

## CHAPTER 1 SPIRAL DYNAMICS

According to Graves (1970, p. 132) a person's behaviour needs to be explained according to his or her levels of existence. Graves described this view as follows:

- “1. That man's nature is not a set thing, that it is ever emergent, that it is an open system, not a closed system.
2. That man's nature evolves by saccadic, quantum-like jumps from one steady state to another.
3. That man's values change from system to system as his total psychology emerges in new form with each quantum-like jump to a new steady state of being”.

According to this view, a person changes his or her psychology as his or her conditions of existence change. This model describes, explains, and suggests means for managing the biopsychosocial development of the species *homo sapiens* (Graves, 1981).

The development of the theory of Spiral dynamics needs to be understood in the historical context in which it was developed. This theory originated from the research questions of Dr. Graves and the attempts to make sense of his findings. The historical context will be explained in more detail in the next section. This will be done by explaining the process that lead to the origin of Spiral dynamics, and then Graves's theory will be discussed, as well as the contributions of Beck and Cowan to the theory of Spiral dynamics. The rationale behind the layout of this chapter is that Graves never wrote a seminal work in which he explained the totality of his theory. The origin of Spiral dynamics provides an idea as to how the theory came into existence. Graves's theory will be explained according to his publications and lectures on Spiral dynamics. Beck and Cowan were Graves's PhD students who further developed this theory according to their own understanding of Spiral dynamics and their view of Graves's work. In some respects Beck and Cowan built on the original ideas according to Graves, and in some instances they developed new areas in the theory of Spiral dynamics.

## Origins and Development of Spiral Dynamics

According to Graves (1971), his original research question in his development of Spiral dynamics was: “What is a Psychological healthy human being?”. This question was addressed to his students who would then discuss it and have to present an opinion on it. This research went through a series of stages, and it included the following:

1. Students presenting their own opinion on a psychological healthy human being,
2. A discussion with other students about their opinions
3. Group discussions between students that were observed through a one-way mirror, from which Graves made process observations about the changes the students had undergone since their first opinions about the research question.

Graves found that the data he gathered fell into two categories with two subtypes each. The first category is what he called “Deny-self” or “Sacrifice-self” category. This category had two subtypes, of which the first one was “deny-self or sacrifice-self for reward later”. This kind of denial or sacrifice seemed to involve denying or sacrificing the self in order to get some kind of reward at a later stage. In terms thereof, one should, for example, work hard now to become something, deny oneself of a number of things in order to get to heaven, or to attain some similar reward. The second kind of subtype in the category of “deny self or sacrifice self” was to deny the self or sacrifice the self to get acceptance now. This kind of denial seemed to involve something like the following: A person would deny him-or herself from going to a movie that he or she wants to see, and rather go to a movie that a friend wants to see in order that the friend would like that person (the sacrifice) right now.

The second category included two subtypes of expressing self. The first subcategory in the express-self category is, “express self as self desires in a calculating fashion at the expense of others”. In this view a healthy person will try to draw as much as he or she can out of the other person, but will be very careful not to go so far that the other person turns on him or her. The second subtype was “express self as self desires, but not at the expense of others”.

There were basic subtypes that Graves started to investigate concerning:

1. The study of classification in relation to peer criticism – peer influence, changing under peer influence, acting with peers, defending, or modifying the conception.
2. The study of classification in relation to authority criticism.

3. The study of peer interaction data.

Graves summarised his data at that stage of the research as follows:

- The deny or sacrifice of self now to get later, was like the deny or sacrifice self now to get now in seeing healthy personality as adjusting to external sources and as a denial of self.
- The denial or sacrifice self now to get later, was like the deny or sacrifice self now to get now in terms of changing to an expression of self-type when change took place centrally.
- The deny or sacrifice self now to get later, was not like the deny or sacrifice self now to get now in terms of effective change forces. The former responded to higher authority and the latter responded to peer authority.
- The deny or sacrifice self now to get later was not like the deny or sacrifice self now to get now in terms of judged freedom to behave.
- The deny or sacrifice now to get later, was not like the deny or sacrifice self now to get now in terms of the source of authority as to healthy behaviour.
- The express self calculatingly / rationally for what the self desires without shame or guilt was like the express self, but not at the expense of others in seeing healthy personality as an expression of self.
- The express self calculatingly / rationally for what the self desires without shame or guilt was like the express self, but not at the expense of others in terms of changing to a non-expressive form or denial of self from when central change took place.

Graves realised that the deny or sacrifice self now, always changed to an express-self system, and that the express-self system always changed to a deny- or sacrifice-self system when they changed centrally. Graves differentiated between peripheral and central change. Peripheral change means change that occurs within a system, keeping within the deny- / sacrifice-self or express-self category. The person might change by becoming more defensive or might change in what he or she thought was a proper way to sacrifice the self, but he or she would not change from believing that it was healthy to deny or sacrifice the self to believing in an express-self form. There could be an intensification of the original belief, but not a change to another system. In contrast to this, central change means going to one of the other systems. Examples of this process will be discussed in the results chapter of this thesis.

According to the research done the deny-/ sacrifice-self for reward later changed to the express-self as self desires calculatingly/ rationally without shame or guilt, which then changed to the deny-/sacrifice -self to get acceptance now, which would, in turn, change to the express-self but not at the expense of others. This process of going from the one category to the next and then back to the first, would later form the basis for the conceptualisation of a spiral or double helix as Graves referred to it.

Grave's conceptualisation of his data changed when, in 1959, he received feedback from some of his students. These students came back to him and said that they used to believe that this (express-self but with concern for others / not at the expense of others) was a healthy human being, but they did not believe it to be so any longer. According to Graves: "In other words, I had a new conception, a new description of healthy human behavior, a new conception appeared right in the middle of my research" (Seminar on Levels of Human Existence, 1971, p. 32). The problem that this presented to Graves was that both Rogers and Maslow had, in essence, conceived the healthy human being (with healthy human behaviour) to be an end — an ultimate achievable state. Graves had assumed that Maslow was correct when the latter developed his hierarchy of needs in a closed pyramidal form, with the final end-state being the self-actualising human being. These new data called into question both Maslow's conception of the self-actualising human being and Rogers's conception of the fully functioning human being as the final end state. This opened up the idea that psychological health is not an ultimate and attainable end state, but rather a process. This issue will be discussed in more detail in the results chapter that deals with the application of the Lens assessment.

Graves's modified his conception of psychological health to the idea that psychological health is a process — that is a hierarchical process — and that this hierarchical process is open-ended. The steps in this process could be described as:

Express self impulsively at any cost  
(Changed to)  
Deny/Sacrifice self for reward later  
(Changed to)  
Express self for gain, but calculated/ rationally

(Changed to)

Deny/Sacrifice self to get acceptance now

(Changed to)

Express self with concern for others and not at the expense of others

(Changed to)

Deny/Sacrifice self to existential realities.

At this point in Graves's research he saw that he was not dealing so much with the idea of psychological health, but rather that the conception of psychological health represented a kind of miniaturisation of personality systems in operation. No existing personality theory could explain Graves's data adequately. According to Graves: "I tried to rationalise 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 rationalise the information. So...I finally said the obvious thing to myself at this date. Just let the data talk! Let the data tell you what personality should conceive to be" (*Seminar on Levels of Human Existence*, 1971, p. 37).

According to Graves the conceptualisation of the data should be the following:

"Conceptualise adult behavior so as to allow for no variation in certain psychological dimensions, such as intelligence and temperament. So personality must be represented in such a way that certain dimensions do not change over systems of behavior.

Granted to:

Conceptualise adult behavior so as to allow for quantitative variation in some dimensions. Authoritarianism and dogmatism are dimensions that vary in a quantitative fashion – both in a decreasing quantitative fashion.... more authoritarianism down below and increasing up above.

Conceptualise adult behaviour in an alternating wave-like fashion, allowing for a repetition of theme as seen in the change and organisational data...the different ways that people systems organised to do work.

Conceptualise adult behaviour so that every other system is similar to, but at the same time different, from its alternative, the change data.

Conceptualise adult behavior so that each system has its system specificness, so that each system has a quality of its own; namely the interaction of the data.

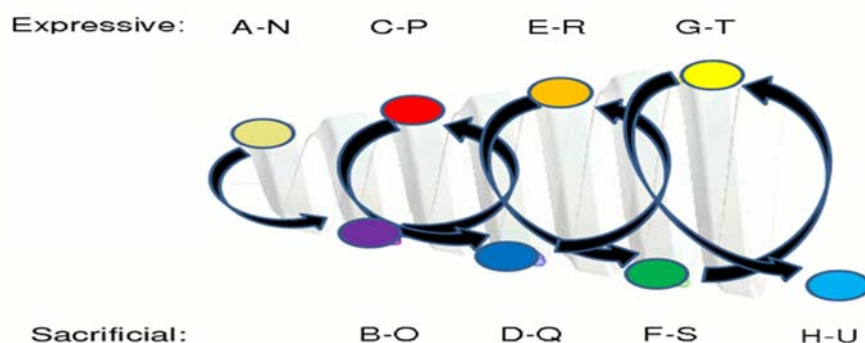
Conceptualise adult behavior so that certain systems are more externally oriented, and so that other systems are more internally oriented; the deny-/sacrifice-self, and the express-self data.

Conceptualise adult behaviour so as to show increased degrees of behavioral freedom in each successive system, particularly in the express-self not at the expense of others system; the freedom to behave and problem-solving data” (*Seminar on Levels of Human Existence*, 1971, p. 37).

The last conceptualisation was based on research done by Graves on the problem-solving abilities of students. He found that the students, who fell in the category of express-self not at the expense of others, found more solutions and also in a shorter time. Initially the logical conclusion was that it reflected a hierarchy of who was brighter and who was not. This conclusion would later be proven to be wrong, as show by subsequent psychometric tests (*Seminar on Levels of Human Existence*, 1971, p. 37).

According to Graves an incredible change in human behaviour takes place when the individual begins to believe that psychological health should be both expressive of self, and, at the same time, taking care of other human beings. This kind of thinking evidences a reorganisation of personality and it should be represented in the conceptualisation of the theory. Examples of this will be shown in the chapter that deals with the discussion on the Lens results.

Figure 1



Human personality in this theory is being conceptualised quite differently from anything conceived before. Graves had, first of all, to choose a beginning point of conceptualisation, and he started with this factor of the cyclic dimension (Figure 1). In some manner the deny-sacrifice and the express-self shifted back and forth on the spiral. When one system dimmed, the other brightened. In general, Graves found that the lower the socio-economic status of the individual, the more his or her conception of human personality tended to be low in the hierarchy of conceptions (*Seminar on Levels of Human Existence*, 1971,p.39). So, looking at a person's conception of healthy personality, and generalising from this miniature system of personality to a more general system of personality, was the function of the person having experienced the solution of certain problems human beings run into when they try to stay alive. The lower the conception of healthy personality in the hierarchy Graves established, the closer to being vital were the problems with which the human being was confronted. From this data and the other research Graves conceptualised a theory of personality that postulates that there are two major components in personality which change with time, but they have the character that they spurt and then plateau for a period of time — then they spurt and plateau again, and this is how Graves explained the cyclic factor in his data. The data indicated that some people were attempting to make the world fit them, while others were trying to fit themselves to the world. These are the express-self and deny- /sacrifice-self categories. So, according to Graves, personality develops through periods of spurts and plateaus of certain basic components in the brain. The need to make the world fit the individual, and the opposite need of the individual to fit into the world, will be explained in more detail in the chapter dealing with Existentialism.

A second factor that came out of the data of Graves was that the degrees of behavioural freedom increase that an individual experiences as he or she moves up the level of human existence, thus having more choices. At the lowest level of human existence, the choices he or she can make are very limited. In his theory “A” represents the most vital problem of the human being, and “B, C, D, E, F, G, H” are less vital in a sense in that they represent different existential problems. From this Graves hypothesised that the brain of a person must be structured (functionally and not physically) into a series of hierarchically-ordered dynamic, neurological, systems. Therefore, when a person has solved the “A” condition, there ought to be identifiable in the brain of that person, the “O” system which he or she operates under when trying to solve the “B” problems.

The level of existential problem that the person is trying to solve, defines how he or she views the world, and what he or she needs out of the world. These constructs, as well as a definition of consciousness, will be discussed in more detail in the chapter on Existentialism.

Problem “A” is defined as those problems involving the operation of the imperative periodic physiological needs of the organism. Graves further hypothesized that there is a functional system in the brain that is specifically related to the task of running the vital processes, periodic in nature, in the organism. The “B” problems Graves defined as those involving the physiology of the organism that do not have the characteristic of periodicity in them, in other words, the problem of shelter and food. According to Graves (*Seminar on Levels of Human Existence*, 1971, p. 40) “...we are equipped by nature with certain information processing devices and certain decision making equipment to handle in a hierarchically ordered way a series of problems of human existence.” In light of the fact that Graves came to see personality as an open-ended system, he came to see the process of trying to produce a healthy personality as a process of chasing a will-o’-the-wisp, because as soon as a person functions well in one system, he wants to be in another.

Graves noticed that people do not change unless they have a reason to do so. People do not simply change; they need something to push them. According to his data, there is a factor of improved conditions for existence involved in the element of change. The first factor required in change to a higher system of behaviour is that a person has potential, and hence the higher-level structures are present in the brain. The second factor is the solution of existential problems with which a person is faced. This is still not necessarily enough to bring about change. According to Graves (*Seminar on Levels of Human Existence*, 1971, p. 43 and *Personality Structure and Perceptual Readiness*, 1965, p. 3), additional studies showed that if a person has existential problems of existence that he or she considered solved, and something came along that showed that his or her solution was inappropriate, then it was absolutely necessary for change to occur. Graves saw this as the old concept of dissonance, when something (knowledge, noise) must come in and stir things up that is in a pleasant state of equilibrium. This would not necessarily cause the change, but it would require that the person use his or her established solutions. These old solutions would inevitably not work, and the person would be forced to try something new — the end product being that a new insight would have developed. (Graves initially explained this through a reversible chemical process — *Seminar on Levels of Human Existence*, 1971, p. 43). Since change on the spiral



is reflected in the concept of dissonance, this is seen on the Lens results in profiles that are in flux or in transition. This concept of change will be discussed in more detail in the Results chapter of this work.

Initially Graves also stated that change depends on which system the person changes from and to which one he or she changes. If a person is transitioning from an expressive system to an adjustive (later this is named “sacrificial”) one, it appears as if the impetus of change is coming from without. If, however, the person is going from an adjustive (“sacrificial”) system to an expressive one, it looks as if the impetus for change is coming from within. This will be discussed later, but it makes sense in terms of the postulation in Existential theory that there are two forces that determine the existence of humanity. These are the need for acceptance / being for others and belonging, and the second is the need to be all you can be or self-actualisation / being for its own sake. It is important to clarify that movement is not from one system to the next. Rather, it is a subordination of the earlier system by the later system. According to Graves (*Seminar on Levels of Human Existence*, 1971, p. 45) 50% of a person’s thinking is centralised in a particular system, and the other 50% shades off in either direction to where he or she is going and where he or she is coming from. This principle is vital for understanding the Lens results.

Graves held to the view that when dissonance comes into an existing system, the person is a new being both physiologically and psychologically, because different chemicals are released in the brain that trigger certain new behaviours in people. Graves, however, also made it clear that he was using his argument of reversal of causalities because he had already observed the behaviours in his respondents, and he tried to explain these behaviours in terms of the chemical processes in the mind. The one is thus not necessarily the cause of the other, but Graves hypothesised that there is a parallel between the two, and that they could not be ignored. The level of existence changes along with the chemistry in the brain. These are neither cause nor effect: they are a system.

According to Graves (*Seminar on Levels of Human Existence*, 1971, p. 47), it does not matter whether you approach this from the structural level and try to explain things in the beginning, or whether you start from a chemical level and try to explain things from the beginning, or even whether you set about it from the behavioural level, you are going to find:

“If you start off and try to explain it structurally – you are going to be left with some gaps over here that you can’t handle until you’ve handled it both chemically and behaviourally.

If you start off chemically and try to explain it all...you can’t get to first base because you’ll be left with some gaps over here that you can’t handle until you dealt with the structural and behavioural. And if you start off behaviourally you are going to end up with some gaps you can’t handle until you deal with the structural and chemical aspects.

So... it isn’t one or the other...it is a system. They are all there. And within my point of view you can see that a system of behavior is roughly akin to the concept of absolute zero and absolute vacuum in physics. It is something that is never achieved but it is that from which the human being varies. And so, I am saying in theory there is a very tight relationship between structure, chemistry and behaviour. If you had pure conditions and this structure with this chemistry – then you’d get this behaviour. If you had this behaviour then you would get this chemistry and structure. This is in theory but we recognise that in reality the pure conditions and ideal states of theory don’t necessarily exist” (*Seminar on Levels of Human Existence*, 1971, p. 47).

The concept of pure conditions is important to understanding the Lens results. In theory the spiral functions in a certain way. This clear progression through the stages is possible in a person’s life, but it does not always take place in such an orderly and predictable manner. Therefore, theoretically the description of the spiral is very clear, but this does not happen in such a way in people’s lives, as is clearly reflected in the Lens results. This issue is discussed in more detail later.

### Graves’s Theory

In the theory of Spiral dynamics it is proposed that the biopsychosocial development of the mature human arises from the interaction of a double-helix complex of two sets of determining forces namely, the environmental social determinants or the existential problems of living, and the neuropsychological equipment of the organism or the neuropsychological equipment for living (Graves, 1981). According to Graves (1970) as a person solves certain crucial problems for existence, the growth rate of the components change, and as they do so higher-order systems or configurations are activated. The first existential state is referred to by Graves as the A-N state. This state exists when a person is living in conditions in which he

or she spends most of his or her waking hours on activities that will satisfy their basic physiological needs. The states which emerge later, arise as each different and original set of human problems is solved. The two components that Graves claimed are interacting are the adjustment-of-the-organism-to-the-environment, and adjustment-of-the-environment-to-the-organism. As the two components develop in their spurt and plateau-like fashion, progressively higher psychological systems emerge. The alteration of the components produces a cyclic emergence of existential states, which dictate that the psychology, and hence the values of every other system, are at the same time like and unlike its cyclic partners. This aspect of human existence and human values, if not understood, leads to a great deal of confusion, when so-called value problems are discussed. Therefore, the biopsychological development of the mature human is an unfolding, emergent, oscillating, spiralling process marked (normally) by the progressive subordination of older, lower-order, less complex biopsychosocial systems to newer, higher-order, and more complex biopsychosocial systems. These systems alternate between a focus on the external world and an attempt to change it (left-hemisphere brain dominance), and focus on the inner world and how to come to peace with it (right-hemisphere brain dominance) with the aim and means of each systemic end changing in each alternately prognostic system (Graves, 1981).

People therefore tend normally to change their biopsychosocial being as the conditions of their existence change. Each successive stage, wave, or level of existence is a state through which developing people pass on their way to other states of being (Graves, 1981). Graves (1970) saw these conditions of existence as states of equilibrium through which people passed on their way to other states of equilibrium. When a person is in one state of equilibrium, he or she has a psychology that is specific to that state. Graves stated that in some cases a person may not be genetically or constitutionally equipped to change in the normal upward hierarchically-ordered and more complex direction when the person's conditions of existence change (Graves, 1981). He or she may move, given the presence of certain conditions through a hierarchically-ordered series of behaviours to some end, or he or she may stabilise and live out his or her life at any one, or a combination of levels in the hierarchy of levels of existence. Under certain conditions he or she may regress to a behaviour system that is lower in the hierarchy. An adult lives in a potentially open system of needs, values and aspirations, but he or she often settles into what approximates a closed system. When he or she is at one level he or she has the behavioural degrees of freedom afforded to him or her at that level. This means that when a human is settled 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 system, conception of mental health, ideas about 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:

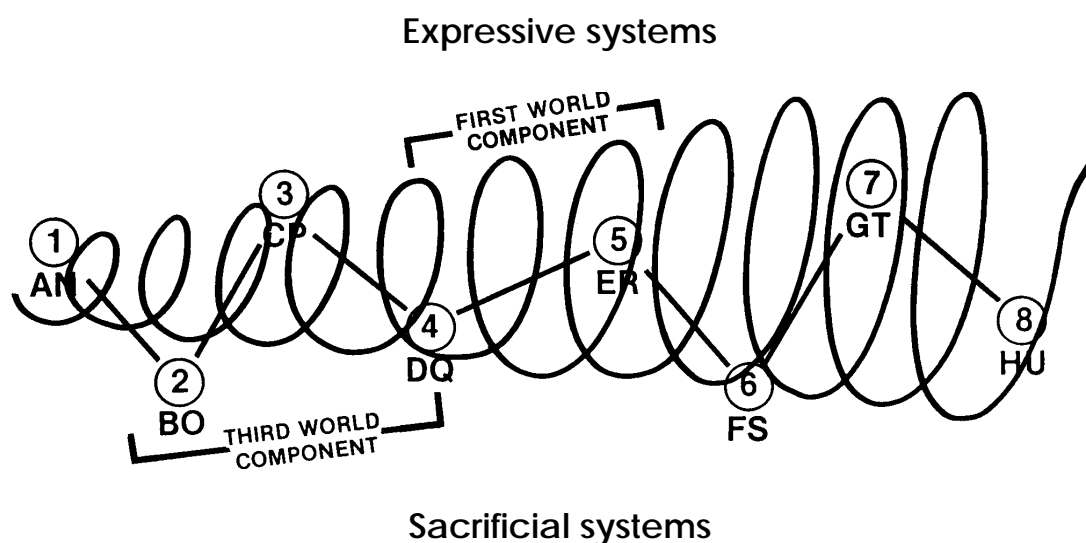
1. Stabilise, the existential conditions being suitable, at any one, or a combination of, levels in the hierarchy. Thus a person may settle, for specifiable organismal or environmental reasons, into what appears to be a fixed and relatively closed system rather than be the usual, open state of development;
2. Show the behaviour of a level in a predominantly positive or negative manner; or
3. Under certain circumstances regress to a system lower in the hierarchy (Graves, 1981).

The psychology of adult men and women therefore develops from the existential states of humankind, and these states evolve as a person solves certain hierarchically ordered existential problems crucial to him or her in his or her existence. If a person solves his or her current existential problems, this releases energy into his or her system and, in turn, creates new existential problems. When these new problems arise, higher-order or different configurations of dynamic neurological systems become active. Outside the person are the social and environmental areas, the external conditions for existence, and various existential problems. These conditions range from the problems which are the very worst of human existence, to the existential difficulties which are faced by individuals living in the best conditions for human existence. The specific functions of these states are defined by the interaction of two components which grow by periods of spurt and plateau. As each existential state emerges, man or woman believes that the problems of human existence are the problems with which he or she is faced at the level at which he or she has arrived. He or she develops a general way of life or a so-called *thema for existence*. Included here is a thematic value system appropriate to his or her current existential state. This major assumption constitutes is the major reason for seeing Spiral dynamics as a theory of values, as Graves referred to it on a number of occasions. This thema is specified into a particular *schema for existence* as a result of individual, group and environmental differences (Graves, 1970).

According to Graves, at a particular level of existence any human being, no matter what the circumstances in which they are living, will develop the same THEMA for existence that in which he or she is centralised. Depending, however, upon particular characteristics of the world in which he or she is living, and the particular characterisation of his or her individual mind, that is, both N and O systems can vary even though they are very much alike in general. You can have the same THEMA of existence with very different SCHEMATIC forms. An example of this is the following: When referring to THEMA and SCHEMA, there is only one difference between the theoretical point of view of orthodox Christianity and orthodox Communism. They are the same thing, namely sacrifice/deny self to attain later systems. Thematically, therefore, they are the same thing, or similar human beings, yet schematically they are very different. The greatest battles exist between people whose thinking is closest together. (*Seminar on Levels of Human Existence*, 1971, p. 72) (Discussion on papers: *Levels of Existence: An Open System Theory of Values*, Fall, 1970, *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*).

When a person's existence is settled in lower level systems (figure 2), the subsistence levels states A-N through F-S, it is characteristic of him or her to believe that there is nothing inherently wrong in a person whose values are contrary to the values dictated by his or her own existential state. Thus, what a person values at the specific subsistence levels will lead him or her to abhor the values of a person who is at, or striving for, any other level of existence.

Figure 2



The characteristic of transitions between levels is a reorganisation for higher-level values, rather than a decay of a finite and lasting value system. Values change in a regressive-progressive fashion, when each set of existential problems is solved and movement to higher-level psychological systems is presaged. The growth of values thus proceeds forward to a critical point, and then changes when this point has been reached. The pressure of changing conditions first produces a regression and disorganisation of values, followed by a spurt-like move to a higher level of organisation. The regressive organisation is interpreted by many as a sign of decay while it can be interpreted from this point of view as a sign of preparation for higher level reorganisation. The movement to the new level of organisation is interpreted by many as a sign of decay because the new values so often reject so many aspects of the immediately preceding values. This regressive-progressive reorganisation is central to the interpretation of values proposed here. Thus the major signs of decay, according to this point of view, become the point of reorganising growth. This interpretation enables us better to understand value crises and confrontations. When a person's old values are no longer appropriate for his or her new existential state, they appear to break down as he or she searches for a new value system which is more congruent with his or her new state of being. Behavioural crises, such as riots or confrontation, may erupt when he or she develops a glimmer of insight into his or her new value system. At this point he or she fights his or her establishment, his or her older generation, or the old value system that he or she is trying to transcend. Here the establishment resists putting his or her new, but embryonic, ways of thinking into operation. As time passes, a person overcomes the values of the past and develops his or her new set of values and consummates his or her movement into his or her next steady-state value system. All things taken into account, Graves's basic position is very simple. It is that a persons, as he or she grows psychologically, moves in a salutary fashion from a value system appropriate in restricted living circumstances to higher values systems appropriate to better conditions of life and being. In terms of this position it is held that a person, as he or she and his or her societies develop, must subordinate old values if he or she is ever to develop new values appropriate to his or her new state of existence. Develop and discard, retain and rearrange, seems nature's way of handling all things. This basic ordering is not any different in the value realm (Graves, 1970).

An important contribution by Graves, that was further explored by Beck and Cowan (1996) at a later stage, was the idea of turning systems on and off, as well as that of open and closed systems.

Graves believed in the concept of turning systems on and off. He contended that there could be a regression from level to level. Graves used a Christmas tree and a vehicle for visualising, and compares the strings of lights in a ladder-like form to the different levels. One has the capacity to control the amount of illumination that comes from the lights, so when a person is in the A-N state of affairs, the lowest string of lights is very bright and the others are all very dim. Something comes in that dampens out the N system and reduces it to a state of being less bright than the other systems, and O becomes the bright one. The same is true for the P system, that when it comes on all the others are dimmer. Hence, something is dampening as a higher system comes on and the lower level is subordinated. It is therefore not a switching on and off process, but rather an increase or decrease of intensity of operation.

At any moment at least three systems are very important in the behaviour of a person:

- The system that is dominating
- The system that is coming up, and
- The system that is going down (*Seminar on Levels of Human Existence*, 1971, p. 48).

This concept is explained in much more detail in the contribution that Beck and Cowan made to the theory of Spiral dynamics.

The closing down of people going from one system to another is discussed in *Seminar on Levels of Human Existence* (1971, pp. 57 - 59). Everybody searches for something, and if they do not find what they want, they sometimes resort to external stimuli such as drugs, alcohol, religion, and so on. This searching is the road to attaining closure, but some people will not succeed in making the transitions between systems and be able to move on to the next level.

According to Graves, every time a transition has taken place in humanity, there has been an upsurge in the use of drugs. One kind of drug at one time, and another kind of drug at another, and this can pretty well be traced back to what kind of drugs were used by which

kind of people, at what time, and the nature of the transition in which they were involved. In other words, a person comes to the end of a way of life which he or she has been living (be this D-Q, E-R or F-S), and this way of life no longer solves the problems that he or she is facing. Humanity is then thrown into a crisis. In their attempts to solve this crisis and move forward, their first steps are regressive. They first go backwards, and then they try to find their way forward through this anxiety-producing situation. If in the course of this movement backwards to go forward, people come upon drugs or alcohol, or they will grasp any other means at their disposal. One is likely to find people turning to drugs at any of the systems, but lately increasing numbers are showing up in the E-R to F-S transition, which is a manifestation of present-day values of society. An example of using drugs to cope with transition is someone going from E-R to F-S, and to cope with the anxiety of this change the person turns to drugs. Rather than trying to find new ways of expressing him- or herself or dealing with the existential problems, he or she goes back to the D-Q system and anchors in religion because this supplies all the answers that he or she needs. So a person will go from E-R to F-S through D-Q, because the first step forward, is a step back.

Graves had some very specific ideas on the therapeutic approach to use with each person. For C-P going to D-Q he suggested Skinner, for D-Q going to E-R he suggested Freud, and for E-R to F-S subjects change under the influence of fear.

According to Graves there are two kinds of mental illness, which he referred to as the alterably closed personality and unalterably closed personality. The unalterably closed personality does not develop psychosis, while the alterably closed cannot but develop psychosis. The unalterably closed personality is a person who is restricted in his or her movement up the levels of existence, or has been reduced to closure from a much higher level because (a) he or she has never had the higher-level structures in the brain in the first place as in the severely mentally retarded, or (b) he or she has had a mechanical injury.

According to Graves, the work done by Goldstein in World War I on brain injury, is relevant to this discussion. Goldstein coined the phrase self-actualisation, which originally meant that as a person loses potentiality (after brain injury) he or she actualises him- or herself at a lower level. He or she thus goes down and becomes a whole person at that level. This means that where the brain tissue has been damaged by disease, senility, malnutrition, and so on, Graves would have conceptualised this as an unalterably closed personality. When an individual has



become alterably closed, he or she has become closed down because of psychological conditions which restrict the degrees of behavioural freedom, and he or she is thrown into a specific channel of development which becomes the only way in which he or she can develop and survive as an organism. This according to graves is the basis of psychosis. Psychosis is the behaviour of the unalterably closed or the alterably closed under stress (*Seminar on Levels of Human Existence*, 1971, p. 60).

Acting-out behaviour occurs at the odd-numbered systems (as seen in figure 2) namely 3, 5, and 7 (Red – Orange – Yellow), because those are the expressive systems. Inhibitory behaviour problems occur more in the even-numbered systems 2, 4, 6, and 8 (Purple – Blue – Green – Turquoise), because they are sacrificial in nature, and one might find more compulsive behaviour in these systems. The odd-numbered systems show more impulsive behaviour. People tend to subordinate their anxiety symptoms in the even-numbered systems, while in the odd-numbered systems; they exaggerate the acting-out symptoms with acts of hostility, aggression, and taking it out on their bodies. Thus, psychosomatic problems are more typical of the 2, 4, 6, and 8 (Purple – Blue – Green – Turquoise) systems. Systems are simply mechanisms that a person has at his or her disposal, and in certain systems he or she would tend to use certain mechanisms in preference to others. The system uses the symptom that best makes sense with the individual psychology and which best fits with psychology of the systems. (*Seminar on Levels of Human Existence*, 1971, p. 59).

Graves went on to explain that the definition of a closed person would be: “One in which the person maintains his beliefs when the conditions of existence around him change” (*Seminar on Levels of Human Existence*, 1971, p. 68). The overall system that Graves was referring to is an open system in that there is no end. He saw levels going on, and that people, depending on certain circumstances can go on. When he referred any particular individual who may be closed, he was referring to a person with brain damage or emotional restraints. These people will climb the levels of existence up to a point, and then flatten off for a variety reasons and remain closed at a certain level for the rest of their lives. These people therefore become closed within this open system, and they themselves become closed down and remain there. This will be dealt with in more detail in the discussion on dogmatism.

Graves questioned whether one should attempt to take a psychologically closed person and try and open them up. “I’m not so sure that if a person has a certain set of beliefs – that no

other human beings in their way of life would think, with their beliefs – can say that the person would be better off with a different set of beliefs, namely their set of beliefs.” (*Seminar on Levels of Human Existence*, 1971, p. 68).

Closed personalities would think at the same level in respect of all issues. Dealing with people depends on this as well: If a person is closed, then the teacher, or the trainer or therapist should be at the same level as the person. If the subject is open then the teacher or trainer or therapist should be one level in advance of the person. A severe problem arises when one finds someone at the G-T level having to function in a context of the C-P or D-Q levels for a long period, because this would prove to be highly frustrating. It would be more advisable to get someone that can do this at the level where they are at.

Graves explained the concept of the time factor with transitions between systems as: “It is psychological time. It is the time you see the resolution of existential problems. It is the time of getting the insight as to how to operate at the higher level and it is the time of the removal of the barriers to moving forward. The time is the time of the resolution of the existential problem that you are involved in — in development” (*Seminar on Levels of Human Existence*, 1971, p. 59). So it is the sort of thing that sometimes there is nothing you can do. You have this barrier and neither the manager nor the therapist can progress beyond this barrier. If the person with the barrier can’t solve it, then maybe nobody knows how to solve it, and the person cannot move forward.

Rokeach pointed out that the Gough-Sanford Rigidity Scale measures resistance to change of single beliefs, sets, or habits, whereas dogmatism refers to change of systems of beliefs. The main argument concerning the use of Rokeach’s rigidity and dogmatism scale is that it would be possible to assess the levels of existence by using these scales. The main use of this kind of instrument would be to determine whether a person is open, closed, or stuck at a specific level of existence (Rokeach, McGovney & Deny, 1960; *Seminar on Levels of Human Existence*, 1971).

According to Graves’s theory, human existence can be likened to a symphony with six themes. In a symphony the composer normally begins by stating his themes in the simplest possible manner. In human existence, our species begins by stating in the simplest way those themes, which will occupy us through history with almost infinite variations. These themes

for living change as humans solve current problems of existence and, in solving them, create new problems of existence (Graves, 1981).

### Spiral Dynamics according to Beck and Cowan

#### *Historical development*

The historical development is important to the understanding of the theory of Spiral dynamics. Graves was unable to explain his view of the theory in its totality because of his failing health, and for this reason Beck and Cowan contributed to the theory as it stands today. It is important to point out that Beck and Cowan's contribution in some aspects differs seriously from Graves's theory. The way in which Beck and Cowan appear to understand Spiral dynamics needs be discussed in more detail.

Beck and Cowan (1996), introduced the notion of the v-Meme, or values-attracting-meta-meme systems. The comparison is made between what biochemical genes are to DNA: these v-Memes are to our psycho-social and organisational 'DNA'. Beck and Cowan consider two related tributaries of thought when looking at human nature and as they term it "New Times Thinking". The first is the expansive Levels of Human Existence framework laid out by Clare Graves. The second is the concept of 'memes' introduced by British biologist Richard Dawkins and later amplified by psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (Beck & Cowan, 1996, p. 29).

Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi uses the expression of memes to contrast with genes in identifying the origins of human behaviour as opposed to physical characteristics. The term itself was introduced by Richard Dawkins, who abbreviated the Greek root 'mimeme'. This term was used to describe a unit of cultural information such as a political ideology, a fashion trend, language usage, musical forms, or even architectural styles. According to John Perry Barlow, (in Beck & Cowan 1996, p. 30), Dawkins's idea involves:

"...Self-replicating patterns of information that propagate themselves across the ecologies of mind, a pattern of reproduction much like that of life forms ...They self-reproduce, they interact with their surroundings and adapt to them, they mutate, they persist. They evolve to fill the empty niches of their local environments, which are, in this case, the surrounding belief systems and cultures of their hosts, namely, us".

This is why Beck and Cowan sees what biological genes are to the human DNA, memes are to the human psycho-cultural DNA. Genes are the information units of our physical nature derived from genetic contributions of mom and dad as well as properties inherited from our species. According to Csikszentmihalyi memes are born and they are the information units in our collective consciousness and transport their views across our minds. A meme will contain behavioural instructions that are passed on from one generation to the next and like an intellectual virus will reproduce itself through cultural norms, language, social movements and moral statements of how living should be done.

It is here where Beck and Cowan combine Spiral dynamics with the v-Meme thinking, in that they argue Spiral dynamics proposes the existence of another kind of wave-like meta-meme, or a systems or 'values meme'. The description of v-Memes (or values memes) originated from this set of assumptions. This is different from Graves's original idea that the spiral consists of existential problems and the coping mechanisms used to address these problems. Graves did not expand on his view of what exactly happens neurologically in the theory of Spiral dynamics. The change in the theory postulated by Beck and Cowan could have been an attempt to explain, or contribute to, a previously vague part of the theory. The understanding of Spiral dynamics does not differ from Graves's original theory; rather Beck and Cowan combine the existing Spiral dynamics theory with their conceptualisations to serve as a meta-theory to explain how their theory of v-Memes operates.

According to Beck and Cowan (1996, p. 32), these v-Memes encode instructions for our worldviews, assumptions about how everything works, and the rationale for decisions we make. Beck and Cowan saw Spiral dynamics as a comparative life form: "We are barely aware of their power because we can only infer their existence from behavioral displays and the artifacts swirling around them. The v-Memes assist the wetware of our minds to sort out what the world is really like and Spiral dynamics is the process that describes how these v-Memes act at three different but clearly interrelated levels. These levels are: 1. Individuals, 2. Organizations. 3. Societies. Spiral dynamics is thus the framework on which v-Meme awakenings and expressions hang. It functions as the organizing principle that pulls the "Why?" from apparent chaos and translate our value languages"(1996, p.32).

This research project sets out to describe how Spiral dynamics plays a role in the process through which worldviews are formed. According to Beck and Cowan (1996) this is also true for the v-Meme systems.

“Like genes, memes do not operate in solo, but interlock in the mosaics that form weltanschauungs, worldviews”(Harword Bloom, *The Lucifer Principle*, in Beck & Cowan, 1996, p. 35).

And also:

“A v-Meme transposes itself into a world *view*, a value *system*, a *level* of psychological existence. A belief *structure*, organizing *principle*, a *way* of thinking, and a *mode* of living” (Beck & Cowan, 1996, p.40).

The definition of worldviews needs to be clarified in this context and will be addressed later in more detail.

The main focus of the present discussion is that Beck and Cowan contributed to Graves’s original theory, and the relevance of the manner in which this was done. In this discussion it will also be shown at a later stage that the contribution made by Beck and Cowan to the theory of Spiral dynamics differs significantly from Graves’s original work.

Beck and Cowan used Spiral dynamics to explain v-Memes or the laws, codes, and principles that influence the shifts, elaborations, and arrangements in the evolving modes of being. Accordingly v-Memes possess the following qualities:

- v-Memes manifest the core intelligences that form systems and impact human behaviour.
- A v-Meme contains the basic package of thought, motives, and instructions that determine how we make decisions and prioritise our lives.
- Each has its own sending and receiving channel, organisation design, intensity level, and code of conduct and set of assumptions regarding the way the world works.
- A v-Meme occupies a human mind like a parasite moves into the body and records the neurological equipment to fit its way of thinking.

According to Beck and Cowan (1996) each has a directional compass that makes it predatory and expansive or passive and cooperative. These v-Memes each contain antibodies to fend off attacks from competing v-Memes. v-Memes shape our basic life priorities, which, in turn result in surface level decisions and behaviours others can observe. It is not possible to detect the operating v-Meme in a person by simply observing behaviour or what someone does. The only way to determine the v-Meme is to recognise why someone does something. Beck and Cowan recognised eight landmark v-Memes that have appeared to date around which ideas and beliefs gather. These landmark v-Memes are the various stations on the spiral as described by Graves namely, Beige (A-N), Purple (B-O), Red (C-P), Blue (D-Q), Orange (E-R), Green (F-S), Yellow (G-T) and Turquoise (H-U). These are described in Graves's view of the original theory that became known as Spiral dynamics.

v-Memes impact all of life's choices. v-Memes are self-organising entities, which elaborate themselves into consistent packages that impact virtually everything in our lives. According to Beck and Cowan, v-Memes are like powerful viruses that attach themselves to those ideas, people, objects, and institutions that allow them to reproduce and radiate their core messages. In this view v-Memes develop minds of their own and a well-entrenched v-Meme will have built a powerfully supporting structure around itself.

A v-Meme can express both healthy (for better) and unhealthy (for worse) qualities. In themselves v-Memes are neither healthy or unhealthy, good or bad, positive or negative. The same v-Meme that produces positive behaviour in people can also lead to destructive behaviour. Healthy v-Memes are those that allow, or even facilitate, the positive expression of other evolving v-Memes on the spiral, even though they may be in competition for influence. Often v-Memes become malignant, lacking the internal regulation system to tell them when to stop growing. Others can be closed, locked-in, and repressive, imposing a guardian mentality.

A v-Meme is a structure of thinking, and determines how people think or make decisions in contrast to what they believe or value.

As life conditions change so v-Memes can brighten or dim.

v-Memes have strong cybernetic capacities, meaning that they can read feedback and adjust to this information, and they are driven to preserve their core intelligences and proliferate their influence whenever they find open minds.

According to this view a v-Meme's core intelligence is the same as what Graves termed the biopsychosocial system or Spiral dynamics.

In response to the challenge Graves left, Beck and Cowan decided to address the problem by postulating that the explanation of v-Memes would be an acceptable explanation. Graves contended that as humanity solves the problems of existence at a level, new brain systems may be activated and, when activated, change their perceptions so as to cause them to see new problems of existence. According to Beck and Cowan this means that, instead of beginning only as passive hardware without content (or the so called *tabula rasa*), it turns out that the normal human brain comes out with potential 'software'-like systems just waiting to be turned on for latent upgrades. It could be argued that this not an acceptable explanation, purely because it makes Spiral dynamics the actual process that takes place in the brain or, in this case the "memes", and not the result of the two main tiers that Graves saw, namely the problems of existence on the one side and the (neurological) coping mechanisms on the other. Secondly, Beck and Cowan could have used a neurological model to explain the abovementioned gap in the theory. Instead they used the existing idea of genes and superimposed it on the theory of Spiral dynamics. Although it is not clear what Beck and Cowan tried to do by combining v-Memes and Spiral dynamics; one possibility is that they attempted to explain one of the gaps in the theory, namely the neurological changes that take place when the problems of existence are encountered. Through this process the theory according to Beck and Cowan reads as if Spiral dynamics supplements the theory of v-Memes.

Another challenge that Graves left unanswered was the jump from how the spiral works to, why the theory becomes a topic of values. This is a major gap in the theory and what is attempted in this project, is to address this specific topic of values, and also to explain why the Spiral dynamics theory is rather a manifestation of a theory of worldviews. The process of explaining this gap in the theory will be attended to in a later chapter of this thesis.

*The seven principles of Spiral dynamics*

Beck and Cowan broke down the theory of Spiral dynamics by explaining it in seven principles or laws, which are:

*Principle 1*

Humans possess the capacity to create new v-Memes. According to Beck and Cowan (1996), a critical aspect of Graves's perspective is that humans possess in themselves the capacity to exist at different levels of psychological development and even add a new level. This variability in levels of existence underlines our capacity to escape the tyranny of lethargic genes. The difference is, however, that while genes take their own time to bring about change, v-Memes have the capacity to leap up an evolutionary spiral overnight. Graves is quoted as having said that the development of the human being is the unfolding or emergent process marked by the progressive subordination of older behavioural systems to newer, higher-order ones. This, according to Beck and Cowan, means that humans have the capacity to recalibrate their minds and create new v-Memes. This statement is vague, because it is not exactly what Graves originally said. Graves said that humans create new meaning in their lives by looking for new problems of existence to solve. This clearly implies that after solving the problems of existence of his or her current level, he or she would look for the next challenge or problem of existence. Graves never said that humans form new v-Meme systems in response to changing life conditions as explicated by Beck and Cowan (1996, p. 50).

*Principle 2*

Life conditions awaken v-Memes, which may emerge, surge, regress, or fade in response. The view is that v-Memes (Graves called it levels of existence) are a product of the interaction in our nervous systems with the life conditions that we face. This interface of conditions of existence without, and latent capacities within, is what Graves called the double helix aspect of his theory. Beck and Cowan used Graves's original theory, but Graves said the levels of existence would change without any reference whatsoever to v-Memes. It is not clear whether Beck and Cowan attempt to substitute v-Memes for the original levels of existence that Graves used. The way in which this part of the theory of Beck and Cowan is explained, leads to confusion. These same theory as Graves's is used to explain life conditions. The change is that instead of referring to the two components of the spiral as the problems of existence, versus the coping mechanisms with which human beings respond,



Beck and Cowan (1996) change it to the broader concept of life conditions that awaken certain v-Memes.

Beck and Cowan contribute to the theory by dividing life conditions up into the following aspects that influence them: Times, Place, Problems, and Circumstances:

- Historic times would mean the location along the overall line of human development, the particular culture's stage of emergence, and stages in the individual's life passages.
- Geographic place would imply the physical conditions, both natural and man-made ecology, within the perception of the individual or group.
- Human problems refers to priorities, needs, concerns and requirements for existence facing a particular individual or group, some of which are common to all humans and others unique to a culture, community or personality.
- Social circumstances are the individual, group, and cultural placement within hierarchies of power, status and influence.

According to this view, it is the above-mentioned factors that contribute to the differing life conditions and which Beck and Cowan see as the awakening different v-Memes. Beck and Cowan (1996) summarise the life conditions by using Graves's classification of the different levels of the spiral. One major change in the above-mentioned explanation could be that Beck and Cowan changed problems of existence into life conditions. By doing this they excluded the Existential dilemma that on which Graves's theory in its totality focuses.

### *Principle 3*

v-Memes zigzag between Express-self and Sacrifice-self themes. The overall Spiral is forged by the pendulum-like shift between a focus on "me" and concerns with "we". Beck and Cowan (1996) quoted the psychologist Csikszentmihalyi's explanation:

"Social scientists (Abraham Maslow, Lawrence Kohlberg, Jane Loevinger and James Fowler) describe a dialectical motion between differentiation and integration, between turning attention inward and then outward, between valuing the self and then the larger community. It is not a circular motion that returns to where one started, but rather, it resembles an ascending spiral, where concern for the self becomes steadily qualified by less selfish goals, and concern for others, become individualistic and personally meaningful" (*The Evolving Self*, 1993, p. 235).

Beck and Cowan saw this statement as supporting their view that each core v-Meme falls closer to one side or the other of a pendulum's arc within the Spiral (1996, p. 56). The one side is designated with warm colours like Beige (A-N), Red (C-P), Orange (E-R), Yellow (G-T), which represent Express-self, I-orientated v-Memes. The other side contains cool colours such as Purple (B-O), Blue (D-Q), Green (F-S), and Turquoise (H-U) and it includes the Sacrifice-self, we-orientated v-Memes. Individuals and societies tend to tilt from one magnet-like pole to the other: whenever this human pendulum approaches the far side of its force field, it generates the new Life Conditions that can only be addressed with solutions from the other. Beck and Cowan explained this swing between the two opposites in the Spiral as the brain's activation of the messages from or about the specific upcoming v-Meme family. The family could be regarded as tilting between the Communal / Collective theme or the Individual / Elite theme. This was what Graves referred to as the Express-self or Sacrifice-self themes.

Again, Life Conditions as a concept replaces Graves's original idea of Problems of Existence. The explanation of v-Memes replace the unknown area in the theory that Graves did not fill in, namely, what happens in the brain when the individual gets confronted with the problems of existence and the process of activating the coping mechanisms in the brain. Problems of Existence fall away, because the v-Memes explain Graves's process on a structural level in the brain. This is done by including Problems of Existence and the Coping Mechanisms in the Life Conditions, although this is never explained explicitly.

In the v-Meme family of Communal / Collective, this self-sacrificing zone is about control being anchored in something more powerful than the individual. This could be the kin or folk, the Unifying Higher Power, community or mutual interest, or Earth's living system. The focus here is on impacting the world "out there". The sacrifice-self person's deep concerns are internal. Therefore, thinking in a group tends to be more geared towards preserving the status quo and in seeking order. This v-Meme group promotes consolidation, acceptance of the external world as it is, and surrenders of immediate self-interest for what is in the best interest of one's reference group or groups. In contrast, warm colours like Beige, Red, Orange, and Yellow tend to divide entities into hierarchies, while cool colours like Purple, Blue, and Green tend to flatten hierarchies.

The third principle of Beck and Cowan can be summarised as follows. The Spiral:  
Swings in focus from an Internal (me) to an External (we) locus of control and then back again,  
Swings in centrality of the self between a freestanding individual and a person defined primarily in terms of the group,  
Swings in reliance on external inputs and feedback from others to trusting internal judgments  
Swings from attempting to explore the external world and master it in a need to repair the inner world and coming to peace with it (Beck & Cowan, 1996. p. 58).

#### *Principle 4*

v-Memes emerge along the Spiral in a wave-like fashion. Awakenings along the Spiral occur after pressure builds up, leading in a spurt to the next system: usually up, but sometimes down. Although the shift may appear to be sudden and chaotic, undetected movement is occurring beneath the surface all along. Graves referred to this phenomenon as saccadic movements. New v-Meme systems come in waves to the beach, each designed to fathom the Life Conditions of its world. Each wave carries the seeds of its birth and death, residues from previous systems fading as well as the first glimmers of new ways of being just ahead. The active life of a v-Meme has three phases. These are the entering, peak and exiting phase.

#### Entering

When first awakening, there is a period of preparation and energy increase. This includes the initial formation and refinement of a system, as well as the period of exploration and discovery.

#### Peak

Next comes an interval of dynamic tension and apparent stability around the pinnacle. In this state the v-Memes and Life Conditions are synchronised, congruent and balanced. According to Beck and Cowan (1996, p.59), Graves always argued that this was a purely theoretical state, once isolated, pure tones are rare in nature. As mentioned earlier this will be discussed in more detail in the results chapter of this thesis.

#### Exiting

The period of stability is followed by a period of disintegration, a confusing time when the system is becoming unbalanced and ineffectual as more complicated problems outstrip its capacities. This is the slippery slope downward, and if the individual has untapped potential and resources, he or she is getting ready for the next wave.

This is one of the most significant contributions that Beck and Cowan made to the theory of Spiral dynamics, because it explains the Spirals nature and how its development takes place within the individual.

#### *Principle 5*

v-Memes spiral up and down through levels of complexity. The emergence along the Spiral is from less to more complexity. It ranges from the mode of living necessary at one stratum of problems, to the mode of living essential for the complications of the next set of Life Conditions. Although each v-Meme builds on the foundation of those preceding it, and adds new factors of complexity, the pattern of v-Memes's emergence does not blindly follow a predetermined script in a mechanistic, step-by-step fashion. The systems, which have evolved thus far, are but the mind-prints of our psychological "DNA" at work.

#### *Principle 6*

v-Memes coexist within our 'onion'-like profiles. Because v-Memes are types of thinking nested in us, rather than types of us, and because we think about many things – like religion, family, work, sports, and politics – it follows that we can also host several ways of thinking which may mix-and-match to the subject areas. It is thus possible for a person in the Red zone to think about religion through the Blue v-Meme, and that Purple would be close to the surface regarding family and friends. In a similar way an individual will access the Red v-Meme when it comes to sport. If you look at the great 'onion' of humanity, it quickly becomes clear that millions of people simultaneously are at different levels along the Spiral.

#### *Principle 7*

V-Memes cluster in tiers of six along the Spiral. According to Beck and Cowan it appears that v-Memes live most happily in groups of six. The first tier of the human odyssey was ascending steps away from our more animalistic nature and our subsistence problems.

Graves (in the *Futurist*) is quoted in Beck and Cowan (1996, p.64) as saying:

"In human existence, our species begins by stating in the simplest way those themes which will preoccupy us through thousands of variations. At this point in history, the societal effective leading edge of man in the technologically advanced nations is currently finishing the initial statement of the sixth theme of existence and is beginning again with the first theme of an entirely new and sophisticated variation".

According to this view, humanity now enters the second tier of existence and that the last 30 years is wishfully referred to as “*Homo lumens*” or man the enlightened. Graves’s theory is the only framework that puts the entire developing flow (from survival through to the socialised), and the impetus behind the process, into perspective. This theory offers an open-ended trajectory into the future. It is open-ended, because the human Spiral is only just beginning. According to Beck and Cowan (1996, p. 66), man is currently in the midst of transition between the First Tier of six v-Memes onto the Second Tier of Spiral development

According to Graves (in Beck and Cowan, 1996, p. 66):

“After being hobbled by the more narrow animal-like needs, the imperative need for sustenance [Beige], the fear of spirits [Purple], and other predatory men [Red], by the fear of trespass upon the ordained order [Blue], by fear of his greediness [Orange], and the fear of social disapproval [Green], suddenly human cognition is free. Now for his energies free for cognitive activation, man focuses upon his self and his world [Yellow, Turquoise, etc.]”

Yet, what we find in this process of going through the spiral, is not necessarily pleasant. While each ascending step along the spiral solved some problems of existence, it created others in their place, namely the residues of successful living. Today many people are exhausted from already going through three or four wrenching transformations during their lifetimes.

As discussed each v-Meme has three phases in its natural life cycle. These are:

- Entering, as the vestiges of the previous system hang on
- Peak, as the thinking is centralised in the v-Meme
- Exiting, as the next Life Conditions appear. Life Conditions (LC 1-8) could be explained as levels of increasing complexity in a constantly changing world to the power of 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8

These phases will be discussed in more detail in the following section that deals with the characteristics of the various levels. A detailed description of these phases will also be presented in Appendix 1 as well. The contribution of Beck and Cowan in terms of the understanding of Graves’s theory by focusing on the phases of the various levels, could be considered as one of the most significant contributions made by Beck and Cowan.

## Characteristics of the Various Levels

### *First Subsistence Level: Automatic Existence, Reactive Values ('A-N' or 'Beige')*

According to Graves (1981), the first subsistence level is that of AN or an Autistic Existential state. The theme for this state of existence is to express the self as if it is just another animal according to the dictates of one's imperative periodic physiological needs.

People at this level seek only the immediate gratification of their basic physiological needs, and can be described as being in an automatic state of physiological existence. A person is a simple, reflex-driven organism who lives through the medium of his or her built-in equipment. His or her awareness excludes him- or herself and is limited to the presence of physiologically determined tension, when present, and the relief of such tension. His or her awareness thus includes only a need-based concept of time and space. A person does not have to rise above this level to continue the survival of the species. This is purely a physiological existence (Graves, 1970). The human at this level is just another animal. There is no awareness of the self as separate and distinct from other animals. There exist only a home territory concept of space, an imperative need-based concept of time, and there is no concept of God, the gods, the universe or the like. During this phase people are motivated only by the degree of satisfaction of the imperative, periodic physiological needs such as hunger, thirst, and sex. There is no show of organised or planned work effort, and no concept of leadership or managership (Graves, 1981). A productive lifetime would include the ability of his/her built-in response mechanisms to reduce the tensions of his/her imperative physiological needs. This level of existence is rarely seen today, except in rare instances or pathological cases (Graves, 1970). All humans lived in this system 40 000 years ago and earlier. It still exists in remote cases in the world today, but it is found mainly in a pathological form in our world (Graves, 1981).

The value system of the first subsistence level is motivated only by a person's imperative needs. Since he or she is so motivated, since he or she lives by his or her built-in reflex-driven equipment, and since he or she learns by imprinting, and lacks awareness of him- or herself as a separate and distinct being, and has no consciousness of self, his or her values at this level are purely reactive in character. They are based on a person's reaction to the presence or absence of tension. In the moral sense, this is an amoral system. There is thus no

‘should’ or ‘ought’ in behaviour because man when settled at this level does not operate cognitively. A person only reacts. He or she does not think or judge or believe (Graves, 1970). To have fixated into this form as a viable existence, the human conditions must have provided for the automatic satisfaction of the imperative, periodic, physiological needs, or the “A” or individual, and race survival problems of existence. Necessary information for the survival of the individual and the species is processed through the automatic sensing and reacting equipment of the neurological system, and stored through the learning process of habituation, the learning equipment that automatically signals the on-off character of the degree of need. The “N” system responds only to change in intensity of the imperative need and not to patterning. This system is thus not open to assessment by verbal means (Graves, 1981).

Today this system is more theoretical than actual, and more transitory than lasting as the dominating value system in man. The very conditions of human existence, as in the presence of an indifferent but ever-changing external world, as well as a person’s emerging cognitive component, inevitably challenges man to seek a higher level of living, as well as a new and different value system. No person will ever be without some reactive values, because even if a person functions at a higher level of existence, he or she will still be a physiological organism. Depending on the current conditions of his existence, reactive values may dominate his existence, or they may be subordinate within emerging higher-level value systems (Graves, 1970).

Furthermore, the A-N level of being does not spawn a form of management, and it can be managed effectively only through the means of nurturing management. Thus management is concerned only with the maintenance of viability in life. This is the kind of management which seeks to provide unencumbered ministrations to the human’s imperative, periodic, physiological needs. So long as the human lives in a completely provident, relatively unthreatened regarding the satisfaction-of-the-basic-needs kind of world, the human has no reason to enlarge his or her conceptual space and move beyond this level of being (Graves, 1981, p. 4).

Beck and Cowan support Graves’s understanding of A-N or Beige. According to Beck and Cowan (1996, p. 196) Beige or the Instinctive v-Meme, or LC1 is described at the core as the following:

“Automatic, autistic, reflective

Centers around satisfaction of human biological needs

Driven by deep brain programs, instincts and genetics

Little awareness of self as a distinct being (undifferentiated)

Lives off the land, much as other animals

Minimal impact on or control over environment.

Survive at the most basic level.

Satisfy physiological needs

Form protective, supportive bands

Entities exist as biological units

Simply make it through the night or day”.

Beck and Cowan describe the Beige Life Condition as:

“My existence centers on survival. Energy is devoted to staying alive and meeting the needs of my physical being so that I am not hungry or thirsty. I must reproduce my kind so I respond to sexual urges as they occur. I do not know what you mean by ‘future’, laying plans, saving for a rainy day, or ‘self’. My body tells me what to do and I am driven by senses talking to my brain, not so much a conscious mind” (1996, p. 197).

Beck and Cowan refer to the life conditions or the problems of existence as “LC”. Beige would then be LC1. This condition, as described above, deals mainly with the meeting of the most basic human needs.

This is a virtually automatic state of existence and is driven by the imperative physiological needs, which dominate LC1 and thus trigger the basic survival equipment with which we are born. Beige is concerned with satisfying basic biological needs, like food, water, temperature control, sex, and to a limited extent, safety. In this zone, “normal” behaviour comes from deep-brain instincts, which require very little higher-brain reasoning. Most actions are by reflexes, rather than good choices. Beige thinking dominates infancy, and usually resurges later in life, as a result of, for example, Alzheimer’s disease. In the Beige level of existence, emotions are few, there is no surplus energy to mobilise when all goes into staying alive on a day-by-day basis. Beige systems intertwine with nature to access senses most of us have lost. When Beige is in control, people form bands that are just a step above the herd and the objectives are survival and procreation. Beige is best managed through nurturance and tender



loving care. Often people in this zone cannot even ask for help, it must be delivered. When a tragedy occurs and there is a large loss of life, some survivors from other states of existence regress, at least temporarily, into a Beige state of being.

Graves (1970) said that as soon as a person accrues a set of Pavlovian conditioned reflexes which provide the satisfaction of his or her imperative needs, and as soon as he or she comes across that place in space which is particularly appropriate to his or her acquired Pavlovian behaviour, he or she slides almost immediately out of this stage into the second existential state, which is the tribalistic way. Here his or her values are more phenomenistic in character, since they do not arrive from intuition or thought, but rather from the passive association between physiological states aroused and stimuli experienced in the course of their arousal.

*Second Subsistence Level: Tribalistic Existence, Traditionalistic Values ('B-O' or 'Purple')*

According to Graves (1981) the second subsistence level is the B-O or animistic State. The theme for the second subsistence level is to sacrifice one's desires to the way of one's elders. The B-O state emerges when living the A-N life produces safety and security problems. One example of this is when the A-N life exhausts the natural food or water supply. This leads to the safety and security problems (B) activating the (O) neuropsychological system. This neuropsychological system is the system especially attuned to the sensing, processing, and acting upon conditions which threaten satisfaction of the non-imperative, aperiodic, physiological needs, such as needs to avoid pain, danger, cold, heat, etc. (Graves, 1981).

This second level of existence has an autistic state of thinking, which reflects humanity's needs for stability, and for the continuation of a strongly defended way of life (even if this way of life is not understood). In this state of existence, a person has just struggled forth from striving to exist, and has his or her first established way of life. This way of life is essentially without awareness, thought or purpose, because it is based on his or her Pavlovian principles learnt in the first state of existence. A person therefore believes his or her tribalistic way to be inherent to the nature of things, and because of this he or she holds to it tenaciously and strives desperately for its continuance (Graves, 1970).

Thinking at this level is animistic, thus in terms of life in all things animate and inanimate. In terms of transmutability it is from one form to another and in terms of the continuous existence of disembodied spirits capable of exercising benign or malign influences. This is

shown in the atomistic, and not the holistic, manner in which each bend in the river is named, but there is no name for the river itself as a whole. The thinking is magical, superstitious, and stereotypical; it controls the self, others, and things by incantations, totems, and taboos. The humans use these rituals to invoke continuance of what is, to ward off harm, to bring about favour or control the unexpected. People in the B-O state live a tribalistic way of life which is believed to be inherent in the nature of things, and they therefore resolutely hold to unchanging and unalterable beliefs and ways. The predominant learning method is by classical or Pavlovian conditioning, that is, learning by association in time or place without conscious awareness or intent, thus the fixated, tenaciously-held totem and taboo way of life (Graves, 1981).

In this situation the world has no separation between subject and object, and phenomena and things have no clear identity. One form of being can be transmuted into another, for there is correspondence between all things. A naturally based concept of time exists, and space is perceived in an atomistic fashion. Causality does not exist, since mankind perceives the forces at work to be inherent. A form of existence based upon myth and tradition arises, while being is a mystical phenomenon full of spirits, magic and superstition. The task of existence is simply to continue what it seems has enabled 'my tribe to be'.

The prime end-value of the second level is safety, and the means by which this is achieved is through tradition. Safety and tradition are valued, because here a person's elders and their ancestors, although they cannot explain why, seem to have learned which factors foster a person's existence, and which factors threaten his or her wellbeing. A person's thema for existence at this level is "one shall live according to the ways of one's elders", and his or her values are consonant with this existential schema. It is important to remember that schematic forms and values for existence at the second level are highly varied due to different conditionings from tribe to tribe, or group to group. Each traditional set of values is tribally centred, concrete and rigid, and tribal members are locked into them and may not violate them. At this level a value attitude may contain several meanings because of the conditioning principles of generalisation and differentialisation. Circumstances force the individual into a magical, superstitious and ritualistic way of life, wherein he or she values positively that which will bring his or her spirit favour. He or she shuns that which tradition says will raise his or her spirits' ire. Although these values may seem mysterious, peculiar, odd and

unexplainable to those who are at higher levels of existence, they give order to humanity's B-O state of existence.

In this level of existence some people achieve relative control over their spirit world through their inexplicable, elder-administered, tradition-based way of life. This way of life continues relatively unchanged until disturbed from within or without. When the established tribal way of life assures the continuance of the tribe with minimal energy expenditure, it creates the first of the general conditions necessary for new and different steady states of being. According to Graves (1970, p. 137), "It produces excess energy in the system which puts the system in a state of readiness for change". But unless another factor such as dissonance or challenge comes into the field, the change does not move in the direction of some other state of being. Instead it moves towards maximum entropy and its demise because it becomes overloaded with its accretion of more and more tradition, and more and more ritual. If, when the state of readiness is achieved, dissonance enters the system, then this steady state of being is precipitated towards a different kind of change. The dissonance usually arises in youth or in certain minds not troubled by the memories of the past, and who are capable of newer and more lasting insights into the nature of man's being. This change can also occur when someone disturbs the tribe's way of life. The B-O subsistence level first appeared around 4000 years ago, when cataclysmic climate conditions drastically changed the source of food, water, and shelter for humans. According to Graves (1981, p. 4) this is probably the way the majority of humans still think today.

This dissonance does not immediately produce a movement to a higher state of being: rather it produces a regressive search through older ways before new insights develop. A crisis state in any established way of existence is always a precursor of a new crises state; provided that three other conditions come to exist. The first of these conditions is insight: capable minds in any system must be able to produce new insights or be able to perceive the significance of new insights brought to the system's attention. Secondly, there must be the removal of barriers to the implementation of the insight. This is not an easily attainable because it causes a period of confrontation. Thirdly, enabling factors are needed to make it possible for the new steady state to be born. When the above takes place in the B-O level, and readiness for change co-occurs, it triggers a person's insight into his or her existence as an individual: a being separate and distinct from other beings, as well as from his or her tribal compatriots. His or her struggle is now intentional, because the operant or instrumental conditioning

systems are opening. People perceive that others, other men and women, other animals and even the spirits in their physical world fight back. Again his or her need for survival comes to the fore, as in the previous level of existence. With this change in consciousness, a person becomes aware of a threatening physical universe. He or she is now aligned against other predatory animals, as well as other predatory men or women, who fight back for their established way of existence, or even against him or her for the new way of existence he or she is striving to develop. Mankind is not one-with-all as previously in the tribe, rather he or she is now alone and struggling against the ‘draconic’ forces of the universe. Here people set out in heroic fashion to build a way of being which will foster their individual survival (Graves, 1970).

Beck and Cowan describe Purple or LC2 as *Kin Spirits* or *The Clannish v-Meme*. This Life Condition supports Graves’s views and is summarised as:

“Obey desires to the mystical spirit beings  
Show allegiance to elders, custom or clan  
Preserve sacred places, objects, and rituals  
Bond together to endure and find safety  
Live in an enchanted magical village  
Seek harmony with nature’s power” (Beck & Cowan, 1996, p. 202)

According to Beck and Cowan the core of Purple, or Life Condition, 2 is:

“We seek safety and security for our kind through trust in blood relationships, extended family bonds, and magical powers which reach into the spirit world. We honor our ancestors’ ways as sacred for they are ever with us. Our path is full of seasonal rituals, rites of passage, traditional music and dance. We seek to live in harmony with nature and her way through our ceremonies” (1996, p. 203).

According to Beck and Cowan the Purple v-Meme is awakened when successful Beige living permits curiosity about the large world ‘out there’, and the awareness of all the threats to safety and security it holds. Purple is the mother of Communal/Collective v-Memes, and the first to deal with forces outside the individual. This makes way for the family and then fosters tribes and clans to regulate families. When Purple intelligence ask why things happen, it finds answers in useable natural forces and actions of powerful spirit beings. While Beige does not comprehend causes, this capacity is activated in Purple.

Possible historical contexts that allowed Purple to develop are:

Loose bands of gatherers began to overuse local resources, found the need to move to greener pastures, and became more organised as they travelled; or

Migrating groups would welcome ‘others’, creating the need for interpersonal rules and social structure to maintain harmony.

In this state, no organised management for work purposes existed, and management of people is only possible through the myths, traditions, and taboos of the tribe. Extreme force is necessary to get a person to operate contrary to the traditional ways and even then it most often fails. The tribal way then continues forever, except as force now and then breaks and replaces old ways (Graves, 1981).

*Third Subsistence Level: Egocentric Existence, Exploitive Values (‘C-P’ or ‘Red’)*

The third subsistence level of existence is that of the C-P or egocentric Existential state. The main theme for this level of existence is to express the self, but to hell with others lest one suffer the torment of unbearable shame (Graves, 1981).

The thinking in this level of existence is raw, impulsive, amoral and uninhibited in character. There is no feeling of guilt, but there is a strong element of shame. There is a driving concept of heroism in this system. If the dragon is there, one must join battle with it – even if one dies in the struggle for less would make one less than a person. People in this level show a stubborn resistance to power exercised by others, but obedience when overpowered, thus thinking is in terms of “haves” and “have-nots”. They revel in hedonistic pleasure and are a cauldron of negative emotions such as fear, rage, disgust, and grief. People in this level have a two-fold aim in life, namely to win or, at least, to live forever in the mouths of men. Therefore people in the C-P level believe that humans exist in three classes: (a) the strong, far-seeing, anointed ones, (b) the desirous motivated but not far-seeing ones, and (c) the inherently weak and lazy masses who need and prefer directions (Graves, 1981).

This level of existence is characterised by raw power, based on the prerogatives of the “haves” and the “have-nots”, where the “haves” base life on the right way to behave as their might indicates. Ultimately a system develops in which each acts out in detail, in the interest of his or her own survival how life is to be lived, but only a small number ever achieve any

modicum of power, and the rest are left to submit. Both the authoritarian and the submissive develop standards which they feel will insure them against threat, but these are very raw standards. Here the submissive chooses to get away with what he can within that which is possible for him. The authoritarian chooses to do as he pleases. In this they spawn the rights of assertive individualism. These rights become, in time, the absolute rights of kings, the unassailable prerogatives of management, the inalienable rights of those who have achieved, through their own intentionality (this will be discussed in the following chapter) and positions of power (Graves, 1970). This level of existence emerges when the achievement of relative safety and security in a tribalistic way of life produces the “C” problems of existence, the problems of boredom in a being as intelligent as the human. This in turn activates the risk-taking, chronological time and space-perceiving equipment of the human. This activation produces an organism aware of self as a possibly powerful being separate and distinct from others. This being thinks in a self-centred fashion, in terms of controlling or being controlled, in terms of struggling to gain one’s own satisfaction – to hell with others (Graves, 1981). This system assumes its form, because of the normal distribution of risk-taking potential and the normal distribution of operant, intentional learning capacity, which is the dominant learning mode of the “P” neurological system. Through this exercise of strong risk-taking tendencies and superior capacity to learn by operant, instrumental or intentional learning, some people are exceedingly successful, some moderately so, and many hardly at all.

The impact of the first two levels of existence on mankind is that it awakens in them the recognition that they are a separate and distinct beings. As a result a person’s quest is no longer for tensional relief or the continuance of the tribe’s established way of life. Now he or she is aware of him- or herself as an individual being, as well as the need to foster his or her individual survival. Therefore in his or her existence there comes to centre stage his or her need for survival, and this is a need which cannot dominate man until a consciousness of self emerges, as it does at this level. The emergence of self-awareness, as well as its bedfellow, the need for survival is the emergence of the intentional, operant, instrumental learning system. A person now starts to adjust the environment to his or her needs, and seeks a primordial form of existence, which he or she can control for his/her personal survival, and not just one of automatic reactivity. People begin intentionally to manipulate their world, rather than to accept it passively, and from this manipulation develops their third level values.

Driven by the need to maintain his or her own existence, an individual manipulates his or her world, and egocentrically interprets the reward or punishment feedback as fostering or not fostering his or her own survival in this world, which is his or her major value. Their perceptions of the world are that many may try, but few succeed, and therefore they come to believe the heroic deed is the means to their survival. Heroism becomes his/her valued means and the epic hero his or her most revered figure. To this victor or hero belongs the spoils and the right to exercise greed, avarice, envy, and gluttony, pride for he or she has shown through his or her deeds that the gods or the fates see him or her as worthy or survival. From this, as mentioned above, develops a world of “have” and “have-nots”. The power ethic reveres those who can do what they want and who show no fear of the world’s wrath and assurance of its favour. Right is demonstrated in violent action. In the power ethic the more daring and horrendous the act of the person, the more it is revered. It does not matter whether others have plans for the replacement of the system that he or she attacks. The heroic thing is to replace the system and if there is nothing to attack, if he or she is truly a hero, he or she will create a dragon to be destroyed. Even if he or she is to die in the attack, he/she is assured that he/she will live on forever in the words of men. These conditions for existence, which spawns power ethics, produce a fearful and insecure world for all. This might not be an attractive value system from other points of reference, but for all the negative aspects this is a giant step forward for humanity. Some people in their pursuit of power tame the mighty river, provide the leisure for beginning intellectual efforts, and build cities (Graves, 1970).

The organisational context is especially where the anointed use the masses to accomplish the anointed one’s ends through the direction of the desirous spawned at this level. This is an exploitative form of management, which presumes that those of demonstrated superiority have the right, because they were “chosen” to organise and carry-out, through delegated power from the desirous, the efforts of the lesser ones toward whatever the anointed choose. This kind of management believes that the world, its entire people and all its things, are there to serve the anointed one’s ends. Only superior power can challenge the organisation’s goals and means in combat. The big boss decides what is to be done, when it is to be done, where to do it, and provides the means to accomplish it. The big boss selects from the desirous the Work Bosses. The Work Bosses decide how it is to be done, who is to do it and how to get them to do it (Graves, 1981).

Although level of existence is the world of the aggressive expression of man's lusts – openly and unabashedly by the “haves”, and more covertly and deviously by the “have nots”, it creates a new existential problem for man. When this system solidifies into a new stable feudal way of life, it creates a new existential problem for both the “haves” and the “have nots”. For death still faces the “haves” and the “have nots” wonder why it is that they must live this miserable existence. Ultimately, the third-level person sees that in spite of his or her manipulation, life seems not to be within their control. Egocentric values break down from the weight of the existential problem they created. The “haves” ask: “What is it all about? Why was I born? Why can't I go on living?” While the miserable “have nots,” ask: “Why can't I find some success in life?” Eventually they conclude that life's problems are a sign indicating that if one finds the “right” form of existence the result will be everlasting pleasure. This sends a person on his or her quest to find that ordered form of existence that will ensure an everlasting state of satisfaction. Thus as C-P values fail to meet the test of time, both the “haves” as well as the “have nots” must explain why their new problems come to be. Out of this develops humanity's fourth level of existence (Graves, 1970).

Beck and Cowan call the Red level of existence the Powergods or the Egocentric v-Meme. This life condition is supportive of Graves' view and is summarised in concepts like:

“In a world of haves and have-nots, it's good to be a have

Avoid shame, defend reputation, and be respected

Gratify impulses and senses immediately

Fight remorselessly and without guilt to break constraints

Don't worry about consequences that may not come” (Beck & Cowan, 1996, p. 214).

At the core of Red or Life Conditions 3 is:

“Life is a jungle. It's survival of the fittest. I am tough and expect those around me to be tough or else... I take charge of people and can win over nature, bending her to my will. Respect and reputation matter more than life itself, so do what it takes to avoid being shamed or put down. You don't take anything or anybody, not if you're worth anything. You always get them back. Whatever you need to do, you do it without guilt. Nothing and nobody can stand in your way. Right now is all there is, so I'll do what makes me feel good. You can't worry about what hasn't happened yet. I'm all I've got, and I'll make it or die trying” (Beck & Cowan, 1996, p. 215).



Humanity moves to the lasting security level of need and learns by avoidant learning. As he or she moved to the fourth level of existence, they develop a way of life based on the culminated conviction that there must be a reason for it all. A reason why the “haves” shall have so much in life and the “have nots” lead their lives in miserable existence. This conviction leads to the belief that it is all part of a directed design. This design originates from the forces guiding man and his or her destiny. Therefore, a saintly way of life comes into existence, based on one of the world’s great philosophies or great religions. Here mankind tarries long enough to create what he or she believes is a way for everlasting peace or alternatively, everlasting life. A person hence seeks his or her salvation in a way which seems to him or her will remove the pain of the “haves” and the “have nots”. Mankind believes that it is meant that some shall have in life and yet face death, that some shall have less and that many shall not have. There is meaning in humanity’s living, in why roles are assigned, why some people shall suffer, and why all people must die. Fourth level humanity believes that life is a test of whether one is worthy of salvation, be this salvation occidental or oriental (Graves, 1970).

According to Graves (1981, p. 6) this system is minimally open to verbal assessment, it first appeared about 10 000 years ago, and it is also markedly present today in many emerging nations.

*Fourth Subsistence level: Saintly Existence, Sacrificial Values (‘D-Q’ or ‘Blue’)*

The fourth subsistence level is the “D-Q” or Absolutistic Existential state. The main theme for this level is the sacrifice of the self now, to receive reward later. This state evolves when successful C-P living, as described in the previous section, improves the lot of some (the “haves”), but leave the many with a miserable existence. It creates the problem that the “haves” must relinquish their successful, self-centred ,existence in death, and the “have-nots” must also explain why life has been such a miserable existence in the face of death. Each must face these inexplicable problems and find an answer, or a reason for being which coalesces the two. The capacity to philosophise, namely the “Q” system of the brain is activated and the D-Q state, or absolutistic existential state, is born. According to Graves (1981, p. 5) “ ‘What is this living all about, why was I born, why can’t I go on living’, asks the successful. ‘Why was I born to live this miserable existence?’ asks the have-not. The answer is it is God or nature’s designing. It has all been planned this way, and the reason is to test if one is worthy of everlasting existence”.

Mankind develops a way of life based on “Thou shalt suffer the pangs of one’s existence in this life to prove thyself worthy of later life”. This saintly form of existence comes from experiencing that living in this world is not made for ultimate pleasure. This perception of ultimate pleasure is based upon the previous endless struggle with unbridled lusts and a threatening universe. Here people perceive that certain rules are prescribed for each class of person, and that these rules describe the proper way for each class to behave. These rules are the price a person must pay for his or her more lasting life, for the peace which they seek, which is the price of no ultimate pleasure while living.

The fourth thema for existence is thus “one shall sacrifice earthly desires now in order to come to everlasting peace later”. This thema for existence gives rise to its associated value system, namely the sacrificial system. At this level, a person focused his or her earthly existence not on the eventual salvation, but on the means to that end, which means he or she must sacrifice his or her desires in the here-and-now. According to Graves (1970, p. 147) there is a similarity between the fourth level of existence and the B-O system. As in the B-O system, people value the means towards a tensionless state, but here in the D-Q system, the means are not a continuance of tribal ways administered by one’s elders. Instead, the means are those prescribed by some all-powerful, other-worldly authority. At the fourth level of existence, mankind does not try to appease the spirits to remove the threat to their immediate existence; they are rather on a quest for everlasting peace. Again, humanity reveres the established, the lasting, the unchanging, just as they did in the B-O state. The difference is that this time it is not the lasting ways of their tribe, but rather the all-encompassing ways for all humanity. Here the search peaks in the absolutistic, sacrificial values which, if followed will assure him or her that he or she will achieve the most valued end . This end is that of salvation. This end is the ultimate reward for living according to the values which “the power” has laid down as the basis of a person’s earthly behaviour. The most representative schema of this thematic form of valuing is to value Nirvana or some other tensionless state like heaven. The form of existence must therefore coalesce with whatever its particular group’s heavenly end might be. They therefore require giving up bodily and selfish desire in the here-and-now. Typical of this schema would be denial, deference, piety, modesty, self-sacrifice, harsh self-discipline and no self-indulgence.

At this level a person accepts his or her position and role in life. Inequality is a fact of life. A person believes his or her task of living is to strive for perfection in his assigned role, absolute perfection, regardless of how high or low his assigned station. The individual believes that salvation will come ultimately, regardless of his or her original position, to him or her who lives best to the rules prescribed to them. The prime value of fourth level individual is self-sacrifice. He or she, who sacrifices best their wants in the way that authority prescribed, is most revered. Fourth level individuals value the suppression and repression of his or her inner life and a rigid ordering of the outer world. He or she values their absolutistic moral laws and the words “ought” and “should”. Life is considered a serious business and only institutionalized pleasure is permitted. Rules are black and white and only “the” authority has the proper word. This system has a lot in common with the B-O system, but now it is the person’s ultimate authority that sets the rules for life instead of their elders, as is the case with the B-O system (Graves, 1970).

But after security is achieved through these prescribed, absolutistic rules, the time does come when some people question this price. When this question arises in the minds of people, the saintly way of life is doomed for decay and readied for discard since some people are bound to ask why they cannot have some pleasure in his life. When man asks this question he or she struggles on through another period of transition to another level. When individuals cast aside the inhuman aspect of his or her saintly existence, they are again charged with excess energy, because their security needs has been met and he or she sets out to build a life for pleasure here and now. Fourth level individuals see the ultimate destruction of all that is good in people, as fifth level wants begin to impel them to seek a new form of existence and a new value system. But people cannot move on until they perceive their next set of problems. He or she must perceive that he or she cannot have enjoyment in this life as long as they are the servant of the universe, rather than its master, so long as he or she does not express their independence from predetermined fate. Once again, people attempts to adjust the environment to the self, and in this beginning another climb, this time to the E-R level.

Thinking at this level is absolutistic; there is one right way, and only one right way, to think about anything. Thinking is in a categorical black or white fashion, for me or against me, good or evil. What the higher power prescribes applies, and no questioning of authority is permitted. It is whatever the higher power says that it is and we must obey, because one is tested in many ways to see if he or she is worthy. Therefore, the desires of the self are

sacrificed now, in order to get a lasting higher reward, and that is the basic theme of this world-view. Thinking is in terms of others being taken into account, and as one person having needs and feelings different from others, but they are judged in terms of having the right or the wrong feelings. A person at this level therefore assumes a right or wrong position in respect to everything, and sees weakness in any person who changes position and guilt as a control part of existence. Such a person thinks life is hierarchical, and assigns roles within which individuals are required to stay.

Beck and Cowan describe the Blue level of existence as Truthforce and The Purposeful v-Meme. This v-Meme also supports Graves's description of Blue and is summarised as:

“Find meaning and purpose in living

Sacrifice self to the Way for deferred reward

Bring order and stability to all things

Control impulsivity and respond to guilt

Enforce principles of righteous living

Devine plan assigns people to their places” (Beck & Cowan, 1996, p. 229).

According to Beck and Cowan at the core of Blue or Life Conditions 4 is:

“A single guiding force controls the world and determines our destiny. Its abiding Truth provides structure and order for all aspects of living here on Earth and rules the heavens, as well. My life has meaning because the fires of redemption burn in my heart. I follow the appointed pathway, which ties me with something much greater than myself [a cause, belief, tradition, organization, or movement]. I stand for what is right, proper and good, always subjecting myself to the directives of proper authority. I willingly sacrifice my desires in the present in the sure knowledge that I look forward to something wonderful in the future” (1996, p. 229).

Fourth level being spawns paternalistic or benevolently autocratic management of people. Here management is based on the assumption that people are born into classes which are unequal in rank. Those chosen to be born with more have the vested responsibility to supply for the needs of others and to regulate others through fatherly concern. In this system a higher authority has laid down a class-ordered life each is to live like father, like son as prescribed in the design for living or running the organisation. All rewards, all punishments, all duties, all

methods of performing duties are religiously prescribed and adhered to. This level is quite open to verbal assessment. D-Q levels first emerged 6000 to 4000 years ago (Graves, 1981).

*Fifth Subsistence Level: Materialistic Existence, Materialistic Values ('E-R' or 'Orange')*

The fifth subsistence level is known as the E-R or Multiplistic Existential State. The main theme is to express the self for what the self desires, but in a fashion calculated not to bring down the wrath of others (Graves, 1981).

At this level, humanity strives to conquer the world by learning of its secrets rather than through raw, naked force as they did at the third or C-P level of existence. Here humanity develops and utilizes the objectivistic, positivistic scientific method so as to provide the material ends for a satisfactory human existence in the here and now. But once assured of his or her material satisfaction he or she finds a new void in their being. People finds themselves master of the objective physical world but a prime neophyte in the subjectivistic, humanistic world. He or she has achieved the satisfaction of a good life through their relative mastery of the physical universe (Graves, 1970).

The E-R level emerges when the "D" problems of creating order and security through the design of higher authority does not solve the problems of everlasting peace and creates the problem that God's word alone is not enough to achieve lasting order and security. This creates the "E" problems, or the problems to know more than God's word to handle the pestilence and nature's vagaries. Expressing of self is seen as necessary to carry out what God designed, but did not control. This need for the expression of self and doubt about the prescriptions of authority activates the "R" neurological system, namely the system for dispassionate, hypothetico-deductive and mechanistic, but not moralistic, prescriptive thinking. This results in multiplistic, not absolutistic, forms of thinking, that is, there are many ways to think about something, but only one best way.

The thema for existence is "express self in a way that rationality say is good for me now, but carefully, calculated so as not to bring down the wrath of others upon me". The end value is materialism and the means to an end is rational, objective, positivism: that is scientism. Materialistic values derive naturally from the thema of the fifth level of existence. These values are of accomplishing and getting, having and possessing. An important means value is one of control over the physical universe so as to provide for man's material wants. Here

humanity values equality of opportunity and mechanistic, measuring, quantitative approach to problems, including the problems relating to humanity. He or she values gamesmanship, and competition, the entrepreneurial attitude, efficiency, work simplification, the calculated risk, scientific scheming and manipulation. But these fifth level self-centred values are not “to-hell-with-the-other-man”, egocentric values as described in the third level system. Here people avoid inviting rage against themselves, and they see to it that the loser gets more than the scraps, but never as much as the winner does.

Although humanity has solved its problems concerning its materialistic existence, it has created a new existential problem for humanity. In levels A-N through D-Q, they have learned to live with want, and in E-R he or she learned how to overcome it, but they have learned this for themselves and themselves alone. They have not learned how to live with their abundance, or how to live when there are other people who still must live with want. People’s E-R existential problems are resolved through the over-exercise of their needs for independence. The need to belong and to affiliate, rather than to “go-it-alone”, becomes central. This affiliative need, which is humanity’s third form of belonging need, now organizes humanity’s existence (Graves, 1970).

The thinking in this level is that it is right to receive and aspire beyond what one’s assigned class permits. It seeks to analyse and comprehend, but not to explain why. It is rather a matter of learning how so as to change what is. Absolutism is gone. Nothing is for sure until proven so. There are as many possible value systems as there are people evolving. Careful testing, rather than arrogant affirmations or logical reasoning teaches the right way. The authority of tried and true experience replaces professed or divisive authority.

This system spawns bureaucratic management: this is management that is based on the assumption that the world and its organisms are machines. Objectively derived knowledge provides for the control of organisations. Tested experience and the objective knowledge will make for the properly designed machine, and keeping it well-oiled will make for productivity and gain. Management is characterised by simplification, specialisation of function, objective qualification for position, interchangeability of parts, and objective evaluation of performance. This system first appeared 1300 to 1400 A. D. (Graves, 1981).

Beck and Cowan describes the Orange Level of Existence as the “StriveDrive” or the Strategic v-Meme. The view that they expressed is similar to the stance adopted in Graves’s theory, namely that Orange:

“Strive for autonomy and independence

Seek out the “good life’ and material abundance

Progress through searching out the best solutions

Enhance living for many through science and technology

Play to win and enjoy competition

Learn through tried and true experience” (Beck & Cowan, 1999, p. 244).

At the core of orange is:

“I want to achieve and win, and get somewhere in my life. The world is full of opportunities for those who’ll seize the day and take some calculated risks. Nothing is certain, but if you’re good you play the odds and find the best choices among many. You’ve got to believe in yourself first, and then everything else falls into place. You can’t get bogged down in structure or rules if they hold back progress. Instead, by practical applications of tried-and-true experience, you can make things better and better for yourself. I’m confident in my own abilities and intend to make a difference in this world. Gather the data, build a strategic plan, and then go for excellence” (Beck & Cowan, 1996, p. 244).

The mastery of the universe that has been achieved in the E-R level of existence is done at a price. The price they have paid is that they are not liked by other people for their callous use of knowledge for themselves. They have become envied and respected, but liked they are not. They have achieved their personal status and their material existence at the expense of being rejected. The solution of humanity’s material problems, along with this perception of themselves as being alone, initiates humanity’s move to the sixth form of existence.

*Sixth Subsistence Level: Sociocentric Existence, Sociocratic Values (‘F-S’ or ‘Green’)*

The sixth subsistence level is that of the F-S or Relativistic Existential State. The main theme for this level is that of sacrifice now for all to get now. The E-R way of life solves the problems of living for many more than any preceding ways of life, but it creates the “F” problems of existence, namely the problems of antipathy of others. Felt by those who benefit from E-R ways, but who also sensed a widening gulf between the successful ones and those who have not shared the fruits of multiplistic living. The successful want to be liked and

those who have been passed over want in. These problems activate the “S” neurological system, namely the system for truly experiencing the inner, subjective feelings of humankind.

The mode of thinking in this system is in terms of the rights of others’ individualities, rather than just in terms of one’s own individuality. Thinking is in terms of goals, which relate to all of one’s groups, and not just one or some of the group. They absorb themselves into the group, and in essence become the group. They talk earnestly about community, intimacy, shared experiences, but behaviourally they display an inability to commit themselves to others beyond members of their own group (Graves, 1981).

At this level humanity becomes a sociocentric being. Thus individuals become a being concerned with the relation of his or her self to other selves. They become concerned with belonging, with being accepted, with being rejected, with knowing the inner side of the self and other selves so human harmony can come to be, and when he or she achieves this, they become concerned with more than self and other selves. Individuals become concerned with self in relation to life and the whole, the total universe.

As in the B-O and D-Q levels of existence, humanity values authority, but not that of his or her elders or of an all powerful authority, but the authority of those contemporaries that he or she values. Graves call these values sociocratic, because the peer group determines the means by which this end value, namely the community with valued others, is to be obtained (1970, p. 150). The core of this system is based on the very solid process of being with, in-with and within, the feelings of their valued others. Here humanity values interpersonal penetration, communication, committeeism, majority rule, the tender, the subjective, manipulative persuasion, softness over cold rationality, sensitivity in preference to objectivity, taste over wealth, respectability over power, and personality more than things. At the sixth level it is the feelings of people, rather the hidden secrets of the physical universe, which draw their attention. Getting along with is valued more than getting ahead.

In the sixth level of existence two other aspects of valuing stand out. Here humanity values commonality over differential classification. To classify people into types of groups is to threaten the sociocentrics’ sense of community. The other aspect is his or her return to religiousness which again he or she value as they did in the previous adjustive systems. Here



they do not value religion per se, rather it is the spiritual attitude, the tender touch that he or she reveres.

When humanity centralise their values at the F-S level, many feel that humanity has caused them to lose its self: that they have given it up for social approval. However, the frame of reference advanced here indicates that this conclusion is in error. It suggests that humanity has simply subordinated its self-interest for the time being, and that self-interest will return again but in a newer and higher form, namely the G-T form of existence (Graves, 1970).

This level spawns participative or consensus management. Management here is based on the assumption that the human is a group animal seeking above all else to be accepted in a community of humans important to him or her. They believe the humans will work best when they feel secure and a part of what is happening. This system believes in achieving consensus by compromising, because a person is seen as a totality of immediate family, community, company and nation. Management believes in providing each a voice in running the organisation, because this system believes that nothing gets done until all the people involved agree. Thus management brings all interested people together before a decision is made. While this is done, and to others it may appear tedious, and to others it may seem that an almost interminable the process of discussion takes place before a compromise is produced by consensus. Through this procedure all members align themselves behind the consensus goal. The individual is seen to benefit only through the evaluation of the group as a whole. Thus, this management does not operate for the quick pay-off, but for that which will provide the better competitive position in the long run. This is because a stable life for all is the prime value with quality far exceeding quantity as a value. Quality control is a prime means towards the attainment of organisational goals, which implies that short-term set-backs are accepted in order to obtain long-term qualitative goals. There is an easy working relationship between labour and management, because both believe one's importance is determined by the good reputation of the organisation. Management and labour trust one another to make the right decisions, the decisions that will improve their group's competitive position.

This level promotes self-discipline over self-expression; adequate means to do the work and to live over frills, ceremonies, social welfare and social interaction; the future over the present or the past; own group over outsiders; in-group cooperation over competition; and

group over individual needs. This level of existence first appeared about 80 to 90 years ago (Graves, 1981).

Beck and Cowan agree with Graves and describe the Green level of Existence as the “Humanbond” and the “Realistic” v-Meme. The Green station on the Spiral is described in the following terms:

“Explore the inner beings of self and others  
Promote a sense of community and unity  
Share society’s resources among all  
Liberate humans from green and dogmatism  
Reach decisions through consensus  
Refresh spirituality and bring harmony” (1996, p. 260)

The core of Green or Life Condition 6 (LC6) is:

“Life is for experiencing each moment. We can all come to understand who we are and how wondrous it is to be human if we will only accept that everyone is equal and important. All must share in the joy of togetherness and fulfillment. Each spirit is connected to all others in our community; every soul travels together. We are interdependent beings in search of love and involvement. The community grows by synergizing life forces; artificial divisions take away from everyone. There is an abiding order for those who are open to it. Bad attitudes and negative beliefs dissolve once we look inside each person and uncover the richness within. Peace and love for all” (Beck & Cowan, 1996, p. 260).

As humanity moves from this level of being with others, their next level of existence is the cognitive level of existence, which allows them the freedom to know and to do and through this a chasm of unbelievable depth is being crossed. The bridge between the sixth and the seventh is difference between getting and giving, taking and contributing, destroying and constructing. Thus it is the difference between deficiency or deficit motivation and growth or abundance motivation. Or according to Graves (1970, p. 141) it is the bridge between similarity to animals and the dissimilarity to animals.

*First Being Level: Cognitive Existence, Existential Values (‘A-N’ / ‘G-T’ or ‘Yellow’)*

The main theme for this level is to express the self for what the self desires, but never at the expense of others and in a manner that all life, not just my life, will profit. This system is

triggered by the second set of human survival problems, namely the ‘A’ problems of existence. These problems are the ones that are produced from the threat of organismic health by the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> existential ways. These second-order survival problems trigger into operation the systemic thinking process in the brain and a marked activation of previously uncommitted cells in the brain. These cells of the Y system of the brain combine with the basic coping cells to form the first- of the second-order coping systems. Thus, N (from the first level of existence) plus the Y cells equals ‘N’, which greatly expands the conceptual thinking of humanity. This tremendous increase in conceptual space markedly changes the thinking of the human when operating at this level. Fear disappears, but not anxiety. Compulsiveness is gone as well. A person at this level will have ambition, but is not ambitious. He or she will have anxieties, worries, and concerns, but they are not bothersome to the person. No need is felt to overcome them, because they do not intrude. He or she thinks of how to deal with them so as to feel comfortable, but does not feel compelled to master them. Anger and even hostility is present, but it is intellectually used, rather than emotionally driven. Concern is felt, but solutions do not have to be. Care for others is displayed, but one does not feel compelled to care or be cared for. Things done well or on time are preferred, but things not done well on time do not mean the end of the world (Graves, 1981).

Once man grasps the meaning of passing from the level of “being with others” to the cognitive level of knowing and doing so that “all can be and can continue to be”, it is possible to see the enormous difference between mankind and other animals (Graves, 1970, p. 141). Through this process humanity steps over the line which separates those needs they have in common with other animals and those needs which are distinctly human. Humanity at the threshold of the seventh level is at the threshold of being human. Humanity is now for the first time in their existence truly becoming a human being, and no longer are they just another of nature’s species.

Previously humanity has learned and developed values which would assure physiological satisfaction, provide for the continuance of a way of life, assured them survival where others did not, assured them a future salvation, that which would bring them earthly satisfaction here and now, and enabled them to be accepted and like by others. At the seventh level, something happens which changes their behaviour markedly. After being hobbled by the more narrow animal-like needs: like the imperative need for sustenance, the fear of spirits and other predatory men, by the fear of trespass upon the ordained order, by the fear of his greediness

and the fear of social disapproval; suddenly human cognition is free. With the energies free for his or her cognition, individuals focus on themselves and their world. What they see is not pleasant. Illuminated in devastating detail is humanity's failure to be what they might be as well as the misuse of their world. Triggered by this revelation, humanity leaps out in search of a new way of life and a new set of values. They seek a foundation for self-respect that will have a firm base in existential reality. This takes place through the seventh value system, a value system that is truly rooted in knowledge and cosmic reality and not in the delusions brought on by animal-like needs. Proper behaviour in the seventh level of existence is "recognize, truly notice, what life is and you shall know how to behave". The proper way to behave is the way that comes from working within existent reality. If it is realistic that one should suffer, then suffer he or she should. If it is realistic to be happy, then it is good to be happy. Behaviour is thus proper and right if it is based upon today's best possible evidence and those who behave within such limits and fail or have to change should feel no shame. Therefore what was right yesterday might not be right tomorrow, or the same goes for behaviour that was wrong. Western humankind, in history is approaching their great divide, the landmark between subsistence-level systems and being-level systems. Across this psychological space, people may come to the end of their value trek, the trek which favoured the existence of the more action-prone person or animalistic person. If humanity, in mass, can span this space and truly establish their seventh form for existence then for the future of mankind, an amazing process will be uncovered.

The G-T state develops when humanity has resolved the basic human fears. With this, a marked change in their conception of existence arises. Humanity's attention turns their failures to focus upon the truly salient aspects of life. They now see that they have the problem of life hereafter, not life now, not life after life, but the restoration of the world so that life can continue to be. The most serious problem of existence to date is now the existential problem of their species. Their thema for existence is now: "express self so that all others, all beings, can continue to exist". Values at the seventh level are different from the previous values. At the seventh level values came not from selfish interests, but from the recognition of the magnificence of the existence, and from the desire to see that it shall continue to be so. To seventh level humanity, the values is existence and thus they focuses on the problems that the nature of existence per se creates. Their values are accepting values, incorporating the existence of all others and other views as well. Since humanity values life,

they will look at the world in the context of the many problems that life creates. Different ways in different species, and different values in different people.

Knowledge in A'-N' thinking exists in different settings and knowers think in different ways. Thus, thinking is in terms of legitimate interpretations and several sets of values are legitimate, depending on the thinker and his or her positions of and for existence. The world is seen kaleidoscopically with different views demanding different attention. A'-N' thinking is in terms of the systemic whole, and thought is about the different wholes in different ways. Thought strives to ascertain which way of thinking or which combination of ways fits the present set of conditions. Thinking is in terms of what is best for the survival of life, my life, their lives and all life, but not compulsively. What is best for me or thee does not have to be best for she or them (Graves, 1981). My way does not have to be yours, nor yours mine, yet I have very strong convictions about what is my way, but never such about yours. Thinking is thus in terms of the authority being centred in the person in terms of his or her capacity to act in this or that situation. It is not derived from age, status, blood, and so on. Rather, it is situational. It must be earned and it must be given over to the superior competence of another. Thinking at this level is done in terms of competence and not trappings. Thought is of being there to help and to help if helping is desired, but not helping to straighten out, to shape up, to gain power or gain control over.

A'-N' level people see life continuing hereafter, and not in terms of my life continuing in a hereafter. People at this level will accept and live with the fact of differences and that one is relating to people who are different. Therefore these people show readiness to live with differences.

The A'-N' level spawns facilitative management. This is management in which the managed and the managing change according to the fit between problems and competencies to deal with problems. In this system, management is based on the assumption that people have unequal competencies and capacities and unequal needs. This view of management assumes the person will produce if management organises so that the competencies are expressed to fulfil the needs. Individual needs are then integrated with organisational needs in its dictums. In this system, the means to the end, or organisational goals, are restructured to fit the individual characteristics of the organisational members, rather than to attempt to restructure the person to fit organisational needs. The manager's role is to rework the organisation so that

its goals are achieved using people, as they are not as some wish them to be or perceive what they should be (Graves, 1981).

According to Graves the reason why the GT level of existence is much different from the other levels of existence, and why people in GT behave so much better quantitatively and qualitatively, is this:

“They are simply not so afraid....

they are not afraid of not finding food – (A-N)

they are not afraid that they’re not going to have shelter – (B-O)

they are not afraid of predatory man – (C-P)

they are not afraid of God – (D-Q)

they are not afraid of not having status or not making it on their own in this world – (E-R)

they are not afraid of social rejection –(F-S).” (Seminar on levels of human existence, 1971, p. 47)

It is this fear that is the expression of a need or, as Sartre said, it is something that they lack or, according to Heidegger, something missing that they want. This will be explained in detail in the next chapter.

Beck and Cowan confirm the description of Graves’s explanation of the Yellow level of existence, but they differ as to the terms used to describe the Yellow v-Meme’s place in the Spiral. According to Graves the First Being Level includes the Yellow Level of Existence. Beck and Cowan place the Yellow v-Meme as the Second Tier of Human development. Graves also saw the second phase of development to start with the Yellow Level, but he called it the Second Being Level. This points to a difference between the original work of Graves, and the explication of the theory by Beck and Cowan.

According to Beck and Cowan, the First Tier of human development (the ‘action man’ phase of the Beige through Green v-Memes) is the culmination of our primate nature. The brightening of every new v-Meme is a major step in human development, but the Green to Yellow transition is as Graves called it ‘a momentous leap’, which takes us over from the First Tier’s Subsistence Levels to the Second Tier Being Levels. The Green problems in Life Conditions 6 (LC6) include all those of the previous worlds, namely LC1-5, and often

resonate with them. With Life Condition 7, v-Memes almost start over. LC7 introduces complexity beyond even the best First Tier thinking.

Beck and Cowan call the Yellow Level of Existence the “FlexFlow” or The Systemic v-Meme. This Level of Existence is described as:

“Accept the inevitability of nature’s flows and forms

Focus on functionality, competence, flexibility, and spontaneity

Find natural mix of conflicting ‘truths’ and ‘uncertainties’

Discover personal freedom without harm to others or excesses of self-interest

Experience fullness of living on an Earth of such diversity in multiple dimensions

Demand integrative and open systems” (1996, p. 275).

At the core of Yellow or Life Conditions 7 is:

“Viability must be restored to a disordered world endangered by the cumulative effects of the first six systems on the earth’s environment and populations. The purpose of living is to be dependent within reason; knowledgeable so much as possible; and caring, so much as realistic. Yet I am my own person, accountable to myself, an island in an archipelago of other people. Continuing to develop along a natural pathway is more highly valued than striving to have or do. I am concerned with the world’s conditions because of the impact they have on me as part of this living system” (Beck & Cowan, 1996, p. 275).

For those people who come to a relative satisfaction of their need to esteem life, a new existential state is beginning to develop. It emerges when cognitive humanity truly realizes that there is much they will never know about existence. This insight brings humanity to the end of their first ladder of values, because now they learn, they must go back to the beginning and travel again, in a higher form, the road by whence they had come (Graves, 1970).

*Second Being Level: Experientialistic Existence, Experientialistic Values (‘H-U’ or ‘Turquoise’)*

Once past the seventh level of existence, humanity is driven to the experientialistic level of existence as well as to even higher levels of existence by the winds of knowledge and the surging waves of confidence. The knowledge and competence acquired at the seventh level of existence will bring humanity to a level of understanding, or the eight or H-U level. If humanity moves on it will be towards the delight of tasting more of his emergent self. If ever

humanity leaps to this great beyond there will be no bowing or suffering, no vassalage or peonage. There will be no shame in behaviour for humanity will know that it is human to behave. There will be no pointing of the finger at other people, no segregation or depredation in his or her behaviour. Humanity will be driving forth on the subsequent crests of their humanness rather than vacillating and swirling in the turbulence of partially emerged humanity.

What a person cannot stand is not to solve his or her problems. So, in the solution of the problems he or she now has, he or she creates a new set of problems to be solved. As he or she solves the problems A – he creates problems B – as he solves problems B, he or she creates problems C. Now, what is the major problem that the H-U person has according to Graves's data? Humanity's major problem is: how do you live if you have no problems, and, according to Graves that has to be a problem (*Seminar on levels of human existence*, 1971, p. 72).

In the *Seminar on Levels of Human Existence* (1971, p. 48), Graves discussed the H-U level as well as H-U problems as: "...because I am saying that when the H-U problems come to be...there will be something unique about them that we've never run into before".

Whereas Graves did not explain this second Level of Being in as much detail, Beck and Cowan describe it in more detail. These authors describe this v-Meme as a Global View and The Holistic v-Meme. Concepts that describe this v-Meme are:

“Blending and harmonising a strong collective of individuals  
Focus on the good of all living entities as integrated systems  
Expanded use of human brain / mind tools and competencies  
Self is part of larger, conscious, spiritual whole that also serves self  
Global (and whole-Spiral) networking seen as routine  
Acts for minimalist living so less actually is more” (Beck & Cowan, p. 287).

Due to the nature of Turquoise or H-U problems, it is redundant to speculate on how these problems will look or come to influence the development of the Spiral. This is not to say that the existence of H-U levels on the Spiral is denied, but for all practical purposes it is not possible to determine the exact nature and scope of the existential problems, because we have



nothing with which it can be compared. This is also the reason that the Lens assessment instrument only deals with the spiral up to Yellow or G-T levels of existence.

### Conclusion

Spiral dynamics describe the development of humankind as a cycle between two main opposing spheres or dimensions. The first of these opposing dimensions is the external-internal sphere. This describes a process where the internal and external states of humanity interact to form what the individual sees as his or her world according to his or her existential problems. The second sphere is the self sacrificial-self expressive one. According to Beck and Cowan this process takes place within the v-Meme, or psychological DNA of the human race. The concept of Life Conditions does not clarify the theory in terms of the existential needs of the person on the spiral as discussed by Graves, although an argument could be that this is implied by the concept of life conditions. The next chapter will focus in detail on explaining the concept of existential needs by looking at the theory of Existentialism; by using Existentialism to explain Graves's existential needs this thesis will go back to a previous understanding of the spiral.