

# **A New Story of Value in Response to the Meta-Crisis**

*Excerpt from the Pre-Version of the Book*

## ***The Rise of Evolutionary Relationships***

### ***The Evolution of Relationships***

In Response to the Meta-Crisis

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***&***

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Decades of research and study have led us to the conclusion, as we will briefly unpack below, that only a New Story of Value can avert unimaginable suffering or worse and change the vector of history towards ever-deepening expressions of the Good, the True, and the Beautiful. As perceptive historians point out, history changes when a compelling New Story [hi-story] emerges that changes the vector of cultural evolution.

Indeed, it is only a New Story that has the capacity to change the course of history. Technology matters. But the story we tell about technology matters as well. Exponential technology matters. But the story we tell about exponential technology matters exponentially more.

Without such a new, shared, evolving Story of Value, our capacity to escape unbearable suffering and, based on hardheaded analysis, even extinction seems, from a human perspective, unlikely. The results of not being able to articulate a New Story of Value are excruciating, both in the level of suffering for billions of human beings, as well as the entire life system—and, more than even all that, for the trillions of lives that will remain unborn.

*All of the past depends on us to fulfill its dreams.*

*All of the present depends on us to live.*

*All of the future depends on us to be born.*

This essay is also part of a whole volume, *The Rise of Evolutionary Relationships: The Evolution of Relationships in Response to the Meta-Crisis*. The purpose of that volume and its companion volume *The Future of Relationships: On the Evolution of Love* is to provide a first articulation of this New Story of Value in the domain of relationship, which, as we will see below, is the core structure of Reality itself.

## ***The Ontology of Story: Story Is the Structure of the Real***

Postmodernity argues that Reality is *merely* a story, that no story is better or worse than any other story, and that stories are but social constructs, fictions, or figments of our imagination.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See, for example, our colleague Yuval Harari, who explicitly embraces this postmodern view of story through his writing on history. See for example, Harari, *Sapiens*, Chapter 2 and *Homo Deus*, Chapter 7, where he explicitly writes that all stories are but social constructs, fictions, and figments of our imagination, and that no story is intrinsically better than any other story. A second important source, which, like Harari, is reflective of the leading-edge embrace of postmodern deconstruction into the fabric of society is Irvin Yalom's classic *Existential Psychotherapy*, where he understands story in precisely this manner.

But of course, postmodernity is not only deconstructing the ontology, or Reality, of Story, but also the ontology, or Real Nature of Value.<sup>2</sup>

These deconstructions of Story and Value are true but partial. It is true that there is a plentitude of stories we tell about Reality, and that Story is the underling unit that constitutes Reality. But it is not true that Story is mere fiction. There is a plentitude of stories, not because there is no Real Value or Meaning, but rather because there is a plentitude of Value and Meaning.

Story is the structure of the Real. This is what we have referred to, in other contexts, as the *Ontology of Story*. Story itself is the source code, not only of culture and consciousness, but of all of Reality all the way down and all the way up the evolutionary chain.<sup>3</sup> It is for that reason that to evolve the Story is to evolve the source code.

Emergent from the recognition of the Ontology of Story is the recognition that we live in inescapable narrative frameworks—Stories of Value—which define the nature and quality of both our personal and collective human lives.

Stories are not merely randomly contrived conjectures. Rather, stories are attempts to gather information, interior and exterior information about the nature of Reality, and translate it into a coherent Story of Value.

Not all stories are equal. There is a hierarchy of stories. In other words, there are better and worse stories.

*A better story takes deeper account of more meaning or information, exterior and interior, and weaves that meaning and information together in the most elegant, good, true, and beautiful fashion.*

*A better story is aligned with more and wider Fields of Value, even as it integrates more contradictions into greater wholes.*

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid, Harari and Yalom, who both embrace the deconstruction of value as well.

<sup>3</sup> We have written elsewhere of Story as a First Principle and First Value of Reality that runs all the way up and all the way down the evolutionary chain. There we discuss the four core elements of story that define all stories—whether at the level of matter, life, or the depth of the self-reflective human mind. These four elements of story include: 1) Events that are not merely random but inherently connected in their unfolding. 2) The story has *telos* or direction—what we have called *plotlines*. 3) The plotlines are driven by inherent value and the desire for more value. 4) There is some degree of freedom in the story. See David J. Temple, *Forty-Two Propositions on CosmoErotic Humanism: First Principles and First Values of Evolving Perennialism—A New Metaphysics—Post-Tragic Memories of the Future* (2023) and David J. Temple, *First Principles and First Values: Towards an Evolving Perennialism: Introducing the Anthro-Ontological Method*. See also, our five-volume set on *Evolution: The Love Story of the Universe—First Meditations on CosmoErotic Humanism—In Response to the Meta-Crisis*.

*A better story weaves a narrative thread that articulates the most coherent and compelling framework that embraces, honors, and uplifts the most-possible people.*

*A better story must be not only an eternal story—aligned with eternal structures of value—but also an evolving story, aligned with the evolution of value—the evolution of love—the evolution of the Good, the True, and the Beautiful.*

*A better story is an eternal and evolving story.*

We cannot trust stories that claim to be *only* eternal stories, or that claim to be ever-evolving stories with no ground in Eternity—in the Real, which is not dependent on the changing mores of time. The more deeply we investigate Cosmos, both in its exterior and interior faces, deploying the interior and exterior sciences, the more accurate—and the better, truer, and more beautiful—story we can tell.<sup>4</sup>

A story with flawed, incomplete, or distorted plotlines can bring us—and indeed has brought us—to the brink of existential risk, the potential end of humanity as we know it. To respond to this meta-crisis, we need to evolve the story, which is to evolve the source code of culture itself.

## ***What Is the Meta-Crisis?***

A simple image:

Let's turn to a cultural artifact, the *Death Star* in that cinematic classic of the late twentieth, early twenty-first, century—*Star Wars*.

The Death Star is a battleship armed so intensely that it poses an existential risk—that means that it has the destructive capacity not just to attack and damage but to destroy a planet.

***That's existential risk—risk to our very existence.***

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<sup>4</sup> You may have noticed some unconventional deployments of capitalization. For instance, we distinguish between a reductionist *cosmos* and a living *Cosmos*, while also distinguishing the degraded sense of *fuck* and the Eros quality of *Fuck* through capitalization. We are also referring, for example, to all of *Reality*, *God*, *Goddess*, the *Intimate Universe*, the *Amorous Cosmos*, etc. This mode of capitalizing will continue through this and all of the correspondent volumes as both an expression of the author's emphasis and also as an invocation of intrinsic Qualities of Eternal and Infinite Value into otherwise ordinary or degraded terms.

*There are two forms of existential risk. The potential death of humanity. The death star has the capacity to destroy a planet. Or the death of our humanity. The death star has the capacity to exert totalitarian control over a planet.*

The forces of good in the *Star Wars* narrative don't have the capacity to engage the *Death Star*.

Of course, both the death of humanity and the totalitarian control that would lead to the death of *our* humanity as genuine options are very different in their genealogy than the precise plotline of *Star Wars*.<sup>5</sup> But that does not matter. The Death Star emerges in culture as a foreshadowing of both forms of existential risk.

## **The Death Star as a Symbol for a Culture of Death**

From the deeper perspective of cultural myth and prophetic symbol, the Death Star is not one weapon. It is a culture. It is a systemic culture of death that leads to intense suffering for the majority of human beings in the present, catastrophic risk in the immediate future, and impending existential risk in the near or intermediate future.

We are now—validated by the most hardheaded analysis from multiple vectors of leading-edge policy and social analysis<sup>6</sup>—confronted by the Death Star in myriad vectors of distressing disguises. That is quite literally true and self-evident to anyone who has the willingness and capacity to do genuine sensemaking, which begins by reading the serious background material available beneath the headlines.<sup>7</sup>

There is a realization in the cinematic version—which is not about what the writers were thinking, but it is culture speaking through this epic story—that the only way to take out the Death Star is with a direct hit: A direct hit that gets through all the defenses, all the structural obstacles, and actually explodes culture into a new possibility.

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<sup>5</sup> The death star depicts a kind of Orwellian Totalitarianism of a kind of a closed society like it is enacted today in China, for example. There is however a more ostensibly covert totalitarianism, of the kind that is now gradually disclosing its nature in open societies, what we have called in other writings *TechnoFeudalism*, which seeks to enclose the world in a planetary stack, designed and monitored for maximum control, without the controlled even knowing that their freedom was forfeit.

<sup>6</sup> Ord, Toby (2020). *The Precipice: Existential Risk and the Future of Humanity*. London: Bloomsbury.

<sup>7</sup> See Peter Zeihan, who advises energy corporations, financial institutions, business associations, agricultural interests, universities, and the U.S. military, in his book, *The End of the World Is Just the Beginning: Mapping the Collapse of Globalization*, HarperCollins, 2022. See also Ray Dalio, *Principles for Dealing with the Changing World Order: Why Nations Succeed and Fail*, Simon and Schuster, 2021.

This writing is about one dimension—based on decades of investigation in the interior and exterior sciences—of how we can score that direct hit.

***In a word, the direct hit is a New Story of Value. For as we noted at the outset, it is only a New Story of Value that truly changes the course of history.***

That New Story of Value is—expressed somewhat differently—a new interior technology of culture. It is this space from which all is generated. The New Story of Value itself is generated by new insights into the nature of Self and Reality. These new insights themselves are often provoked by interior practice and contemplation, which generate the evolution of consciousness. They are also provoked however by new exterior technologies, from the plough to the printing press to the internal combustion engine to the personal computer to social media to machine intelligence driven data sciences.

This book and its sister volume is about one dimension of that New Story of Value, the emergence of a new structure of relationship. In that sense, this book is filled with hope. For hope is a *memory of the future*. And the future is called into existence by a New Story of Value.

Before we turn to the direct hit, however, we need to understand more deeply the Death Star context. When we are talking about the Death Star, the culture of death, we are talking about, as we already noted, the meta-crisis.

The meta-crisis is what we call the *second shock of existence*.<sup>1</sup>

The second shock of existence, of course, implies the first shock of existence, with which we will briefly begin.

## **The First Shock of Existence**

The first shock of existence is the realization of the death of the human being; our realization that we will die, which dawns in human consciousness at the beginning of history. We are not talking about the biological fact of death but the existential realization of death.



The existential fear or dread of death begins in the prehistoric period, according to some during the hunter-gathering era,<sup>8</sup> and according to others when we began to have surplus food. In the second reading, it had to do with having time on our hands. We started to think about our lives. We were much less worried than the hunter-gatherers about the elephant or mammoth or lion who was going to kill us potentially this afternoon. This is the natural fear that the human shares with the animal world of biological death. But when that fear became less immediate, the fear of death did not disappear. Rather, we began to think about death not in terms of warding off an immediate threat, but in terms of what we might call *the existential fear of death*. We thought, *Oh my God, I'm going to die*. The ego structure—that we developed after we emerged from humanity's early sense of being almost coextensive with nature—became afraid. The ego sought to arrogate its intuition of immortality to itself, which in reality belonged to Spirit or Essence. The ego desired its own immortality and was therefore shocked by the reality of its impending death. *I realize that my personality, family, social status, farming community—with my relatively stable home, identity, and existence—is ephemeral. I am going to die*. This is the existential fear of death that we are calling the first shock of existence.

## ***Tastes to the Fear of Death***

There are many tastes to the existential fear of death that is the first shock of existence. But four interrelated elements are central:

1. ***There is a fear of nothingness.*** There is a fear that death may be oblivion. If death is oblivion, then I will lose not only myself but the precious connections to all that I hold dear and love.
2. ***There is a fear of the pain of the body.*** The body will betray me, and that betrayal will be painful.
3. ***There is the fear of accountability.*** Life itself is filled with injustice. Death is the door to justice in most great traditions. We know in our bodies that Reality should be fair. We know that there is a vast difference between a life lived as

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<sup>8</sup> According to some historians, the existential fear of death was already present in hunter-gatherer societies. David Graeber in particular has correctly problematized the linear unfolding of hunter-gatherer to farming communities on several key accounts, showing conclusively larger organized gatherings with sophisticated religions appearing in the hunter-gatherer era. See David Graeber and David Wengrow. *The Dawn of Everything*, Farrar Straus and Giroux, 2021.

Hitler and one lived as Mother Teresa. In death, the promissory note of fairness is potentially paid. It is that promissory note that in many ways makes life bearable. And yet, it creates a fear of death, not only for Hitler, but for every ordinary human being who has committed offense against their own conception of intrinsic and eternal value. In life, these offenses can at least sometimes remain hidden. In death, all is revealed. That was Woody Allen's point in his epic movie *Crimes and Misdemeanors*. The good character in the movie—a rabbi—dies of cancer. His brother, by contrast, murders his mistress, so his wife will not find out and leave him and...gets away with it. Allen's point is clear: The notion that Reality holds one accountable in the course of a lifetime is not true. Death is often the first moment of accountability.

4. But there is a deeper fear of death. It is the fear of accountability in an entirely different fashion. It is the fear of not counting. The fear of death is the fear of insignificance, the fear of living a life that does not matter. This is the fear of being a side effect in your own life. Or closely related, the fear of living a life that is not your own. It is the fear of insignificance. It is the fear that you did not live the life that was yours to live. Your ladder was perched against the wrong wall, so all of your climbing was in vain.

***The fear of death of this fourth form is to die when your death is not held in a larger story of existence.*** If you have no Universe Story, no narrative of identity, no narrative of community, desire, Eros, or *ethos*, in which your life is meaningfully woven into the larger narrative fabric of Cosmos, then, the fear of death will destroy you. But if you are able to access the inner knowing that your story, your love story is chapter and verse in the Universe: A Love Story, then the natural fear of death is relocated in a larger context, and ***death, upon deeper investigation, reveals its true nature as a night between two days.***

But although the interior sciences disclose that death is a portal between two days—there is vast empirical,<sup>9</sup> philosophical,<sup>10</sup> and anthro-ontological evidence<sup>11</sup> for the continuity of consciousness<sup>12</sup>—death is also, for our own direct surface experience, a stark end. All the stories, all the plotlines, and all the threads of living end at that moment. What happens beyond is a different conversation. Mounds of evidence, as we just noted, indicate that there is a continuity of consciousness. But we have an actual experience of ending. We have an experience of death, and the experience—if encountered without reflection and transformation—inspires fear.

The encounter with death and the experience it may evoke is, however, not a bug but a feature of Reality.

Our first-person surface experience is that death ends this life. It is not the totality of our experience if we go deeper inside. But it is obviously intended to be the central, potent, and painful dimension of every human life. Indeed, as Ernest Becker potently reminded us, the *denial of death* is at our peril. Paradoxically, that ending, the experience of our finality or mortality, is itself what presses us into life.

Thus, from the implicit demand of the first shock of existence, human beings were activated, pressed into creative emergence. What emerged was all of human culture in its interior and exterior dimensions.

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<sup>9</sup> Evidence gathered by the most serious of researchers beginning with Henry and Edit Sidgwick at Cambridge University and William James at Harvard University and continuing in highly rigorous form for the last 150 years as recapitulated by Whiteheadian scholar David Ray Griffin in multiple volumes. See also, for example, Dean Radin, *Real Magic: Unlocking Your Natural Psychic Abilities to Create Everyday Miracles*, Potter/TenSpeed/Harmony, 2018, *The Conscious Universe: The Scientific Truth of Psychic Phenomena*, HarperCollins e-books, 2010, and other books by him. Or see the earlier classic by Frederic William Henry Myers, *Human Personality And Its Survival Of Bodily Death; Human Personality And Its Survival Of Bodily Death*, Longmans, Green, 1907.

<sup>10</sup> This requires a cogent analysis of materialism and dualism, and the introduction of a far more cogent third possibility which we have called *pan-interiority*.

<sup>11</sup> We discuss *Anthro-Ontology* in some depth in the forthcoming book by David J. Temple, *First Principles and First Values: Towards an Evolving Perennialism: Introducing the Anthro-Ontological Method*. For now, we will simply define it as an innate and clear interior *gnosis*, which is directly available to the human being.

<sup>12</sup> See Dr. Marc Gafni's and Dr. Zachary Stein's essay in preparation, "Beyond Death: Anthro-Ontology, Philosophy, and Empiricism." This essay is slated to appear in the book *Towards a World Religion: Homo Amor Essays*. The essay is also the ground for a larger book by the same authors, *Twelve Portals to Life Beyond Death: Responding to the Second Shock of Existence*. In this volume, we discuss three forms of material: the empirical, the philosophical, and the anthro-ontological and show how each form discredits the notion of death as the end.

## *The First Shock of Existence Activated Our Inner Gnosis*

The first shock of existence pressed the human being into disclosing meaning. The Eye of Consciousness was pressed into service. The result was the great religions, the result was great art, the result was great music, the result was law and the cornerstones of civilization.<sup>13</sup>

The fear of death—the encounter with mortality—generated a depth of vision and understanding of human nature that invited the human being into a larger story, where he could, at least in potential, participate in immortality. The fear of death focused our attention inside. When we went inside, we accessed in our own interiors the deepest wellsprings of the interior face of Cosmos. The fear of death generated some of the great beauties and critical movements of value—including ethics, Spirit, and religion—which originally meant *religare—to reconnect, to realign with the nature of Reality*. So, the fear of death entering Reality generated this explosion of Spirit—a Story of Value, a story about what it means to be a human being in the Cosmos. And this new Story of Value in the premodern period was almost always called *religion*.

In other words, the old religions transcended the fear of death in two ways:

The first was by realizing the immortal Infinite Nature of the human *essence* or *value*, which transcends the limitations of finitude. But the second way made the first inaccessible to us. In the second way, the old religions, locked in their ethnocentric prisms, hopelessly entwined their genuine realization of the Infinite with dogmatic baggage. The realization of immortality was not linked to the alignment with universal structure of value but to dogmatic obedience, and every religion, locked in a win/lose metrics with all the others, saw only its dogmatic coin as earning Eternity.

Of course, many of us have left the old religions behind. The intuition of immortality was priceless, but the ticket price demanded by each religion was too high. Every religion claimed in one form or the other that Eternity, or immortality, was available only to its adherents and only in exchange for various forms of submission, which ranged from doctrinal, psychological, theological, political, and economic. We are children of Voltaire, who led the liberation of the corruptions of religion's many shadows with the battle cry, *Remember the*

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<sup>13</sup> Of course, many of these great revelations were mediated through distorting prisms resulting in the horrific pain inflicted by the ethnocentric bias of virtually all of the great traditions. But underneath their public ethnocentric teachings were also teachings of profound depth and realization revolving around the nature of meaning, justices, goodness, *ethos*, relationship, and joy.

*Cruelties*. And those cruelties were often bound up with the ethnocentric prisms of all the premodern religions, which mediated between human beings and the Infinite.

But we threw out the baby with the bathwater. While we rejected the ways of obedience and submission that were demanded by the religions, their essential intuition—the realization of the first shock of existence, the overwhelming existential fear of death and the need to respond to it—remains powerfully resonant and true.

To transcend the fear of death, post the old religions, we need to make our life a triumph. It is only a well-lived life that does not fear death. But a life well lived is—as consciousness has evolved—no longer reducible to obedience to the dictates of a local God who is alienated from Cosmos and denies human dignity and capacity. ***Instead, a life well lived is a life aligned with what we have called in CosmoErotic Humanism the eternal yet evolving Values of Cosmos, which themselves transcend death. But it is not only about alignment with those Values, but rather about the incarnation of those Values. In incarnating the eternal yet evolving Values, which transcend death, we most naturally transcend death ourselves. For we are those death-transcending Values ourselves.***

Postmodernity, however, moved to savagely deconstruct all previous narratives of the well-lived life, meaning a life rooted in in the personal incarnation of Values aligned with Cosmos. Indeed, postmodernity claimed that the very idea of a well-lived life, a life of intrinsic value, was itself a social construction of Reality, not backed by the Universe.

## **The Second Shock of Existence**

***The first shock of existence is the realization of the death of the human being.***

***The second shock of existence is the realization of the potential death of humanity.***

After we have gone through all the stages of history—of matter, life, and mind in all of their stages of evolutionary unfolding—we have come to this place in the evolution of humanity, in which the gap between our exterior technologies in their exponential forms—from atomic bombs to social media to weaponized drones to artificial intelligence—and our failure to develop genuine shared interior technologies of value has created extraction models and exponential growth curves, rivalrous conflicts based on win/lose metrics, as well as complicated, incoherent world systems that, together, create dire existential risk.

When the Corona crisis hit in 2020, there was an explosion of catastrophic risk onto the public stage. We had been warning about that possibility for many years already, but most people pretty much thought the systems were too big to fail. They were believed to just keep on going, one way or the other. Many of us wrote that the combination of the win/lose metrics and the extended *complicated* system, optimizing for efficiency instead of resiliency, was vulnerable to a thousand different forms of so-called *Black Swans*. Our core infrastructures had become inherently fragile, and catastrophic risk scenarios were just a matter of time. All of this began to be visible to a limited extent in the financial meltdown of 2008. But it became unmistakably recognizable with the eruption of the long awaited and long predicted Corona Crisis.

And of course, this catastrophic risk was actually a dress rehearsal for what we have called *existential risk*—or the *second shock of existence*. Existential risk, or the second shock of existence, means not the death of the individual human being; it means the potential death of humanity.

Corona had evoked both the first and the second shock of existence—the fear of death, which presses into the life of every human being, which was now unavoidable—we couldn't split it off—but it also had the fragrance of the second shock of existence.

Because catastrophic risk, which was now manifest in many forms of global risk, where all of a sudden everybody was interconnected—and it affects the entire globe—actually raised the specter for a looming existential risk. That means risk through climate change, ecosystems destabilization, rogue weapons, exponentialized destructive technologies, runaway machine learning and AI, methane gas under the tundra, peak oil and peak phosphorus, resource depletion based on resource extraction models, which feed exponential growth curves based on fractional-reserve banking, the Bretton Woods economic structures, completely fragile, complicated, spread-out systems that are radically vulnerable to myriad forms of attack. This is, of course, but one list of possible causes for existential risk. These causes are fully real, and yet we have split them off from our awareness—another example of what we have called the *global intimacy disorder*.

But then, *seemingly* out of nowhere, the potential catastrophic risk of the Coronavirus brought existential risk into our hearts and into our living rooms. So, the fear of death was all of a sudden radically present. The skull grinned at the banquet again—in the form of both the first and second shock of existence.

***Catastrophic and existential risk is born in the gap between our exponentially expanding exterior technologies and our stalled or even regressive interior technologies.***

This gap has created *the tragedies of the commons*<sup>14</sup> and *multipolar traps*,<sup>15</sup> in which everyone has to keep producing to the  $n^{\text{th}}$  degree. We even created weaponized exponential threats to our very existence because we were afraid that, if we are not going to do it, the other parties will, and they will not be transparent—they will hide it from us and then dominate us.<sup>16</sup>

***What are the major generator functions for existential risk—for the meta-crisis—for the second shock of existence?***

1) Rivalrous conflict governed by win/lose metrics:

- a) This is the success story that dominates the cultural landscape of modernity. It is the interior North Star that virtually every person, or group of people, lives within. Success, within the context of this story, is virtually always defined by objective, measurable, exterior indicators in relation to economic growth, levels of consumption, resources, and power.
- b) This success story also generates extraction models and exponential growth curves at the core of the economic system. Both of these are products of and driven by a contrived system of artificially manufactured desires and needs—animated by:
  - i) the motivational architecture of rivalrous conflict,
  - ii) governed by zero-sum win/lose metrics,
  - iii) delivered into culture:

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<sup>14</sup> *The tragedy of the commons* is an economic theory that was first conceptualized in 1833 by British writer William Forster Lloyd. The term refers to a situation in which individuals who have access to a public resource (= *a common*) deplete the resource by acting in their own interest.

<sup>15</sup> A *multipolar trap* (in game theory also known as *destructive defection*) is a group situation where individual incentives produce a suboptimal outcome for all participants. When individual actors obtain a benefit (an advantage over the other actors in the system) from taking action that is detrimental to the group as a whole (= *defect*), the other actors are then faced with the choice to either defect themselves or slide into irrelevance. If all actors assume that the other actors are rational and self-interested, this kind of defection will propagate through the system until everyone is contributing to the harm of the group—and is losing their initial advantage. In fact, the situation of each individual is probably worse than before.

<sup>16</sup> This has become especially real since the war in Ukraine started in February 2022. See Dr. Marc Gafni with Elena Maslova-Lenin, *Glory to the Heroes: The First Four Weeks of the Russia Ukraine War: For the Sake of Value and the Arousal of the West Beyond Moral Equivalence—For the Sake of Value and the Arousal of the West Beyond Moral Equivalence*, Integral Publisher, 2023.

- (1) by exponentially more precise forms of microtargeting individuals and groups,
  - (2) through the exponentially more immersive environment of the worldwide web than ever existed before,
  - (3) accessed through handheld devices, which will soon be supplanted by augmentation and versions of the metaverse.
- 2) Fragile and complicated, rather than complex systems:
- a) Extraction models and exponential growth curves, animated by win/lose metrics, generate highly vulnerable—what theorists have called *fragile*—world systems that are subject to myriad forms of collapse. *Fragile systems* are often called—in systems theory—*complicated systems*. The terms *fragile* and *complicated* describe systems in which the different parts are acting independently—each within their own success story [rivalrous conflict governed by win/lose metrics]—and are disassociated from each other.
  - b) As a result, each part pulls in its own direction, unaware of the effect of their pulling on the rest of the system, resulting in system-wide breakdown and ultimate collapse.
  - c) Fragile local systems are made exponentially more fragile on a global level by our inability to meet global challenges with only local social, legal, political, economic, and ethical infrastructures.

### ***The Unique Terror of Death in this Time of the Meta-Crisis***

In our moment of the meta-crisis, however, we are caught denuded of a Story of Value:

Modernity and postmodernity threw out the baby of premodernity with its sullied bathwater. The great traditions became identified with their great shadows. That was, at least for a time, understandable. But the result has been a collapse of Story. And particularly the collapse of a Story of Value rooted in First Principles and First Values. We are at a time between worlds, a time between stories. The crucial gifts of the transcultural perennial truths shared by virtually all the great traditions were lost.



One of those shared truths was the understanding that it is not over when it's over—that what we call *death* is indeed a portal into a deeper Reality of consciousness. However one might want to tell that Story, the great traditions were able to locate the truth of the continuity of consciousness as a shared human truth. This was a core part of the shared *gnosis* of humanity. But when modernity and postmodernity discarded this *gnosis*, nothing was left in its place.

Without a larger Story rooted in genuine *gnosis* to hold us, the fear of death turned into a terror that needed to be avoided at all costs. This has created two distinct movements in our culture:

1. The first is an obsession with busyness, entertainment, and diversion, so as not to have to face that terror. It is easy to hijack our attention because we do not want to place our attention on the ultimate dread, the fear of death. So we allow the tech plex<sup>17</sup> in myriad forms to steal our attention. This is one form of what we have called in other writings *pseudo-eros*—the covering-up of the emptiness with imitation-erotics that dull the terror of mortality.
2. The second has been to make death the enemy. The frantic obsession with life extension and even immortality—what has been called *the War on Death*—is a direct expression of this terror.

Because we have ripped death from its mooring in a larger weave of sense and meaning, we are left, in this moment of meta-crisis, only with its terror and not with its essential gifts. For it is only death, which confronts us, that is demanding that we find our own deepest integrity.

To borrow William James phrase,

*It is only death that makes life a genuine option.*

Or as Rilke wrote,

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<sup>17</sup> By tech plex we mean the technological infrastructure of society, which includes the entire planetary stack (Benjamin Bratton's term), as well as the daily immersive environment constituted by social media and the internet of things. The tech plex is unique in that it has facilitated a new world in which technology is no longer a tool, but an immersive environment. We live inside of that plex. That plex moves all the way up and all the way down the planetary stack. The tech plex is constituted by infrastructure, social structure, and superstructure, as we have previously defined these terms. Clearly, there is infrastructure, in terms of the actual physical structures of the tech plex. There is social structure, in relationship to the laws that govern and the absence of laws in relationship to the tech plex. And third, there is superstructure. That is to say, the technology actually codifies particular values and ignores or bypasses or rejects other values. That is to say, the tech plex is not value neutral; the tech plex implies a set of worldviews or super structures.

*Death is our friend precisely because it brings us into absolute and passionate presence with all that is here, that is natural, that is love.*

Without death, life all too easily devolves into the *Picture of Dorian Gray*. In Oscar Wilde's classic by that name, the protagonist does not age. But without the process of aging, decadence sets in. We have lost connection to death's blessings, so we are left only with her ugly terror.

None of this—of course—suggests that our moral passion at this moment of meta-crisis dares to be invested in anything other than the transformation of self and culture necessary to avert dystopia and manifest Reality as it truly desires to be—a love story. This is a moment where we must rage against death and do battle with all the promethean force of human dignity. It is in that sense that the prophetic mystic cries out [Isaiah 25:8]:

*Let Death Be Swallowed Forever.*

But when the battle is not set in the dialectical context of a larger Story of death, then, we are left only with the fear that devolves into terror when it is denuded of narrative. The prophet both speaks against death, even as he tastes the eternity that lives beneath the flow of time.

All of this is the particular contemporary meta-crisis expression of the first shock of existence—the fear of death rearing its head—mediated through this postmodern moment, a time between stories, where the sacred heroic battle against death, which requires all of our moral, economic, and political passion, remains untampered by a larger narrative of meaning. The result is that the inner knowing, activated in prehistoric times by the first appearance of the first shock of existence, is missing and thereby inducing a worldwide terror.

## ***The Second Shock of Existence Activates Our Inner Gnosis***

Just like the potential death of the individual human exploded a new level of Spirit, a new level of meaning, in the world, because it pressed us into our own interior realization...

Just like the first shock of existence created a first wave of value realization, albeit mediated through narrow ethnocentric and, what we now know to be, regressive prisms, which oppressed virtually all of humanity...

...now the second shock of existence needs to press us into ever-deeper *gnosis*, where we begin to articulate a universal grammar of value as a context for our diversity.

## ***A New Grammar of Value as the Context for Our Diversity in Response to the Second Shock of Existence***

The second shock of existence must—like the first shock—press us into new *gnosis*. And at the core of new *gnosis* is new a grammar of value—evolving yet eternal value—with which we are aligned—and which we incarnate. Such a new grammar of value engages both the terror of death and the terror of a life lived denuded of intrinsic meaning that is backed by the Cosmos. The new *gnosis* is the articulation of a new set of First Principles and First Values, eternal yet evolving, embedded in a New Story of Value. The First Principles and First Values are the plotlines of the Universe: A Love Story. The shared grammar of value is the only possible context for a global civilization that is not self-terminating.

This is the deeper sensemaking that seeks to emerge from the second shock of existence.

We don't only need, at this moment, to be activists to heal the direct crises—be they medical crises, environmental crises, AI threats, or wars. That's for sure—no questions asked, hands down—the very first thing we need to do. We need to revision our infrastructures and our social structures. That comes before everything. That trumps everything. Anything else would be a failure of intimacy.

But we also dare not to waste the meta-crisis, or it will be the last crisis we are privileged to navigate. We must allow this moment to spur us—to press into our interiors—and invite the second shock of existence into our hearts—not in a way that paralyzes us, but in a way that inspires new levels of insight and realization—precisely the insights and realizations that will be necessary to prevent the second shock of existence from ever actualizing.

## **Between Utopia and Dystopia**

We stand in this moment poised between utopia and dystopia.

# A Time Between Worlds: A Time Between Stories

We are at a time between worlds and a time between stories. We need a New Story of Value, eternal yet evolving, rooted in First Principles and First Values, which would become a universal grammar of value as a context for our diversity.

This is exactly what the Renaissance was—it was a time between worlds and a time between stories. In the Renaissance, we were swept with and challenged by the Black Death, a pandemic that swept Europe. The Black Death destroyed between a third to half of Europe and a huge part of Asia. It killed everyone. People died horrifically, brutally, in the streets. They had no idea how to meet this challenge.

And so, in response to the Black Death, da Vinci, Ficino, and their cohorts understood that they had to tell a New Story of Value—and that story was the story of modernity.

Did they get the story right? They got part of it right, and this birthed, to use Jürgen Habermas' phrase, *the dignities of modernity*, the new way of information-gathering, and universal human rights.

To the extent that the stories disqualified interiors, deconstructed the source of value, downgraded the dignity and Eros of human nature and identity, undermined the moral coherence of human communion, and disenchanting the Universe from the rivers of the sacred that nourished its core, they gradually generated the disasters of modernity, all of which together have led us to a point where our very future is at risk.

They *lost the basis* for the Good, the True, and the Beautiful.

This basis *used* to be Divine Revelation:

*God told us.*

But that Divine Revelation was owned by religion, and every religion had overreached and over-claimed. The revelation was often mediated through cultural categories and wasn't fully accurate—so, modernity threw out revelation, but was unable to establish a new basis for value. Value was just *assumed* to be real; as it says in the founding document of the American revolution, the Declaration of Independence, *we hold these truths to be self-evident*—that is, we don't really have a basis for value, but we just take it *as a given*.

In other words, modernity took out a loan of social capital from the traditional world.

The source of value has never been worked out, and then, gradually, value began to collapse.

The Universe Story began to collapse.

The belief that *the Good, the True, and the Beautiful are Real* began to collapse.

The belief that *Love is Real* began to collapse.

As Bertrand Russell is reported to have said,

*I cannot see how to refute the arguments for the subjectivity of ethical values, but I find myself incapable of believing that all that is wrong with wanton cruelty is that I don't like it.*<sup>18</sup>

What do you do if you grew up in a world in which Value is not Real—a world without a source of value, without a Universe Story, without a story of human identity, without a story of desire, without a narrative of power?

In the words of W.B. Yeats, *the center cannot hold*.<sup>19</sup>

We become *the hollow men* and *the stuffed men, shape without form, gesture without motion*.<sup>20</sup>

You have a collapse at the very center of society because you no longer have Eros. You no longer have a Reality in which Value is Real—and so you have this lingering sense of emptiness. You have a complete collapse at the very center—and that's the source of existential risk.

To sum up:

Without a shared grammar of value, there is no global intimacy, and therefore no global coherence, and no global coordination in response to catastrophic and existential risk, which means—put simply—there will be, quite literally, no future.

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<sup>18</sup> See *Russell on Ethics*, edited by Charles Pigden, London: Routledge, 1999, 165/*Papers* 11: 310–11.

<sup>19</sup> William Butler Yeats in his poem “The Second Coming”:

*Turning and turning in the widening gyre  
The falcon cannot hear the falconer;  
Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold...*

<sup>20</sup> T.S. Eliot in his poem “The Hollow Men”:

*We are the hollow men  
We are the stuffed men  
...  
Shape without form, shade without colour,  
Paralysed force, gesture without motion...*

## Hope Is a Memory of the Future

But we are not hopeless. On the contrary, we are filled with great hope.

*Hope is a memory of the future.*

That memory of the future is the direct hit that takes down the Death Star—the culture of death.

## A Direct Hit Takes Down the Death Star

What's our direct hit move in response to the Death Star?

How do we respond to imminent existential risk?

The direct hit must be—as it has always been in history—the emergence of a new stage of evolution.

*Crisis is an evolutionary driver.*

*And every crisis is, at its core, a crisis of intimacy.*

From the oxygen crisis of the single cells dying at the dawn of life on Earth, which generated a new type of cells that were able to breathe oxygen, and later the emergence of multicellular life,<sup>21</sup> to existential risk in this very moment, *all crisis is a crisis of intimacy.*

We demonstrate this principle in some depth in the writings of CosmoErotic Humanism.<sup>22</sup>

The direct hit, therefore, is—structurally and self-evidently—to evolve intimacy itself. Intimacy is always rooted in a Shared Story of Value. A crisis of intimacy, at its core, is a crisis in value. To evolve intimacy is therefore to evolve a New Story of Value. A new—emergent—Shared Story of Value generates a new—emergent—global intimacy.

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<sup>21</sup> To which we will return later in Meditation Fifty-One in Essay Three of this volume.

<sup>22</sup> See Marc Gafni, Barbara Marx Hubbard, and Kristina Kincaid: *Meditations on the New Narrative of Desire: Volume One, Introduction, Meditation Thirteen: "Every Crisis is a Crisis of Intimacy"* and David J. Temple, *The Intimate Universe: Global Intimacy Disorder as Cause for Global Action Paralysis—From the Global Intimacy Disorder to the Intimate Universe and the Evolution of Intimacy.*

## More Adequate and Compelling Interior Technologies

Another way to articulate the story we are telling:

The generator functions of existential and catastrophic risk are the direct results of the failure to develop more adequate interior technologies that are sufficiently compelling to displace rivalrous conflict governed by win/lose metrics as the motivational architecture—in myriad forms—for the human lifeworld. This has led to the conditions for the essential implosion of our social and ecological systems. These systems are already—and quite literally—on the brink of collapsing themselves.

That's what we mean by *the second shock of existence*.

To recapitulate:

The second shock of existence is not the realization of the death of the human being; the second shock of existence is the realization of the potential death of humanity. It is the second shock of existence that is the *Death Star moment* of our species.

## The Global Intimacy Disorder

But there is a deeper root cause for existential and catastrophic risk that lurks underneath these important generator functions, which we articulated above: rivalrous conflict governed by win/lose metrics and the fragile systems they engender.

And we cannot take the Death Star down without discerning and addressing this deeper root cause. We have already alluded to this deeper root cause above, in our invocation of interior technologies that are sufficient to displace the *current civilizational architecture of rivalrous conflict governed by win/lose metrics, which generates fragile systems*.

But at this point, we need to make the root cause, and from that the root response, more explicit and clearer.

***The deeper root cause of the meta-crisis is a global intimacy disorder.***

This ostensibly surprising statement can be understood in a few simple steps:

- 1) All of the catastrophic and existential risk challenges we face are GLOBAL challenges—from climate change to artificial intelligence, to pandemics, to systems collapse, to the exponential arms races of exponential weaponized technologies.

- 2) All of these factors are driven by the *tragedies of the commons*, *multipolar traps*, and *races to the bottom*<sup>23</sup>—all of which are expressions of the rivalrous conflict meta-architecture, and all of which generate fragile systems subject to multiple forms of gradual or sudden collapse.
- 3) Every global challenge SELF-EVIDENTLY requires a global solution.
- 4) Global solutions can only be implemented with global co-ordination.
- 5) Global co-ordination is impossible without global coherence.
- 6) Global coherence is only possible if there is resonance between the parts—global resonance.
- 7) Global resonance is only possible if we have global intimacy.
- 8) Global intimacy—just like intimacy in a couple—is only possible when there is a shared story—not just a shared history but a shared story—guiding us into the future. It is only a shared global story that can generate a new emergent quality of intimacy—global intimacy.
- 9) A shared story must be a Shared Story of Value.
- 10) A Shared Story of Value is rooted in shared *ordinating values*, or what we have called *Evolving First Values and First Principles*. Intimacy requires a shared grammar of values as a matrix for a Shared Story of Value.
- 11) It is only a shared global story that heals and generates a new emergent quality of intimacy—*global intimacy*.
- 12) Without a shared grammar of values, there is no global intimacy, and therefore no global coherence, and no global coordination in response to catastrophic and existential risk; the latter of which means—put simply—there will quite literally be no future.

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<sup>23</sup> The *Oxford Languages* dictionary defines a *race to the bottom* as a situation characterized by a progressive lowering or deterioration of standards, especially (in business contexts) as a result of the pressure of competition.



## **Brief Recapitulation: The Global Intimacy Disorder Is the Root Cause of the Second Shock of Existence**

The global intimacy disorder is the root cause of the second shock of existence—existential risk. It is the global intimacy disorder that underlies its core generator functions as we have described them above. The global intimacy disorder is rooted in the *failure* to experience ourselves in a Field of shared intrinsic Value—a Shared Story of Value rooted in First Principles and First Values. This failure itself derives from the deconstruction of value that has been one of the defining characteristics of modernity and postmodernity.<sup>24</sup>

### ***The Great Library***

The two volumes you are reading, right now,<sup>25</sup> are part of a large cultural project, a kind of global genome project, which focuses not on human genetics or genes but on the cultural memetics or memes that animate and define Reality.

We call this *the Great Library Project*.

The purpose of this Great Library Project is to initiate a new Renaissance, which integrates the leading edges of human wisdom, from the traditional, premodern period, the

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<sup>24</sup> We have noted in other writings of CosmoErotic Humanism that the modern and postmodern period are characterized by two paradoxical vectors, the evolution of value and the deconstruction of value. Both modernity and postmodernity are characterized by both movements—think, for example, of universal human rights and the rise of the feminine in modernity, and the reaching out to embrace and honor and protect marginalized communities in postmodernity. The evolution of value in both eras, however, was funded by social capital borrowed from premodernity—the traditional period. That social capital was the core common-sense sacred axiom that Value is Real. That loan was then deconstructed in postmodernity—which deconstructed the very Reality of Value itself as being anything more than a contrived social construct, a fiction, or a figment of our imagination.

<sup>25</sup> *The Evolution of Relationships & The Rise of Evolutionary Relationships: In Response to the Meta-Crisis* and its companion volume *The Future of Relationships: On the Evolution of Love*.

modern era and the postmodern moment, into a New Story of Value, which evolves the source code of culture and consciousness.<sup>26</sup>

## CosmoErotic Humanism and *Homo Amor*

At the core of this New Story of Value are a new Universe Story and a new narrative of identity, which we have called *CosmoErotic Humanism* and *Homo amor*. The essence of the new Universe Story and the new narrative of identity, which derive from the story of *I* and the story of *We*, is a new story of relationship.

These two volumes are focused on this pivotal dimension of the New Story of Value—*relationship*. Particularly in this writing, we look at the future of relationship—the emergence of a new structure of relationship itself—as a key plotline in the New Story.

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<sup>26</sup> The New Story of Value, which we have called CosmoErotic Humanism, is already evident in short form in the titles to multiple sets of forthcoming volumes. The first set of five volumes are called *Evolution: The Love Story of the Universe—First Meditations on CosmoErotic Humanism—In Response to the Meta-Crisis*. A short version, a kind of short recapitulation of the five volumes, is entitled *From Homo Sapiens to Homo Amor: In Response to the Global Intimacy Disorder—The Meta-Crisis*. Those volumes are then complemented by three additional volumes revolving around what we call the *Intimate Universe*. The Intimate Universe and what we have called the *Tenets of Intimacy* are in effect a particular door in. Their titles are: *The Intimate Universe: Global Intimacy Disorder as Cause for Global Action Paralysis—From the Global Intimacy Disorder to the Intimate Universe and the Evolution of Intimacy* and *CosmoErotic Humanism—Toward the New Human and the New Humanity*, and finally, *Homo Amor—The Tenets of Intimacy and the Social Miracles*, all by David J. Temple. Complementing these two sets of volumes are two volumes exclusively devoted to the reconstruction of value—a New Story of Value embedded in First Principles and First Values—at the center of culture. One is already published, and the second is in preparation. Their titles are: David J. Temple, *Forty-Two Propositions on CosmoErotic Humanism: First Principles and First Values of Evolving Perennialism—A New Metaphysics—Post-Tragic Memories of the Future* (2023) and David J. Temple, *First Principles and First Values: Towards an Evolving Perennialism: Introducing the Anthro-Ontological Method*. See also the four-volume *Meditations on the New Narrative of Desire* by Dr. Marc Gafni, Barbara Marx Hubbard, and Dr. Kristina Kincaid, as well as *God Loves Stores: First Notes on the Ontology of Story and the Narrative Arc of Reality*. There are also two other key short volumes, both of which are equally important. The first short volume is entitled *Global Intimacy Disorder as Cause for Global Action Paralysis: What the World Looks Like Sans First Principles and First Values* and the second volume *From Conspiracy Theory to the Great Conspiring of Reality—Information as Intimacy: Healing the Broken Information Ecology*. Their topics are self-evident in their titles, so we will add but a word. In the first short volume, we paint a stark but highly realistic vision of the system collapse that will likely emerge if we fail to articulate and download a New Story of Value into culture. In the second short volume, we talk about the destruction of information as intimacy, and the destruction of the information ecosystem we need to be fully human, which is a direct result—again—of the failure to articulate an accurate Story of Value, which points towards some of the inherent plotlines of the drama of Cosmos—a drama in which human beings are today—more than we have ever been at any previous stage in history—the leading actors on the stage. All of these volumes taken together, articulate the key next steps, grounded in our earlier work over the last twenty years, in telling the emergent Story of Value, the *New Story*—rooted in the exterior and interior sciences—or the Universe: A Love Story. Together, these books form what we are calling *the New Story of Value*, in response to the meta-crisis.

## ***The Alienation from Wholeness as the Meta-Crisis***

A story weaves the most separate fragments into a larger whole. The fragments, however, are not ontologically separate. Rather, they are unique expressions of the larger whole, inherently allured to other parts.

The unique parts—animated by the currency of attraction that is the inherent nature of their uniqueness—are always already seeking each other, feeling allured to each other, to birth the emergence of ever-greater wholeness.

These unique parts, which make up a larger story, may refer to subatomic particles, atoms, molecules, macromolecules, cells, all the way up to human beings—as well as ideas, all the way up the evolutionary chain through all the levels of matter, life, and the further depths of the self-reflective human mind.

The deeper and wider the ground of the whole, the better the story.

The contemporary meta-crisis—as we have discussed it throughout the writings of CosmoErotic Humanism<sup>27</sup> and briefly unfolded above—is rooted in our alienation from wholeness. ***It is our alienation from wholeness, at a moment when wholeness is necessary for our very survival, that is the root cause of the meta-crisis.***

When we speak of wholeness, we include at least two primary dimensions:

- 1) The interior wholeness of Self, which is one ground of our identity.
- 2) Our relationship to the larger Whole of Reality in all of its dimensions—exterior and interior—from the biosphere to the larger Field of Consciousness, which is a second ground of our identity.

The first and second dimensions are inseparable. It is only the interior wholeness of our wider Self that turns to embrace the larger Whole.

And another way to talk about relationship is wholeness.

## **Wholeness and Relationship**

Relationship and wholeness are intimately inter-included.

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

New structures of relationship *emerge* from deeper levels of wholeness.

And new structures of relationship *generate* ever-greater wholeness.

As such, the core of this volume and its second sister volume will be to describe:

*The Evolution of Relationship*

And in particular:

*The Rise of Evolutionary Relationship,*

which we have also termed:

*Whole Mate Relationship.*

## ***The Response to the Alienation from Wholeness Is the Rise of Whole Mate Relationships***

The response to the alienation from wholeness—which, as we have described it, is the root of the meta-crisis—can be nothing other than the rise of a new form of relationship—whole mate relationship. And one of the key qualities of whole mate relationship is naturally a more profoundly evolved relationship to the large Whole.

Indeed, whole mate relationship is—as we will unpack below—demarcated by two primary dimensions of wholeness. They are—not surprisingly—precisely the two dimensions we noted just above.

1. The interior wholeness of Self, which is one ground of our identity.
2. Our relationship to the larger Whole of Reality in all of its dimensions—exterior and interior—from the biosphere to the larger Field of Consciousness, which is a second ground of our identity.

## ***The Response to the Meta-Crisis Is Whole Mate Relationships***

In other words, the rise of whole mate relationships is an essential dimension of the response to the meta-crisis, which itself is rooted in a fundamental alienation from Wholeness. This, of course, is the inherent logic of Cosmos, once we understand the following second-

simplicity discernments, to which we have already alluded above and will return to below as the core of our conversation in the next essay.

They are as follows:

*Reality is relationship.*

*Reality is evolution.*

*Reality is the evolution of relationship.*

*All relationships emerge from crisis.*

*All crisis is a crisis of relationship.*

*The crisis of relationship is solved by the emergence of a higher level of relationship.*

Wholeness is another word for relationship.

Wholeness means right relationship between parts that synergize as a larger whole.

The evolution of relationship is thus the evolution of our relationship to the larger Whole, both as it lives in us and as we live in it.

Those two evolutions of relationship to the larger Whole are—as we shall see below—the very essence of the new evolutionary emergence of whole mate relationship.

## **Eros, Intimacy, Value, & Wholeness**

All dimensions of our alienation are expressions of one core dynamic—a core alienation from the Whole. *Eros*, *intimacy*, *value*, and *wholeness* are all part of a cluster of words that point to the same ontology.

Reality is the movement of Eros towards ever-deeper contact and greater wholeness—the progressive deepening of intimacies—ever-deeper and wider shared identities—defined by mutualities of recognition, feeling, value, and purpose, which themselves generate the ever-deeper and more evolved values.

## ***Eros and Intimacy as Value Structures of Cosmos All Way Down and All the Way Up the Evolutionary Chain***

For now, we will simply adduce what we have called the *intimacy equation*:<sup>28</sup>

*Intimacy = shared identity in the context of [relative] otherness x mutuality of recognition x mutuality of pathos x mutuality of value x mutuality of purpose*

We will unpack and further deepen this equation in the main body of this and other works.<sup>29</sup>

At this juncture, however, it is sufficient to say that intimacy is about the capacity of parts to generate a *shared identity* while retaining their otherness, or distinct identity, at the very same time. This requires multiple mutualities, including recognition, feeling (or *pathos*), value, and purpose. The parts must recognize and feel each other, even as they share value and purpose, but all of this must lead to intimate union and not pathological fusion, where the distinct identity of the parts disappears. [Think subatomic particles that successfully become an atom or two persons who successfully become a couple.]

With this in mind, let's return to our two major generator functions for existential risk, whose root cause, as we have identified here, is a *global intimacy disorder*.

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<sup>28</sup> This is a popular formulation that we have formalized over time as:

*Intimacy = Shared Identity x [Relative] Otherness x Mutuality (Recognition + Feeling + Value + Purpose)*

All our equations of interiors are not to be understood in quantitative terms. They are not technically equations in the mathematical sense. They are not intended to be used to quantify an amount of a particular value. This is not possible, because value is ultimately not quantifiable. It is a basic question, the extent to which the qualities of the interiors (value/consciousness) are in any way measurable, the way material realities are measurable. We don't think they are. For example, asking someone to put a number on how much they love you, as compared to their dog, is absurd. While there are identifiable differences of intensity, there is no common metric that allows us to put a verifiable number on amounts of love (nor should there be!). We are, of course, aware that, normally, a mathematical equation works with numerical values—even if it would be just 0 and 1—with 0 meaning that quality is *not* present, and 1 meaning it *is* present. Even though that is something we are able to say even for subjective qualities—at least for ourselves—and for ourselves, we may also be able to say that maybe a quality is only about halfway present—we are not using these equations in that way. The equations are illustrative and suggestive of the structures and dynamics of the interiors. The intention is to find a way to capture the complexity and numinosity, as well as the generativity and definability, of Cosmic Values.

<sup>29</sup> See, for example, David J. Temple, *Forty-Two Propositions on CosmoErotic Humanism: First Principles and First Values of Evolving Perennialism—A New Metaphysics—Post-Tragic Memories of the Future* (2023) and see also the fuller conversation in David J. Temple, *First Principles and First Values: Towards an Evolving Perennialism: Introducing the Anthro-Ontological Method*—both books published by World Philosophy and Religion Press, in Conjunction with Waterside Press and Integral Publishers.

1. Our modern success story is *rivalrous conflict governed by win/lose metrics*, which violates all the terms of the intimacy equation: there is no shared identity and no mutuality of recognition, feeling, value, or purpose, and instead of relative otherness, there is alienated otherness. Such a story generates *complicated, fragile systems with no allurements or intimacy between the parts*, systems which optimize for efficiency (as an expression of win/lose metric) and not for resiliency and life.
2. The second generator function we have already identified above as *the deconstruction of intrinsic value* itself. The deconstruction of value means that human value does not participate in any sense in the intrinsic Value of the Real, for the Real is dogmatically declared to have no intrinsic value. Thus, there is no shared identity—no intimacy—between the interior of the human being and Reality. There is no common participation in a Field of shared intrinsic Value. Instead of intimacy with Value we are alienated from Value—and only intrinsic value can arouse will—political, moral, and social will.

## The Breakdown of Eros

We might also call the root cause of these two generator functions of existential risk *a breakdown of Eros*. For it is Value itself and the value of desiring ever-deeper value that are the nature of Eros itself.<sup>30</sup>

When value is deconstructed, the center doesn't hold.

## Evolution Is the Evolution of Intimacy

Coupled with the *intimacy equation* is the scientifically grounded<sup>31</sup> realization that:

***Reality is the progressive deepening of intimacies.***<sup>32</sup>

Or said only slightly differently:

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<sup>30</sup> We will turn to the nature of Eros more directly in the Eros equation below.

<sup>31</sup> In both the exterior and interior sciences.

<sup>32</sup> Which we begin to unpack in depth in the aforementioned volumes [especially David J. Temple, *The Intimate Universe: Global Intimacy Disorder as Cause for Global Action Paralysis—From the Global Intimacy Disorder to the Intimate Universe and the Evolution of Intimacy*].

***Reality is evolution. Evolution is the evolution of intimacy.***

The evolution of intimacy requires—personally and collectively—a deeper, more accurate discernment of the nature of our Universe, ourselves, and our beloveds.

In other words:

The evolution of intimacy requires the best possible, the most accurate, and therefore the most compelling emergent responses to what we have called the *three great questions—inquiries*—of CosmoErotic Humanism, to which we will turn below.

This new discernment generates a New Global Story of Value.

The New Global Story of Value generates an emergent—a heretofore unseen emergent—global intimacy—healing the global intimacy disorder.

The New Global Story of Value is the direct hit that takes down the Death Star and replaces it with the hope that invokes the memory of our best future.

*Global intimacy facilitates global coherence,*

*which facilitates global coordination,*

*which activates the possibility of our creative and effectively coordinated global responses to the global meta-crisis,*

*in its entirety and its specific expressions.*

## ***From a Crisis of Eros to a Culture of Eros***

Eros is life.

Eros is a First Principle and First Value of Reality itself.

Eros is Value.

And Value is Eros.

Indeed, it is for that reason that we coined a new term in CosmoErotic Humanism:

*ErosValue.*

For there is no ultimate split between them.

The failure of Eros destroys life.



Our lack of Eros is poised to destroy the world.

That is what we referred to earlier as *existential risk*, or *the second shock of existence*.

Recapitulating:

*The first shock of existence is the realization—at the dawn of human existence—that the skull grins at the banquet. Life, before it continues, is first confronted by death. The first shock of existence is the death of the individual human being.*

*The second shock of existence is the realization of the potential death of humanity, or in a second form, the death of our humanity.*

All civilizations have fallen because the stories that they lived in were, in some sense, stories based on rivalrous conflict governed by win/lose metrics. Every civilization was weakened by interior polarization caused by the lack of a shared Story of Value.

We now have a global civilization, but we haven't created a Shared Story of Value. We haven't solved the generator functions that caused all civilizations to fall. Our global civilization has exponential technologies and extraction models depleting the Earth of resources that it took billions of years to create, which is going to lead to a civilizational collapse.

Existential risk is a risk to our very existence.

The choice is clear: ***Love or die.***

It is that simple.

Eros is no longer a luxury. It is an absolute necessity for the survival of the individual and the planet.

In the last half of the twentieth century, modern psychology has documented an age-old truth: a fully nourished baby who is not held in loving arms will die. So too our world, personally and globally—even with all the resources of intelligence and technology at our disposal—will die without being held in Love—in the embrace of Eros.

We must embrace a personal path of Love and a global politics of Love.

Not ordinary love—not love that is mere human sentiment—but Eros, or what we sometimes call *Outrageous Love*, which is the Heart of Existence itself.

*We live in a world of outrageous pain. The only response to outrageous pain is Outrageous Love.*

These are the core ideas we begin to unpack in this book.

## **What Is Eros?**

We define Eros through what we refer to as the *Eros equation* (like the intimacy equation adduced above, the Eros equation is one of a series of what we call *interior science equations*):

*Eros = Radical Aliveness x Desiring (Growing + Seeking) x Deeper  
Contact x Greater Wholeness x Self-Actualization/ Self-Transcendence  
(Creation [Destruction])*

There are good reasons for the formal language of the interior science equations in these writings, and the reader is invited to explore them on their own, in particular, in David J. Temple's work entitled *Forty-Two Propositions on CosmoErotic Humanism: First Principles and First Values of Evolving Perennialism—A New Metaphysics—Post-Tragic Memories of the Future*. But for now, let's describe Eros simply, outside of the formal equation:

*Eros is the experience of radical aliveness moving towards—seeking—  
desiring—ever-deeper contact and ever-greater wholeness.*

## ***Eros and Intimacy Equations as One***

Eros is a core Value of Reality. Eros, as we have articulated it in the Eros equation just above, is the movement towards ever-deeper contact and ever-greater wholeness.

Another way to express this core movement of Cosmos is the progression towards ever-deeper intimacy—meaning ever-wider and deeper shared identities, characterized by mutuality of recognition, mutuality of *pathos* (feeling), mutuality of value, and mutuality of purpose.

In other words, the Eros and intimacy equations are two articulations of the same mathematics of interiors. Eros and intimacy—and the movement towards their progressive deepening—are two of the First Principles and First Values of Reality. The First Principles

and First Values are what we have also called the *core plotlines* in the Story of the ever-evolving Value that is Reality itself. For more about these plotlines, see Appendix 3.

## **Eros: Being and Becoming**

Eros is the core fabric of Reality's *being* and the motivational architecture of Reality's *becoming*.

Eros is what animates the evolutionary impulse itself, from the very inception of Cosmos all the way to our very selves, who awaken to the realization that the evolutionary impulse throbs uniquely in every single one of us.

The realization of human awakening and transformation that lies at the core of the interior sciences is the invitation—or even the urgent and desperate *demand*—of a madly loving Cosmos animated by Infinities of Power and Infinities of Intimacy. The demand, the desperate invitation, the plea, the tender and fierce command of Cosmos that lives inside every human being, is to awaken—to *awaken to our true nature as unique incarnations of Eros and ethos that are needed and desperately desired by All-That-Is*.

Or, said slightly differently:

*Reality is Eros.*

Which could also be formulated as:

*God is Eros.*

The failure of Eros destroys life. The collapse of Eros is always the hidden (or not so hidden) root cause for the collapse of ethics. This is true both personally and collectively.

We live in a moment of a worldwide and personal collapse of Eros. Our lack of Eros is poised to destroy the world. This is precisely what we referred to above as *the second shock of existence* or *the meta-crisis of existential risk*. It is only a culture of Eros—rooted in the New Story of Value—that has the capacity to respond to the meta-crisis—the second shock of existence.

## Generating a Culture of Eros

A careful study of complexity theory, in part rooted in polymath Alan Turing's epic essay "The Chemical Basis of Morphogenesis,"<sup>33</sup> discloses its response to one of its own core inquiries:

*What generates coherent complex systems that do not break down?*

This is, of course, core to the second shock of existence inquiry:

*How does a world spiraling towards ten billion people, all engaged in various forms of rivalrous conflict governed by win/lose metrics, not collapse or and extinct itself?*

A key dimension of the response of complexity theory, rooted in part in Turing, is that simple first rules, iterated again and again exponentially, generate vast, coherent, complex systems.

When I (Marc) was first reading the complexity theory literature many years ago, it immediately dawned on me that this is self-evidently true not only about exteriors but also about interiors. Just like simple first rules generate coherent complex exteriors, so, too, what we are calling simple *First Principles and First Values embedded in a simple Story of Value* generate the hyper-complex world of consciousness and interiors.

We now live in what has been called the *Anthropocene*, a world in which human consciousness will create or destroy the future.

For this reason, defining consciousness is an imperative of survival. We have—in other writing of CosmoErotic Humanism—defined *consciousness* through the *simple First Principles and First Values embedded in a Story of Value* that we tell ourselves about the nature of Reality and our place in it. Said simply, consciousness expresses itself in the manifest world as a Story of Value. Consciousness is the interior of Story.

Said differently, consciousness is essentially the structure of intimacy, and the structure of relationship, and the structure of conversation at play. In other words, consciousness is not an abstract thing. Consciousness is the depth of relationship, the depth of

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<sup>33</sup> Turing, Alan Mathison. "The chemical basis of morphogenesis." *Bulletin of mathematical biology* 52.1 (1990): 153-197.

intimacy, and the depth of conversation taking place—both between the parts inside of the whole and between two or more larger wholes.

In order to generate a culture of Eros, we turn to the three great questions of CosmoErotic Humanism.

## ***Reality Is Exteriors and Interiors***

Reality, as we live in it, is self-evidently constituted by exteriors and interiors.

Reality is objective economic, social, physical, and environmental factors—exteriors.

And Reality is mood, motivation, value, longings, and desire—all interior dimensions.

Both are governed by simple first rules.

Simple first rules must be simple.

In the world of interiors, therefore, we have looked for the most elemental elements of our Story of Value as expressed in our responses to the three most *simple* questions:

*Who?*

*Where?*

*And What?*

And it is worth pointing out here, as my (Marc's) brother Aaron realized when I shared these questions with him, that the *Why* question is paradoxically off the table. The *Why* question almost always gets mired down in dogma, abstract philosophy, and *theo-logic*, none of which is grounded in any direct sense of knowing. What is true is that if we engage the *Where*, *Who*, and *What* questions, the *Why* resolves itself in a self-evident way.

## ***The Three Great Inquiries of CosmoErotic Humanism***

These are three great inquiries that are the motivational architecture of CosmoErotic Humanism. An inquiry is, simply put, a question. But it is a question upon which virtually all future choices depend. It is not an informational question but a question about the essential nature of Reality itself.

So said somewhat differently, we might also speak of the *Three Great Questions of CosmoErotic Humanism*.

## WHO?

The essential *Who* question is:

*Who am I?*

This is the great question of identity.

*Who am I?*

*What is my true nature?*

The question might also be expressed as:

*Who are you?*

[The *Who are you* question may be faced towards a fellow human being, but it also may be faced towards other living beings, or even towards Infinity itself. When faced towards Infinity, the question of *Who are You* is really: *Is there a Who in Infinity facing towards me with whom I might commune?*]

In the plural, a subset of the fundamental *Who am I* question emerges, which is dependent on and yet not at all redundant with the first question.

This is the question of *Who are we?*

It is the *I* question of the collective, and again, it is self-evidently related to the answer to the inquiry of *Who am I?*

These are the great questions of identity. An identity crisis, or a breakdown in identity, which means insanity, collective or personal, stems from our incapacity to adequately answer these questions.

## WHERE?

The second question is not a *Who* question but a *Where* question.

*Where am I?*

This is a question *not* of identity but of Universe Story.

*Where do I live?*

*What is the nature of this Reality, in which I breathe and upon which and within which I operate?*

Naturally, this question is in some sense prior to the first question.

The nature of the Universe determines the nature of the individual. This is especially clear in the evolutionary sciences, which tell us that Reality—the Universe—lives in us.

In this sense, our response to the *Where* question directly informs our answer to the *Who* question.

But from the perspective of the interior sciences, the vector of in-formation is somewhat different. For the interior sciences point out that *the mysteries live within us*. This is the truth of Anthro-Ontology.

Thus, from the perspective of the interior sciences, it is not only the *Where* that directs us to the *Who*, but it is also the *Who* that directs us to the *Where*.

## **WHAT?**

*What is there for me to do?*

That question is but another way of stating a deeper question:

*What do I want?*

Or said slightly differently:

*What do I desire?*

This is an action question, not a *Where* or a *Who*, but a *What* question. But of course, it may be expressed in multiple forms. For example, we might express it as:

*What do I need?*

Or more broadly:

*What do I truly desire?*

*What is my deepest heart's desire?*

Or more broadly still:

*What does evolution, or Reality, or God, need from me—desire from me—in the very next moment?*

***For at the deepest level of realization, we gain direct access to the truth that my deepest heart's desire is the desire of evolution itself. Evolution is desire, and evolutionary desire lives intimately, personally, uniquely in me as my deepest heart's desire.***

But we are ahead of ourselves.

We might move from the *I* to the *We* and ask:

*What is there for us to do?*

*What do we truly desire?*

*What is our deepest heart's desire?*

This question, of course, implies a distinction between our surface desire and our depth desire, necessitating a process of deepening, a human invitation, and even demand, to engage in the clarification of desire.

Another way to ask the same question might also be—still in the *Where* form:

*Where are we going?*

Or:

*Where is it all going?*

## **A Caveat**

There are no *answers* to these questions. At least not *answers* that are definitive to the extent that the question disappears, and the mystery abates.

We humans are always dancing between certainty and uncertainty. ***Gnosis and revelation—certainty and uncertainty—clarity and mystery—are themselves First Principles and First Values of Cosmos.***

But there are potent and poignant *responses* to these questions. *Responses* are *orienting certainties* that locate us in the Cosmos and guide our dance amidst the



uncertainties. These *orienting certainties* that guide us are not *answers* but the intrinsic Values of Cosmos that is—anthro-ontologically—awake, alive, and therefore accessible in us.

## ***Homo Amor***

At the very core of this deeper vision is what we have called *the emergence of the New Human and the New Humanity*, the evolutionary progression from *Homo sapiens* to *Homo amor*.

We have demonstrated in the writings of CosmoErotic Humanism, particularly in our Appendix 2 called “The Narrative Thread of Cosmos: The Evolution of Intimacy Through the Four Big Bangs,” why this emergence is aligned with what we have called *the inherent plotlines or vectors of evolution*.

As we alluded to above, these plotlines are the *First Values and First Principles of Cosmos* itself and are akin to what, in the exterior science of complexity theory, is sometimes referred to as the *simple first rules* that generate the complex, intimate coherence of our dazingly sophisticated Earth and life systems.<sup>34</sup>

Core to the identity of *Homo amor, the New Human and the New Humanity*, is what we have called *Unique Self* and *Unique Self Symphonies*.

*Homo amor* is the New Story of Value in person. We have called the New Story of Value *CosmoErotic Humanism*. *Homo amor* is simply the incarnation of the New Story of Value—rooted in the *New Universe Story* and the new narrative of identity for both *Me* and *We, I* and *Us*, that is articulated in CosmoErotic Humanism.

*Homo amor*, expressed in part as *Unique Self* and *Unique Self Symphonies*, is the New Story of Value. The New Story of Value is the direct hit that evolves the source code and capacitates the healing of the global intimacy disorder through an evolutionary restoration of intimacy at all levels and areas of culture—personal, economic, and political.

A direct hit means a transformation of the culture itself not at the desktop level but at the level of source code.

We invoke complexity theory one more time, as it informs us that only a source-code change—in the very core First Principles—of our answers to the questions of *Where are we?*

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<sup>34</sup> See our Essay on “Story: The Five Demonstrations that Point Towards the Orienting Power of First Values and First Principles Embedded in a Story of Value.”

*Who am I? [Who are We?], and What is there to do?* Can change the direction and destiny of the whole system.

## **Unique Self Symphony**

*Homo amor* is *Unique Self* who participates in what we have called *Unique Self Symphony*.

*Homo amor* is not a fanciful conjecture. The realization of *Homo amor* as a necessary new level of human evolution is the result of decades of work that we have done, integrating—in a form of *second simplicity*—meaning not just simple (first simplicity), but moving from simplicity, to complexity, to *second simplicity*—the leading-edge, validated insights of the exterior and interior sciences, in the entire premodern, modern, and postmodern period, woven together in a *New Universe Story*, in a new understanding of identity—that we are calling *Unique Self*.

That is the direct hit.

Downloading *Homo amor—Unique Self***Error! Bookmark not defined.** and *Unique Self Symphony*—into the source code of culture is what actually takes down the *culture of death*.

That is to say, *Homo amor* responds to both—as we will see—the second shock of existence—existential risk—the realization of the potential death of humanity—and even the first shock of existence—the realization of the inevitable death experience of every human being.

## ***The First and Second Shock of Existence Merge in the Meta-Crisis: Birthing Homo Amor***

It is this vacuum of a Story of Value that haunts the second shock of existence. And it is the postmodern deconstruction of value, story, and self that induces the unique terror of death of this moment in time. We have rejected—and rightfully so—the old stories of value, given to us by the old religions, which held us in response to the terror of death. Their ethnocentric cruelty blocked our access to their deeper realizations. So, the first shock of existence, the terror at the realization of our individual death as human beings, has returned to the center of our existence.

The second shock of existence—not the fear of the death of the human being but of the death of humanity—therefore comes together with the first shock of existence, to chill the very core of our being. We cannot face what Robert J. Lifton called the *apocalypse* of our being. So, we turn our attention to every manner of pseudo-eros. For culture has denied us access to Eros—deconstructed her and claimed that she is, in the language of one popular purveyor of the postmodern consensus, Yuval Harari, a *fiction*, a *figment of our imagination*, and a mere *social construct*.

Crisis is an evolutionary driver. Our Crisis is a birth. The crises of the first and second shock of existence birth *Homo amor*.

It is from the depth of this very crisis—this very terror—the terror of both the first shock and second shock of existence—that we have begun to articulate a New Story of Value. That is what we mean when we say, *our crisis is a birth*. The New Story is a post-postmodern story that integrates the leading-edge validated insights of the premodern, modern, and postmodern wisdom streams. As we have already noted, we call this New Story of Value *CosmoErotic Humanism*.

At the center of CosmoErotic Humanism is the vision of a New Human and a New Humanity, the movement from *Homo sapiens* to what we have called *Homo amor*. The encounter with death, in the merged experience of the first and second shock of existence, presses us into new *gnosis* and what emerges is a momentous evolutionary leap in what it means to be human. The death terror births new life, a vision of the New Human and the New Humanity—*Homo amor*. And central to *Homo amor* is both an emergent value theory, the reclamation of value in a post-postmodern context, coupled with Unique Self Theory and its vision of the four selves.<sup>35</sup>

## The Realization of Unique Self

The central knowing that is crystalizing in this evolutionary moment, sourced in the interior sciences, is that each of us is a Unique Self, with a unique perspective, quality of Self, and capacity for action. Our Unique Self is not simply our talents as separate monadic units. According to the best of the interior and exterior sciences, we are each not fundamentally

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<sup>35</sup> The four selves in Unique Self Theory are separate self (ego), True Self, Unique Self, and Evolutionary Unique Self. We will engage them more deeply in volume 2 of this series. For a brief preview, see Table 2 at the end of Essay Two.

apart but rather part of the larger Whole of existence. But we are distinct parts. Each of us is a unique emergent of the entire system. We are unique configurations of the larger Field of Eros, Value, Life, and Consciousness. And therefore, we each have a unique incarnation of value to live and to give that is needed by the Whole. That is our core identity.

As Unique Selves, we fear death only when we have been afraid of life—when we have not lived the life that is ours to live. We do not have to die fearing that our ladder was perched against the wrong wall, and our climbing was in vain. The weakness of the old religions was that they each claimed to be the sole right wall. Each demanded obedience to its particular form, against all others, who were called *infidels*. Only the coin of absolute obedience to their particular ritual forms—not to a universal *ethos*—gave passage to Eternity.

In the deepest sense, the fear of dying is of not having lived your Unique Self—the life that was yours to live. It is the fear of dying and not having made the contribution that your very cells know is yours to make. The way to transcend the fear of death is therefore clear: to live your story—your Unique Self—to the fullest, giving your unique gift, writing your poem, singing your song, and being the unique configuration of intimacy and desire that Reality intended in its incarnation as you.

Your unique value is not a psychological construct. Rather you—not the details of your social status, bodily form, or personality but rather your unique essence—are a unique incarnation of Value that participates in the Field of eternal yet evolving Value. Your unique value is irreducible and irreplaceable—the source of your eternal dignity, which, by its very nature, transcends death.

These are among the revelations newly pressed into our knowing by the contemplation of death, both in the original, first shock of existence and in the new, second shock of existence with which we are now confronted.

So, let's see if we can state Unique Self clearly.

### ***The Unique Self Realization in a Few Sentences***

In these sentences, we intend to capture the heart of Unique Self Theory, which is the core of the New Story of Value which births the new narrative of identity. The new narrative of identity is a direct corollary of our New Universe Story. The New Universe Story and its corollary narrative of identity are the primary keys to the evolutionary emergence of a New Human and a New Humanity—*Homo amor*—the evolutionary fulfillment of *Homo sapiens*:

And at the very core of *Homo amor* is the emergence of a new structure of relationship. We have called these evolutionary relationships or whole mate relationships.

## **Who Are You?**

*You are an irreducibly unique expression of the larger Field. Meaning, we are not talking about your separate self or ego self. Rather, you are an irreducibly unique expression of the larger Field of Value.*

*You are an irreducibly unique expression of the LoveIntelligence, LoveBeauty, and LoveDesire that is the initiating and animating Eros and energy of All-That-Is—that lives—uniquely—in you, as you, and through you—that never was, is, or will be ever again—past, present, and future—in anyone other than you.*

*As such, you have an irreducibly unique perspective, you are an irreducibly unique quality of Eros, intimacy, desire, and power. Your unique perspective, your unique quality of intimacy, your unique quality of desire, and your unique expression of power come together to activate your unique capacity to live your unique life and give your unique gift.*

*Your unique gift is both your unique quality of **being** in the world — interacting, interfacing, inter-activating with Reality—your interbeing with Reality—and your unique quality of **becoming**—your unique gift is the unique gift that you have to give to Reality.*

*Through your unique gift, you are uniquely empowered to address a unique need in your unique circle of intimacy and influence, that can be addressed by you, and you, alone—in the particularized special way that you are able to address it.*

*When you address that unique need in your unique circle of intimacy and influence, you are actually responding to Reality. That is your unique response-ability.*

*To address that unique need is your unique calling and your unique, inherent obligation. This obligation is not imposed from without but is the*

*unique expression of your unique configuration of LoveIntelligence, LoveDesire, LoveValue, and LoveBeauty. Indeed, in the original Semitic languages, love and obligation share the same root word.*

*In other words: Your unique gift, an expression of your Unique Self, is the unique expression of your LoveIntelligence, LoveDesire and LoveBeauty that can be manifested and gifted into Reality by no one that ever was, is, or will be, other than you.*

*You recognize the unique need that is yours to address because it arouses your deepest heart's desire. Giving your unique gift to address that unique need is the unique joy and unique responsibility of your unique life.*

*Even more: Giving your unique gift, which addresses a unique need in your unique circle of intimacy and influence, is your own deepest need. Your own deepest need is your deepest heart's desire.*

*In giving your unique gift, you awaken as the leading edge of evolution and incarnate a unique quality of Evolutionary Love. You become the personal face of Conscious Evolution.*

*Your Unique Self is your unique configuration of being and becoming.*

*Your unique configuration of being includes the full spectrum of your qualities of presence and interiority.*

*Your unique configuration of becoming includes your unique transformation, which is evolution itself continuing its own process of transformation in you, as you, and through you. In the depth of your Unique Self Realization, it becomes clear that your unique need is your transformation—which is the transformation of the whole—that can be uniquely accomplished only by you.*

Every person is a unique configuration of the Eros of the Cosmos. One word—deployed by CosmoErotic Humanism in evolving the great lineage traditions—for the Eros of Cosmos is *Outrageous Love*. The Eros of Cosmos—Outrageous Love—configures uniquely in you, as you, and through you, and capacitates your unique gift into Reality, which is desperately needed by All-That-Is. Your unique gift is your *Outrageous Act of Love*.

## *Unique Self as Unique Value*

Unique Self is your personal realization of your fully connected uniqueness.

Not only do you have an irreducibly unique molecular and cellular structure, and not only is your immune system undeniably and shockingly unique—so your entire biological matrix is unique—the unique aspects do not stop at the biology of your Unique Self.

To awaken to your Unique Self is to know that you occupy a particular place in the spacetime continuum. You are an irreducibly unique emergent value of the whole thing. You don't exist without the atmosphere—and without the plants that produce it—and without the hydrological cycles that water the plants—and without the gravity driving the thermonuclear fusions that fuel our planet. You do not exist independently of everything and everyone.

You are both the same as everyone and everything in significant ways, you are inter-included and inter-connected—interbeing with everything and everyone one—even as you are irreducibly unique—a unique value in cosmos—a new ontic identity.

You are a new ontic value in Cosmos—that never was, is, or will be ever again.

You are singularly unique and therefore irreplaceable and therefore irreducibly valuable. Your irreducibly unique expression and experience of consciousness and agency are emergent properties of All-That-Is, uniquely configured in relationship as you. Although you are a novel property of Eros, intimacy, desire, and perspective, and you emerge from everything, you are not reducible to your constituent parts or the laws that govern them at lower levels. You are a new ontological emergent that both generates newness including new value and is governed by new sets of laws.

This means simply that you have an irreducibly unique perspective and an irreducibly unique quality of intimacy. Your unique perspective and unique quality of intimacy foster your unique insight, which births your unique capacity, which in turn fosters your unique gift. Your unique gift allows you to address a unique need in your unique circle of intimacy and influence that can be addressed uniquely by you, and you, alone.

Once you realize that you are an irreducibly unique expression of the LoveIntelligence of Cosmos, you realize that there is a corner of the world that lacks Love and can only be transformed by you. Evolution took 13.7 billion years of synchronicity to produce the unique

expression of you. You are the personal face of the evolutionary impulse. You are not irrelevant.

Emergence theory<sup>36</sup> powerfully reminds us that evolution moves from unconscious to conscious when you awaken as evolution in person. In our interconnected world of quantum entanglement, we begin to understand, in a way rarely previously possible, that your next evolutionary act sends ripples throughout Reality that literally affect everything.

## **Intimacy, Welcome, and the Experience of Being Needed**

You are welcome in Reality.

You cannot feel welcome, if you do not realize that are you always, ever, already in relationship. To be in relationship is to be needed. The deeper and wider the relationship, the deeper and wider is Reality's need for you, the more you are welcome—at home in Reality.

The great refrain of the Story of Value—which is at the root of the Universe Story and its scientific narrative of Unique Self Identity—the evolutionary worldview of Unique Self—was already expressed by the great Spanish interior scientist of the Renaissance, Meir Ibn Gabbai, paraphrased by us as *Reality needs your service*.<sup>37</sup>

You are needed by All-That-Is. You have irreducibly unique gifts, which are the very engine of evolution. Need drives evolution. You are the unique expression of evolution's need. *Reality needs your service*.

Imagine you have been invited for dinner. Great pains are made to find the food that you love, the décor that pleases you, and the guests that interest you. You arrive at the time designated on this generous invitation in your honor. You receive with grace all of the effort poured into welcoming you, making you feel at home. But in the back of your mind, you wait for it to be over, when you can really get home, let down your hair, and spread your heart,

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<sup>36</sup> On what is being called *emergence theory*, see, *The Reemergence of Emergence Theory*, Phillip Clayton, Paul Davies, Oxford University Press.

<sup>37</sup> See, for example, Arthur Green, in his essay “God’s Need for Man: A Unitive Approach to the Writings of Abraham Joshua Heschel,” writes that, “in his summary of kabbalistic teaching ‘*Avodat ha-Kodesh*,’ Rabbi Meir Ibn Gabbai, “who lived in the Ottoman Empire in the early sixteenth century, offers a great synthesis of Jewish mystical wisdom in the generation immediately preceding that of Moshe Cordovero and Yizhak Luria, who were to make such great additions and changes to that tradition. The key theme of the work, repeated frequently throughout, is *ha-‘avodah tsorekh gavoha* (lit.: “service is a need on high”), that worship, including the life of the *mitzvot*, fulfills a divine need.”—see here:

<https://www.studocu.com/row/document/มหาวิทยาลัยขอนแก่น/calculus/arthur-green-god-s-need-for-man-a-unitiv/44871119>.



mind, and body out into the spacious fullness of yourself. You are welcome here; you appreciate the effort made on your behalf, but you do not quite feel at home.

Now, imagine that you are sitting next to the host of the dinner itself—and lo and behold, he or she has to take an emergency call. The phone is brought to the table, and by their expression, you realize that some very serious situation has developed. They get off the phone and turn to you with the words:

*Thank God you are here. This is what just happened. I know of your work and your unique gifts, and you are the only one in the world that has the capacity to address this most serious and world-shattering challenge, with which we have just been confronted.*

The host tells you of the challenge, and you realize that she is right, you are uniquely gifted to address this huge challenge, which—without you—might have wrought great destruction. In that second, you—for the first time—feel fully needed, and therefore also fully welcomed, fully at home, fully intimate with your hosts and all of the assembled.

But you are not merely needed by the host of dinner.

You are needed by Reality itself.

The realization of Unique Self is the realization that you are uniquely needed by All-That-Is. That is the ontological disclosure that wells from the very fact of your uniqueness.

It is only the experience of being in relationship—of being uniquely needed—*Reality needs your service*—that allows you to feel fully intimate, welcome, and at home in Reality.

## ***Who Are We? Unique Self Symphony***

Unique Self Symphony is the answer to the question of *Who are we?*

### ***Who Are We?***

*We are participants playing our unique instruments in the Unique Self Symphony.*

*When you are committing your unique Outrageous Acts of Love for the sake of the larger Whole—which is your deepest heart's desire—your*

*evolutionary desire—the evolutionary impulse lived as you—your  
Outrageous Acts of Love, which emerge from your unique configuration of  
desire—you are living your Unique Self and giving your unique gift.*

*When we give our unique gifts in a way that is omni-considerate, omni-  
responsible, and omni-loving—for the sake of the Whole...*

*When we intend our unique gifts as an expression a larger evolutionary  
purpose and Evolutionary Love...*

*When we are allured to other Unique Selves, each giving their unique gifts  
for the sake of the Whole...*

*...then a new emergent discloses itself—a new structure of Evolutionary  
Intimacy—which we have called Unique Self Symphony.*

*That's what it means to play your unique instrument in the Unique Self  
Symphony.*

*Homo amor*—incarnate as the Unique Self Symphony—is not a top-down command-and-control structure. It rather is the human being self-organizing—self-actualizing—to their highest self, to their deepest self, to their most wondrous and beautiful self, which is their Evolutionary Unique Self—their Unique Self in an evolutionary context.

Unique Self Symphony is the new emergent of Evolutionary Intimacy, which is the natural product of the self-organizing Universe and the self-actualizing Cosmos.

## ***The Evolution of Intimacy: Evolutionary Intimacy***

### ***Where Are We?***

Whenever there is a crisis, the crisis is always a crisis of intimacy. Today, we are facing a meta-crisis, which is at its core a meta-crisis of intimacy—what we might call a *global intimacy disorder*.

At every stage of evolution, there is crisis. Crisis is always a crisis of intimacy that arises; and the response is always a new configuration of intimacy—a new configuration of relationship—that invokes ever-more wholeness. The Universe self-organizes to greater and greater levels of intimacy because evolution itself is the progressive deepening of intimacies.

The new configuration of intimacy that responds to the meta-crisis—a new level of Evolutionary Intimacy in this generation—is Unique Self Symphony. The strange attractor towards this actualization is Unique Self. We are uniquely individuated expressions of the evolutionary Field of Eros—of the LoveIntelligence, LoveDesire, and LoveBeauty—that is the fabric of Cosmos.

Uniqueness is a core First Principle and First Value of Cosmos calling every human being to their Unique Self—and to play their unique instrument in the Unique Self Symphony.

In other words, uniqueness is, at the human level, like the pheromones in an ant colony that self-organize the ant colony, or the inherent intelligence of bees that calls each bee to their vocation. We know scientifically that beehives are wildly organized, allured, and uniquely emergent in myriad wonderful expressions of intelligence. But ants and bees are not human beings.

So how does that work on the human level? What calls human beings to their vocation? Human beings, at this stage of history, are, for the first time, expressions of Conscious Evolution. So, what drives us? What guides us? What is our North Star? What is our compass of joy?

Our compass of joy is our uniqueness itself. Our Unique Self calls us to our true nature and true vocation of consciousness and desire as a unique expression of the larger Field of Desire and Consciousness. Your Unique Self is the unique set of allurements that call you forward to give your unique gift. Your Unique Self is your unique configuration of desire.

But not surface desire, not pseudo-desire, not the lowest common denominator of desire, manipulated by the internet, whose goals are bottom lines of profit and control. Rather, we are talking about your *deepest heart's desire*, your clarified desire, which capacitates your giving of your unique gift, and invites you—even demands—that you play your instrument in the Unique Self Symphony. Sometimes, we play together. Sometimes, 10 of us, or 20 of us, or 30, or a whole division, or a whole people, are playing different strands on the same Unique Self instrument. That Unique Self instrument gives a unique gift into society.

So, I, human being, who am I? I am a Unique Self. I have an instrument to play in the Unique Self Symphony, and I am needed by All-That-Is.

That is the realization of Unique Self.

Unique Self implies personhood, and personhood means there is a personal relationship. Reality intended me, that's what uniqueness tells me.

Uniqueness tells me:

*I am unique, I am not generic. I am irreducibly unique.*

*Reality intended me. Reality chose me. Reality recognizes me. Reality loves and adores me. Reality desires me. Reality needs me. Reality needs my own growth and my own transformation.*

Reality is evolution. Evolution is a series of transformations animated by the inherent LoveIntelligence and LoveDesire and LoveBeauty of Cosmos. Transformation is Reality's inherent purpose and goal.

At the human level, transformation is the transformation of identity. It is only my transformation from separate self to True Self (*I am part of the Field*), to Unique Self (*a unique expression of the Field*), to Evolutionary Unique Self (*Unique Self in an evolutionary context*)—and Evolutionary Unique Self feels the evolutionary impulse pulsing in him—pulsing in her.

In Evolutionary Unique Self, that evolutionary impulse has a personal face, and that personal face is my Unique Self playing the music of my Unique Self instrument. That is how I join the Unique Self Symphony.

Unique Self Symphony is made up of Evolutionary Unique Selves, acting as unique expressions of the LoveIntelligence, LoveBeauty, and LoveDesire—joining together across space and time—to participate in the evolution of consciousness.

Unique Self Symphony is the only authentic and potent response we have to existential risk: A new narrative of identity. Unique Self and Unique Self Symphony are not just transformations of personal identity but transformations of the narrative of identity itself.

*Who am I?* I am a Unique Self, I participate personally in the LoveIntelligence of Cosmos, and we join together in Unique Self Symphonies all over the world—as expressions of a bottom-up, grassroots, self-organizing Universe—self-organizing to ever-higher, deeper, and wider expressions of the Good, the True, and the Beautiful.

That is quite a different vision than the attention-hijacking, lowest-common-denominator vision of the rapidly proliferating global technocracy. Indeed, it is this vision that must animate the tech environments in all of their noble and also distressing disguises.

***The response to existential risk is a Planetary Awakening in Love through Unique Self Symphonies.***

## ***Unique Self Symphonies: A Deeper Cut***

Unique Self Symphonies, as a very specific kind of what has been called a *superorganism*, which could be said to have some sort of *collective intelligence*, will *only* emerge when all of us have a shared sense of the inviolability and value of each individual's Unique Self—each person as a unique expression of the larger Field of Consciousness and Desire, a kind of individuation beyond ego, the personal beyond the impersonal.<sup>38</sup>

It is only such a narrative of realized identity that constitutes the evolution and health of any group. When a group comes together in such a way that no one's Unique Self is diminished, but all are, in fact, leveraged, there emerges a Unique Self Symphony. This requires all the members to hold the group in mind, to be omni-considerate of the whole, to envision their part in the self-organizing and self-orchestrating social reality, to which they consent to participate.<sup>39</sup>

To be part of a self-conscious Unique Self Symphony is the feeling of being ethically integrated into a larger totality without being absorbed by it; social justice is about the feeling of harmonious social integration. The felt integrity of one's Unique Self is the core of an evolutionary phenomenology of moral consciousness.

To fit into the evolutionary puzzle, or story, the shape required by each individual is unique. That is the very nature of what we have called *the Unique Self Puzzle Piece*.<sup>40</sup>

There is, by definition, no formula for generating identical puzzle pieces.

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<sup>38</sup> On Unique Self and Unique Self Symphonies, see Essay Three of *First Meditations on the New Narrative of Desire*, Part Four, "The Universe Self-Organizes Toward Unique Self and Unique Self Symphonies."

<sup>39</sup> In my own (Marc's) anecdotal experience, I have found that, if there is a strong enough center of gravity in a community that has realized Unique Self Identity, it creates a vortex that draws in and positively shapes even those who have not experienced such realization. This requires further research both in terms of the quantitative and qualitative issues. On the qualitative side, depth of uniqueness and the capacity to generate Unique Self Symphonies are an essential next step in evolving democratic forms of self-governance. This line of thinking is very much in tune with the design principles for CPR (Common-Pool Resource)—organizational governance structures outlined by Elinor Ostrom (summarized by David Sloan Wilson in his essay "The Tragedy of the Commons: How Elinor Ostrom Solved One of Life's Greatest Dilemmas: The design principles for solving the tragedy of the commons can be applied to all groups," (2016, October 29), <https://evonomics.com/tragedy-of-the-commons-elinor-ostrom/>). Although not all forms of deliberative democracy are created equal: see *We the People: Consenting to a Deeper Democracy*, by J. Buck and S. Villines, 2007, Sociocracy.info Press; *Between Facts and Norms: Contributions to a Discourse Theory of Law and Democracy*, by J. Habermas, 1996, MIT Press.

<sup>40</sup> In this image, the separate self is a puzzle piece without a puzzle, True Self is the puzzle without the pieces, Unique Self is the puzzle piece that completes—and is needed and held by—the puzzle, and Evolutionary Unique Self not only completes but evolves the whole puzzle.

When a once open community or society closes through force, what can be called a *superorganic closure via violence*, or *the move to a totalitarian system*, it will ultimately be undone, unseated—not because it is physically unsustainable, but because it is unbearable for human identity formation and moral development.<sup>41</sup> Every human being must feel that their uniqueness is recognized, felt, and needed by the larger group. Without accounting for the dignity of irreducible uniqueness, all superorganic communities will ultimately break down.

Without an elaborate language of moral consciousness, a *language of strong evaluation* (as Charles Taylor (1989) would put it<sup>42</sup>), all talk about the superorganisms of tomorrow will fall short of catalyzing them.

Our modest proposal here is simply that the emerging insights from mainstream evolutionary sciences (which are still struggling to get out of the old paradigm) begin to be enlivened with the insights of the alternative narrative, where interiors—consciousness and value—implicated in the next steps of human evolution—have been the focal point of concerted scholarly efforts for over a century.

## ***Homo Amor* and Whole Mate Relationship**

To recapitulate briefly:

The contemporary meta-crisis—as we have discussed above—is rooted in our alienation from wholeness.

At the core of this New Story of Value is a new Universe Story and a new narrative of identity, which we have called *CosmoErotic Humanism* and *Homo amor*. At the core of the New Universe Story and our narrative of identity, the story of I and the story of We, is a new story of relationship. This volume focuses on this pivotal dimension of the New Story of Value—relationship. Particularly in this writing, we look at the future of relationship itself, as a key plotline in the New Story.

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<sup>41</sup> Human systems are different from other biological systems in the sense that they can have identity crises (of self-understanding and conscience) as well as systemic crises (of resources, reproductive capacities). The book *Legitimation Crises*, by J. Habermas, 1978, Beacon Press, makes this point, suggesting the limits of views of social evolution that focus on systems, objectives, resources, and economies, while neglecting the fact that meaning-making systems are equally important in sustaining the continuity of society and life.

<sup>42</sup> Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity*, Harvard University Press. 1989.

Relationship and wholeness are intimately inter-included. New structures of relationship *emerge* from deeper levels of wholeness. And new structures of relationship *generate* ever-greater wholeness.

In other words, the essence of the meta-crisis is a breakdown of Eros, which is expressed as our fundamental alienation from the whole, the larger whole of which we are a part and the deeper whole in which we rest that is our core.

The healing of the meta-crisis is in the emergence of a new level of relationship to the whole.

This is what we describe in these two volumes as:

*The Rise of Whole Mate Relationship.*

Whole mate relationship is a key characteristic of *Homo amor*.

## **The Crossing: From *Homo Sapiens* to *Homo Amor***

This description of the human being we have evoked here is *Homo amor*. That's the New Human and the New Humanity. Stepping into the lived identity of this New Human and New Humanity is what we call *the Crossing*. We cross over, as it were, to the other side.

In the great lineages, there is a term of speech: *Our side and God's side*. In the crossing, we cross to the other side. We no longer see only as separate-self humans, lost in the grasping of the lonely and traumatized ego. Rather, we cross over. We begin to see Reality with God's Eyes. We not only love but we are lived as Love. And to be a lover is to see with God's Eyes. We are not merely separate parts seeking our own good. ***But we become omni-considerate for the sake of the Whole.***

In other words, the answer to the question of *Who am I* must include the Whole. And the answer to the question of *Who are we* must also include the Whole. Indeed, once we are individually omni-considerate for the sake of the Whole, then our relationships—our we space—must naturally be omni-considerate for the sake of the Whole. This is what we have described as *whole mate relationship*. This is precisely the movement—the crossing—from *Homo sapiens* to *Homo amor*.

In the language of one lineage—and every lineage has their own unique, intimate language that alludes to the crossing—we re-enact, in an evolutionary context, the story of

Abraham, of Ibrahim, the Hebrew. The word *Hebrew* means: *the one who crosses over to the other side*.

The experience of the crossing is the awakening to the Fourth Big Bang,<sup>43</sup> in which I experience the Field of LoveIntelligence, LoveBeauty, and LoveDesire holding me in every moment. And at the same time, I experience all of the Field in me—irreducibly and uniquely in me—and I realize,

*I matter. I impact Reality. For Real. I am not an extra on the set, but I am fundamentally and poignantly needed by All-That-Is.*

This is, in some very deep sense, precisely the ancient teaching of *Hineni*. When the Divine Voice calls Abraham, he responds with this one word.

*Hineni—Here I am.*

There are, of course, two ways to interpret that response. The first is an expression of utter obedience and submission.

*Here I am, Thy Will be done.*

But the other way, which appears in the hidden texts of nondual humanism, and all the great interior sciences that are one part of the source matrix for our CosmoErotic Humanism, is that it's *not* that I am completely obliterating my selfness to become an empty vessel for the Divine. It's rather, that I'm so in my selfness—so in my depth, so in my uniqueness—that my radical subjectivity merges with the Divine.

My unique individuated configuration of matter is alive with Divinity. I ultimately matter.

And when I say *Hineni—Here I am*, I realize that *I am found*.

## **Conclusion: Hope Is a Memory of the Future**

We are not hopeless. On the contrary, we are filled with great hope.

Hope is a memory of the future. That memory of the future is the direct hit that takes down the Death Star—the culture of death.

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<sup>43</sup> For more on the Fourth Big Bang, see Appendix 2 of this volume.



The direct hit must be—as it has always been in history—the emergence of a new stage of evolution.

***Crisis is an evolutionary driver.***

***And every crisis is, at its core, a crisis of intimacy.***

From the oxygen crisis of the single cells dying at the dawn of life on Earth, which generated a new type of cells that were able to breathe oxygen, and later the emergence of multicellular life—to which we will return later in Essay Three of this volume in Meditation Fifty-One—to existential risk in this very moment, ***all crisis is a crisis of intimacy.***

We demonstrate this principle in some depth in the writings of CosmoErotic Humanism.<sup>44</sup> ***Error! Bookmark not defined.***

The direct hit, therefore, is—structurally and self-evidently—to evolve intimacy itself.

What is intimacy, as a structure of Cosmos all the way down and all the way up the evolutionary chain? We engage this inquiry in depth in other writings, but for now we will simply repeat what we have called the *intimacy equation*:

*Intimacy = shared identity in the context of (relative)] otherness x mutuality of recognition, mutuality of pathos x mutuality of value x mutuality of purpose.*

Intimacy is about the capacity of parts to generate a *shared identity*, while retaining their otherness or distinct identity at the same time. This requires multiple mutualities, including recognition, feeling (or *pathos*), value, and purpose. The parts must recognize each other, feel each other, even as they share value and purpose, but all of this must lead to intimate union and not pathological fusion where the distinct identity of the parts is disappeared—like subatomic particles that successfully become an atom or two persons who successfully become a couple.

We have identified the global intimacy disorder as the root cause of the existential risk, but ***the underlying ultimate failure of intimacy is the deconstruction of value itself.***

The deconstruction of value means that human value does not participate in any sense of intrinsic Value of the Real. It is not about *values* but about *the Field of Value* that underlies

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<sup>44</sup> See Marc Gafni, Barbara Marx Hubbard, and Kristina Kincaid: *Meditations on the New Narrative of Desire: Volume One, Introduction, Meditation Thirteen: “Every Crisis is a Crisis of Intimacy”* and David J. Temple, *The Intimate Universe: Global Intimacy Disorder as Cause for Global Action Paralysis—From the Global Intimacy Disorder to the Intimate Universe and the Evolution of Intimacy.*

all individual values. When the human being, moved—often sincerely or even nobly—by myriad cultural, historical, and psychological confusions, claims to have stepped out of the Field of Value, then intimacy itself is deconstructed. The deconstruction of value is the deconstruction of intimacy.

In the absence of a shared Story of Value, a story which is an expression of Reality's Eros, a story rooted in pseudo-eros takes center stage and becomes the generator functions for existential risk.

Our modern pseudo-eros story is rivalrous conflict governed by win/lose metrics. Such a story catalyzes in its wake the second generator function of existential risk: complicated, fragile systems with no allurements or intimacy between the parts. It is in that sense that we have argued that the first generator function for existential risk is the success story.

The failure of intimacy is precisely the impotent experience that there is no shared identity between the interiors of the human being and Reality. There is no shared identity in the sense of any kind of common participation in a Field of shared intrinsic Value—but only a shared Story of Value can arouse the global will required to engage catastrophic and existential risk. For it is only global political, moral, and social will—we can say *erotic will*—that can generate the most good, true, and beautiful world that we have always known is possible.

## **CosmoErotic Humanism**

Coupled with the intimacy equation is the scientifically grounded realization, in both the exterior and interior sciences, that Reality is the progressive deepening of intimacies, or, said only slightly differently:

*Reality is evolution. Evolution is the evolution of intimacy.*

*The evolution of intimacy is the evolution of relationship.*

The evolution of intimacy requires—personally and collectively—a deeper, more accurate discernment of the nature of our Universe, ourselves, and our beloveds. This new discernment generates a new global Story of Value. The new global Story of Value generates an emergent, heretofore unseen **global intimacy** and heals the global intimacy disorder.

The New Story of Value is the direct hit that takes down the Death Star and replaces it with the hope that invokes the memory of our best future. Global intimacy facilitates global

coherence, which facilitates global coordination, which activates the possibility of our creative and effectively coordinated global responses to the global meta-crisis in its entirety and its specific expressions.

To solve Russell's challenge, the apparent argument for the subjectivity of ethical values, we have to reground value theory in eternal yet evolving First Principles and First Values and articulate a New Story of Value as a context for our diversity, which we call *CosmoErotic Humanism*.

## **Love or Die**

Our choice is simple: *Love or die*.

To love means to participate in the evolution of love, which is the evolution of the human Story of Value.

To love means to evolve, to activate a new cultural enlightenment, rooted in a new narrative of identity, a new narrative of value, a new narrative of intimate communion, a new narrative of desire, a new narrative of power, all of which will birth new narratives of economics and politics.

The evolution of love is the telling of a New Story. The New Story that must be told is a Love Story, for in fact that is the deepest truth of Reality, rooted in the best exterior and interior sciences that we have at this moment in time:

*Reality is not merely a fact. Reality is a story.*

*Reality is not an ordinary story. Reality is a love story.*

*Reality is not an ordinary love story. Reality is an Outrageous Love Story.*

A New Story doesn't mean a *made-up story*. It means doing the hard work of integrating the validated insights of the traditional world, the modern world, and the postmodern world. This is the intention at the heart of CosmoErotic Humanism.

CosmoErotic Humanism, together with other emergent strands, needs to become the ground of a world religion as a context for our diversity. We need religion, even as we need science, to articulate a shared global grammar of value. A New Story means that we come to the Story from a new interior wholeness—with a new relationship to the larger whole.

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<sup>i</sup> A colleague, Mauk Pieper, an excellent thinker in his own right, attended my (Marc's) seminars themed around *Your Unique Self* in response to collective existential crises in Holland between 2009 and 2013. He published a book entitled *Humanity's Second Shock and Your Unique Self*, 2014, Venwoude Press, for which I gladly wrote an afterword. *Your Unique Self* is the title of my core writing on this topic. He understood well the basic premise of our work—what I have called Unique Self Theory, meaning an emergent new theory of identity—an accurate response to what we call the first great question of CosmoErotic Humanism: *Who Am I?* Unique Self Theory as part of a larger Story of Value is crucial if we are to respond to the meta-crisis of the twenty-first century and beyond. Mauk coined the term *second shock of existence*, to capture the notion of existential risk, which we happily acknowledge. The term *shock of existence* seems to have been coined by philosopher Robert Creegan in his book by that name *The Shock of Existence: A Philosophy of Freedom*, by R. F. Creegan, 1954, Sci-Art Publishers. On Unique Self, see Gafni, Marc. *Your Unique Self: The Radical Path to Personal Enlightenment*, with Introduction and Afterword by Ken Wilber, Integral Publishers, 2012. See also, Gafni, Marc [Guest Ed.]. *Journal of Integral Theory and Practice* 6:1, Special Scholarly Issue on Unique Self, Ed. Sean Esbjörn Hargens.