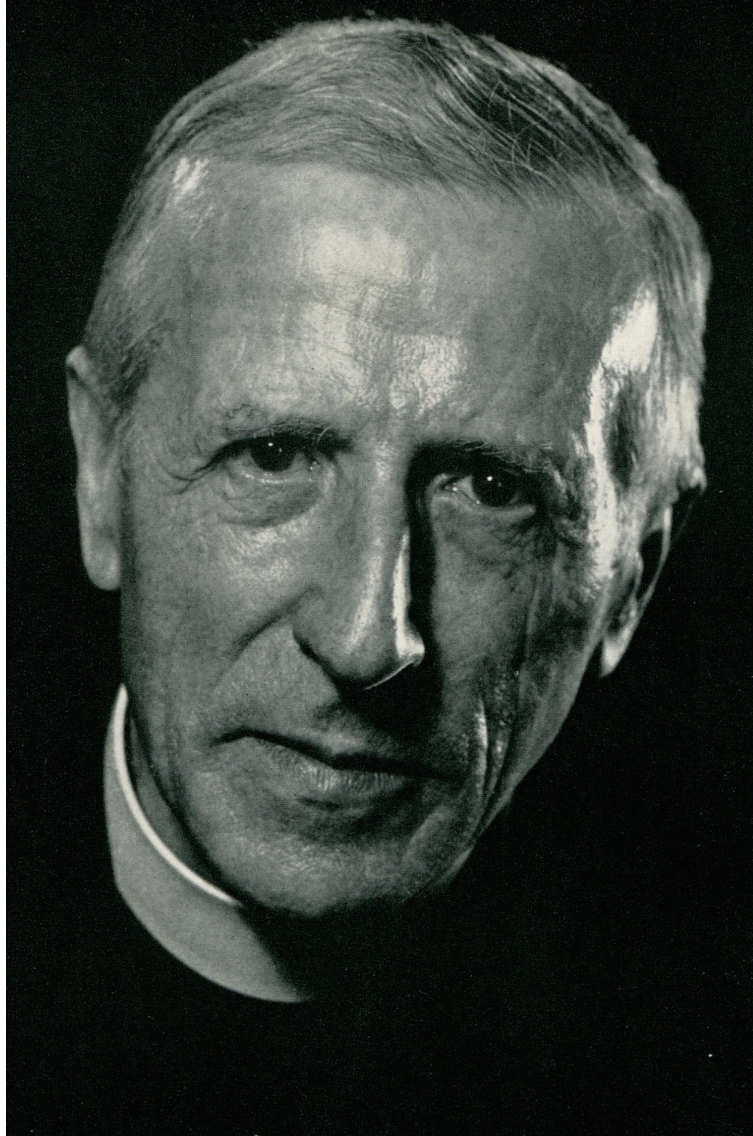


# Mysticism of Teilhard de Chardin:



a solution to  
the modern religious crisis

C G Jung Society of Melbourne

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*presented by*

David Moore

# influence

I am a pilgrim of the future on my way back from a journey made entirely in the past.<sup>1</sup>

Teilhard de Chardin was silenced by his own church during his lifetime. But since his death, has exerted an extraordinarily wide influence on many fields of endeavour. Contributors to three recent collections of essays are experts in an astonishingly wide range of science and humanities disciplines,<sup>2</sup> including Jungian Analysts.<sup>3</sup>

The book which gives today's symposium its title, and which devotes a chapter to the legacy of Teilhard, is by a former NASA researcher, computational scientist, and professor of mathematics.<sup>4</sup> Dave Pruett makes the claim that Teilhard illuminates the future in three ways: "By providing a new paradigm, by his long view of evolution, and by serving as a radiant example of a transformed human being."<sup>5</sup>

Teilhard lived during a tumultuous period, and though he experienced the multiple crises of war, revolution, the atomic nightmare, personal condemnation, being silenced and exiled, "there was no bitterness nor disillusioned cynicism, nothing but a constant optimism."<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> LT, New York: Fontana, 1967, p60.

<sup>2</sup> Professors of theology, religious studies, spirituality, and the history of religion; philosophy, and ethics; political science; chemistry, biochemistry, physics, and zoology; a member of the Council of Monetary Policy, and Honorary Governor, of the Bank of France; an engineer in materials and environmental technology; a population ecologist who teaches in community and regional planning; a physicist who teaches in Integral Studies. see Thierry Meynard (ed), **Teilhard and the Future of Humanity**, New York: Fordham University Press, 2006; Ilija Delio (ed.), *From Teilhard to Omega: Co-creating an Unfinished Universe*, Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2014; Arthur Fabel & Donald St John (eds.), *Teilhard in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: The Emerging Spirit of Earth*, Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2003. Also see Kathleen Duffy, **Teilhard's Mysticism: Seeing the Inner Face of Evolution**, Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2014.

<sup>3</sup> John P Dourley, 'Teilhard de Chardin and the Christian Attempt to Reconnect', in **Jung and Religious Alternative**, 1995; Fred R Gustafson (ed.) **Pierre Teilhard de Chardin and Carl Gustav Jung Side by Side**, Cheyenne: Fisher King Press, 2015.

<sup>4</sup> Dave Pruett, **Reason and Wonder: A Copernican Revolution in Science and Spirit**, Chapter 15 'A World Aflame', Santa Barbara: Praeger, 2012.

<sup>5</sup> Dave Pruett, p348.

<sup>6</sup> Pierre Leroy, in the Introduction to **DM**, p14. "Pere Pierre Teilhard de Chardin lived during a period of doubt and perplexity. He witnessed the modernist crisis, with the sacrifices it entailed; he was driven from his own country by the injustice of political strife; and when he reached manhood he was caught up in the terrible war of 1914. A few years later he saw the collapse in the heat of revolution of social structures to which centuries of history seemed to have given permanence. He was present when forces were let loose which were to lead to a second world war; he was in Pekin when the atom bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. It

Why? Or, better still, how was this possible? Teilhard's spirituality is the key.

## Teilhard the Mystic

I have applied the term 'mystic' to Teilhard. 'Mystic' can mean many things, but what did it mean for Teilhard? Mysticism is commitment to a thoroughly unitive vision of humankind, indeed of all things.

No moral system can live without developing a nimbus of worship... the thinking atom definitively becomes submerged in the omnipresence and omni-action of a supreme consciousness.<sup>7</sup>

Teilhard's 'mysticism' is nothing like institutional, or sectarian, or merely individual piety:

Without mysticism, there can be no successful religion: and there can be no well-founded mysticism apart from faith in some *unification of the universe*.<sup>8</sup>

"The duty of a mystic is to be aware of the inner rhythm of the world and to listen with care for the heartbeat of a higher reality."<sup>9</sup>

## Love & Fire!

For Teilhard, love is the heart of the matter:

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was his own fate to be misunderstood and condemned to silence, and to suffer torments that at times came near to overwhelming him. Like many others, he might well have retreated into his own solitary existence and abandoned his chosen field of activity, but his reaction was the exact opposite. In all that he did, as in all that he taught, there was no bitterness nor disillusioned cynicism, nothing but a constant optimism. Far from railing against the pettiness of men or the chaos of the world, he made it a rule never to assume the presence of evil. And when he was unable to deny the evidence of his eyes, he looked not for the damning but for the saving element in what he saw: a mental attitude that surely, if unexpectedly, provides the only road to truth."

<sup>7</sup> 'The Atomism of Spirit', in **AE**, p53, 54.

<sup>8</sup> 'The Road of the West: To a New Mysticism', in **TF**, p40. Emphasis added.

<sup>9</sup> Kathleen Duffy, **Teilhard's Mysticism: Seeing the Inner Face of Evolution**, Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2014, p32.

There is but a single fundamental feeling underlying all mystical systems; and that is an innate love of the human person, extended to the whole universe.<sup>10</sup>

This consuming love was envisaged by Teilhard as the very *fire of creation*.

Throughout my whole life, during every moment I have lived, the world has gradually been taking on light and fire for me, until it has come to envelop me in one mass of luminosity, glowing from within... This is what I have learnt from my contact with the earth – the diaphony of the divine at the heart of a glowing universe, the divine radiating from the depths of matter a-flame.<sup>11</sup>

In an explicit challenge to the regressive and concretising application of the book of Genesis:

In the beginning there was not coldness and darkness: there was *Fire*.<sup>12</sup>

“Teilhard’s [religious] pantheism was... obviously based on a lifelong experience of the ‘fire’ in himself and beyond himself in matter and in the matter of his discipline as it engaged the phenomenon of evolving humanity.”<sup>13</sup>

Exiled for about half his life, silenced by his own religious community, dying alone and being buried by just ten mourners, this accurately describes Teilhard. It highlights a crucial aspect of the birth-giving of a new spirituality: not mere ideas, love must be embodied, even to the whole universe.<sup>14</sup> People who encountered Teilhard met this as a tangible reality in him as a person: “The look in his eyes when they met your eyes revealed the man's soul: his

<sup>10</sup> ‘The Mystical Milieu’, in **WW**, p121. “When all is said and done, the future of the world depends entirely upon the emergence in us of a moral consciousness of the atom, culminating in the appearance of a universal love.” ‘The Atomism of Spirit’, in **AE**, p48.

<sup>11</sup> DM, New York: Harper Torchbooks, Introduction ‘Teilhard de Chardin: the Man’, by Pierre Leroy, p13.

<sup>12</sup> ‘The Mass on the World’, **HM**, p121-2

<sup>13</sup> John P Dourley, ‘Teilhard de Chardin and the Christian Attempt to Reconnect’, in Jung and the Religious Alternative, 1995.

<sup>14</sup> HP, p190.

reassuring sympathy restored your confidence in yourself. Just to speak to him made you feel better; you knew that he was listening to you and that he understood you. His own faith was in the invincible power of love.”<sup>15</sup>

A unique feature of Teilhard’s mysticism was his equal devotion to his Christian faith as to science – especially the science of evolution,<sup>16</sup> pertinent for today’s symposium. His “life was possessed by the need to harmonize the absolute but apparently contradictory truth of science, especially in the form of the earth sciences and evolution, with his Christian faith in God.”<sup>17</sup> His was a commitment of cosmic proportions:

I am a child of Earth before being a child of God. I can only grasp the Divine through the Cosmic. You will never understand if you do not see that.<sup>18</sup>

“How could a man a man of such faith arrive at so bold a view of evolution? ... Teilhard grasped that evolution applies not only to biological processes but also to the universe as a whole... Teilhard saw a trend [in the scientific revolutions of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries]: the nature of nature is to change.”<sup>19</sup>

‘Evolution’... haunted my thoughts like a tune: which was to me like an unsatisfied hunger, like a promise held out to me, like a summons to be answered.<sup>20</sup>

## diagnosis

My title refers to the ‘modern religious crisis’. Again, ‘religious crisis’ can mean many things: its ‘uprooting and

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<sup>15</sup> Pierre Leroy, in the Introduction to **DM**, p13.

<sup>16</sup> Kathleen Duffy, *Teilhard’s Mysticism*, p1.

<sup>17</sup> John P Dourley, ‘Teilhard de Chardin and the Christian Attempt to Reconnect’, in **Jung and the Religious Alternative**, 1995.

<sup>18</sup> **Lettres a Jeanne Mortier**, pp58-59; cited in Kathleen Duffy, p117.

<sup>19</sup> Dave Pruett, p317.

<sup>20</sup> ‘The Heart of Matter’, in **HM**, p25.

pathologizing tendencies'<sup>21</sup> manifesting not only in organisational religion- where the numbers of fundamentalists are swelling in all three traditions<sup>22</sup> – but also in ecology, economics, geopolitics, and in science.<sup>23</sup>

Teilhard identified the following as relevant to the current spiritual crisis:<sup>24</sup>

### **God**

- the mystery of the transcendent concretised and externalised

### **Spirit/mind/consciousness**

- severed from matter/brain

### **Creation**

- static and fixed, radically separated from the creator

### **Christ**

- single individual, static & externalised superhero whose principal business is law/judgment

### **Salvation**

- fostering a fixation on rescue religion based on doctrines of Original Sin and Fall

### **Humankind**

- reducing humankind to the status of mere spectators to the divine drama

In all this Teilhard identified the central issue as the healing of dualism:

All that exists is matter becoming spirit. There is neither spirit nor matter in the world; the 'stuff of the

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<sup>21</sup> John Dourley, 'Teilhard de Chardin: The Christian Attempt to Reconnect', in **Jung and Religious Alternative**, 1995.

<sup>22</sup> John P Dourley, **Jung and His Mystics: In the end it all comes to nothing**, London: Routledge, 2014, p29.

<sup>23</sup> John P Dourley, **On Behalf of the Mystical Fool: Jung and His Mystics**, Hove: Routledge, 2010, pvii.

<sup>24</sup> See Iliia Delio, **CE**, Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2008, p173. "For too long, the Christian confession has rendered Christ a static figure who looms in judgment over the world. Christ has become less a way of life than a law of life... The static world of the Greek / medieval cosmos was the world in which the traditional understanding of Jesus Christ was conceived. In this world, marked by order, hierarchy, and structure, Jesus Christ was portrayed as a single, individual existent, born in absolute space and time. A static, ordered, and hierarchical world gave birth to a static, ordered, and hierarchical understanding of Jesus Christ as God and human... Through a labyrinth of Greek cosmology, terminology, ecumenical councils, and political battles, we have locked the mystery of God into a single, individual human person, Jesus of Nazareth, so that Jesus Christ has become a single, individual superhero and we are mere spectators to the divine drama." I have both added to and summarised Delio's list.

universe' is spirit-matter. No other substance but this could produce the human molecule.<sup>25</sup>

For many reasons – well documented in the now-considerable secondary literature – Teilhard was profoundly driven to heal the dualism which he experienced in both church and in science.

Ever since [humankind] reflected, and the more [we] reflected, the opposition between spirit and matter has constantly risen up as an ever higher barrier across the road that climbs up to a better awareness of the universe: and in this lies the *deep-rooted origin of all our troubles*.<sup>26</sup>

From Plato to Descartes, through the three Abrahamic faiths, to contemporary materialistic science and economics, dualism, the assertion of an irreconcilable split – between matter and spirit, consciousness and the material body, earth and heaven, and so on – has plagued us in every aspect of life. One philosopher has described this universal deep-rooted dualism as 'a kind of original sin'.<sup>27</sup>

Now while some might argue that such language belongs only to formalised religion, there are at least some scientists who now recognise that materialistic science has also been subject to the functional equivalent of an 'original sin'. Namely, the 'sin' of excluding the mind itself, consciousness, the psyche, from all consideration.<sup>28</sup>

From a purely positivistic point of view, the human being is the most mysterious and disconcerting of subjects science has yet encountered. In fact, we must

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<sup>25</sup> 'Sketch of a personalistic universe', in **HE**, pp57-58.

<sup>26</sup> Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, 'The Atomism of Spirit', in **AE**, London: William Collins, 1970, p23. Emphasis added.

<sup>27</sup> Stan V McDaniel, 'Jung, Teilhard, and the Psychological Problem of Dualism', in Fred R Gustafson (ed), **Pierre Teilhard de Chardin and Carl Gustav Jung Side by Side**, Cheyenne: Fisher King Books, 2015, p52.

<sup>28</sup> "Without psyche, there would be no theory... nor would a being exist to discover the timeless mathematical truths to which physicists like Schrodinger have referred." Peter B Todd, **The Individuation of God**, p137.

admit that science has not yet found a place for the human in its descriptions of the universe.<sup>29</sup>

If we were to apply the same rigorous diagnosis to the domain of ‘metaphysical materialism’ – to employ the term adopted by our keynote speaker at this symposium<sup>30</sup> – then we would easily see that it’s not only religion which is terminally sick.<sup>31</sup>

Materialism is born from a fundamental error of perspective... We had to get down to ‘atoms’ in order to realise this truth... The *only consistence* beings have comes to them from their *synthetic element*, in other words from what, at a more or less perfect degree, is *their soul, their spirit*.<sup>32</sup>

The ‘religious crisis’ and the ‘scientific crisis’ are one and the same phenomena, two sides of the same dualistic malaise, the severing of spirit-matter.

## prognosis

Teilhard observed:

It becomes clear that [science and faith] cannot develop normally without each other, for the simple reason that they are animated by the same life.<sup>33</sup>

## God

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<sup>29</sup> HP, p109.

<sup>30</sup> Peter B Todd, **The Individuation of God: Integrating Science and Religion**, Wilmette: Chiron Publications, 2012, p52.

<sup>31</sup> Rupert Sheldrake, **The Science Delusion: Freeing the Spirit of Enquiry**, London: Hodder & Stoughton, 2012, p7-8. 1. Biologist Rupert Sheldrake’s 10 ‘core beliefs’ of ‘the scientific creed’ succinctly summarise the illness: Everything is essentially mechanical. 2. All matter is unconscious. 3. The total amount of matter and energy is always the same. 4. The laws of nature are fixed. 5. Nature is purposeless, and evolution has no goal or direction. 6. All biological inheritance is material. 7. Minds are inside heads and are nothing but the activity of brains. 8. Memories are stored as material traces in brains and are wiped out at death. 9. Unexplained phenomena like telepathy are illusory. 10. Mechanistic medicine is the only kind that really works.

<sup>32</sup> ‘Science and Christ or Analysis and Synthesis’, in **SC**, pp28-29.

<sup>33</sup> HP, p203. Teilhard continues: “In fact, science cannot reach the full limits of itself either in its impetus or in its constructions without being tinged with mysticism and charged with faith.”

- the mystery God as dynamic, evolutive, interior to creation, drawing all things towards fullness, completion, Omega

### **Spirit/mind/consciousness**

- unified, whole, pleroma with brain/mind

### **Creation**

- dynamic, expanding, infinite, matter as sacred, increasing in complexity while converging towards union, a comprehensive synthesis of matter and consciousness

### **Christ**

- archetype of anthropogenesis, 'Christ the Evolver', whose only law is evolution of consciousness

### **Salvation**

- a term for evolution of consciousness, noogenesis, and the necessary cost in terms of labour and suffering – an equivalent of individuation

### **Humankind**

- creation conscious of itself, vessels of co-creation, Christogenesis – creation become conscious of itself

### **Union**

- the means by which the creation is synthesised, approaches Omega - pleroma, an equivalent of the *unus mundus*

## **in the doctor's bag**

### **Suffering**

The price of love, as T S Eliot observed, 'costs not less than everything'.<sup>34</sup> Teilhard was profoundly affected by his experience as stretcher-bearer at the battle front:

The world, seen by experience at our level, is an immense groping, an immense search, an immense attack; its progress can take place only at the expense of many failures, of many wounds. Sufferers of

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<sup>34</sup> T S Eliot, 'Little Gidding', in **Four Quartets**, London: Faber & Faber, 1947, p44.

whatever species ... are simply paying the way for the forward march and triumph of all. They are casualties, fallen on the field of honour.<sup>35</sup>

Only one force is capable of accomplishing this task: Love.<sup>36</sup> For Teilhard, there can be no new 'Third Millennium Spirituality' without the suffering of its birth. Though some conservative religionists accuse Teilhard of peddling 'new age spirituality',<sup>37</sup> in fact Teilhard's stance on the positive value of suffering both sets him apart from modern spiritual consumerism, and quite firmly grounds him in his Christian tradition: "For the mystic... the struggle for identity and integrity assumes epic, even cosmic proportions because it presents itself existentially as an intensely personal life-and-death struggle. He [sic] becomes a mystic because he experiences a breakthrough in terms of a unifying principle, a coincidence of opposites, an overarching integration in which conflicting worlds become one world... It is as if the mystic's integrity... is achieved because he has suffered, at least in imagination, a potential dichotomy that threatens to tear him to pieces."<sup>38</sup>

All the sufferers of the earth joining their sufferings so that the world's pain might become a great and unique act of consciousness, elevation and union.<sup>39</sup>

Teilhard would have delighted, I suspect, in the words of fellow scientist and chemistry Nobel laureate Ilya Prigogine, "If one can remain with this tension of opposites long enough – 'sustain it, be true to it – [one] can become a vessel within which the divine opposites come together and give birth to a new reality.'"<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> 'The Significance and Positive Value of Suffering', in **HE**, p50.

<sup>36</sup> "To overcome every obstacle, to unite our beings without loss of individual personality, there is a single force which nothing can replace and nothing destroy, a force which urges us forwards and draws us upwards: this is the force of love." Pierre Leroy, in the Introduction to **DM**, p15.

<sup>37</sup> Wolfgang Smith, **Teilhardism and the New Religion: A Thorough Analysis of the Teachings of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin**, Rockford: Torch Books, 1988.

<sup>38</sup> John R Yungblut, **Discovering God Within**, Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1979, p178, cited in Dave Pruett, p309.

<sup>39</sup> 'The Significance and Positive Value of Suffering', in **HE**, p51

<sup>40</sup> Cited in Dave Pruett, **Reason and Wonder**, p306.

In the light of cosmogenesis,

Suffering and sin are the expression of the delays, the mistakes, the 'pain and labour', which are *necessary in terms of energetics* for the synthesis of spirit...  
[appearing] as the *condition for evolution and the price to be paid for it*.<sup>41</sup>

In this way Teilhard avoids both the dangerous denial of evil, on the one hand, and soul-stifling static-cosmos 'original sin' on the other.

The recognition that 'God cannot create except evolutively' provides a radical solution ... to the problem of evil (which is a direct 'effect' of evolution), and at the same time explains the manifest and mysterious association of matter and spirit.<sup>42</sup>

Crucially, Teilhard considered his own suffering, along with all human suffering, in the context of the whole cosmos, which

"bears the scars of the chaos and tragedy that accompany the evolutionary process."<sup>43</sup>

There is some similarity between Teilhard's understanding of the place of suffering in the work of what he called 'cosmogenesis', and Jung's regarding the price of individuation.<sup>44</sup>

## Consciousness & Noosphere

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<sup>41</sup> 'The Atomism of Spirit', in **AE**, p50. Emphasis added.

<sup>42</sup> 'Suggestions for a New Theology', in **CE**, p179

<sup>43</sup> Kathleen Duffy, **Teilhard's Mysticism**, p76-77.

<sup>44</sup> Firstly, Jung's advice to Victor White: "Somewhere you have to pay the toll, either to man or to God. And in the end you will discover that both overcharge you... There is no comfort, and no consolation anywhere, except in the submission to, and the acceptance of the Self; or you may call it the God that suffers in his own creation." Jung-White Letters. Now, Teilhard: "What we see nailed to the wood – suffering, dying, freeing – is that really still the God of original sin? Is it? Or is it not the God of evolution? 'to bear the sins of the guilty world' means precisely, *translated and transposed into terms of cosmogenesis*, 'to bear the weight of a world in a state of evolution'. 'What the world is looking for from the Church of God at this moment: A generalizing and deepening of the meaning of the Cross', in **CE**, pp218-9

Teilhard identified in evolution the trajectory from geosphere, to biosphere, to noosphere – the evolution of interiority, psyche, consciousness.<sup>45</sup> He envisaged the rise of *consciousness* – embodied in the human phenomenon – as an envelope around the entire earth. Hence, the credit he is given for inventing the *idea* of the internet, regarded as Teilhard’s ‘superconsciousness’,<sup>46</sup> a “single unanimous act of reflection.”<sup>47</sup> He saw rudimentary consciousness detectable in the very earliest and most primitive of matter:

nothing less than the substance and blood of life as it evolves.<sup>48</sup>

He saw the “primordial psychism of the first cells.”<sup>49</sup> This substance and blood comes to its most complex and radical in human consciousness:

Through hominization a new age begins. The Earth ‘makes a new skin.’ Better still, it finds a soul.<sup>50</sup>

Psychogenesis has led us to the human being. Now it vanishes, replaced or absorbed by a higher function: first to give birth to mind, then later to all its developments – *noogenesis*.<sup>51</sup>

Paradoxically, though unsurprisingly in the light of the ‘sin’ of dualism, Teilhard found himself struggling to convince both his religionist and his scientific colleagues that the

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<sup>45</sup> If the universe appears to be sidereally in process of spatial expansion (from the infinitely small to the immense), then in the same way, and even more clearly, it appears to be physicochemically in process of organically enfolding itself (from the very simple to the extremely complicated) – this particular enfolding of ‘complexity’ being bound experimentally to a corresponding increase in interiority; that is, of psyche or consciousness.” **HP**, p217.

<sup>46</sup> Anthony M Stevens-Arroyo, ‘Fire and Force: Civilization as Noosphere in the Works of Teilhard de Chardin’, in **Comparative Civilizations Review**, Number 66, Spring 2012, p63.

<sup>47</sup> **HP**, p178.

<sup>48</sup> **HP**, p121.

<sup>49</sup> **PM**, p166. The poetic tone is lost in Sarah Appleton-Weber’s newer translation: “The obscure psyche of the first cells,” in **HP**, p111.

<sup>50</sup> **HP**, p124.

<sup>51</sup> **HP**, p123.

solution was right in front of them.<sup>52</sup> I suspect Teilhard had detractors at both ends of the centuries-long divide in mind when he set out his aim in the prologue of *The Human Phenomenon*:

The time has come for us to realize that to be satisfactory, any interpretation of the universe, even a positivistic one, must cover the inside as well as the outside of things – spirit as well as matter.<sup>53</sup>

## **Cosmogogenesis, Omega & Love**

In this light, creation is not the static supposedly perfect state before a 'Fall'. Rather, creation is a vast labour of *becoming*.

To our clearer vision the universe is no longer an Order but a Process. The cosmos has become a Cosmogogenesis.<sup>54</sup>

Crucially, the trajectory of cosmogogenesis, the goal, the telos, is *unitive*.<sup>55</sup> Jung's *unus mundus* and Teilhard's 'Omega Point' share some resonance. "By following the arc of complexification into the future, Teilhard envisioned the *Omega Point* on the far horizon of evolution."<sup>56</sup>

Because it contains and generates consciousness, space-time is necessarily *convergent by nature*. Consequently, followed in the right direction, its boundless layers must coil up somewhere ahead in a

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<sup>52</sup> All we need to do is to take the inside of things into account at the same time as the outside... to squarely confront the central phenomenon of reflection... the power acquired by a consciousness of turning in on itself and taking possession of itself. **HP**, pp109,110

<sup>53</sup> **HP**, p6. "In every region of time and space... coextensive with its outside, everything has an inside... everywhere in the stuff of the universe there necessarily exists an internal conscious face lining the external "material" face habitually the only one considered by science." **HP**, pp24,6.

<sup>54</sup> 'The Heart of the Problem', **FM**, p274

<sup>55</sup> "In truth it is impossible to keep one's gaze constantly fixed on the vast horizons opened out to us by science without feeling the stirrings of an obscure desire to see men drawn closer and closer together by an ever-increasing knowledge and sympathy until finally, in obedience to some divine attraction, there remains but one heart and one soul on the face of the earth." 'Pensees', in **HU**, p75.

<sup>56</sup> Dave Pruett, p317.

point – call it *Omega* – which fuses them and consummates them integrally in itself.<sup>57</sup>

In rhapsodic language, Teilhard says the Omega Point is “the very axis of the cosmic vortex of interiorization”,<sup>58</sup> the evolutionary adventure “a paroxysm of harmonized complexity.”<sup>59</sup> “the psychic convergence of the universe on itself.”<sup>60</sup>

In Omega we have in the first place the principle we needed to explain the persistent march of things towards greater consciousness... gravitating against the tide of improbability towards a *divine focus of mind* which draws it onward.<sup>61</sup>

As a scientist, Teilhard was well aware of the counter-intuitive trajectory of consciousness and complexity, in light of the predictions of the second law of thermodynamics, known as entropy.<sup>62</sup> His idea of the omega point anticipated what physicists now say about negative entropy and ‘far from equilibrium’ conditions.<sup>63</sup> “It appears that Teilhard considered the omega point as the gateway to a transcendent reality outside of space-time... the assumption of such a reality is no longer in conflict with contemporary physics and may even be suggested by it.”<sup>64</sup> I think he would have been delighted with the professor of mathematics’ description of love as “the extreme counterentropic sport”.<sup>65</sup>

## The role of the human

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<sup>57</sup> HP, p184.

<sup>58</sup> HP, p220.

<sup>59</sup> HP, p186.

<sup>60</sup> HP, p188.

<sup>61</sup> PM, 271. Emphasis added.

<sup>62</sup> “Omega is the principle we need to explain both the steady advance of things towards more consciousness and the paradoxical solidity of what is most fragile... Something in the cosmos... escapes entropy – and does so more and more.” HP, p193.

<sup>63</sup> Dave Pruett, ‘The Arrows of Time’, in **Reason and Wonder**, pp261-280.

<sup>64</sup> Lothar Schäfer, ‘The Emergence of Consciousness in Biological Evolution and Quantum Reality’, in Thierry Meynard (ed.), **Teilhard and the Future of Humanity**, New York: Fordham University Press, 2006, p130.

<sup>65</sup> Dave Pruett, **Reason and Wonder**, p280.

Teilhard's vision offers invaluable resources in the healing of the tragic split between a static-state deistic metaphysics which inflates the human at the expense of the creation, robbing the human person of their best energies, and a metaphysical materialism which discounts the human, consciousness, and mind.

The human is not the static center of the world, as was thought for so long; but the axis and arrow of evolution – which is much more beautiful.<sup>66</sup>

Teilhard regarded humanity and divinity as related to each other from the beginning, attaining “the completion of their respective consciousness in the reciprocity of their relationship.”<sup>67</sup>

Boldly and controversially, Teilhard declared that cosmogenesis depends upon evolution of both the divine and human energies, God being the “center of the convergence of the cosmos.”<sup>68</sup>

*“The Christ of Revelation is none other than the Omega of Evolution”.*<sup>69</sup>

It is Christ, in very truth, who saves,  
- but should we not immediately add that at the same time it is Christ who is saved by Evolution?<sup>70</sup>

Teilhard identifies the “Christ event as a catalyst intensifying an evolutionary process already well under way by the time the historical Christ entered the process in human form.”<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> HP, p7.

<sup>67</sup> John P Dourley, 'Teilhard de Chardin: the Christian attempt to Reconnect', in **Jung and the Religious Alternative**, 1986.

<sup>68</sup> While, in the case of a static world, the creator ... is still, on any theory, structurally independent of his work, and in consequence, without any definable basis to his immanence - in the case of a world which is by nature evolutive, the contrary is true: God is not conceivable (either structurally or dynamically) except in so far as he coincides with..., but without being lost in, the centre of convergence of cosmogenesis", 'The God of Evolution', in **CE**, p239.

<sup>69</sup> Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, 'The Christic', in **HM**, New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1978, p92.

<sup>70</sup> Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, 'The Christic', in **HM**, New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1978, p92.

<sup>71</sup> John P Dourley, 'Teilhard de Chardin: the Christian attempt to Reconnect', in **Jung and the Religious Alternative**, 1986.

In closing, what was Teilhard's attitude to the future of cosmogenesis? He was most definitely optimistic, yes,<sup>72</sup> but also realistic.<sup>73</sup> In light of the crucial role of consciousness he envisaged as the method and the goal of cosmogenesis, the human *responsibility* is very great, as is the potential for failure to choose the necessary path:

We have glimpsed that unconsciousness is a kind of ontological inferiority or evil.<sup>74</sup>

Parallels with Jung seem relevant: "The danger would be that humanity would turn away from the energies working toward the mutual completion of divinity and humanity."<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> **HP**, p221.

<sup>73</sup> **HP**, p222.

<sup>74</sup> **HP**, p176.

<sup>75</sup> John P Dourley, 'Teilhard de Chardin: the Christian attempt to Reconnect', in **Jung and the Religious Alternative**, 1986.

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# Teilhard de Chardin Glossary

Anthropogenesis	The science of human development, taken as a whole, not divided into separate spheres of study
Christogenesis	process by which all persons will come to share in, to form part of, the Mystical Body of Christ
Complexity-consciousness	The correlation of psychic energy to a proportionately greater concentration of matter
Cosmogogenesis	The movement of the universe to evolutionary goal
Energy: Radial	The cosmic energy which produces bodies increasingly complex and increasingly centred upon themselves
Energy: Tangential	The energy that sets up external relations between the material bodies of the universe
Hominisation	The process leading to reflective life in humankind
noosphere	The envelop of reflective life embracing the biosphere, though still dependent on it
Omega	The point at which the universe will ultimately centre upon itself and the climax of evolution, identified by Teilhard with the risen Christ of the Parousia

