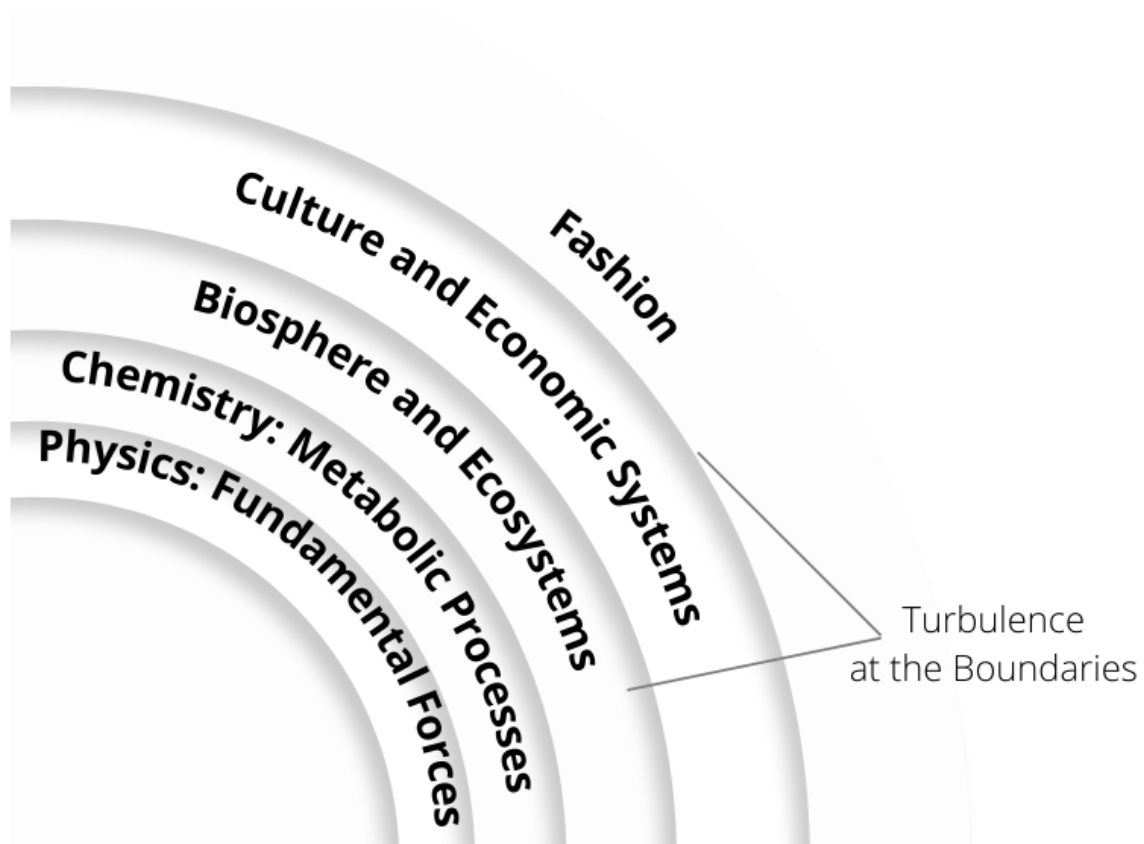


Deepening into Generative Conflict

By Caffyn Jesse



New Layers Innovate, Old Layers Stabilize

Graphic from Caffyn Jesse, Ecstatic aging, Conscious Dying, with gratitude to “Pace Layering: How Complex Systems Learn and Keep Learning”

<https://jods.mitpress.mit.edu/pub/issue3-brand/release/2>

In all complex systems, different layers unfold on different timescales, as Stewart Brand writing on pace layering guides us to notice. Each layer is functionally different and somewhat independent of the others. It operates with different information sources, at different frequencies, with different influences. Each layer directly influences and responds to the layers closest to it, and to a less immediate and noticeable extent, to the layers farthest from it. Expanding awareness across all the layers, and feeling the contradictions between them, while respecting each layer for its particular magic, is what creates a capacity for system-level learning and resilience. Complex systems can go on becoming.

Fast, small wavelengths of energy grab our attention. They generate a whole lot of noise and innovation, and welcome the new and the now. Most times, fast is forgettable. But if fast is held together with slow, in differentiated layers, new can weave with what is old, and there can be ongoing innovation. Slow, large-amplitude wavelengths of energy provide foundation, with their power and constancy. Slow has lots of space in it, but it is not ignorable. Deep

layers command awareness, over time. Sometimes, fast and fashion make propositions with lasting value. Occasionally, new can punctuate old with radical change.

What is immediate and now grabs our attention. Fashion is an ever-shifting, fast-moving layer of noise. Culture and commerce that emerge from this outside edge of matter don't last very long. But because the pace is fast, the noise is loud, and the consequences can be so awful and irrevocable, high-energy cultures and economic systems grab our attention. The impact of them settles, through layers of awareness, rearranging the molecules of us. They come to shape our intimacies, societies, and the destiny of the biosphere. Sustainable, resilient culture and commerce emerges in slower timescales.

Deepening into Generative Conflict can be seen as a gradual process of bringing attention to slower-moving layers of energy and information that unfold underneath higher-frequency, immediately accessible layers. This graphic (based on the Visible Light spectrum, going from high-frequency smaller waves to low-frequency large waves) can guide consideration of different kinds of energy and layers of conflict-awareness. Consider also how things are moving on different timescales, within you and in your relational world.

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Hear Shame and Blame as Cry For Attachment

Reach Past Strategic Fixes and Problem-Solving

Be Held In Woundedness and Wonderfulness

Co-Create Remedies and Repair

Deepen Into Subliminal Processes and Identities

Share Emergences and Divergences

Touch Unknowable Mystery

Transformative Ritual