

Part 1 God: The Question of God, Meaning and Purpose—and The Human Condition

The following synopsis outlines the subject matter of Part 1 of the proposed documentary. It is intended that it will include the views of scientists who support and scientists who oppose the concept of purpose in existence as well as the opinions of both theologians and philosophers. Insights from psychologists into the mechanisms of denial will also be relevant.

SYNOPSIS

(Note to reader: All underlinings have been added for emphasis.)

Towards the end of his momentous 1859 book, *On The Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection*, Charles Darwin wrote: ‘**In the distant future I see open fields for far more important researches. Psychology will be based on a new foundation...Light will be thrown on the origin of man and his history**’ (p.458 of 476). Could it be Darwin was anticipating a time when understanding of the human condition would be found—a time when an all-pervading insecurity, indeed psychosis about what it is to be human would be able to be lifted from the human race?

To date the debate about God, meaning and purpose has focused on two issues. The first is whether physicists’ discoveries about the Big Bang origin of the universe, the extinction of time before the Big Bang and, more recently, the possibility of multiple universes have each undermined the concept of God. In other words, can we now understand the origins of the universe without invoking the involvement of a divine agent, someone ‘twiddling the dials’? This debate has stalled however because the more physicists discover, the more they realise there is to discover. They are unable to give a logical and rational explanation for everything, such as how did the laws that govern the universe come into being in the first place.

The second issue the debate has focused on is whether there is purpose and design in our world. Scientists such as Stephen Jay Gould and Richard Dawkins have argued determinedly that there is no purpose to existence, that change has occurred randomly. Other scientists such as biologist Stuart Kauffman, a founder of the Santa Fe Institute for the Study of Complexity, and physicist Paul Davies have argued equally determinedly that we do live in a meaningful, purposeful world. They maintain there is an underlying meaning or purpose or theme or design or direction to existence and that it is for matter to self-organise or integrate into more ordered and complex wholes.

What this program aims to examine is whether the debate over the fundamental question of God, meaning and purpose has failed to acknowledge the involvement of the issue of the human condition—the existence within our species of a collective, shared-by-all psychosis that is resisting recognition of meaning and purpose and the demystification of our concept of God.

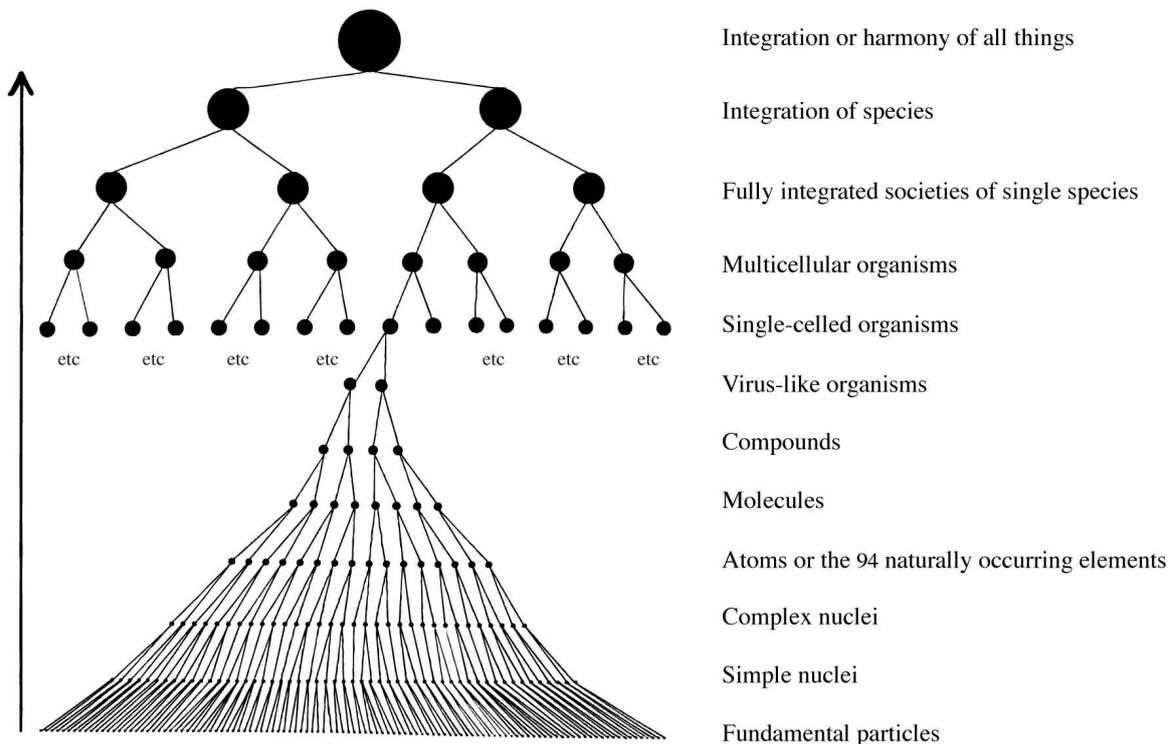
In 1938, the visionary Jesuit, palaeontologist and philosopher Pierre Teilhard de Chardin wrote: ‘**I can see a direction and a line of progress for life, a line and a direction which are in fact so well marked that I am convinced their reality will be universally admitted by the science of tomorrow**’ (*The Phenomenon of Man*, p.142 of 320). Teilhard de Chardin is acknowledging that there is an extremely obvious direction and line of progress for life that humans are currently refusing to admit, but will one day stop denying. He is saying there *is* a psychosis

involved, that the real issue is that humans have a psychological resistance to accepting that there is a direction, meaning and purpose in existence.

The question raised then is why would humans have such a resistance? To answer this question we need only look at a brief description of what that ‘so well marked’ ‘direction’ and ‘line of progress for life’ is.

When we look around our environment we can see hierarchies of ordered matter everywhere: ‘There is a tree built of parts—leaves, branches, trunk and roots—and in turn these parts are built of cells.’ ‘Over here is a forest of trees, herbs, animals, birds and insects coexisting.’ ‘Here is our toenail built of cells.’ So what is going on? As will be more fully articulated in the forthcoming quote from scientist-philosopher Arthur Koestler, we now know that Negative Entropy or the so-called Second Path of the Second Law of Thermodynamics, like gravity, is one of the physical laws of existence, and that this law states that in an open system such as Earth’s, where energy comes from outside the system (in Earth’s case from the Sun), matter becomes ordered and more complex. Negative Entropy causes matter to self-organise into larger and more stable wholes. It leads matter to integrate, develop order. Thus, due to the influence of Negative Entropy, atoms have arranged themselves, or come together, or integrated, to form molecules. Molecules have then integrated to form compounds, compounds have integrated to form single-celled organisms, single-celled organisms have integrated to form multi-cellular organisms, and these in turn have integrated to form societies.

The following chart depicts this hierarchy of order:



Development of Order or Integration of Matter

A similar chart appears in Arthur Koestler’s 1978 book, *Janus: A Summing Up*

Koestler acknowledged integrative meaning in his 1978 book, *Janus: A Summing Up*, in the chapter titled ‘Strategies and Purpose in Evolution’: ‘One of the basic doctrines of the nineteenth-century mechanistic world-view was Clausius’ famous “Second Law of Thermodynamics”. It asserted that the universe was running down towards its final dissolution because its energy is being steadily, inexorably dissipated into the random motion of molecules, until it ends up as a single, amorphous bubble of gas with a uniform temperature just above absolute zero: cosmos dissolving into chaos. Only fairly recently did science begin to recover from the hypnotic effect of this gloomy vision, by realizing that the Second Law applies only in the special case of so-called “closed systems” (such as a gas enclosed in a perfectly insulated container), whereas all living organisms are “open systems” which maintain their complex structure and function by continuously drawing materials and energy from their environment...It was in fact a physicist, not a biologist, the Nobel laureate Erwin Schrödinger, who put an end to the tyranny of the Second Law with his celebrated dictum: “What an organism feeds on is negative entropy”...Schrödinger’s revolutionary concept of negentropy, published in 1944...is a somewhat perverse way of referring to the power of living organisms to “build up” instead of running down, to create complex structures out of simpler elements, integrated patterns out of shapelessness, order out of disorder. The same irrepressible building-up tendency is manifested in the progress of evolution, the emergence of new levels of complexity in the organismic hierarchy and new methods of functional coordination...The origin of the concept dates back to Aristotle’s *entelechy*, the vital principle or function which turns mere substance into a living organism and at the same time strives towards perfection’.

Koestler proceeded to talk of ‘the active striving of living matter towards’ order, of ‘a drive towards synthesis, towards growth, towards wholeness’. He said ‘the integrative tendency has the dual function of coordinating the constituent parts of a system in its existing state, and of generating new levels of organization in evolving hierarchies’ (pp.222–226 of 354).

Significantly, in terms of behaviour, Koestler said ‘the integrative tendency’ requires ‘coordination’. It requires the parts of the new whole to *cooperate*, behave selflessly, place the maintenance of the whole above the maintenance of self. Put simply, selfishness is divisive or disintegrative while selflessness is integrative. A leaf falling from a tree in autumn does so in order for the tree to survive through winter and carry on. It has put the maintenance of the whole, namely the tree, above its own. The effective functioning of our body depends on the cooperation of all its parts, on every part doing what is best for the whole body. Cancer cells destroy the body precisely because they violate this principle and follow their own independent agenda. Cooperation is the glue of working systems or arrangements of matter.

The concept of ‘holism’ is an acknowledgment of integrative meaning. The ‘alternative’ culture has embraced the word on the superficial basis that it refers to the interconnectedness of all matter, however the true, deeper, core meaning of holism is ‘the tendency in nature to form wholes’ (*Concise Oxford Dict.* 5th edn, 1964). The concept was first introduced by statesman, philosopher and scientist Jan Smuts in his 1926 book *Holism and Evolution*. Smuts conceived ‘holism’ as being ‘the ultimate organising, regulative activity in the universe that accounts for all the structural groupings and syntheses in it, from the atom, and the physico-chemical structures, through the cell and organisms, through Mind in animals, to Personality in Man’ (p.341 of 380).

‘Teleology’, ‘the belief that purpose and design are a part of nature’ (*Macquarie Dict.* 3rd edn, 1998), is, like holism, another term that has been used to describe the integrative, cooperative, selfless purpose or meaning or theme or design in the universe.

‘Holism’ and ‘teleology’ acknowledge the cooperative, integrative purpose or meaning of life and indeed of all existence. Indeed, could it not be that this cooperative, integrative meaning of existence is what we have termed ‘God’ in the metaphysical, religious domain, such as in monotheistic Christian mythology? ‘God’ could be seen as the metaphysical

term that has been used for integration, for Negative Entropy's development of order of matter. Leading physicist Paul Davies thought so when he said: **'these laws of physics are the correct place to look for God or meaning or purpose'** (*God Only Knows, Compass*, ABC-TV, 23 Mar. 1997), and that **'humans came about as a result of the underlying laws of physics'** (*Paul Davies—More Big Questions: Are We Alone in the Universe?* SBS-TV, 1999). A decade earlier, physicist Stephen Hawking, the Lucasian Professor of Mathematics at Cambridge University, a position once held by Isaac Newton, said, **'I would use the term God as the embodiment of the laws of physics'** (*Master of the Universe*, BBC, 1989).

In an article titled *The Time of His Life* (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 28 Apr. 2002), Gregory Benford, a professor of physics at the University of California, chronicled a meeting he held with Hawking, in which Hawking elaborated on this observation about God being the laws of physics. Benford reported that in the course of discussion he had commented that **'there is amazing structure we can see from inside [the universe]'**, to which Hawking agreed, saying, **'the overwhelming impression is of order. The more we discover about the universe, the more we find that it is governed by rational laws. If one liked, one could say that this order was the work of God. Einstein thought so... We could call order by the name of God.'**

'God' then can be seen as the personification of the Negative Entropy-driven integrative, cooperative, loving, selfless ideals, purpose and meaning of life. The old Christian word for love is **'caritas'**, meaning charity or giving or selflessness (see the *Bible*, Col. 3:14, 1 Cor. 13:1–13, 10:24 & John 15:13), therefore **'God is love'** (1 John 4:8,16), or unconditional selflessness, or commitment to integration.

Since humans frequently behave divisively not integratively, this brief description of integrative meaning reveals what an extremely confronting concept it is for humans; indeed so confronting it must be met with determined psychological resistance. For rather than behave cooperatively, lovingly and selflessly we humans can be extremely competitive, aggressive and selfish. On the face of it, integrative meaning implies that humans are out-of-step with creation, at odds with the ideals or God, apparently bad, unworthy, guilty, sinful, even evil beings. Integrative meaning confronts us squarely with the question of our non-ideal reality, in fact with the dilemma of the human condition.

There must, however, be a biological reason for why we are the way we are, often divisively rather than integratively behaved, and it makes sense that until we find that guilt-lifting, dignifying and ameliorating biological explanation—until we can finally understand ourselves—we have no choice but to practice avoiding such a profoundly condemning and dangerously depressing concept as integrative meaning. We must first find the defence for ourselves; only then will we be in the position to face the truth about ourselves.

In order to appreciate just how important, and indeed extreme, our denial of integrative meaning has been we need to examine just how dangerously depressing the concept has been for humans. To do so requires evidence of how depressing both integrative meaning and the issue of the human condition that it gives rise to are. Such evidence however is not easy to find due to humans' reluctance to revisit the extreme, near suicidal, state of depression that thinking about our divisive, non-ideal, corrupted 'fallen' state can cause. Acknowledgment of that extremely depressing state is therefore very rare, which makes the following collection of quotes describing the agony of fully engaging the dilemma of the human condition all the more exceptional in their honesty.

In his 1931 book, *The Destiny of Man*, the Russian philosopher Nikolai Berdyaev wrote: **'Knowledge requires great daring. It means victory over ancient, primeval terror. Fear makes the search for truth and the knowledge of it impossible. Knowledge implies fearlessness... Conquest of fear is a spiritual cognitive act. This does not imply, of course, that the experience of fear is not lived through; on the contrary, it may be deeply felt, as was the case with Kierkegaard, for instance**

...it must also be said of knowledge that it is bitter, and there is no escaping that bitterness ... Particularly bitter is moral knowledge, the knowledge of good and evil. But the bitterness is due to the fallen state of the world, and in no way undermines the value of knowledge...it must be said that the very distinction between good and evil is a bitter distinction, the bitterest thing in the world ... Moral knowledge is the most bitter and the most fearless of all for in it sin and evil are revealed to us along with the meaning and value of life. There is a deadly pain in the very distinction of good and evil, of the valuable and the worthless. We cannot rest in the thought that that distinction is ultimate. The longing for God in the human heart springs from the fact that we cannot bear to be faced for ever with the distinction between good and evil and the bitterness of choice' (tr. N. Duddington, 1960, pp.14–16 of 310).

This 'deadly pain in the very distinction of good and evil' is the extreme depression that can result in humans when we attempt to determine whether or not we are 'valuable' or 'worthless' beings. To illustrate his argument, Berdyaev drew upon the writings of Danish philosopher Søren Kierkegaard, who, in daring to grapple with the issue of the human condition, 'deeply felt' the 'fear' of encountering the 'primeval terror'. We can locate the description Berdyaev was referring to, of the 'tormenting contradiction' in the human situation, in Kierkegaard's 1849 aptly titled book, *The Sickness Unto Death*. In it Kierkegaard describes the depression as being like a living death. In fact he says the subject of our contradictory nature is so fearfully depressing 'he doesn't even dare strike up acquaintance with' it. Kierkegaard wrote: 'the torment of despair is precisely the inability to die ...that despair is the sickness unto death, this tormenting contradiction, this sickness in the self; eternally to die, to die and yet not to die [p.48]...there is not a single human being who does not despair at least a little, in whose innermost being there does not dwell an uneasiness, an unquiet, a discordance, an anxiety in the face of an unknown something, or a something he doesn't even dare strike up acquaintance with...he goes about with a sickness, goes about weighed down with a sickness of the spirit, which only now and then reveals its presence within, in glimpses, and with what is for him an inexplicable anxiety [p.52]' (tr. A. Hannay, 1989).

When *Time* magazine invited Alan Paton, author of *Cry, the Beloved Country*, to write an essay on apartheid in South Africa they received in its place a deeply reflective article on his favourite pieces of literature. In what proved to be the great writer's last written work, Paton revealed: 'I would like to have written one of the greatest poems in the English language—William Blake's "Tiger, Tiger Burning Bright", with that verse that asks in the simplest words the question which has troubled the mind of man—both believing and non believing man—for centuries: "When the stars threw down their spears / And watered heaven with their tears / Did he smile his work to see? / Did he who made the lamb make thee?"' (*Time* mag. 25 Apr. 1988). The opening lines of the poem, 'Tiger, Tiger, burning bright / In the forests of the night', refer to humans' denial of the issue of our divisive condition. It is a subject humans consciously repress and yet it is an issue that 'burns bright' in the 'forests of the night' of our deepest thoughts. The very heart of this issue lies in the line, 'Did he who made the lamb make thee?'—a rhetorical question disturbing in its insinuation that we are wholly unrelated to the 'lamb', to the world of innocence. The poem raises the age-old riddle and fundamental question involved in being human: how could the mean, cruel, indifferent and aggressive 'dark side' of human nature—represented by the 'Tiger'—be reconcilable with, and derivative of, the same force that created 'the lamb' in all its innocence? As Paton pointed out, despite humans' denial of it, *the* great, fundamental, underlying question has always been, *are* humans part of God's 'work', part of his purpose and design, or *aren't we*?

With these final words, in what was the culmination of a lifetime of thoughtful expression, Paton takes the reader into the realm where the deep fear about what it really is to be human resides; he raises the core question—that one day had to be addressed and solved—of whether or not humans are evil, worthless, meaningless beings?

In his 1981 autobiography, *Flaws in the Glass*, Patrick White, Australia's only literary Nobel laureate, offered a rare, honest description of the core agony of having to live with this unresolved question: **'What do I believe? I'm accused of not making it explicit. How to be explicit about a grandeur too overwhelming to express, a daily wrestling match with an opponent whose limbs never become material, a struggle from which the sweat and blood are scattered on the pages of anything the serious writer writes? A belief contained less in what is said than in the silences. In patterns on water. A gust of wind. A flower opening. I hesitate to add a child, because a child can grow into a monster, a destroyer. Am I a destroyer? this face in the glass which has spent a lifetime searching for what it believes, but can never prove to be, the truth. A face consumed by wondering whether truth can be the worst destroyer of all'** (p.70 of 260). In this distillation of a lifetime of mentally grappling with what it is to be human, White has bravely managed to articulate the core fear shared by all humans. If you allow yourself to think deeply about what it is that White is daring to face down you will see it is a terrifying issue—**'this tormenting contradiction, this sickness in the self'** that **'not a single human'** does not suffer from, as Kierkegaard acknowledged. The issue of the human condition is such an incredibly difficult subject for humans to acknowledge that to do so virtually demands we betray and undermine ourselves.

Henry Lawson, one of Australia's most renowned literary figures, wrote extraordinarily forthrightly about the dangerous depression that awaits those who attempt to confront the issue of the human condition. In his 1897 poem, *The Voice from Over Yonder*, Lawson wrote: **'"Say it! Think it, if you dare! / Have you ever thought or wondered / Why the Man and God were sundered? / Do you think the Maker blundered?" / And the voice in mocking accents, answered only: "I've been there."**' Implicit in the final phrase, 'I've been there', are the unsaid words, 'and I'm not going *there* again'. The 'there' and the 'over yonder' of the title refer to the state of depression that resulted from trying to confront the issue of the human condition—trying to understand **'why the Man and God were sundered'** or torn apart, why we humans lost our innocence, departed from the cooperative, loving, ideal state, 'fell from grace', became corrupted. (The implication here that humans once lived in a cooperative, harmonious, ideal state and then departed from it forms the basis of Part 2 of this documentary series, 'The Question of the Existence of Moral Instincts in Humans'.) To avoid depression humans had no choice but to repress the issue of the human condition, block it from our conscious awareness, cease trying to decide whether **'the Maker blundered'**.

In his 1885 sonnet, the suitably titled *No worst there is none*, poet Gerard Manley Hopkins similarly described the dangerous depression that confronted anyone who dared to try to plumb the depths of the human condition, writing: **'O the mind, mind has mountains; cliffs of fall Frightful, sheer, no-man fathomed'**.

These quotes indicate how fearful humans have been of the issue of the human condition—as Kierkegaard said, it is the subject a human **'doesn't even dare strike up acquaintance with'**.

Faced with the fearfully depressing criticism the cooperative, loving, selfless ideals of life represented for humans—this **'deadly pain of the very distinction of good and evil'**, as Berdyaev described it—it is fully understandable that humans decided we had no choice other than to deny the whole concept of integrative, cooperative ideality. For if no acknowledgment is made of the existence of integrative meaning then there is no issue about human divisiveness, no dilemma of the human condition, with which to become depressed about.

This strategy of denial is one humans have employed in many diverse situations. For instance, it was used early last century to resist the now-accepted geological concept of Continental Drift. Opponents of that concept simply maintained the Earth's crust was not

divided into continental (tectonic) plates, and therefore there was nothing to drift; end of argument.

While integrative meaning is one of the most obvious, profound and thus important of all truths it is also the truth that has appeared to most condemn humans, and which humans have therefore most feared and found most difficult to confront and accept. Being divisively rather than integratively behaved and unable to explain why, humans have had no choice but to evade and deny the truth of integrative meaning. We have been a ‘God-fearing’ rather than a ‘God-confronting’ species.

We have sensibly avoided the subjective dimension to life, the issue of ‘self’. Instead of hopelessly and dangerously trying to confront the issue of our non-ideal, corrupted human condition we have sensibly either practiced denial of integrative meaning, and even of God, and thus the issue of self-corruption, or indirectly acknowledged our self-corruption by acknowledging the existence of God and embracing some expression of faith that a greater dignifying understanding of our condition does exist and will one day be found. To cope with the **‘deadly pain of the very distinction of good and evil’** all there has ever been is either denial or faith. Understanding just how insecure we humans have been in the presence of the integrative ideals or God allows us to understand the origins of the religious impulse.

Even science has had to comply with this need to deny the truth of integrative meaning. Science has been reductionist and mechanistic, not holistic. It has focused on finding understanding of the details and mechanisms of our world and avoided the dangerously depressing, whole, integrative meaning-confronting view. It has done so by predominantly maintaining that evolution is a meaningless, purposeless, random process of selfish genetic opportunism. As will be explained in the synopsis of Part 2 of this proposed documentary, genetic selection is ultimately an integrative process, albeit one that is limited in most cases by the inability to develop unconditional selflessness. Selfishness is a *limitation* of the genetic process; it doesn’t demonstrate that the meaning of existence is to be selfish.

Arthur Koestler described this state of denial of the truth of integrative purpose in life, and its consequences, writing that **‘although the facts [of the integration of matter] were there for everyone to see, orthodox evolutionists were reluctant to accept their theoretical implications. The idea that living organisms, in contrast to machines, were primarily *active*, and not merely *reactive*; that instead of passively adapting to their environment they were...creating...new patterns of structure... such ideas were profoundly distasteful to [Social] Darwinians, behaviourists and reductionists in general...Evolution has been compared to a journey from an unknown origin towards an unknown destination, a sailing along a vast ocean; but we can at least chart the route ...and there is no denying that there is a wind which makes the sails move...the purposiveness of all vital processes...Causality and finality are complementary principles in the sciences of life; if you take out finality and purpose you have taken the life out of biology as well as psychology’** (*Janus: A Summing Up*, 1978, pp.222–226 of 354). We can see here the significance of Darwin’s prediction that the sciences of psychology and biology would one day be based on a new foundation.

Despite the great danger in acknowledging integrative meaning without first resolving the human condition there has, in recent times, been a movement by some scientists and science commentators to follow the brave—some would say reckless—examples of Smuts, Teilhard de Chardin, Schrödinger and Koestler and recognise the truth of holism or teleology or integrative meaning. Titles written by these scientists and commentators offer evidence (particularly the words underlined) of this recent development: Professor David Bohm wrote *Wholeness and The Implicate Order* in 1980; Professors Ilya Prigogine and Isabelle Stengers wrote *Order Out of Chaos* in 1984; Professor Paul Davies wrote *God and the New Physics* in 1983, *The Cosmic Blueprint* in 1987 and *The Mind of God: Science and the Search for Ultimate Meaning* in 1992; Professor Charles Birch wrote *Nature and God* in 1965, *On Purpose* in 1990 and *Biology and The Riddle of Life* in 1999; Roger Lewin wrote *Complexity:*

Life at the Edge of Chaos, the major new theory that unifies all sciences in 1992; Dr M. Mitchell Waldrop wrote *Complexity: The Emerging Science at the Edge of Order and Chaos* in 1992; Professor Stuart Kauffman wrote *The Origins of Order: Self-Organization and Selection in Evolution* in 1993, *At Home in the Universe: The Search for the Laws of Self-Organization and Complexity* in 1995 and *Anti-chaos* in 1996; and Dr Richard J. Bird wrote *Chaos and Life: Complexity and Order in Evolution and Thought* in 2003.

As mentioned earlier, the terms ‘wholeness’, ‘order’, ‘self-organisation’ and ‘complexity’ used in these titles are all aspects of the purposeful, meaningful, goal-directed, holistic, teleological, godly, integrative theme or design in existence and, as Roger Lewin said in his above-mentioned book, *Complexity: Life at the Edge of Chaos*, ‘the study of complexity represents nothing less than a major revolution in science’ (p.10 of 208). Complexity/order/self-organisation/integrative meaning gained some formal recognition with the establishment in 1984 of the independent Santa Fe Institute for the Study of Complexity in America, of which Stuart Kauffman is a founding member.

Despite the brave initiative of those who established the Santa Fe Institute, scientists who recognise integrative meaning continue to meet strong resistance. In an article titled *Science Friction*, journalist Deidre Macken refers to a ‘scientific revolution’ and a coming ‘monumental paradigm shift’, and reveals that the few scientists who have ‘dared to take a holistic approach’ are seen by the scientific orthodoxy as committing ‘scientific heresy’. Macken says scientists taking the ‘holistic approach’, such as ‘physicist Paul Davies and biologist Charles Birch’ (Australian scientists whose works are mentioned above) are trying ‘to cross the great divide between science and religion’, and are ‘not afraid of terms such as “purpose” and “meaning”’. She adds: ‘Quite a number of biologists got upset [about this new development] because they don’t want to open the gates to teleology—the idea that there is goal-directed change is an anathema to biologists who believe [evade the condemning truth of integrative meaning by saying] that change is random...The emerging clash of scientific thought has forced many of the new scientists on to the fringe. Some of the pioneers no longer have university positions, many publish their theories in popular books rather than journals, others have their work sponsored by independent organisations...Universities are not catering for the new paradigm’ (*Sydney Morning Herald, Good Weekend* mag. 16 Nov. 1991).

It is significant that both Professors Birch and Davies have been awarded the prestigious and, with a purse of over \$US1 million, financially rewarding Templeton Prize for ‘increasing man’s understanding of God’ (*The Templeton Prize*, Vol.3, 1988–1992, p.108 of 153).

In discussing a ‘scientific revolution’ and a coming ‘monumental paradigm shift’, Macken is intimating that acknowledgment of holism or integrative meaning is becoming a trend. However the truth is, until understanding of the human condition was found, holism could not be fully accepted by humanity without the disastrous consequences of madness and suicidal depression on a global scale. Macken spoke of integrative meaning being ‘an anathema’, which is defined as ‘a thing detested or loathed’ (*Macquarie Dict.* 3rd edn, 1997), and for good reason.

In *The Cosmic Blueprint* Paul Davies wrote: ‘We seem to be on the verge of discovering not only wholly new laws of nature, but ways of thinking about nature that depart radically from traditional science...Way back in the primeval phase of the universe, gravity triggered a cascade of self-organizing processes—organization begets organization—that led, step by step, to the conscious individuals who now contemplate the history of the cosmos and wonder what it all means...There exists alongside the entropy arrow another arrow of time, equally fundamental and no less subtle in nature...I refer to the fact that the universe is *progressing*—through the steady growth of structure, organization and complexity—to ever more developed and elaborate states of matter and energy. This unidirectional advance we might call the optimistic arrow, as opposed to the pessimistic arrow of the second law...There has been a tendency for scientists to simply deny the existence of the optimistic arrow. One wonders why’ (chpts 10,9,2 respectively). The reason ‘why’ ‘the optimistic arrow’ of

integrative meaning was denied was because it was too dangerous to acknowledge without first finding the biological reason for humans' divisive, apparently non-integrative condition.

In approximately 360BC the Greek philosopher Plato wrote what many consider to be his greatest work, *The Republic*. Central to this work is the allegory of a cave in which humans are imprisoned, chained together and able only to envisage the outside world via shadows cast on the back wall. The shadows are thrown by the light of a fire that, situated in the entrance to the cave, effectively prevents any escape from the dark existence. Plato wrote that **'the light of the brightly burning fire in the [cave] prison corresponds to the power of the sun'**, and explained that the sun represents the **'universal first principle'** and the **'absolute form of Good'** and that **'if he [a prisoner in the cave] were made to look directly at the light of the fire, it would hurt his eyes and he would turn back'** (quotes from H.D.P. Lee's 1955 translation of *The Republic*). We can now understand that Plato's **'universal first principle'** and **'absolute form of Good'** is integrative meaning, the truth that so condemns humans that we have had to live in denial of it; metaphorically speaking, in a dark cave, protected from the scrutiny of its scorching glare.

Fire appears in many mythologies as a metaphor for the integrative ideals of life, the condemning implications of which prevented humanity's 'escape' from its restricted, chained-up, alienated condition. In the Zoroastrian religion, **'Fire is the representative of God ...His physical manifestation...Fire is bright, always points upward, is always pure'** (*Eastern Definitions*, Edward Rice, 1978, p.138 of 433). In Christian mythology the story of Genesis features **'a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life'** (Gen. 3:24). In a rare acknowledgment of how suicidally confronting and depressing the truth of integrative meaning can be for humans, the *Bible* also records the Israelites as saying, **'Let us not hear the voice of the Lord our God nor see this great fire any more, or we will die'** (Deut. 18:16). In the biblical account, Job pleaded for relief from confrontation with the issue of the human condition when he lamented, **'Why then did you [God] bring me out of the womb?...Turn away from me so I can have a moment's joy before I go to the place of no return, to the land of gloom and deep shadow, to the land of deepest night'** (Job 10:18, 20–22). Job's **'land of gloom and deep shadow ... land of deepest night'**, the state of deepest and darkest depression that resulted from trying to confront the issue of the human condition, equates perfectly with life in Plato's cave. Humans could only avoid the terrible depression by turning from the sun/fire, by living psychologically in denial of the truth of integrative meaning and all the truths that related to it. Christ understood the problem of the exposing **'light'** of truth—which he, in his fully nurtured, innocent, alienation and denial-free, sound state, also represented — when he said, **'the light shines in the darkness but...everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed'** (John 1:5, 3:20).

While this strategy of living in denial of integrative meaning may have saved humans from the condemning criticism of the truth, it also meant living a truthless, false, unreal existence. All thinking in that realm came off a false base; it involved a flawed view of the world, an alienated world of delusions and illusions, a dishonest, ugly, limited existence. The Scottish psychiatrist R.D. Laing penned this candid description of just how fraudulent humans' alienated world of denial has been: **'[In the world today] there is little conjunction of truth and social "reality". Around us are pseudo-events, to which we adjust with a false consciousness adapted to see these events as true and real, and even as beautiful. In the society of men the truth resides now less in what things are than in what they are not. Our social realities are so ugly if seen in the light of exiled truth, and beauty is almost no longer possible if it is not a lie'** (*The Politics of Experience and The Bird of Paradise*, 1967, p.11 of 156).

Humans' world of denial, of **'exiled truth'**, involved a world of lies and thus of delusions and illusions. Plato's shadows on the back wall of the cave symbolise this world, for his

‘prisoners’ cannot see anything ‘except the shadows thrown by the fire on the wall of the cave opposite them...And so they would believe that the shadows of the objects...were in all respects real’.

Laing perfectly articulated just how difficult it is to think effectively from the alienated position of denial when he wrote: **‘Our alienation goes to the roots. The realization of this is the essential springboard for any serious reflection on any aspect of present inter-human life [p.12 of 156]... The condition of alienation, of being asleep, of being unconscious, of being out of one’s mind, is the condition of the normal man [p.24]...between us and It [our instinctive self or soul] there is a veil which is more like fifty feet of solid concrete. *Deus absconditus*. Or we have absconded [p.118]... We respect the voyager, the explorer, the climber, the space man. It makes far more sense to me as a valid project—indeed, as a desperately urgently required project for our time—to explore the inner space and time of consciousness. Perhaps this is one of the few things that still make sense in our historical context. We are so out of touch with this realm [so in denial of the issue of the human condition] that many people can now argue seriously that it does not exist. It is very small wonder that it is perilous indeed to explore such a lost realm [p.105]’** (*The Politics of Experience* and *The Bird of Paradise*, 1967).

As penalised and tragic as it has been, the strategy of living in denial of such condemning truths as integrative meaning, the ‘fifty feet of solid concrete’ barricade that Laing referred to, has been absolutely unavoidable. If we revisit the initial questions raised at the beginning of this synopsis, we can see it was necessary to evasively focus away from the real issue of the human condition onto specious issues of whether the concept of God is destroyed by the ability of science to explain the origins of the universe, and whether integrative meaning actually exists.

Armed now with an appreciation of how important our denial of integrative meaning has been, we can understand why we have so steadfastly avoided demystifying the concept of God. The final episode of *Evolution* (a TV series co-produced by WGBH/NOVA Science Unit and Clear Blue Sky Productions in 2001) examined the controversy in American schools and universities over the teaching of ‘natural selection’ as a godless, meaningless, blind process. The program’s title, *What about God?*, asked why God is excluded from science’s interpretation of existence. The answer is that direct acknowledgment of integrative meaning was excluded for humans’ own sake, for it saved us from suicidal depression. Ensuring the concept of God remained abstract, and undefined in scientific terms, saved us from direct confrontation with the truth of integrative meaning, a confrontation we could not survive until understanding of the human condition was found.

The debate over the question of God, meaning and purpose *has* failed to acknowledge the real, underlying issue of the human condition, but for good reason. To be able to safely acknowledge the truth of integrative meaning and accept the demystification of God as integrative meaning required the biological explanation of the human condition, the biological reason for why humans are so competitive, aggressive and selfish when the ideals are to be cooperative, loving and selfless.

Part 4 of this proposed documentary series will present this all-important, dignifying, ameliorating and liberating biological explanation of the human condition. This critical explanation however depends firstly on the ability to explain and acknowledge that humans have moral instincts, and secondly on the ability to explain what consciousness is and how humans acquired it. These explanations are necessary because it will be proposed and evidenced in Part 4 that it was the conflict between our moral instincts and our newly emerged conscious self that created the dilemma of the human condition.

Therefore as we continue, Part 2 will look at the emergence of moral instincts in humans while Part 3 will examine the emergence of consciousness in humans.

The Human Condition Documentary Proposal, written by Jeremy Griffith.

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