

3. Our Evolutionary Story in a Nutshell

Paul Hague

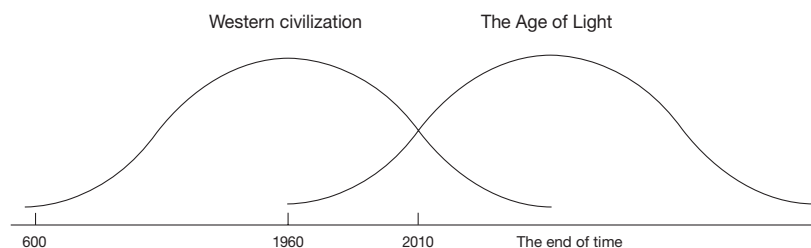
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There is a widespread understanding that humanity is currently in a transition from the old to something quite new in some sense, radical changes in lifestyle and worldview that are intended to resolve an unprecedented critical situation. For as Einstein said, “You cannot solve a problem with the mindset that created it.” But because our collective, cultural, and personal conditioning lies so deep in the fragmented psyche, there is very little understanding of the overall evolutionary context for these momentous happenings. As a consequence, we are not focusing attention on the central psychospiritual issues of our times, being distracted by secondary economic and ecological problems, whose cause is psychospiritual and can thus only be solved in this manner.

To understand what is happening to us all, we can best turn to Pierre Teilhard de Chardin’s four-stage evolutionary model, published posthumously in 1955 as *Le Phénomène Humain*. These four stages are physical, biological, noological or mental, and spiritual, which Teilhard called Pre-life, Life, Thought, and Superlife, each phase and transition between the phases being much shorter than the previous ones because evolutionary change is accelerating exponentially, illustrated in this table:

Evolutionary phases, years ago					Transition phases, years ago		
Teilhard	Type	Start	End	Duration	Start	End	Duration
Pre-life	Physical	14,000,000,000	4,500,000,000	9,500,000,000	4,500,000,000	3,500,000,000	1,000,000,000
Life	Biological	3,500,000,000	25,000	3,500,000,000			
Thought	Noological	5,000	50	5,000	25,000	5,000	20,000
Superlife	Spiritual	+50	+300	250	50	+50	100

As this table indicates, we are currently in the middle of a 100-year transition period between what we can call the mental-egoic age (the self-centred me-epoch, focused on conflict and competition) and the age of universal spirituality (the socially centred us-epoch, focused on peace and cooperation). We can say that this radical transformation of consciousness began with the counter-cultural movements of the 1960s, symbolized by ‘flower power’. But Love alone is not enough to carry us into the Age of Light, for Western civilization, which still dominates the world through the global economy, is further removed from Reality than any other civilization in human history. To grasp to the full the opportunity that will arise from the deaths of capitalism and communism, self-reflective Intelligence is also required, for as Teilhard said in *The Human Phenomenon* “what constitutes the truly ‘intelligent’ being is the fact of being ‘reflective.’” So Western civilization must die so that humanity can reach its fullest potential as a species, illustrated in this diagram, adapted from Fritjof Capra’s *The Turning Point: Science, Society and the Rising Culture*:



The end of the 27 octillion years of the Mayan calendar in 2012 is another indication that humanity is currently passing through the most momentous turning point in fourteen billion years of evolution since the most recent big bang. However, as we can see, the Age of Light is not destined to last forever, even after the global economy self-destructs. For when the growth of structures reach the peak of their development,

while they might stay in a state of dynamic equilibrium for a time, they eventually decay and die. In the case of evolution as a whole, evolution does not continue indefinitely; it eventually reaches its glorious culmination, when all the divergent streams of evolution converge in a megasynthesis of everything called the Omega point.

As Shakyamuni Buddha said on his deathbed, “Behold, O monks, this is my last advice to you. All component things in the world are changeable. They do not last. Work hard to gain your own salvation.” With the global economy about to collapse like a house of cards, spiritual practice must therefore be our top priority. For we are all conceived and born to die, as individuals, civilizations, and species. So the Age of Light is unlikely to last more than a few generations, no further forward in time than the start of the Industrial Revolution is backwards in time. A generation of children is about to be born, if they have not been born already, who are not destined to have grandchildren or even children of their own.

Spiritual awakening does not mean some vague sense of immanent, transcendent Spiritual Reality. The Buddha specifically showed that if we are to be free of any suffering (*dukkha*) that might arise from the universal principle of impermanence (*anitya*), we need to be free of the sense of a separate self (*anatman*). This is a way of being that is largely unknown to Western civilization, accelerating away from our Immortal Ground of Being, as this diagram illustrates.

The traditional way to realize our Immortal Nature is depicted in the small bell curve, as seekers turn inwards, returning to our Divine Source in Oneness, whence the outward movement of evolution begins, with ‘No-mind’. However, in today’s Information Society, such an ontogeny does not help us intelligently manage our highly complex business affairs with full consciousness of the evolutionary energies that cause us to behave as we do. To do this, we need to take science and business into the mystical, as the large bell curve illustrates, returning Home to Wholeness with Supermind, unifying Wholeness and Oneness, as outlined in the essay ‘Revealing the Hidden Harmony’.

Whether we are following either of these paths on our journeys through life, or some mixture of the two as we struggle to make sense of what is happening to humanity at the present time, these bell curves denote the essence of the spiritual transition from the me- to the us-epoch. In general, politicians and economists believing that technological development can drive economic growth indefinitely do not acknowledge this. Neither do ecologists, pursuing transitional policies of sustainability and permaculture, which are clearly only relevant for a few generations, at most.

In practical terms, the key issue is whether the Internet could stay up and running as the financial infrastructure of the global economy self-destructs. As the Internet is based on the unifying structure that underlies the Universe, it could provide the continuity we need at these momentous times. Under these circumstances, the life-shock that will spread rapidly through society with the death of Western civilization could stimulate a gigantic awakening of Love, Intelligence, and Consciousness. For we all have immense unfulfilled potential within us. However, as money is the predominant divisive immortality symbol in society, providing many with a precarious sense of security and identity, it is unlikely that the masses could become liberated from the traditional materialistic and mechanistic work ethic. As some visionaries have foreseen, the more likely scenario is that in the next decade or two the Global Village will disintegrate into self-sufficient communities, each endeavouring to teach their children to live peacefully and harmoniously in the Eternal Now.

