

# CosmoErotic Humanism: Philosophy in a Time Between Worlds

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This brief paper represents an overview of the project of *CosmoErotic Humanism*, which is a philosophical orientation conceived here as an emergent aspect of the historical moment. We view this moment as a kind of Da Vinci moment, when new syntheses and sciences become possible, when new worldviews can emerge. We are poised between potential dystopia and utopia, a position rooted in global intimacy disorder (who are we?) and a consequent global action paralysis or confusion (what should we do?), which itself is sourced in a foundational collapse of narrative frameworks including a shared universe story and its derivative narratives of identity, community, sexuality, purpose, and power (what is the nature of reality?).

When looking at the world situation, our first reaction is to ask about what, who, and how? What has happened? Who has gotten our civilization into this? How can it be helped or changed for the better? These questions are essential, and we encourage people to ask them. However, there is a more important question that is asked less often, which is: when is it? Which is to say: when are we? Or more basically: what time is it?

*It is time for a change. We live in a time between worlds; a time of almost unbearable intensity, potential, and change.*



**Figure:** Timeline displaying secular cycles of world hegemonic organization during seven centuries of the capitalist world system (based on Arrighi; Wallerstein), as nested within dynamics of media and cultural evolution (based on McLuhan; Gebser). Two epochs represent a convergence of metahistorical trends marking major transformations and can thus be characterized as “time between worlds”.

The Greeks had a word (an archetype, really) for this kind of time, *Kairos*, which means in Homeric Greek, “a penetrable opening,” a chance opening in the flow of time, which allows for something truly new. It is a potent time of meaning and transformation. This is contrasted with *Chronos*, which is linear time, duration, and clock time. Understanding that we have stepped outside of “normal time” is important because the meaning of what transpires is reframed. On the inside of normal time, of *Chronos*, are the events of life, the rhythms of civilization, the seasons, and normal courses of life. On the “inside” of *Kairos* are the portals to new worlds and the nonlinear influxes of creativity, disruptions, and opportunity. The Greek conception of *Kairos* tells us that within the vast linear fabric of *Chronos* there are “penetrable openings” at certain points. There are chinks in the regimented armor of time through which the truly new can emerge. *Kairos* refers to the time within time, the special times, pregnant times, times when the unimaginable is imagined, and the impossible becomes actual. One hour is not worth the same as any other.

The figure above places insights from the field of cultural evolution alongside a certain telling of economic history in the West. The point here is not the exact dates, nor the exact language, but rather the broad trends, and more importantly, the convergences between trends. During this incredibly eventful stretch of history there are two places where metahistorical trends in cultural evolution and economic cycles coincide: the years surrounding the turnings of the seventeenth and twenty-first centuries. In these epochs, we find the ramifications of new technologies, wholesale new beginnings of economic hegemony, and sweeping changes in the nature of culture and consciousness. During each of these transformational epochs, there is an inordinate amount of thinking and innovation in the realms of basic institutional design and cultural patterns of life and symbols providing meaning. In particular, conceptions of knowledge and education, religion and government, are all in the process of being rethought.

We are presenting CosmoErotic Humanism as an intellectual movement, not as a theory, and it is understood as part of a broader trajectory of intellectual currents that are coming into focus and climax during the current historical juncture. Da Vinci and his cohorts in Venice during the Renaissance stood on the brink of a time between worlds, and their synoptic and innovative humanism would be shepherded through a period of tremendous turmoil and transformation through Europe, until the modern revolutions began in earnest during the 17<sup>th</sup> Century. The movement included those oriented to changing the dominant mood and metaphors underlying culture itself in particular directions. They were specifically oriented towards a new story of the universe, self, and community that includes the actual best statements of what is known about nature, psyche, and power. So it is again today as we stand in a time between worlds, seeking a way forward. However, today the stakes are higher, the picture bigger, and the way through to a new world even more promising.

We have named the movement CosmoErotic Humanism as the term captures the core of the emergent universe story, which is a vision of an Intimate Universe, what we often call a CosmoErotic Universe. CosmoErotic Humanism is a normative project of reconstructive philosophy, which serves both as a metatheoretical engine (articulating, organizing, and norming theories and metatheories) but also as an intermediary between the special languages

of theory (sciences) and the everyday languages of the lifeworld (religions, cultural worldviews). Therefore, the scope of CosmoErotic Humanism as a project involves creating and curating a collection of metatheories and articulating their implications by clarifying and disseminating a collection of ordinary language “memes.” The project is a call to action on the part of scholar-practitioners to converge and convene into metatheoretical coherence in a time when the planetary crises are reaching their existential pitch. It is only in this way that we can together articulate and activate a global *ethos* and Eros for a global civilization, which we understand to be the urgent need of this 11<sup>th</sup> Hour.

The highest order metatheories organized by CosmoErotic Humanism include:

- Integral Theory (Wilber)
- Unique Self Theory (Gafni)
- meta-psychology and personal myth (Stein, Gafni)
- educational theory, developmental theory, and metrics (Stein)
- classical sciences (Bloom)
- anthro-ontological value theory (Gafni, Stein, Wilber),
- metaphysics of Eros (Gafni, Kincaid, Stein)
- and Conscious Evolution (Hubbard, Gafni)
- among others.

CosmoErotic Humanism is a convener of complementary orientations, working to translate the implications of leading-edge metatheory into cultural and personal practice and meaning. At its core this is a new language, offering a novel set of key distinctions, which weave between academic theory and the processes of meaning making and sensemaking at the level of the individual and culture. This involves distilling anthro-ontological realities and common sense from the cacophony of postmodern academia. [Anthro-Ontology is a new field of thought that we have delineated and named as one of the key pillars of CosmoErotic Humanism. It is the notion that clarified human interiors disclose some of the interior face of the Kosmos.] Within the vast expanses of the special sciences, such as biology, psychology, and cosmology, metatheories are emerging that have started to cohere fields into new forms. These unprecedented syntheses at the leading edge of knowledge are a novel outcome of the acceleration of modern knowledge production in universities and think tanks. But because this is so new, there is no quality control at the level of metatheory, nor are there any checks and balances between the spiraling complexity of science and the vulnerable forms of community and personality that constitute the lifeworld. That is to say: fragmented science and theory is being translated into civilizational practice in ways that are degrading our humanity and endangering all life as we know it. Reversing this trend means both getting our metatheoretical orientations correct and translating them into the terms of the lifeworld (making them living, breathing aspects of culture and education).

Now is the time to weave the various strands of knowledge together in order to navigate between worlds. As such the core work being done at The Center for Integral Wisdom is the writing and disseminating of what we are calling, *The Great Library*. Books continue to be one

of the drivers of culture, especially if “the book” is understood as a noetic reality, i.e., it is not books *per se*, but ideas that make history. Our work is that of builders in the domain of the heart and mind, working at the level of the foundation, laying the cornerstone for a new world.

There are several primary sets of interrelated volumes that constitute *The Great Library*. The first set revolves directly around a new vision of the universe and the human. This work involves the central idea of *Homo amor*, the New Human emergent as factor in Kosmic evolution. This set includes the following books: Two early books are *The Universe: A Love Story* and *The Intimate Universe*. These are relatively popular introductions to the general directions of CosmoErotic Humanism. These will be followed by one of the foundational books entitled, *CosmoErotic Humanism: Towards the New Human and the New Humanity: Homo Amor*, which will then be followed by a second foundational book entitled simply, *Homo Amor*. This volume is a history book and will constitute the direct response to the kind of bleakly reductive materialist thought with nihilistic undertones that is found in works like *Sapiens* and *Homo Deus* by popular historian, Yuval Harari and finally a short volume entitled *Evolutionary Love*. These books elaborate one aspect of CosmoErotic Humanism by telling the story of evolution and history in a new way, based on novel metatheoretical framings and models.

Another set of books focuses on the anthropological, epistemological, and psychological aspects of CosmoErotic Humanism. These three foundational books are: *Anthro-Ontology: Towards an Evolving Perennialism, Unique Self Theory*, and *In a Unique Voice: On Human Development and Uniqueness*. Here, the core insights and foundations of human knowledge and psychology are rethought, in keeping with the New Universe Story elaborated in the first set.

The final foundational set revolves around *Eros* as an aspect of human life and culture. At its core is a twelve-volume *Phenomenology of Eros*, a two-volume abridged version of the same, and a one volume popular expression of the same. These volumes forge a narrative of sex and sexuality, coherent with the psychology, epistemology, and universe stories elaborated in the books above. The final two volumes of this series engage gender and what we are terming Unique Gender and the future of relationships. The first of this final two volumes is entitled, *Beyond He and She: Towards the Emergence of Unique Gender* and the second, *The Future of Relationships: From Role Mate to Soul Mate to Whole Mate*.

The last foundational book is in the realm of culture and the human lifeworld entitled *Towards a New Politics of Evolutionary Love: On the Emergence of Evolutionary Intimacy and Unique Self Symphonies*, which explicates the full scope of the movement of ideas and touches on the foundational issues of our historical moment with concrete utopian projections and calls for a reconfiguring for science, religions, and politics.

These books are deepened by a wider set of volumes which are composed of two types of books. The first type of volumes are succinct statements of the core principles of CosmoErotic Humanism through various mediating prisms. These volumes include *Distinctions, Five Keys, Evolutionary Love Codes, Evolutionary Sermons, Unique Self Process, Your One True Vocations*,

*Unique Self Presencing*. The second set are creative applications, expansions, and deepenings of CosmoErotic Humanism through its application to a series of disciplines, including mental health, education, psychology, spirituality and more, coaching, economics, and more. These include *The Path and Practice of Outrageous Love*, *Outrageous Medicine*, *World Spirituality*, *Unique Shadow: Personal and Collective & Its Implications for Global Policy*, *Unique Self Recovery*, and *Unique Self Symphonies*.

Behind these books is a team of scholar-practitioners who have been working for over a decade on elaborating the core ideas through research, discourse, and drafting manuscripts. As the scope of the vision came into view it became clear that there would be no way to rush the production of material nor to abnegate on the responsibility to deliver on the total scope of the project, i.e., to produce what is necessary to launch CosmoErotic Humanism as a viable philosophy for a time between worlds, no matter how long it took. The goal has always been to create resources for a culture and a time that is not yet upon us, to provide what is needed to make meaning, love, and good, during a period when there are no longer accepted models for doing this. We have been humbled by the realization that this is a true need, and that we are obligated to fill it: a task of blessed obligation, rooted in the merger of *Eros* and *Ethos*.

The foundational authors include Marc Gafni, Zak Stein, and Barbara Marx Hubbard.

Addendum:

Books already published include:

Gafni, Marc, and Kristina Kincaid. *A Return to Eros: The Radical Experience of Being Fully Alive*. BenBella Books, Inc, 2017.

Gafni, Marc. *Radical Kabbalah Vols. 1 and 2*. Integral Publishers, 2010.

Gafni, Marc, *Your Unique Self, The Radical Path to Personal Enlightenment*, with Introduction and Afterword by Ken Wilber, Integral Publishers, 2012

Gafni, Marc, *Self, Two Models in Integral Evolutionary Mysticism*, Integral Publishers, 2014

Gafni, Marc, *Tears, Reclaiming Ritual, Integral Religion and Rosh Hashanah*, Integral Publishers [Beta Edition] 2014

Gafni, Marc, *Loving Your Way to Enlightenment*, 2014

Stein, Z. (2019). *Education in a Time Between Worlds: Essays on the Future of Schools, Technology, and Society*. San Fransisco: Bright Alliance.

Stein, Z. (2016). *Social Justice and Educational Measurement: John Rawls, the History of Testing, and the Future of Education*. New York: Routledge.

Papers:

Stein, Z. (2019). If education is not the answer you are asking the wrong question: why it's time to see planetary crises as a species-wide learning opportunity. Transformative Educational Alliance. London: Perspectiva Press.

Stein, Z. (2019). The education commodity proposition. *Allies for Education*. 2(2).

Stein, Z. (2018). Love in a Time Between Worlds: On the Metamodern "Return" to a Metaphysics of Eros. *Integral Review*, 4(1).

Stein, Z. & Gafni, M. (2017). The Apocalypse of the Modern World System and Related Possibilities for Democratizing Enlightenment. *Spanda Journal*. 2(1) pp.93-103.

Stein, Z. & Gafni, M. (2015). Reimagining Humanity's Identity: Responding to the Second Shock of Existence. *World Future Review*. 7(1) 1-10.

Stein, Z. (2015). Beyond nature and humanity: reflections on the emergence and purposes of metatheories. In Bhaskar, Esbjorn-Hargens, Hedlund-de Witt & Hartwig (Eds.) *Metatheory for the 21st Century: Critical Realism and Integral Theory in Dialogue*. New York: Routledge. [

Gafni, Marc [Guest Ed.]. *Journal of Integral Theory and Practice* 6:1, Special Scholarly Issue on Unique Self, Ed. Sean Esbjörn Hargens

Gafni, Marc, The Evolutionary Emergent of Unique Self, A New Chapter in Integral Theory, *Journal of Integral Theory and Practice*, 6:1, 2011

Tuschik, Kerstin. Paper on "The World Spirituality Unique Self Vision of Dharma, Lineage, Students, and Teachers" (2014).

Courses Published Include:

Awakening Your Unique Self

Wake Up – Grow Up – Show Up

The Pleasure Map

Loving Your Way to Enlightenment

Reclaiming Eros

God Is Eros: The Seven Tastes of Sexing

Becoming a Future Human

The Evolution of Love: Activating Evolutionary Relationships & Unique Gender

## Our First Steps as “Homo Amor”: Birthing the New Human and the New Humanity