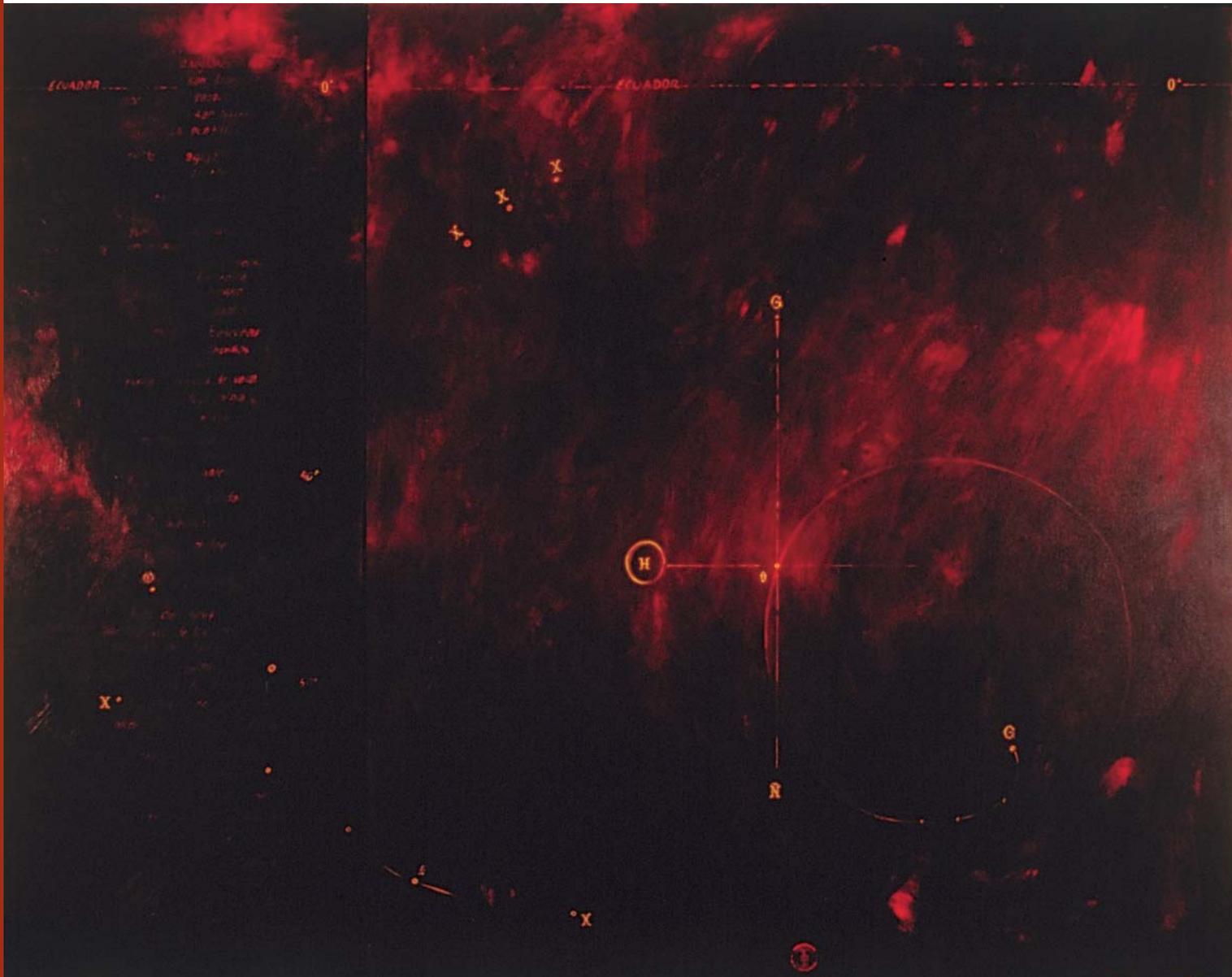


# Conscious Ev

A NEW BRE



ERIKA EWEL

*Evolutionary Choice*



# olutionaries

ED OF GLOBAL CITIZEN

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**T**he human species is facing a great transition to our next stage in evolution. In our generation, *Homo sapiens sapiens* has gained unprecedented technological and social power either to destroy the world as we know it, or to co-create a sustainable future. We stand at a threshold, and it has become clear that if we continue to use our new powers in the same state of consciousness that created them, we can wreak greater havoc on ourselves and the other species of Earth. But if we use our new powers wisely, we will transcend the current human condition, not only solving our problems but also participating in the cocreation of futures that are chosen, open-ended, and ever-evolving.

The necessity to learn how to evolve, and to choose consciously, is actually an evolutionary imperative that has taken us by surprise. The fact is, through our advanced understanding of nature, we have suddenly gained radical new powers, the magnitude of which we used to attribute to our gods. But we are not prepared to act as gods!

Eric Chaisson, a professor of physics and of education at Tufts University, writes of the impact and responsibility of these new powers:

The emergence of technologically intelligent life on Earth, and perhaps elsewhere, heralds a whole new era, a Life Era. Why? Because technology, for all its pitfalls, enables life to begin to control matter, much as matter evolved to control radiative energy more than 10 billion years ago. . . . The implications of our newly gained power over matter are nothing short of cosmic . . . not least of which potentially include species immortality and cosmic consciousness.

Drawn forth by this evolutionary condition of unparalleled danger and opportunity, a new worldview is arising, one that has the potential of offering a set of ideas, tools, and capacities that can serve our species in navigating through this transition. It is called *conscious evolution*.

Conscious evolution as a worldview began to emerge in the latter half of the twentieth century because of scientific, social, and technological abilities that have given us the power to affect the evolution of life on Earth. We now have a large and growing body of evolutionary knowledge converging from almost every field of study, including quantum physics, cosmology, philosophy, anthropology, futurism, transpersonal psychology, systems theory, and, of course, evolutionary biology itself. The list of pioneers and their respective fields is growing; however, there is not yet a definable field called *conscious evolution* to coordinate all the separate growing-edge insights to direct our immense new powers toward the common good.

Conscious evolution is a “meta-discipline,” and its purpose is to learn how to be responsible for the ethical guidance of evolution. It is a quest to understand the processes of developmental change, to identify inherent values, and to learn how to cooperate with these processes to foster both near-term and long-range positive futures. It can also provide a new context for education, transcending the separation of disciplines through a whole-systems approach, orienting and guiding us toward meaningful vocations and life purpose. Conscious evolution reveals to us that there is an emerging developmental path upon which we can deliberately enter in the greatest learning experiment since the advent of language.

## Why Conscious Evolution Now?

It is important to realize how new this idea is, and why it has not yet, in general, been incorporated into our academic, political, and religious worldviews. Three new elements are vital to conscious evolution. I call them the 3 Cs: *new cosmology*, *new crises*, and *new capacities*. ➤

**NEW COSMOLOGY.** We now recognize that the universe originated mysteriously through a singularity—an emergence not fully understood. It has been evolving for billions of years, and is still evolving now, *through us* as well as throughout the entire cosmos. Cosmologist Brian Swimme has said: “During the modern period, we have moved from that dominant spatial mode of consciousness, where time is experienced in ever-renewing seasonal cycles, to a dominant time-developmental mode of consciousness, where time is experienced as an evolutionary sequence of irreversible transformations.”

The discovery of cosmogenesis (the birth and development of the cosmos) gives rise to an evolutionary consciousness central to the practice of conscious evolution. First, we recognize that the universe has a history and a direction, and therefore, *so do we*. Awareness of cosmogenesis reinforces our own impulse to evolve in history—right here and now on our own planet, not purely as a metaphysical event, or happening in an afterworld. This awareness helps us see the future not as more of the same, but as potentially radically new, self-transcending, fulfilling our age-old yearning for our own transformation. We see, in witnessing the billions of years, that evolution is continually self-transcending, manifesting the rise of consciousness and freedom through an ever more complex order, and we see that we are part of that story.

Yet we also see that the future is a contingency, not an inevitability. Most of the species that ever existed on our planet are now extinct. Our future depends ever more so on us, as we gain the powers that can lead us down the paths of destruction or cocreativity. The new cosmology sets the context for faith in the possibility of long-range positive futures, and helps us formulate visions of ideal futures and work toward them.

**NEW CRISES.** We are facing a set of complex and rapidly escalating crises in our world that could render the human species extinct. There are no experts to guide us in the great transition from a high technology species destroying its own environment toward a coevolutionary species capable of developing and manifesting an ethical, evolutionary agenda. The set of crises can be interpreted as “evolutionary drivers” on a planetary scale, forcing us to gain evolutionary consciousness, and to practice conscious evolution, or to suffer degradation and self-destruction.

## MAKING IT REAL

**N**ot content with her visionary theory, Barbara Marx Hubbard has created the Foundation for Conscious Evolution, in Santa Barbara, California. Formed to respond to epochal issues, it is creating a new context for an inclusive developmental path to the next stage of human evolution. To initiate this path, the foundation is engaged in three main projects offered through their website ([www.evolve.org](http://www.evolve.org)).

**PROJECT ONE: The Gateway to Conscious Evolution** is the beginning of an evolutionary education system designed to empower people to become conscious cocreators of their own futures in alignment with the patterns of evolution.

**PROJECT TWO: The Development of a Conscious Evolution Community**, in Santa Barbara, is dedicated to designing a synergetic social system that will liberate each person to give her or his gift for the good of self and the whole community, and to serve as a template for other future-creating communities working for a more direct and synergetic democracy.

**PROJECT THREE: The Formation of a Synergy Center** on the internet and in various localities to identify, map, connect, and communicate what *is* working toward a compassionate and creative world. The first Global Synergy Center is available at the [evolve.org](http://evolve.org) website and the first local Synergy Center/Peace Room is being initiated by the Santa Barbara Conscious Evolution community.

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**NEW CAPACITIES.** These capacities reside in our advancing technologies, such as biotechnology, nuclear power, nanotechnology, cybernetics, artificial intelligence, space development, as well as new social technologies that offer us methods of greater cooperation, synergy, and evolutionary design through systems thinking and organizational application.

The “noosphere,” a term used by paleontologist Teilhard de Chardin for the thinking layer of Earth, is matur-

ing rapidly as a “superorganism” combining our collective consciousness and capacities. As individuals, we are not much different physically than we were 2,000 years ago, but the noosphere (mind, and all its intellectual and visionary “property”) is radically different and empowered. Our new technological and social capacities are already transforming the material world, including our own bodies.

From the perspective of conscious evolution, activated by these three new conditions—the new cosmology, the new crises, and our new capacities—we see ourselves as a cross-over generation from one phase of evolution to the next. We stand at the beginning of a period of unknown and undefined potential.

We are undergoing what systems theorist Ervin Laszlo calls a *macroshift*, which he defines as

a bifurcation in the evolutionary dynamic of a society. . . . When a human society reaches the limits of its stability, it becomes supersensitive and is highly responsive to the smallest fluctuation. . . . Then the system responds even to subtle changes in values, beliefs, worldviews, and aspiration.

The stakes are high. There are no experts. Time is short. The question, then, is: What do we need to know to practice self- and social-evolution? What constitutes a new developmental path that can take us through this great transition to the actual “other side” of the evolutionary leap?

## Choosing to Evolve

As we accelerate toward this macroshift, I feel we are entering a period of “late transition on planet Earth.” Let me explain: “Pre-transition” extends from the origin of self-reflective consciousness to the advent of the A-bomb. “Transition” began in 1945, when we gained the powers of codestruction and cocreation. “Post-transition” would be landing on the other side of the “quantum gap.” I see this next post-transitional phase, then, as a universal humanity—a species capable of co-evolving with nature

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and cocreating with spirit. I use the word “spirit” here to connote the pattern in the process of creation, or the Great Creating Process, which is Sidney Lanier’s phrase for God. It is this Great Creating Process that runs through the core of the evolutionary journey, the source of universal intelligence. I believe that this intelligence has manifested in all the great faiths of the world, and until now those faiths have been able to guide our various cultures. However, they can no longer provide that guidance because civilization as a whole is entering this macroshift to “late transition” Earth, and with it we see arising a new breed of global citizens I call “conscious evolutionaries.”

I see the emergence of conscious evolutionaries happening at a global scale. You find such people in every faith, every tradition, every race, every culture, and every economic background. This type of person seems to transcend ordinary classifications and boundaries. The quality that distinguishes evolutionary consciousness is that you feel the emergent potential within yourself, and you are driven with a passion as great as the desire for self-preservation and self-reproduction, but are turned now toward self-evolution and self-expression for the sake of yourself and the world.

By choosing to consciously participate in this experiment rather than merely being a passive witness, we can identify ourselves with the conscious “force” seeking to manifest through evolution, developing our untapped cocreative potential. In my own efforts at self-evolution, I hold three aspects of consciousness in my heart simultaneously: I am an expression of the whole story of creation; I am a vital participant in expressing my creativity to serve that evolution and my own evolution; and thirdly, I am one with source. This is evolutionary consciousness.



**BARBARA MARX HUBBARD**, *evolutionary explorer, social innovator and author, is president of the Foundation for Conscious Evolution. Since the 1960s she has pioneered in evolutionary education and in 1984 was placed in nomination for the US vice-presidency.* 