

## Immanent Emergence – Paper I

What would be the tell-tale signs that would indicate that a possible Emergence was brewing?

Not an easy question to answer, because such events are NOT predictable, but if, as I am sure is the case, an Emergence is a major overturn in an area that has been “quiescent” for some time, but whose stability is finally being undermined, then some warning rumblings or “pre-shocks” MUST, in this period, be becoming evident. We can only proceed by studying, where possible, both the Emergences themselves AND the conditions immediately prior to these revolutionary Events.

But, we are sadly **never present at such events**, and no recordings were made, or were even possible, when these things actually happened. In addition, physical Emergences are extremely thin on the ground in the lifetime of an individual researcher, and to be truthful, hardly less so in the whole period of Mankind’s presence on Earth. So, the task is somewhat difficult!

Where can we start?

We can study the only fossils left from early hominids – and, in particular, their skulls, but luckily, those are precisely the appropriate things to study. The skull is the case for the brain. The brain is differentiated into special areas for special functions, and the excessive demands on certain regions of the brain inevitably cause them to grow in size. Now, in spite of all the tissue having been lost, the skulls DO indicate the shapes and sizes of the brains that they contained. And we can extrapolate backwards from modern studies and knowledge of the functions of various brain parts to draw conclusions about the fossil brains that have left crucial traces in the shapes of the fossil skulls. Now, the major changes in the evolution of our early ancestors were certainly IN THE BRAIN, and the functions that its various parts performed. Those parts with greatly developed functions certainly grew relative to other parts and conclusions could be drawn as to what had happened with these very important developments. It is clear that what these newly enlarged regions managed to do was undergoing a whole series of Emergences. In addition comparisons between modern human skulls, the fossil skulls and those of other day apes, along with the detailed knowledge available of the, perhaps related abilities and behaviours of the modern day examples, could also help us make intelligent guesses as to what sort of new abilities were Emerging at various times.

There is a very elegant piece of work by the American palaeontologist George Gaylord Simpson, in his classical study of the development of the horse from *Eohippus* (as it used to be called) to *Equus* in fossils deposits obtained from rocks in Wyoming. The brain cases were compared with one another and correlated with changes in various other skeletal features, in particular the developments in the feet. He was able to establish, that changes in the feet selected for fleetness of foot as the forests were replaced by open grasslands, also demanded consequent developments in the brain, in particular in those areas involved in balance and flexibility while running at speed. Clearly, here several vital Emergences had taken place which resulted in a very different animal from the dog-like *Eohippus*.

In a similar way, vast changes in certain parts of the brain were evident in Man, and once again correlations were possible, this time in connecting changes in the hand with consequent developments in the brain. Many of the reasons for the found associations were speculative to a degree, but what was absolutely certain is that SOME FORM of changes were related to Emergences here as well.

So, we have evidence – of sorts. Our problem is of course that such Events are all in the distant past, and take place over thousands of generations, so the chance of watching such things happen is precisely NIL!

Evidence from most of our guessed-at Emergences are not so directly related to other anatomical features and so are totally unavailable for study, even as fossils. Also waiting about for an Emergence to occur right in front of you on your laboratory bench is likely to be as fruitless as the current SETI quest.

So, we can only speculate, I’m afraid, and that is extremely difficult to do IN GENERALITY, than in any given particular area, especially with the scarcity of evidence as discussed above.

And yet something closely similar has been achieved TWICE in precisely this area of study.

First, in the work of Hegel on *Becoming* in Thought, and secondly, in the work of revolutionaries such as Lenin and Trotsky, in dealing with the tumult preceding and during the revolutions in Russia in 1917.

What these men had to do was interpret the rumblings and crises of the period correctly, so that they could both design and timetable the interventions that could be made to ensure the success of their intervention in the upheaval as a Social Emergence into an entirely new form. This was so difficult that before the return of Lenin in April 1917, and his crucial intervention within the Bolshevic Party with his April Theses, the Party could not have begun to understand exactly what was going on and the potential in the situation. Even knowing this was insufficient. The actual task was to be logging and analysing the changing situation day by day, and to learn this part of the task could only be discovered via failures as well as successes. Errors were made, and by July Lenin had fled to Finland, while Trotsky had been put in prison. But, that did not terminate the process. The ebbs and flows of the developing revolution, which had its own trajectory independent of any individuals, had to be interpreted constantly, and by October, the Party was in a position to drive forward, mostly by the analyses of Lenin, to intervene directly to take the power.

Trotsky called the process involved – The Art of Insurrection and you can see why.

Also, though the Russian Revolution WAS a social Emergence, it was certainly no automatic event - as has been the case with many other similar situations that have since occurred. The interpretation of the rumblings and crises can easily be misinterpreted, and the opportunity missed.

**To be continued**

(1,040 words)