

TEILHARD AND OTHER MODERN THINKERS ON EVOLUTION, MIND, AND MATTER

Peter B. Todd

Abstract: In his *The Phenomenon of Man*, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin develops concepts of consciousness, the noosphere, and psychosocial evolution. This paper explores Teilhard's evolutionary concepts as resonant with thinking in psychology and physics. It explores contributions from archetypal depth psychology, quantum physics, and neuroscience to elucidate relationships between mind and matter. Teilhard's work can be seen as advancing this psychological lineage or psychogenesis. That is, the evolutionary emergence of matter in increasing complexity from sub-atomic particles to the human brain and reflective consciousness leads to a noosphere evolving towards an Omega point. Teilhard's central ideas provide intimations of a numinous principle implicit in cosmology and the discovery that in and through humanity evolution becomes not only conscious of itself but also directed and purposive.

Introduction

In his introduction to *The Phenomenon of Man*, evolutionary biologist Sir Julian Huxley provides a synopsis and glowing endorsement of Teilhard's evolutionary ideas published in *The Phenomenon of Man*. Huxley writes,

Teilhard de Chardin was at the same time a Jesuit father and a distinguished palaeontologist. . . . [H]e has effected a threefold synthesis—of the material and the physical world with the world of mind and spirit; of the past with the future; and of variety with unity, the many with the one.¹

¹ Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, *The Phenomenon of Man*, trans. Bernard Wall (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1959), 11.