

The Gradual Emergence of Life? – A Myth Paper III

Surprisingly to many, there have been innumerable other Emergences SINCE the Origin of Life. They have appeared **within** the development of Life itself. Level upon Level of brand New forms has piled up to produce what exists today. The distance between the first primitive organisms and Human Society is truly vast, and repeatedly the distinctive features of an Emergence have shown themselves many times. And these multiple transitions have again proved to be just as inexplicable by the old pluralist methods.

But the very preponderance of these Events has given us extremely valuable **data**. There is no shortage of cases where we can study Emergence, even if it has to be after the Event.

In addition, we also have the rich area of currently living things and their relationships. A deep knowledge of this area of study **also** informs our attempts to understand the mostly inaccessible past. For, we do have a record of the whole history of Life from its Origin to Now. This record, though fragmentary, is frozen into the rocks beneath our feet. We have literally billions of Fossils!

Now, in spite of the clearly patchy nature of this evidence, it is **still** quite sufficient to actually reveal when the major Emergences took place and in what order.

From the fossil record we can gradually draw out the beginnings of a picture of how the process results in species change. Of course, such a halting record, by its very nature, seems to indicate smooth gradual changes, but as our skills in interpretation have developed, the varying pulse also became increasingly discernable.

What slowly dawns upon the researcher into Emergences, is that we **must** replace our immutable assumptions and immutable “things” with ones that expect and embrace Change as THE crucial process: that History can only be described as one of Constant Change. There have been fairly static periods with small changes, all the way to complete revolutions, with concentrated, fast-paced and radical explosions of Change.

In addition we **MUST** also deal simultaneously with both Phenomena and their Contexts, with “Figure **and** Ground”, and be primed to counter our seemingly unavoidable pluralistic methods with important and immediate qualifications. After all, without the simultaneous and ultimately definitive changes in the **Context** – the **background**, the particular avalanches of Change in the foreground would not be precipitated.

Now, this may sound like a simple balancing act between foreground and background factors, but it is, of course, much more than that. It is the classic Chicken-and-Egg situation writ large!

Essentially, though the Context constrains its contained phenomena, it is also ultimately subject to them, and modified by them.

Normally, this reciprocity does not immediately and significantly change the Context, but the effects can, and do, sometimes pass a **Threshold**, and the Context rapidly flips into a new state, or more accurately a series of new States in quick succession.

Now, if we only look at foreground phenomena, and merely monitor the Context, we can **still** miss the crucial action.

The whole nature of an Emergence is that minor, invisible, insignificant or ignored processes, can begin to grow in significance and have an increasingly significant effect.

Now, our necessary methodology is always to ignore “all trivial” processes, and concentrate on the dominant relations alone, to reveal their nature and consequent Laws. But in an Emergence these **always** undergo an accelerating decline, until ultimately, in the Overthrow itself, they actually **vanish!** What we had been depending upon to “explain” the transition disappears and we are left with absolutely NOTHING.

THIS is why we cannot determine post-Emergence Laws from pre-Emergence Laws.

We cannot predict the details produced by an Emergence.

The former seem to appear from Nowhere, and the latter simply “melt away”.
I think you can see the problem!

It is not merely a matter of monitoring EVERYTHING just in case an Emergence might be in the offing, and in case one of the multitudinous negligible candidates will become a determining factor in an Overturn. The reason that we cannot do this is twofold.

ONE: Many of the factors are not only invisible but also UNKNOWN. We don't even know that they exist! So how can we monitor them?

TWO: How do we know that an Emergence is coming? As the crucial indicators are mostly hidden and unmonitorable, we have few ways of guessing that we are about to experience an Overturn. We could either MISS the crucial indicators because we were unaware of their existence, or we could be monitoring everything we can for long periods, with nothing happening. Under such circumstances, we could get so bored with our interminable monitoring with NO results that we turn off and mechanically collect the data, and STILL miss the crucial trajectory of the Event. [Rather like the SETI situation – The search for Extra-terrestrial Intelligence, which I believe has been dredging the Universe for decades without a single blip!]

Obviously, simple strategies, such as the ones outlined above are simply too onerous and debilitating. We have instead to somehow be *tuned* to detect the faintest signs of immanent major change, and then be experienced enough, and responsive enough, to quickly look at the “best” indicators, while also scanning for quite “new” factors emerging from invisibility.

Such happenings could be the true beginnings of an Emergence, and the operation would then have to accelerate into vast monitoring to capture everything that is needed to PLOT the trajectory of Change.

Obviously, “Head-down” specialists would NEVER detect such things. The nature of their everyday normal studies prohibits this, for they are tuned to concentrate on the current Dominant relations in Reality NOW!

The appropriate researchers involved would have to be very different scientists: they would have to be “Head-up” generalists, who are “tuned” to detect significant “tides” in the interplay of relations. They would not only detect the Emergences, but also the Ebb and Flow of the balances of relations, which move towards, and then away from the possible Overturn. These people would be watching with great interest and constantly increasing familiarity with the Tides of Evolving Reality.

(1,022 words)