

4. Society and the Individual

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W e human beings are the least instinctive, most adaptable of all the species. Apart from a few reflex actions we witness in newborn babies, most of our behaviour is determined by our learning. Using the metaphor of the computer, which can be regarded as an extension of our minds, our behaviour is predominantly programmed within us, not hard wired.

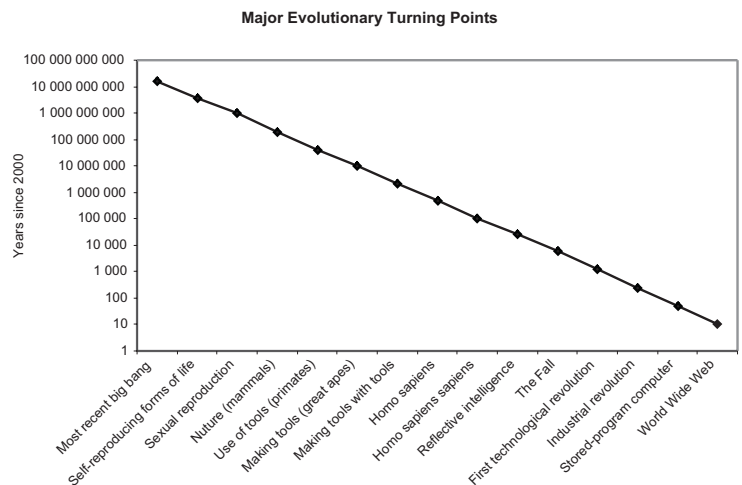
Yet by the time we are just three years of age, we have been so thoroughly brainwashed by the families and cultures we were born into that we have lost much of our adaptability. For as Rupert Sheldrake said in *The Presence of the Past*, once a behaviour pattern becomes established, it tends to repeat itself habitually. This is not only true for a particular member of a species. Through morphic resonance, skills learned by one individual can spread through an entire population, across vast distances through the Cosmic Psyche. And what is true of the biosphere is even more relevant to the noosphere. So as the social pressure on children to conform is so intense, by the time they complete their education at school or university, it is as if they are living in locked cells in high-security prisons entrapped in what William Blake aptly called 'mind-forged manacles'.

Nevertheless, despite this mechanistic conditioning, human beings have shown remarkable adaptability to their changing environment during the past few millennia, as Arnold Toynbee describes in his monumental *A Study of History*. This twelve-volume work describes the general patterns of the birth and death of twenty-odd civilizations during the patriarchal epoch, each adapting to their changing environment, often with a new, but restricted spiritual awareness.

So where are we today? Well, many are aware that traditional worldviews and lifestyles are no longer appropriate for our rapidly changing times, often inspired by the forthcoming end of the Mayan calendar in 2012. In *The Mayan Calendar*, Carl Johan Calleman showed how some of the major evolutionary turning points of the past fourteen billion years could be mapped to the major cycles in the Mayan calendar, which is uniquely exponential. Then, in 2000, Nick Hoggard, a former student at Holma College of Holistic Studies in Sweden, refined this model in rigorous scientific terms, as this diagram illustrates, a more mathematical model than the table in 'Our Evolutionary Story in a Nutshell', based on Pierre Teilhard de Chardin's four-phase evolutionary model.

Using the metaphor of a dripping tap, these turning points represent the way that the distances between successive drips reduce as the tap is turned slowly on until eventually water flows unabatedly. A simple calculation shows that the evolutionary tap is now turned full on, just now passing through its accumulation point in systems-theory terms, the most momentous turning point in some fourteen billion years of evolution. So humanity is being presented with an unprecedented situation, whose solution cannot be drawn from anything that we have learnt in the past.

Yet, because of the way that we have all been conditioned by the cultures we were born into, as a species, we are not adapting to our rapidly changing environment. Yes, a minority are seeking to escape from their high-security prisons. But they are still constrained by what is acceptable to society as a whole, living in what we could call open prisons, able to come and go, to some extent. Essentially, this is because people's mental models still contain some rigid structures that inhibit change.



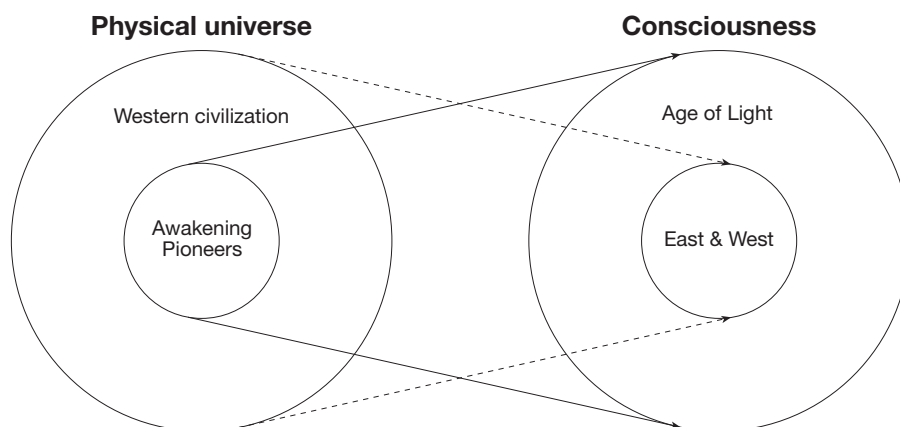
So if we human beings are to adapt to our rapidly changing environment, we need to build structures that are completely open, with no impediments whatsoever. But where can we find such liberating structures? Well, it is very simple: in the Internet, which is based on information systems modelling methods that are universally applicable; in all industries, disciplines, and cultures. So if we could cocreate institutions that are based on the unifying structure that underlies the Universe, the institutions that govern our lives would no longer try to prevent us from reaching our fullest potential as Divine, Cosmic beings. On the contrary, they would be empowering.

For as Giambattista Vico showed in *The New Science*, perhaps the first attempt to develop a comprehensive science of society, published in 1725, two years before Newton's death, "not only does man create societies and institutions in his own mind's image, but these in the end create him." That is, as Terence Hawkes points out in *Structuralism and Semiotics*, "man constructs the myth, the social institutions, virtually the whole world as he perceives it, and in so doing he constructs himself." In the terms of Vico himself, we need to invoke our inherent 'poetic wisdom' (*sapienza poetica*) if our children and grandchildren are to have any chance of growing old enough to have children of their own.

So in today's fearfully hopeful environment, how could we set up just one institution that is designed to help humanity adapt to the unprecedentedly changing times we all live in? Well, one such living organism has been evolving quietly on the Internet for some fifteen years. It is called the Paragonian Foundation, whose motto is 'Awakening to Total Revolution', inspired by Vimala Thakar, who said in *Spirituality and Social Action*: "Do we have the vitality to go beyond narrow, one-sided views of human life and to open ourselves to totality, wholeness? The call of the hour is to move beyond the fragmentary, to awaken to total revolution." In other words, our health, well-being, and survival as a species is dependent on us all seeing that we individuals *are* society.

The motive power behind the Paragonian Foundation is the Principle of Unity, the fundamental design principle of the Universe, outlined in 'Revealing the Hidden Harmony'. This self-verifying, paradoxical truth lies at the core of Integral Relational Logic (IRL), an egalitarian, commonsensical science of thought and consciousness that has evolved from the business modelling methods that underlie the Internet. In turn, IRL provides the coordinating framework for the Unified Relationships Theory, which includes a comprehensive model of the psychodynamics of society as a whole, explaining why scientists and technologists are driving the pace of technological development at unprecedented rates of change.

Now, one reason why such a vital research project is not on the agenda of any institution in the world today is that in order to intelligently manage our business affairs with full consciousness of what we are doing, we need to put Western civilization back on its feet by recognizing that Consciousness is the Cosmic Context for all our lives, not the physical universe, illustrated here:



But whether we shall ever be able to live in love and peace by ending the long-running war between science and mysticism is a moot point. For one of George Bernard Shaw's maxims for revolutionists was "The reasonable man adapts himself to the world. The unreasonable one persists in trying to adapt the world to himself. Therefore all progress depends on the unreasonable man."