

# Questioning Our Cultural Assumptions

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In *Soul Story: Evolution and the Purpose of Life* in 2017, Tim Freke writes, “my philosophy has come from a lifetime of questioning my cultural assumptions,” following an awakened state that he first experienced as a 12-year-old boy.

Today, there are millions of awakening humans and hundreds of communities questioning the cultural assumptions that guide our lives together, with some advocating total systems change. For, as David Bohm, my principal scientific mentor, said in 1985, if we do not question the beliefs and suppositions of the cultures and subcultures we live in, then humankind is not a viable species. Some, recognizing that we live in a sick society, are also seeking to heal our collective, ancestral, and personal traumas. One example is the annual Collective Trauma Summit, convened by Thomas Hübl, founder of the Academy for Inner Science.

However, such healing, liberating questionings can be very destructive, threatening the beliefs that most of us inherit in early life from our parents and the cultures we were born in. What people might perceive as a threat can be psychologically disturbing, for enculturated assumptions provide many with a precarious sense of security and identity in life. So, in practice, to maintain cordial relationships with our fellows and obey the restrictive laws of the land, few dare to question everything, like Vimala Thakar in her thirties, greatly helped by conversations with Jiddu Krishnamurti. For, by awakening to Total Revolution, as she advised in *Spirituality and Social Action: A Holistic Approach* in 1984, the entire infrastructure of Western civilization, the global economy, and the patriarchal epoch would collapse. What then would replace it?

Well, this is something that each of us must discover for ourselves, as unique members of the species that Carl Linnaeus named *Homo sapiens* ‘wise human’ in the tenth edition of *Systema Naturæ* in 1758. In evolutionary terms, Julian Huxley, author of *Evolution: The Modern Synthesis*, saw that we humans could realize our fullest potential when evolution becomes fully aware of itself, writing in 1957 in a visionary essay titled ‘Transhumanism’, “As a result of a thousand million years of evolution, the universe is becoming conscious of itself, able to understand something of its past history and its possible future.”

As Huxley said, by “destroying the ideas and the institutions that stand in the way of our realizing our possibilities”, we could understand human nature, what it truly means to be an intelligent human being, far beyond machines with so-called artificial intelligence (AI). When evolution thus becomes fully conscious of itself, we would transcend our limitations, fulfilling our highest potential as spiritual beings, living in mystical ecstasy, free from the suffering that has plagued humanity through the millennia.

Huxley wrote the Foreword to the first English translation of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin’s *Le phénomène humain*, posthumously published in 1955, building on a vision that had begun to appear in Teilhard’s consciousness during the 1920s. For Teilhard had then realized that we cannot understand evolutionary processes without first investigating what it means to be a self-reflective, creative human, as his biographer, Ursula King, tells us in *Spirit of Fire*. And that requires profound introspection, free of any cultural or personal preconceptions about what might be revealed by looking inwards through self-inquiry.

Teilhard titled the four parts of what Peter Medawar mockingly called an ‘incoherent rhapsody’, ‘Prelife’, ‘Life’, ‘Thought’, and ‘Superlife’, corresponding to the physical, biological, mental, and spiritual stages of evolution since the most recent big bang some 13.8 billion years ago. However, as we are currently in the transition period between the final two stages, the relationship between them is far from clear.

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Tim has developed a similar evolutionary model, as the successive emergence of matter, life, and soul, as both mind and spirit, which is also an interpretation of Teilhard's notion of *noogenesis*, from Greek *noos* 'mind'. However, even though evolution is becoming increasingly conscious of itself, we don't yet have a commonly agreed language with which to communicate our awakening experiences. In 2001, Siôn Cowell wrote *The Teilhard Lexicon*, following Claude Cuénot's 1968 book *Nouveau Lexique Teilhard de Chardin*. And Tim has added a four-page Glossary to *Soul Story*, explaining his own terminology.

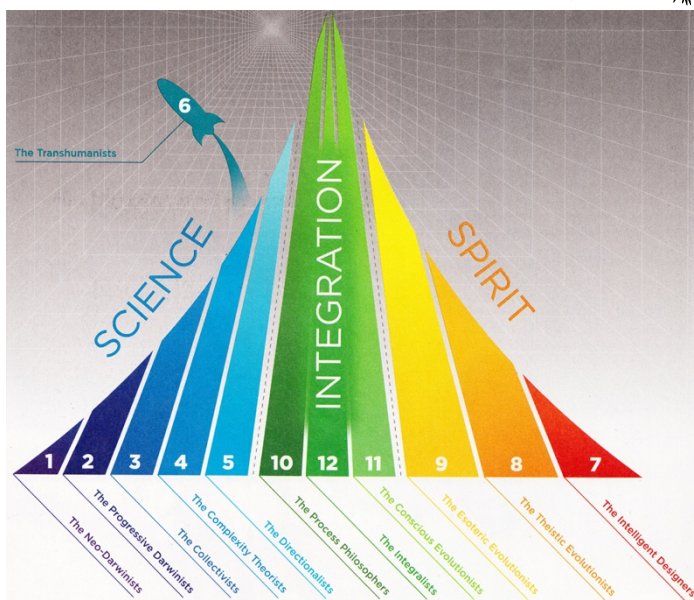
For instance, *timestream* is 'reality seen as the flow of accumulating time', which has an underlying similarity to this definition: *evolution is an accumulative process of divergence and convergence, proceeding in an accelerating, exponential fashion by synergistically creating wholes that are greater than the sum of the immediately preceding structures through the new forms and relationships that emerge, apparently out of nothing*. Structures increase in complexity through time because they are synergistically causative, and hence energetic.

In *Holism and Evolution* in 1925, Jan Christiaan Smuts called this entire evolutionary process *holism*, highlighting a factor in the physical and biological sciences that he felt had been neglected. As he said:

This factor, called Holism in the sequel, underlies the synthetic tendency in the universe, and is the principle which makes for the origin and progress of wholes in the universe. An attempt is made to show that this whole-making or holistic tendency is fundamental in nature, that it has a well-marked ascertainable character, and that Evolution is nothing but the gradual development and stratification of progressive series of wholes, stretching from the inorganic beginnings to the highest levels of spiritual creation."

In summary, Smuts writes, "The whole-making, holistic tendency, or Holism, operating in and through particular wholes, is seen in all stages of existence, and is by no means confined to the biological domain to which science has hitherto restricted it. ... Wholeness is the most characteristic expression of the nature of the universe in its forward movement in time. It marks the line of evolutionary progress. And Holism is the inner driving force behind that progress."

Then, what Tim calls *unividuation* is 'the process through which individual timestreams combine to form a greater timestream on a more emergent level of evolution'. *Unividuals* are thus 'individuals who are awakening to unity with the universe', as passionately curious ordinary beings. As a gathering, the International Community of Unividuals (ICU) is then putting into practice what Teilhard foresaw emerging: "The way out for the world, the gates of the future, the entry into the superhuman, will not open ahead to some privileged few, or to a single people, elect among all peoples. They will yield only to the thrust of all together in the direction where all can rejoin and complete one another in a spiritual renewal of the Earth."



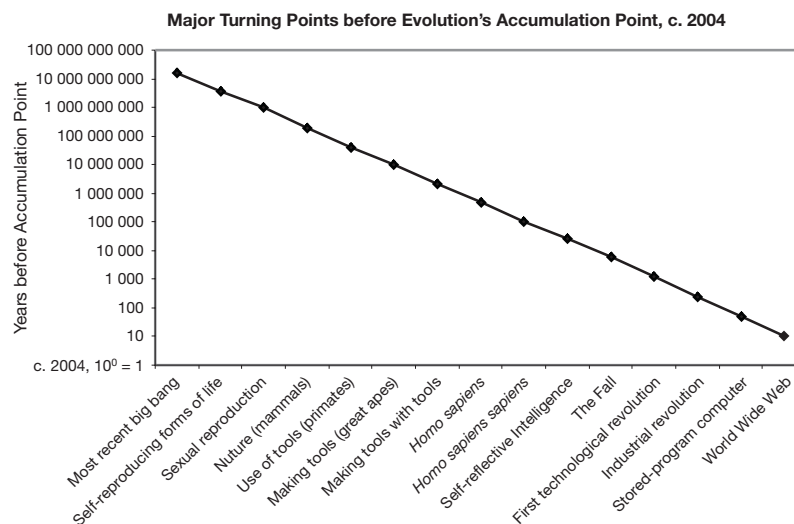
However, while physicists can predict solar and lunar eclipses in our mechanistic solar system with pinpoint accuracy, there is not yet a global understanding of where the exponential rate of evolutionary change is carrying us all as a species. In 2007, the editors of the *What is Enlightenment?* magazine wrote an article about this confused state of affairs, titled 'The Mystery of Evolution: A spiritual and scientific exploration of where we came from and where we're headed', illustrated with this diagram. They attempted to integrate science and spirit, with the core idea of the technocratic transhumanists, outside the spectrum, being:

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“Human beings must take control of their continued evolution—primarily through bioengineering, cybernetics, nanorobotics, and other technological means.”

Rather, as creative humans are the leading edge of evolution, not mechanistic computers, to develop a synthesis of all evolutionary theories, as Julian Huxley attempted to do, we need to turn to the universal language of mathematics. Such a transcultural and transdisciplinary model could thus help us to explain what is causing the rate of social change—currently taking place within the vast nonmaterial domain that is inaccessible to our physical senses—to spread at an unprecedented exponential rate of acceleration. This I learned to do in 2000, when Nick Hoggard, a software developer, gave a presentation at the continental gathering of the UK-based Scientific and Medical Network (SMN) in Sweden.

What we are witnessing today is evolution’s glorious culmination in the noosphere, as evolution becomes cognitively and experientially aware of itself in us humans, within some, at least. For, the abstractions of holistic, paralogical thinking and reasoning explain why the exponential rate of evolutionary acceleration we are witnessing today is carrying society into more and more psychological chaos, not yet able to understand what is happening to us all as a supposedly wise, intelligent species. Nick illustrated all these developments in this chart, which I have modified a little, depicting some of the major evolutionary turning points since the most recent big bang in the horizontal dimension of time.



Using Mitchell J. Feigenbaum’s bifurcation velocity constant  $\delta$  (4.6692) in nonlinear system dynamics, a simple calculation shows that all the divergent streams of evolution degenerated into chaos in the collective unconscious around 2004, as I explained in 2016 in a book titled *Through Evolution's Accumulation Point: Towards Its Glorious Culmination*. Using the metaphor of a dripping tap, as another example of a bifurcating system, the evolutionary tap is now turned full on, with no further turning points to be distinguished.

But this does not mean that machines with artificial intelligence are about to take over all our lives, as Vernor Vinge predicted in 1993, writing a paper for NASA titled ‘The Technological Singularity’. He wrote, “Within thirty years, we will have the technological means to create superhuman intelligence [in machines]. Shortly after, the human era will be ended.” Ray Kurzweil made a similar prognostication in 2005 in *The Singularity is Near*, sometimes quoted by leading evolutionaries, such as Carter Phipps and Peter Russell, who similarly studied mathematics and physics in the same high school as me, albeit four years later.



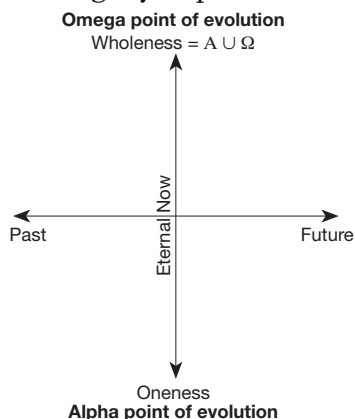
For myself, I began to become totally free of my mechanistic cultural conditioning during the winter and spring of 1980 by using my passionate curiosity to ask questions that no computer scientist had ever asked before, as far as I could tell. At the time, I was developing an innovative marketing programme for

Decision Support Systems (DSS) for IBM (UK) within its Information Systems Support Centre (ISSC). This pioneering group, within a highly conservative company, had a brief to take a five-year view of technological development, in contrast to the three-month perspective of finance directors, focusing attention on the bottom line, for the benefit of shareholders. So, I was beginning to look at the psychodynamics of the business world through the semantic modelling methods of information systems architects, rather than the quantitative modelling methods of economists, investment bankers, and management accountants.

Without going into the technical details, I noticed that every executable program that had ever existed during the entire history of the data-processing industry had been generated from another program. So, where did the first program or computer come from? Indeed, where did the first of anything come from, like the first human, idea, or hydrogen atom? Could we solve the greatest mystery of all: What is life?

As I later discovered, these questions were like ones that Aristotle had asked some 2,300 years earlier, when he was investigating the essential characteristics of causality. In Book VIII, Section 4 of *Physics*, he said that everything that changes is changed by something and in Section 5 that there is a first agent of change that is not changed by anything. Thus, the notion of an Unmoved Mover entered Western philosophy, expressed in *Metaphysics* in this way: "Now since that which is moved must be moved by something, that the prime mover must be essentially immovable, and eternal motion must be excited by something eternal." In *Summa Theologiae*, Thomas Aquinas then took Aristotle's mechanistic cause-and-effect chain as the basis for his five proofs for the existence of God, as the Unmoved Mover.

While wondering how functions in programs could dynamically generate other functions, apparently programming themselves, something happened to me in the spring of 1980 that is so marvellous and unusual that it can only be understood by questioning *all* our cultural assumptions, not just some. At 11:30 on Sunday 27th April 1980, as I was strolling across Wimbledon Common in London, a tremendous explosion of energy erupted in the utmost depths of what I call the *Cosmic Psyche*, carrying me into a wonderful world that some have briefly glimpsed in out-of-body experiences or by taking psychedelic substances. Although I have neither had a near-death experience nor taken LSD, for instance, I have found no better way of relating my unprecedented experiences to the narratives of people's past experiences.



Nevertheless, what happened is of the utmost simplicity, as this diagram illustrates. After 13.8 billion years of evolution, the Universe revealed its innermost secret to an intelligent being: the primary-secondary relationship between the vertical dimension of time and the horizontal. This revelation is thus an example of what Tim calls *paralogical thinking* in *The Mystery Experience: A Revolutionary Approach to Spiritual Awakening*, denoting our ability to see both sides of any situation. Even though mathematicians refute paradoxical, paralogical reasoning, such a harmonious, both-and approach to life leads to Inner Peace, and hence potentially World Peace. But then, if mathematics is to conform to the fundamental law of the Universe, which states *Wholeness is the union of all opposites*, we need to view mathematics as the art and science of patterns and relationships, vertically emanating from the Divine Origin of the Universe through the creative power of Life.



Such a radical transformation of the world of learning is an enormous challenge, which I have narrated in several autobiographical articles over the years, as my understanding of what is happening to us all as a species has deepened and broadened. Most recently, in the summer and autumn, I wrote 60-page and 20-page articles titled 'Solving the Ultimate Problem of Human Learning' and 'Realizing the Truth'.

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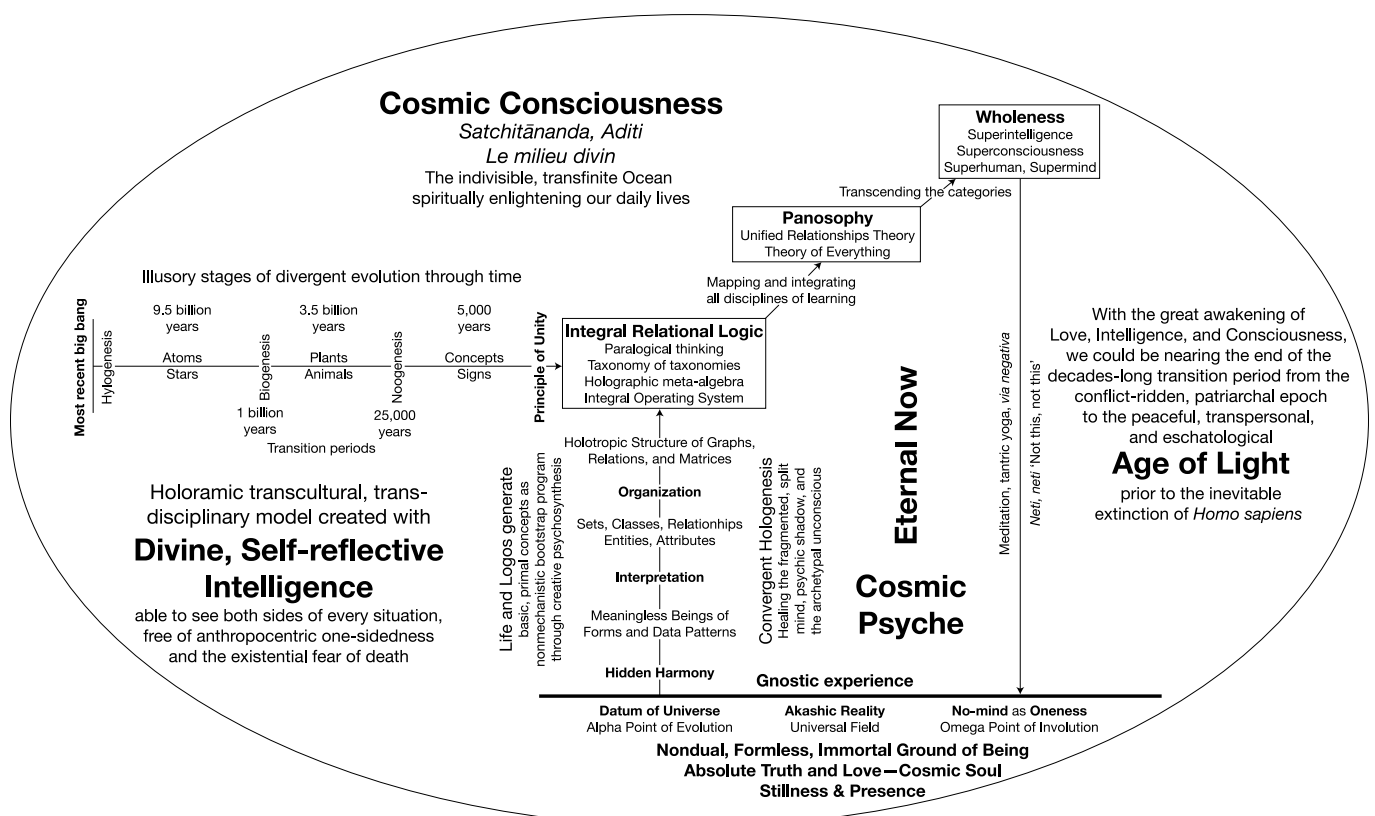
In brief, apart from David Bohm, with whom I had a few invaluable conversations during the 1980s on the causality of meaning, I have had many psychospiritual teachers. For instance, rebirthing, with my Norwegian wife Berit, greatly helped me to recover from a cataclysmic prenatal trauma that I suffered from in October 1941. Then I enjoyed a holotropic breathwork session with Christina and Stansilav Grof in 1992, which helped heal a spiritual emergency that I went through in the early 1980s, as Spirit emerged from the Source far faster than the psychosomatic organism writing these words could handle at the time.

Berit and I travelled to Australia in 1992 to attend a 17-day master class with Barry Long, an associate of Eckhart Tolle, one of the most famous spiritual teachers in the world today. They both wrote books with *Stillness* in the title, denoting the start and finish of the universal spiritual journey, echoing John of Patmos, who said in the eschatological Book of Revelation, “I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.”

My last spiritual teacher was Nukunu Larsen, who invited me to attend a 6-day retreat in 2008 in the Altai Mountains in Russia, the original home of the shamans. This invitation was a thank you for writing the Foreword to his book *Words of Fire: Commentaries on the Gospel of Thomas* and editing it.

During the 1990s and noughties, I also travelled to several countries in north-west Europe to attend retreats and seminars with other spiritual teachers. Foremost among these was Vijai Shankar, an Advaita sage in the tradition of Ramana Maharshi and Nisargadatta Maharaj, and former consultant cardiologist. Vijai encouraged me to go public with the synthesis of spirituality and science that I had been developing since I was seven years of age. For he felt that this could help us bring much-needed Peace to the world.

However, I first needed to be free of my fear of humans, instilled within me as the result of a lifetime questioning people’s religious beliefs and the scientific, economic, mathematical, and logical methods of academia and business. In the event, it was not until I was in my mid-seventies that I could visualize the world that could appear after a significant minority awakened to Total Revolution. Inspired by Stephen Hawking’s *The Grand Design*, co-authored with Leonard Mlodinow, I drew this diagram, depicting the Cosmic Context, Gnostic Foundation, and coordinating framework for the Grand Design of the Universe.





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What this schema illustrates on the left is the accelerating pace of the first three stages of Teilhard's four-stage model of the whole of evolution. The final stage is depicted in the vertical dimension of time, as the union of all evolutionary and involutionary processes from Alpha to Omega and back again. Most significantly, *Jñāna yoga*, as the 'path of wisdom and abstract knowledge' in the downward direction of the Eternal Now, beautifully complements the upward impulse of the commonsensical art and science of reason that we all use to form concepts and organize our ideas. The vertical impulse that creates *Integral Relational Logic* and everything else is better known as *élan vital* in Henri Bergson's *Evolution créatrice* from 1907.

However, this cosmology—as an external expression of a coherent cognitive map within the Cosmic Psyche—depicts just one physical universe becoming aware of itself. To see the complete picture, Panosophers view the Totality of Existence as a multiverse of physical universes, being born and dying through eternity, as infinite time. So our universe is not special. It is quite possible for superintelligent beings on other planets to emerge in this or other universes that are destined to become aware of themselves.

Regarding our beautiful planet Earth, the above diagram illustrates that Ultimate Reality can be simply denoted by the exquisite Sanskrit word *Satchitānanda*, which means 'Bliss of Absolute Truth and Consciousness'. In my experience, *Satchitānanda* is a normal state of consciousness, not an altered state. With such a realization, I no longer see myself as a separate being. Rather, as it says in the *Mandukya Upanishad*, *Brahman* and *Atman* are one, with no division between Divinity and humanity. We are not only living in unity with the Universe, our True Nature *is* the Universe, as the Totality of Existence. As some have realized, God is everything and everywhere, through eternity, united with the Eternal.

I also relate *Satchitānanda* to Teilhard's *milieu divin*, which in French includes both the outer and inner centre, both Transcendence and Immanence. So, we can experience the Divine through both Cosmic and Unity Consciousness, or *Gnosis*, cognate with *Jñānin* in Sanskrit. The True Nature of all of us is Wholeness, both the entire Ocean of Consciousness and inseparable, insignificant drops on and within the Ocean.

In my experience, such self-realization is essential if we are to resolve the greatest existential crisis in human history: abrupt, irreversible climate change. At the time of writing, we are at the beginning of the 2023 United Nations Climate Change Conference, better known as COP28, demonstrating how little the powers-that-be understand about what is happening to humankind at the present time. For instance, on 1st December, delegates from the tech giants of Microsoft and Google were scheduled to hold a panel discussion on how AI could play a 'remarkable role' in the 'climate change battle'.

But this ignores the central role that Self-reflective Intelligence has implicitly played in human learning for some 60,000 years, becoming manifest today at evolution's glorious culmination. Such Divine qualities have led to the emergence of the *Unified Relationships Theory*, as a generalization of the unified field theory that Einstein attempted to develop. However, like the earlier revolutions in science that Copernicus, Kepler, Newton, Darwin, Einstein, and Bohm introduced, assimilating what is also called the *Theory of Everything* into consciousness by questioning *all* our cultural assumptions is a tremendous undertaking. So, whether Life intends Paul Hagar to play a useful role in society at these end times we live in is most uncertain.

For, while my mystical experiences are much like those of any other, my integral cognitive understanding of evolutionary processes from their Origin has led me to be a Holoramic visionary, able to see humankind's place within the overall scheme of things with utmost clarity. This tells me that we could only resolve the global crisis through a miracle, as an act of God, called an evolutionary leap or jump by some. Somehow, we need to pool our skills and resources, compassionately caring for each other. At these critical times, it is essential to realize that Love is the Divine Essence we all share, as the Immortal Ground of Being. For, as the Sufi poet Rumi beautifully put it, "Love is the sea of not-being and there intellect drowns."