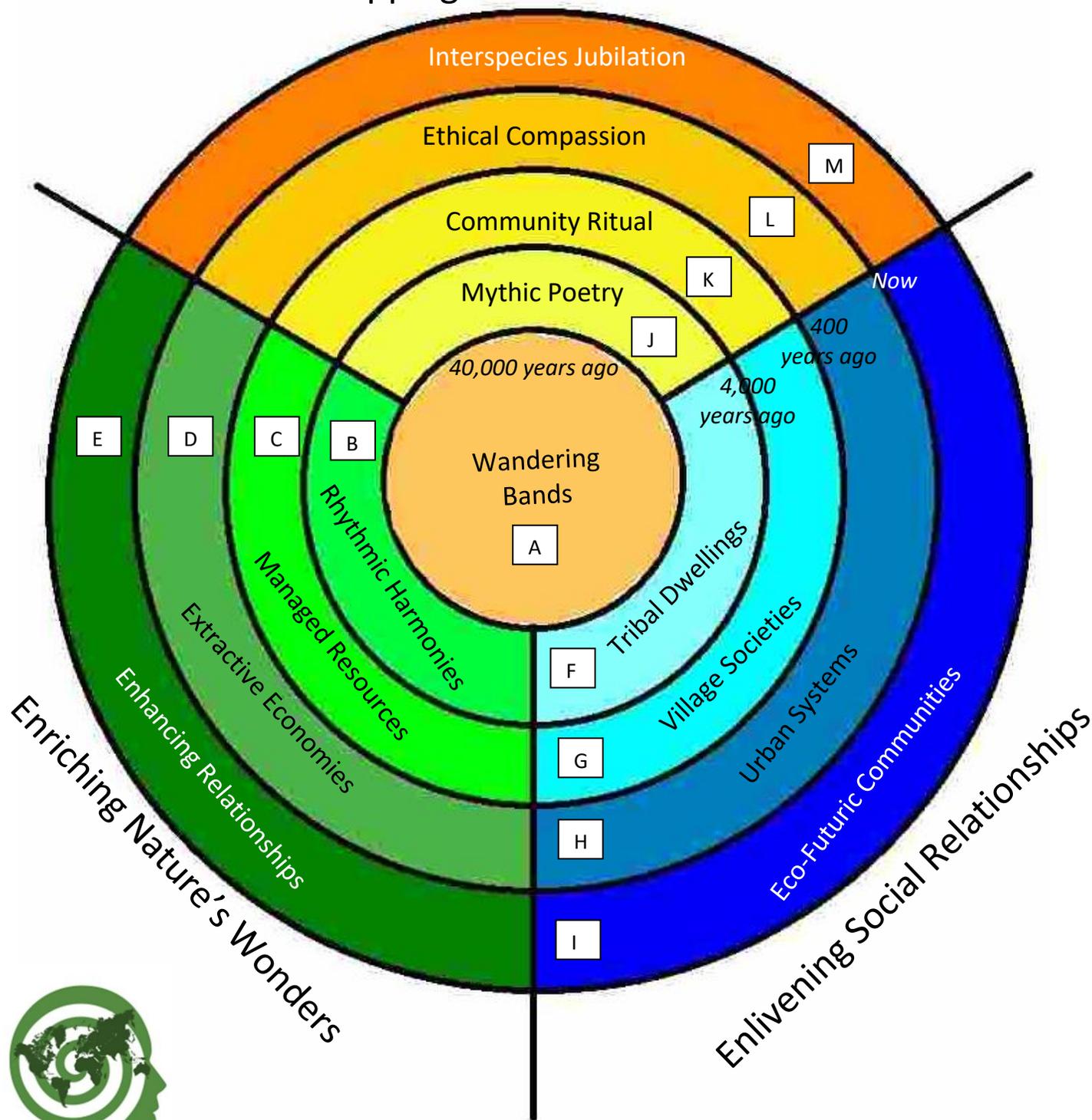


# The Human Adventure

*Increasing Complexity, Deepening Consciousness*

## Tapping Interior Resources



The narrative form of this diagram appears on the opposite side.

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# The Human Adventure

## *Increasing Complexity, Deepening Consciousness*

**Overall Context:** The opening decades of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century place the human community in a time of transition the magnitude of which has rarely occurred in the 40,000 years since the human species became self-conscious of its unique place on Planet Earth. Two important factors make this phase of the Planet's growth unique: 1) the actions of a single species – human beings – affect all of the Planet's other physical and biological systems and 2) the members of the human species have the technology to communicate with each other virtually instantaneously anywhere on the Planet. These factors foster a new awareness of the human capacity and innervate new creative actions at the individual and societal levels. The chart on the opposite side of this page encapsulates the current and previous transitions of human consciousness; the following paragraphs describe the chart.

**Three Aspects:** Every phase of the human adventure has included three distinct aspects in which skills, perspectives and attitudes shape a worldview which turns a meaningful interpretation of events into effective and passion-filled actions. The *natural world* which surrounds each individual and community has provided both a sense of awe and wonder as well as the foundational nourishment and sustenance necessary to thrive. Neighbors, family and others encountered along the way have provided enlivening *social relationships* which extend and enhance the capacity of any single person. Finally, each individual has the capacity to tap into *interior resources* of creativity and resolve that transcend the physical and rational bounds of daily existence.

**Previous Transitions:** The human adventure began in Africa several million years ago when creatures began to walk upright. Descendants of the bi-pedal pioneers spread out across the continents. Over time, these *Wandering Bands* filled most of the habitable spaces. About 40,000 years ago, some of these wanderers began to form into *Tribal Dwellings*. They increased their familiarity with their environment and began to develop languages and artistic skills to convey their experiences. They learned to live in rhythmic harmony with their natural surroundings. They developed great mythic poetry to convey the wonder and awe they experienced.

About 4,000 years ago, along the great rivers of the temperate zone, some tribes began to settle down, to create larger communities and to manage the water and soil resources to increase their food supply. These *Village Societies* had the capacity to sustain larger populations and individuals adopted diversified skillsets within their communities. Annual community rituals held the societies together and allowed ordering traditions to be passed down through generations. The size and complexity of human communities continued to grow until another major worldview transition occurred.

*Urban Systems* emerged when the human species developed techniques for harnessing the Planet's stored up energy and combined these with a sophisticated understanding of material resources. These allowed large-scale industrial production and fostered the growth of global distribution networks. These extractive economies began to flourish about 400 years ago. Their presence called forth another transition in interior awareness by which ethical compassion guided personal actions and informed social order.

**Present Opportunity:** As the Planet enters the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, the increased complexity of the human family once again calls forth a new worldview, a deeper level of consciousness, in which members of the human species can become personally aware of their active role in influencing the direction of Planetary growth and development. Whether in geographic neighborhoods, virtual communities or business organizations, individuals have the opportunity to create *eco-futuristic communities*. In their interaction with the natural world, these communities have the potential to establish *mutually enhancing relationships* between the human and non-human worlds. Finally, the interior dimension can expand beyond individual self-awareness to include vibrant *interspecies jubilation* where the boundaries between sentient beings dissolve. Many of the social patterns and mental models developed in earlier stages no longer provide adequate ways to respond to the challenges of the present century. Now, opportunities abound to forge new social forms, to explore creative new relationships with the natural world and to expand interior consciousness in ways that open fresh pathways for future generations.