

L. Robert Keck,  
*Synergy Associates, Colorado*

## **THE NEXT STEP IN HUMANITY'S EVOLUTIONARY JOURNEY — THE PRODIGAL COMES HOME**

In the mid-1950's Lewis Mumford wrote:

We stand on the brink of a new age: the age of an open world and a self capable of playing its part in that larger sphere,... a higher trajectory for life as a whole,... a fresh release of spiritual energy that will unveil new potentialities, no more visible in the human self today than radium was in the physical world a century ago, though always present.<sup>1</sup>

Mumford could hardly have been considered a "New Ager," at least as that term has been used in recent years. He was an extraordinary historian, combining vast and scholarly knowledge of the past with intuitive and visionary sensibilities. Before most of us had any inkling of the radical changes about to threaten our world, and our worldview — remember the 1950's? — Mumford realized that humanity was on the threshold of an evolutionary growth spurt. Particularly important for the concerns of this article is that Mumford, a secular and academic historian, perceived the emerging new age as one which would be characterized by "a fresh release of spiritual energy."

After fourteen years of research in "deep value trend analysis" I have become convinced that Mumford was absolutely right, along with many others, in perceiving the latter part of the twentieth century to be a dramatic spiritual transformation for humankind. This article is about this new age of spirituality, specifically as it has to do with a new relationship between humanity and the rest of nature. It would be helpful, however, if you set aside all that has been characterized as "New Age," and simply join me in a fresh look at humanity's long evolutionary journey.

If a narrow focus upon the issues and concerns of our daily lives is like looking at the human evolutionary "parade" through a knothole

---

1. Mumford, Lewis, *Transformations of Man* (Harper & Row, 1956) pp. 191-2

in a fence, I ask you to step up with me on a visionary ladder to look over the top of the fence, to see the entire "parade."

### **The Human Evolutionary Journey as Perceived Through the Lens of Deep Value Trend Analysis**

Many cultural analysts and futurists look at what is in the daily newspapers – literally – quantifying the number of stories on given topics so as to ascertain today's "mega-trends" and then extrapolating them out into a picture of the future. The problem with this, I believe, is that one may be fooled into thinking that popular fads, temporary aberrations, and/or various versions of social backlash are the "wave of the future" rather than the temporary backwaters and multidirectional swirls that they are.

My thesis is that for an accurate understanding of the past and present, as well as for a more reliable prognostication of the future, we need to go further down the causal ladder. When we do, we find that it is ultimately the deep value system emanating from humanity's soul that is the determinative factor in shaping all that we know as human culture – our notions of what constitutes human nature, our place in the universe, how we think about our world and the challenges of living our daily lives, how we shape and run our political, economic, educational, and religious institutions. Only by looking at deep values can we perceive what is being born and what is dying in the womb – tomb of soul level transformation.

Deep value trend analysis, when taken to the scope of humanity's entire evolutionary journey, suggests a pattern of maturation taking place within humanity's soul. We have progressed, it seems, through two previous evolutionary epochs, each epoch having a specific developmental purpose, and each with its own unique deep value system. In the latter part of the twentieth century we are living right in the midst of a monumental transition – growing from the second into the third epoch of our soul's maturation. Particularly relevant to this article is how each epoch has had a significantly different relationship between humanity and the rest of nature.

## **EVOLUTIONARY EPOCH I**

### **Humanity's Childhood for the Purpose of Physical Development**

Our childhood's evolutionary purpose was to become physiologically human. But the entire story of that process is much too long and

complex for this discussion. We are star children – literally. The stuff of our bodies is star stuff – created in supernovas, spending some time in Father Sky and some time in Mother Earth, before and after it is in human form in general, or forming our body in particular. So, by necessity, we have to make the very long and complex story of humanity's childhood short and simple.

We arrived at our current state of human physiology about 150,000 years ago. But, the important point for this discussion, is that a particular value system emerged from deep within humanity's soul in order to correspond with the physical development of our childhood. It was a feminine value system – emphasizing our unity with nature, cooperation with animals and the other elements of nature, equality among the sexes, essentially nonviolent and peaceful, societies that were matricentric and matrilineal (but not matriarchal), and a focus upon the regenerative cycle of birth, life, and death.

Nature and the feminine have always been synonymous. We have always treated nature, women, and our innate feminine principal – in both men and women – in basically the same way. So, when we matured to the point of recognizing a larger world beyond ourselves, and of appreciating and giving thanks for the wonder of life, we naturally looked to what appeared to us to be the feminine power behind it all – the focus of our worship, therefore, was the Great Earth Goddess.

Riane Eisler sums up what has been a great deal of accumulating evidence – covering over 40,000 years – regarding our childhood's deep value system.

....instead of being random and unconnected materials, the Paleolithic remains of female figurines, red ocher in burials, and vagina-shaped cowrie shells appear to be early manifestations of what was later to develop into a complex religion centering on the worship of a Mother Goddess as the source and regeneratrix of all forms of life,<sup>2</sup>

British archaeologist James Mellaart has documented "a stability and continuity of growth over many thousands of years for progressively

---

2. Eisler, Riane, *The Chalice & The Blade*, (Harper Collins, 1987) pg 27.

more advanced Goddess-worshipping cultures."<sup>3</sup> Mellaart did extensive excavations in present day Turkey, what in the seventh millennium B.C.E. was the plains of Anatolia, and discovered that:

There had been no wars (and)....there was an ordered pattern of society. There were no human or animal sacrifices. Vegetarianism prevailed, for domestic animal were kept for milk and wool - not for meat. There is no evidence of violent deaths.<sup>4</sup>

To put our deep value system and our focus of worship in proper order - we worshiped the Goddess precisely because our deep value system was feminine, and not the other way around. The Divine "ground of being" is the inner force evolving humanity's soul. It is out of our soul that a deep value system emerges to correspond with the evolutionary purpose of that particular stage in human growth and development. Then, and only then, do we conceptualize and name what we would understand as the ultimate source of the Divine Spirit.

Other scholars suggest that Anatolia was not a cultural aberration, but apparently the norm. There is now sufficient evidence from other archaeological digs to show that much of the Near and Middle East, as well as parts of Europe, Asia and America, once were dominated by feminine values and worship was of the Great Goddess.<sup>5</sup>

The cave art from our childhood years, interestingly enough, has a notable absence of imagery idealizing war, violence, or noble warriors. Lewis Mumford suggests that "what is conspicuous in neolithic diggings is... the complete absence of weapons, though tools and pots are not lacking."<sup>6</sup>

Archaeologist W.J. Perry adds that:

It is an error, as profound as it is universal, to think that men in the food-gathering stage were given to fighting.. All the available facts go to show that the food-gathering stage of

3. Ibid., pg 7

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid.

6. Mumford, Lewis, *The Myth of the Machine*, (Harcourt Brace Javanovich, Inc., 1966) pg 216

history must have been one of perfect peace. The study of the artifacts of the Paleolithic age fails to reveal any definite signs of human warfare.<sup>7</sup>

When we get to the point of considering our current transformation, it will be helpful to remember that our recent relationship with nature, and our propensity for violence – violent with ourselves, nature, and other people – is not inescapably “human nature.” Separation from nature, patriarchy, hierarchy, and violence are only our most recent value system. We’ve changed before, and we are changing again – but I’m getting ahead of the story.

## **EVOLUTIONARY EPOCH II**

### **Humanity's Adolescence for the Purpose of Ego and Mental Development**

Ten thousand years ago we started our first soul-level transformation – moving from our childhood into our adolescence. This transformation brought with it a new evolutionary purpose and a new deep value system.

The purpose was that of ego and mental development – the next evolutionary step on the journey toward becoming fully human. Ego, or a sense of self, is developed by distinguishing self from other, and so we began the process by separating ourselves from the rest of nature. We domesticated plants and animals with the beginning of agriculture and horticulture. We began the process of developing civilization, separating ourselves from the wilderness, the savage, and the beast. We changed our relationship with nature from that of equality and at-one-ment, to that of control, domination, and manipulation.

The enormously influential psychological and spiritual fracture of humanity from the rest of nature distorted our very notion of what it is to be human. And although the process began in our soul ten thousand years ago, it erupted upon the surface of human culture about 6,500 years ago. Violent nomadic bands – the street gangs of pre-history? – led by male warrior-priests, began a five thousand year process of obliterating the more peaceful goddess-worshipping cultures.

---

7. Heinberg, Richard, *Memories and Visions of Paradise*, (Tarcher, 1989) pg 216

Our childhood gave way to our adolescence, our deep value system changed from feminine to masculine, and we left the organic garden in order to pick fights on the Jr. High playground. It is important to keep in mind that the version of the masculine fashioned our deep value system was an adolescent version of masculinity. And, as the natural consequence, we switched the focus of our worship from an immanent Mother Goddess to a transcendent Father God.

The Epoch II adolescent and masculine deep value system - to correspond with ego and mental evolution - included:

### 1. *Reductionism:*

The initial act of separating ourselves from nature started us down the path of reducing all of reality to pieces and parts. We separated heaven and earth, divine and human, matter and spirit, body and mind, etc., etc., etc. And then we came to believe in that illusion - that distinct parts were a more accurate description of "reality," than was the whole.

### 2. *Patriarchy and hierarchy:*

Again, the influential act was separating humanity from nature - it can hardly be over-emphasized in terms of its impact. When we separated ourselves from nature, we rejected and repressed our innate feminine nature, and emphasized an out-of-balance and immature notion of the masculine.

A patriarchy then deals with reductionism in a very specific way. After dividing reality up into pieces it arranges the pieces in hierarchal order - the pieces favored by an adolescent masculine value system having dominance over, and being better than, the other pieces. A patriarchy has particular difficulty in seeing various elements in equal, ecological, and cooperative roles - everything is either better or worse, higher or lower, dominant or submissive, in relationship to other elements.

### 3. *Adolescent notions of power:*

The fracture of our innate feminine-masculine integrity had severe consequences regarding our notions regarding power. We misunderstood

power in two ways. One was in thinking that power had to do with having control over other people. The other mistake was in thinking the essential source of power was external. We projected our worship of power out onto God, saviors, institutions and professions as conduits to salvation and, in our later adolescent years, out onto money and machines.

#### 4. *Violence:*

Because our projection and externalization of power was so unnatural, we developed a desperate need for control. And we used an incredible amount of violence in a desperate attempt to gain and maintain control.

The first and most frantic need was to control the very separation of humanity from nature - we have been extraordinarily fearful that we might slip back into the wild. There were times when we were obsessed with werewolves, and other times when we were preoccupied with cleanliness - both driven by our desperate attempt to maintain our separation from those wild and dirty animals. In fact, "bestiality" was considered among the most terrible crimes, actually punishable by death from the late sixteenth century up until the middle of the nineteenth century. And consider how many religious folks reacted to Darwin, as well as the emergence of the so-called "creation science" - are they not simply the fear that we might actually have a brotherly and sisterly kinship, rather than a separate and dominator relationship, with the animal world?

Another manifestation of our use of violence in order to gain and maintain control, has been the insistence upon right belief. It has provided some of the most hideous chapters in the human biography. One need only to look carefully at the witchcraze, in which perhaps as many as nine million women were tortured and killed, in the name of God.

Or consider the Cathars, who were capable of bodily ecstasy, vision, and trance. That, Morris Berman suggests, "... provided a focus of attack for what the crusaders feared and hated most: their bodies, the natural world, the wild and the primitive. . ."8 Entire towns

---

8. Berman, Morris, *Coming to Our Senses*, (Simon & Schuster, 1989) pg 192.

that were suspected to be Cathar strongholds were put to the sword. Out of the fear of losing control came an enormous amount of self-righteousness, rage, fear and violence – it is reported that some butchered babies with glee so as to protect the world from them growing up to be Cathars.

Or consider our reaction to the Black Plague, which gave Europe a major case of helplessness and lack of control. The Jews were singled out as the minority which must be responsible for all the dying, and they became the brunt of massive torture and killing. The fact that Jews were also dying from the plague was not taken as any proof that they were innocent of causing the tragedy. But in spite of all the scapegoating we were not able to gain control – eventually some forty-four million people died of the Black Plague, wiping out about one-third of Europe.

### **Humanity, As Prodigal Son, Leaves The Father**

The parable of the Prodigal Son is apt for discussing what has happened in the past four hundred years. Two things are probably responsible for us leaving the Father, and going out on our own. First of all, we separated heaven and earth, projected essential power externally, and then established the theological and institutional means by which loyalty to the heavenly Father (and the appropriate conduits) promised the means for controlling our salvation. The Black Plague was the crowning blow to the notion that such loyalty would enable us to control life. So we switched – in terms of primary loyalty – to the earthly realm in general, and science in particular. As Charles Mee, Jr. wrote in the *Smithsonian Magazine*:

As the Black Death waned in Europe, the power of religion waned with it, leaving behind a population that was gradually but certainly turning its attention to the physical realm in which it lived, to materialism and worldliness, to the terrible power of the world itself, and to the wonder of how it works.<sup>9</sup>

The second reason why we took off on our Prodigal Son sojourn is that, quite naturally, ego development is not completed until the

9. *Smithsonian Magazine*, February, 1990, "How a Mysterious Disease Laid Low Europe's Masses" by Charles L. Mee, Jr., pg 76



adolescent feels the need to separate from the parent and try the adventure of life on one's own. "This is my life," all healthy ego development eventually has us saying, "and I can live it on my own." We became convinced that loyalty to the Father was childish and other-worldly, and was unable to fulfill the promise of controlling life here and now. We had a growing confidence in our own mental capacities of figure this world out, and science and technology were the means of salvation.

The Epoch II deep value system, however, was still the soul-level power and guiding force for the Prodigal Son's sojourn. The Prodigal Son did not leave the Epoch II deep values – his loyalty to rationalism and science, as we shall see, simply gave that adolescent value system more powerful tools. And it was still an adolescent masculine value system – thus the appropriate metaphor of the Prodigal Son.

We switched our worship from the heavenly Father to a this-worldly science, from the veneration of religious saints to the almost religious belief in the capacity of our scientific saints to understand and control our world. And, consistent with Epoch II values, the Prodigal Son's theology was "3 M" – masculinity, materialism, and machines. The patriarchy continued, spirit was banished from playing an important role in anything that really counted – "what matters is matter, as for mind, never mind" – and machines became the primary metaphors by which we understood the world and the human body.

All the deep values of Epoch II were taken to extreme measures during our Prodigal Son sojourn. Yet – surprise, surprise – we did not find greater meaning and purpose in our soul, nor attained the "Holy Grail" of gaining control over life. We found that even science could not give us the absolute power to control nature, disease, politics, economics, our spouse, our kids, nor our inner lives. We became depressed, favored entropic philosophies over evolutionary ones, all hell seemed to break loose, and we entered our "dark night of the soul."

### **The Prodigal Son Experiences a "Dark Night of the Soul"**

The decade of the 1960's, at least in America, is when the Prodigal Son entered his (our) "dark night of the soul" – the time of spiritual

crisis heralding the transformation of soul. It was the time when maturational energies burst forth from the collective soul. The pathologies emerging from a deep value system that had outlived its usefulness, and the petrification of stymied maturation sent us into a downward spiral.

What seemed like total chaos at the time was a bursting forth of life's innate drive toward health and wholeness. The last refuge of humanity's adolescence was blown away, and what was "blowing in the wind" was the drive toward a higher order, the maturation of humanity's soul, and the next evolutionary step toward getting our act together in body, mind, and spirit.

It has been a very dark night, because what we have known is dying. The old day is gone. Light has ceased to shine on, and enlightenment has ceased to emit from, the value system of our adolescence. Consequently, we experience a lot of darkness and death, loss and disintegration. It feels like being Linus when his blanket is in the dryer – we don't have the familiar security blankets to hold on to any more.

It is a dark night of the soul precisely because this is soul level stuff we're dealing with – the deep values that shape all of culture, including our religions – and it is only the second such transformation of soul in all of human evolutionary history. The spiritual challenges to such a major transition are substantial – do we focus on what is dying, or on what is being born?

In such a transformational time we have caterpillar people who sense very intensely the dying and the disintegration and, at the same time, we have butterfly people who prefer to focus on the new life that is emerging. The former, with feet firmly planted on the old "turf" have a fear of flying, whereas the latter are attracted to the possibilities of flying high and seeing far.

Fundamentalists, of every stripe, sense the dying of the old values, don't like it one bit, and are trying to will Epoch II back into vibrancy. It won't work – it never does. And if we try to hold on to a value system that has now outlived its organic life – tightly, passionately, and rigidly – we have the capacity of committing an Epoch II "teenage" suicide. We now have the capacity to kill ourselves slowly, through damaging

our ecological life-support system – or suddenly, through the massive use of the powerful weapons our advanced intellect has developed.

The suggestion here, however, is that life has an innate bias of evolution and maturation. There is a divine “inwardness” loving us (attracting us) towards health and wholeness. Yes, we can mess up our participation in that process – we have now grown to the point of having considerable power and self determination – but if we cooperate with the creative and natural flow of life, we will not only survive, we will grow onward into the spiritual maturity of Epoch III.

### **EVOLUTIONARY EPOCH III**

#### **Humanity's Adulthood For the purpose of Spiritual Development**

After evolving physically and mentally, humanity is now entering the next epoch in our evolutionary journey towards health and wholeness – the epoch of spiritual maturation.

The deep values that were necessary for ego and mental development, the deep values appropriate for our adolescence, are definitely not the same values appropriate for the task of spiritual maturation. Epoch III deep values will be in stark contrast to the Epoch II values with which we are so familiar. Holism will replace reductionism. Empowering theologies, philosophies, concepts of human nature, institutions, and professions will replace the disempowering ones of Epoch II. We will become user friendly with change, rather than seeing it as an enemy, as we have in Epoch II. And the Epoch III spirituality will take seriously the integration of our lives with the time of our lives – how the “text” of our individual stories fit within the “context” of Humanity's Big Story.

(A parenthetical word of caution regarding such a brief mention of the Epoch III deep values. They will totally reshape life as we know it as we enter the 21st century, change our very notions about being human and our relationship with the universe, and will radically transform all our institutions. Do not be fooled by quick and superficial recognition of them, for we have only begun to feel their impact. The small and early ripples should not be confused with the “wave of the future.” Or to use another metaphor, we have seen only the first glimmers of a light that would

blind us if we were blasted with its full power. Like a cosmic rheostat we are getting the light, and the enlightenment, in gradual degrees.)

The fifth new and emerging deep value is the one most relevant to this particular article. It is that of re-membering human-nature, so that the Prodigal Son can come home to become reconciled with his heritage.

### **The Prodigal Son Comes Home**

Humanity, as the Prodigal Son, has completed the natural and organic process of ego and mental development, and is now ready for the ego transcendence of spiritual development and adult maturity. The emphasis now shifts from separation and estrangement, to the celebration of unity, reconciliation, synergy, cooperation, ecology, community, and the many marvelous ways in which everything is interrelated.

The Prodigal Son can now re-member human-nature - in both its meanings. First of all, it means that the Prodigal Son can now remember that which was dismembered some ten thousand years ago - humanity and nature. No longer fearing that we might slip back into a bestial state, nor lose the advantages of civilization, we can now bring heaven and earth back together, reconcile with our estranged Father Sky and Mother Earth, as well as with our Brothers and Sisters among the other species.

Secondly, it means that the Prodigal Son can remember who he really is - because of the adolescent need for ego development we got caught up in a false and distorted self-image. By separating ourselves from the rest of nature, although an evolutionary necessity, we falsely came to believe that to be a human being was to be separate from and above the rest of nature.

There are at least five major benefits awaiting humanity in Epoch III that are a direct result of healing the human-nature fracture. To identify them very briefly - for each one could be the subject of an entire essay - they are:

#### **1. *A re-balancing of the masculine and feminine elements of life***

As already stated, when we separated ourselves from nature we separated ourselves from our innate feminine element. This threw

us out of balance, thrust an adolescent notion of the masculine to the forefront, and established the Epoch II values as the driving force behind all human activity.

The re-balancing in Epoch III will do away with both patriarchy and hierarchy as dominant values, will dramatically change our notions of what mature masculinity is all about, and will, consequently, change men's relationship to both nature and women. (The death of Epoch II values will change everything for humanity, but our relationship with nature is the focus of this article.)

*2. Organic metaphors will replace mechanistic metaphors as our way of understanding the universe, the earth, life in general, and our bodies in particular*

The metaphors we use to understand ourselves, and the world around us, are incredibly powerful – they fashion what we think is “real” or unreal, and what we think is “possible” and “impossible”.

Although there was a time when humanity thought about the world in organic metaphors, the Prodigal Son thought all that was rather silly and the evidence of a childish mind. The Prodigal Son thought he had it all figured out when he switched to mechanistic metaphors. The universe, he thought, is a machine that can run by itself – no need for a creator and sustainer. If a creator was needed at all it was only as the masculine “watch-maker” who, after getting it going, could then absent himself. Obviously – at least it seemed obvious to the Prodigal Son's mind – machines don't have soul. Carolyn Merchant, in her important book, *The Death of Nature*, writes:

The removal of animistic, organic assumptions about the cosmos constituted the death of nature, the most far-reaching effect of the Scientific Revolution... because nature was now viewed as a system of dead, inert particles moved by external, rather than inherent forces, the mechanical framework itself could legitimate the manipulation of nature.<sup>10</sup>

When the Prodigal Son entered medical school and began to figure out how the human body works, breaks down, and gets fixed, he

10. Merchant, Carolyn, *The Death of Nature*, (Harper Collins, 1980) pg 193

again looked to mechanistic metaphors. One of his favorite "professors," Rene Descartes, wrote: "I consider the human body as a machine....My thought....compares a sick man and an ill-made clock with my idea of a healthy man and a well-made clock."<sup>11</sup>

Again, the Prodigal Son did not consider the psyche (mind and soul) to be a relevant ingredient in understanding how the mechanistic human body works, breaks down, or is fixed. As Descartes put it: "There is nothing included in the concept of the body that belongs to the mind; and nothing in that of the mind that belongs to the body."<sup>12</sup>

So we came to understand the heart as like a pump, the mind as like a computer, etc., etc., etc. And as much as I enjoyed the mind of Buckminster Fuller, his metaphor of "Spaceship Earth" was thoroughly Epoch II. On the other hand, perhaps the most celebrated image of the Epoch III shift into organic metaphors is James Lovelock's "Gaia hypothesis."

Increasing numbers of scientists are beginning to think of the earth and the universe in organic terms and, likewise, an increasing number of physicians are beginning to consider the body-mind-spirit synergy in health and illness – all are indications that the Prodigal Son is remembering human-nature.

### *3. Love will finally be seen as the ontological power that it is*

When we saw the universe, the earth, and ourselves as machines, we were unable to realize that Love is the ultimate creative and sustaining power. And in our adolescence we were unable to even understand a mature concept of Love.

But, entering Epoch III, we are now beginning to realize that it is Love that created the universe, it is Love that is the attracting power that makes this a holistic universe, it is love that heals our inner fractures, and it is Love that reunites us with our estranged Mother, Father, Brothers and Sisters.

### *4. A holistic sense of spiritual power and consequently, a less frantic need to control life*

11. Capra, Fritjof, *The Turning Point*, (Simon & Schuster, 1982) pg 62.

12. *Ibid.*, pg 59.

Our participation in the source of spiritual power is best understood by the metaphor of the hologram. "A hologram," explains science writer John Briggs,

is a photographic image produced by laser light. The image is stored on the holographic plate, then retrieved by shining a laser beam through the plate to create a three-dimensional projection. Curiously, if a piece of the holographic plate is broken off and the laser beam is passed through it, the whole image still appears, though it is somewhat fuzzy. In other words, each 'part' has implicitly retained information about the whole.<sup>13</sup>

We are created "in the image of God," and inherit an at-one-ment with that Source of spiritual power. It was only in our adolescent ego development that we lived under the illusion that we were separate from essential power, and that sense of separation is the root cause of our desperate attempts to gain and maintain control of life.

In the spiritual maturation of Epoch III we will remember our unity with divine power, realize that love is the laser beam of light that when shining through us shows an image of the Whole, albeit in a slightly fuzzy form. By reconnecting with the essential power of the universe, through love, we are empowering the only part of the universe over which we have responsibility—ourselves. We are individually unique, yet share the ultimate source of power with all the rest of creation. And when we become so empowered, in Epoch III, we will know power intimately and, therefore, be much less prone to project notions of power, as well as much less driven to control others.

As we let go of this need to control, we will have less energy around gaining and maintaining conformity to rigid belief systems. Imperialistic institutions and professions will also lose their power. Faith and flow will take on greater roles, as we become more at home in and with nature. And, believe it or now, our propensity for violence will undergo a major transformation.

##### 5. *A new human self-image vis-a-vis the rest of nature*

Epoch II, for the purpose of ego maturation, developed a human self image based, first of all, upon separation from nature, then a

---

13. *A New Age Journal* interview with David Bohm, Sept/Oct. 1989

theological rationale for domination over nature, then used fear, control, and violence by which to make sure we didn't slip back into a wild and bestial state, and finally, with the Prodigal Son's ego-strong scientific eyesight we viewed ourselves as the pinnacle of the evolutionary process.

(Actually, there is a far more complex and paradoxical picture of self-image during our Prodigal Son sojourn, than we can discuss in full in this article. In a process similar to what happens to us individually, as the collective Prodigal Son's adolescent ego developed, self-image seems to go in opposite directions at the same time. Before we left the Father we thought we were at the center of the universe, as well as the prime reason for creation, distinct and above the rest of nature. In the early stages of our Prodigal Son venture, Copernicus and Galileo and others displaced us from the center of the universe - thus diminishing our importance while we were in the very process of maturing our ego. Then along came Darwin, linking us to the lowly beasts - another blow to our importance. Of course, some of our brothers and sisters who stayed in the Father's house, refused to accept those heretical notions that would seemingly damage our favored role in the Father's universal home. So our place and importance in the universe, along with our position atop the hierarchy of God's creation, diminished at the very time when we were finishing off our ego development. But the subtleties of all that are grist for another time.)

Moving now into Epoch III and spirituality maturity, the human ego is becoming strong and mature enough for ego transcendence. The benefit of that will be the ability to consider our special purpose and calling, without having to see that in a separate or hierarchal fashion. We will see that each participant in this glorious creation has a function and special purpose. So, from domination and pinnacle status we are now beginning to see ourselves as participants in an incredibly interrelated, marvelously synergetic, ecological matrix - a point of view that emphasizes relationship, responsibility, community, communion, and a common destiny.

The metaphor that may facilitate this Epoch III self image is that of all creation being a spirit - filled body - love permeating every cell as the power of healing and wholeness. Our role may be as the head - only Epoch II would see that as more important than the heart, or the lungs,



or the circulatory system, etc. – in which eyes are high so as to be able to see far, and consciousness can take special responsibilities for the health of the rest of the body. Peter Russell spoke of the Global Brain, and perhaps we are Gaia's central nervous system, and the planetary mind. Only Epoch II adolescent self-centered arrogance would think of damaging the rest of our body, but hold out hope for keeping alive that which is singularly important – our head – “under glass” in some disembodied state by some miracle machine.

### **A New Heaven and A New Earth**

The transformation in which we are living is huge – nothing less than a transformation of humanity's soul. In fact, although this is the second soul-level maturation in all of human evolutionary history, this is the most substantial, and has the greatest consequences. A new deep value system is emerging by which to shape the 21st century, totally change our notions of heaven and earth, divine and human, matter and spirit and, consequently, radically change all our institutions. And, we will be growing into a whole new image of God. So, buckle your seat-belts – we're in for quite a ride as we enter the 21st century and catapult into Epoch III.