



THE DYNAMICS OF CULTURAL AND TECHNOLOGICAL EVOLUTION: DOMINATION VERSUS PARTNERSHIP

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There is growing consensus that we need a new paradigm if we are to solve the global problems that are the result of actions and policies stemming from prevailing paradigms or cognitive maps. Theories are cognitive maps. This article summarizes cultural transformation theory, which proposes that to solve our mounting global problems we need a clearer understanding of the self-organizing interaction of two basic movements in cultural evolution. The first consists of technological phase changes, including the most recent shift from industrial to electronic, nuclear, and biochemical technologies. The second consists of shifts in a system's orientation to what, based on three decades of transdisciplinary research, the author identifies as the socio-economic, gender, and cultural configurations characteristic of the dominator and partnership models. The article calls for a reassessment of earlier theories as the basis for effective action to accelerate the shift to a world orienting to the partnership rather than dominator model as a basis for a sustainable, equitable, and peaceful future.

KEYWORDS: evolution, transformation, technology, gender, consciousness.

INTRODUCTION

Scholars from diverse disciplines agree that we are at a critical crossroads, that unless we alter our present course our children's future looks grim. Many also agree that we must become conscious agents of our cultural evolution if we are to find solutions to our escalating environmental, economic, and social problems. I believe that if we are to better understand, predict, and influence the course of cultural evolution, we need a more adequate theory of cultural evolution drawing from a multidisciplinary systems approach. Theories provide cognitive maps that influence how we think and how we act, not only personally but also socially through customs, institutions, and national and global policies.

As a first step toward this new cognitive map for looking at our past, present, and

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the possibilities for our future, conventional theories need to be reassessed. The second step is to begin to put together some of the key pieces for a new cognitive map retaining what is sound, discarding what is not, and adding elements that more closely fit new observations and findings.

The still-circulated theory that history is a progression from lower to higher stages (e.g., Bachofen, 1861; Morgan, 1877; Comte, 1855) has been thoroughly discredited. The argument that the “scientific age” marks a regression from the “age of faith” is also untenable as, in G. Rattray Taylor’s words, the religious Middle Ages were in critical respects “a cross between a charnel house and a lunatic asylum” (Taylor, 1954).

But if history is neither a linear forward movement nor one of oscillating cycles, does this mean that there are no patterns? Is history merely a series of random events, a story that to borrow Shakespeare’s words, is “full of sound and fury, signifying nothing”?

Based on three decades of study focusing on the self-organizing dynamics of social systems maintenance and transformation (Eisler, 1987a, 1987b, 1993a, 1993b, 1994, 1995), I have proposed that history is neither linear, cyclical, nor purely random, but the outcome of the interaction of two types of movements. The first is the tendency of social systems to move from less to more complex forms of organization largely due to technological breakthroughs or *phase changes*. The second is the movement of *cultural shifts* between two basic models or “attractors” for social and ideological organization which I have called the *dominator* and *partnership* models—or more specifically, *androcracy* and *gylany*.¹

The *cultural transformation theory* I have developed proposes that a shift from a partnership to a dominator direction radically altered the course of civilization during a chaotic period of systems disequilibrium in our prehistory² (e.g., Nash, 1978; Min, 1995). It further proposes that in our time of mounting systems disequilibrium there is a powerful thrust toward another fundamental shift: this time from domination to partnership.

Cultural transformation theory introduces a new approach to the study of history. It is based on a multidisciplinary study drawing from fields ranging from sociology, anthropology, archaeology, history, economics, political science, biology, linguistics, and the study of folklore and myth to systems theory, chaos theory, and nonlinear dynamics. Moreover, cultural transformation theory draws from a data base that includes the whole of history, including prehistory, and the whole of humanity: both its female and male halves.³

SOCIAL SYSTEMS: TWO BASIC MODELS

If we look at only part of a picture, we cannot see the connections between its parts—in systems terms, its underlying patterns or configuration. Applying these principles to the study of the past, present, and future of human society, we can predict that conventional studies of society that have accurately been called “the story of man”—with the almost total omission of the experiences, situation, needs, problems, and aspirations of one half of humanity—will contain severe distortions and inaccuracies.

By contrast, if we look at human society drawing from a data base that includes the whole of humanity (both its female and male halves) and the whole of our history (including our prehistory), it becomes possible to see that, underneath the great surface diversity of social systems, are two basic models of social organization—each with its own characteristic configuration of dynamically interactive and mutually reinforcing parts.

The first is the *dominator* model, which is primarily (although not exclusively) based on the organizational principle of *ranking* and on a cognitive cultural map in which one type of human is more highly valued than another. Depending on which basic human type—the female or the male—is ranked over the other, this model can take two forms. One is the ranking of women over men in a matriarchal or gynocratic form of social organization. The second, which has prevailed over most of recorded history, is a patriarchal or androcratic social structure based on the ranking of men over women in a domination hierarchy ultimately backed up by force or the threat of force.

The other is the model of *partnership* or *gylany*, which has a single basic form. Where the dominator model primarily relies on ranking as an organizational principle, the primary (though by no means exclusive) organizational principle for the partnership model is *linking*⁴ (Eisler & Loye, 1990). Here neither half of humanity is permanently ranked over the other, with both genders tending to be valued equally. The distinctive feature of this model is a way of structuring human relations—be they of men and women, or of different races, religions, and nations—in which diversity is not automatically equated with inferiority or superiority.

Models are abstractions. However, if we reexamine societies from different corners of the Earth from this new perspective, we see striking commonalities in societies that on the surface seem completely different.

THE DOMINATOR MODEL

The Samurai of medieval Japan, Hitler's Germany, the Masai of 19th century East Africa, and Khomeini's Iran are generally considered fundamentally different. But underneath their radically different surfaces is a distinctive pattern that only becomes visible when information about women and traits and activities in these societies associated with femininity or masculinity are taken into account.

The Samurai culture arose from a sharp swing not only toward a highly stratified and authoritarian system in which the samurai or warriors—as well as the fighting of wars—were accorded high value but also toward rigid male dominance (Takamura, 1975; Mische, 1981). Similarly, the rise of fascism in Germany was characterized not only by a shift toward warfare and other forms of institutionalized social violence such as the Nazi's infamous death camps, but also by the re-institutionalization of rigid male dominance and the re-idealization of the male as warrior (Koonz, 1977). Male socialization for the highly warlike Masai likewise hinged on the identification of masculine identity with dominance and aggression: in other words, with strong-man rule, be it in intimate or intertribal relations. Similarly, the idealization of the male as "holy" warrior and the return of women to their "traditional" place in a rigidly male-dominated family was a prime feature of Khomeini's authoritarian re-

gime in Iran, which was also characterized by a high degree of institutionalized social violence — from the execution of women who defied their subservient status to the sponsorship of terrorism in all parts of the globe (Brenner, 1979).

In short, the common feature of these seemingly diverse social systems is that they orient primarily to the same basic model of social organization: the androcratic version of the dominator model. Like earlier examples of this model, such as the theocracies of ancient Babylon and Judaea, and the Aryans, Dorians, and other Indo-European tribes, such societies have a characteristic social and ideological configuration: a generally hierarchic and authoritarian social organization, rigid male dominance, and a high degree of institutionalized social violence, ranging from child and wife beating to chronic warfare.

Moreover, the more closely a social system approximates the androcratic or male-dominant form of the dominator model, the more highly such stereotypically “masculine” values as aggression, dominance, and conquest, which are required to maintain this system, tend to be idealized and accorded social governance. In these rigidly male-dominant societies, qualities like caring, compassion, and peacefulness may be given lip service by both women and men. However, in operational fact they are generally considered appropriate only for women and “weak” or “effeminate” men—in other words, for those who are in both social structure and cognition automatically excluded from social governance (Eisler, 1987a, 1987c).

Here, I want to make two important points. The first is that any society is going to have some violence, and that what we are here dealing with is the *institutionalization* and *idealization* of violence to maintain rigid rankings of domination. The second is that we are dealing with *stereotypes* of masculinity and femininity based primarily on gender-specific socialization processes, and not with innate biological differences between women and men (Fausto-Sterling, 1984; Lewontin, Rose, & Kamin, 1984; Hubbard, 1990).

Indeed, today many men are rejecting their stereotypical “masculine” roles—for example, the men who are redefining fathering in the more nurturing ways once stereotypically associated only with mothering. Moreover, most women, like most men, have in dominator societies often not just been passive victims but active collaborators in maintaining rankings of domination—including the ranking of man over woman—in accordance with religious and secular teachings that such rankings are divinely or genetically ordained.

But by utilizing a gender-holistic methodology, it is possible to see something that once articulated seems evident. This is that how a society structures the roles and relations of the female and male halves of humanity is of critical importance for the structure of all its institutions—from the family, religion, and education to politics and economics. This until now largely ignored matter of the social construction of gender roles and relations also profoundly affects, and is in turn affected by, a society’s guiding system of values—what Johan Galtung has called social cosmology or deep ideology (Galtung, 1979), and I call the cognitive cultural maps that organize and interpret information to fit a system’s maintenance requirements.

THE PARTNERSHIP MODEL

In societies that closely approximate the partnership or gylanic model, we find a very different core configuration: a more equal partnership between women and men in both the so-called private and public spheres, a more generally democratic political and economic structure, and (since it is not required to maintain rigid rankings of domination) abuse and violence is here neither idealized nor institutionalized. Moreover, here stereotypically “feminine” values can be fully integrated into the operational system of social guidance (Eisler, 1987a).

Although there is today strong movement toward this type of social organization (most notably in the Scandinavian world), (Eisler, 1995; Eisler, Loye, & Norgaard, 1995) until recently societies approximating the partnership or gylanic configuration were generally believed to exist only at the most technologically primitive level, among tribes such as the BaMbuti, Tiruray, and !Kung (e.g., Turnbull, 1961; Draper, 1975; Schlegel, 1970). In the 19th century, archaeologists and historians of myth did find evidence indicating there were more advanced prehistoric societies that were not androcratic or patriarchal. However, they assumed that, not being patriarchal, these societies were matriarchal (e.g., Bachofen, 1861, 1967). But more recent archaeological findings coupled with the study of ancient myths and linguistics, as well as a closer re-examination of earlier finds, indicate that these earlier societies actually oriented to a partnership model of society.

A striking feature of these findings is that they are congruent with familiar legends about an earlier, more harmonious and peaceful age. The Judaeo-Christian Bible tells of a garden where woman and man lived in harmony with each other and nature—a time before a male god decreed that woman henceforth be subservient to man. The Chinese Tao Te Ching recounts a time when the yin or feminine principle was not yet ruled by the male principle or yang—a more peaceful and just time when, we are told, the wisdom of the mother was still honored. The ancient writings of the Greek poet Hesiod tell of a “golden race” who lived in peaceful ease before a “lesser race” brought in Ares, the Greek god of war.

While these stories undoubtedly were over-idealized, they offer important clues to what archaeologists are rediscovering: that civilization is not only much older than previously thought, but that it was also originally structured around different lines from what we have been taught (e.g., Platon, 1966; Mellaart, 1967; Gimbutas, 1982; Eisler, 1987c, 1995). For example, in Europe there is evidence of stable Neolithic societies going back to approximately 8,000 years ago where the arts flourished, and in which, though there were differences in status and wealth, as the British archaeologist James Mellaart writes, they were not extreme (Mellaart, 1967). There are also specific indications that these were not male-dominant societies; women were priestesses, women were craftspeople, and to many people most surprising, their anthropomorphic religious imagery is primarily female rather than male. As the archeologist Marija Gimbutas wrote, before Old Europe was overrun by Indo-European hordes, the female was seen as “creative and active,” with neither the female nor the male “subordinate to the other” (Gimbutas, 1989). Finally, these were also societies that, contrary to our prevailing view of human nature, appear to have been generally more peaceful than what later became the norm, as there is a paucity of

fortifications and signs of destruction through war. This is also reflected in their cognitive maps or symbology. For we find in their extensive and considerably advanced art a general absence of the glorification of warriors and wars (e.g., Hawkes, 1968; Gimbutas, 1982).

Even later, in the art of the Bronze Age civilization of Minoan Crete—in marked contrast to other high civilizations of the time, which were male dominated, highly authoritarian, and constantly at war—there are no great statues or reliefs of mighty kings, nor are there any grandiose scenes of men killing each other in battle (Hawkes, 1968). The influence of “feminine” creativity in Crete is repeatedly reported by archaeologists. And in the words of Nicolas Platon (the former director of the Acropolis Museum who excavated in Crete for over 50 years), on this island, “the important part played by women is discernible in every sphere” (Platon, 1966).

Platon writes that in Minoan Crete “the whole of life was pervaded by an ardent faith in the goddess Nature, the source of all creation and harmony. This led to a love of peace, a horror of tyranny, and a respect for the law” (Platon, 1966). Minoan art, described by scholars as unique in the annals of civilization for its love of life and nature, also reflected a cognitive cultural map emphasizing the principle of linking—not only among humans but with signs of a nature-based spirituality we today might call a deep ecological consciousness. In short, while these were not ideal or even violence-free societies, there is strong archaeological and mythical evidence that the original direction of civilization was in a more peaceful and socially and ecologically balanced direction characterized by cognitive maps reflecting a social and ideological organization oriented primarily to a partnership model. But there is also strong evidence that during a period of chaos or great systems disequilibrium there was a fundamental cultural shift ushering in millennia orienting primarily to a dominator model (Mellaart, 1965; Gimbutas, 1991). And this is where we come to the interaction between *cultural shifts* and *technological phase changes* outlined in the rest of this article.

TECHNOLOGICAL PHASE CHANGES AND CULTURAL SHIFTS

The emergence of our species brought with it the first human-made tools and artifacts, as well as that most fundamental of human conceptual tools: language. It initiated a co-evolutionary process that gradually, and then at ever more accelerated rates, profoundly altered our terrestrial, and to some extent now also our extraterrestrial, environment. It is also in this initial phase of the age of human co-evolution that the two basic forms of human social organization I have identified first appeared.

The traditional assumption has been that the development of an androcratic social organization—the configuration of rigid male dominance, strong-man rule, and institutionalized violence—and the development of hominid and then human society are one and the same, with “man the hunter” presented as the sole protagonist of our early technological evolution. However, hunting was hardly a major activity among early hominids, since fossil remains indicate that (like apes, monkeys, and most contemporary human foraging societies) they survived primarily on a vegetarian diet. Moreover, as the paleoanthropologist Adrienne Zihlman and the anthropologist Nancy Tanner note, “woman the gatherer” seems to have played a major part in the evolu-

tion of human technology (Zihlman, 1978; Tanner, 1981).

Zihlman and Tanner cite data indicating that chimpanzee females, who like human mothers also share food with their offspring, are among the most adept nonhuman tool users, often using sticks to more effectively dig up roots and small forms of animal protein (Zihlman, 1978; Tanner, 1981). They argue that the hominid mothers who shared their food with their offspring (and therefore had to gather extra food) likewise followed this practice, and that they most probably also fashioned the first containers to carry and store food. Not only that, Tanner and Zihlman argue that by developing these technologies, and by also using stones and mortars to soften vegetable fibers for their babies, these females improved their offsprings' chances of survival. And these technologies may also have facilitated the gradual substitution in our species of our much smaller jaws and teeth for the large jaws and mandibles with which most other primates soften vegetable foods—a co-creative process that in turn facilitated the evolution of a species with room in its cranium for our large human brain and for the larynx box that makes possible the vocalizations we call language.

In addition, Zihlman points to the social organization of the more peaceful and egalitarian so-called pygmy chimpanzees or bonobos as a possible model for our hominid origins (Zihlman, 1989). More recently, I have expanded cultural transformation theory to incorporate this proposal into a new *multilinear*, rather than *unilinear*, theory of early human cultural evolution (Eisler, 1995): one that proposes that it did not follow a single path, but rather a variety of paths—with groups in different environments evolving in different directions, some orienting primarily to a partnership or gylanic model and others to an androcratic model.⁵

THE AGRARIAN AGE

The next major technological phase change in the history of our planet is our species' shift from technologies to forage for food to our co-creation with nature of food through the technology of farming. This phase begins approximately 10,000 B.C.E. (Mellaart, 1975) at the onset of the Neolithic or first agrarian age (although there are indications that the first use of seeds probably goes back thousands of years earlier). Indeed, rather than consisting of a series of abrupt and discrete developments, each phase change is itself a gradual process where at first isolated new nucleations eventually culminate in a qualitative system change.

Once again, although the traditional account of this phase of technological evolution has also been male-centered, there is massive evidence of a complex system of Neolithic religious imagery centering on female anthropomorphic imagery (Neumann, 1955; Mellaart, 1967, 1975; Gimbutas, 1991). As the British archaeologist James Mellaart notes, these images not only offer important information about the belief systems of Çatal Hüyük and other early Neolithic sites; they also provide the “missing link” between the Paleolithic so-called Venus figurines (25,000-year-old full bodied and often pregnant female images) and the veneration in early historic times of a Great Goddess from whose womb all life is born and to whose womb all life returns at death, like the cycles of vegetation, to be reborn (Mellaart, 1967).

However, as noted, rather than being matriarchies or female-dominated societies, these early farming societies appear to have been societies where women and men

lived and worked in partnership. And although, as noted earlier, they were not ideal societies, they seemed to have had a more generally egalitarian and more peaceful social structure (Mellaart, 1967; Gimbutas, 1991).

It is from these societies that we have inherited the creation and/or refinement of most of the basic technologies on which later civilizations are founded — from the manufacture of fibers into sophisticated rugs, wall hangings, and clothing and the use of clay and wood for increasingly complex housing and furniture to the building of seaworthy boats for transportation and trade and the first mining and smelting of metals for both jewelry and tools. And it is here, flowing from a far more reliable supply of food and other natural resources, and with this, the concentration of much larger populations, that we also see the first great expansion of humanity's mental powers through the creation of a far more complex system of culture, including intricate systems of religion, government, and the arts.

But agriculture could only develop in relatively fertile areas. In the less hospitable regions of our globe, there was a different technological development: the shift to nomadic pastoralism rather than farming. It was the mass migrations of some of these peoples with what remained of their herds from their homelands during times of increasing marginalization (particularly prolonged drought and gradual desertification) that ushered in a series of cataclysmic changes in the mainstream of cultural and technological evolution beginning in the West sometime between the fifth and fourth millennium B.C.E. (De Meo, 1991).

In Europe these were Indo-European peoples who, as the Indo-Europeanist J. P. Mallory writes, displaced and destroyed previous cultures. These peoples, who as Gimbutas writes, were “ruled by priestly and warrior classes who had mastered the horse and weapons of war,” (Mallory, 1989; Gimbutas, 1991) brought with them a different technological emphasis.

In the earlier more partnership-societies, the emphasis had been primarily on technologies to create: technologies to sustain and enhance human life, guided by the life-giving image of a Great Mother. The new emphasis after the shift to an androcratic direction—as one might predict from a culture that in its more technologically primitive stages, as Gimbutas writes, literally worshipped the lethal power of the blade (Gimbutas, 1977)—focused on technologies to destroy: technologies to enable men to dominate and conquer, guided by the life-taking image of such seemingly diverse, but essentially related, gods of war as the Greek Ares and the Hebrew Yahweh or Jehovah. Indeed, now even female deities like Ishtar and Athene, through the process of cooption, became identified with warfare—a complete ideological metamorphosis, as the religious historian E. O. James notes (James, 1959). This is not to imply that both natural and human resources were after this shift not also channeled into technologies to support and, at least for those on top, enhance life. But there is in societies orienting primarily to a partnership or dominator model of social organization a very different system of cultural priorities. In dominator-oriented societies, as is required to enforce rankings of domination, great priority is given to the power symbolized by the blade: the power to dominate and destroy.

As a consequence, in most Bronze Age civilizations, with the notable exception of Minoan Crete, the character of Western civilization became profoundly altered. Nonetheless—and this is of critical importance for the revision of our cognitive maps

of history—even after this fundamental social and ideological transformation, gynany remained in the cultural substratum, coopted and exploited.

In systems dynamics terms, the partnership model also acted as a “periodic attractor.” That is, as we enter recorded history we begin to see oscillations between periods of partnership resurgence followed, until now, by periods of regression toward a more faithful approximation of the androcratic model—for example, the rise of early Christianity inspired by the partnership teachings of Jesus, followed by the rigidly male-dominant, authoritarian, and highly violent (as in its inquisitions and witchburnings) “orthodox” Church⁶ (Eisler, 1995).

In short, the dominator and partnership models as periodic attractors provide us with new insight into the systems dynamics underlying seemingly random workings of history, including the extreme violence of many medieval “men of God.” And moving forward into the next technological phase change, we can also see how the historical impact of the underlying tension between the partnership and dominator configurations becomes progressively greater. While the attractor of the partnership model becomes even stronger, the scale of violence of androcratic regressions also vastly increases—largely due to bigger populations and more “advanced” technics of destruction.

THE INDUSTRIAL AGE

The next major phase change or technological breakthrough for our species was the shift to the industrial or machine age. I should again add that just as the first sporadic use of agrarian technology goes back thousands of years before the date generally assigned to the agrarian revolution, machines usually presented as modern breakthroughs actually had precursors in antiquity. For example, the steam engine was already developed by the ancient Greek mathematician-inventor Heron. But it was apparently used only for the opening of temple doors, just as later Byzantine steam technologies were used to elevate thrones (Galtung, 1979)—in other words, to impress on a ruler’s subjects his superior, even supernatural, powers.

Even later, when after the rise of capitalism machines began to be used for other purposes than the aggrandizement and/or entertainment of ruling elites (as with the fabulously ingenious hydraulically powered fountains that we can still admire at the Villa d’Este near Rome), their uses were still largely guided by the cognitive maps of a dominator rather than partnership model. In fact, to understand what happened during the industrial age, it is useful to focus on the maintenance requirements (Csanyi, 1989) of a dominator system — including the use of technological breakthroughs to devise ever “better” technologies of destruction in the service of “heroic” warfare.

We see this emphasis on technologies of destruction most clearly during periods of regressions to a closer approximation of an androcratic system. Accordingly, as the cultural historian Theodore Roszak and the social psychologist David McClelland have noted, we characteristically find the renewed idealizations of male violence and domination—and, even more specifically, of male dominance over women—pre-saging periods of warfare and repression (Roszak, 1969; Winter, 1973; McClelland, 1975). Along the same lines, the social psychologist David Winter’s study indicates that the resurgence of Don Juan type stories, with their theme of sexual conquest or

the rape and degradation of women, is a predictor of periods of aggressive warfare—and with this, of the use of technological know-how to devise and manufacture ever more destructive armaments (Winter, 1973).

In other words, the key problem of modern times was not, as is sometimes claimed, modern science and technology. It is modern science and technology within the system maintenance requirements of a dominator-oriented social organization, with its cognitive cultural maps that present a rigidly hierarchic, chronically violent, exploitive, and inherently unjust social organization as natural, and even moral.

There was no inherent reason manufacturing plants during the earlier phases of industrialization had to be designed as assembly lines in which humans themselves became merely cogs in giant machines—as demonstrated by the division of the Swedish Volvo plant that in the 1960s switched to a very different design, one of work teams that made many of their own decisions about how to best build a car, rather than themselves being turned into little more than mechanical automatons. Neither was there anything inherent in industrial technology to make sweatshops, mines, and other business enterprises practically enslave men, women, and children in dangerous workplaces and otherwise be dehumanized and exploited. Nor was there anything inherent in industrial technologies for a use in which nature's life giving and supporting capacities, like woman's life giving and supporting capacities, are viewed as no more than man's natural due—to use as he sees fit, in ever more effective and destructive degradations and despoliations.

Certainly the idealization of “man's conquest of Nature” was not introduced by Newtonian science or Cartesian rationalism. It is vividly articulated in religious passages such as Genesis 1:28 where we read that God gave man dominion “over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.” And Bacon's often quoted pronouncement that science must “torture nature's secrets from her” (Capra, 1983) is not a function of modern thinking, much less modern science. It stems from entrenched dominator cognitive maps going back all the way to the Babylonian *Enuma Elish*, where the god Marduk creates the world by dismembering the body of the Mother Goddess Tiamat—cognitive maps that today threaten our very survival.

THE NUCLEAR/ELECTRONIC/BIOCHEMICAL AGE

The next major technological phase change began in the second half of the 20th century—at this writing, only a few decades ago. It is the nuclear/electronic/biochemical age, marked by the harnessing of nuclear power, by microchips to power computers that supplement our human brains with what have aptly been called electronic brains, scientific breakthroughs such as the decoding of DNA, and even by attempts by scientists to create life in the laboratory and the introduction of nanotechnology for recombining elements at the microcellular level.

This technological phase change has brought us to a point where our species possesses technologies as powerful as the processes of nature. And because of the continuing sway of dominator cultural cognitive maps, these include unprecedentedly powerful technologies to take life through ever more exorbitantly expensive weaponry—the kind of power to destroy all life on this planet formerly attributed only to a supreme Father God—and more “advanced” ways of exploiting nature. This has

fueled an intensifying movement to complete the shift from a dominator to a partnership model.

The organized modern challenge to entrenched traditions of domination already began with the post-Enlightenment political rebellions against the “divinely ordained” rule of kings in Europe and the Americas during the 18th and 19th centuries. It continued in the 20th century with the ever more intensive challenge to the dominator rankings of racism, colonialism, and—through the resurgence of feminism with the 20th century women’s movement—the ranking of the male half of humanity over the female half. Most recently, the domination and conquest of nature has been challenged through a modern environmental movement and what is sometimes called a new scientific paradigm focusing on the interconnection or linking of all life forms on this planet. At the same time, the challenge to the third major component of androcracy, a high degree of institutionalized violence, has also become progressively stronger—not only in the growing rejection of war as a means of conflict-resolution, but also in the growing exposure of (and public revulsion against) such established forms of institutionalized intimate violence as wife battering, child beating, and rape.

But this mounting global partnership movement has in turn sparked intensified dominator systems-maintenance pressures. One manifestation, which we today see all around us, is the re-idealization of “masculine” aggression and conquest—which, as the works of Winter and McClelland show, predicts what we in fact are seeing worldwide: the escalation of violence in intertribal and international, as well as intimate relations. Another manifestation is the concentration by heads of mammoth transnational corporations of enormous economic and political power, leading governments and international agencies such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund to formulate policies that further widen the gap between haves and have nots—including “structural adjustment” policies that increasingly curtail social funding for such stereotypically “feminine” priorities as feeding children and caring for people’s health.⁷ Still another manifestation is the pressure of dominator religious elites—at a time when global population growth rates are soaring, when every year 90 million more people swell our numbers (World Population News Service Popline, 1994) exacerbating already severe economic, ecological, and social problems—to continue to deprive women of not only family planning technologies, but of life options beyond those of motherhood through equal education and other advances in the status of women⁸ (Klein, 1995). And still another manifestation is the revival of religious dogmas exalting strong-man rule in both the home and state⁹ (Eisler, 1995)—a phenomenon occurring worldwide through the rise of Christian, Muslim, Hindu, and other forms of so-called religious fundamentalism, which is actually *dominator* fundamentalism.

In fact, one of the great ironies of our time is that those seeking a return to the “good old days” when most men, and all women, still “knew their place” have correctly seen so-called women’s issues as central to their agendas—fiercely, and increasingly violently, opposing any fundamental change in the status of women. But many people who reject authoritarian rule and the institutionalization of violence characteristic of dominator systems still view anything relating to the roles and relations of women and men as secondary, to be dealt with, if at all, after “more impor-

tant” matters. And so, because the cultural cognitive maps of most liberal, socialist, humanist, and other progressive writings have treated what marxists called the woman question as ancillary to men’s struggle for freedom and equality, lacking this third major element of the partnership configuration—like a three-legged structure with only two legs—a more peaceful and equitable social and ideological organization could not become firmly grounded.

THE HUMAN ACTUALIZATION OR EXTINCTION PHASE

Today, we are at a level of technological development that guided by a partnership cognitive cultural map could lead to an era when the culminating use of human creativity and technology could be the realization of our unique human potentials. But there is another possibility: that a dominator cognitive cultural map will at our level of technological development lead to the human extinction phase, the end of our adventure on this Earth.

We know from studying the dynamics of systems changes that when a system approaches a critical bifurcation it may not be possible to predict the course it will take (Prigogine & Stengers, 1984; Loye, 2000). But it may be possible to predict which factors or interventions will amplify desired nucleations and which will tend to arrest this movement.

In charting the interactive dynamics of cultural shifts and technological phase changes sketched in this article, I have become convinced that timely attention to what we may call the hidden subtext of gender is a necessary, though not sufficient, factor for completing the shift from a dominator to a partnership world in this time of intense systems disequilibrium. To succeed, we need to address many interlocking forms of domination and exploitation—from the economic domination and exploitation of “inferior” races to the unbridled exploitation and domination of nature. But not until the fundamental relations between the female and male halves of humanity become more balanced will we have the foundations we have lacked until now: a solid base on which to build a more equitable, peaceful, and ecologically sustainable world.

I therefore want to close with an urgent appeal to scholars and educators to rethink our cognitive cultural maps. Can we realistically expect a more peaceful world as long as boys and men continue to be socialized to equate their identity or masculinity with “manly” violence and control—a socialization magnified today as perhaps never before by a mass media that bombard us with images of male violence as not only heroic but also fun? Can we realistically expect to lower the world’s exponential—and economically, ecologically, and socially unsustainable—population growth as long as women are denied free access to family planning technologies? Is it realistic, as long as housekeeping and caring for children, the elderly, and people’s health are considered only women’s work to expect that a social system in which the “masculine” is still more highly valued than the “feminine” will give funding priority to childcare, healthcare, elder care, and the environmental housekeeping necessary to deal with our ecological problems? Does it make sense in a world where (as the United Nations reports) women perform two thirds of the world’s work, and for this earn only ten percent and own only one percent of what men do¹⁰ (UN State of

the World's Women's Report, 1985) to talk of ending economic exploitation without attention to this so-called women's issue?

If we develop new cognitive maps of our past, present, and future that take into full account the whole of humanity, and with this, the whole of our lives—both the so-called public spheres of politics and economics and the so-called personal sphere of family and other intimate relations—we will have a real systems approach to the study of cultural evolution. Most important, we will have cognitive maps that open the way not only to a better understanding of our past and present, but also to less violent and exploitive and more ecologically sustainable, equitable, and fulfilling paths to our future: paths that will support rather than impede the realization of our great human potentials.

NOTES

1. *Gylany* is a neologism composed of *gy* (from the Greek *gyne* or woman) and *an* (from the Greek *andros* or man), with the linking letter *l* between them standing for the Greek verbs *lyein* (to resolve) or *lyo* (to set free).
2. Even though my work has focused primarily on the evolution of Western civilization, there are indications that a shift from a partnership to a dominator direction also occurred in other major world regions such as Meso-America and Asia. (See e.g., Nash, 1978, pp. 349–362; Min, 1995; Eisler, 2000). Furthermore, even though the technological phase changes I describe are most visible in the development of technology in the West, the analytical templates provided by the partnership and dominator models are, as I will show, applicable cross-culturally.
3. I want to acknowledge three important sources for my research. One is the new information about our prehistory emerging from what the British archaeologist James Mellaart called a “veritable archeological revolution” (Mellaart, 1965). The second is the work of nonlinear dynamics, systems self-organizing, and chaos theorists that today challenge older views that fundamental change must be a gradual process that cannot take place in a relatively short time. (See, e.g., Prigogine & Stengers, 1984; Maturana & Varela, 1980; Abraham & Shaw, 1984; Loye & Eisler, 1987, pp. 53–65). The third is the new feminist scholarship, which is also a key factor in what the historian of science Thomas Kuhn calls a major scientific paradigm shift (Kuhn, 1970). I also want to acknowledge the inspiration of what the social psychologist Kurt Lewin called action research, a tradition of scientific activism that also informs my work.
4. In my work I make a distinction between what I call domination hierarchies and actualization hierarchies. See Eisler, 1987a, and Eisler and Loye, 1990, particularly charts and discussion on p. 179.
5. This multilinear theory is a sharp departure from earlier unilinear theories that either implicitly or explicitly assumed a single line movement toward ever higher levels, thus implying that because something happened it was the best and the only possibility. It is also congruent with the observable fact that the history of life on this planet is multilinear, that nature does not just provide one option or evolutionary pathway, and that even in biological evolution the same species in different habitats develop different behaviors, and sometimes also different physical traits. And it would help explain the archeological data outlined earlier, which indicate that the earliest Western civilizations, beginning with the Neolithic or first agrarian age, oriented more to a partnership than dominator model.
6. For an in-depth discussion of this, focusing on how the Church's authoritarian rule even extended to controlling peoples' most intimate sexual behaviors and thoughts, see Eisler, 1995.
7. This same pattern can be seen in the radical 1995 U.S. Congressional cutbacks of social programs. The rationale was federal deficit reduction, but this same Congress voted seven billion dollars for obsolete aircraft that the military explicitly stated they did not want, plus a \$425 billion tax break for upper income taxpayers, at the same time that it cut tax breaks for lower income families.
8. This opposition is so extreme that, for example, in Bangladesh, militant Muslim fundamentalists staged a demonstration to demand that the government ban non-governmental organizations that educate women and provide health care for them or face a “religious war”—this even though Bangladesh has

- never been a particularly orthodox Islamic country, but simply because as one Bangladesh politician put it, "they have challenged the authority of the husband" (Klein, 1995, p. 56).
9. For a discussion of this, see Eisler, 1995.
10. *The United Nations State of the World's Women Report*, report prepared for the World Conference to review and appraise the achievements of the United Nations decade for women held in Nairobi, Kenya in 1985. For a study showing the strong correlation between gender equity and a higher quality of life for all, see Eisler, Loye, and Norgaard, 1995.

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