

HOMO AMOR MANIFESTO

DAVID J. TEMPLE

HOMO AMOR MANIFESTO

A MEMORY OF THE FUTURE

FOREWORD BY WOUTER TORFS
AND STEPHANIE VALCKE

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*For tomorrow's generations.
For the memory of the future.*

COSMOEROTIC HUMANISM is a philosophical movement aimed at reconstructing the collapse of value at the core of global culture. This movement emerges in response to the meta-crisis, understanding existential and catastrophic risks as rooted not only in failures of economics, politics, and technology, but in failed worldviews. The core of CosmoErotic Humanism offers a system of First Principles and First Values that recasts cosmic evolution as a Story of Value in which humanity plays a unique role. These First Principles and First Values ground a comprehensive set of theories, including self and psychology, epistemology, scientific metaphysics, education, theology, mysticism, sexuality, and value. CosmoErotic Humanism thereby responds to the three great questions: *Where?* *Who?* and *What?* It offers a new Universe story (*Where am I?*), a new narrative of identity (*Who am I?*), and new vision of ethics (*What ought I/we do?*). These are some of the first words on the possibilities of a world philosophy adequate to our time of civilization transformation. What is offered by CosmoErotic Humanism is a new story of *eternal yet evolving* value that can serve as a context for our diversity, finally allowing us to speak of humanity as part of a shared story of evolving cosmic value.

Foreword

by Wouter Torfs and Stephanie Valcke

Have you ever had the experience of meeting someone special who immediately gets under your skin, without being able to explain exactly why? Something about both their words and the depth of their being moves you. You may not agree or even fully understand immediately everything they say, but you know you are in the presence of that rare combination of radical wisdom and equally radical love.

You have met that very rare treasure, a true teacher. But not a teacher who wants any power over you; quite the opposite, you feel the depth of their desire to gift and empower, and call forth not their greatness, but yours. Such was our meeting with Dr. Marc Gafni.

We had that experience in the summer of 2016 when we first met Marc Gafni in Gers, France, at the vacation home of a dear friend of ours. Twice a year, a group of CEOs comes together under the guidance of James Bampffield. In the CEO council we create together a space where we can turn to each other with our life questions.

James had already been actively studying with Marc at his Mystery schools and had also read deeply in his writings. Like us, he was intensely moved by Marc's person and his teaching. And by one of those series of sacred synchronicities that change the course of our lives, Marc was in Europe and James, for unforeseen

reasons, could not come to the CEO council. He asked Marc to come and do a special weekend teaching with us.

Wouter met him in the depth and joy of his teaching that weekend, and Stephanie met Marc the Sunday of that weekend because one of the CEOs at that meeting—a dear friend—called her multiple times with profound excitement and absolutely insisted that she must meet Dr. Gafni.

It was for both of us, in different ways, a weekend which changed our lives.

Neither of us had ever had a spiritual teacher. And Marc himself is radically against any form of guruhood. But he agreed to become what he called our “spiritual friend”, what we would call a life coach in our world. But that does not really do him justice.

In truth, Marc reminded all of us how badly society needs teachers who are *not* Gurus but deeply wise, kind and visionary men and women. What would society be without Plato and Aristotle, without the saints and seers and men of science, without the Leonardo Da Vincis who have appeared in every age. Marc is in that company.

It occurred to us both that in our generation we have very much lost contact with the institution of the sacred teacher who teaches not to *amass power and be served*, but the very opposite, to *empower and to serve* wisdom in love and devotion and is our closest friend at the same time.

We each began weekly study with him, which we have been doing in various contexts now for the last eight years. The result has been a profound and undeniable strengthening of the depth and quality of life not only for us, but for our children, partners, families and friends as well.

Marc Gafni is a world class philosopher, prominent thinker, and a scholar of the ancient Aramaic texts. His doctorate from Oxford University and formal religious ordination are but a few of his multiple degrees. But he is also a person committed to friendship and family, a person who has suffered deeply, and yet, at times when others might have broken down, has instead broken open to ever deeper wells of goodness, truth and beauty.

His public position is as the co-president of the Center for World Philosophy and Religion, a leading think tank whose profoundly reasoned premise is that the only successful response to the world meta-crisis will be to revision the stories of value in which we live, which are root cause for both the stories of our lives and the societies we have created.

Marc founded the think tank together with his dear friend and colleague, the world's leading integral philosopher and most well-read living philosopher in the world today, Ken Wilber, and with his own lineage holder, dear friend and now intellectual partner, the prominent and brilliant developmental thinker from Harvard University, Dr. Zachary Stein. Zachary also serves in a leadership role of the Civilization Emerging Project, under the stewardship of Marc and Zachary's dear mutual friend and colleague, Daniel Schmachtenberger.

Together, they describe the moment we all find ourselves in as a time of great meta-crisis where the old world is breaking down, and the existential threats to the very existence of humanity, and our own humanity, are enormous—"a time between worlds and a time between stories".

They liken our day to the Western Renaissance, which flourished at the end of the Middle Ages and gave birth to modernity.

Marc, Zachary and Ken have shown, based on study, research and insight, that only with what they call a “Da Vinci move”—the emergence of a new story of value, which takes the integrated wisdom from across history in every space and time and weaves it into a new narrative that evolves the very source code of consciousness and culture—can we respond effectively to the meta-crisis.

They argue persuasively that it is only with the birth of a new story of value, and a new human and new humanity, that we can respond to the threat of the death of humanity or the death of our humanity. And they point out that a new story of value, interfacing effectively with new technologies, has always been the only thing that changed the course of history. And that the only thing that never changes is that it always changes.

They call this new story of value CosmoErotic Humanism.

Marc, together with Ken and Zak, believed that this message is vital to be held by any one person, and so like many of the great traditions of the ancient world, they created a semi-anonymous fictional character to author some of their key books. The name of that author is David J. Temple. Think for a second about who wrote the Vedas in Hinduism or the Zohar in Hebrew wisdom or some of the key texts of biblical Christianity. It was not any one person making a name for themselves, rather it was a small group of people who created a new form of authorship that could ripple through history itself. Such is the nature of the book you hold in your hands right now.

At its core, this work you hold in your hands is deep world philosophy, which like all true great works has the capacity to change the course of history. It is not a light read, but at the same time can be read by any man or woman. While many scholars are

reading it, it is written, like the works of Plato, Marx, Oscar Wilde, Freud or Jung for the general public of men and women who want to think and live more deeply, and are willing to, as Marc often says, “take their seat at the table of history”.

One of the sources of our profound commitment to the message of CosmoErotic Humanism has everything to do with a deep chord it strikes in our hearts. It felt like we had been given, for the first time, a complete conceptual and coherent framework for the way we had intuitively thought must be a true way of living. But we did not have either the language for it, the coherent vision or the evidence that this might actually be true. It’s a remarkable experience when someone gives you the words and vision to describe what your own deepest heart, mind and body know to be “right” and “good”. It is not that we *understood* this world philosophy to be true, it is that we *recognized* it to be true.

The core of the business philosophy and the culture we have tried to build is love—truly empowering people and allowing them to be their full selves. We hesitate to say those words because they don’t seem to belong in a business context. But it was this set of intuitions that have guided us and, in Wouter’s company, caused it to be voted the best place to work in Belgium for ten years in a row.

When we heard Marc describe, grounded in sciences, philosophy, poetry, psychology, physics and biology, what he calls “the Universe as a Love Story”, “all the way up and all the way down”, we recognized the depth of its truth. “The Universe breathes Eros; it is pure Eros”, which he defines as the “force of radical aliveness, always yearning for ever deeper contact, ever greater wholeness and ever more value that underlies the four physical forces”. The “entire spiral evolution from mud to Mozart is an expression of the

evolution of Intimacy”. And “this intimate Universe exists not just outside of us but also within us”.

In our thinking, we have always written or stated how proud we are that our business visions, companies and commitment are genuinely driven by values. But as children of postmodern thinking, we saw our business cultures, our missions, and our companies’ values as a beautiful and useful social construct—something we had created together that wonderfully supported our business operations.

Marc woke us up.

CosmoErotic Humanism asserts that Value is real, not just a social construct. The Cosmos is so much more than matter and energy—“Value and Consciousness” are inherent to the Cosmos. “The evolution of the Cosmos is not random or purposeless, as postmodern thought assumes. No, the evolution of the Cosmos is leading somewhere; it has *telos*, guided by *First Principles and First Values*”.

One of the most important *First Principles and First Values* is *Intimacy*: In the words of CosmoErotic Humanism: “Evolution is the progressive deepening of Intimacy.” Intimacy, in this sense, means a situation where two individuals experience a new shared identity in a context of relative otherness. *Allurement* is the driving force behind intimacy. Think of a couple in love, where the two partners discover and experience a new identity as a couple without merging entirely. Or think of the water molecule, made up of two hydrogen atoms and one oxygen atom, drawn to each other—out of that intimacy, a new identity, “water,” is formed, without its individual components ceasing to exist”.

Naturally, we immediately thought *companies in business*, where employees, drawn by an inspiring mission and strong

values, form a new authentic corporate identity without losing their own. We were deeply moved when we realized that a company is “chapter and verse in the Universe, a Love Story”. At that same moment, we also understood that the contributions of every employee—including our own—are, in turn, “chapter and verse in the Universe, a Love Story”.

By demonstrating that the Cosmos has a purpose, a direction (the “progressive deepening of coherent intimacies”), and that life—including *our* lives—is inherently meaningful, Marc makes a profound claim against postmodern thought. A key spokesperson for postmodern thinking, Yuval Harari, considers the Cosmos inherently purposeless and meaningless, defining “Values” as merely “a figment of our imagination”.

Indeed as Marc has pointed out, Harari writes time and again, that value itself is not real and that “any meaning we ascribe to our lives is mere delusion”. And Harari writes that not only in books for adults, but also in children’s books with the same message. What Marc is saying is that we owe a new great library of value, written out of the depth of our time—to our children.

This book, with its forty-two theses on CosmoErotic Humanism, has a grand ambition—nothing less than providing a response to what we described just above as the *Meta-Crisis* which is our time, one that threatens our very survival as a species. We are not confronting just one crisis today, but rather an interwoven network of crises. The global health crisis, the artificial intelligence crisis, the population crisis, the environmental crisis,—and particularly its expression in the climate crisis which now looms larger than ever, with wildfires, floods, and famine. With a war just 1,500 kilometers from our doorstep, the Middle East engulfed in violence, we are

also facing a severe security and political crisis. And on top of that, there is the global information crisis, where social media influence elections, and “fact-checking” is becoming a thing of the past. All of these are rooted in what this book calls a “meaning crisis”.

One of the core messages of CosmoErotic Humanism is that “in the vast gap between the daily suffering that overwhelms us and our ability to respond to it, we close our hearts and look away”.

The authors of this book do not. *Homo Amor Manifesto* has the extraordinary ambition and courage to offer an answer to the *Meta-Crisis*. CosmoErotic Humanism proposes “A New Story of Value that responds to the Meta-Crisis” – “A New Grammar of Value” in which every human being recognizes themselves, because it speaks of values and principles that we not only understand intellectually but that also *live within us*.

There are moments when we look our dear friend Marc in the eyes and tell him that what he speaks of is too beautiful, too grand to be true. To which he replies, with a twinkle in his eye, that we would regret it until our dying breath if we didn’t at least *try with all our heart and soul*. For as he always says to us and to anyone who will listen, “we are God’s verbs”.

We hope that you, too, will explore this great new story of *Value, Eros, and Intimacy*. And perhaps, in that discovery, you will find the courageous and joyful path to contribution to our personal and collective transformation.

We write this introduction not only personally, but also in our roles as co-presidents of the Office for the Future, which is the holding organization for the think tank, Center for World Philosophy and Religion.

January 27, 2025

To the Reader

The propositions collected here unpack the urgent moral need to articulate a new vision and theory of value. Simply put, humanity must redefine what it understands to be valuable if it is going to survive. Humans must understand the importance of what they value in the Cosmos—the reality of value itself—beyond the notion that what they value is, for example, simply an arbitrary price that can be fixed to a commodity. The idea that a tree is only as valuable as what it can be sold for is absurd. The idea that a person is only as valuable as what they can contribute to society is also absurd. In fact, both the tree and the person incarnate a dimension of value that is immeasurable and fundamentally irreducible to its commodified form. Yet just this kind of absurdity has been driving global culture for centuries.

There has been great confusion in value theory over the last two hundred years. On the one hand, conservatives have attempted to simplify the discussion to a single list of preordained and eternal values, which must be protected and to which all people must pledge allegiance. At the same time, driven by a reductive materialism, scientific communities largely claim that only what is described by physics is real and that therefore nothing ultimately has intrinsic value. Given this metaphysical assumption, contemporary value theory has stridently argued that value is but a

contrived human invention. The rise of postmodernity has only exacerbated this trend, labelling all values “social constructs,” “fictions,” or “figments of our imaginations.” This claim has now entered mainstream culture. To cite but one example, two extremely popular books by Yuval Harari, *Sapiens* and *Homo Deus*, present these kinds of dogmatic postmodern claims as taken-for-granted assumptions. Harari’s books have received enthusiastic endorsements from popular cultural luminaries, including prime ministers, presidents, corporate leaders, and myriad literary, spiritual, and religious figures.

Value, however, is not merely instrumental or economic. It is not a social construction or cultural contrivance—not a mere fiction covering over a truly valueless and therefore ultimately meaningless world. The propositions here begin to demonstrate that value is intrinsic to Cosmos, all the way down and all the way up the evolutionary chain. Value is foundational and evolving. It is not that human beings contrive value; rather, value precedes life. Life is an inherent expression of value. Life is contrived in pursuit of cosmic value. Cosmic value in this way *generates* life, as life emerges in pursuit of value. We live inside of value even as value lives inside of us. Reality is value. But this is all ahead of the story.

The material collected here is from the internal writings of the Center for World Philosophy and Religion. The Center is cofounded and led by Marc Gafni and Zak Stein. Together with Ken Wilber—also a cofounder of the Center—and an international team, they execute the Center’s mission: to evolve culture as needed in response to the looming threat of existential and catastrophic risk. This movement in culture has become referred to as CosmoErotic Humanism. Future volumes will include many colleagues who have been in leadership

positions or dialogue with the Center for World Philosophy and Religion over the years—including Barbara Marx Hubbard, Lori Galperin, John P. Mackey, Howard Bloom, Ervin László, Sally Kempton, Daniel Schmachtenberger, and others. In each volume, as appropriate, we will recognize any particular partners who played a key coauthorship role in that particular work.

Taking the form of forty-two telegraphic propositions, this extended monograph provides a brief unpacking of CosmoErotic Humanism's First Principles and First Values. We are not making our full arguments here; these will appear in longer forthcoming volumes. Please read through the propositions themselves, skipping ahead to those most interesting to you, those that elicit the most desire. Also review the list of First Principles and First Values (see pages 168–170) and try to hold the whole picture before beginning to read through them in sequence. Here we are putting it all on the table, as it were, so that as we begin to publish more and elaborate on these themes, there will be no confusion as to where we stand.

David Judah Temple

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Vermont, USA

Introduction

On Redefining “Value” and Realizing Intimacy with All Things During the Meta-Crisis

The world is not what it was when the great wisdom traditions first began to (re)connect (“religion” is from the Latin *religare*, meaning to bind or tie) the human to the Cosmos through the identification of *a field of value in which all life participates*. The last century has seen more change in the conditions of human existence than any other period in known history. Technologies and societal evolutions have moved the center of culture outside the field of value. Humanity has become untethered from reality, and more specifically, divorced from the *reality of value*. And so there is an urgent need for new forms of religion, philosophy, and culture that reconstruct value and reconnect humanity with nature and reality.

Concern for the legacy of the great traditions is what unites the writing collected here to the modern tradition of *perennial philosophy*. This tradition suggests that a common core of truths can be found within all the best works of humanity’s religious

imagination and interior sciences of contemplation. We propose here an *Evolving Perennialism* in which universal and eternal truths can be identified without becoming fixed. Eternal values evolve. As explained below, this is one of the ways beyond the devastating criticisms of accepted forms of value that modernity and postmodernity have rightfully offered. The failures of prior traditions that enthroned value do not put an end to value; in our hands, these critiques serve to evolve value.

Throughout this text we seek to integrate the insights of those traditions that have read value into the very fabric of Cosmos. We are attempting to distill, at a moment of supreme need, the deepest insights that humans have had about what is intrinsically valuable, sacred, and good—as well as the means to know these truths, communicate them, and integrate them into culture, psyche, governance, and technology.

Before getting to the forty-two propositions, it is necessary to introduce some of the most important ideas up front. While this introduction is by no means a replacement for the whole text, it does aim to provide a good enough sense of the main ideas—the rest is justification and elaboration on the big picture encapsulated in these first pages.

A Universal Grammar of Value as a Context for Our Diversity

Core to CosmoErotic Humanism is the articulation of a universal grammar of value, shared by all humanity as a context for its diversity—and shared by humanity with all of nature and the broader Cosmos. A grammar is something shared by everyone

who speaks a language, and aligning with its parameters allows for each person's unique expression. A grammar of value is likewise universal for everyone, while allowing for unique individual expressions, manifestations, and evolutions. Articulating such a grammar of value is the essential basis for any coherent course of action at planetary scale that could preserve the species. As such, its creation/discovery is self-evidently one of the overriding moral imperatives of our time.

This universal grammar of value must serve as a context for our diversity. And so, it must not be merely arbitrary, but clearly rooted in First Principles and First Values, which are themselves embedded in a cosmic Story of Value.

Value must be shown to be real, and our shared allegiance to it must be self-aware and noble. Otherwise, a New Story of Value would need to be an imposed fiction, as the postmodernists claim, rather than realized and validated truth, as we do, along with so many others in the many traditions of value realism. CosmoErotic Humanism is not a totalizing or homogenizing project. It is rather the (re)valorization of richly diverse and unique personhood—and the (re)uniting of personhood with the intrinsic values of Cosmos.

A New Story of Value

CosmoErotic Humanism demonstrates that no detail of reality, from matter to life to mind, can be legitimately engaged with or made sense of when alienated from the magnificence and mystery of the larger cosmic field of value and story. Indeed, story is not merely a human contrivance. This is a core idea in CosmoErotic Humanism. As we point out in Proposition Eleven—and will soon

dedicate an entire volume to unpacking—language, story, and narrative constitute part of the ontology of manifest reality itself.

But for now, we simply note that reality has a narrative arc, an inherent telos, and a direction. There are inherent plotlines, strange attractors if you will, or what we refer to in CosmoErotic Humanism as *the lure of value*.

The movement from quarks to culture is filled with inherent creative freedom. At all levels of reality, there is story. And the story of reality is the evolution of Eros and intimacy, each of which we will define formally in our interior science equations below. Reality's story—a CosmoErotic love story in which humans have unique capacities for consciousness, freedom, and responsibility—is always already animated by plotlines driving the ever-deeper emergence of Eros and Value. We speak below and elsewhere of *Eros Value*—a single term pointing to the heart of reality's evolutionary dynamics. This term was coined to denote the *absolute inseparability* of Eros from Value, and the role of Eros as a superordinate value—the expression of which manifests all value, driving all plotlines toward love.

Evolving First Principles and First Values Are the Plotlines of Reality

We understand from complexity theory, evolutionary biology, and theories of universal grammar in linguistics that a simple, limited set of foundational (first) principles can generate the emergent self-organization of highly complex systems, evolving to display a virtually unimaginable number of parts. Basic patterns establish the possibility space into which chaotic emergence evolves, as seen