

Thematic Meeting

Chemistry and the Evolution of Consciousness

Date: May 4th 2022, 15:00 CET

Location: online

Participants: 16

Style: Presentation and discussion

Summary:

1. Hans Steisslinger introduces the concept of spiral dynamics. He understands it as an alternative to three other common discourse approaches (deontology, utilitarianism, scientism) that are insufficient for comprehending and tackling the roots of immoral behaviour. Built on Clare Graves' work on the psychology of human emergence, spiral dynamics employs the image of a spiral that illustrates an organisational development of consciousness from rather narrow and unconscious memes towards holistic and adumbrating mindsets. Steisslinger relates different ethical approaches with particular memes in this scheme. A truly enlightening and impacting moral compass, however, would be one that reaches higher memes. An understanding of this concept would empower moral agents to perform honest self-assessments of the own moral attitudes and to observe and engage the community in effective conversations. Diagnostics like Ken Wilber's 'integral map' may be supportive of individual efforts to raise the level of moral consciousness.
2. Meeting attendees ask various questions and comment on the introduced concept. It is clarified that the underlying psychological and philosophical considerations are not pseudo-scientific but grounded in academically validated concepts and theories. The claim that a spiral dynamics inspired approach to ethical professional behaviour may be of great use for the activities and positions of the WP finds widespread acceptance among the meeting participants. What that means for future meetings, for example whether topics of the next thematic meetings are derived from elements of this concept, will be discussed.
3. The next thematic meeting is scheduled on Friday, June 24th 2022.

Attachments (documents communicated before the meeting):

- The PPT-file of Hans Steisslinger's presentation

Ethics and the Evolution of Consciousness

EuCheMS Working Party on Ethics in Chemistry

Hans W. Steisslinger, Terra Institute, Bressanone (Italy)

4. May 2022

Agenda

1. Start with Einstein
2. THE chemist doesn't exist!
3. How to reach moral agency - 3 ways to frame moral discourse
4. The expanding human consciousness - Spiral Dynamics - a short introduction
5. Outlook and potential next steps for the Working Party

1

Einstein....

Einstein.....

" The crisis, which our world is facing, is not being seen by those in power, who have to take big decisions towards good or evil.

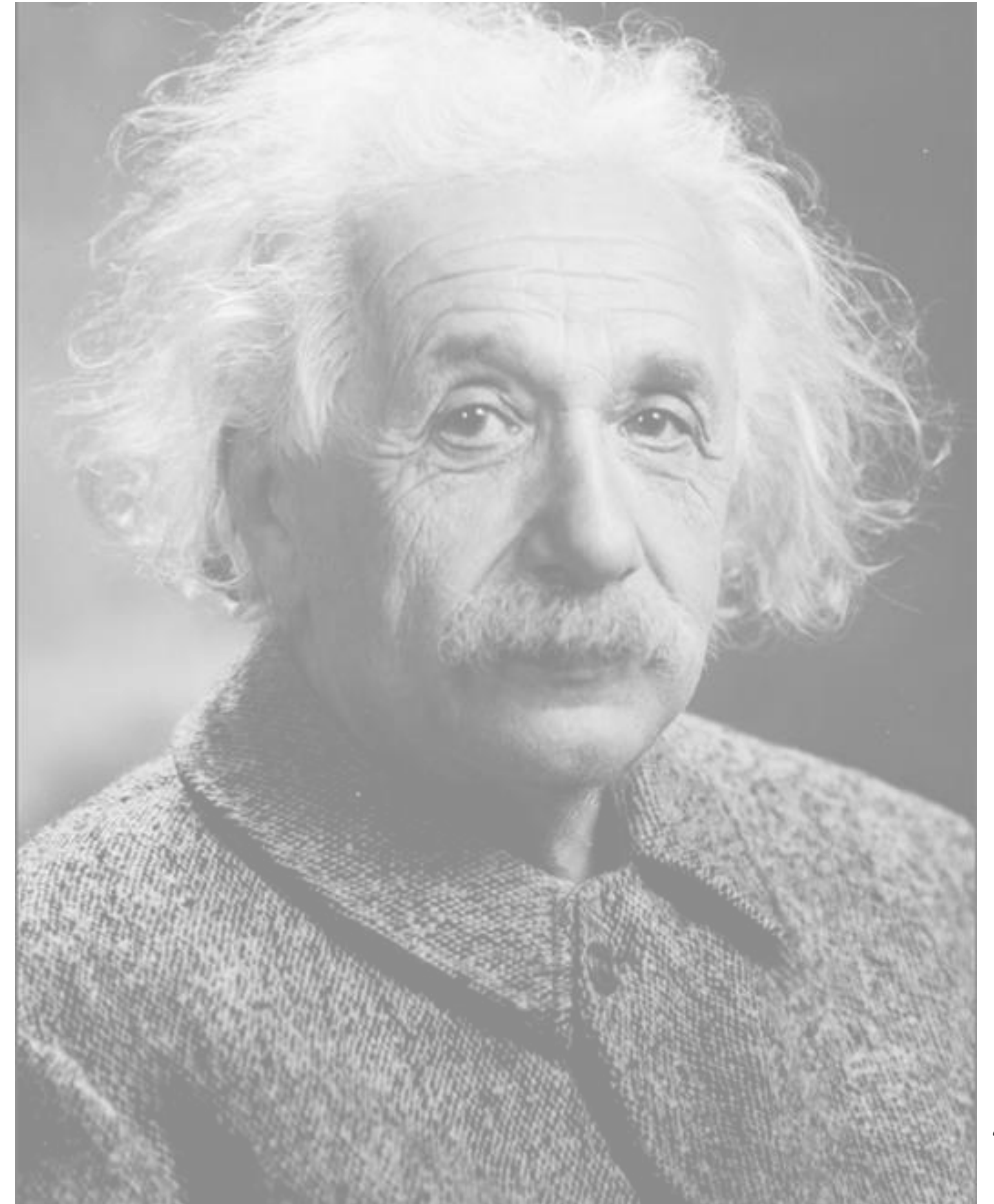
The unleashed power of the atom has changed everything - except our thinking.

Therefore, we are drifting towards a catastrophe of unprecedented scale.

We scientists, who have liberated these tremendous powers, are carrying heavy responsibility, to harness these powers ...for the benefit of mankind and not for its annihilation.

We **absolutely need a new way of thinking**, if mankind is to survive and to reach higher levels"

("Atomic Education urged by Einstein" New York Times, 25. May 1946, p.13)



2

THE Chemist doesn't
exist

Chemists all over the world have different roles to play as

- University and school teachers
- Designers of molecules and processes in industry
- Business leaders and managers
- State regulators
- Politicians
- Journalists
- Activists in NGO's like Greenpeace, WWF
- Fathers and mothers, i.e., members of civil society

3

Moral Agency

Moral Compass: Three Ways to frame the Discourse

- **Deontology:**

deon = duty, logos = science: people have a duty to do the right things no matter what the consequences.

Differing views about what is "right"... Kant: Universal law, Stefan Molineux: Universally preferable behavior (UPB)

- **Utilitarianism** (or consequentialist ethics):

The consequences of an action will determine whether it is morally permissible or not. Utility determines the path of action. Cost-benefit analyses are ubiquitous.

- **Scientism:**

Science as the arbiter of objective, factual truth; only "objective, hard" data are allowed in making moral decisions.

4

The expanding human
Consciousness - Spiral
Dynamics –
a short Introduction

What drives human Emergence?

That's the question Clare Graves (1914 – 1986) asked himself....and he proposed...

“...that the psychology of human nature is an enfolding, shimmering and spiral process, in which, with the changing existential human problems older behavioral patterns are step by step subordinated to newer systems of a higher order”



Organisational Development and the Evolution of Consciousness

Gene = unit of biological information on the DNA
Meme = unit of cultural information = psycho-social „DNA“
= Thought Structures (R. Dawkins)

Turquoise:
Holistic Meme

Yellow:
Integrative-ecological
Meme

Green:
Common living space Meme

Orange:
Performance Meme

Blue:
Intentional - Holy Meme

Red:
Impulsive Meme

Purple:
Magical-mythical Meme

Beige:
Survival Meme



Turquoise: Holistic - agile, self-responsible, self-managed teams, involved in decision making processes, mind – body - soul, led by inner voice, evolutionary organizational development

Yellow: Systemic - leadership determined by co-operative behavior, principle driven, safety through evolutionary development, eco-conscious

Green: Equality - organization as a family, empowerment, value-based, diverse

Orange: Performance - innovation, reliability, organization as a machine

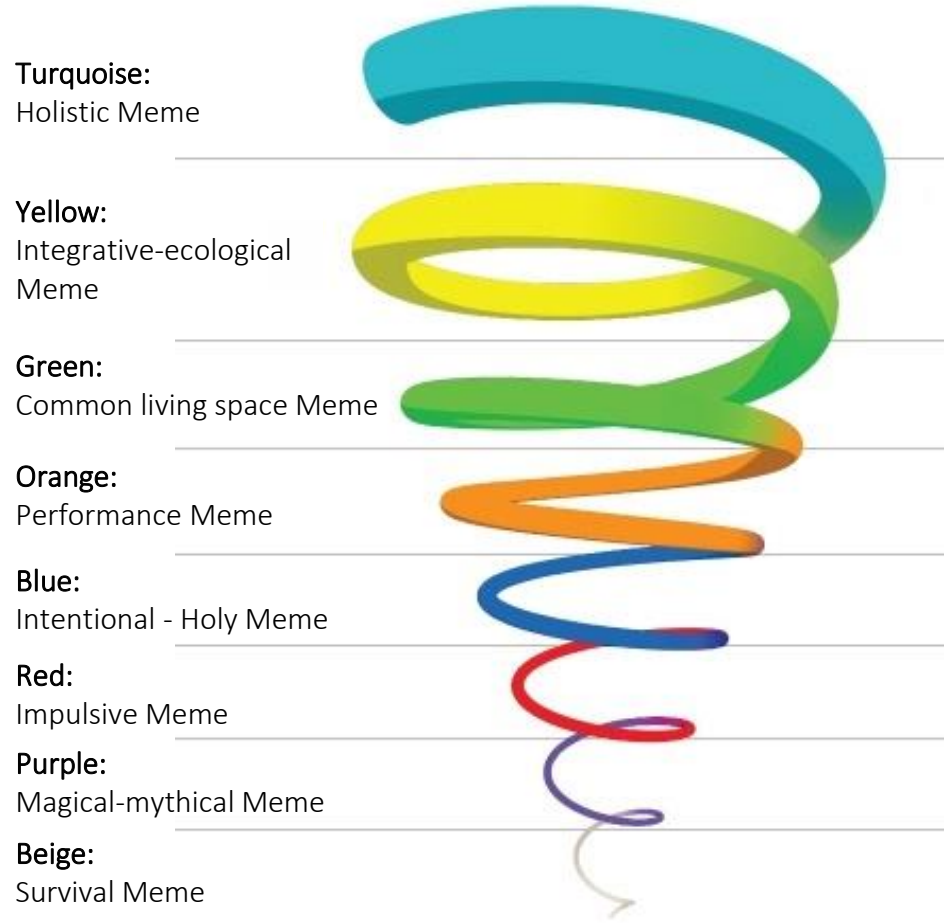
Blue: Truth - repetitive processes, stable organization

Red: Power – the world is a jungle, top-down authority, separation of work

Purple: Safety – appeasing the spirits by connecting to the peers

Beige: Survival – meeting basic needs, food, shelter

How does the Level of Consciousness influence the moral Compass?



Deontological frame:

Can be applied on all levels, but has the greatest effect on the green, yellow and turquoise levels.

Utilitarian frame:

What is “morally right” serves more ego-centric purposes on the lower levels, i.e., orange to beige

Scientism frame:

Only makes sense within a reductionist view of nature, where only sensorial “data” are accepted, i.e., the outside of matter. The inner side of life itself is cut out... It is the frame for the orange meme.



Outlook & Next Steps

THANK YOU!