—Chapter Four—

Managing the Changing Realities of Change

"I think there are good reasons for suggesting that the modern age has ended. Today, many things indicate that we are going through a transitional period, when it seems that something is on the way out, and something else is painfully being born."

—Va'clav Havel

"Can we come to terms with the inexorability of evolution itself—with all the diversity in nature and in human nature—a process that generates then consumes what it generates?"

—Jonas Salk

"The universe is a spiraling Big Band in a polka-dot speakeasy, effusively generating new light every one night stand."

—Ishmael Reed

Our third theme—change—has helped introduce each theme previous. Like it or not, our world refuses to stand still. Between today's ever accelerating rate of technological innovation, the increasingly transforming presence of globalization, and needed shifts in how we relate and how we understand, change has become increasingly inescapable.

Effectively making our way will require essential changes in our relationship to change. Most obviously, we must learn to be more comfortable in its change's presence. We need also, if we are to make good choices, to better understand the particular changes that define our time. But the new requirements are deeper. We need, too, to better understand change itself, how it works—in ourselves, in relationships, in larger social systems, and more generally. The concept of Culture Maturity offers both help and hope with each of these needed changes in how we engage and make sense of change.

At the least, culturally mature perspective offers the possibility of greater grace in the face of change. It also alerts us how the topic of change has particular pertinence to the kind of thinking the future will require. Culturally mature perspective not only better

acknowledges change and makes change more understandable, it makes change part of the substance of understanding. We will look specifically at how a creative frame helps us think deeply about change in human systems, both change' mechanisms, and how change takes us where it does, how it helps us develop detailed "pattern language" formulations for thinking about how we change. This includes how our thinking about change has changed in times past, and the particular further ways it is changing today.

We begin with two further excerpts from the stretching exercise (our topics community and government):

David: (A social worker): I chose community as my topic. I don't have much community in my life these days, and I don't think many people do. This feels like a big loss.

CJ: Great topic.

David: Its funny how I got to the question of community. I started out looking at the problem of gangs. But I realized that part of what attracted me to the topic of gangs was that I'm a bit envious of them. At some level, I wish I had a gang (laughter in the room). I know the gang problem has to do with much more than just community, but I went with community because the topic caught me by surprise. I feel real concern about the very small role community plays in most people's lives these days. I see considerable danger when I project what we have today into the future. People need a sense of community.

CJ: I think you've hit on an important concern—more important than we might at first realize. I often ask people in groups I'm working with where in their lives they feel most rich and where they feel most impoverished. A felt lack of community consistently tops the impoverished list, and I think for good reason. Social evolution has realized no greater achievement than the liberation of the individual, but we've paid a price. The limited sense of belonging many people feel today not only isolates, it can leave us without any sense of collective purpose. Or personal purpose—meaning has little meaning separate from shared experience.

David: I think we need to do a lot more to support community. Community used to be a part of everyone's life. Most of us grew up in neighborhoods. Before that people lived in villages and before that tribes. I don't think we can have healthy lives without it.

CJ: I very much agree. But we need to be careful in how we approach the question of community—particularly when we make comparisons with what we've known before. We can look to the past to appreciate community's value. But we really can't use past images to guide us. When we do, we become vulnerable to advocating outcomes that we not only can't achieve, but that we would not want to achieve.

David: Can you be more specific?

CJ: It is important to recognize how community's definition has changed over time—and the unique challenges it presents in today's world. We easily assume that community is just community. But what gives relationship the experience we call community has evolved through history—and continues to evolve. We can learn from the past, but we don't really have the option of returning to it.

For example, if our ideal for community is the close-knit neighborhoods of our great-grandparents' days, we've got real problems. Such community was a product not just of place and proximity, but also of close blood bonds and narrowly restrictive codes of appropriate behavior. Even if we could return to such times, it is very unlikely we would be happy there. We would feel our freedom and individuality intolerably stifled.

The bind would be even more pronounced if we tried to recreate tribal reality. The felt sense of community in tribal societies is even stronger—at least if we define community as connectedness. But the flip side of this is also the case. Even less room exists for difference. To a profound degree, people in tribal societies have identity, indeed existence, only as part of the tribe.[1]

David: Do you think we have less need for community today?

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[1] People banned from their tribe often just go off and die.

CJ: We do if we define community only in terms of connectedness. But it is not that simple. Better, the feeling we call community derives from a timely balance between connectedness and separateness. If the amount of closeness is too great, we don't feel community at all, we feel suffocation. We see the same thing in relationships of all kinds. Relationship feels most vital not when difference disappears, but when the balance between closeness and separateness is just right.

History describes an evolving dialogue between connection and distinction. Early on, with tribal societies, social bonds were paramount and individual differences secondary. Over time, this relationship has gradually reversed, reaching an opposite in today's world where distinct identity receives much the greater emphasis. What has made community community has evolved in parallel with these changes.

So in one sense we do have less need for community. But in another, the need is no less great. And given the degree of isolation so many people today feel, addressing that need assumes special importance. What we need to be doing is looking for the particular kinds of relationships that, in the context of today's realities, are capable of fulfilling that need. That might seem like splitting hairs, but it is an essential distinction if our concern is the future of community.[2]

David: I'm still confused. That progression toward ever-greater individuality would seem to point toward community—of any kind—becoming a thing of the past. It really doesn't give much hope. If that is where things are going, my longing for community would just be immaturity, some futile desire to return to mother (chuckles in the room).

CJ: We *are* likely seeing the last vestiges of traditional community. Community is not entirely gone. It survives in many locales. And it thrives in mass culture—the TV our modern equivalent of the communal campfire (a meager remnant of belonging but belonging nonetheless).

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2 There is a critical added piece that follows from earlier observations about the mythologizing of truth. When we look back not only are we looking at historically-outdated forms, most likely what we see is not even what then existed. Rather we see romantically distorted—idealized and ultimately polarized—versions of what was.

But what lies ahead is likely more interesting than just the disappearance of community. The concept of Cultural Maturity very much affirms your call to support healthy communities. It simply reminds us that we have to find this by looking ahead rather than to what has been.[3] Something is being lost, but it is our past relationship to community, not community itself. Certainly the pendulum with regard to community seems to be swinging back. At least in the industrialized world, people today are more likely to express a hunger for community than a desire for greater individuality. As it turns out we don't have to choose.

David: Because?

CJ: Cultural Maturity proposes that successful community in the future will involve both the continued evolution of individuality and a renewed connectedness. This may seem a paradox, but it is an apparent contradiction we encounter in other places. The greater differentiation required by love today—that move beyond two-haves-makes-a-whole relating—makes us more distinct but also capable of deeper intimacy. In a similar way, if the notion of Cultural Maturity is accurate, we should observe both greater individuality and greater community in the future—each essential to the realization of the other.

A good way to understand this is to appreciate how past bonds of community, like those of love and national allegiance, have tended to be polar—mythologized, idealized. (We see faint remnants in sports rivalries and heated debates at neighborhood meetings.) At least a bit, we've seen our own people as special—and often more than just special, as in some sense chosen. In the same sense that other kinds of personal and social engagement today require more Whole-Person ways of relating, increasingly it is so for community—at least community that adds significantly to our lives.

David: What exactly does community in the new sense you are suggesting look like?

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3 Jim Jones and early twentieth-century calls for Aryan purity were each attempts at a kind of ideal (but ultimately regressive) connectedness.

CJ: It will be different for different people and different for the same people at different times. A key characteristic of future community should be the diverse and evolving ways we fulfill community needs. But we can identify common themes. For example, community in times ahead will necessarily require greater awareness and intentionality, a new willingness to take responsibility for both the fact of community and its forms. In times past, community was a given, something handed to us. We were born into it. In the future, we will have community only to the degree we choose to make it a priority and work to create it.

David: I get that.

CJ: It will also require greater comfort with diversity and difference. Community bonds of times past were most always with people very similar to us. In the future this will change. Some of our most treasured bonds will be with people who before may have lived in very different worlds. Indeed such differences may often provide the impetus for connection.[4]

David: I like that.

CJ: For many people, the most challenging new ingredient will be the need for greater acceptance of change. The ways people fill their needs for community over the course of their lives will commonly be more fluid than in times past. This is not to say that long-term commitment to place and particular people won't be important. Indeed, many people will choose to have that role increase—part of the motivation for rethinking community is recognizing the price we have paid for modern mobility and the frenetic pace of modern life. But the option of change will certainly be more a part of the equation.

David: That fits.

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4 We are drawn to particular connections when relationship potentially makes us more. With Cultural Maturity, differences that before we would have experienced as threats come increasingly to serve as "teachers" for the tasks ahead. (See Chapter Five.)

CJ: Change also comes into the equation another way. Successful community will require appreciation for what we've just been talking about—how, over time, community's definition has changed and some of the changes likely still ahead. At multiple levels, change and community must less and less seem opposites.

David: I think I've already been working some on community in this new sense. I just hadn't called it that.

CJ: Say more.

David: It is a mix of things. For example, I've lately been putting more energy into relationships at work. I've always thought of the work world and community as distinct—even opposite. In fact work is where I fulfill a lot of my community needs. I think we have to find work meaningful if it is to address community needs at all deeply. But, fortunately I work for a good company.

Also, I've made greater effort to keep in touch with old friends. I meet several friends for lunch every couple of months—we have our regular place we go. That might not seem like much to most people. But it works for me. I really value these connections.

There is also what has become possible with the Internet. Before, I always promised friends I'd write letters—but rarely did. E-mail is easier. And sometimes just surfing on the web helps me feel more connected. Social networking sites don't do that much for me, but they obviously work for some people.

CJ: The great attraction of social networking today supports the importance of your community question. What we see also reflects how distanced we can be from community in any deep sense. I find that people can find human connection in hearing what someone they don't actually know is having for lunch a bit boggling. But I trust that future manifestations of socially networking will, over time, come to effectively address deeper needs.

David: That makes sense.

CJ: If you set aside romanticized images of community and look at what today actually gives you a feeling of community, how are you doing?

David: Things still feel impoverished. But I think I better understand what I need to do. Recognizing that a lot is new in how we need to think about community is helpful. In a funny way it helps me feel less alone. We may not be very good at making community in the new ways required today, but at least we are all not very good at it together (laughter).[5]

Amy (A political science major): Enough with this touchy-feely community stuff. I want to talk politics.

CJ: Fire away.

Amy: I am very concerned about government today. Mostly at a national level, I guess. But I think my question has to do with government at every level.

CJ: And the question?

Amy: Can we fix it? I see so much trivialness in government today—and so little real leadership. Government seems about little more than selfish interests and petty squabbles. I'm close to finishing a degree in political science and I'm not sure what to do with it. I question whether the world of government is where I want to spend my life.

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5 Two of our later themes provide additional insight into how Culturally Maturity might support this new picture of community. Chapter Five's look at complexity expands on how Cultural Maturity helps us both better appreciate connectedness and become more comfortable with difference. Chapter Sevens's look at the significance of the past argues for ways previous realities—including those of community—do (in spite of my warnings here) have pertinence to the present.

CJ: You are certainly not alone in your concern. A survey done by The New York Times at the height of anti-establishment rhetoric forty years ago reported that two-thirds of people said they trusted the government in Washington to "do the right thing." That survey was recently repeated, and the figure today is less than one-third.

Amy: Those are scary numbers.

CJ: Provocative at least. But I'm not sure depicting government as broken provides the most useful perspective. Certainly a lot of people would disagree with you that there is anything fundamentally wrong. But even if we accept your degree of concern—which I do—I think we need more dynamic perspective if critique is to usefully serve us. We need to better appreciate both the necessary role of change in government and something about the changes current times may be asking for. As with the question of community, we need to put our ideas about government and governance in motion.

Amy: Okay.

CJ: We humans tend to view our existing forms of social organization, whatever forms they may be, as static endpoints. Certainly this is so with political structures. In fact no governmental form has proven to be the end of the road. Ours may prove the exception, but there is really no reason to assume that it should.

This tendency to deny the role of change in social organization creates a couple of problems. Most obviously, it limits vision. But it also interferes with our ability to accurately perceive the forms we have. Static endpoints are most always tied to mythologized images. One result is that both our advocacies and our criticisms tend to end up missing the point.

Amy: Our notions about government can be more symbol than substance.

CJ: Certainly they have been historically. And most often they still are. Such mythologizing is most obvious with the reigns of pharaohs or kings. But authority relationships in modern representative democracy have for the most part remained

parental (less overtly, but parental nonetheless). We elect people and then make them elevated symbols—Kennedy in Camelot, Reagan as the kindly father figure.

Amy: Which distorts how societal forms actually work.

CJ: Exactly. Such mythologizing—past and present—reassures us and affirms our connectedness, but we pay a price when it comes to accurate description. An example: Poeple in the United States talk with pride of having "government by the people." But the phrase is really an idealization. So far as a species, we've never really had government by the people—at least in the egalitarian sense the words imply. The democratic processes of ancient Athens governed a city-state in which the much greater portion of the inhabitants were not citizens, but slaves. And all of the "founding fathers" who gathered at the Constitutional Convention were white, male landowners.[6]

Our language reflects less what has been than one half of a romanticized polarity—"the people," equated with, freedom versus constraint or tyranny. What do we have more accurately? We lack good language, but an awkward phrase like "government by competing constituencies with delineated limits on authority."[7] would be a more precise description. And while competing constituencies may have equal rights, differences in the wealth and power they represent mean that they do not at all have equal influence.

I make this observation not to diminish the significance of modern representative government. It took us a critical—indeed profound—steps beyond government by royal decree. But if we want to think usefully about government's future, we need to be accurate in how we think about the past and present.

Amy: Isn't the fact that we don't have real government by the people exactly the problem?

CJ: Yes and no. Again, we need to place our observations within its temporal context. Using full and equal representation as our measure for good government, when such is in

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6 With the larger portion slave-holders.

7 As provided in the United States by the Bill of Rights.

fact developmentally neither timely nor possible, can lead only to unfair criticism. And idealized interpretations of just what full and equal representation means leads to the proposing of alternatives that not only couldn't work, but that we wouldn't want even if they could. Socialist experiments have not provided promising results. Anarchistic views take us even further astray. And more extensive use of "direct democracy"—whether through greater use of popular initiative or the introduction of issue-specific electronic voting—tend to fall just as short in real-world application.

Amy: But you seem to think change is needed.

CJ: I see few more important tasks for the future than rethinking government. And framing the task in terms of seeking something closer to government by the people makes a good starting place. It is consistent with what Cultural Maturity proposes will be both increasingly essential and increasingly possible to realize.

Amy: Cultural Maturity predicts major changes in government?

CJ: Certainly it suggests thinking in some new ways about governance and government. Tell me about characteristics you think will be important to a next chapter in governance and let's look to see if the concept of Cultural Maturity offers any assistance.

Amy: Okay, we need to feel that we are really a part of government, that leaders actually represent us.

CJ: That could well be in the cards. If the growing up in relation to authority Cultural Maturity predicts proves real, we should come increasingly to view political leaders, as with leaders of all sorts, less as symbols. The complement to this shift is greater felt citizen involvement and responsibility.[8]

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8 We can miss how much of this is already taking place for a reason we will look at more closely in the next chapter. Greater participation in governance can be masked because it does not necessarily occur within the formal structures of government. When leadership is mythologized ,we tend not to recognize that government represents but a small part of governance. Mature perspective helps us see governance more

Amy: How about this one? We need more economic fairness in government. Politics today seems much more about one-dollar-one-vote than one-person-one-vote.

CJ: I think the current situation *is* closer to one-dollar-one-vote. And it is getting more that way as candidates face the daunting task of raising funds for ever more expensive media-driven campaigns. But Cultural Maturity predicts we will see changes here also.

We need to start with a notion that might feel initially distasteful. I wouldn't choose the inequities we see, but I think in fact they have served a creative purpose. For good or ill, monetary disparities come with the benefits of a market economy. And government by competing constituencies means that people with greatest monetary resources will tend to prevail—unless the moral weight, or sheer numbers, lies dramatically with the other side. However imperfect this situation, historically it represents a step forward. Equating power with money *is* more "democratic" than equating it with royal lineage or military might.

But, again, Cultural Maturity proposes that this need not be the end of the road. At the least, it predicts changes in the amount of inequity societies find acceptable. Bridge polarities such as self and society or leader and follower and we are quickly brought face-to-face with the polarity with the greatest potential to rip asunder the social fabric—that which separates the world's haves and have nots, the wealthy and the poor. Cultural Maturity argues that the need for greater economic fairness ultimately cannot be escaped. Even if a more consciously equitable picture is not developmentally inevitable, it is a practical imperative.

Amy: Major economic discrepancies will make our cities—and the world as a whole—less and less safe.

CJ: That—and there is a more particular consequence for government if this is the final chapter. Equating money with power will in time bring the democratic experiment to an end. The inevitable result, if the world's wealth becomes concentrated in fewer and

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systemically, better appreciate how teachers, scientists, artists, religious leaders, and business people each play important roles in the larger fabric of social determination—and always have.

fewer hands, is global governance by a small group of individuals and large corporations—not a pretty picture.[9] Again, this is not at all to call for some socialist equal distribution of resources—competition is critical to society's creative functioning. But rethinking social inequities will be essential if our future world is to be a healthy place in which to live.

Amy: One more?

CJ: Sure.

Amy: We need to get beyond the endless partisan squabbling. Government today often looks more like little kids fighting on a playfield than governance. It is hard to take government seriously. Maybe things have always been like this. But people are getting fed up—and, with growing frequency, just tuning out.

CJ: Cultural Maturity affirms the creative importance of difference—so it doesn't promise any end to conflict and debate. But what it does suggest could certainly change conflict's tenor. One part of its argument is particularly important in this regard.

Both experience and culturally mature perspective support that neither liberal nor conservative positions, in isolation or even in compromise, can adequately address the essential questions ahead. The important challenges require systemic solutions. Do the hawks or the doves have the right answer for a safer world? I'd claim both and neither. Does offering a helping hand or encouraging people to pull themselves up by their own bootstraps provide the answer to poverty? Again, both and neither.

I think people are getting fed up not just because of the rancor of debate. As much it is because of the outmodedness of how questions are presented and proposed debate's lack of maturity and real courage. If the conclusion that more systemic perspective has

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9 We must take some care here not to fall for a common polar trap. Excessive corporate power—and the greed that commonly accompanies it—is a major concern. But, simply painting corporate power as the problem—in effect making corporations the enemy—results in naïve and ultimately unhelpful conclusions. The section "Business and Economics" in Chapter Ten looks more closely at changing realities in our relationship to money and its institutions.

become essential is accurate—and this consclusion becomes more broadly understood—we should find debate becoming, if not more amicable, at least more significant and creative.[10]

Cultural Maturity predicts that we will see two contrasting trends with regard to political debate. We should witness inspiring moments of new sophistication as both politicians and populace begin to see beyond the limitations of past polar advocacies (and also simple middle-of-the-road compromise). Attempts to articulate "post-partisan" and "third way" positions—each phrases heard in recent years from both the liberal and conservative sides of the aisle—suggest that this trend may be at least beginning. At the same time, we should witness the opposite, an escalation of pettiness and rancor, something we also see. In struggling to stretch sufficiently, people defend against feelings of confusion by amplifying outmoded polar differences.[11] Sometimes one trend will be most visible, sometimes the other.[12]

Amy: Do you think in time we will replace representative democracy with whole new forms of government? I can't tell from what you have said.

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10 I am not proposing that at any particular time liberal or conservative beliefs make equal, or even necessarily useful contributions, only that the important questions elude us without systemic perspective. (See examples throughout the book and in Chapter Ten's summary reflections on the future of government.) If this is accurate, historically liberal and conservative views each have contributions to make to the needed larger picture. However, unless their advocates recognize the importance of a more systemic picture, however, these contributions can be difficult to make use of.

11 Later we will look at how reactivity and polarization are predictable responses to events that stretch capabilities (See Chapter Six.) The challenges of Cultural Maturity stretch us as do outside events that cause uncertainty—such as war, terrorism or natural disaster. There is also an additional contributor. Dynamics inherent to the transition into mature thought can, in a further way, make us vulnerable to finding "meaning" in incessant conflict. (See Chapter Seven.)

12 The growing inadequacy of polar positions has major implications for journalism. Rarely, today, do I waste my time reading publications that identify with either the political right or the political left. Conclusions are all too predictable and rarely do they contribute measurably to needed solutions. Unfortunately, even news at its best rarely gets beyond "balanced" reporting—presenting one polar view and then the other. I see the need for culturally mature journalism to be one of our time's most critical leadership challenges.

CJ: A great question—though its one that the concept of Cultural Maturity doesn't explicitly answer. We will likely see both kinds of change processes, attitudinal and structural. Much of what we've touched on could manifest through changes only in how we approach governance, this without significant changes in the actual mechanisms of government.

But certainly at a global level we will need to get beyond current structural models. Representative government as we know it becomes unwieldy at best at a global scale—the number of conflicting voices is just too great. The only other option we know well is totalitarianism, and I can't imagine even the most benevolent of dictatorial forms working at large scales in today's world.

The way national boundaries are becoming increasingly permeable will make the nation-state determination task at least messier. Without clear national bounds, it will become ever more difficult to determine just who "the people" in government by the people might be.

As far as governmental structures more generally, all the pieces of the puzzle we touched on in our conversation will stretch the traditional functioning of government. Governmental structures must work, increasingly, in the absence of parental notions of authority. If governmental forms are to be in any way democratic, they will need to more explicitly separate economic advantage and political influence. And just as mythologized, us-versus-them relations between nations cannot work for times ahead, so must political processes based on adolescent squabbles between polarized ideological factions give way to more creative and sophisticated processes of engagement. Each of these pieces, both its necessity and it possibility, follows from Cultural Maturity's changes. How great a role structural alternations will need to play in the realization of such changes, time will have to tell.

Amy: But a lot would change.

CJ: Without question. One necessary new ingredient cuts across all that we have talked about: a deeper acceptance and understanding of change's role in governance. Certainly, government needs to better function as a vehicle for ongoing change. In addition, ideas about governance adequate to the tasks ahead must themselves include

change. We need to view government not as a static, isolated edifice, but an ever-changing, integral part of culture's evolving story.

Doing so will be essential to good global relations, certainly to avoiding dangerous misunderstandings between people's at different cultural stages. Effectively combating terrorism, for example, becomes impossible without it. If we can't recognize that that terrorism is an expected result of the collision of cultures at different developmental stages, we will respond with actions that are as irrational as those of the terrorists. It is also necessary so that the modern industrialized world does not assume that the governmental and economic forms they know best are right for everyone—irrespective of a culture's history or its time in cultural development. Attempted helpfulness, even if well intended, when not timely becomes something quite opposite.

And, without question, better including change in our thinking about government is essential to future changes. Ultimately, we need to be open to the possibility of whole new chapters in governance—in its assumptions, certainly, and at least in limited ways in government's formal structures.

Amy: That's good.

CJ: Its a start. A lot is not yet ours to know.[13]

Change and the Future

The common assertion that change is today's only constant is a cliché that by itself is not very helpful. But the fact of great change in today's world, and change of considerable significance, cannot be escaped.

The last century was defined by change—eighty percent of history's scientific discoveries were made in the last hundred years. Today, new circumstances such as globalization, radically more dangerous weaponry, and the specter of climate change threaten to change existence irrevocably. And of particular importance for our project, we confront all the changes to which we have here given particular attention. Certainly, the

13 The section "Government and Governance" in Chapter Ten offers further reflection.

diminishing authority of cultural absolutes puts the rules on which we base our decisions in flux. And the way understandings needed to address today's new questions require entree into fundamentally altered relational and conceptual worlds makes change an even more unavoidable part of today's equation.

The century ahead will be surely even more defined by change than the last—and change of an essential sort. The concept of Cultural Maturity describes how effectively addressing challenges ahead will require essential changes in our relationship to change. We can think of three major necessary new pieces: We need greater appreciation for the simple, inescapable fact of change. We need a fuller grasp of the significance of current changes. And we need deeper and more detailed understandings of how change works, its mechanisms and just how they play out. Each of these changes in how we understand change will be key to a healthy and hopeful future. Each also follows directly from where Cultural Maturity takes us.

First, at the very least, we must learn to be more comfortable in the face of change. When we deny the existence of change, particularly change of this potential magnitude, our choices become reactive and regressive. Greater ease in the face of change will be critical if we are just to stay healthy. Medical research demonstrates that individuals are most apt to suffer disease, physical as well as psychological, when they experience greater than normal amounts of change.[14]

Such greater ease is not going to come from eliminating change. In the end, it must derive from better appreciating the role change plays—and has really always played—in every part of our lives. Culturally mature perspective not only makes change more normal in day-to-day experience, it does so at the level of defining story. Previous cultural stories have been static, about how things are. They've acknowledged change from times past, but this was always a mythologized past. And while times of transition might note changes to come, always before such intermediary times took us to a new

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14 It is immaterial whether the particular changes are positive or negative—getting a promotion or the death of a spouse leaves us equally vulnerable. The classic research on life change is that of Thomas Holmes and Richard Rahe at the University of Washington.

"last word."[15] The shift in perspective predicted by the concept of Cultural Maturity brings a more full and complete acknowledgement of change as something inherent to both past and future. It also invites a new, more evolutionary, change-permeated picture of life and existence more generally.

We saw how David needed both to recognize that community had changed over time and to accept a more on-going role for change in community's future. Amy needed a similarly more dynamic temporal picture of government, one that recognized both the depths of past changes and the important role change would play in the future. At one level this change-riddled picture adds to life's demands. But at the same time it makes change simply part of how things work.

The second change-related task is most immedaitely pertinent to our project in these pages. We need to make better sense of current changes and likely changes ahead. Eric Hoffer reminds us that, "In times of drastic change it is the learners who inherit the future, while the learned find themselves beautifully equipped to live in a world that no longer exists." This has always been the case. But it becomes doubly so if changes do more than just add to what we know, if they involve discontinuities. And if those leaps are of major proportion, as I've proposed is true for today, it becomes more so still.

A deep understanding of today's changes is critical not just to making good choices, but also, given the overwhelming quantities of change we fact, to the appropriateness of hope. A future defined only by ever more rapid change is not a future we would want to be a part of. Such a frenetic picture would be neither sane nor healthy. Somehow our picture of change must point toward future that is more sustainable, at least in the sense that we are better able to manage change. It must also be more substantive, more meaningful in specific and identifiable ways. Cultural Maturity's reframing of current changes does both of these things.

Also critical—and a primary focus of this chapter—is our third piece: changes in how we understand change itself. That we might see such change is, again, not wholly new. The cultural narratives of times past have described where we came from, how we got to where we are, and, at least by implication, what may lie ahead. In addtion, they've

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15 Traditional cultural stories always include "myths of creation." But such stories too us to a static, final-word, present. Our modern myth of progress might seem to be explicitly about change, but, in fact, its basic assumptions about how things work are particularly impervious.

taught us about how change works. Is change a product of omens, portents, and animistic gods? Or perhaps we think of it more accurately in terms of simple laws of cause and effect. Like we witnessed with uncertainty and responsibility, culturally mature perspective not only increases our awareness of change, it also alters our understanding of change's workings. And it does so in particularly fascinating and significant ways.

Changes in how we understand change relate both to the depths at which change mechanisms work and to how change takes place over time. They challenge us to appreciate not just changing circumstances, but also changes in belief at the most fundamental of levels, including beliefs about change. Begin to surrender once-and-for-all cultural truths and it becomes obvious that we humans see things very differently at different times—and not just because of learning, but because at different times essential changes in ourselves produce different ways of seeing things. Culturally mature perspective brings differentiation to our understanding of how human systems—individuals, relationships, organizations, nations—grow and evolve. One thing that comes with such a more differentiated picture is a new chapter of our understanding of change itself.

These multiple changes in our relationship to change deeply impact both personal choices and the collective decisions we make as citizens and members of the human species. Culture's new story must somehow make all of us more comfortable in the face of change, guide us in making good decisions in the face of today's changes, and help us understand change with sufficient depth that we can develop ideas and institutions able to support healthy future change. If culture's new story is able to do so, it will also provide new stability. This will be so if for no other reason than that it will be a story right for our time. But it will also do so because of the depths to which better understanding change teaches us about ourselves.

Maturity and Change

The concept of Cultural Maturity makes understandable how such changes in our relationship to change are not just possible, but predicted—and indeed already happening. We will see how each follows directly from how an Integrative Meta-

Perspective alters how we understand. But we get a more informal kind of support from our now familiar developmental metaphor.

Second half of life developmental tasks bring related changes in our relationship to change. If we fend off second-half of life demands, the result is a "hardening of the categories,' a resistance to and even denial of change is the result. But engage second-half of life developmental tasks deeply, and we come to better appreciate the role change has played, and will continue to play, in our lives. We also become better able to understand how change works and to recognize pattern in life's changes.

Second-half-of life sensibilities help us more easily look back, reflect on our lives. In Chapter Seven, we will look closely at how this works. For now the general observation must do. This is not so much about memory, though sometimes memories are important, than a kind of "reeengagement." Creative amnesias that separate developmental stages begin to dissolve as we engage second-half-of-life sensibilities.

Second helf of life sensibilities also offer that we might more effectively look forward. Prior to midlife, our ability to contemplate life's second half is profoundly limited. Certainly we plan—often diligently. But commonly we miss much of what should be most impossible to miss. We find the most striking illustration in how difficult it can be to deeply grasp our mortality from the vantage of life's first half—however obvious the fact that we die might seem. Address midlife's developmental tasks and the second half of life, while always a "misted landscape," becomes more open to contemplation.[16]

Second half of life perspective helps us better makes sense of specfic change in our lives, past and future. It also helps us see pattern and meaning, to appreciate chapters in our life story. Of particular importance, it alerts us to how centrally important future life changes will be to a continued sense of life as purposeful. Because the changes that mark the second half of life are less tied to dramatic images of emancipation and achievement, in anticipation they may not seem as significant as those of our youth. But second half of life changes are just as essential. And if we engage them deeply, they are in the end even more fundamentally transforming.

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16 Chapter Six looks at the implications of a more mature collective relationship with death for our cultural future.

With regard to change most generally, second-half-of-life perspective makes us more facile in managing daily life changes. It also makes us calmer in the face of change. Part of wisdom is recognizing impermanence and the importance of being prepared for change. Maturity's less triumphal imagery also supports a more sustainable relationship to change. We learn to live life with a better sense of pace and proportion. This makes even dramatic changes more a part of life's "ordinariness," more simply part of what makes life alive. Success with the development tasks of life's second half supports us becoming both more knowledgeable and wiser in our relationship with change.

Creativity and Change

Our creative metaphor provides an even more direct reference for needed changes in our relationship to change. Certainly creative imagery supports appreciating the fact of change. If creation is about anything it is about change—and its inescapability. As far as understanding today's changes, I've described how an Integrative Meta-Perspective results in an explicitly creative relationship between awareness and our cognitive complexity and how such new perspective creates much of what we see. As far as how we understand change, it also alters how we see change, makes change itself more explicitly creative. This picture both supports the depths of change's mechanisms and the value of understanding change as process. We better see how creative change at once contains surprises and follow recognizable patterns—with much to teach us about creating well.

Given previous observations, it is not surprising that framing change in creative terms would prove particularly fruitful, at least when it comes to ourselves. If what most defines us is our capacities as toolmakers, our ability to create—and not just things, but complex personal and social relationships, great art and music, intricate and evolving belief systems, and elaborate institutional mechanisms and structures—then it is not unreasonable to think that better understanding formative process and its mechanisms would hold important rewards.

Creative imagery is most obviously pertinent to change in our personal lives. But it is just as relevant to change at a societal level. The challenge of developing institutions able to support healthy change—in the world and in themselves—provides good

illustration of this aptness of creative language. In the needed new picture, the term social "structure" stops being quite adequate. As much the challenge is to craft social evolutionary mechanisms, in every sphere—education, government, medicine, religion, science. As we will see, perhaps surprisingly, this more creative picture also applies, though in a more limited sense, to changes in our understanding of change in our physical and biological worlds. In fact, this is what we would expect. Changes in *how* we understand predictably produce related changes in *what* we understand—this wherever we look. They always have. Today they do so in particularly intrigueing ways.

It is mportant to recognize how creative imagery supports an association between change and significance. Indeed things creative are always in the end as much about stability as change. While creative change can appear chaotic and feel disorienting, it is ultimately about substance and purpose. Certainly, without it the solid stuff of life would not exist. But even when things are not solid, creative change is ultimately about order—and of a special sort. It is about the specific kind of order that makes both existence and life possible, and that makes human life a particularly vital kind of life.

Later in the chapter we will look specifically at how Creative Systems Theory applies a creative frame to understanding change in human systems. Its approach helps us both better understanding the mechanisms of change and tease out change's details. It also helps anchor the concept of Cultural Maturity theoretically. Among other things, a creative frame provides insight into why we might expect imagery drawn from personal developmental and from various creative processes to prove so helpful with the concept of Cultural Maturity. We will see how maturity, whether found in human development or more generally in the mature stages of any creative process, represents not just an evocative metaphor for our times,but a direct structural analogy.

The Changing Face of Change

Buckminster Fuller once observed, "God to me, it seems, is a verb." Cultural Maturity proposes that in a sense not before possible, we are needing to recognize, and beginning to recognize, the depths to which change and God (existence, life, humanity—whatever term best captures the big picture) are linked. If the concept of Cultural Maturity holds, the future may well find us more deeply appreciating how change works,

more and more adept at managing change, and increasingly capable of promoting useful (wise) change. At least we hold in ourselves the potential for doing so.

We find important support for such possibility in twentieth-century conceptual advances. Just as the best of contemporary thought has offered fresh insight for understanding uncertainty and responsibility, so has it altered out understanding of change—and just as dramatically. New ideas from every sphere have helped us more deeply appreciate the fact of change and offered more dynamic pictures of how change mechanisms. What we have seen offers encouragement. It also helps fill out just what needed changes in our thinking about change—and thinking more generally—entail.

Let's turn specifically to some of these advances. My concern, as always, is not the specifics of new ideas in different fields, or even whether they are good ideas, but rather with how they reflect changes in perspective predicted by Cultural Maturity. Again we start with the most material of realms and progress toward the more ephemeral.

Until the early part of the last century, change—at least in any generative sense—was not a concern of the harder sciences. Classical physics and chemistry make change a secondary matter, a simple product of actions and their predictable reactions.

Today the situation could not be more different. Physics' most dramatic change-related contribution engaged understanding at the grandest of scales. The discovery by Edwin Hubble in 1929 that distant galaxies move apart in a fashion suggesting that the universe as a whole is expanding opened a radical new chapter in science's story of the cosmos. Prior to this, the makeup of the universe was assumed to be fixed and eternal.[17] The recognition that the universe is swelling in size, and that it therefore must have had a beginning, radically altered thinking in physics

It also gave physics a new role—that of cultural storyteller. The "big bang" and related concepts turned the ideas of astrophysics into a modern tale of creation. The generative imagery of this new story—white-hot plasmas, matter moving apart at ever-increasing speeds, the dramatic birth of stars and galaxies—is explosively provocative. Change is not only ever-present; it makes leaps of striking magnitude. Go back close

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17 Einstein put a constant in his equations to make his calculations indicate a fixed universe—a decision he later described, upon meeting Hubble, as the greatest error of his career.

enough to creation's beginnings and the laws of classical physics cease to apply; go back further yet, and even the rules of quantum mechanics are not sufficient.[18]

Actually, modern physics' challenge to conventional thinking about change began earlier—with first journeys into the subatomic. Not only did uncertainty and that more linked relationship between observer and observed prove inescapable, so did a new, more dynamic picture of the workings of change. Classical physics' cardinal rules "conserving" matter and energy also relegated these defining sentinels of substance and change to separate, deterministically-related realities. Modern subatomic physics' more integrative picture propels us into a shape-shifting world of fundamental transformation in which something-from-nothing, rabbit-from-hat, is not magic, but just the way things work.

A less wellknown change-related scientific advance has particular pertinence to the topic of change. Belgian Nobel chemist Ilya Prigogine[19] was fascinated by the apparent contradiction between a mechanistic physical world governed by the laws of entropy (where everything is supposed to run down hill) and biology's world of living things (in which growth is what it's all about). (The fact that you are reading this book means that, at least temporarily, you have beaten the entropy game.) Prigogine demonstrated how what he called "dissipative structures"—open systems[20] that are far from equilibrium—could spontaneously reorganize, often to more complex states. Even non-living systems, and ones of larger than quantum proportions, he proposed, can be

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18 While this "creation story" is pretty solidly established, we can't assume it represents the last word. Respected researchers postulate alternating rhythms of creation rather than a single beginning. And certain String Theory proponents talk of bubble-like "multiverses" each spawning off more of their kind.

19 He received his award in 1977.

20 Open systems—as opposed to closed systems like a sealed jar—have inflow and outflow. The vortex that forms as water runs out of your bathtub is such a system. (Note how, in what may seem a paradox, the stability of a vortex is a product of its ever-changing makeup.) A far from equilibrium open system is one with lots of inflow and outflow. You and I are far from equilibrium open systems (we continually take in food and oxygen then release them transformed back into the environment) as are all other organisms and their ecosystems—as well as families, communities, nations, and the planet as a whole. The concept of open systems originated with Alfred Lotke and was further developed by Ludwig von Bertalanffy. (See Chapter Five.)

generative. Every atom and molecule has the potential (if, as my father used to say, it holds its tongue just right) to transform into more complex atoms and molecules.[21]

Earlier I tied evolutionary biology's contribution to the topic of uncertainty, but it pertains even more direclty to change. Darwin's ideas about change in living systems are today so familiar that we easily forget their revolutionary significance.[22]Always before, biological existence and change had been separate concerns, creation an event of times past. Darwin described a world in which life and change were inextricably interwoven. In his words: "...whilst this planet has gone cycling on according to the fixed laws of gravity, from o simple a beginning endless forms most beautiful and wonderful have been and are being evolved."[23]

Advances in the life sciences and elsewhere also began to take on the even more basic question of how life starts. While just what life is may leave us befuddled, as it turns out, getting it started is not that difficult. Simple chemicals, given the right environment and a jolt of energy, can transform into basic organic molecules. Consistent with this, evidence now suggests that life began on earth only half a billion years after

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21 Prigogine's work demonstrated that self-organizing processes can occur even in purely physical systems and provided a new argument for the irreversibility of time.

22 Darwin wrote in the century before, but his thinking had its greatest impact in the last century. Gregor Mendel's elucidation of underlying genetic mechanisms (published in 1902) was a major factor in this expanding influence.

23 The idea that life evolves was not original to Darwin. Many had found the archeological evidence compelling. Darwin's original contribution lay in his notion that life evolves through the generative interplay of novelty and selection. Darwin's ideas have been refined through the decades, but their basic inspiration has withstood the test of time remarkably well. They don't explain all that some people might hope. Natural selection concerns how life evolves once existent; it doesn't by itself explain life's origins or help much at all with that most fundamental question of what defines life. But it does explain a great deal and is foundational to modern biological thought. Most who today question the completeness of the Darwinian model (except those who do so on religious grounds) focus on whether other mechanisms besides mutation and selection as classically described might sometimes be involved. Steven J. Gould and Niles Eldridge, with their notion of "punctuated equalibria," extended the classical incremental model to better explain sudden change processes. We've also seen how certain organisms combine natural selection with other approaches (for example, how bacteria engage in direct exchange of genetic material). And a few brave theorists propose that wholly different kinds of mechanisms are always somehow at work. (Biologist Stuart Kauffman, for example, suggests that natural selection likely combines with more deeply self-organizing processes.)

earth's creation—a very short time. The properties we call life, it appears, may somehow lie creatively immanent in what before we have looked on as a dead world of predictable chemical processes. This new picture has turned the notion of life on other planets and galaxies from science fiction fantasy to the everyday conjecture of the most hard-nosed of scientists.

Just as significant have been new perspectives on change from the social sciences. Because change is a rather assumed dimension of human phenomena—few would question that individuals grow, organizations develop, and societies progress—new ideas about change in human systems can, on first encounter, seem less dramatic. But advances here have been equally radical, and because they are about us, of particular significance.

At the level of the individual, the twentieth century gave us the birth of modern developmental psychology.[24] We'd not before given how people grow and develop such focused attention. And the kind of attention was just as significant. Of specific relevance to the tasks of culturally mature conception, ideas about human development evolved from simple descriptions of age-related capacities to increasingly subtle depictions of the dynamics that shape how we see our worlds. The thinking of Jean Piaget was particularly notable for how fully it shifted focus from specifics of thought and behavior to the different ways of organizing experience that accompany various stages in development.

More recently, this developmental picture has filled out with the recognition that the idea of human development is as pertinent to the lives of adults as it is to kids. Through most of the twentieth century, developmental psychologies tended to stop with the late teens or early twenties. We now recognize that developmental stages with unique and critical creative tasks span the whole of our lives.[25] This recognition richly redefines the tasks of life's second half, painting a much more detailed and purpose-filled picture of our later years—and of life as a whole. In these pages, it has provided analogy for our time in culture.

In a related way, modern archaeology, anthropology, and sociology have brought a growing fascination not just with who we are as social systems, but with how social

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24 With the thinking of Melanie Kline, Margaret Mahler, Eric Erickson, and Jean Piaget.

25 Eric Erickson and Carl Jung both addressed adult development, but popular acknowledgment of mature developmental stages is much more recent. (Cultural Maturity's changes provide explanation. See Chapter Seven.)

systems change. Each has given our understanding of the larger human story new depths and narrative textures.[26] In the new view, history comes to be about much more than just progressive ascension from primitive ignorance (or the opposite, gradual degeneration from some early Golden Age). Culture's story has chapters—in the most common framing, an age of hunter-gatherers, an age of agriculture, an age of industry, and now, whatever in time we come to call today's information-rich enterprise.

Of particular pertinence to ideas in this chapter, the best of social science thinking better appreciates how history's chapters are about more than just invention—the advent of the plow, the printing press, or the computer. Cultural stages can be distinguished by evolving approaches to governance—from tribal authority, to the rule of god-kings, to monarchical and dictatorial rule, to the beginnings of representative authority, to today's fledgling efforts to govern in a global world with ever-more permeable governmental and social boundaries. Too, they can be distinguished by ways we've viewed the sacred—from animism, to polytheism, to monotheism, to the more personal and philosophical monotheism that followed the Reformation, to today's post-modern vacillations between throwing out the sacred altogether and seeking deeper and more inclusive ways to embrace it.[27]

Change has gained similar new status in the humanities. In philosophy, existentialism's early twentieth century emphasis on meaning as something to be actively discovered made truth as much process as product. And nothing more defined philosophy's increasingly constructivist emphasis in the later part of the century than the notion that cultural as well as personal truth were "made not found." A related new fascination with change and its meaning came to permeate literature—for example, with the altering of time found in the works of Joyce, Eliot and Faulkner.

In the arts, not only did the twentieth century make change more frequently a topic, art's reflections focused increasingly on our changing relationship to change. We

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26 I think most immediately of the ideas of Emile Durkheim, Herbert Spencer, August Compte, Merlo Ponte, and Claude Lévi-Straus. Lévi-Straus's structuralist contributions in anthropology have important parallels with those of Piaget in psychology—and related pertinence to the ideas in these pages.

27 The more reductionist of social scientists still tend to assume such deeper changes are themselves only products of invention. But this, as we shall see, is a simplistic conclusion that quickly proves by itself insufficient in the face of evidence.

see this most readily in the visual arts—with the melting watches of Salvador Dali, the ever-turning mobiles of Alexander Calder, and perhaps most dramatically in the growing prevalence of performance pieces meant not for the permanence of galleries, but to be seen once and not again. In music, we witnessed new comfort with change in greater rhythmic sophistication and in an expanding role for improvisation. While artistic sensibilities are inherently more ephemeral and kinetic than their more material counterparts, in the twentieth century they became also more consciously about change itself—about both the fact of change and who we are in relationship to it.[28]

Change also at least made at start at getting its nose under the tent of religion. New insights into how religion has evolved through time have given us greater appreciation for the diverse forms religion has taken—and new curiosity about the significances of the changes we've seen. Certainly, we've witnessed a diminishing of past tendencies to demonize more "primitive" beliefs.[29] We also see innovative ideas in religion that incorporate change as a core principle. I think most specifically of Alfred North Whitehead's "process theology," but we could turn as well to modern spiritual perspectives that draw from cultural times and places in which change had a more dominant presence.[30]

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28 That change is a new concern is even less obvious with the arts (or the humanities) than with the social sciences. Change being intimate to what creativity is about, it has always had a revered place. I am reminded of Robert Burns' claim that "Nature's mighty law is change." But this new focus on change was no less radical, and arguably of particular importance given that one of creative work's functions is to presage future changes. (See "The Arts" in Chapter Eleven.) CST describes how—and why—the harder spheres of human understanding tend to emphasize stability while the more ineffable dimensions of understanding identify more with change. We shall catch a glimpse shortly.

29 Most religious people today respond with regret if not shame when reminded of the forced removal of Native American and Australian aboriginal children from their families that happened through much of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in the name of "Christian education."

30 Like the inescapability of uncertainty, change's presence is an ancient observation that today assumes new pertinence. And, similarly, it derives fundamentally new meaning that requires care when drawing on references from times past. Impermanence is a common theme in early Western writings (particularly writings of a mystical sort). From Ovid's *Metamorphosis* we hear: "There is nothing constant in the universe. All ebb and flow, and every shape that is born bears in its womb the seeds of change. Plato declared that "nothing ever is, all is becoming." And the sacred significance of change is a frequent motif in classical Eastern religious forms (Chinese Taoism, India's yogic disciplines, Zen Buddhism). The *I Ching*,

Cultural Maturity proposes that this new attention to the temporal—broadly sweeping across cultural pursuits—represents more than serendipity. Rather, it is an expected ingredient of the more sophisticated understandings of change and our relationship to change made possible by and required by our time.[31]

Understanding Change

With our examinations of uncertainty and responsibility, we saw how Cultural Maturity not only brought new attention to these themes, it gave them whole new meanings. We also saw how appreciating such changes at the level of basic meaning was necessary both to deep understanding and to applying the themes in ways that could help us as we move forward.

We find something directly analogous with the theme of change. I've described how an Integrative Meta-Perspective brings with it, along with greater ease in the face of change and deeper appreciation for today's changes, more detailed understandings of change and its mechanisms. Four changes in our thinking about change permeate the diverse advances just described. Each is consistent with the predictions of Cultural Maturity and a generally more creative picture of change's workings.

The first is that we might think this much about change at all. By this I mean change in any fundamental sense—not the change of moving a car from one parking spot to another, but the kind of change that shapes solar systems, species, relationships, the evolution of societies, and artistic endeavors. The greater part of nineteenth-century biology focused on structure and stability—on anatomy, taxonomy, and with physiology,

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the ancient Chinese text of divination is appropriately subtitled "the book of changes." Again, while we can learn from ancient reflections, we must always understand them historically if we are not to reach fundamentally misleading conclusions. Chapter Seven examines both parallels and fundamental differences between such early descriptions and perspectives needed for today.

31 We could go on with this chronicling of twentieth-century change-related advances. In medicine we find Elizabeth Kubler Ross's description of stages commonly found in confronting death. In business we see new attention given to flexibility and adaptability—on the need for "learning organizations" and for businesses to be "quick on their feet"—and increasingly sophisticated understandings of how institutional change takes place. In education we witness growing emphasis not just on learning, but on "learning how to learn," and all that entails.

on homeostasis, on mechanisms of balance. Nineteenth-century physics did not ignore change, but certainly made it a secondary concern. And until the last century (and for many even today) we've tended to treat familiar cultural institutions and truths as static endpoints and interpret the past only in terms of their assumptions.

The second new piece returns us to the theme of uncertainty. Mechanistic models of change are deterministic. In change's new picture, not only is uncertainty acceptable, in a growing number of formulations uncertainty plays an intrinsic role. Related is the recognition that change is not just additive, incremental—it makes leaps. On the endlessly creative billiard table of existence, one ball hitting another may alter not just each ball's position, but as easily its composition, or the rules of the game. Change can result in properties wholly different from and not predictable from those of where we begin.

The third new ingredient is the way new ideas about change challenge past dualistic assumptions about how change works (whether mechanistic of teleological). Previously, reality as "noun" and reality as "verb" had stood wholly separate—with change's driving impetus variously an action that produces an "equal and opposite reaction," the hand of an omniscient creator, or, as in vitalism, an inner animating force. Increasingly we see formulations that regard change as a fundamental property. Piaget described structure as "a system of transformations" (effectively bridging structure and process).[32] The hard sciences speak of "self organization" and "emergence"[33] and more and more often treat change as an intrinsic property of systems.[34] The new view puts reality as a whole in dynamic, shape-shifting motion.[35]

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32 Nietzsche captured the new picture more philosophically and poetically a century earlier in calling the world "a piece of art that gives birth to itself."

33 The concept of emergence brings our second and third pieces together. Emergent properties are characteristics made manifest by leaps in systemic organization. (See Chapter Five.)

34 Both of these terms—self organization and emergence—are vulnerable to misinterpretation. In Chapter Five we will see how each shares with systems thinking more generally the unusual fate of at times being used to argue for polar opposite (and equally partial) worldviews.

35 Not all related conceptual advances are non-dualistic. One of the most provocative aspects of Prigogine's work, for example, was his demonstration that wholly mechanistic processes could be self-organizing. And the assertion that the best of future thinking will be non-dualistic is decidedly controversial. Neither people of more spiritual, idealist, or vitalistic bent on one hand, nor people of more

The fourth new ingredient is particular to ideas about change in the human realm—or more specifically, to conscious systems—and has special pertinence for our task. We see a growing recognition of pattern in human change.[36] Victor Hugo noted that "Nothing is so powerful as an idea whose time has come." We are coming to better understand why certain ideas are powerful and why they come (and go) when they do. Archaeologists, anthropologists, sociologists, and psychologists each in different ways have brought new sophistication to the timeless truth that everything has its seasons. We are beginning to better understand how those seasons differ and why developmental processes proceed as they do.[37]

This last ingredient loops back to each of those previous. It is not that change has changed, but rather that what we see when we look at change is changing. New perspectives on change are not always necessary—I can change my socks or order a hamburger quite successfully without them. But more sophisticated thinking about change will be increasingly critical for addressing all manner of concerns, often even ones of apparent small consequence. Cultural Maturity argues that our future depends on such newly sophisticated ways of thinking about change.

One example is particularly pertinent to our project. Earlier I emphasized how Cultural Maturity is unusual as much for the developmental/evolutionary sort of

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mechanistic and reductionistic proclivities on the other, are going to sit comfortably with this conclusion. But much of the best thinking in our time points in this direction.

36 The recognition of pattern is not really confined to human systems. But that is where we have given pattern greatest attention.

37 We don't see all four of these changes with each of our pioneering contributions. In general, the greater number of the four we see, the greater the power of that contribution as a tool for addressing culturally mature concerns. When any one gets left out, something else of importance get lets left out with it. I've described how natural selection (with its mechanistic formulation of change) can tell us a great deal about how life changes, but leaves untouched the question of life itself—what makes one thing alive and another not. Another example: Modern sociology, anthropology, and archeology address leaps and patterns in human organization. But in most instances, because thinking in these spheres remains mechanistic and dualistic (these disciplines had their origins in attempts to apply classical science to the human dimension) conclusions are able to address only superficially what underlies these leaps and patterns—and questions of purpose in general. Of particular importance for our considerations here, they are extremely limited in their ability to provide guidance for the future.

perspective it presents as its particular conclusions. These distinctions help us appreciate just how such perspective is new.

I've described how Cultural Maturity's developmental/evolutionary picture differs at least in its conclusions from the other most common ways of looking at the future. In contrast to "we've arrived" notions, it predicts further changes ahead. In contrast to views that frame the tasks ahead only in terms of correcting mistakes—or even going back, the future becomes about new challenges and yet to be realized capacities. In contrast to more post-modern interpretations, it argues that not only are potential future changes meaningful, understanding meaning in new ways is what they are ultimately about. In contrast to more technological interpretations, invention becomes only one part of a larger picture. And in contrast to more "transformational" views, needed changes become less about idealized possibilities than about doing the necessary tasks at hand.

But we see critical differences, too, not just in where these various ways of looking at the future take us, but in how change itself is understood. We see each of our four characteristics in how developmental/evolutionary perspective expands our thinking about cultural change. Developmental/evolutionary perspective not only alerts us to the fact of change, change is inherent to it. While it is predictive, it is not deterministic—part of what it predicts is leaps for which neither when they are to occur or exactly where they will take us can be fully anticipated. It "bridges" usual notions not just about where change will take us, but also about how causality works. (We could think of it drawing an encompassing circle around the causalities implied by each of the other interpretations.) And it is consistent with the idea that change is patterned. With it, Cultural Maturity becomes not just a good idea, but an idea "whose time has come."

Pattern and Change

If we are to use change's new picture to make practical decision, we need more specific conceptual tools. I've spoken of the importance of having culturally mature "multiplicity" concepts that address change. I've also begun to describe how Creative

Systems Theory uses a creative frame to develop such temporal “pattern language” notions.

Creative Systems Theory is specifically about change—how human systems change and grow. Creative Systems Theory patterning concepts provide a detailed approach to teasing apart the specifics of change in human systems. Because Creative Systems Theory explicitly applies an Integrative Meta-Perspective, the picture of change that results reflects all the changes in our relationships to change I have described.

Let’s examine its general method, and also take a beginning look at the change-mapping tools that results. Expanding on earlier observations about creative/formative process provides a good point of entry. We don't have a single best term to describe change in the more encompassing definition the four characteristics identified in the last section suggest. There I applied a variety of adjectives—developmental, dynamic, evolutionary, self-organizing. But we can very usefully return to that simple word "creative."

For non-human systems, the word creative at least helps us get our thinking around how change and substance could be aspects of a single package. Generative processes are obviously about both, about change as a process and the products of change. With regard to conscious systems, thinking in creative terms can take us considerably further. Creative Systems Theory describes how we can use the idea that change in human experience organizes creatively both to more deeply understand how change in human systems works and to map it, to delineate pattern in human change processes of all sorts—personal, relational, organizational, societal.[38]

This use of a creative frame is supported by how each of the attributes common to new formulations of change just noted is consistent with things creative. The most obvious characteristic of creative dynamics is that realities change (that is why we call them creative). Things creative make leaps (what once was not, now is). Creative processes inextricably “bridge” polarities—for example, they link substance and process (music is equally about the notes and how each note proceeds from the last). And

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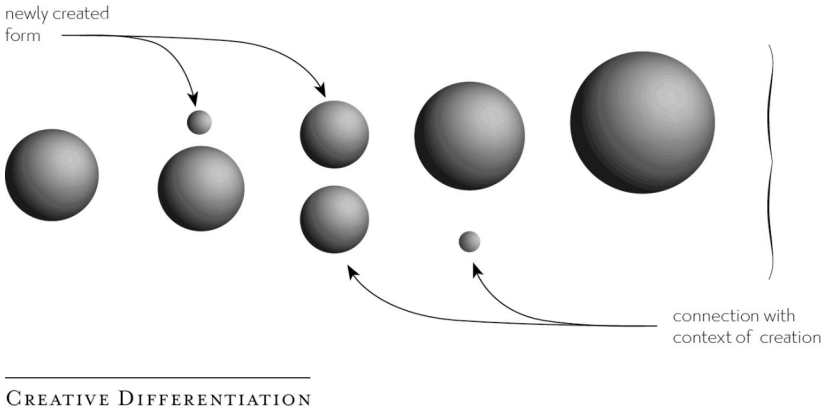
38 Such understanding of pattern can be used not just for making sense of change as process, but also change's products. This includes both how at different times we understand and what at different times it is possible to create (whether inventions or social structures).

formative processes follow predictable patterns (inspiration precedes first manifestation, first manifestation precedes full realization).

How creative processes inherently “bridge” polarities is particularly key to a creative frame’s conceptual power. Creation transcends dualism. It is a drive, but it drives itself. We create it and it in turn creates us. It is both expression and mirror. In *The Raw and the Cooked*, Claude Lévi Straus wrote, "Music has its being in me and I listen to myself through it." The bridging/integrative nature of formative process is key to how a creative frame gets us beyond the limits inherent to both rational/positivist/mechanistic and poetic/idealist/spiritual ways of thinking about change

Creative Systems Theory not only draws on “bridiging” dynamics, it proposes that formative process is the source of both polarity and the fact that “bridging” is something we see. Earlier reflections on why we tend to think in polar terms in the first place established the basic arguement: the generation of polarity is necessary to the mechanisms of formative process. Creative processes—whatever the sort—start with a budding off of new possibility (an insight or new artistic expression, a growing identity, a set of new cultural assumptions) from what before has been known (existing idea or art, our bodies, present cultural assumptions). As part of becoming established, new form must push away from its generative context. Polarity is the result.



Formative Process and the Generation of Polarity

Creative Systems Theory describes how formative processes of all sorts progress as generatively-ordered interplays of polar relationships. It also describes how the ways we think, how we relate, and even what we invent can be understood in terms of the evolution of such time-specific polar juxtapositions.

On first encounter, just the basic notion that opposites creatively relate can catch some people by surprise. We are used to thinking of polar opposites as, well, opposites. But a closer look reveals a more dynamic—and ultimately generative—picture.

Polar juxtapositions—of the sort we are interested in here—are always more than opposites in the simple sense of alternative aspects, two sides of a coin or two halves of an apple. This is the case whatever the polar extremes we wish to bridge—fact and fancy, parent and child, secular and sacred. One way they are different helps particularly in making sense of that deeper significance. Earlier I described how polarities share a predictable symmetry. Each juxtaposes an aesthetically harder element—in these examples, fact, parent, or secular—with a second element that is softer, more poetic and diaphanous—here, fancy, child, and sacred.

Psychology has terms for these extremes, drawn from the study of myth, that highlight the deeper significance. It refers to the more concrete side of each pairing as archetypally masculine and its softer counterpart as archetypally feminine. The gender-linked language can cause confusion, particularly today as women and men each seek to make both poles their own, but its sexual connotations are evocative. In some fundamental way, the relationship between polar extremes is "procreative."[39]

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39 To fully grasp the conceptual implications of bridging polarities we must be precise about what we are bridging. Even thinking of polarity as like the poles of a magnet stops short in other than a metaphorical sense. The idea that we need to better bridge mind and body doesn't add much (get us much closer to what it means to be alive and human) if the word mind refers only our logical capacities and by body we mean only our anatomy. In a similar way, bridging matter and energy provides no escape from classical models limited to balls-on-a-billiard-table definitions of matter and energy. The recognition that culturally mature conceptual requires that we draw on multiple intelligences provides a first step toward understanding how we must expand our understanding. But just thinking in terms of multiple intelligences as we tend to conceive of them still leaves us short. Later we will look at how a full grasp of the nature of polarity and what it implies requires a reengagement with "forgotten" aspects of ourselves—and thus a few solid steps into culturally mature territory. (See Chapter Seven.)

I often use other language for such juxtapositions, in part to get past gender confusions, in part because different terms best highlight particular characteristics. For example, if I want to highlight creative dynamics, I may speak of the creatively manifest and the creatively germinal or of creative content and creative context (language to which we shall return). Or I may speak more generally of the more concrete and the more ineffable, the more opaque and the more translucent, or the more outer and more inner aspects of experience. To keep things basic and to avoid confusion, I will here often refer to them simply as truth's right and left hands.[40] Whatever language we choose to use, the key recognition is that polar pairings work together as creative partners and play key roles in making us who we are (they form Creative Wholes.[41])

We can witness creative polar dynamics at work in a crude way in how change processes often involve a back and forth rhythmic interplay—for example in the ambivalent cycles of independence and dependence that mark an adolescent's forays into the adult world. Like the swinging of a pendulum giving movement to the hands of a clock, or the undulating movements by which a snake makes its way, what might at first seem like wasted motion, may, with sufficiently vantage, reveal itself to be an essential part of the creative mechanisms of change.

Usual ways of thinking about change tend to blind us to such polar interplays, but they are all around us. In *The Cycles of American History*, Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. describes how liberal and conservative dominance has alternated predictably over the course of American politics.[42] We tend to regard liberal and conservative only as differing ideologies (which, because their advocates would each like to prevail, often conflict). But Schlesinger's observation suggests a more symbiotic interpretation. History's relationship between the political left and the political right may be ultimately generative, as much in the end about collaboration as conflict. In this view, the political

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40 This language is simplistic, but is generally supported both by myth (the direction that tends most to correlate with particular qualities in symbolic representations) and by neurology (the side of the cerebral cortex likely to be most activated with such considerations—keeping in mind that pathways between sides of the brain and sides of the body cross).

41 See Chapter Five.

42 He proposes roughly thirty-year cycles.

extremes have functioned over time—however unwittingly—as collaborators, working like a sculptor's two opposed hands to define the emerging shape of governance.

Creative Systems Theory describes how a predictable progression of generatively-ordered polar relationships underlies any process of creative change. Each stage in any creative process juxtaposes polarity in different ways—different both in what we perceive to be juxtaposed and in our felt sense of that juxtaposition. The theory goes on to delineate how we can use a creative framing of change to map the underlying dynamics of change in human systems of all sorts.

Of particular importance for our task is Creative System Theory's assertion that cultural change, like with all change in human systems, patterns creatively. Creative Systems Theory describes how polar juxtapositions interplay to drive culture's narrative. It also describes how history's unfolding narrative has at least the outline of a script—one that follows the stages we would predict if large-scale cultural change were a creative process. The results is a framework that provides insight not just into how our actions change, but also into how and why at different times we might see the world in the ways we do (including how we describe change) and create particular kinds of objects and social structures.

A quick glimpse at how polarity itself evolves through cultural time gives a feel for the depths at which this works. While thought in tribal times includes polarity, its influence tends to reside in understanding's background. (The unbroken whole of nature and tribe is more ultimately defining.) With classical times in both East and West, polarity assumes a key role in understanding, but poles remain conceptually close, not yet at odds. (The complementary yin and yang of Chinese Taoist philosophy or the entwined snakes of the Greek caduceus provide ready images, but we could look as well to the underlying dialectics of Plato or Aristotle.) With the Middle Ages, truth became most explicitly polar. (It became an isometric—though still ultimately co-generative—play between opposites: feudal lords and peasants, church and crown, good and evil.) With the Modern Age poles became even more separate, and at once, by virtue of that separateness, less obviously in opposition. (In a Cartesian reality, subjective and objective or mind and body are not so much in conflict as simply inhabitants of separate worlds.) Each kind of polar relationship has brought with it predictable assumptions about how the world works.

In *The Future of Capitalism,* economist Lester Thurow offers a description of cultural difference that is provocative in two ways that are each pertinent to this creative picture. It graphically illustrates the interaction of social and technological aspects of cultural change and how it is a two-way dynamic.[43] It also provides example of how deeply cultural stage differences permeate experience, how they affect not just belief, but also the structures of human relationship, and, here, what is creatively possible at the level of invention.

Thurow describes how China developed all the technologies necessary for an industrial revolution centuries before the West's Industrial Age. In his words: "At least eight hundred years before they had occurred in Europe, China had invented blast furnaces and piston bellows for making steel; gunpowder and the cannon for military conquest; the compass and the rudder for world exploration; paper, movable type and the printing press for disseminating knowledge…." His list goes on for over a page.

Thurow proposes that the missing ingredient was a cultural ideology supportive of the individuality and competition needed for an industrial revolution. Such was missing also during the Middle Ages in the West. Neither the highly individualized competition-oriented concept of the self, nor the materialist view of the world needed to drive the industrial model of economic growth was acceptable within medieval religious beliefs. While greed was hardly absent, the church included it among the seven deadly sins. To again quote Thurow: "Capitalism needed a world where avarice was a virtue and the merchant could be most pleasing to God." The Renaissance and the Reformation provided the needed new view of self and world.[44]

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43 Historically we've most often either ignored causal relationships between these two worlds or made causality one-way. In modern times, such one-way causality most often makes invention the determiner of social realities. But go back very far in history and the reverse becomes the more common interpretation (as we will see, for creatively predictable reasons). The more complete picture is co-generative. We create our tools, and our tools create us, which in turn suggests new tools. And this is not just a back and forth between new knowledge and new invention. What is technologically possible is affected by every aspect of social context—beliefs, values, and ultimately most important, the sensibilities that order a time's picture of reality.

44 Advocates of a wholly technology-determined interpretation of history could argue that the Renaissance and the Reformation were products of earlier technologies such as the printing press—which

If we are to understand the mature stages of any creative dynamic—including the creative mechanisms of culture—we need one more piece with regard to polarity. Polarity's creative progression as I've described it thus far, with polarities growing ever further apart, is not the end of polarity's story. It is a topic to which we will give considerable attention. During the first half new content becomes elaborated and differentiated while original context fades into the background. Formative process's more integrative second half reconciles polarity to produce creation's next systemic whole. We become able increasingly to consciously engage the encompassing reality that the various juxtapositions have all along been about. We begin to appreciate a more integrative—and now more overtly creative—picture. Combine this picture with the notion that even large scale human systems evolve creatively and we get that one place culture's story should eventually take us is to more integrative and consciously creative—culturally mature—ways of understanding (in general, and also in particular, with regard to change).[45]

Intelligence, Creativity, and Change

Two basic sorts of insights provide most ready entry in how Creative Systems Theory addresses the temporal "multiplicity" task. The first is this recognition of polarity and its ultimately creative function. The second returns us to the topic of intelligence, what it is, and, here, more specifically, why it is structured as it is.

Looking back a hundred years from now, it is quite possible that none of the contribution to the emerging picture of change we have looked at—scientific, sociological, philosophic, artistic, or religious—will be viewed as the most important. Rather, it will be new ideas about human cognition. In the end, what we can know and the forms in which we know depend on the cognitive equipment with which we do the knowing.

I've proposed that our tool-making nature means that human intelligence must at least powerfully support formative process. I've also described how Cultural Maturity reflects and requires not just new ideas but a new kind of cognitive ability, that capacity

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is partly true, but again only partly—and would start us into an ultimately unresolvable chicken and egg debate.

45 See the Creative Function later in this chapter for a graphic representation of this full progression.

for Integrative Meta-Perspective. Creative Systems Theory adds the notion that human intelligence is specifically structured to drive and facilitate creative change. It goes on to tie the underlying structures of intelligence to patterns we see in how human systems change (and the possibility of prediction).

Appreciating the fact of multiple intelligences is key to understanding Cultural Maturity theoretically. We've looked at how mature perspective (and wisdom) demands an at once more conscious and more fully integrative kind of knowing.[46] This is true for day-to-day decision-making. And it is just as true for theoretical conception that is in any way complete. In *The Social Construction of Reality*, sociologist Peter Berger argues for a more inclusive kind of social theory. In his words, "theoretical formulations of reality, whether scientific, philosophical, or even mythological do not exhaust what is 'real' for the members of a society." Choices at every level today require that we draw on more of ourselves.

The advent of modern psychology and psychiatry provided a start toward the needed new picture. We saw new credence given to the less conscious aspects of the psyche—to the feeling realm, certainly, but also to the symbolic, and sometime to sensibilities of even more primordial sorts. Most early formulations, while of unquestioned significance, presented only limited challenge to Enlightenment assumptions. The "unconscious" was newly acknowledged and newly formidable, but the ultimate task lay with making the unconscious less so (with awareness still tied to a identification with rationality, at least with "insight"). The intellect, while situated now on a somewhat shakier foundation, remained intelligence's final arbiter.[47] But in these

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46 That we are more than just rational beings is, of course, not new. (I am reminded of Rabindranath Tagore's claim that "A mind all logic is like a knife all blade. It makes the hand bleed that uses it. ") Those who most identify with the more germinal parts of intelligence—artists, poets, and spiritual seekers—have affirmed the beauty and essential power of the non-rational since the first animistic drawings came to adorn the walls of ancient caves. But in modern times, we have more and more placed rationality and the other aspects of cognition (lumped together) into separate worlds. Some things are rational; others are irrational. And we have come to treat our conscious rationality as the final measure of intelligence. Cultural Maturity argues for the importance of a newly integrative picture—newly conscious, more subtly differentiated, and newly embracing.

47 With certain schools of thought we saw almost the opposite, a polar identification with the non-rational—with the feeling world (humanistic psychology), the imaginal/spiritual (transpersonal

beginnings we recognize important steps toward a more all-the-crayons-in-the-box picture of intelligence.

Advances in cognitive science have helped point toward more differentiated—and, at once more integrated—understanding. Formulations that conceive of intelligence more complexly have divided the pie of cognition in a variety of ways. The neurosciences have replaced old images of a single managerial rational brain with a view that recognizes multiple quasi-independent "brains"—a reptilian brain, a mammalian brain, along with that thin outer cerebral layer in which we take special, and appropriate, pride. Educational theorists offer an array of schemes, the most well known being Howard Gardner's eight part smorgasbord of intelligences—linguistic, musical, mathematical, spatial, kinesthetic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, and rational. The popular assertion that we need to think with "both sides of the brain," while neurologically simplistic, draws our attention to how the task is not just to have lots of intelligences at our disposal, but to appreciate how, at least in potential, they work together.

This new picture raises intriguing questions—and about more than thought. Our intelligences are not just ways we think but the lenses and filters through which we discern and make sense of our worlds (and ultimately ourselves). A more differentiated picture of intelligence confronts our conclusions about all we perceive. Our perceptions must suddenly be understood in relation to the sensibilities through which we organize and interpret them.

Creative Systems Theory takes such perspective an important step further, one that gives change newly pivotal signficance in the workings of cognition. It proposes that our multiple intelligences work together as the fundamental mechanism of generativity. This thesis helps explain why intelligence is structured as it is. It also serves as a basis for differentiating how and why we think differently at different times and places.

Creative Systems Theory proposes that we are the uniquely creative creatures we are not just because we are conscious, but because of the particular way the various aspects of our intelligence are structured and interrelate.[48] It describes how our various

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psychology), or the body. But most often this represented more a flipping of polar advocacies, as with romanticism, than anything fundamentally new.

48 Creative Systems Theory's picture of multiple intelligence is unusual both for its emphasis on change and for the attention if gives to how various ways of knowing work together.

intelligences—or we might better say sensibilities to reflect all they encompass—relate in specifically creative ways. And it goes on to delineate how different ways of knowing, and different relationships between ways of knowing, predominate at specific times in any human change processes.

If this picture is right, the key to the needed new understandings of change may lie in better understanding our own cognitive mechanisms. Creative Systems Theory provides detailed perspective for understanding just how this might be so.

Creative Systems Theory identifies four basic types of intelligence,[49] what it calls somatic/kinesthetic[50], symbolic/imaginal[51], emotional/moral[52], and rational/material intelligence.[53] For ease of conversation, we can refer to them here, simply, as the intelligences of the body, the imagination, the emotions, and the intellect. Creative Systems Theory offers that these ways of knowing represent not just approaches to processing information, but the windows through which we make sense of our worlds—and as we shall see, more than just this, the formative tendencies that have us shape our worlds in the ways that we do.

It also argues that our various intelligences, in the end, work together in ways that are not just collaborative, but specifically creative.[54] Human intelligence is uniquely

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49 We could break intelligence's picture down further (and CST does), but four makes a good compromise between oversimplification and unnecessary complexity.

50 The language of movement, sensation, sensuality, and the organismic. (And much we are only discovering. For example, it is increasingly accepted that the immune system is in the broadest sense "intelligent." The immune system makes subtle discriminations and learns every day to make new ones.)

51 The language of poetry, metaphor, dream, and artistic inspiration. In *A Midsummer Night's Dream,* Shakespeare referred to it in describing how "the lover, the lunatic, and the poet/are of imagination all compact."

52 The language of mood, affect, and the more interpersonal aspects of discourse. It also relates closely with how impulse translates into action.

53 The language of syllogistic logic, the more explicit aspects of verbal exchange, and "objective" observation. (I put the word objective in quotes because of how, with modern times, we've tended to equate objective with complete. The fact that such observation tends to draw on only part of cognition suggests a more nuanced interpretation.)

54 Which is not to say that our diverse intelligences don't at times work at cross-purposes to one another. Often they arrive at conflicting conclusions—sometimes because they simply do, sometimes because doing so is a natural and necessary part of underlying developmental dynamic. For example,

configured to support creative change. Our various modes of intelligence, juxtaposed like colors on a color wheel, function together as creativity's mechanism. That wheel, like the wheel of a car or a Ferris wheel, is continually turning, continually in motion. The way the faces of intelligence juxtapose makes change, and specifically purposeful change, inherent to our natures.

The following diagram from my book, *Necessary Wisdom,* depicts these parallels between the workings of intelligence and the stages of formative process: [55]

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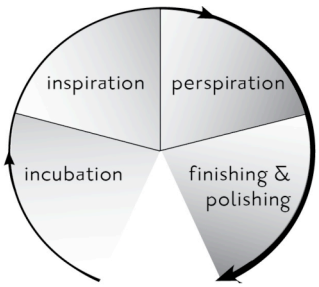
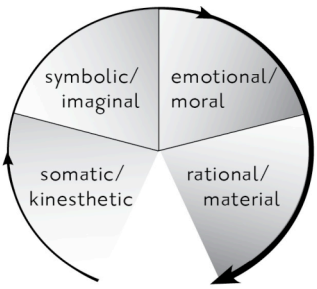
internal wars between thoughts and emotions are essential to the developmental tasks of adolescence. (See "Patterning in Time" in the Appendix.)

55 What we witness is much more subtle and layered than one stage, one intelligence. A different intelligence predominates with each stage, but every intelligence is present and plays an important role at each stage. More than this, each intelligence takes a different form with each creative stage. For example, CST describes how with each stage imaginal intelligence manifests differently. The imaginal is most centrally significant with creative inspiration, but it always plays a role. We see its earliest stage expression in animistic imagery. With creative inspiration it takes expression more in things magical and the language of myth. Next comes symbolic expression more akin to the language of legend and fable. (In contrast with myh, legend's ultimate interest lies with the "moral" of the story). And with creation's last formative stage, it takes expression in the more surface playfulness of Walt Disney-style fantasy. With each stage, our various intelligences manifest in their stage-specific forms. These combine to define each stage's unique organizing reality. (See the Appendix.)





INTELLIGENCE AND FORMATIVE PROCESS

Formative Process and Intelligence

A brief look at a single creative process—we might take as example the writing of this book—helps clarify. In subtly overlapping and multi-layered ways, the process by which this book has come to be took me through a progression of creative stages and associated sensibilities. Creative processes unfold in varied ways, but the following outline is generally representative:

Before beginning to write, my sense of the book was murky at best. Creative processes begin in darkness. I was aware that I had ideas I wanted to communicate. But I had only the most beginning sense of just what ideas I wanted to include or how I wanted to address them. This is creativity's "incubation" stage. The dominant intelligence here is the kinesthetic, body intelligence if you will. It is like I am pregnant, but don't yet know with quite what. What I do know takes the form of "inklings" and faint "glimmerings," inner sensings. If I want to feed this part of the creative process, I do things that help me be reflective and connect in my body. I take a long walk in the woods, draw a warm bath, build a fire in the fireplace.

Generativity's second stage propels the new thing created out of darkness into first light. I begin to have "ah-has"—my mind floods with notions about what I might express in the book and possible approaches for expression. Some of these first insights take the form of thoughts. Others manifest more as images or metaphors. In this "inspiration" stage, the dominant intelligence is the imaginal—that which most defines art, myth, and the let's pretend world of young children. The products of this period in the creative process may appear suddenly—Archimedes' "eureka"—or they may come more subtly and gradually. It is this stage, and this part of our larger sensibility, that we tend to most traditionally associate with things creative.[56]

The next stage leaves behind the realm of first possibilities and takes us into the world of manifest form. With the book, I try out specific structural approaches. And I get down to the hard work of writing, and revising—and writing and revising some more. This is creation's "perspiration" stage. The dominant intelligence is different still, more emotional and visceral—the intelligence of heart and guts. It ushers a new tenacity onto creation's stage. It is here that we confront the hard work of finding right approach and satisfying means of expression. We also confront limits to our skills and are challenged to push beyond them. The perspiration stage tends to bring a new moral commitment and emotional edginess. We must compassionately but unswervingly confront what we have created if it is to stand the test of time.

Generativity's fourth stage is more concerned with detail and refinement. While the book's basic form is established, much yet remains to do. Both the book's ideas and how they are expressed need a more fine-toothed examination. Rational/material intelligence orders this "finishing and polishing" stage. This period is more conscious and more concerned with aesthetic precision than periods previous. It is also more concerned with audience and outcome. It brings final focus to the creative work, offers the clarity of thought and nuances of style needed for effective communication.

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56 Because the imaginal indirectly anticipates final form, there is a sense in which it presages fact. I am reminded of Rilke's poetic reflection that "The future enters into us in order to transform us long before it happens"—an observation both about creative process and understanding's broader generativity. Chapter Ten's look at the future of art examines this presaging function of imagination.

Creative expression is often placed in the world at this point. But a further stage —or more accurately, an additional series of stages—remains. It is as important as any of the others—and of particular significance with mature creative process. It varies greatly in length and intensity. Creative Systems Theory calls this further generative sequence Creative Integration. The process of refinement complete, we can now step back from the work, appreciate it with new perspective. We become better able to recognize the relationship of one part to another. And we become more able to appreciate the relationship of the work to its creative contexts, to ourselves and to the time and place in which is was created. We might call creativity's integrative stages the seasoning or ripening stages.[57]

Creative Integration forms a complement to the more differentiation-defined tasks of other stages—a second half to the creative process. Creative Integration is about our diverse ways of knowing more consciously working together. It is about learning to apply our intelligences in various combinations and balances as time and situation warrant, and about a growing ability not just to engage the work as a whole, but ourselves as a whole in relationship to it. As wholeness is where we started—before the disruptive birth of new creation—in a certain sense creative integration returns us to where we began. But because change that matters changes everything, this is a point of beginning that has not been before.

This progression is highly simplified. Human generativity always involves the overlapping and intertwining of multiple creative cycles (for example, the creative cycle that produced the book overlay the work of particular chapters, and each of these the creative efforts of themes, paragraphs, and moments of reflection.) And one stage or

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57 Sometimes this stage (or set of stages) takes place well after a work has taken expression. When this is the case, its underlying emphasis tends to be more on maturity in the creator's life than on the process of the specific work, or about finding mature expression in a body of work. At other times, especially when the work represents mature stages in the creator's efforts, it may manifest fully as a part of the creative process that brings a work into being. This is particularly likely when the needed maturity is cultural as well as personal. In the writing of this book—Cultural Maturity its primary focus—it is where much of the most important creative work took place. In either case, this stage draws on intelligence as a (now more creatively integrated) whole.

intelligence may play a more powerful role than others in a person's act of creation, depending on a variety of factors—what is being created, the personality style or age of the person doing the creating, or even the period in cultural history. But this general picture holds irrespective of the creative task.

Creative Systems Theory applies this relationship between intelligence and formative process as a more general template for delineating pattern in human systems. It proposes that the same general progression of dynamics we saw with a creative project orders the creative growth of all human systems. It argues that we see similar patterns at all levels—from the growth of an individual, to the development of an organization, to culture and its evolution. A few snapshots:

The same bodily intelligence that orders creative "incubation" plays a particularly prominent role in the infant's rhythmic world of movement, touch, and taste. The realities of early tribal cultures also draw deeply on body sensibilities. Truth in tribal societies is synonymous with the rhythms of nature, and through dance, song, story, and drumbeat, with the body of the tribe.

The same imaginal intelligence that we saw ordering creative "inspiration" takes prominence in the play-centered world of the young child. We also hear its voice with particular strength in early civilizations—such as ancient Greece or Egypt, with the Incas and Aztecs in the Americas, or in the classical East—with their mythic pantheons and great symbolic tales.

The same emotional and moral intelligence that orders creative "perspiration" tends to occupy center stage in adolescence with its deepening passions and pivotal struggles for identity. It can be felt with particular strength also in the beliefs and values of the European Middle Ages, times marked by feudal struggle and ardent moral conviction (and, today, in places where struggle and conflict seem forever recurring).

The same rational intelligence that comes forward for the "finishing and polishing" tasks of creativity can be seen taking new prominence in young adulthood as we strive to create our unique place in the world of adult expectations. This more refined and refining aspect of intelligence assumed a similar new prominence culturally with the Renaissance and the Age of Reason and, in the West, has held sway into modern times.

Of particular pertinence to the concept of Cultural Maturity, the same more integrative intelligence that we see in the "seasoning" stage of a creative act orders the

unique developmental capacities of a lifetime's second half. We can also see it just beneath the surface with each of the advances that have most transformed understanding through the last century. We associate the Age of Reason with Descartes' assertion that "I think, therefore I am." We could make a parallel assertion for each of these other cultural stages: "I am embodied, therefore I am; "I imagine therefore I am;" "I am a moral being therefore I am;" and, if the concept of Cultural Maturity is accurate, "I understand maturely and systemically—with the whole of myself—therefore I am." Cultural Maturity proposes that this discussion about change has been possible because such integrative dynamics are reordering how we think and perceive.[58]

Patterning in TIme

Creative Systems Theory brings together observations such as these about polarity, intelligence, and formative process more generally, to map human generativity. From a Creative Systems perspective, various scales of formative process layer one atop the other and together define any creative moment. Creative Systems Theory calls this approach to delineating systemic change Patterning in Time. In chapters ahead—and in greater detail in the Appendix—we will examine how such delineation can help us and develop more sophisticated language for applying it.

Patterning in Time discernments bring both dynamism and detail to our understanding of change. They apply to human systems at all scales. While they don't apply directly to non-human systems, they do tell us a great deal about the lenses through

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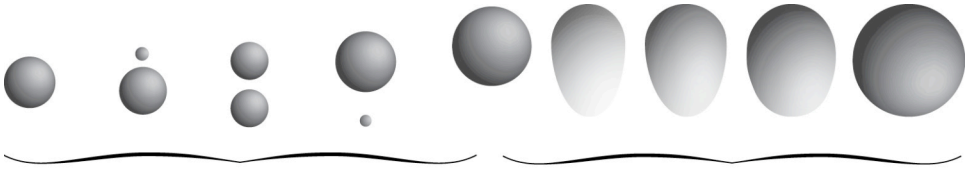
58 Note that one place this takes us is to a sort of historicism. Historicism has been roundly—and appropriately—discredited. But the problem is not with historicism as an endeavor. Appreciating pattern in cultural development has great value (and should have ever-greater value in the future). Rather, historicism can be ultimately helpful only if its frame is integrative. Failed versions of historicism—Hegel's espousing of a utopian Prussian state is often cited—have generally had their basis in some version of philosophical romanticism or idealism. We might call this a "left-handed" sort of historicism. CST proposes that the assumption that cultural change can be adequately described solely in terms of leaders, wars and inventions (the conclusion implied in much teaching of history) is also historicism—just a more "right-hand" version. Predictably, neither helps us reliably when it comes to addressing the future, nor in any deeply satisfying way when looking to the past. (And avoiding issues of causality altogether only begs the important questions.)

which, at different times, we've viewed the creaturely and physical realms. Of particular importance, they offer that our ideas about temporal difference might be as much about the creative making of meaning as specific behaviors or beliefs.

Because creativity itself bridges conceptual polarities (indeed is arguably the sources of both polarity and bridging), a creative framing of change, used skillfully, offers a direct way past the Dilemma of Differentiation. It specifically honors the living dynamism of human experience. This success is most obviously pertinent to the "multiplicity" side of differentiation's challenge. Creative Systems Theory's method offers an approach to understanding parts that gets beyond simple analysis, that maintains systemic integrity. But from a larger systemic vantage, we can see, too, how it pertains just as much to change's inescapable contribution to the "crux" aspect of truth. We can usefully regard what makes any action "true" to be the degree it is creatively "right and timely," and thus most life-giving.



THE CREATIVE FUNCTION[4]

The Creative Function, the image lies at the heart of Creative Systems Theory, is pertinent to Creative Systems observations of all sorts. But it is most obviously a map of change. It takes the simple notion of polarity and extends it like a bellows. The Creative Function represents the formative mechanism as an evolving sequence of stage-specific juxtapositions. We can think of these juxtapositions alternatively in terms of how polarity predictably evolves or in terms of how intelligences organizes differently over the course

of any formative process.[59] The first four stages correspond to creative differentiation's incubation, inspiration, perspiration, and finishing/polishing periods (future chapters offer more formal language) the last four stages to integrative processes.[60]

The "upper pole" of each polarity in the diagram represents the object being created (artistic product or cognitive insight, individual personality structure, the structures and assumptions of culture). The "lower pole" represents creation's context, its formative ground, generativity's original unity (or more precisely the relationship with that original unity existent at that point in time). Over the course of the first half of formative process the upper pole—and the archetypally masculine in general—increases in prominence (as the new object becomes increasingly manifest). At the same time the intensity of our connection with context and origin—and the archetypally feminine in general—diminishes.[61] The second half of formative process is integrative. Polarities are

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59 The Creative Function, understood deeply, adds an important additional level of sophistication to our thinking about polarity as it relates to intelligence. We commonly speak as if intelligences themselves form polarities—for example, referring to thoughts and feels or mind and body as opposites. More precisely, each creative stage organizes both polarity and intelligence in specific ways with each intelligence playing an evolving role with each stage (and at least a minimal role in both halves of any polarity). Polarity and intelligence are in the end separate variables.

We get a beginning sense of this by noting how the upper (thought or mind) pole and the lower (feeling or body) pole in such juxtapositions each take quite different forms depending on the creative stage. Early on in creation's differentiation phase, upper pole "thought" is as much imagination as rationality. With the middle stage in creative differentiation, moral/emotional sensibilities becomes as central to thought's organization. Only later in creative differentiation does thought manifest primarily in the more purely intellectual functioning we commonly associate with the word. Simiarly, lower pole "feeling' dynamics employ different mixes of intelligences with each creative stage—from more bodily/sensual sensibilities, to responses more tied to emotion and relationship, to more appearance-oriented feeling reactions.

60 Creative stages are at once continuous and distinct. Think of them like overlapping tectonic plates or like phase shifts in water—between ice, liquid water, and water vapor (each phase no less water yet fundamentally different). We perhaps come closest (no picture can fully capture the relationship) by thinking of creative change as like what happens to a snake or other reptile that must periodically shed its skin in order to grow. The skin represents time-specific beliefs and assumptions, the creature's expanding girth the growing capacity made possible by those skin-sheddings.

61 And our perceived experience of it changes—as fully as the ever-changing appearance of the created object.

bridged and the larger reality that formative process has been about becomes increasingly revealed. Chapter Eight and the Appendix use the creative function to map creative change in individual development, the developmental course of a relationship, and the evolution of culture.

We can relate the Creative Function directly to this chapter's reflections on changing ideas about change. Creative Systems Theory proposes that mechanical concepts of change derive from a bias toward the more creatively manifest (right-hand, archetypally masculine) half of creative polarity, more spiritual, psychological, and social notions from greater identification with more germinal and contextual (left-hand, archetypally feminine) sensibilities. It also describes how, over the course of history, right-hand sensibilities have become increasingly dominant while left--hand sensibilities have moved more into the background. History's diverse ways of describing how one thing leads to another can be understood as predictable expressions of how creative truth's two hands evolve (both in how each is experienced and in how they relate) over the course of culture as a formative process. Cultural Maturity brings truth's creative hands together as a larger systemic whole. With Integrative Meta-Perspective, awareness new more explicitly creative role combines with this newly systemic holding of our human complexity to produce change's new, more rich, dynamic, and complete picture.

Important to the solidity of Cultural Maturity conceptually is how the Creative Function places the metaphor of maturity in individual developmental drawn on so extensively here in a larger context—makes it more specifically an analogy. Rather than personal and cultural development having some special relationship, any formative dynamic includes a point at which the perceived creative task shifts from the establishment of form to a deepened appreciation of and responsibility for generativity as a whole. In the end, the parallel with personal maturity succeeds because personal and cultural development are each human formative processes.[62]

Change and Hope

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62 I've chosen the analogy with personal maturity because the second half of life is an experience most people eventually share. Creative Systems Theory proposes that the most precise reference for understanding Cultural Maturity is formative process more generally.

For much that we do, a culturally mature understanding of change—whether framed in creative terms or otherwise—is not needed. We can roll a bowling ball quite well within the constraints of classical mechanics and recount a casual conversation quite adequately within the action and reaction language of "I said this and he said that."

But culturally mature perspective of some sort is essential if we wish to understand change at all deeply, and not just its mechanisms. And this so for many concerns that might seem commonplace. An Integrative Meta-Perspective is needed to at all adequately understand our past, as it is for making sense of developmental processes of any sort at all deeply. If Cultural Maturity's argument holds, it will be essential to making good sense of the changes before us as a species and any possibility that we might engage them in healthy and sustainable ways.

With regard to hope, Cultural Maturity's most immediate change-related contribution is simply to highlight that it is in our natures both to hope and to change. Our immense inventive capacities make us remarkable both in our ability to imagine possibilities and to adapt to changing circumstances. It is these things that have made us the successful species that we are.

Changes specific to Cultural Maturity add a couple important layers to this adaptive picture. If Cultural Maturity's thesis is accurate, in times ahead we should become even more adept at adapting. An Integrative Meta-Perspective amplifies creative ability. More directly, if the concept of Cultural Maturity effectively describes what we see, we should be becoming increasingly adept at generating, and providing leadership in, the more mature kinds of change the future will require.

This chapter's creative picture of cognition lets us be more specific with regard to hope. Its most important consequence may lie with the question of whether how we humans are "designed" is sufficient to the tasks ahead. We have no way of knowing whether we are fully up to the challenges we face. But if the picture of cognition presented here is generally accurate, our design may be quite ideal for taking them on. Intelligence's creative architecture may not be a perfect match for all with which we need to address. But for the task of engaging a world in which change is a constant presence and for which decisions will increasingly require broadly systemic perspective, it provides a solid foundation. If we can learn to utilize our full cognitive complexity in mature, consciously integrated ways, we may find ourselves more able to predict in the

face of change, more able to manage change in healthy and sustainable ways, and more skilled at creating needed change than we might have imagined.

The best of designs can't help us ride the rapids of future change with perfect safety. But if we can bring the needed courage to bear, we just might be able to do so with greater elegance than circumstances and fears might suggest.

The Price and the Prize

A culturally mature relationship to change asks a lot. It demands greater openness to change as an ongoing part of life. It requires a willingness to surrender favorite beliefs that make time-specific cultural truths once-and-for-all. It also makes inescapable the need to address current changes and to think about change itself in new ways.

But the price we will pay if we hide from change's demands, as with our other themes, would be intolerable. At the least, we will end up applying outmoded and ineffectual solutions. Increasingly, we will act dangerously and dogmatically to protect ourselves from today's loss of traditional belief and, more generally, to feeling overwhelmed by today's pace of change. We will also find ourselves ineffective when confronting challenges of any sort that require mature developmental perceptive—whether the healthy raising of our children, leading in the context of newly dynamic organizational realities, or being attentive to cultural differences at the depth needed for effective global decision-making. And with no capacity to see pictures of the future that are at all compelling (and also realistic), we risk becoming increasingly vulnerable to hype and cynicism. In the end, not just good decision-making, but hope, depends on the art of the long view.

And, again, the rewards we can reap from such maturity have the potential to be not just great, but profound. More mature understandings of change promise both greater comfort in the face of change and less vulnerability to the addictive attractions of a frenetic life. It means deeper creativity and meaning in our personal choices and greater possibility and success with relationships of all kinds—in love, in our friendships and with out families, in work relationships and in community. It provides new and deeper understandings of our cultural past, better appreciation of cultures that manifest from diverse culture stages, and, ultimately, deeper engagement with our collective human

natures. It helps us manage change in ways that are maximally healthy and sustainable. And it makes possible a grasp of future human possibility that is not only worthy of our great creative capacities but appropriately seen as an ultimate realization of them.

Weaving Threads

The short version:

> Our times demand increasing comfort with the fact of change, new skills for managing change, and new frameworks for making sense of change—in particular the changes that define our time.
>
> In times past, mythologized social structures and absolutist beliefs have kept the larger portion of change, both its implications and our necessary role in it, out of conscious awareness.
>
> We need, in the end, to better understand change itself. The future requires that we replace familiar dualistic notions of change with more dynamic and integrative formulations. Where our concern is ourselves, this means ways of understanding change that better reflect our audaciously change-permeated human natures.
>
> The good news: Cultural Maturity should help us better tolerate change; develop new, more effective strategies for managing change; and arrive at more creative and powerful understandings of change.

Rethinking change is ultimately inseparable from rethinking complexity and interrelationship—the topic of our next chapter.