Healing Our Sick Society

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We human beings are the least instinctive of all the animals. Virtually all our behaviour is determined by our learning. Using the metaphor of the stored-program computer, our behaviour is mainly programmed, not hard-wired, and therefore can be changed with our divine, self-reflective Intelligence. This programmed behaviour arises from the past from three main sources: our personal experiences since conception, our cultural inheritance and traditions, and our collective human experience, particularly our strained sexual relationships induced by the patriarchal epoch that emerged a few thousand years ago.

Although this mechanistic conditioning has been the direct cause of all the wars during human history, it has also served the purpose of ensuring that human society could function with a modicum of harmony. But not any more. The evolutionary processes that have been accumulating during the past fourteen billion years at an exponential rate are now accelerating so fast that holding on to our fixed beliefs and assumptions is driving humanity to extinction before we have realized our fullest potential as a species. For any species that does not adapt to its changing environment cannot expect to survive for very long.

In these rapidly changing times, conservatism, holding on to the status quo, is insane. As Eckhart Tolle and Erich Fromm, among many others, have pointed out, we live in a dysfunctional, sick society. The root cause of our sickness is the assumption that we human beings are separate from God, from Nature, and from each other, instilled in us by Christianity (and Judaism and Islam), materialistic and mechanistic science, and capitalistic and communistic economic ideologies.

The cure for our sickness is thus to live consciously in union with the Divine, which alone has the power to transform our fragmented, deluded, and programmed minds, recognizing that we are one whole, both as individuals and as a society. For *health* is cognate with both *wholeness* and *holiness*. So when we have all learnt to return Home to Wholeness, we shall be living in a fully awakened, liberated, and healthy society, able to live in love and peace for as long as human beings remain on our beautiful planet Earth.

However, applying the remedy is not easy because mechanistic evolutionary processes are blind. Once a behaviour pattern becomes established, it tends to habitually repeat itself. In human terms, the traditions that we have inherited from our less than fully conscious forebears provide many of us with our sense of security and identity in life. Most have not yet learnt to live according to Shakyamuni Buddha’s three marks of being: there is nothing permanent in the Universe and until we are free of the sense of a separate self, we shall suffer. We therefore do not know and feel that the only certain base for security in life is our gnostic, immortal Ground of Being. Even though Jesus of Nazareth taught that knowing the Truth makes us free, there is still a deep fear of freedom, of letting go of egoic attachments to the ever-changing world of form, including our bodies and belief systems about God, life, and money.

We human beings are thus still poised midway between the gods and the beasts, as the Neo-Platonic philosopher Plotinus observed in the third century. Even though there is a great spiritual
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awakening taking place in the world, today we are behaving more like our machines than the divine, cosmic beings we truly are. So how can we become free of our mechanistic conditioning and so ensure that today’s schoolchildren have a reasonable chance of growing old enough to have children of their own?

Well, the first point to note is that there is no ‘how’. Even if we were totally free to live spontaneously and naturally, we would still not have the free will as autonomous beings to make the changes that are urgently needed to ensure our survival as a species for as long as possible. For none of us is separate from the Divine for a single instance in our lives, despite what modern science and the monotheistic religions tell us. As the Advaita sages reiterate in their satsangs, there is no doership, no separate entity, including the Divine, itself, that can be said to be doing anything. Each of us is the product of some fourteen billion years of evolution arising directly from our divine Source.

Yet, as Julian Huxley observed, “in modern scientific man, evolution [is] at last becoming conscious of itself.” So we can see that evolution is giving us the understanding that is necessary to ensure that our species brings the fourteen billion years of evolution to their glorious culmination at the end of time in the eternal Now: the Universe is intelligently designed, as the Creationists believe, but there is no designer thereof, as the Darwinists believe.

The French palæontologist and Jesuit priest Pierre Teilhard de Chardin was one in whom evolution was becoming conscious of itself. He foresaw that one day all the divergent streams of evolution would converge in a great megasynthesis at what he called the Omega point of evolution. In modern terms, evolution is carrying us to the complete unification of Western reason and Eastern mysticism, thus healing the great schism between science and religion that has bedevilled human learning for the past few hundred years.

Actually, this is not a new aspiration. Many individuals throughout human history have sought to integrate all knowledge, including self-knowledge, into a coherent whole. Perhaps the earliest reference to this great dream of humanity is in the Bhagavad Gita. In this Hindu classic, Krishna showed Arjuna the Ultimate Cosmic Vision, for “Arjuna saw all the manifold forms of the universe united as one.”

Then in the sixth century BCE, the Pythagorean Brotherhood embraced all aspects of the human condition, from mathematics to mysticism. They saw that reality, at its deepest level, is mathematical in nature, that philosophy can be used for spiritual purification, and that the soul can rise to union with the Divine. Yet the politicians were afraid of the Brotherhood and sacked and burned its meetinghouses. Such is the fate of those who seek Wholeness and the Truth in a fragmented and deluded world.

In the thirteenth century, the English friar Roger Bacon, a progenitor of the empirical approach of modern experimental science, sought to build a vast encyclopædia of all the sciences known at his time based on human experience. Inevitably, the church authorities felt threatened by Bacon’s ideas, and he was condemned to prison for ‘suspected novelties’ in his teaching.
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Then on 10th November 1619, René Descartes had a dream of the unification of the whole of knowledge through the power of reason.14 Descartes realized that this dream could not be realized within the Aristotelian framework that held sway at that time and so endeavoured to construct a philosophical edifice de novo.15 However, he did not manage to free himself of his dualistic conditioning, reinforcing the West’s mechanistic world-view and separation from the Divine.

In 1925, Albert Einstein continued humanity’s quest for Wholeness by postulating a unified field theory that would unify all the known forces of Nature within a single, all-encompassing framework. Today, the physicists are still trying to develop what is now called the Theory of Everything or Grand Unified Theory. For instance, Stephen W. Hawking has said that if we do discover such a complete theory, “it would be the ultimate triumph of human reason—for then we would know the mind of God.”16

The transpersonal philosopher Ken Wilber has recognized that the Theory of Everything cannot be developed within physics and so during the course of nearly thirty years he has written over twenty books seeking “an integral vision for business, politics, science, and spirituality”.17 However, he has said that integrating all knowledge into a coherent whole is a task that is inherently undoable because “knowledge expands faster than ways to categorize it.”17 Despite this inhibiting opinion, Ken has attempted to develop a Theory of Everything using his well-known four-quadrant model,18 “because, I believe, a little bit of wholeness is better than none at all.”17 Christian de Quincey, in a critical appreciation of A Theory of Everything, supports Ken’s sceptical view “because you cannot create a model or a map that contains itself.”19

This is not my experience. To understand my own life experiences and the experiences of every other human being on this planet, Life has led me to create a coherent body of all knowledge, whose creation is included within the territory being mapped. For me, Alfred Korzybski’s well-known notion that the map is not the territory20 is not true. In my experience, there is no objective reality that is separate from my all-embracing conceptual model of the Universe, from my own profound inner knowing of Wholeness. In the words of J. Krishnamurti and David Bohm, the observer and observed are one.21 Such an understanding is essential if we are to follow the maxim in the Oracle’s kitchen, TEMET NOSCE (‘Know Yourself’), in the movie The Matrix.

Indeed, this popular movie provides us with a powerful allegory of our times. If we are to be free of our mechanistic minds, we need to be born again, stripped bare, deprogrammed, and deconditioned, as Neo dramatically was in the movie. We need “to awaken to total revolution”, in the words of Vimala Thakar.22 This is essential if we are to become masters of our computers, rather than being slaves to technology, as many of us are at present. We can only realize our fullest potential as human beings by starting afresh at the very beginning, by becoming free of our religious, scientific, economic, and personal conditioning.

Not that the mechanistic and conservative authorities are our enemy, as depicted in the movie; this is dualistic thinking. Evolution is carrying us all Home to nondual Wholeness, in which there are no enemies. There is then just Love and Peace, Life and Freedom, the great joy of being alive, free of the fear of death.
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This is essentially what has happened to me during my lifetime. I was born in the middle of the Second World War midway between London and the English Channel and was educated primarily as a mathematician. These two happenings were closely related because I realized at the age of eight that we could only bring about peace in the world by unifying the concepts of God and the Universe, the contextual concepts of religion and science, respectively. But as neither could tell me how to bring about this fundamental unification, there was little point in studying them. Not that mathematics could solve this ultimate problem of human learning. But being brought up within a culture that was clearly not based on Wholeness and the Truth, mathematics (and music) gave me some solace until I discovered the limitations of mathematics at university.

I spent my business career in the information technology industry, mostly with IBM in sales and marketing in the UK and in software development in Sweden. It was when developing a UK marketing programme for decision support systems with IBM in 1980 that my life took a major change in direction.

This work led me to realize that we were, and still are, running our business lives blindfold, having little understanding of the evolutionary forces that cause us to behave as we do. This is rather like driving down the highway at accelerating speeds with our eyes closed. Sooner or later there is going to be a great pile-up, to put it bluntly.

At the time I had this vision, my children were aged nine and seven and I was thirty-seven. I therefore asked myself what would the world be like when my children reached my age, at the beginning of the second decade of the third millennium in the Christian calendar. Well, taking all the factors that I could see into consideration, it was quite clear that both capitalism and communism are incompatible with the invention of the programmable computer and both would self-destruct within thirty years. In the event, communism has already collapsed in Eastern Europe. As many visionaries can now intuitively see, it is an evolutionary inevitability that the global economy will follow suit within the next five to ten years.

Back in 1980, it was therefore obvious that my children were not being educated to live in the world that would exist when they were bringing up children of their own. But how could I prepare them for the catastrophe that we were blindly accelerating towards? Well, we clearly needed to open our eyes and develop a comprehensive science of evolutionary change that would tell us where we human beings have come from and where we are heading in such a frantic rush.

The blindfolds were removed from my own eyes in a great flash at 11.30 a.m. on Sunday 27th April 1980 as I was strolling across Wimbledon Common in London to the pub for lunch. As I was a technologist helping to bring about major changes in the world, the knowledge and intelligence of scientists and technologists, including my own, aided and abetted by the corresponding constructs in computers, must be types of energy, rather like potential and kinetic energy in mechanics. There are thus nonphysical energies at work in the Universe as well as the physical energies that I had learnt about at school.

I knew at once that this idea would reveal all the secrets of the Universe that I had been seeking to uncover since I was eight years of age. Just three weeks after this eureka! experience, which I now
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see as the beginning of my spiritual awakening, I resigned from IBM and set out to conduct an experiment in learning that would unify the nonphysical and physical energies at work in the Universe, leading to the Theory of Everything, the holy grail of human learning.

At the time of this great breakthrough, I felt as if a dam had burst in my psyche, allowing thirty years of pent-up energy to come pouring through. But today I can use another metaphor that should be more vivid for my readers. What happened to me is that a volcanic earthquake erupted in the depths of the ocean of Consciousness, creating a tsunami that laid to waste everything I had ever learnt at school, at university, and in business. The television pictures of utter devastation in Aceh province in Sumatra well illustrate the state of my mind at the time.

In spiritual terms, I became a renunciate, sacrificing everything in the world of form to concentrate on the search for Wholeness and the Truth, including my career, job, home, and family. I was helped greatly in this process because I had never completely lost the innate innocence and natural intelligence of a child. Because of my personal conditioning, I was not as heavily conditioned by my cultural inheritance as people who mimic their parents, priests, teachers, and peers generally are. Almost everything I have learnt about myself and the world I live in I have learnt since I was thirty-eight.

From this tabula rasa, I then had the task of rebuilding the whole world of learning de novo, not unlike Descartes 361 years before me. Another metaphor well describes this process. The volcano that erupted within me was like a big bang arising from the black hole at the centre of the ocean of Consciousness, leading to the most amazing burst of creativity. As I began to integrate all knowledge into a coherent whole, the synergy that arose from the relationships that I could see between the different cultures and academic disciplines caused my learning to accelerate at a superhyperexponential rate. My experiences thus fully confirmed the comprehensive science of evolutionary change that was emerging within me at that time.

The basic idea for what Karl Marx called the laws of motion of society24 came from the enterprise modelling methods25 that my IBM marketing colleagues were using to raise the level of awareness of information technology in executive management. For these methods were able to model nearly all processes and entities in businesses, whatever their nature. There was only one thing missing: the process of developing a comprehensive model of any particular enterprise or conglomerate was not included in the models being developed.

To rectify this omission, I began a thought experiment in which I imagined that I was a computer that switched itself off and on again so that it had no programs within it, not even a bootstrap program to load the operating system. This computer then had the task of integrating all knowledge into a coherent whole, rather like the Internet is becoming. My only guru, which means ‘dispeller of darkness’,26 was my own immediate experience.

This experiment in learning has shown me quite clearly that Intelligence, the eyesight of Consciousness, is Divine, and that the attempts of computer scientists to create artificial intelligence, consciousness, and even life are bound to fail. It is thus not true that technological development can drive economic growth indefinitely, as is widely believed today.
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Furthermore, the divisions that we make between science, philosophy, and religion no longer exist for me. All the fragmented fields of learning have merged into a single discipline, without any hedges between them, which I call *panosophy*, from the Greek *panosophos* meaning ‘all-wise’. The *Oxford English Dictionary* records that this word was used as early as 1642, albeit with a slightly different spelling, to mean “universal or cyclopædic knowledge; a scheme or cyclopædic work embracing the whole body of human knowledge”.

The framework or system of coordinates for this transdisciplinary, transcultural synthesis of all knowledge is a holographic, nonaxiomatic, self-reflective science of reason called *relational logic* because it has arisen through the action of what Heraclitus, the mystical philosopher of change, called ‘the Logos’, the rational organizing principle of the Universe, and because it has evolved from the relational model of data introduced by Ted Codd of IBM in 1970, augmented by object-oriented modelling methods. Relational logic thus provides the ontological and epistemological foundations for panosophy, beneath the foundations of mathematics, which mathematicians struggled to establish during much of the twentieth century.

While we all implicitly use relational logic everyday, making explicit how we organize our ideas actually introduces the most fundamental change in Western thought since Aristotle some 2,300 years ago. Because relational logic is noninferential it does not need to obey Aristotle’s Law of Contradiction, which lies at the heart of mathematical proof and deductive logic, and can accept paradoxes and self-contradictions. This is essential, for the Universe is essentially paradoxical and unless we follow E. F. Schumacher’s maxim for mapmaking, “Accept everything; reject nothing,” our reasoning cannot possibly provide us with a valid map of the world we live in.

Relational logic is thus based firmly and squarely on the fundamental design principle of the Universe: *Wholeness is the union of all opposites*. This statement is the closest we can come to expressing the absolute Truth in words for it is true in all possible worlds. Unifying all opposites is the ultimate yoga and moral imperative of our times, for the Sanskrit word *yoga*, which is cognate with the English words *yoke* and *join*, means ‘union’.

So how can we unify the nonphysical energies at work in the Universe, whether they be mental, psychic, subtle, spiritual, or whatever, with the four forces recognized by the physicists: gravitational, electromagnetic, and weak and strong nuclear forces? Well, this was a question that I asked David Bohm, who unified relativity and quantum theories with his theory of the implicate order, when I first met him in November 1980 just a few months after abandoning my business career.

He told me that energy is a property of structure, whether structures are physical or nonphysical. So today, I do not look at the Universe in terms of the fire, air, earth, and water of the ancients, or the space, time, mass, and energy of the physicists. Rather, the four basic concepts in panosophy and relational logic are form, structure, relationships, and meaning. I can thus see, somewhat like Arthur Koestler, that the underlying structure of the Universe is an infinitely dimensional network of hierarchical relationships. Like the domains of values in database design, these dimensions can be measured either qualitatively or quantitatively, thus freeing us from the tyranny of numbers in both science and economics.
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For me, energy is associated with meaning, rather than mass, as in Einstein’s famous equation $E = mc^2$. It is therefore better to call the Theory of Everything a unified relationships theory rather than the unified field theory, as Einstein did. For fields in Western science, including Rupert Sheldrake’s concept of morphogenetic fields, are just a special type of relationship. And it is relationships that make the world go round.

How then can we unify the concepts of God and the Universe, which troubled me so much as a child and adolescent? Again, this is very simple. They are unified in Consciousness, for Consciousness is all there is, the only true Reality, as the Advaita sage and former President of the Bank of India, Ramesh S. Balsekar, and many other teachers of the Truth emphasize in their discourses. Everything in the relativistic world of form, including our bodies, the global economy, and the human race, is thus just an appearance in or abstraction from Consciousness, destined to dissolve back into Consciousness in the course of time, like waves in the ocean. By recognizing that the entire world of form is nothing but an illusion, panosophy thus fulfils the mission of the Scientific and Medical Network: “To challenge the adequacy of scientific materialism as an explanation of reality”.

As I have been consciously living at the Omega point of evolution for over twenty years, I am able to articulate what many can intuitively see today: evolution is poised to carry humanity into an eschatological epoch of the most exquisite beauty. We shall then recognize, with Krishnamurti, that it does not need two to have a conflict; it needs only one.

I call the loving, peaceful civilization that is emerging from the death of Western civilization the Paragonian Society. Paragonian derives from the Greek words para, ‘beyond’, and agon, ‘contest’ or ‘conflict’, which we see in the English words agony and antagonistic. So paragonian means ‘beyond conflict and suffering’, a healthy, liberated, and awakened way of being that we can realize when we live consciously in union with the Divine.

To help heal our grievously sick society, evolution is guiding me to set up the Paragonian Foundation consisting of four living organisms: Paragonian Fellowship, University, Business Academy, and Publications. For if we do not all work harmoniously together with a common vision, we have very little chance of realizing our fullest potential as a species before we are driven to extinction. But if we can, the synergy that would be generated through the deepening of loving relationships between us all would enable us to create a miracle.

The motto of the Paragonian Foundation is Healing our sick society, for even though it is fifty years since Erich Fromm wrote The Sane Society, pointing out that the normal behaviour of today’s society is pathological, this subject is still not on the agenda. The Paragonian Fellowship, whose motto is Being natural, inspired by Fromm’s greatest masterpiece, is open to everyone who is consciously living in union with the Divine. In particular, we need to come together to address the two most critical issues of our time:

1. We need to transform the schools and universities so that our children do not learn the seven pillars of unwisdom, to use Arthur Koestler’s term, lies about God, the Universe,
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Life, humanity, money, justice, and reason, which arise from our sense of separation from God, Nature, and each other.

2. We need to stop obeying economic laws that are causing severe psychological and ecological damage, which could well drive humanity to extinction before we have returned Home to Wholeness, and so build a life-enhancing economic system that will empower everyone to realize their fullest potential as human beings.

The Paragonian University, whose motto is Integrating all knowledge, addresses the first of these issues. For the word university, like universe, has a Latin root meaning ‘turned into one whole’. But universities today are very far from living up to their name, falling far short of the wisdom that the young are desperately crying out for. A principal goal of the University is conceptual clarity, integrity, consistency, and simplicity, which we can reach when we follow one of the guidelines of the Scientific and Medical Network: “Question your own assumptions and presuppositions.” The University will thus be based on the seven pillars of wisdom, which are revealed when we realize that we are all one, with no divisions between us.

The second critical issue will be addressed by the Paragonian Business Academy, whose motto is Living without borders. The central purpose of the PBA will be to build the infrastructure of the Sharing Economy, which will come into being as the global economy self-destructs in the next five to ten years. Not that the PBA can do anything on its own. So its main goal will be to show governments and businesses that it is not in their interests to continue with their current selfish practices and that we can design and implement an ecologically sustainable way of managing our business affairs, in harmony with the fundamental laws of the Universe.

The motto of Paragonian Publications is Communicating Wholeness. It has been set up to publish books and magazines on panosophy and the emerging civilization. Its first book is called The Paragonian Manifesto: Revealing the Coherent Light of Consciousness, so-called because it is a nondualistic, spiritual response to The Communist Manifesto. This seminal, apocalyptic book is an introduction to a scholarly work, currently in preparation, called Ineffable, Nondual Wholeness: The Union of All Opposites. By establishing the scientific truth that Consciousness is the only Reality, and not the physical universe as is widely believed today, Wholeness will complete the scientific revolution that has been taking place during the past few decades, just as Isaac Newton completed the Copernican revolution with the Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy. Wholeness will be the defining book for panosophy and relational logic and the standard textbook for the University.

One further reason why it is necessary to add yet another organization to the many that are seeking to build a new society is that many leading figures in the emerging civilization have found a comfortable niche in the rapidly degenerating prevailing culture and are most resistant to change, unwilling to accept the possibility of the complete unification of Western reason and Eastern mysticism. For instance, Fritjof Capra has said that it is not possible to create a synthesis of science and mysticism and Ken Wilber has said, “we still cannot figure out how to get [science and religion] together in a way that both find acceptable.”
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While we need to be as compassionate and caring as possible for our fellow human beings, in these critical times there is no room for political correctness. From the perspective of holistic science, it is essential that we free ourselves of the notion of self-organizing systems,\(^4\) for everything in the Universe is organized through the action of the Logos arising from our divine Source. And from the religious point of view, we need to be free of the Christian notion that “man is essentially a creature and remains so for all eternity, so the absorption of the human I in the divine I will never be possible.”\(^4\)

Yet there is a slight glimmer of hope that we shall one day rise above the beasts and our machines and so realize our fullest potential as divine, cosmic beings. The Benedictine monk David Steindl-Rast has said that one of his great concerns is that the Western God-view is warped and makes us sick. The idea of God as being separate from us is an extremely dangerous view.\(^4\) On this crucial point, it is thus quite possible for us all to recognize that our true Essence is Love and Consciousness, no matter what our religious and scientific conditioning might be.

In practical terms, it is interesting to note here that the native English word for nature is kind.\(^4\) Kindliness is our natural state of being, as Tenzin Gyatso, the fourteenth Dalai Lama, often tells his wide circle of followers. It is through the kindliness that millions showed in response to the recent tsunami disaster that we can work harmoniously together with a common vision.

Of course, whether or not we can then heal our grievously sick society is not really in our hands. As Ramana Maharshi wrote when his mother tried to persuade him to return home from Arunachala, “What is not meant to happen will not happen, however much you wish it. What is meant to happen will happen, no matter what you do to prevent it. This is certain.”\(^4\)

Ramana Maharshi concluded from this, “the best path is to remain silent.” In a way he was right for Life is leading us all back to Stillness and Emptiness, whence we are all born. But to get there, evolution is destined to pass through the biggest transformation in its fourteen-billion-year history. So what Peter Russell calls ‘our next evolutionary leap’\(^5\) is likely to be a very big jump indeed.

Further information about the Paragonian Foundation is available at www.paragonian.org.

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10. Balsekar, Ramesh S. *Consciousness Speaks*.
15. Descartes, René. *Discourse on the Method of Properly Conducting One’s Reason and of Seeking the Truth in the Sciences*. 

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16 Hawking, Stephen W. *A Brief History of Time.*
17 Wilber, Ken. *A Theory of Everything.*
18 Wilber, Ken. *Sex, Ecology, Spirituality.*
20 Korzybski, Alfred. *Science and Sanity.*
22 Thakar, Vimala. *Spirituality and Social Action.*
25 IBM. *Business Systems Planning.*
31 Aristotle. *Prior Analytics.*
35 Boyle, David. *The Tyranny of Numbers.*
37 Sheldrake, Rupert. *A New Science of Life.*
39 Krishnamurti, J. *The Awakening of Intelligence.*
40 Fromm, Erich. *To Have or To Be?*
42 Newton, Isaac. *The Principia.*
43 Capra, Fritjof. *The Tao of Physics.*
44 Wilber, Ken. *The Marriage of Sense and Soul.*
45 Tantsch, Erich. *The Self-Organizing Universe.*
49 *The Spiritual Teaching of Ramana Maharshi.*