

The Foundation and Framework for the Sharing Economy

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Seen from our perspective here on Earth, evolution has been accelerating exponentially for some fourteen billion years since the most recent big bang and is now accelerating at mind-shattering speeds—literally. This is leading humanity into a major crisis, for many are afraid of change, most obviously evident in political, religious, economic, and scientific conservatism. For any species that does not adapt to its changing environment cannot expect to survive for long.

Yet out of crisis comes opportunity, the opportunity to realize the great dream of humanity to build a society living in love, peace, and harmony within itself and with its environment. This realization can come about by recognizing that evolution is a cumulative process, which proceeds in an accelerating, exponential fashion by creating wholes that are greater than the sum of the preceding wholes through the new relationships that are formed, apparently out of nothing. So by working harmoniously together with a common vision we can synergistically cocreate the society that we all long for deep in our hearts.

During this great cultural transformation of consciousness, which will bring about major changes in the way we see ourselves and live our lives, we need to provide a sense of continuity. Otherwise, the changes that we need to make in our lives could be too overwhelming, leading in some cases to what Christina and Stanislav Grof call a spiritual emergency, as spirit emerges faster than the psyche can handle.

As many spiritual seekers are discovering today, the unshakeable foundation for all our lives is our immortal Ground of Being, which we experience through gnosis, cognate with both *knowledge* in English and *jnana* in Sanskrit. So when we live consciously in union with the Divine, we recognize that we are all one Whole, the fundamental understanding that we need to build a peaceful, harmonious society.

In practical terms, the Internet can provide the framework or infrastructure that we need to ensure the continuous supply of goods and services during the tumultuous times that lie ahead. For the Internet is transcultural and transdisciplinary, containing no underlying fixed structures within it that could inhibit the development of the Sharing Economy, a life-enhancing way of conducting business based on cooperation rather than competition.

An evolutionary perspective

Before we look at the immediate issues facing us all today, it is useful to see the big picture. For by understanding a little of where we have come from, we can better understand where we are all heading as a species.

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, the French palæontologist, geologist, and Jesuit priest, showed in *The Human Phenomenon* that we can divide the overall process of cosmogenesis or hologenesis of the past fourteen billion years into four stages, the first three of which were the evolution of matter and the physical universe, of forms of life, and of concepts in the mind, which we can call hylogenesis, biomorphogenesis, and noogenesis, respectively. Narrowing the focus of our attention, the transition between the second and third phases took place during the comparatively peaceful age of the Great Mother, coming to an end about 4,500 years ago with the birth of history, marked in the West by the mythical Garden of Eden.

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During the patriarchal, mental-egoic age (me-epoch) that followed, Arnold J. Toynbee showed in his monumental *A Study of History* that twenty major civilizations were born, most naturally dying in the course of time. This includes Western civilization, which today dominates the world through the global economy. In turn, this great civilization is now dying because it is based on the false assumption that we human beings are separate from God, Nature, and each other, when the truth is that we are in gnostic union with the Divine at every instant of our lives.

This has led the education system to become fragmented, with the focus of attention being on intellectual specialization rather than on the awakening of Intelligence, which we need to be able to see ourselves and the world we live in with the utmost clarity. As a consequence, Western civilization is based on seven pillars of unwisdom, to use Arthur Koestler's term, misconceptions about God, the Universe, Life, humanity, money, justice, and reason. So if we are to heal our divided minds, we need to create an education system based on the seven pillars of wisdom, recognizing that we are all one Whole. I am in you and you are in me, the 'I' here denoting our true Essence, which is Love, Consciousness, and Intelligence.

Today, there are many millions of people going through such a healing process, recognizing that what has traditionally been taught in schools, universities, and churches no longer makes sense. It is therefore crystal clear that evolution is poised to carry humanity to its glorious culmination, those we call Indigo children being among the cultural pioneers. We are entering the fourth and final stage of evolution in general and the third and final phase of human evolution. The war-ridden, self-centred epoch is being transformed into a holistic, wisdom society.

I call this peaceful eschatological age of universal spirit (us-epoch) the Paragonian Society, from the Greek words *para*, 'beyond', and *agon*, 'contest' or 'conflict', which is also the root of *agony* and *antagonistic*. *Paragonian* thus means 'beyond conflict and suffering', a healthy, liberated, and awakened way of being that we can realize when we are both unified with the Divine and integrated with the Cosmos.

The limits of technology

What is bringing the great global crisis to a head at this particular time is not severe ecological damage, first brought to our attention by Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*, or the psychological and economic dangers highlighted by Erich Fromm's lifelong study of the human predicament, but the invention of the stored-program computer in the middle of the last century.

For while the computer might be made from sand and bits of metal, it is essentially a tool of thought. The computer extends our *mental* abilities and in some cases can replace them, in contrast to the many tools we have developed over the millennia to extend our rather limited *physical* abilities, such as the flint axe, the wheel, the steam engine, the telephone, and the aeroplane.

Yet we do not understand what we have invented because we do not understand ourselves, how the mind and spirit function. For it is quite impossible to understand our machines and what it means to be a human being through materialistic science, whether mechanistic and reductionist or holistic, and within the materialistic, monetary economic systems of capitalism and communism.

Indeed, our ignorance of the relationship between human beings and computers has led us to believe that technological development can drive economic growth indefinitely. In effect, we have made the computer the leading edge of evolution instead of us human beings. This is a fundamental misconception, for we have far greater potential for development than computer

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technology. It is not possible for computer scientists to build machines with artificial intelligence, consciousness, or life, for it is we human beings who are at the leading edge of evolution.

The popular movie *The Matrix* provides a powerful allegory for our times. This depicts Neo and his friends attempting to escape from the rigid, habitual behaviour that characterizes much of society today. As the movie shows, if we are to creatively rise above our mechanistic minds, we need to turn the focus of our attention inwards by following the maxim in the Oracle's kitchen, TEMET NOSCE ('Know Yourself'). It is through self-inquiry that we can learn to be masters of our computers, rather than being slaves to technology, as many of us are at present. It is in this way that we can make the transition from the mental-egoic epoch to the age of universal spirit.

Not that this is easy, for to truly know ourselves, we need to be grounded in our divine Source, bringing into consciousness not only our personal and cultural conditioning, but also the collective unconscious that has accumulated over many thousands of years. For much of our behaviour today is being caused by evolutionary forces that we do not yet fully understand. Tragically, we are running our business lives blindfold, rather like driving down the highway with our eyes closed, not very wise.

Integral business modelling

Not that we have any choice in this matter, for we are all the products of fourteen billion years of evolution. What we know or don't know is the result of all these years of development. So what is evolution telling us today? How can Life open our eyes so that we live our lives in full consciousness of what we are doing? How can evolution become fully conscious of itself?

Well, in my particular case, Life has taught me to know myself by studying the way that the Internet is designed. For the underlying structure of the Internet reflects the underlying structure of the human mind, and hence the Universe as a whole. Indeed, this knowledge is also essential to build the systems that will provide the coherent framework that we need for our cocreative activities. The *What is Enlightenment?* magazine is also searching for such a framework for transformation, rooted in the timeless revelation of enlightenment. For as they say, finding such an architecture is vital not only for the evolution of our species, but for our very survival.

However, it has to be said that this framework involves thought processes of the utmost abstraction and generality, which are not everyone's cup of tea. Thankfully, it is not necessary to understand these thought processes in detail to live in the Paragonian Society, any more than it is necessary to understand economic theory to buy a loaf of bread in the village store, where these still exist. In most cases, heart-felt intuition is quite sufficient here. But some of us need to understand the rational underlying structure of the Internet if we are to use it to build the information systems we need in the Sharing Economy when the global economy self-destructs in five to ten years' time.

It is the job of the information systems architect to design and implement information systems in the global economy. And because the tools and techniques used for this purpose are applicable in all cultures, industries, and countries, they are equally applicable in the Sharing Economy. The word *architect* is appropriate here for it derives from the Greek *arch*, meaning 'chief', and *tekon*, 'builder'. So an information systems (IS) architect is the master builder, someone who can see the big picture: how all the parts of a system fit together to form a coherent whole. It is therefore not surprising that IS architects are adapting the pattern language of the architect Christopher Alexander to build systems that evolve naturally as living wholes.

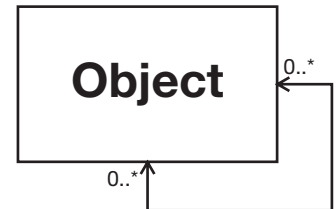
Like architects who design buildings, IS architects begin their design processes by developing models of the systems they are going to build. The most fundamental of the business modelling

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methods being used today is the relational model of data introduced by Ted Codd of IBM in 1970. Because it evolved from the mathematical theory of relations and first-order predicate logic, this modelling method provided, for the first time, a mathematical representation of the basic resource of the data-processing industry: data itself. Since Codd's seminal eleven-page paper was published, it has spawned a multibillion-dollar industry. You cannot order a book or an airline ticket on the Internet without using the relational model of data behind the scenes

Beginning in the 1980s, the relational model was augmented by object-oriented modelling methods, which had their origin in the programming language Simula, introduced by the Norwegian Computing Center in 1965. This led to the desktop metaphor introduced in the Apple Macintosh in the 1980s and to object-oriented programming languages, like C++, Java, and Smalltalk, used by most professional programmers today. Framework programmers use such languages to build class libraries that provide the building blocks of the systems being created, like the bricks used in the design of a house.

In business terms, the object-oriented modelling method that has become the de facto standard is the Unified Modeling Language, developed in the 1990s by Grady Booch, James Rumbaugh, and Ivar Jacobson of Rational Software Corporation, now a subsidiary of IBM. UML models can be very complex, reflecting the complexity of the territory being mapped. But underlying all these models is a class model of the utmost simplicity and abstraction, shown here.



The word *object* in this class diagram denotes the superclass, at the top of the class hierarchy. All other classes are subclasses of **object**. The diagram shows that instances of any class in the system, called objects, can have zero or more relationships with an object in any other class, including itself. The diagram is thus a depiction of the entire business world, of the global economy!

Healing the mind

We can extend this self-reflective semantic model of the psychodynamics of society to build a model of the Totality of Existence and so solve the ultimate problem of science. This is simply done by replacing the word *object* in the diagram above with that of *being*, the concept that formed the basis of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. This is what Aristotle wrote about being:

There is a science which studies Being *qua* Being, and the properties inherent in it in virtue of its own nature. This science is not the same as any of the so-called particular sciences, for none of the others contemplates Being generally *qua* Being; they divide off some portion of it and study the attribute of this portion, as do for example the mathematical sciences.

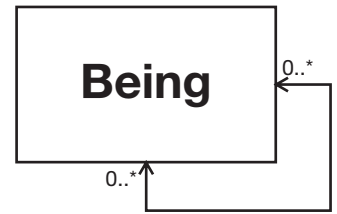
By regarding **being** as the superclass of all other classes, we can thus develop a completely general science to balance the particular sciences. *Being* does not just denote an object. The word represents any object, event, process, system, organism, state, feeling, form, structure, relationship, field, concept, class, character, symbol, religion, discipline, ism, ology, osophy, theory, language, culture, civilization, or any other entity that I, or any other knowing being, can perceive, conceive, or imagine.

The word *being* also denotes the Absolute, the Supreme Being, generally called God in Western civilization. Using a term from the data processing industry, we can call the Absolute the Datum of the Universe, meaning 'that which is given'. This is the Essence of the Universe, which exists prior to being, a notion encapsulated in the word *presence*, which derives from the Latin word *praesense*, consisting of two parts, *prae*, 'before' and *esse*, 'to be'. So *presence* literally means 'before

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being’ or ‘prior to existence’. The concept of being is thus the simplest possible application of Ockham’s razor, known as the “principle of ontological economy, usually formulated as ‘Entities are not to be multiplied beyond necessity’ ”.

By forming all concepts as subclasses of **being**, we can develop a comprehensive, self-inclusive model of the entire Universe, illustrated in this diagram. This shows that every being in the Universe, felt and viewed as Consciousness, is related to every other being in potentially an infinite number of ways. There are thus no autonomous beings in the Universe that can act freely and independently of any other being. In human terms, we are all in the same boat, interdependent on each other for maintaining the health and wellbeing, not only of ourselves, but also of our physical environment.



But more than this. As the superclass **being** includes the absolute Whole, or Wholeness, it provides the overall context for all our learning. This is of profound importance. For by learning in this way, we are always Wholeness, no matter how detailed and specialized our analytical activities might become. It is a thoroughly healthy approach to learning, enabling us to see our particular areas of expertise in the context of the Whole.

Specifically, we can adapt the IS design principles of conceptual clarity, integrity, simplicity, and consistency to interpret the data patterns of our experience to form a meaningful set of concepts that relate to each other as a coherent whole. By watching our thoughts arise directly from their divine Source and by paying careful attention to the similar differences and different similarities between beings, an approach that leads to universal order, as David Bohm points out, we can heal the fragmented mind.

As this egalitarian approach to concept formation is very original, as Chris Clarke, a professor of mathematical physics in the UK, has observed, we need a new word to denote the study of Wholeness. To this end, I call the abstract science that has evolved from business modelling methods *panosophy*, a word first used in English in 1642, albeit with a slightly different spelling, to mean ‘a scheme or cyclopædic work embracing the whole body of human knowledge’. Panosophy is a unified relationships theory, the Theory of Everything that such figures as Stephen W. Hawking and Ken Wilber are attempting to develop today. For panosophy is a coherent body of knowledge that describes all the forces of Nature—both physical and nonphysical—within a single, all-encompassing framework, called relational logic.

Not that there is anything mysterious about this nonaxiomatic, holographic, self-reflective science of reason. Relational logic simply makes explicit the way that we all implicitly organize our thoughts and ideas, guided by the Logos, the rational principle governing the Cosmos. Yet, paradoxically, because relational logic enables us to integrate all knowledge in all cultures and disciplines at all times into a coherent whole, it introduces the most radical change in the way we think in the history of human learning.

A strategy for change and transformation

So what does all this mean for our rapidly changing society? Well, people usually only make radical changes in their lives when the pain of not doing so is greater than the pain of change. For instance, the anxiety, stress, and burnout that many are experiencing living in a rapidly changing world is a common trigger for change. Others have had desperately unhappy childhoods, which leads them to

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seek the reasons for their distress. In general, the deeper the pain, the more profound the transformation.

In my particular case, I have been through a series of major crises in my life, going back to before I was born. This has led me to return to our divine Source to search for the root cause of my suffering. This experiment in learning has then led me to the glorious culmination of evolution, when Alpha and Omega are one in conformity with the fundamental design principle of the Universe: *Wholeness is the union of all opposites*. All I want to do in the remainder of my life is to help my fellow human beings through the transition from the me- to the us-epoch as well as I am able.

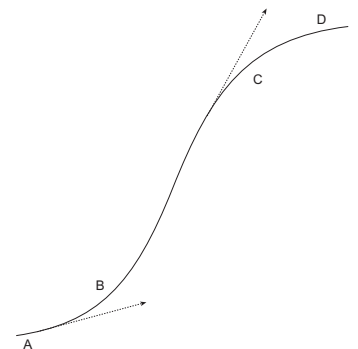
At present, the primary focus of most people's transformation process is on the individual. Of course, there are many social activists, but in general, they are not so deeply involved in personal transformation. As Vimala Thakar points out in *Spirituality and Social Action* "religious groups concerned with inner growth and inner revolution, and social activist groups concerned with social service ... throughout history have been contemptuous of each other." This is a very sad state of affairs that we need to rectify if we are to live freely in harmony with the accelerating pace of evolutionary change we are experiencing today.

In recent years, there have been three major crises that have affected a wide section of society. These were the extremist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on 11th September 2001, the tsunami in south-east Asia on 26th December 2004, and Hurricane Katrina in the Gulf Coast states in the USA on 2nd September 2005. While all these events were shocking, none of them was surprising. All of them are signals from the Universe of the need to make radical changes in our lives. For worse is to come, far worse. We probably need a series of similar life-shocks to wake us all up, to shake us out of our fears and delusions. For Western civilization is a society living further away from Reality and Nature than any civilization in history.

This is going to be most obvious when the global economy collapses during the next decade. People see many psychological, ecological, and economic reasons for this evolutionary inevitability, such as the huge debt burden and the growing oil crisis. But they don't generally see the cosmic or technological reasons. Cosmically, Western civilization has to transform itself into the Paragonian Society because there is no other way for evolution to reach its fulfilment at the end of time in the eternal Now, a notion made popular by Eckhart Tolle's *The Power of Now*, which has sold over 700,000 copies, the last time I heard.

Technologically, capitalism will die because computer technology is limited and so its development cannot drive economic growth indefinitely. We can see this most clearly from the S-shape of the growth or learning curve, also called the logistic curve. All evolutionary growth processes follow an S-shape, as has been observed by scientists from D'Arcy Wentworth Thompson, through C. H. Waddington and Stephen Jay Gould, to Peter Russell. Growth begins slowly, then accelerates exponentially, eventually coming to a limit, at which point growth slows down and reverses. Evolution thus goes through a start-stop process, which Niles Eldridge and Stephen Jay Gould called 'punctuated equilibrium'.

As this diagram illustrates, the growth curve has three distinct phases. In the first phase, growth is very slow and apparently non-existent until at point B there is a sharp turn that can be most unexpected. We can call point B the coordination point of the learning curve, leading to an exponential synergistic effect as new relationships form apparently out of nothing.



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However, there is generally a limit when the formation of relationships reaches saturation at point C. Computer technology, both software and hardware, is approaching this point today. For the basic fact is that there are no more major discoveries to be made in computer science. The infrastructure of the discipline, and hence of the information technology industry, is now well established. Of course, there is no limit to the refinements that can still be made, such as the multitude of gadgets that are leading to what is called ‘the digital lifestyle’. But these are mere details, of little relevance to the big picture.

This fact is well demonstrated by relational logic, a both-and, neither-nor, and either-or science of reason that cannot be developed further. It is so abstract and all-encompassing that it marks the end of metaphysics, providing the framework we need to organize all knowledge in all cultures and disciplines into a coherent whole, the great dream of humanity from Arjuna, through Pythagoras and Descartes, to Einstein, Bohm, and many others today. Not that there is any limit to the uses to which relational logic can be put. It is just that this integral approach to learning provides the framework for the megasynthesis that Teilhard prophesied would result from the convergence of all the diverse streams of evolution when it reaches its Omega point.

In contrast to our machines, there is no limit to the growth of human consciousness, when we are free of the personal, cultural, and collective conditioning that leads us to behave more like our machines than the divine, cosmic beings we truly are. Comparing human phylogeny with ontogeny, at best we are still at the adolescent stage of development, with many still in infancy. So if we could work harmoniously together with a common vision and systemic framework, we would grow into full maturity as loving, conscious, and intelligent beings.

The Paragonian Foundation

To this end, I am currently setting up the Paragonian Foundation to provide the foundation and framework we need to address the spiritual, educational, and economic needs of our emerging civilization. For from where I sit deep in the countryside in western Sweden surrounded by beautiful lakes, forests, and hills, I see a great awakening of Love, Consciousness, and Intelligence taking place in the world, but which is tragically lacking in coherence.

While a growing number of people are becoming increasingly aware of our nondual, immortal Ground of Being, the solid foundation that provides us all with a true sense of security in life, almost no one is yet aware of the metaphysical framework that we all similarly share.

Not that I can teach anyone relational logic, which is at once simple common sense and the most fundamental change in Western thought since Aristotle. This holistic system of thought can only be learned when evolution decrees that the time is right, specifically when seekers of Wholeness and the Truth are ready to start afresh at the very beginning, at the Alpha point of evolution.

Rather, I see my role in life to be to demonstrate panosophy in action, to walk my talk. For I’ve been developing and using relational logic for twenty-five years, building on thirty earlier years of questioning the basic religious and scientific assumptions of the culture I was born into. Living in Wholeness at the Alpha/Omega point of evolution is thus second nature to me now.

What I’ve done so far to try to establish a role for myself in society is to publish a 154–page introductory book on the Paragonian vision called *The Paragonian Manifesto: Revealing the Coherent Light of Consciousness*. I am following this up by setting up a web site (www.paragonian.org) designed to reach out to the world.

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This web site contains the draft of about half my second book, an 800–page work of scholarship called *Ineffable, Nondual Wholeness: The Union of All Opposites*, including a detailed description of relational logic. This is rather like a skeleton for the coherent body of knowledge that is panosophy. So if it is to be seen in all its beauty, there is still much flesh to be added to these bare bones.

There are also a growing number of articles available for download. Two of these have so far been published by David Lorimer, the editor of *Omnipedia*, the electronic journal of the International Futures Forum, and of *Network Review*, the printed journal of the Scientific and Medical Network, both in the UK.

I'm also putting on the web a glossary of terms used in panosophy and a bibliography of recommended books for those who wish to study the Grand Unified Theory. For English, along with the other European languages, reflects a materialistic worldview in which God is viewed as other. So if we are to completely heal the split between science and religion, East and West, and reason and mysticism, we need to change the meanings of many words, often by returning to the root meanings of words, what David Bohm aptly called the archæology of language.

However, progress so far has been very slow, for our conditioning goes very deep. While I am making some valuable new contacts, we are still on the flat part of the growth curve, some way short of the coordination point. Nevertheless, I feel sure that this critical point will be reached before too long, as more and more people open their hearts and minds to the necessity of a systemic framework not only to coordinate our activities, but also to provide some continuity during the great cultural transformation taking place today.

And when this happens, we shall witness the most amazing awakening of Love, Consciousness, and Intelligence. What is happening today will appear like a tiny ripple compared with the great wave that even now is building up in the depths of the ocean of Consciousness, rather like a tsunami. As early as the beginning of the next decade, our beautiful planet Earth could be ablaze with the radiant light of Consciousness, at the end of what José Argüelles called 'a period of Harmonic Convergence' and the end of the Mayan Long Count, the only calendar in the world to reflect the exponential character of evolutionary development.

It is this great wave of Consciousness that will enable us to build the Sharing Economy when the global economy self-destructs. For it is Love and Intelligence that can dissolve the fears and delusions that inhibit us from realizing our fullest potential both as individuals and as a species. Marvellous times we live in!

Paul was born in south-east England in the middle of the Second World War, a traumatic experience that was to have a profound effect on his later development. After graduating in mathematics, he has spent his business career in the information technology industry, mostly with IBM in sales and marketing in the UK and in software development in Sweden.

Since 1980, when Paul realized that the global economy held the seeds of its own destruction within it, he has used his knowledge of mathematics and computer science to follow a spiritual path of jnana-yoga, the path of abstract knowledge in the East, and so has returned Home to Wholeness, the union of all opposites, at the Alpha/Omega point of evolution.