

## Perspective

# Science, Religion & Resplendence in a Nutshell

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### ABSTRACT

Science is the foundation of our description of nature and the physical universe. Traditional religions are in fundamental conflict with both scientific cosmology and human survival. Resplendence complements scientific cosmology providing three existential *raison d'être* for humanity as a climax cultural species.

**Keywords:** Science, religion, resplendence, nutshell, cosmic evolution, biogenesis, complex organism.

## Science

Science is the foundation of our description of nature and the physical universe:

1. **Cosmic Evolution:** Symmetry-breaking of the forces of nature leads to the physical and biological structures in the universe. Gravitation causes collapse to form galaxies full of stars radiating through the nuclear forces in turn forming planetary systems, with gravitation causing collapse to black holes, also modulated by the effects of dark matter and dark energy.
2. **Biogenesis:** There is strong evidence that life is an [emergent property of the laws of nature](#), ubiquitous throughout the universe. Biomolecules, including amino acids have been found in gaseous nebulae, on meteorites and in primitive lab syntheses. The process has a cosmological basis. Stellar radiation leads to the formation of complex molecules, including the organic precursors of life. In interaction, these form fractal structures constituting the most complex interaction of the forces of nature. Under favorable conditions, these can lead to [cellular life](#), which evolves at the edge of chaos to form ever more complex life-forms.
3. **Complex Organisms:** Symbiosis between the two main branches of life then existent on Earth, bacteria and archaea, has then led to the [complex nucleated eucaryote cell](#) that forms the basis of complex animals, algae and fungi, with further symbiotic events involving photosynthesis leading to the land plants.
4. **Sexuality** is essential to the evolution of complex organisms because recombination creates an almost endless variety of viable individuals, which can manifest new evolutionary features, fend off mutational decline and resist catastrophic epidemics from

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diseases and parasites. Humans are one of the most sexually polarized mammalian species. The reproductive strategies of men and women are thus in a state of **strategic conflict**.

5. **Sentient Consciousness** arises as an **emergent property of complex organisms** through sexual evolution, as their interactive behavior creates new survival crises requiring a field-of-view anticipation of the world in real time. While science has made great progress in identifying brain regions giving rise to certain kinds of conscious experience, how objective physical processes could in principle give rise to subjective experience, remains one of the deepest unresolved enigmas of science.
6. **Cognizant Culture:** The evolution of intelligence ultimately leads to a species developing culture and with it a capacity to describe and understand the nature of the universe around it. This runs a significant risk of planetary crisis and a mass extinction of life, as this species multiplies, and appropriates a disproportionate share of the planet's resources. Critical is the active symbiotic relationship between such a species and life as a whole, so that the biosphere retains fecundity and robustness to external crises.

## Religion

Traditional religions are in fundamental conflict with both scientific cosmology and human survival. **Monotheism is particularly dangerous**, because it invokes a violent End of Days, leading to conflagration, triage of all life and destruction of the Earth in favor of a heavenly kingdom:

1. **Creation by Command:** Monotheism conflicts with the generative nature of the physical universe by claiming that the Earth and heavens were ordered by a creator deity out of formless chaos in six days by verbal command. The heavens are a firmament, or great dome over the flat Earth in with the stars are placed. The plants are made before the sun and moon and the animals of the sea air and land created complete and fixed for all time, designed much as we shape our artifacts. Finally man and woman are made male and female in the likeness of the 'Elohim, to be fruitful, and multiply, to replenish the earth and subdue it: and have dominion over every living thing that move.
2. **Mortality and God's Curse on Women:** But then in the paradisiacal garden of Eden a falling out occurs which has corrupted history ever since. Woman seduced by the serpent for seeking wisdom, eats of the tree of knowledge of good and evil and persuades man to do likewise, making them both sexually aware. YHVH then withdraws the tree of life which could have made them immortal and throws them out into the wilderness to struggle by vanquishing the thorns and thistles, with woman cursed with the pain of childbirth, to be ruled over by her husband and both doomed to mortal existence.
3. **Jealous Conflict and Apocalypse:** The entire biblical paradigm becomes a moral cosmology reinforced with fire and brimstone against the whoring of the unfaithful wife Israel by the jealous God Jehovah. Jesus referred to the loving father God, but this deity

is claimed to have sacrificed him as his only begotten son in the crucifixion leading to centuries of martyrdom, Crusade and Inquisition. Rolled into this toxic mix is apocalypse in the End of days - a time of tumult and triage of all life, annihilating all in a day of judgment leading to a heavenly Jerusalem.

4. **Dominion over Nature:** Christians throughout history, have thus regarded it as our sacred duty to have dominion over nature, while women became the 'Devil's gateway', to be seen but not heard, or burned at the stake as witches. Although some denominations, now advocate responsible stewardship to address climate change and species loss, the basic influences remain those of a desert religion regarding nature as an inferior realm to be conquered.
5. **Jihad, Repression of Women and Genocide:** Islam adapted the same end of days desert tradition to the patriarchal tribal law of Muhammad's day, turning the violence outward in jihad, partitioning the world between [the domain of submission to Allah and the domain of war](#), in conversion by the sword. In addition to beheading 700 Jewish men in the souk of Medina, taking their wives and children into sexual slavery, Muhammad adopted the invocation to stone women for adultery, discarded for centuries by the Jews, so that it continues to this day in Sharia as a cruel homicidal punishment for female reproductive choice. Women are only half the value of men, forcibly veiled, chaperoned and sequestered as instruments of male control of female fertility. Religion is compulsory, with death for apostasy and blasphemy, in contradiction to the claim that Allah is compassionate and merciful.
6. **Reproductive Domination:** Both Christianity and Islam attempt to [out-populate their competitors](#) at a time when overpopulation is stressing the planet's resilience.
7. **Nirvana and Samsara vs Nature:** Buddhism is an atheistic meditative religion based on the renunciation of egotistical desires and the ensuing fear of mortality, through escaping the round of birth and death in the emptiness of nirvana. However, samsara and its karma of rebirth remains a morally causal mind-over-nature cosmology in which the animals are assigned to the inferior status of ignorant or corrupted sentient beings. It thus tries to solve the existential dilemma by negation without the key redeeming life purpose of replenishing living diversity, although both Buddhism and Upanishadic Hinduism invoke an autonomous path of contemplation in which individual consciousness can ultimately gain transcendence.

Religion, according to Augustine and others, comes from *re-ligare* to "bind again" or "bind fast". Religions bind together spiritually-minded people into mass movements, but religions are also contaminated with the notion of bondage to a potentially oppressive utopian moral order. This is a fascist totalitarian notion that makes traditional religions dangerous and harmful to world futures. The fasces is a bundle of sticks, sometimes with a protruding axe, or labrys, whose strength bound together is greater than the sum of its parts.

In scientific revolutions, the skeptical principle of inquiry, seeks verification from nature, confirming a theory to be true only when all attempts to negate it result in contradiction, rather

than imposing preconceived beliefs. This means that descriptions of reality only remain stable over limited epochs, called paradigms, punctuated by evolutionary leaps. When a new theory, or description of reality, is discovered, which generalizes, or replaces a previous one, a new scientific paradigm is born. The term paradigm itself has an ancient origin in Greek *paradeigma*, "pattern, example" from *para*, "beside, beyond" and *deiknumi* "to show, to point out" meaning "exhibit, represent, expose". The term was used in Plato's *Timaeus* as the model or pattern that the Demiurge (god) used to create the cosmos. Resplendence in making a paradigm transition from religion does precisely this, transforming the naive view of religious creation of the cosmos by God into a wisdom tradition to guide human action based on the extraordinarily confounding and detailed scientific knowledge of the universe we have more recently accumulated.

## Resplendence

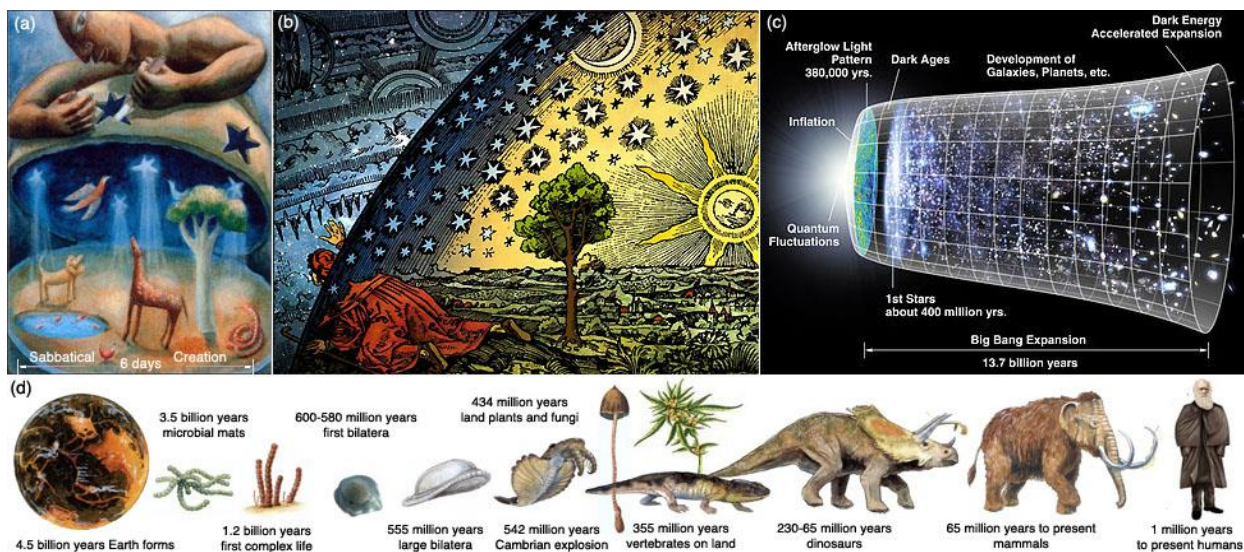
Resplendence complements scientific cosmology providing **three existential raisons d'être** for humanity as a climax cultural species:

- (a) To cherish and **replenish the diversity of life on the planet** so that the immortal passage of the generations will continue.
  - (b) To **facilitate** the unfolding **illumination of all conscious beings**.
  - (c) To **support** a caring **community to realize resplendence** as a creative process.
1. **Replenishing Planetary Paradise:** Our primary goal in life is to sustain Earth as a living paradise so that the generations both of humanity and the other diverse lifeforms including those on which we co-depend shall continue to flourish.
  2. **Mortality and Sexuality:** We experience mortality as individuals because fertilization contributes only half our genes to make up each new individual, with half coming from our sexual partner, our most altruistic act, resulting in the almost endless variety of sexual individuals. Since we arise from the fertility process, we redeem our individual mortality by giving our energy and creativity back to the flow of life in our creative life expression.
  3. **Female Reproductive Choice:** In the fertility between the sexes, due to a **high degree of sexual polarization**, women have a primary place as the live bearers of the next generation, enduring a massive sometimes risky pregnancy, lactation and long periods of early child-rearing.. It is thus essential, both genetically and socially, that women retain the right to reproductive choice.
  4. **Conscious Transcendence:** As a climax species, we experience subjective consciousness, in several forms - waking life, dreams, contemplation and visionary and **entheogenic states**, which may in turn be a manifestation of cosmological principles and may thus have transcendent properties . We need to keep this quest completely free of religious doctrines, so that we can explore it in an unfettered discovery process.

5. **Autonomy and Personal Responsibility:** Replenishing life is an existential necessity providing our central meaning in existence, not a moral imperative. It is however a fulfilling ethic. We are autonomous beings and so we need to take responsibility as intentional agents. What each of us do as individuals of a climax cultural species will affect the future viability of the planet. This is the one and only meaningful response to the existential condition.

There are just **three simple commitments** to make this a reality:

1. To cherish and **replenish the generations of life** on our planet.
2. To facilitate visionary transcendence through **conscious insight and illumination**.
3. To support a **caring planetary consensus** for resplendence.



**Cosmological Paradigm Shift:** Ancient religious notions of a universe created by God are in fundamental conflict with the scientific description of reality confirmed by experimental investigation. The six day sabbatical creation of Genesis (a) has the 'Elohim or God as a manufacturing designer creating the life forms and the firmament of stars as a dome over the flat Earth. The Sun and Moon are created before the plants. This view continued into the middle ages (b), but with the scientific revolution a fundamentally different paradigm has emerged (c), in which the Earth is a planet in a vastly bigger more complex universe, which has emerged from an explosive origin over 13 billion years ago, with processes such as cosmic inflation providing the dynamics to induce the formation of galaxy clusters, stars and planets in the form we see today amid accelerating expansion caused by dark energy. This is a cosmogenic process with no evidence for an external creator God. Life was not generated de-novo in a fixed machine-like act of manufacture at a single point in time, but shows exhaustive genetic, fossil and developmental evidence of evolution (d) to form complex organisms and ultimately conscious sentient beings. Resplendence, as a democratic social process, seeks to reparadise the Earth by applying the scientific paradigm correctly to the human existential condition. This provides a more effective view of our life-giving role in the universe, in terms of protecting the generations of living diversity and of conscious beings on the planet over evolutionary time scales, thereby enabling a

deepening of conscious awareness as a whole in the universe, as a cumulative emergent manifestation of cosmology.

Human societies and individual consciousness have been driven by two complementary sensibilities. On the one hand, the practical understanding of nature is essential for survival, manifest in gatherer-hunter society, for example in knowledge of diverse food and medicinal plant species and in the practicalities of hunting and developing arrow poisons and this has eventually become science. Complementing this are feelings of belonging and meaning in a precocious natural world, associated with beliefs in spirits and deities that guide behavior towards societal strength through morality, and explain the mortal condition and the vagaries of fate. These have over time become what we call science and religion.



However, religions have resisted natural paradigm evolution because they seek permanent ascendancy. Thus Jesus, Buddha and Muhammad remain fixed male entities impeding the natural evolution of human insight and world guardianship of nature. Buddha has become a symbol of perfection unattainable in the round of birth and death. Muhammad is claimed to be the last prophet under pain of execution. Jesus is claimed to be going to return in the 'second coming' as the avenging Lord. This prevents natural evolution, even though our understanding of the world, and the closing circle of the biosphere have been transformed, both by science, and human impacts of our burgeoning planetary technological society, leading to climate change, ecocrisis and potentially irreversible risks to human and natural survival.

**Morality and Emotional Virtue:** Christianity asserts a fallacious moral imperative that human beings are flawed by **original sin**, stemming from Eve's transgression, and that human free will is set in a moral cosmology, in which those who do not believe in God, and/or commit any of the seven deadly sins, will suffer eternal damnation in the Day of Judgment. Resplendence asserts that humans possess **original virtue** in their emotional makeup, which allows for love and empathic relationship as well as expedience and betrayal, and that moral behavior is a natural feature of sociobiology in which individuals in a species, or human society, or religion, forgo immediate advantages over their peers to enable the society as a whole to gain dominance over competing societies and better survive in the wider environment. Below:

Three features of morality in mammals:

- (a) Protective behavior at risk to the individual. Lion attacking a wildebeest. A pride of lionesses cooperating to try to capture a young, or weaker, straggler are rounded on by a herd of buffalo also cooperating with one another, making a classically moral decision to act together for the benefit of the group at some risk to their individual lives, forcing the predators to flee.
- (b) Clear evidence of emotional bonding in elephants and chimps showing they can make emotional decisions.
- (c) Collective altruistic action. A group of hippos act together to save a zebra at a waterhole from a crocodile. Altruistic punishment is neither necessary, nor sufficient for morality, although it is very effective in human societies.

Compassion and empathy are natural mammalian emotions which have also been observed, even across species in animal societies. Notice also that the carnivores have an essential role in the ecosystem of avoiding boom and bust in the herbivores, which could lead to a famine resulting in them becoming extinct, so their role in tooth and claw is also beneficent. The lion lying down with the lamb of Isaiah is thus a misguided fantasy. The religious moral imperative in urban societies arises from the imposition of cultural values which rob the human individuals of their deeper relationship with the passage of the generations in nature. As a climax species having major impacts on the planet, we are only now becoming aware of our cognizant role in planetary life. Resplendence, by restoring the natural relationship between humanity and life as a whole, applies the redemptive principle, which heals cultural tendencies towards selfish exploitation, because they are futile mortal strategies with no long-term fulfillment and no lasting outcome,

except for diminishing the regenerative process by short-term exploitation and tragedy of the commons.

Resplendence accepts the paradigm shift to the scientific description of reality in all its manifestations, while at the same time resolving the dilemma of existence in a way religions are failing to do, by coupling our sense of purpose and collective action to the one thing that immortalizes us - protecting the life flow of the living planet and its generations.

Gods are projections of conscious personalities onto the cosmos that come from an earlier phase in human emergence, where gatherer-hunters devised parent-like entities to guard over their vulnerable lives in a tumultuous world, and later in our cultural adolescence, agricultural civilizations used increasingly powerful deities as punishing moral entities holding sway over life and death, and the implied after-life as the final moral end-of-days scenario.



**Women and Sexuality:** Enforced veiling and homicidal stoning. Islam, imposes stringent and violent restrictions on female reproductive choice, social, educational and career opportunities, enforced by torture and homicide for adultery, as part of an archaic patriarchal tribal code. Such reproductive control of the female to ensure patriarchal reproductive imperatives has been an almost universal feature of world religions for millennia. Centre to right: In contrast with religion, resplendence seeks a high degree of sovereignty for female reproductive choice in an overall climate of mutual partner choice consistent with the needs of the human family.

This is because humans are at an extreme among mammals in the dissonance between the male reproductive strategy which is primarily focused on fertilization and the female strategy focused on parenting. Because mammals bear live young and the females engage lactation and a pivotal role in infant care, females need to be able to choose the best combination of resourcing partner and good genes for what is a massive commitment, with a long pregnancy leaving the woman vulnerable and travail, a risky delivery bearing a large head, months to years of breast feeding



and years of young child care. In addition mammalian XY chromosome sexual selection favours males displaying single X-linked characteristics, while females are able to apply sexual selection to these, again emphasizing the importance of female reproductive choice.

In an overpopulated world, universal access to contraception is essential, but in addition, there need to be social incentives to enable capable achieving women to both pursue and maintain their professional careers and have security of parental leave, to avoid the conflict between parenting and women's careers that has blighted democratic countries from Italy to Japan. At the same time, this predicates a pro-choice position concerning terminating pregnancy, not least to avoid the risks women suffer when these rights are withheld in the name of religious conviction. Finally resplendence implies ensuring natural childbirth remains a viable process, and advising against routine cosmetic Caesarians based on a false image of womanhood, and giving responsible advice about the implications for future generations of technologies such as in-vitro fertilization and intra-cytoplasmic sperm implantation, as well as more advanced techniques such as generating gametes from stem cells, to avoid the human species becoming perpetually dependent on medical procedures to survive. Right: Sexuality commands respect as sacred to the natural order, as we each become conscious beings through sexual fertilization and sexual recombination to create the diversity of all sexual beings, without which higher life forms would never have come into existence.

With the coming to maturity of human culture in reaching a state today where human actions themselves can irreversibly harm the planet's future, we have to accept we have entered a state of de-facto maturity and accept that it is we ourselves, neither God, nor Jesus as Lord in the Day of Judgment, who must assume responsibility for beneficent guardianship of the planetary future, and achieve the enlightenment to be able to do this successfully. This is a complete fulfillment of our life meaning and purpose and enables the mystery of conscious existence to be more and more deeply explored over the lifetimes of all the sentient participants as an open-ended process.

**Consciousness and Enlightenment:** Resplendence rejects the notions of heaven and hell (left) because they have no place in the physical universe and they are a product of a fantastic moral punishment causality that is in fundamental conflict with nature, where moral systems are simply a natural evolutionary manifestation of sociobiology, implying that heaven and hell are imaginary realms generated by conscious experience, as religions endeavour to come to terms with the mysteries and paradoxes of conscious existence. It likewise rejects the contrivances of cults, such as the Galactic Dictator Xenu of Scientology. The Buddhist realms of the hungry ghosts and titans are likewise representations of mental states with a false anthropocentric emphasis on a universal morality which falsely demotes the animals to a realm of inferior incarnations due to previous moral dereliction.

Biological incarnation is a sexual process inconsistent with the reincarnation of individual souls. Resplendence wisdom thus remains clear of false misleading assumptions based on preconceived religious notions. However resplendence accepts the discoveries of neuroscience concerning the brain-mind relationship and the full diversity of experiences and personal accounts spanning the spectrum of mental states (right), from waking, through dreaming, meditative, contemplative, visionary and sacrament induced, because these are a central part of the discovery of the inner nature of conscious experience. Cosmology would suggest that, since the brain is the most

complex interactive process manifest by the forces of nature in interaction, consciousness may be the most inscrutable mystery in cosmology and one that may take evolutionary time scales to fully elucidate. This in no way rules in or out forms of consciousness extending beyond our biological life spans, consciousness being shared directly between beings, or prophetic forms of conscious anticipation, all of which remain to be explored over time, without prejudging the nature and scope of consciousness in fixed religious doctrines, or preconceived beliefs - a fatal error, given the sensitive nature of consciousness. Right: The Huichol *nierika* or portal to the visionary world induced by peyote is a valid part of subjective sacramental exploration of the conscious condition because it can be experienced first-hand.



Resplendence seeks a condition of unfolding visionary transcendence in sentient consciousness and in human society at large. This is a quest that spans both the foundations of cosmology and neuroscience and the deepest insights of the religious traditions. It is a greater perspective than the lofty pretensions of religions because it encompasses all conscious experience in an open-ended discovery process, neither limited by materialistic assumptions that the conscious mind is no more than the workings of the chemical brain, nor pre-empted by doctrines and dogmas of prescribed religious assumptions.

Spiritually, resplendence seeks a condition where every individual is able to explore the mystical and visionary undercurrents of the conscious condition first hand, without becoming subject to

oppressive forces seeking to assert any religious belief or creed, or to deny people the opportunity to experience such states themselves through legislation to prevent the use of visionary sacraments or drugs which induce visionary states. Attempting to ban access to mind altering substances is a benighted policy aimed more at shoring up mindless consumer materialism and existing traditional religious beliefs than any protection of society from misadventure. Any forms of societal abuse of substances need to be treated as a heath matter to avoid the growth of violent criminal organizations seeking to profit from banned substances in an age where technology is making synthesis on demand ever more available.



Politically, resplendence aims at an ecosystemically diverse informed non-violent democratic society of mutually enlightened beings, possessing maximal autonomy of choice, avoiding the tyranny of the majority democracies are prone to , while recognizing the need to actively oppose all forms of totalitarianism that could lead to a loss of democratic autonomy, both from political movements such as totalitarian fascism and communism and from world religions with totalitarian doctrines that form an even more all-encompassing utopian threat to freedom of choice and world futures.

**Primary Threats to Evolution and Survival:** Top: Hiroshima after the nuclear holocaust. Middle: Intentional deforestation in Indonesia. Bottom: Genetic technology holds both great promise and great risks, requiring careful ethical assessment to avoid irreversible damage. (Left) Macaques genetically edited using CRISPR to alter three genes. Right: Parthenogenetic and stem-cell generated mice using reproductive genetic technology.

Technologically, resplendence seeks a society utilizing the most advanced techniques in a sensitive way which works closely with evolutionary principles to achieve a high standard of living and fully informed intelligence, while having minimal impact on and actively restoring the biospheric resilience of the planet over evolutionary time scales. The energy economy needs urgently to move to renewable forms of energy not having deleterious impacts on the climate and biosphere as a whole. The information economy needs to remain as free as possible from governmental surveillance and accessible to all people.

**Habitat destruction and Climate Change:** Above all resplendence seeks to prevent the destabilization of the entire planet's resilience and robustness to survive, through rampant habitat destruction, burning the fossil fuels accumulated over three hundred million years and climate change running to tipping points which could compromise both human survival and the survival of the diverse species upon which we co-depend.

**Weapons of mass destruction** need to be replaced by programs to provide defences against events on an astronomical scale threatening to the continuity of life, such as asteroid impacts and nearby supernovae. Questions of interstellar migration, or communication, need to be considered cautiously for their deeper implications.

**Genetic Technology:** Great precautionary care needs to be applied to bootstrap genetic technologies such as germ-line editing and engineering, which feedback directly into the process of genetic evolution itself and hence the informational foundation of the biosphere. These technologies have vast utopian potential, and invoke the temptation to make choices which result in an elitist dependence on advanced reproductive technology. They are liable to lead to 'poisoned chalice' dystopias, lacking the resilience to survive over evolutionary time scales. Because resplendence is founded on the resilience that natural evolutionary ecosystems have over cosmological time scales and the super-computing power of parallel genetic algorithms in a diverse natural ecology, resplendence as a concept applies a very strong precautionary principle against forms of technology which impose utopian forms of dominion over nature - the patriarchal notion accepted by most historical religions, and against winner-take-all exploitation from the business world, such as the terminator technology Monsanto and others tried to introduce to mass market seeds which would lose viability in the second generation due to genetically engineered death traps.

Technologies such as germ-line editing, particularly in humans and the species upon which we depend, have to be examined very carefully on a case-by-case basis. Eugenic genetic engineering and/or cloning, or using other genetic reproductive technologies for "brave new world" utopian aims is a key potential threat to long term ecosystemic viability that needs to be avoided, because it is most likely to lead to irreversible loss of characteristics essential to the long-term adaptiveness of both human beings and the species upon which we depend for our future survival.

CRISPR, a new gene editing technology based on a key bacterial immune system, has already been shown to be able to make changes in specific genes and yet enable the birth of live gene-edited primate offspring, leading to the potential to make selective changes to genes such as those causing diseases in humans. But this technology has to be very carefully assessed. Combining it with 'gene drive' techniques, which can selectively result in the edited genes being transmitted to virtually all offspring when an organism containing the edited changes mates and produces offspring, rather than the natural 50-50 ratio, could eliminate a disease such as malaria by precipitating an explosive loss of mosquito fertility, but could also cause irreversible changes to both species and ecosystems. Such gene drive mechanisms could continue to cause collateral damage, resulting in the loss of essential characteristics in species upon which depend or even our own species. A decade ago Monsanto tried to introduce 'terminator technology' which would cause seeds produced by the company to become genetically infertile in the second generation leading to a similar risk of irreversible loss if the natural varieties ceased to be cultivated on an adequate scale by farmers dependent on the technology.

Resplendence is the natural paradigm successor to religion, in which we cherish and replenish the Earth throughout the generations of the diversity of life, no longer seeing through a glass darkly, but now face-to-face, coming into coherence with our sexually-immortal condition, becoming the source of a collective illumination of enlightenment, both scientific and visionary, to flower the future generations and sustain the epoch of paradise on Earth.

