

## A TRIALOGUE AMONG CRAIG FOSTER, LOUIS HERMAN, AND BRIAN THOMAS SWIMME ON COSMOGENESIS

### *CRAIG FOSTER*

Craig Foster is an Oscar and BAFTA winning filmmaker, naturalist, author, and ocean explorer. His films have won over 150 international awards. He is the co-founder of the Sea Change Project (<https://seachangeproject.com/>), dedicated to the long-term conservation and regeneration of the Great African Seaforest. His work in the ocean has contributed to the marine sciences through the discovery of new species and new animal behaviors. He is the first person to create a method of underwater tracking in the kelp forest. His Academy Award-winning documentary, *“My Octopus Teacher,”* has led to making the Great African Seaforest a global icon. He also has consulted for eight years with the Centre For Early *Sapiens* Behavior, SapienCE (<https://www.uib.no/en/sapience>) and created an award-winning exhibition about middle Stone Age human origins. He believes that the greatest threat we face is the cooling of the human heart towards nature. All his work is about inspiring a change of heart, inspiring people to care for and regenerate nature, no matter where they live.

### *LOUIS HERMAN*

Louis Herman is a senior professor of political science at the University of Hawai‘i–West O‘ahu. He grew up in a traditional Jewish community in neo-Nazi, racist South Africa in the aftermath of the Holocaust. The two poles of his formative political experiences were outrage at human-inflicted suffering and the healing beauty of southern Africa’s rugged wilderness. He obtained degrees in medicine and the history and philosophy of science at Cambridge University in England, then emigrated to Israel where he lived out his Jewish connection to the Biblical homeland working on a kibbutz. His participation in the Yom Kippur War as a paratrooper confronted him with Palestinian indigeneity in a way that impelled him to return to big questions of life and philosophy: How do we know what is true and good? How should we live together? Louis completed his PhD work in political philosophy at the University of Hawai‘i and described an emerging political cosmology in his book, *Future Primal: How our Wilderness Origins Show us a Way Forward* (2013).

This work contributes to a new political cosmology based in part on our understanding of the evolution of consciousness, the politics of early hunting gathering societies like the San Bushmen, and a comparative understanding of civilizations. He founded the Institute for a New Political Cosmology in 2018 and is currently writing a book to promote the search for truth as the beating heart of the new political cosmology we so urgently need.

### *BRIAN THOMAS SWIMME*

The achievements that define Brian Thomas Swimme's professional life are a series of collaborations: with Frank Cousins at the University of Puget Sound, the "Yellow House dialogues;" with Matthew Fox at Holy Names College, the "Institute of Culture and Creation Spirituality"; with Thomas Berry at the Riverdale Center, *The Universe Story*; with Bruce Bochte at the California Institute of Integral Studies, the "Center for the Story of the Universe" (<https://storyoftheuniverse.org/>); with Rick Tarnas, Sean Kelly, Robert McDermott, and Laurance Rockefeller, the "Philosophy, Cosmology, and Consciousness program"; with Mary Evelyn Tucker and David Kennard, the *Journey of the Universe* documentary; and with Monica DeRaspe-Bolles, Devin O'Dea, and Ben Kacyra at Human Energy, *the Story of the Noosphere* video series (<https://humanenergy.io/noosphere/>)

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*Political philosopher Louis Herman called late at night from his home in Hawai'i. The call landed in the morning at the tip of Africa and was picked up by his long-time friend Craig Foster, filmmaker and co-founder of the Sea Change Project, the team behind the film "My Octopus Teacher."*

*Louis almost shouted out, "Craig, you have to read Brian Swimme's new book, it's something else! I'm sending a very brief taste to give you some idea." Louis sent these three paragraphs to Craig written by his long-time friend Brian Swimme, author of *Cosmogogenesis: An Unveiling of the Expanding Universe*:*

The most radical discovery of four hundred years of modern science is our realization that the universe constructed us. Each carbon atom of our body was built in the core of some star. The fusion reaction in the core of a star

is the only process in the universe that can make carbon or oxygen or any of the other elements that compose us.

The universe not only constructs the matter of our body, it also provides the energy of our lives. Here's the sequence: If we twiddle our fingers, the ergs of energy enabling this action come from the food we've eaten. The food received its energy from the Sun. The Sun received its energy from the gravitational collapse of the galactic cloud that gave birth to it. That cloud received its gravitational potential energy from the flaring forth of the universe billions of years ago. Each time we move a finger, we are drawing upon the energy that burst forth at the beginning of time.

At a secondary level, we are American or Chinese, mothers or fathers. But at the most fundamental level, each of us is an elegant construction of the universe. This is what we have in common. We are all cosmological beings. The universe in the mode of a human being.



Starburst Cluster. [NASA](#)

*Craig read the book in two days and was spellbound.*

*What follows is an online-written conversation between Brian, Craig, and Louis inspired by their mutual love for humanity, wilderness, and the expanding universe.*

**Craig:** It's struck me recently that I may have misunderstood some of the subtleties in Brian's book, *Cosmogogenesis*, and one fundamental thing may be when you say "the universe" I think you are also referring to God/Great Spirit, but I think you might see these concepts as different?

I'd love to know how you see these as different or the same, Brian.

**Brian:** This plunges us into the mystery of evolutionary change. What causes things to evolve? It could be asked this way: "Who" causes things to evolve? Is it spirit? Is it scientific laws?

We find ourselves in one of the great transitions in human history. The modern story of scientific laws governing the universe is breaking down, so humans around the planet are tempted to retreat into the barbarism of fundamentalism, whether of the religious or secular kinds. But there is a pathway forward which goes beyond all those, a pathway I was searching for in *Cosmogogenesis*.

So, my response to your questions is to remind us of the amazing discovery that Earth began as molten rock and transformed itself into Chinook salmon and oak trees and a hundred million other forms of life. Rather than trying to come up with a new word for the power that makes such transformations happen, I aimed at telling the story of how I came to feel this power, directly. How I came to experience in the presence of salmon a billion-year creative process. How I came to feel in each salmon the entire adventure of this wild universe.

I know I am not answering your question in a literal sense, but does any of what I say connect to your own experiences?

**Craig:** I love the way you gently coax me into feeling the mystery and the awe as opposed to naming it. Everything that you describe resonates with my face-to-face experiences with great white sharks, with limpets, and with cuttlefish. They all appear as the faces of "God," but this word is so loaded that we could replace it with many other words. The feeling of there being something so ancient and deep and intelligent behind the living faces is what matters. And of course, there are also those rare moments of intense grace where this unfathomable intelligence seems very clear and present, until my cognition wanes and the giant waves of mystery cover the clarity.

This brings me to the question that your book brought up so strongly for me, this idea of the human as a way for the universe to be able to look back at herself? I'm sure you phrased it much better. I'd heard this idea before and dismissed it, but surrounded by the intense awe and clarity that *Cosmogogenesis* evoked, this

idea suddenly became very interesting to me. I'd love to know your and Thomas Berry's thinking behind this.

In looking through *Cosmogogenesis* again, I found this incredible line—the universe “knew” how to create a species that could understand the universe. I think this is connected to my last question to you Brian, about the universe using us humans to know herself. This line you wrote is so much more powerful and I guess my mind goes to the word “knew” and in what way did she know?

Some scientists will say it's all chance but there is still knowing in that process. I've come to experience this strange knowing in my work with nature. I've had too many coincidences that defy standard attention bias. It really does feel as if there is an intelligence out there that is somehow mirroring what is inside our minds, and trying to break down the barrier, striving for unity.

**Brian:** With your two very interesting questions still fluttering about our minds, can I enter a sincere plea? That you tell us one of your experiences of “an intelligence out there that is somehow mirroring what is inside our minds?” I know that words are inadequate to capture the full concrete experience, but I'd love to get a feel for what happened in your mind or soul when you encountered great white sharks or limpets. Even just a finger pointing to the moon would be so helpful.

**Craig:** It's very hard to explain in words but I will try. When I first swam with a large great white shark several decades ago, I was struck by her extreme grace





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and beauty and her complete lack of aggression. She approached me slowly and swam close and I could feel very strongly she meant me no harm. When I got out of the water the part of my mind that dealt with fear was vastly reduced. I had to force myself to put my seatbelt on in my car because I had just come face to face with this creature from the “Jaws” movie, and the monster turned out to be a highly sensitive being of immense beauty.

My experience with limpets is quite different but more profound than the white shark. I see limpets every day, they are like family to me. I know them intimately, I know their subtle behaviors, their exquisite gardening techniques. I know the tiny track marks their teeth leave on the kelp. I know them from the middens of our Stone Age ancestors, for they provided food for thousands of generations of humans. I love them more than white sharks because I’m so much closer to them. White shark encounters are rare.

You see Brian I’m still skirting your tough question. Here is how I see it. There is something inside of us that is also inside of nature. Maybe it’s because we are made of the same stuff. There is a resonance, and that resonance acts like a mirror. It’s sometimes very subtle and sometimes very clear. I can remember at my most dark and difficult time diving in the kelp forest, no animals came near me and I found only pieces of plastic and a dead carrier pigeon floating. When I’ve felt very calm and open and peaceful things are very different in the Seaforest.

I'm often looking for rare animal behavior that I suspect but have never seen, it's often really uncanny that sometimes nature's mirror opens up in the most fascinating way. Now as I'm writing my mind goes to a time when I was obsessed with the giant clingfish, an air breathing predator of limpets. I couldn't understand how they were catching granular limpets on the high shore above the waterline. This is where it gets strange, it felt like something in the Seaforest, the "forest mind," was wanting to show me. This mysterious unexplainable thing was somehow finding a way to rewrite what was a rough script in my mind and show me the wonder. I was drawn across this wild bay, big waves hitting the shore. I swam alone full of dopamine, entranced by the cold water on my bare skin. And there it was—a fish out of water.

This clingfish surfed up the wave and stuck to a rock high out the water with its massive suction pad. When the next wave came it surfed higher. On the third wave it went even higher and grabbed a limpet in its great teeth, twisted the limpet off and dropped back into the water. The mystery question I'd recently asked was solved. It sounds trite when I try to explain, but these questions keep being answered again and again in ways that seem to defy statistical probability. What is going on? Is there really an intelligence out there teaching us? A kind of nature's mirror? Or are we just one big organism and these things are already known, just forgotten in the rush of our time?

**Brian:** This was intense to read. Your stories are explosive. When I finished reading you, the image that came to mind was that of a group of scholars poring over various books of the Bible. In my fantasy, I gently pulled the Bibles away when they were not looking and replaced them with your stories. My intuition is that it will take a century of dialogue and reflection before all the layered meanings in your accounts are articulated in philosophical terminology.

I want to note something important. Because you didn't use any of the usual abstract words from philosophy or theology, your account exploded inside me. By staying with your concrete experience, you enabled me to feel it . . . as when you mentioned the seatbelt. With the image of you having to force yourself to wear a seatbelt, I entered into resonance with the exquisite beauty you had just beheld. I am still vibrating with it.

When I had finished reading your words and was reflecting on the whole event, I could see a vague similarity of two of my experiences that I explored in *Cosmogogenesis* with two of your experiences that you just articulated. I need to say immediately that I am not suggesting they were the same. But there was a similarity connecting them. I want to draw Louis into our conversation here, but first please allow me to say one last thing about this similarity. My intuition is that *Homo sapiens* is entering an era where unique individuals all over the planet

will, in a thousand million different ways, enter into an experience of resonance they will feel as foundational. By which I mean, this spectrum of experiences will be more important to them than their money or their religions.

So, Louis, if we are indeed entering into new experiences of the oceans and the stars, how might this impact our ways of governance? How might these emergent forms of experience affect modern politics?

**Louis:** A new cosmology needs to include what has been traditionally called an integrated political philosophy. This involves the place of the human being in the natural cosmos, the individual in society, and considering how we make decisions in personal life, economics, governance, education, religion and so on. Since I'm currently writing a book on this, I'm struggling mightily with brevity. An additional challenge is that I'm writing this before rushing to join Craig for more walking, talking, and swimming in icy Cape waters. If I had more time, I would write less.

So an Ecozoic politics would be concerned with actions, practices, institutions, structures which embody and foster the sorts of peak, ecstatic-mystical experiences we have been sharing. So far, to my thinking, the most promising generalized direction for a life-loving, planetary human community is something like a one-world multilayered, radically decentralized political economy where the primary unit of organization is the sustainable, democratized bioregion.

**Brian:** There's a lot packed into your last sentence. What do you mean exactly?

**Louis:** In order to understand the power and appeal of the bioregional vision, we first have to understand that our current political economy is organized around converting the natural world into marketable commodities for profit within a competitive global market system. For John Locke, perhaps the keystone modern political philosopher, the natural world in its wild state was "waste" without value or meaning until converted by human labor into valuable commodities. This is the precise opposite of an Ecozoic ethic. Individuals were essentially self-interested and materialistic. Freedom from the oppressiveness of a corrupt feudalism depended directly on the right to own and sell property. Society in Locke's mind was little more than the product of self-interested contracts between individuals who, being rational, would see that an alliance to set up a strong, but not too strong, central government would protect private property and ensure maximum freedom for all. All emphasis was on the rights and freedoms of the individual. There was almost nothing said about duties and responsibilities to the whole.



Over time free market dynamics had the effect of concentrating individual wealth among a shrinking elite and increasing the overall monetary wealth of the economy. So we now have an endlessly growing economy which is extractive and wasteful, while undermining traditional communities and authentic relationships, offering instead addictive consumerism.

In contrast, a decentralized global bioregionalism reverses this political-moral imperative. The social basic unit is defined ecologically. For example, an entire river system or a watershed or any other integrated ecosystem could be a bioregional unit. A bioregional community lives in resonance with plants, soil, insects and animals, rain, wind, and seasonal fluctuations. People know the strengths and weakness of the place and where its hidden treasures lie. The small size allows the community to have a direct experience of all the systems that touch the human community, making easier a shared understanding of the big issues and making possible a higher level of face-to-face direct democracy.

On a global level, higher levels of social organization—regional governments and international organizations, like the UN and the WTO—would be charged with funneling knowledge, resources, services, and decision-making to small communities empowering them to be more self-sustaining while networking with similar communities around the world.

This move would reconstitute conditions which give Indigenous cultures their unique languages and identities. Obvious examples are the Inuktitut in the Canadian arctic who have many words for different types of snow but none for tracking in desert sands and the Kalahari San of southern Africa whose languages are full of linguistic subtleties to help embed them in their desert home. This is not a simple matter of words, since symbols emerge from experiences formed by living in specific habitats. It is a matter of ways of life.

Consider the traditional Hawaiian political economy. Each island was divided into more or less self-sufficient bioregions called an *ahupua'a*. Typically this was a broad valley between two ridges and the coastal area fringed with reef. The valley was intensively cultivated with the staple kalo (taro) and other crops, while timber and other wild resources were gathered from the back of the valley and mountain slopes. The farmers would then trade generously with those who lived on the coast fishing and gathering oceans' foods. All of this was politically regulated by kapus (taboos) embodying an awareness of an island ecology which had to be absolutely self-sufficient. But the ethic was safeguarded by a culture that found joy and a spiritual connection to the Kalo—the younger sibling of Sky and Earth gods. Farmers would celebrate in chants the beauty of the taro plant and the joy of cultivation. They would mourn when too old to work the *loi* (taro paddies).

Think of the billions of urbanized humans today who are increasingly bereft of such reciprocal relationships with the natural world—the creative evolutionary

reality which incubated what it means to be human, in all its unique, local configurations. This is a major source of our pathology.

This bioregional model—global, decentralized, democratized, wisdom-based—is an attempt to reconnect the human to the living universe and the unfathomable source of it all. This empowers and inspires the creative individual to become a self-aware agent in the furthering of evolution. Stepping back, looking at such a seismic change in consciousness, we can see it as the core of the major evolutionary transformation Brian suggests our species is going through.

There is an identifiable primordial dynamic to this transformative process. Big history studies of early human societies, hunter-gatherers like the San, together with the history of consciousness, suggest a four-part mandala dynamic to truth-seeking as a way of life—a future primal politics. These practices constitute a method from which life-enhancing institutions and policies can emerge. They also provide a grid which can be placed over any policy, ideology, or action to test its truth-grounding.

The challenge for the new story is to understand it and keep re-telling the story of creation in a way that incorporates unique ecstatic experiences you two were sharing. In other words, the new story needs to have a numinous, sacred dimension. It needs to thrill, inspire, comfort, and guide. It also needs to be open-ended, ongoing, and welcome the contribution of the life-experience of each unique individual. Brian, you achieved something of this in your work and most conspicuously in *Cosmogogenesis*. The evidence is the passionate response it evoked in Craig, me, and many other readers.

**Brian:** Yours is one of humanity's most comprehensive political visions, both vast and realistic. Oftentimes at the end of a talk, someone in the audience will say, "Brian, I love this cosmology, but how does it relate to our political situation." I respond by sending them to your work. Yesterday I received an interesting off-script email from Craig that I want to include here, but first, Louis, could you say a word or two about John Locke and his view of the natural world? That story alone is so convincing concerning the validity of your vision.

**Louis:** I'm glad you zeroed in on asking about John Locke's cosmology and political philosophy. Locke really is the quintessential philosopher of modernity. His story and the story of how his thinking shaped global, industrial, corporate capitalism needs to be a critical part of the new Big Story. It helps open the audience to the numinous, evolutionary unfolding when it understands how and why humanity locked itself in a dark cupboard. How we lost the plot is a vital part of regaining the plot—our place in the story of the universe.

**Brian:** Is John Locke how we lost the plot?

**Louis:** Locke at first was relatively obscure in 17<sup>th</sup> century England and Europe. His monumental *Two Treatises of Government* was published in 1688. He came to global prominence in the 18<sup>th</sup> century as the primary philosopher of Classical Liberalism in its stripped down and simplified form in the Constitution of the United States. North America provided ideal laboratory conditions for Locke's ideas and his model of government. The science equipped, profit-minded Christian colonizers saw themselves confronted with "savage natives living in the stone age of culture" within a vast, terrifying "untamed wilderness" filled with untold treasures.

Although Locke is regarded as a political philosopher, he incorporated much of the cosmology of the time—Christian creationism, the Genesis account of six days of creation followed by the divine admonition for humanity to proliferate, subdue, and have dominion over the natural world. Locke, like his contemporaries, had no inkling of being part of a living growing cosmos, no clue about mass extinction, and a very crude understanding of the nature of the psyche. The evolutionary paradox of consciousness-reality-culture totally eluded him, as it did his peers for the next couple of centuries.

Locke provides the rationale for an ideal of individual fulfillment and a system of government based on individual freedoms, private property, and society as a social contract between selfish, property-obsessed individuals. Wilderness—land untilled, undeveloped, untamed—was simply "waste" with no meaning or value until converted by human labor into salable commodities on the free market.

**Brian:** Where did Locke's hierarchy of values come from?

**Louis:** Not from diving in the kelp forests of Africa or from roaming amongst the charismatic megafauna of Southern Africa. Murder and mayhem probably overrode any primal wilderness rapture left over from his rural childhood. He lived during chaotic times when three revolutions—the scientific revolution, the Protestant Reformation, and the commercial revolution were converging into a new cosmology.

For Locke the right to property was the simple bottom line in protecting the individuals from the abuses of aristocratic privilege. Locke was a fierce advocate of what Max Weber called "the Protestant work ethic," which Locke extended to child labor by suggesting that children of the poor should be obliged to work, even from the age of three.

The primary moral imperative for the child, as for the adult, was that of learning a healthy work ethic, since it was work alone that conferred value and meaning. Work transformed wild nature into the material stuff of "civilization."

The founding fathers of the United States regarded him along with Newton as one of the great geniuses of the age.

We need to give credit to Lockean Liberalism. In the context of dysfunctional feudalism, and in the face of modern sociopathic autocrats, liberalism does provide significant protections from oppression and the abuses of concentrated power. But the foundational assumptions ultimately fail to deliver. This is the mess we confront today. Without meaning, people easily lose their heads. Until a new truth-seeking cosmology is center stage, the vacuum of meaning is being filled by religious fundamentalism and post-truth, neo-fascism.

**Brian:** Speaking of truth, allow me to describe how this conversation is happening. With the words arranged nicely on the page, one can imagine the three of us are in the same room somewhere. In actuality, Craig is near the southern tip of Africa, Louis has been flying, first from Hawai'i to Australia, and right now to Africa to join Craig, and I am on an island in the Puget Sound of North America, the three of us in daily contact via the power of the noosphere.

In addition to the “official conversation” printed on these pages, the three of us have had occasional “off-script conversation” as well, such as this recent message from Craig:

I'm so pleased you are finding this conversation interesting, dear Brian. Perhaps we should include some of this off-script material in the script, I'll leave that to you, just an idea. I'm meeting with Louis today and will discuss further.

Wish you were with us. More and more I'm excited for the potential that you have opened for people to have a relationship with the cosmos and to feel that we are inside space, not looking out at the stars. We are inside the drama, we are the actors, not the audience.

So, Louis and Craig, are you now off exploring the African veldt, or diving in the Southern ocean, and unavailable for further comment? Or do you have time for a final comment before I send this off to our editor Herman Greene?

**Craig:** After reading through our conversation I was drawn to two things, firstly, Brian, I still thirst to hear your answer to the two questions posed in the beginning that you promised you would come back to, or is this somehow answered in our dialogue and I've missed the subtlety?

Secondly after hearing through Louis about the horror of the Lockean desecration of First Nations culture and the destruction of the immune system of our planet, which is biodiverse wilderness, I'm taken back to a small cave on the

coast of South Africa. This cave is called Blombos, and here my friend professor Christopher Henshilwood and his wife Dr Karen van Niekerk have found the oldest collection of engravings on Earth, among the earliest beads and the first known drawing. Together with other artifacts, these make up the first evidence of producing symbols that could be shared and be stored outside of the human brain—an invention that would change the course of our entire species. In essence these are the world's first proto-books and -computers, one hundred thousand years old.

I'm excited that science is telling us we were all forged in the great crucible of the African continent. We are all African by nature, having spent eighty percent of our time as a species here, living in deep reciprocity with nature. This has the power to unite us, and to reconnect us to our original twin mothers of Africa and Nature. Now through Brian's work we can extend our origin deep into the universe and know we are part of her radical architecture. Our precious Earth home is the still unfolding culmination of this enormous journey and we are obligated to protect and regenerate our sacred mother planet.

Much of my work with the Great African Seaforest over the last decade has been inspired by the lives of the ancient people who lived in Blombos cave, in a pristine environment for thousands of generations. They knew that their survival depended on the natural world, and that wisdom is something that we desperately need to reawaken in all contemporary humans.

**Brian:** I note that here at the end, Craig, you return to the beginning and speak of the inspiration you received from our primal ancestors. My life path, as unveiled in *Cosmogogenesis*, is exactly that, a return to the beginning of the universe to find inspiration. You touched on this isomorphism in an earlier off-script message: "I love how you are guiding this Brian . . . I had the feeling when I was reading *Cosmogogenesis* that here is this guy Swimme, swimming in the universe and having similar experiences to what I had swimming in the Great African Seaforest. That was very exciting and it made me start to feel the ecology of the cosmos and feel my universe mother. It also gave me hope that people living in cities largely cut off from nature could use this cosmological tracking to find meaning and wonder. I loved how you tracked the primordial light and brought it into your hands. It felt like an octopus coming to me and touching my fingers, lighting me up."

With your gorgeous image of an octopus-touching-your-fingers swirling about us, I can return to the two questions you asked, about how the human species is a way for the universe to know itself, and what it means to say that the universe "knew" how to construct humans. I am happy to put these two questions together and reflect on them here at the end.



Let me begin with a powerful experience I had decades ago when first moving to California. It was a hot summer evening and I was taking a bath with the window open and wondering over the amazing fact that the four interactions physicists study—the strong and weak nuclear, the electromagnetic, and the gravitational—“had what it takes” to transform, over billions of years, primordial plasma into life and humanity. At some point I noticed a small black animal crawling on my naked thigh. I flicked at it with my fingertips, but my action only flattened it. Leaning forward I discovered it was a gnat, still alive. By pressing my finger into my skin, I managed to lift it to the window. With one big exhalation, I blew it away into the dark night.

As I leaned back in the tub, my imagination shifted from wondering over the development of the universe to wondering over what that gnat might be thinking right then. It had a brain and a central nervous system with which it interpreted phenomena. Without question, the event of being swooped up and thrown into the night had registered in some form in its mind. That’s when it hit me. I was the gnat. I had some scientific knowledge which I was drawing upon to wonder over the birth and development of the universe, but that knowledge was profoundly inadequate for arriving at a full understanding of the creativity of the universe. I was a gnat trying to understand the full history of humanity.

Even given the importance of remembering humility, we have in fact discovered some things about ultimate reality. Like a single laser light in a vast, dark cave, we do get glimmers that reach deep into the nature of existence. These glimmers are not final knowledge, but they are enough to inspire us to live creative and even noble lives.

Before I respond to your questions, let me name two changes forced on me by the discovery of cosmic evolution.

First, I shy away from thinking in terms of a “cosmic mind.” My problem is with the English word “mind.” It’s been encased in dualism since the seventeenth century. I would prefer to speak of the universe as a whole. The universe as a whole is the source of creativity. The universe as a whole is what makes evolution happen.

Second, as much as possible, I refrain from thinking of people as individuals. Each human is indeed a unique manifestation of the whole universe, and our uniqueness is profoundly significant, yes, but our unique individuality comprises less than one percent of our existence. What we’ve learned is that every being is a “universe-individual.” Each of us is an individual entity that is, simultaneously, both the whole vast universe and just a fragment of it.

So, here’s my answer. It is buried in one of your statements, Craig: “Our deep ancestors knew how to live, they knew how to have reciprocity with nature. We still have all their memories inside us. So, underneath the shallow Lockean

influence, we have a deep sea of knowing. We still know what to do. We can remember.”

The essence of my own thinking is in those two and a half sentences: . . . *underneath the shallow Lockean influence, we have a deep sea of knowing. We still know what to do. We can remember.* The deep sea of knowing is the hundred-thousand-year human collective. The deep sea of knowing is the fifty-five-million-year primate collective, the two-hundred-million-year mammalian collective, the billion-year molecular collective. Underneath the shallow Lockean influence is a vast tower of time containing all cosmic history. We contain that vast tower within us.

We are awakening. We are discovering our place at the tip of a vast developing universe. And we know what to do.

The last word goes to Louis, the progenitor of our dialogue.

**Louis:** You folks, Brian and Craig, are to my mind exemplars of an emerging type of future primal human being: Craig immerses himself bodily in the life world of our earliest wild-living ancestors yet communicates that experience through the most complex and technologically sophisticated art form—film. Brian brings the sensibility of his hunter-gatherer ancestors who lived in North America for thousands of years to his mathematical study of the evolution of the early universe. Both of you are well established in the modern world, secure in yourselves physically, professionally, and emotionally. Both of you have been graced by experiencing the epic of the universe unfolding in the most ancient and simplest of things—Craig watching a clingfish ripping limpets off a rock and Brian pondering the mind of a gnat flicked into the darkness. Both of you are strikingly modest, generous, courageous, and life-loving.

In my own life, early on, I also had a similar initiation into wilderness rapture, but I was also strongly impacted by evil and ugliness. I grew up as a Jewish kid in neo-Nazi, apartheid South Africa a few years after the Holocaust. I chose to leave my birth place to find a true home, to travel and to study politics to confront this tension between good and evil head on. Today, I see humanity balancing on a knife's edge—on one side spiraling into oblivion and unimaginable suffering; on the other side a dramatic leap in self-awareness. There is grandeur and terror in this moment. It is the best and worst of times to be alive. Facing this reality honestly without constricting consciousness is the only way forward for us as individuals and humanity as a whole, and for the flourishing of our gorgeous Earth community. It is a noble calling. In this situation, *Cosmogogenesis* is like a comforting prayer, but also a vital guide, a light shining in this dark night of the species' soul. It is a unique book at once very personal and universal; both profane and profoundly sacred. It is a model of how to tell our universal creation

story, yet it is a story to be retold, and embellished with each telling, like San bushmen retelling their myths and creation stories, each person free to add, refine, omit. Brian, your *Cosmogenesis* models this primordial process of truth seeking, a practice which aligns with the process of evolution itself. Craig your life, diving and tracking on the coast of Southern Africa exemplifies this evolutionary attunement in the most visceral way. Your films eloquently communicate its beauty and universal appeal. Our work seems to converge in a new political cosmology with the never-ending search for the good, the true, and the beautiful at its heart.

Long may the quest continue.



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