

# Our Evolutionary Future



**H**aving looked briefly at our evolutionary past, what can we learn from this about our evolutionary future? Where are we all heading in such a frantic rush, and how do we get there, wherever it is? Well, it is important to note that what is happening to us all is unprecedented in evolutionary history. What is happening is so new that it is not easy to learn much from the past. Nevertheless, there are similarities that can give us some understanding of what befalls us all. We look at some of these similarities in this chapter.

## **Seven simultaneous turning points**

Focusing our attention on our inner development rather than on technological development is leading not only to the death of Western civilization and the birth of the Paragonian Society. This major turning point in human history is just one of seven happening in evolution at the present time. So what Peter Russell calls our 'next evolutionary leap' is likely to be a very big jump indeed. Here is a brief summary of these different levels, all of which are taking place simultaneously.

1. Pierre Teilhard de Chardin saw four major stages in evolution during the fourteen billion years since the most recent big bang, the first three of which he called 'Pre-life', 'Life', and 'Thought'. We are now entering the fourth and final phase, a stage that he called 'Super-life', which we could also call superconscious and superintelligent.

2. A gnostic species, which we can call *Homo divinus*, is evolving from *Homo sapiens*. *Homo sapiens* is maybe some 500,000 years old and the subspecies *Homo sapiens sapiens* is around 100,000 years old. Our ancestors seem to have acquired reflective intelligence, the most important distinguishing characteristic of human beings, around 40,000 years ago, as evidenced in cave drawings from that time.
3. The selfish, patriarchal, mental-egoic epoch (me-epoch) that emerged at the dawn of history some 4,000 or 5,000 years ago, marked in the West by the Fall in the mythical Garden of Eden, is coming to an end. It is being replaced by a healthy, cooperative epoch of universal spirituality (us-epoch). It is vitally important here not to confuse the prepersonal, subconscious period of human evolution with the transpersonal, superconscious epoch that we are now entering, just because they are both different from the personal, self-conscious era. Trying to go back to a supposed golden age based on a Goddess figure is to fall for what Ken Wilber calls the 'pre-trans fallacy'; it does not lead to the union of the feminine and masculine principles that characterizes the emerging civilization
4. A nondualistic system of thought is emerging that is radically different from the principles of logic laid down by Aristotle some 2,300 years ago. This self-reflective, integrative, holographic science of reason is called relational logic, which has evolved from the enterprise-modelling methods used by information systems architects.
5. Christocentric Western civilization, which emerged from the death of the Hellenic civilization more than 1,400 years ago, is dying, to be replaced by what we call the Paragonian Society, a society soundly based on Love and Peace, Life and Freedom, Wholeness and the Truth, and Consciousness and Intelligence.
6. Scientific materialism and mechanism of the last three or four hundred years are dying, to be replaced by a gnostic, vital sci-

ence that recognizes that Consciousness, not the physical universe, is the primary reality. There is thus a scientific revolution taking place that is even more far-reaching than the Copernican revolution completed by Isaac Newton in 1687 with his *Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy*. The ultimate scientific theory—the Theory of Everything—which we call panosophy, is emerging.

7. The materialistic economies of capitalism and communism, which threatened to blow us all up during the second half of the twentieth century, are dying, giving way to a life-enhancing, ecologically sustainable Sharing Economy, in which we shall all be empowered to reach our highest potential as human beings.

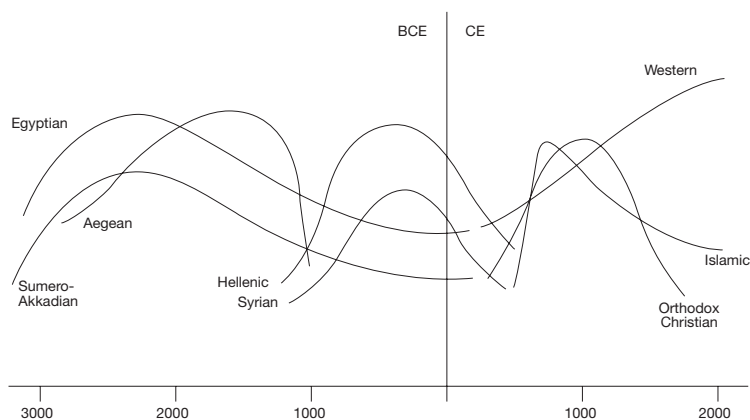
## Death and rebirth of civilizations

Rather than trying to embrace all these turning points at once, perhaps it is simplest just to focus attention on the cultural transformation taking place today. In this respect, the death of Western civilization is nothing new in human history. Arnold Toynbee, in his monumental *A Study of History*, which occupies half a metre of bookshelf in Stockholm University library, identified about twenty major civilizations that have existed in the world during the past five thousand years.

What is new about the current situation is that we are the first civilization that is conscious of its own demise and of the birth of a quite new way of living and relating to each other. This is happening because evolution is becoming more and more conscious of itself. Indeed, the very existence of Toynbee's amazing *tour de force* is an example of the way that evolution is waking up at the present time. Today, we have a far greater understanding of our place in the overall scheme of things than even those living at Isaac Newton's time, just 300 years ago, could possibly have imagined.

It was Fritjof Capra's aptly named book *The Turning Point* that first drew my attention to Toynbee's work. In this book, Fritjof pro-

vided a diagram, reproduced here, of the rise and fall of some of the civilizations that have existed around the Mediterranean during the past five thousand years.



Western civilization arose from the disintegration of the Roman Empire, which Toynbee considered the final stage of the Hellenic civilization, when Christianity came to dominate the European world-view. In turn, the Hellenic civilization arose from the death of the Minoan civilization, which seems to be what Fritjof calls 'Aegean' in his diagram.

In broad overview, Toynbee showed that civilizations come into being through the creative changes being manifested by a minority in a society. Eventually, this new way of living is mimicked by the majority, and the civilization becomes established. Toynbee then showed that civilizations come to an end when a Universal State comes to dominate the civilization just before its final disintegration. The Roman Empire played this role in the Hellenic civilization. Today, the American economic hegemony is playing a similar role in Western civilization. It cannot be long now before it goes the same way as the Roman Empire.

Specifically, as Toynbee showed, civilizations die when these three social characteristics exist:

1. A failure of creative power in the minority [the leadership].
2. An answering withdrawal of mimesis on the part of the majority.
3. A consequent loss of social unity in the society as a whole.

This is exactly what is happening in society today. The leading Christians, philosophers, scientists, medical practitioners, educators, lawyers, executives, technologists, accountants, economists, bankers, and politicians who brought Western civilization into being and have maintained it ever since have ceased to adapt to our rapidly changing times. This is a critical situation, for any species that does not adapt to its changing environment cannot expect to survive for very long.

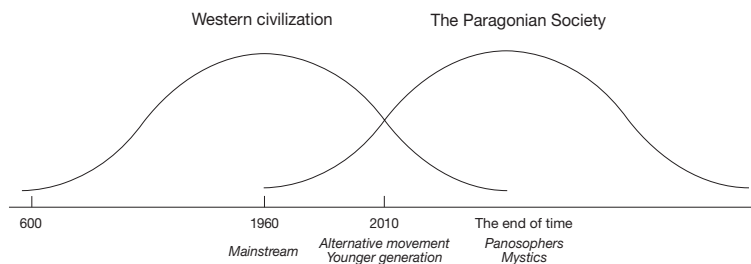
This puts us in a pretty perilous predicament, for holding on to the status quo, to our traditions, in these times of accelerating change is to cooperate with insanity, as Vimala Thakar, a protégée of Krishnamurti, said in *Spirituality and Social Action*. The Spring/Summer 2001 issue of *What is Enlightenment?* magazine, called 'Can enlightenment save the world?', contains extensive extracts from this book. Another key point Vimala makes is that "religious groups concerned with inner growth and inner revolution, and social activist groups concerned with social service ... throughout history have been contemptuous of each other." But such dualism does not lead to Wholeness, does not enable us "to awaken to total revolution", as Vimala puts it.

In a similar fashion, David Bohm said, in a 1986 interview discussing Krishnamurti's enlightened approach to education, that if we do not question all our fixed beliefs and assumptions, then humanity is not a viable species.



As a consequence of the dangers facing humanity at the present time, a new minority is appearing that is beginning to embody the principles of the emerging civilization, one that can survive for as long as human beings populate this beautiful planet of ours.

On the last page of *The Turning Point*, Fritjof Capra provides a simple schematic of this process of cultural transformation. I reproduce it here, with some amendments.



The first amendment is that I call the new civilization that is emerging the Paragonian Society. But I have not truncated the diagram at the peak of the emerging civilization, as Fritjof did. For the Paragonian Society is not destined to last forever. Shakyamuni Buddha's three marks of being make this situation crystal clear:

1. There is nothing whatsoever that is permanent in the Universe, including our bodies and any groups, from our family to our species, that we feel we belong to (*anitya*).
2. If we do not recognize this fundamental principle of existence, we shall suffer (*dukkha*).
3. The way to end suffering is to be free of the sense of a separate self, of attachment to the egoic mind (*anatman*).

Fritjof, writing in 1982, regarded the social movements of the 1960s and 1970s as the beginning of the new civilization. So another amendment I have made to his diagram is to mark the beginning of this process as 1960. My feeling is that it will take two or three generations before the Paragonian Society becomes fully established, embracing both its predecessors, Eastern and Western cultures.

The interesting point about this diagram is what happens at the crossover point, which is likely to happen between 2009 and 2014, at about the time of the end of the Mayan Great Cycle and the end of what José Argüelles called 'a period of Harmonic Convergence'.

This is a critical situation, for this crossover point will be apocalyptic in character, from a Greek word meaning ‘uncover’ or ‘reveal’. What will be revealed is the coherent light of Consciousness, enabling us to see the delusions on which Western civilization is based, giving us the opportunity to rebuild our global society on the inef-fable Truth. We shall then be able to see the Ultimate Cosmic Vi-sion, a world of the utmost simplicity, elegance, and beauty.

But we are not there yet; far from it. We are still “poised midway between the gods and the beasts”, as Plotinus observed in the third century. To what extent people in today’s society can see what is going on is dependent on how far individuals have reached in their own spiritual and cognitive awakening. The most comprehensive model of the different stages of human development in the world today is probably spiral dynamics, introduced by Clare W. Graves, made popular by Don Edward Beck and Christopher C. Cowan, and recently incorporated into Ken Wilber’s integral philosophy.

However, the language of spiral dynamics is closely related to the DNA model of evolution, and it does not satisfactorily reflect the cultural transformation that humanity is currently going through. We need to develop a new model for ourselves in order to commu-nicate effectively with people with quite different backgrounds and propensities. So underneath the timescale for this cultural trans-formation, I have given some indicators of where very broad groups of people are in this transformational process.

Not that this is a black and white situation, as this simplistic diagram indicates. In practice, many people in society today are moving on both curves, growing in consciousness while still holding on to some or all of the beliefs of the dying culture. For it generally takes many years to be completely free from our anthropomorphic, cultural, and personal conditioning. In my case, it has taken more than fifty years, since I was eight years of age in 1950.

In categorizing people in this manner, it is vitally important that we do not put anyone in a box or judge them in any way. We are all living our lives to the best of our ability, being guided by

energies that no individual being can possibly take full responsibility for. Furthermore, I must emphasize that no one in the world is better or worse than any other. We are all the embodiment of some fourteen billion years of physical, biological, mental, and spiritual evolution.

With these observations, on the left of the diagram I have placed the mainstream of Western civilization, still mainly living with Aristotelian logic, medieval religious ideas, materialistic, mechanistic science, the Darwinian theory of evolution, and capitalist economic theories. This is the world that is mainly reported in the newspapers and on television. It does not take more than a few minutes of reading or watching to see that this world is disintegrating before our very eyes.

I have labelled the middle of the diagram 'Alternative movement'. This is a very broad and diverse body of people. It is represented by such organizations as the Institute of Noetic Sciences, the California Institute of Integral Studies, and the Integral Institute, in the USA, and by the Scientific and Medical Network, Schumacher College, and the New Economics Foundation, in the UK. There are many other similar organizations that could be included here.

The alternative movement also includes what is called the New Age movement, the millions of people identified as cultural creatives by Paul Ray, and several different groups of ecologists, not least the growing number of communities around the world collectively calling themselves 'ecovillages'. We could also include here the many people seeking alternative economic systems, like debt-free money, systems using demurrage (a charge for not spending money), local economics systems, such as Local Exchange Trading Systems (LETS) and time banks, and, perhaps the most advanced of these systems, Community Currencies, currently being developed by Michael Linton, the founder of LETS, and his associates.

The alternatives also include those many people in the West who are turning to the East for spiritual fulfilment. Some are following traditional paths, such as Buddhism, Zen, and one or more

of the four yogic paths of Hinduism: *raja-yoga* ('royal path', including hatha yoga and meditation), *bhakti-yoga* ('path of devotion'), *karma-yoga* ('path of selfless service'), and *jnana-yoga* ('path of abstract knowledge').

Others, recognizing that the truly religious person is one with no religion, are turning to a variety of teachers who do not belong to any organized religion, including those teachers in the Advaita lineage, begun by Shankaracharya in the ninth century, but renewed in modern times by Ramana Maharshi. For true Advaita is neither a religion nor a philosophy in the sense in which most people use these terms. In *The Teachers of One*, Paula Marvelly interviewed fifteen exemplars of Advaita, who she described as 'living Advaita'. But there are many other such teachers to be found on the Web at such sites as [www.satsang.nu](http://www.satsang.nu), run from Sweden.

These are just some of the groups that we can say constitute the alternative movement. However, there is one problem. Many of the leaders of this movement have found a comfortable niche within the infrastructure of the predominant culture and have not yet found the root cause of the human malaise. While questioning many of the assumptions of Western civilization, they are still holding on to some extent or other to traditional, consensual ways of thinking. The alternative establishment has thus become as entrenched as the mainstream establishment, as resistant to change as the culture it is seeking to transcend.

If we are to rebuild the infrastructure of society from our divine Source upwards, we need to turn to another group of people to carry this process forward: the younger generation. These are the people who are destined to embody the nondualistic principles of the Paragonian Society.

Today, there is an increasing number of fifteen- to twenty-five-year-olds who know that what they have been taught in school and university does not make sense as a coherent whole, but who have not yet learnt to make sense of the world they live in. This is leading to desperation, as the increasing number of young people taking

drugs and deliberately harming themselves indicates all too clearly. If we can show these youngsters the root cause of their despair, it is their great longing for Wholeness and the Truth, for Love and Peace, and for Life and Freedom that will carry humanity into the age of Light and Spirit.

And, even younger, there is a group of youngsters who are quite clearly questioning at a very early age the beliefs and assumptions of the culture they live in. Nancy Ann Tappe called these youngsters 'Indigo children' in 1982. As Lee Carroll and Jan Tober tell us in *The Indigo Children*, before these children were identified as a group many were put on medication because they were disturbed by the culture they were born into. Yet it is this group of young people who are destined to save humanity from a premature death. The fact that this group of individuals has been identified is a clear sign of the direction that evolution is taking. More and more people are becoming aware that we have to give our children the freedom to determine their future.

For, as Max Planck sadly remarked in his autobiography, "a new scientific truth does not triumph by convincing its opponents and making them see the light, but rather because its opponents eventually die, and a new generation grows up that is familiar with it." It is thus vitally important that we stop sending our children to schools that teach them lies.

This brings us to the ultimate goal of human development, which many young adults will realize when they reach middle age, and their children will realize even earlier, provided our fear and ignorance does not drive humanity to extinction before then.

On the right of the diagram on page 46 showing the crossover of the two civilizations, I show that it is mystics and panosophers (who are mystics who have learnt to integrate all knowledge into a coherent whole) who will naturally embody the principles of the Paragonian Society. The word *mystic* comes from a Greek word meaning 'to close (the lips and eyes)', the primary sense being 'one who vowed to keep silence', according to the *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED).

This is a most extraordinary situation. Why be silent about the most glorious experience that any of us can enjoy in our lives? What an indictment of Western civilization and its Hellenic predecessor! Just to give a few examples, the mystical Pythagorean Brotherhood was attacked and destroyed, the mystical philosopher Heraclitus was called 'the Obscure' and was accused by Aristotle of not reasoning, and the pre-eminent Christian mystic Meister Eckhart was found guilty of heresy for speaking honestly about his mystical experiences.

What I mean by *mystic* is one who lives consciously in union with the ineffable Divine. I use this word as a generic term for all those people we call sages, saints, avatars, adepts, gurus, enlightened masters, and a variety of other terms. Historically, mystics have been a minority within a minority, living ahead of their time.

Indeed, in the West, unlike in the East where they are revered, mystics are often regarded as an oddity, not fitting into society. The OED reports that *mysticism* can be used as a word of reproach, implying self-delusion or the assumption of mysterious agencies of which no rational account can be given. And it is often reported in the alternative movement that psychiatrists and academic psychologists do not understand the mystical, regarding people with such experiences as mentally disturbed and needing medication.



But there is now growing evidence that this situation is beginning to change. Surveys show that as many as half of all people in the UK and the USA have had religious experiences at some time in their lives, some or all of which could perhaps be called mystical. Often these mystical experiences are a mere glimpse, lasting a few minutes, hours, or days. But such experiences are sometimes life-changing, shattering the beliefs that we have been taught by the deluded culture we live in.

Today, this awakening of consciousness is gathering pace. Our mystical experiences are becoming deeper and deeper and lasting

longer and longer. We can see that an earthquake is about to take place in the depths of the ocean of Consciousness. In the next decade or two, the effects of this earthquake will be felt as a gigantic wave of consciousness sweeping all before it, not unlike a tsunami in the physical world. It is this awakening of Love, Consciousness, and Intelligence that will provide the experiential foundation for the Paragonian Society that will come into being when the global economy self-destructs around the end of this decade.

From the perspective of the prevailing culture, panosophers and mystics are extra-ordinary, from the Latin *extra ordinam*, 'outside (the usual) order'. Yet, at the same time, they are utterly ordinary, being no different from anyone else. For panosophers, in particular, are individuals who have learnt to bring everything into universal order, a word that is cognate with *ordinary*, healing the fragmentation and divisiveness of the world of learning.

Of course, not everyone in society can yet see what is happening to us as a species. Those who have not begun this process of cultural transformation or are at an early stage often have great difficulty in understanding this process. They do not see where we human beings have come from and where we are all heading at ever-increasing rates of change.

Indeed, they might feel threatened by the changes that are taking place, seeking to prevent them: the blind immune response of the body politic. For evolution, acting solely from the past, from tradition, is blind, as the biologists Richard Dawkins and Rupert Sheldrake tell us in *The Blind Watchmaker* and *The Presence of the Past*, respectively.

There are two inhibiting attitudes to change in society today. First, people pretend that change is not happening by burying their heads in the sand; we can call this 'the ostrich syndrome'. Alternatively, they attempt to stop change: 'the Canute syndrome', from King Canute, who is reputed to have tried to stop the tide coming in.

These conservative attitudes are quite common in evolutionary history, including the history of human learning. For instance,

those living in the sixteenth century had great difficulty in making the change in world-view that Copernicus introduced in 1543. And when Voltaire attended Isaac Newton's funeral in 1727, he ruefully lamented that his fellow countrymen could still not understand Newton's notion of action at a distance, forty years after the publication of *Principia*.

And even when people can see intuitively what is happening to humanity at the present time, they do not always have the words with which to articulate this vision. For at any one time we know more than we can say. Indeed, no one can tell others what they do not already know. This is because ideas arise from our divine Source as intuitive understanding before they can be rationalized. It takes time for ideas to become fully articulate, rather like the development of a chemical photograph.

It is only when we have consciously reached the Omega point of evolution that we can see evolution as a whole. In this respect, it is interesting to note here that those individuals who live in a culture that believes in reincarnation and who reach what is called 'an enlightened state of consciousness' often say that they have no need to be reborn any more. They know in their own direct experience that they have reached the ultimate goal of human development; indeed, of evolution on this planet.

Thus the Paragonian Society will be one in which there is neither a future nor a past, a way of living utterly different from any culture that has existed in human history or prehistory, when either linear or cyclic time has predominated our thinking.

## **The end of time**

The great paradox of the Paragonian Society is that time will have come to an end for those who are in permanent union with the Divine, yet they will continue to get up each day, perform their daily activities, and go to sleep at night. So how long will such a paradoxical society continue to exist? Of course, such a question does not belong to the Paragonian Society, because in such a society

there will be no more questions. In Vijai Shankar's words, we shall have found the question that has no answer and the answer that has no question.

Nevertheless, it would be remiss of me not to look at this issue, because if we do not understand this point, we fail to see the Big Picture, and we cannot fully comprehend humanity's place in the overall scheme of things.

To understand what is happening to us all, we can first note that because of the exponential rate of evolutionary change, each phase is getting shorter and shorter. Indeed, I have shown that from a systems perspective, evolution has already passed the evolutionary point of accumulation, and there are no longer any patterns in evolution that can be observed.

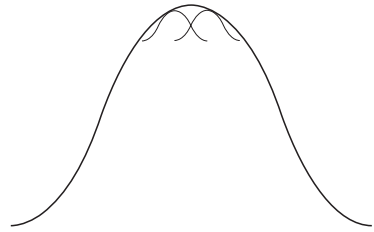
However, if we look at Teilhard de Chardin's four stages of evolutionary development, we can see that we have not quite yet reached the final stage, that of Super-life. But what we can see is that the first three stages lasted approximately 11 billion years, 3.5 billion years, and between 40,000 and 5,000 years, depending on when we consider the mind to have become fully functional.

So the Paragonian Society is likely to last no more than a few centuries, or perhaps just a few decades. This view ties in quite well with John Leslie's estimate made in *The End of the World*. Taking both the obvious and not so obvious factors into account, including the catch-all 'something-we-know-not-what', Leslie's estimate is that the human race has a 70 per cent chance of becoming extinct within 300 years. This is about ten generations, roughly equivalent to the number of generations since Isaac Newton's time.

The conventional reaction to this inevitable situation by those living in Western civilization is to say that we shall therefore need to colonize the galaxy. But, from the point of view of the Paragonian Society, who cares? For when we are in union with the Divine, there is no one to care any longer, as Ramesh S. Balsekar emphasizes in a straight-talking book, *Who Cares?!*

We can therefore see that the notion that we might one day colonize the galaxy is just nonsense. The entire physical universe, including everything that is in it, is nothing more than an abstraction from Consciousness. Every planet, sun, galaxy, galaxy of galaxies, even the physical universe itself, goes through a life and death cycle. So what are we going to do? Keep jumping from galaxy to galaxy for the next few billion years looking for a green and pleasant land to live on after our beautiful planet Earth has become uninhabitable?

We can see this more clearly when we look at the crossover of Western civilization and the Paragonian Society in the context of the birth and death of our solar system, illustrated in this diagram. By comparing the



Sun with other similarly sized stars, astronomers have estimated that within a few billion years the Sun will expand into a red giant then subside into a white dwarf, and the solar system will have come to an end. So we are living approximately at the mid-point of the life of the solar system, and hence of the Earth.

Let us remember that we human beings, both as individuals and as a species, are subject to the laws of the Universe just like any other structures, a point that Shakyamuni Buddha made when he died. We can therefore liken the situation humanity faces today to that which our ancestors faced when they acquired reflective intelligence some 40,000 years ago.

One of the first things our ancestors discovered is that everyone dies. This was quite a shock, for what is the point of being born in a body if after three-score years and ten we disappear again? It is our inability to deal with death that has caused so much suffering in the world over the millennia. The exoteric religions have attempted to assuage the ego's fear of death with various immortality symbols, as Ken Wilber describes in *Up from Eden*.

But there is another way to deal with death, as the rishis of the Indus Valley, who wrote the *Upanishads*, discovered some 5,000 years ago. When we know that Brahman and Atman are one, in their terms, there is no longer a separate self who can be said to be born or to die. The self has become the Self; *atman* (which can also mean 'Self') has become *anatman*.

It is therefore not the purpose of evolution for us human beings to continue to have children indefinitely. One day in the not too distant future, a generation of children will be born who will not have children of their own. That, in essence, is why the Paragonian Society is emerging at the present time. We need to know that death is an illusion so that we have no fear when the human race dies in the coming decades and centuries. Rather, with the awakening of love and consciousness that is about to burst upon us, we can foresee that our species could well die in a blaze of ecstatic glory. What could be more marvellous than that?

## Human ontogeny

Now that we can see the whole of evolution from beginning to end, we can look at what this means for human ontogeny in the future; how our children will grow and develop as individuals. Normally in the evolution of the species, it is ontogeny that recapitulates phylogeny. But when new species emerge, this process is reversed: phylogeny recapitulates ontogeny.

A similar effect exists with the evolution of civilizations. Normally as children we are conditioned through introjection to learn and behave in certain ways suitable for the circumstances that societies find themselves in at the time. Cultural ontogeny thus recapitulates cultural phylogeny.

But when new civilizations emerge, individuals break free of the constraints imposed on them by the prevailing culture and begin to live with quite different value systems and world-views, ones that are appropriate for their changing times. Cultural phylogeny thus recapitulates cultural ontogeny.

This is the case with the emergence of the Paragonian Society, but with a difference. When individuals evolve a way of living that follows the principles of this eschatological epoch, they are actually recapitulating the phylogeny of the whole human race from birth to death, not just some particular civilization. And human phylogeny is a recapitulation of the whole of evolution. So the ontogeny of those living in the Paragonian Society will recapitulate all fourteen billion years of evolution in just a few decades. Such are the possibilities once evolution has passed its point of accumulation.

But what does it mean to recapitulate the whole of evolution in our short lives? Well, we need another pair of evolutionary words to explain this experience, described by Arthur Koestler in *The Ghost in the Machine*. They are the words *gerontomorphosis*, the ‘shaping or forming of the old’, and *pædomorphosis*, ‘the shaping or forming of the young’.

During gerontomorphosis, evolution progresses from immediately preceding forms and structures, as in phylogeny. However, as Koestler puts it, “gerontomorphosis cannot lead to radical changes and new departures; it can only carry an already specialized evolutionary line one more step further in the same direction—as a rule into a dead end of the maze.”

During pædomorphosis, on the other hand, evolution retraces its steps to an earlier point and makes a fresh start in a quite new direction. Pædomorphosis is thus a rejuvenating, renascent process; it leads to new vitality, new energies, and new possibilities. And generally, this process does not begin on the scale of the species; it begins at the individual level.

These principles of pædomorphosis and gerontomorphosis apply equally in the noösphere. What Thomas S. Kuhn called ‘normal science’ is a good example of gerontomorphosis at work at any one time, and scientific revolutions sometimes display pædomorphic characteristics. For instance, Copernicus’ heliocentric theory of the solar system effectively returned to Aristarchus’ heliocentric view developed before the Ptolemaic view gained a grip on conventional thinking.

Today, the evolution of Western civilization, based as it is on the past, is coming to a dead end. We are thus entering a process of pædomorphosis, as the futurist Hazel Henderson points out in *Paradigms in Progress*. But how far back in time do we need to go if we are to reach the Omega point, the glorious culmination of fourteen billion years of evolution? Well, fairly obviously, it is not enough to go back to the Garden of Eden, to the birth of *Homo sapiens*, or even to the origin of the species. We need to go back fourteen billion years and allow a big bang to explode in consciousness.

This is similar to what some experience as a divine spark or spark of genius, but on a cosmic scale. This is the miracle that we must expect to take place in the collective consciousness in the next five to ten years. It is the only chance we have of surviving the collapse of the global economy during this period, the only chance of evolving into a species that is always refreshingly vibrant and creative. We need to return to the beginning of time if we are to live in the eternal Now at the end of time.

### **Vantage point**

As this ontogenetic process is still very rare, a spatial metaphor might help here to understand what it means to reach the Omega point of evolution. If we want to look at the Totality of Existence as a coherent whole, what vantage point might we choose? Normally, here on Earth, if we want to take a broader view of our surroundings, we can go to the top of a tall building, such as a medieval cathedral or a modern television tower, if such edifices are available. Alternatively, we can take a trip in a helicopter or a hot-air balloon to give ourselves a bird's-eye view. Climbing mountains is another most satisfying way of getting a broad perspective on our surroundings, provided the clouds hold off, of course.

The astronauts who travelled to the Moon had an even better perspective. They were able to see the Earth as a unity, where all the divisions that we create between the nations, religions, races, businesses, and so on no longer existed. One of these, Edgar Mitch-

ell, was so moved by the 'sense of universal connectedness' that arose from his journey that, when he returned, he set up the Institute of Noetic Sciences to initiate research into consciousness and human potential.

So if we want to see the Totality of Existence as one coherent whole, with no divisions within it, does this mean that we need to wait for a spaceship to take us to the outermost reaches of the physical universe? Or failing this, will it help us to see the Whole by sending up multibillion-dollar telescopes to look for the origin of the Universe?

Actually, it doesn't help at all. There is a much simpler and cheaper way of viewing the Whole, for the origin of the Universe is within each of us. All we need to do is to look inside, and there we can find a vantage point from which to view the Whole. It is from this vantage point that the witnessing Intelligence can function with full clarity, free from all anthropological hopes and fears.

