

5 PROPHECIES

While it is oftentimes a straightforward matter to trace a trend to its logical conclusion and thereby make a specific prediction, discontinuities may intervene, giving substance to Dubos' epigram, "Trend is not Destiny." The aphorism, 'history repeats itself,' is the foundation of a more reliable approach to forecasting the future. Great cyclical patterns are discernable and suggest some useful surmises about what will happen. In every method of forecast, however, the predictions of *what* are much more successful than the predictions of *when*. My images of the future given here derive from a combination of trends, patterns, and beliefs. Because of the latter, I label them prophecies rather than forecasts. I give them here in a broad form with no time table.

- A General Fragmentation of Political and Social Aggregations. On the basis of the principle of cyclical isolation of systems, I feel we are approaching a period in which the forces of diffusion and decentralization will soon overcome those of monopoly and centralization. Ahead will be secessions, establishment of autonomous regions and a general dismembering of large political units. In particular, the years of the nation state and the urban metropolis are numbered.
- Emergence of Leagues of Cooperating Communities. Self-reliant communities will ally to form global leagues. Multinational corporations will evolve from purely business organizations to full communities for their employees (cf. business organizations in Japan). The World Political Organization's direct membership will consist of the global leagues, which evolve either from cooperating communities that have also become businesses or from multinationals that have established communities.
- The End of the Age of Science. The growth of scientific knowledge will slacken and stagnate. Technical education for the public will cease. Machinery, computers, etc., will be tended by a specially trained 'technical priesthood,' as elite and specialized as historical priesthoods. Knowledge, like other institutions, will fragment. It will become highly proprietary, with portions being held by one league and other portions by another league. The 'cultural DNA' of civilization will be preserved by enclaves of scholars living largely in the interstices of the global leagues.
- Emergence of Higher Consciousness. In matters of intelligence, consciousness, soundness of body, health, vitality, longevity, etc., present gaussian distributions will become bimodal. A radiant point in evolution lies ahead. Freed by a new worldview from the prisons of ego, men will form the first joint or merged consciousness—the Omega Point.
- Space will be Explored. The abortive venture into outer space that occurred in the second half of the 20th century will be redeemed. Instituted on a global foundation, humanity will find in the physical task of the exploration of space a vehicle for its spiritual growth.