

The Spiral Dynamics[®] Newsletter

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“Yes, but how do you apply it?”

This is a question often repeated in Spiral Dynamics circles. We’ve decided to begin to address in this issue with “A Fig Leaf Substituting for Science?” This article covers perspectives on why application might not be as obvious or easy at first glance for some. In the future we’ll attempt to bring you examples of applications at the different levels discussed in this overview. If you have something you’d like to share, please let us know. We’d like to include your stories.

We’ve had a number of questions about the California governor’s recall, so we put together a brief analysis with some Graves/SD ideas, plus a couple of predictions for the future of our fair

state under the latest celebrity governor. Have a look at “What Are You Guys Doing in California? Arnold and the Recall” and let us know how close we’ve come. Then we can revisit it in a year or two.

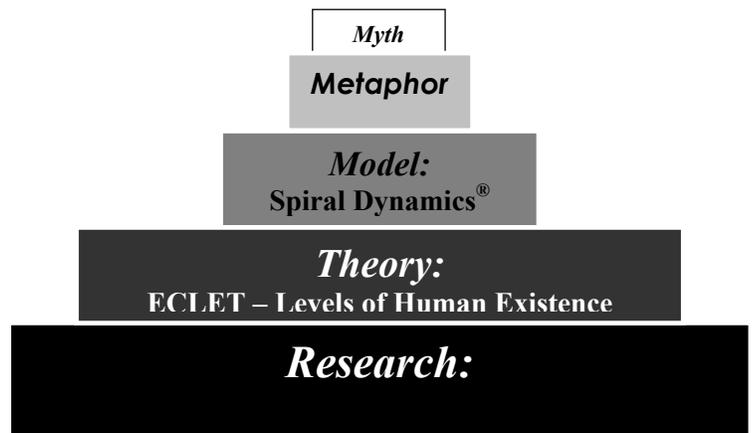
You’ll also find a review of a recent film, *Derrida*, about the deconstructionist philosopher. Although we don’t apply SD language directly, you will get a sense of the tone of the film and can do your own analysis when you have a chance to see it. We had the pleasure of a screening with the filmmakers and highly recommend finding a copy.

We plan to make this newsletter a regular service for those who have signed up for our database, so if you have questions, successes, insights, ideas or news of your own you’d care to contribute, please send us an e-mail at info@spiraldynamics.org.

Spiral Dynamics[®]: A Fig Leaf Substituted for Science?

We’ve created a bit of a muddle. Spiral Dynamics is conceptualized as a myth, used as a metaphor, applied as a model, debated as a theory and rooted in a body of research most practitioners know little about.

Spiral Dynamics can serve in many practical ways, provided we understand practitioners’ conceptions of it. By ‘conception’ we mean how Spiral Dynamics is viewed and thought about. (Dr. Graves used “conceptions of the mature personality” in his research.) Users variously see it as: a) a ‘myth’ – a theme forming part of an ideology; b) a ‘metaphor’ – convenient tags referring to more complex ideas; c) a ‘model’ – a descriptive analogy or archetype; d) a ‘theory’ – analysis and synthesis of facts; e) a body of



‘research’ which most practitioners know little about, or f) a combination thereof. (See figure above) We’ll discuss each conception in two ways,

both as a free-standing view disconnected from the other four and as interlinked and interdependent.

MYTH: Spiral Dynamics has become something of a mythology in conjunction with recent popularizations. The Spiral has acquired an animus of its own – actions must be for the good of “the spiral.” Fables told about Spiral Dynamics are that it is a pathway to God or godliness and a stairway to enlightenment or higher consciousness. For some, a Spiral faith is the way to solve all human problems. For many in personal growth phases, it becomes a map to mastery of self and others.

Myth

The legend of Dr. Graves sometimes takes on a mystic tone of prophecy, something which would have made him laugh out loud. (Visit the www.clarewgraves.com website to read how Graves labored to understand his data.) But a few people take these myths very seriously; they’ll buy the T-shirt and wear the ring.

Like many myths, actual history has been both exaggerated and twisted in retelling. While the mythology adds richness, it also risks disillusionment through burst bubbles if too many facts intrude about what is still not understood about this point of view. Those who understand SD at only this level often speak through illusion and projection rather than fact.

METAPHOR: By far the most common and widespread sense of Spiral Dynamics is as metaphor. The color code stands for complex behavioral systems, so Red is “like” this and Green is “like” that. This interpretation has more detail than the myth, though it is still highly abstracted.

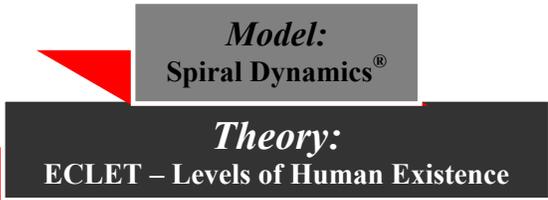
Throughout the world trainers, coaches, and consultants use it to develop a common metaphorical language and symbolic shorthand between themselves and their clients and colleagues. They use it to reframe relationships and sort out issues in non-threatening ways. Some use the colors as language tags – metaphors and memes themselves - to identify growth areas for personal development and resolve various issues. Some use it to describe layers in consciousness and spirituality so as to broaden awareness. Others use the SD metaphor to strategically plan where to put their time and energy, or to settle intragroup conflict. Spiral Dynamics as a metaphor can be a powerful tool to convey meaning. This

Metaphor

seems to be the most common type of application. But by itself, this approach has limitations.

When Spiral Dynamics is understood only as a metaphor, practitioners underconceptualize a fragment of the whole. Unfortunately, when it is thus disconnected, then the quest to fill in the abstraction produces such superficialities as: Purple = bonding and family, Red = violence or anger, Blue = rules and authority, Orange = greed and money, Green = with New Age spirituality and political correctness, Yellow = intelligence and rationality, Turquoise = transcendent global consciousness, etc. Some practitioners with many years’ experience around the Gravesian point of view have not escaped the metaphor and typology trap. As a freestanding metaphor, Spiral Dynamics is still a fig leaf substituting for science.

Both the myth and metaphor traps can be avoided if the practitioner also understands SD from the ground up - from its research base, through its theoretical precepts, to the structural model. Then the concept of SD applied as metaphor and shared as myth can be a useful distillation. Understanding the Graves model and theory behind SD releases those already caught in the metaphor trap and empowers those relying only on mythology to concretize their ideas on a sound footing.



THEORY & MODEL: A theory is a deductive or conceptual system with general characteristics consisting of: a) well-defined core set of concepts related to one another – i.e., Graves’s ECLET components; b) hypotheses connected to the core concepts – i.e., Gravesian Principles; c) an implicit or explicit logic describing how the core concepts are related – i.e., epigenesis; and d) description of standards for measuring phenomena within a frame of reference – i.e., Systems’ Recognition Principles. It is built from analysis of facts and data, as Dr. Graves spent over a decade doing research before attempting to synthesize his theory.

THEORY: “Can one practice without theory and theorize without practice?” Russel Ackoff asked. He answered this by saying, “theory without practice (application) is form without content, and

practice without theory is content without form. Practitioners should bring to their practice both a theory of practice and theories to be used in practice (contextual theories). A practitioner who has no theory of practice flounders when confronted with a new situation, at best muddles through. A practitioner who has no contextual theories is merely a change agent who can provide no assurance of inducing development.” (“A Theory of Practice in the Social Systems Sciences.” *Systems Research*, 5 (3) 1988, pg. 245.) Hence, even many years of parroting a metaphor without understanding theory will, at some point, fail to lead to effective practice. A model is required to make it useful and teachable.

MODEL: A model is a distilled depiction and application of key elements in a theory. In our case, what is now commonly understood as Spiral Dynamics is a model of Graves’s model derived from his theory. It is designed to help us describe, analyze and predict phenomena based on generalizations about human nature.

SD can be as deceptive when viewed strictly as a model as when it’s only a metaphor since it appears transparently simple and easy to grasp at first glance. But when issues deviate from known patterns and the model has been learned disconnected from the underlying theory and research, users fail to describe and analyze problems accurately. Moreover, this failure leads to confusion in prescribing appropriate solutions.

There are differences between Dr. Graves’s model and SD. His is elaborated into letter pairs and an interactive, emergent double-helix with a number of sub-models designed to overlap into a representation of the theory. The popular understanding of Spiral Dynamics collapses Graves’s greater complexity into eight or nine recognizable colors in the shape of a tornado. This

**Model:
Spiral Dynamics®**

simplicity is one reason people like the Spiral model so much. It creates a tangible picture of developing human nature that many other fuzzier social science approaches lack. Human nature becomes more manageable, at least in principle.

The elegance of a good model is that if it is a careful simplification and knowledgeable generalization of theory, it serves as a useful surrogate. In this case, SD’s intent has been to provide an accessible, though admittedly truncated, view of emergent human systems. It is descriptive, retrodictive, predictive, and prescriptive precisely

because we understand the model, its theoretical underpinnings, its research base, and because we have skills and experience in the area where we wish to apply the model.

Without roots planted in the foundational theory and research, the Spiral Dynamics model turns into a simplistic typology which fails real life complexity – a burger without the patty. Since life rarely follows a textbook, leadership or organization designs using Spiral Dynamics as a model might miss organizational needs in non-textbook settings if theory is not understood. Teams might not perform to the capacity that would have been possible with better than model or metaphor work. Coaches might miss more complex problems and offer glib solutions that miss the deeper dynamics. And organizational development consultants might implement inappropriate change with short term gains but long-term failure. To apply Spiral Dynamics more fully, practitioners need connect the model with the theory and research that gives it life. The model parrots words, while theory makes meaning of them and the research opens questions.

Research: Graves, NVCC, ‘appropriate’ others

RESEARCH: This is the weakest link for the majority of those claiming to practice or teach Spiral Dynamics/Graves. By research we mean the grunt work of data gathering and analysis according to a specific, repeatable methodology, while exploring the nature, character and relationships between various connections to then build theory. The majority of trainers, practitioners, and consultants have thus far taken the logic and internal consistency of Gravesian theory for granted. For many, the background research is simply accepted as mythology. Moreover, the methodology and strengths and weaknesses of the research that went into building the theory is glossed over.

It is not entirely their fault because what research data there is has not been widely available. Much of Dr. Graves’s original data is lost, and relatively few studies have been done which extend the theory much beyond what was available in the 1980’s. Some are now underway, and there is much more to be done. Invigorating the investigative side is critical since it’s data which forms, confirms, refutes or reforms a theory and links it with other frameworks.

The word research is thrown around in the SD community far more often than fresh research is actually done. Hard data is claimed to exist more often than it actually does. Amateur 'experts' have spuriously declared links and findings where none have been proven simply due to market need, profit potential or the opinions in their right-thinking minds. This trend must stop if SD is to be respectable and the work of Clare Graves is to continue, and be expanded through sound data gathering, experiments, open scholarship, and shared information.

CONCLUSION: Human nature is a messy realm. Accurate analysis of it using SD cannot come without understanding Spiral Dynamics, as based on Graves, from the ground up; otherwise, we blunder through needless haze. We use and teach SD/Graves because we want to be able to prepare for and deal better with existential problems of today and tomorrow. We want to analyze and understand past problems so we can avoid repeating the same mistakes in the future. We seek the crux of current problems – not just the symptoms - whether they are inter- or intrapersonal, inter- or

intragroup. And we want to understand moral, business, social, psychological, and philosophical dilemmas better.

Myths give us a feeling for what's happening. Models help us by amplifying particular patterns while muting background noise. Theory connects us to the sources of those patterns. Research helps us test our beliefs and to distinguish patterns from background noise.

A skein of woolen yarn is not a sweater. If we want to be warmer, we must either knit it to shape or burn it. We often hear that SD leaves people cold because they cannot see practical application. That happens to those who intentionally or naively substitute a fig leaf for science. The remedy is to recognize and weave these five understandings of Spiral Dynamics – myth, metaphor, model, theory, research - together into a useful and beautiful fabric. Myth and metaphor give the cloth color and make it attractive and memorable. Model and theory make it applicable so it fits. Research gives it strength and durability. When all five views are knitted together we can create a multifunctional and practical garment and forego the fig leaf. ■

What Are You Guys Doing in California? Arnold and the Recall

"Go to the window and shout as loud as you can: I'm mad as hell and I'm not gonna' to take it anymore!" That's Paddy Chayefsky's line delivered by anchor man Howard Beale in *Network*, Sydney Lumet's classic 1976 film about corporate powers selling out journalism for ratings. That's also what 4.5 million Californians shouted out on October 7.

The sitcom that is frequently California governance has merged with late night TV – Schwarzenegger on Leno, Davis with Letterman - while serious issues remain glossed over with Hollywood glitz. The Spiral Dynamics analysis of this sad state of affairs – like botched cosmetic surgery - isn't so pretty now that the bandages are coming off.

Our adopted state has elected a larger-than-life character built with steroids, adulation, self-determination and image to deal with a fractious legislature and a schizophrenic electorate suffering from a mixture of neocon zeal and 'progressive panic' as the world's fifth largest economy teeters in deficit. On the same day the voters picked Conan the Politician, they soundly defeated a racist proposition that would have seriously hurt the poor. This confused energy selected an action movie star

with no political experience and a history of "bad behavior" with women so "playful" that he was compelled to spend \$1.2 million out of his deep pockets to control pesky film outtakes as the person to solve California's problems. Why?

For one thing, many Californians are "mad as hell," so the state's political machine took hits in this hurry-up election for a more palatable governor. Gray Davis, the aptly named incumbent, didn't behave consistently as authority should which would tend to turn off D-Q, especially those people anxious to fill Ronald Reagan's boots. And Mr. Davis suffered from a general lack of personality and charisma which cost him the trust of E-R voters. He was far too politicized to please the F-S crowd since his left-leaning decisions often had a pragmatic flair. Poor Davis was not tough and straight-shooting enough for C-P. Californians, both liberal and conservative, saw him as corruptible and uninspiring. Unlike Bill Simon, his opponent at reelection time, Arnold Schwarzenegger gave voters an option that looked different, something to vote for rather than against. The personable Arnold offered voters a respite with the kind of fun and lightheartedness that comes easily to entertainers and an option to politics as

usual. "...and we're not gonna' take it any more!" The voters heard, and shouted out.

Those centralized in D-Q got a welcome relief in the guise of a tough-guy 'governator' after nearly two years of low-grade psychological fear and strain in the American psyche combined with increased unemployment and a rough national economy. Those more in E-R had a fleeting feeling of excitement about restored prosperity and the future. Macho terminator talk and a stream of familiar one-liners gave C-P something to vote for, as well. Disenfranchised youth turned out to vote for the first time because they finally had a hero – contrived or not – to high five for.

While Californians came out in record numbers to "win one for the proper," they did so without the foggiest idea about his competence and cavalier disregard for his character beyond the scripted, onscreen persona and whistle-stop glad-handing by a very much inside "outsider." He is successful. He seems friendly, and his star status gives him high standing and recognition for predominantly D-Q and E-R voters. Remember, E-R prefers the amateur 'expert' over established authority, and D-Q doesn't generally worry about expertise of their status figures, only that they behave as proper authority should. Suburban middle class white voters – the SUV set - emerged in record number to back the Running Man who combined Commando, Terminator, and Predator with Total Recall.

Following on the heels of *Terminator 3*, Arnold ads came at the public fast and furious portraying him as a man of the people, an independent thinker, a centrist independent who could finish the job Davis – villainized all on his own – hadn't done. Like the action figure of President Bush on a carrier deck proclaiming premature victory over Iraq, another American dream has come to life. The Terminator will save the day remaining true to character. Reality and fantasy morphed from liberal to moderate conservative, from dull and manipulative to exciting and powerful, from buy-off to panache, from dull Gray to another shining Silver Screen Governor.

Given the propaganda machines at Fox, the PR agency known as CNN (domestic), and the equal time exemption provided by the FCC, the new Hummer-driving Governor of California was able to appear virtually without challenge with Howard Stern, Oprah, Leno, and Larry King as heir apparent, then back with Leno to declare victory. Treated as a movie star rather than a political candidate, he was able to get away with a publicity

campaign rather than a political campaign. There were few hard questions for him to duck. The press let his positions on issues slide while they either fawned or fell into the distracting sleaze trap that slammed shut too late to catch many anti-Arnie votes. In the US, 80% of the population relies primarily on television to get their news and about 90% of the campaigns with the most money win. Arnold had both. All he had to do was deliver his lines.

Since the voters tolerated Arnold's refusal to participate in spontaneous questioning, the "debates" did nothing to clarify Mr. Schwarzenegger's positions, other than give him an opportunity to subtly suggest a toilet dunking for Arianna Huffington. It was a scripted, repetitive, cocky, overconfident, aggressive delivery - very Hummer-like. His reliance on clichés, blatant misogyny and denials of prior admiration for Hitler's ability to rally people and lead a movement was in line with the name of the press buses provided by his campaign - Predator. We saw heavy E-R with a strong undercurrent of D-Q throughout the campaign, and expect Arnold will turn out to be more authoritarian, more Republican, and more vested in special interests than he, his website, or his campaign managers let on. His comments in his autobiography, *Arnold: The Education of a Bodybuilder*, are telling as he shares: "A certain amount of people are meant to be in control. Ninety-five percent of the people have to be told what to do, have to be given orders."

Where were the Democrats in all of this? They abandoned a Democrat by supporting him with faint praise, and the ethnic vote ignored Cruz Bustamante, the farm worker's son. Gray Davis and the inept Democrats lost the confidence of their own base among workers and union members. Like the disjointed national Democrats, California's party was taking its constituents for granted, as well as Mr. Bustamante whose campaign was, well, barely.

It's been reported that 30% more people turned out to vote than in the recent 2002 election that reelected Davis. Meanwhile, in many districts, half the polling locations were closed. Some of the large universities, which typically had a number of voting locations on campus, had none. Labor, youth and Republicans came out in full force for Arnie, as did about 25% of disgusted Democrats who voted for the Recall.

We're not quite sure whether Mr. Schwarzenegger's teeter-totter leans more towards D-Q or E-R since it's hard to get past the

manufactured image. Apparently he's quite sincere about his interest in kids, and his views are a mix of pro-development and at least lip service to environmental protection, in contrast to the Bush administration's agendas. His reliance on Warren Buffet suggests pragmatism and taste for successful operators. What's veneer and substance is yet to be tested.

If he tilts more towards D-Q, then the tone of former governor Pete Wilson's regime from which Arnold tapped former staffers to manage his own run will have a strong hold on Arnold's policies and likely rolling back social initiatives and anti-industry, environmental protections (despite claims on his website). The deregulated energy climate that Wilson left to Governor Davis largely led to his downfall. The Enron Energy Crisis and the defrauding of the California consumer by the energy cabal was conveniently painted onto Davis, personally, rather than the voters who initiated the problems with "restructuring" in 1992 and legislatures which failed to do their jobs.

The question is, 'just how strong is his E-R in comparison to his D-Q?' Given years of careful networking and positioning, it's clear that Arnold is quite ambitious, and it appears this was the next step in his individual career development plan. It's been reported that he met with Ken Lay and Michael Milken last May following initiation of the class action lawsuits brought by Lt. Gov. Bustamante to recoup some of the money from various energy companies' scams. We suspect Gov. Schwarzenegger will attempt to let the Enron boys off the \$9 billion hook and do his best to finish deregulating the state, turning more public power into corporate hands for the sake of business interests. But contrary to usual Republican ideology, Arnold says he believes in a woman's right to choose and supports gay rights, suggesting a lean toward E-R.

His Five Point Plan promises jobs and business

growth, solutions to the energy crisis, reduction in Worker's Compensation funding and bureaucratic red tape, and rolling back unfair business practices laws. With a strong E-R he'll likely roll back the unpopular car tax, as well as worker safety, insurance programs and educational grants. Just how much will he be able to get done with both houses belonging to Democrats remains to be seen.

It is difficult to believe that a man who is accused of treating women as objects or toys to be "playful" with will see constituents, many of whom are women, the environment and ordinary workers as worthy of respect. The D-Q/E-R perspective of people and things is that they can be owned, bought and sold. Objectification of other humans comes with a unique psychological package condoned by a culture that dismisses abuse from those in power. Whether this will be an enduring issue for Schwarzenegger is another open question.

This successful recall in California has the potential to unleash a flurry of initiatives across the country designed to overthrow elected officials who are unpopular, or at least to undermine their capacities to function. This might be misunderstood in Republican circles as a Republican mandate. Conservatives will add Arnold's 48% and Republican McClintock's 13% vote and declare a 60+% Republican landslide victory; whereas the vote can also be interpreted as nonpartisan for a change and against a corrupt political system. In any case, it foreshadows cutting the legs from under democracy as we know it, a process which began in earnest with Florida 2000, was repeated in Georgia with Cynthia McKinney and in Texas where Washington-directed gerrymandering will displace Democrat strongholds. Already, groups are gearing up to gather signatures to recall Arnold of he exhibits "bad behavior." If California is the national bellwether it is reputed to be, then the American flock is heading up a slippery slope with a predator at its heels. ■

Derrida a film by Amy Ziering Kofman and Kirby Dick

"Jackie...do you have your keys?" called the woman from the kitchen. The man with the bushy gray hair hustled from the sun room toward the front door, grabbing a leather brief case on the way, and went off to work with a film crew in tow. She, the wife, is a respected psychoanalyst. He, the distracted philosopher-genius whose mission is

challenging assumptions about reality's givens, is Jacques Derrida.

Thus began a wonderful filmic journey into the personal side of this philosopher who has, for half a century, sought to deconstruct metaphysical certitude and introduce doubt to a world in quest of the easy answer and quick fix. Involvement and engagement in truth making, rather than reliance on

external authorities or ultimate, irrevocable, preordained facts is empowering. It creates great responsibility. His intent is as much to deconstruct to as to build better, more comprehensively with awareness of the interplay of many complex parts.

Filmmakers Amy Ziering Kofman and Kirby Dick followed Derrida in Paris, the US, and South Africa to record his actions, thoughts and reactions over several years. From a hundred hours of video, they compiled a portrait juxtaposing conversation, lecture, and narrated selections from Derrida's writing. He fought against separating himself from the whole context throughout, acknowledging the "recording devices" to his classes and pulling the filmmakers into the totality of his world despite their efforts to remain separate. He deconstructs reality into a cohesive, comprehensive, whole construction. Although it is not announced in the credits, Ziering Kofman's voice is the narrator, not because she sounds particularly good or they couldn't use an actor with recognizable voice, but to further explore the unavoidable interplay between filmmaker and subject.

In one amusing scene, the crew follows the Derridas out to dinner with friends, a couple in their home in Paris. All appears normal until the hostess brings nine champagne glasses from the kitchen – four for the dinner party and five for the film crew who they, too, refuse to ignore. Considerable footage from that evening was cut because the

camera person reflexively nodded yes or no to hospitable offers of food and wine.

The viewer joins him at home, in class, with friends, and at the creation of the second Derrida archive at UC Irvine. To see a scholar look at the gray boxes of his words occupying a full library shelf, a sight which would signal to many the end of a career, triggers many reactions. One word in particular, *différance*, the term coined to suggest a sign differs and also defers, was the heart of an amusing anecdote told by a colleague about a party held to celebrate the word's inclusion in a scholarly dictionary. Derrida's elderly mother, who was at the event, thoroughly lambasted her son for misspelling such a simple French word with an 'a' instead of an 'e'.

The film doesn't talk a lot about deconstructionism; the goal was to demonstrate it. Produced by Ziering Kofman and directed by her and Kirby Dick, this is an up close and personal – as personal as he would allow – portrait of Jacques Derrida.

If Derrida plays at a festival or university near you, we recommend it highly. It's still in theatrical release, so copies are only available to libraries and schools for another couple of months. Then the DVD will be available. Check www.derridathemovie.com for details. ■

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| <u>The Hague, Netherlands</u> | November 26-29 | December 1-3 | 2003 |
| <u>Santa Barbara, California</u> | February 19-22 | February 23-25 | 2004 |
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