

TEILHARD AND JUNG: A Cosmic and Psychic Convergence

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Abstract: In this essay, I have attempted to demonstrate how the thought and writings of Teilhard and Jung converge. In their common interpretation of matter and psyche they saw the interior as well as the exterior role of the process of evolution. Their concepts of libido and radial energy led them to an understanding of the collective nature of the human psyche, and its expansion in culture as the noosphere. Common understandings of the archetypes of evil and of the feminine resulted in affirmation of the interior, spiritual drive underlying human nature, with a valuation of the Christ image for Western culture in its cosmic dimension through Jung's archetype of the Self and Teilhard's Omega Point. Their common vision, emerging from the struggles of the 20th century, has yet to be appreciated in its application to the world of the twentyfirst.

Introduction

In his recent book *Cosmos and Psyche*, philosopher and cultural historian Richard Tarnas notes the tremendously creative years that bridged the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries, with the emergence of such giants as Darwin, Einstein, James, Marx, and Freud. These years brought with them, he says, a change in the way that human beings regard the cosmos, expanding the horizons of consciousness out to the edges of the universe and into the depths of matter.

Reflecting on the opening to the human psyche that became known as depth psychology, Tarnas writes:

Just as the Copernicans had displaced the Earth from the center of the Universe to reveal a much larger cosmos of which the earth was now but a tiny peripheral fragment, the Freudians displaced the conscious self from the center of the inner universe to reveal the much larger unknown realm of the unconscious."¹

Two figures emerged during this period, whose lives, research, and theory bring into creative convergence the worlds of matter and psyche. They are Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, the Jesuit paleontologist born in 1881, and Carl Gustav Jung, the medical psychiatrist born in 1875. Though they never met, they shared a common vision of the inner dimension of life, a dimension that underlies the process of evolution on planet Earth.

¹ Richard Tarnas, *Cosmos and Psyche* (New York: Plume, 2007), 44.