

Emergent Meaning Cosmology: A Leap in Thought

From Eternal Nonbeing to the Testing of Meaning in Reality

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Reality does not cease to exist because humanity has yet to articulate it.

The task of cosmology is not to manufacture reality, but to approach it as closely as possible and explain its relationship to life, civilization, and the future.

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The Position of This Book

Emergent Meaning Cosmology: A Leap in Thought is neither the first public entry point into Civilization Leap nor a prerequisite axiom for establishing its institutions, engineering, and practical proposals. Within the theoretical sequence of Emergent Meaning Cosmology, it is a work of in-depth philosophical reading and research into the foundations of thought for readers who wish to pursue further questions about the foundations of existence, life, meaning, and civilization. Its metaphysical propositions concerning eternity, primordial meaning, superconsciousness, the soul, and the manifestation chain may be developed in full, but must also remain openly subject to philosophical criticism, alternative explanations, and tests of their consequences in reality.

Renewed thinking profoundly affects how civilization designs institutions, uses technology, and understands the future. Yet Civilization Leap does not require members of the public, researchers, or practitioners to first accept every metaphysical proposition in this book. Actual risks, the boundaries of rights, institutional arrangements, and engineering proposals must still stand on their own facts, logic, and validation. This book undertakes a deeper task: to propose an interpretation of existence, meaning, and civilization's direction, and explain how, if it holds, it would change our starting point for understanding life, technology, and the future.

Preface

Core Terms Explained (Optional; Consult as Needed)

A Leap in Thought: This is not accepting a fixed set of answers. It is reexamining the standards by which we understand the world, life, technology, and civilization. It involves at least three changes: no longer treating people merely as functional tools; no longer automatically equating growth in capability with civilizational advancement; and no longer reducing meaning to subjective emotion or computable indicators. This book goes on to propose stronger metaphysical interpretations. Readers may accept, question, or reject them while continuing to discuss Civilization Leap's practical issues.

Chapter 1 Epistemological Boundaries and the Position of the Framework

Chapter 2 Resonances across Civilizations

Chapter 3 Why Empirical Science Alone Cannot Adjudicate Primordial Meaning, Yet Rational Comparison Remains Possible

Chapter 4 The Main Cosmological Chain and the Manifestation Chain

Note: For public communication, this book uses the life segment of the manifestation chain (eternity → primordial meaning → universe → superconsciousness → soul → world → human heart → consciousness → lived meaning). For the full fourteen-link manifestation chain, extending to multiscale coordination, Civilization Leap, and interstellar meaning emergence, see Emergent Meaning Cosmology, Academic Edition v6.5. The two segments are entirely isomorphic; this book simply stops at the scene of life.

1. Eternity → Primordial Meaning
2. Primordial Meaning → Universe
3. Universe → Superconsciousness
4. Superconsciousness → Soul
5. Soul → World
6. World → Human Heart

7. Human Heart → Consciousness
8. Consciousness → Lived Meaning
9. Lived Meaning → Structural Meaning
10. Structural Meaning → Meaning in Practice

Chapter 5 Civilization Leap

How A Leap in Thought enters Civilization Leap: The first four chapters propose a deeper interpretation of existence and meaning. Chapter 5 begins to discuss how, if these interpretations hold, they would affect judgments about civilization's direction and structure. Actual institutions must still stand independently on facts, rights, law, engineering, and validation. Philosophical foundations offer a deeper interpretation; they do not replace practical argument.

Chapter 6 Humans and AI: Boundaries of Present Collaboration and Future Symbiosis

Chapter 7 Civilizational Perpetuity

Conclusion

Further Reading and Shared Participation: This book is not the endpoint of thought. It belongs to the in-depth philosophical reading track. Readers may continue from different directions, including everyday life, civilizational institutions, interdisciplinary research, competing theories, and practical validation.

When your immediate experience is exhaustion, emptiness, anxiety, and loss of direction → A Leap in Thought and A Leap in Thought: Practice Manual

When you wish to pursue the deeper foundations of existence, meaning, and civilization → this book (Emergent Meaning Cosmology: A Leap in Thought)

When you wish to understand why civilization must change and how to move into institutions and engineering → Civilization Leap: The Path of Civilization in the AGI Era (Complete Five-Volume Set) and related research

When you wish to investigate further how meaning is generated, carried forward, destabilized, and reorganized → Meaning Dynamics and related research

When you wish to explore relationships, judgment, the human heart, and feedback from reality → The Human Heart

There is no need to read these in order, or to accept this book first. Further reading is intended not to keep people within the system, but to keep questions open and allow different disciplines, different traditions, and actual outcomes genuinely to change the theory.

Appendix 1: Overview of the Manifestation Chain (Conceptual Relationship Map)

Appendix 2: Index of Representative Sources (Citation Verification Round)

Eternity may not need our understanding in order to exist, yet perhaps it has always waited to be heard more clearly.

What this book seeks to accomplish is precisely an inquiry that moves from the depths of silence into the reality of life.

Preface

What Cosmology Seeks to Explain Is a Reality, Not an Idea

What Emergent Meaning Cosmology seeks to explain is not a conceptual product that changes with the age, knowledge, or powers of understanding. It is a reality that is already there. Its existence does not depend on whether humanity articulates, understands, or acknowledges it; it has always been there, coexisting with eternity.

What cosmology does is not manufacture reality, but approach it as closely as finite language allows and explain its relationship to the world, human beings, civilization, and the future.

This means that Emergent Meaning Cosmology is not, in the first instance, an intellectual tool temporarily assembled for practical use, nor a theoretical design that puts utilitarian purposes first. It is more like an inquiry: as humanity continually confronts questions of the universe, life, consciousness, meaning, civilization, and the future, can it gradually approach, beyond the multitude of explanations, a reality that is deeper, more stable, and less subject to changes in human cognition?

This work took shape through precisely that inquiry. It is not satisfied with asking only how the world works, nor does it regard human beings as merely more complex functional entities. It asks further: why does existence unfold rather than remain silent? Why does life not stop at mere adaptation? Why do people repeatedly ask what is worthwhile?

Why is the world not simply an accumulation of facts, but a place where meaning becomes manifest? Why does civilization repeatedly lose its balance between meaning and structure? Why can the future not be understood simply as an extension of time, but instead in terms of whether it remains accessible?

These questions may appear scattered, but all press toward the same issue: why existence unfolds, why life bears responsibility, why meaning becomes manifest, and where civilization should go.

Thus Emergent Meaning Cosmology is first of all a book about existence and unfolding. It seeks to explain the relationships among eternity, primordial meaning, the universe, superconsciousness, the soul, and the world; why the world is not mere background, why human beings are not mere tools, and why stronger systems alone do not automatically bring civilization to maturity. In this sense, it is first of all a work of ontological inquiry.

Yet it cannot remain only at the ontological level. If a higher-level reality cannot enter life, the human heart, actual experience, and civilizational structures, then every account of eternity, primordial meaning, and the unfolding of the universe may still amount to no more than a statement made from on high.

The book must therefore go on to explain how a higher direction enters the world, how the world touches the human heart, how the heart forms lived meaning through consciousness, how lived meaning enters structural meaning, and how structural meaning, in turn, is tested, distorted, corrected, or illuminated anew in reality.

In other words, this work is concerned not only with “why existence is as it is,” but also with “how this reality enters the actual human condition.”

It seeks not only to explain the universe, but also to explain why, in the world, people experience worth, pain, calling, responsibility, inner emptiness, hope, futurity, and loss; why the problems of civilization are ultimately not only problems of resources, institutions, or technology, but repeatedly return to questions of meaning, carrying forward, subjects, and the future.

The book must also explicitly acknowledge its limits. It does not directly provide empirical determinations of the truth of metaphysical propositions. Concepts such as eternity, primordial meaning, superconsciousness, and the soul do not belong to the level of objects directly measurable by empirical science. They are put forward primarily as metaphysical postulates.

This does not weaken the book; it makes it more honest. It does not pretend to have accomplished at the empirical level what it has not actually accomplished. Its relationship to science is one of compatibility and connection, not replacement or opposition. Science provides powerful explanations of “how things work” in the empirical world. This book attempts to address higher-level questions: “why unfold,” “why bear responsibility,” “why is something worthwhile,” and “why must the future not be closed off.”

Thus Emergent Meaning Cosmology is not a closed set of answers. It does not present itself as a final resolution, or regard any current formulation as final possession of reality. It is more like a path that approaches reality as closely as possible.

This openness does not imply weakness. It means fidelity to the very object it confronts. If reality itself precedes and is independent of humanity, then every human formulation should retain humility. Humility is not retreat. It is acknowledgment that all we can do is keep approaching, rather than rashly announce that the task is complete.

What this book truly seeks to preserve is not a handful of lofty terms in themselves, but a deeper line of understanding: existence is not a neutral blank; unfolding is not purely accidental noise; life is not merely a functional node; the human heart is not an accessory emotional layer; the future is not naturally open; and civilization does not automatically attain greater maturity merely by continually strengthening its systems.

If these judgments can gradually be established, Emergent Meaning Cosmology will be more than an abstract work of cosmology. It will become a deeper way of understanding: one that enables people to reconsider their place in the world, reconsider why civilization's difficulties are not only external, and reconsider why the future is not simply something to await, but something to protect, calibrate, and enter together.

Thus what this book ultimately seeks to explain is not a lofty answer for people to gaze up at, but a deeper set of relationships: between eternity and unfolding; between primordial meaning and the universe; between the soul and the world; among the human heart, consciousness, and lived meaning; between structure and testing in reality; and among human beings, civilization, and the future.

If these relationships can gradually be explained, humanity may regain, amid disorder and acceleration, a way of understanding less prone to losing its bearings.

To prevent readers from pulling the book's key concepts back into familiar, habitual contexts, a brief explanation of several core terms is still needed first.

The book begins from humanity's actual condition as the principal self-reflective subjects and bearers of meaning in currently known civilization, and discusses the relationships among existence, meaning, life, civilization, and the future. It does not claim already to possess the universe's ultimate purpose, or rule out in advance other subjects that may bear meaning in the future, including nonhuman life or higher forms of intelligent existence.

What it attempts to establish, then, is not a final truth demanding unconditional acceptance, but a higher-order interpretive framework addressed to the present condition of human civilization. Its concern is not to suppress every question with some abstract answer. It is to explain as far as possible which ways of understanding, within the reality accessible to us now, are less likely to send civilization off course; which structures are more likely to sustain life, preserve the future, and prevent meaning from being easily exhausted.

For this very reason, although the book begins with higher-level questions of eternity, primordial meaning, the universe, and life, it will never remain at the level of lofty statements alone. Ultimately it must return to human beings, civilization, and actual consequences, and to the core problems already pressing upon humanity today: what is thinning life, what is hollowing out structures, and what is making the future increasingly difficult for most lives genuinely to enter?

Core Terms Explained (Optional; Consult as Needed)

You do not need to memorize these terms on a first reading. The main text will explain them again when they are actually needed; this section is only for reference. Relationships that can be explained in existing philosophical or everyday language are not given new names merely for the sake of a tidy system. The terms retained here occupy only those theoretical positions for which existing language cannot readily substitute.

Eternity

Eternity does not mean “existing forever” through an infinite extension of time, nor is it an object within the empirical world. In this book, “eternity” refers to a foundational mode of existence prior to the world, prior to life, and prior to every articulable distinction between being and nonbeing.

Nonbeing (Eternal Nonbeing)

In this book, “nonbeing” means neither nothingness nor lack, nor the absence experienced in everyday life as “loss” or “emptiness.” It refers to a foundational mode of existence that is undifferentiated, not constituted as an object, and not yet manifest: the ground prior to the establishment of every subsequent distinction between being and nonbeing.

Primordial Meaning

Primordial meaning is not a value judgment added to the world after the fact, a particular purpose, or the command of a personified will. It is the prior ground of eternal nonbeing's unfolding into existent being: the root of all meaning, the ground of the source of all things. In relational terms, primordial meaning is the foundational relationship between nonbeing and being; in terms of unfolding, it is the foundational impetus for eternity's self-manifestation, self-unfolding, and self-resonance.

Universe

The universe is not merely a mechanical stage of matter and spacetime. In this book, “universe” means the total field in which primordial meaning unfolds difference, change, order, levels, and complexity. It is primordial meaning's first manifestation as a whole.

Superconsciousness

Superconsciousness is not an enlargement of individual consciousness, nor is it the personal God of conventional religious discourse. It is the mirror of holistic contemplation through which eternity faces its own unfolding, keeping the universe's unfolding from lapsing into dispersal.

Soul

The soul is neither a one-off psychological fragment nor a fleeting stream of consciousness. It is the way primordial meaning enters individual life through superconsciousness: first the origin of an individual perspective, and only subsequently a gradually developing bearer of accumulated experience and continuity.

World

“World” is not simply a synonym for “universe.” The universe is the total field of unfolding and exists independently of individual experience. The world is the situated interface with reality that an individual life actually encounters after entering spacetime, relationships, embodiment, culture, and institutions. Thus the world is not an object created by the soul. Yet “the world as world,” that is, the interface with reality that

carries weight, response, constraints, and the pressure of meaning, truly comes into being for an individual life only after that life enters it.

Human Heart

The human heart is not merely an emotional layer or another name for consciousness. It is the nexus of value-sensing, choices concerning meaning, verification in reality, and directional calibration. It is the first crucial site where primordial meaning enters an individual life and begins to become manifest in the real world. All subsequent unfolding in reality, whether at the level of individual life or civilizational structure, ultimately reveals its gains and losses at this nexus of the human heart.

First-Reflected Meaning

First-reflected meaning is neither fully formed lived meaning nor “one’s original aspiration” in the ordinary sense. It is the first finite reflection formed in the human heart after primordial meaning enters an individual life, the heart’s high point closest to a higher direction. Interaction with the world may obscure it, press it down, or cause it to be misrecognized, but does not thereby make it disappear altogether. Precisely because this first reflection remains, life always retains a point of access to renewed illumination, recalibration, and a return to a higher direction.

Consciousness

Consciousness is not the soul itself, nor the entirety of the human heart. It is the window that illuminates and brings into focus the world, the heart, the body, relationships, and circumstances here and now, organizing them into present experience.

Lived Meaning

Lived meaning is not primordial meaning itself, nor the direct arrival of an abstract eternity. It is the form of meaning concerning “what is worthwhile here and now” that people develop in concrete circumstances through the heart’s sensing and consciousness’s illumination. It is always situated, relational, costly, and finite.

Structural Meaning

Structural meaning is not ultimate meaning. It is the organized form of lived meaning after it enters language, roles, relationships, institutions, collaboration, and the order of a community. It allows “what is worthwhile” to pass beyond an individual’s present moment and be carried forward by civilization.

Meaning in Practice

Meaning in practice is neither merely a subjective feeling nor a purely logical truth value. It is meaning’s actual efficacy in real action, relationships, consequences, and feedback over time. It is both the endpoint and the feedback point of the manifestation chain.

Bearer of Meaning

A bearer of meaning is a being capable of perceiving meaning, responding to it, and bearing the consequences of choices made for its sake. At the current stage of civilization, human beings are the principal known bearers of meaning. The book does not presuppose that this is the only possible form of bearing meaning.

Carrying Forward

Carrying forward is not simply care or short-term accommodation. It is civilization's capacity to prevent lives, paths, roles, contributions, and futures from being easily fragmented, thinned, or reduced to zero.

Drift

Drift is the condition in which a link in the manifestation chain deviates from a higher direction, obstructing the generation of meaning, rupturing its carrying forward, or closing off the future. Drift may occur at the level of the human heart, as when first-reflected meaning is obscured, or at the structural level, as when institutions depart from meaning.

Reduction to Zero

Reduction to zero means that an individual's or group's contributions of meaning are systematically ignored, erased, or prevented from entering structures that carry them forward, so that the weight of those lives disappears from civilization. It is the most severe consequence of a failure to carry forward.

Thickening of Life

The thickening of life is not an increase in the number of experiences or a richer emotional life. It is the process by which life gains greater weight and thicker subjecthood through paths, roles, contributions, accumulation over time, and continuity into the future. It prescribes no single way of living.

Strengthening the Subject

Strengthening the subject is not simply expanding capabilities or adapting to systems more efficiently. It is strengthening the capacity for judgment, for bearing responsibility, for entering reality, for calibrating the human heart, and for generating futures, as well as the depth of one's roles.

Strengthening the System

Strengthening the system means increasing capacities for organizational coordination, resource control, structural replication, behavioral guidance, path selection, and optimization and prediction. It matters greatly, but does not automatically amount to civilizational advancement or to strengthening the subject.

An Accessible Future

An accessible future is not a subjective hope, but a condition of civilizational structure. It means the future remains open to individuals, groups, emerging forces, and new structures, rather than being closed off in advance by a few paths or existing structures.

Symbiosis

In this book, "symbiosis" is first a direction for relationships, not advance recognition of current AI's subjecthood. On present evidence, human beings are the actual subjects of meaning and responsibility, while AI participates primarily as an extension of capabilities that can be authorized. Only if sufficient evidence of subjecthood appears in the future should symbiotic relationships between subjects be reconsidered.

A Shared Future

A shared future means, first, that civilization's future cannot be permanently monopolized by any single technology, organization, nation, or existing structure. Current AI is not granted subject status in advance. If new, confirmable subjects emerge in the future, a shared future would then extend to different subjects' ability to enter the future within the boundaries of rights, responsibilities, and authorization.

Civilization Leap

Civilization Leap is not merely a technological upgrade or linear growth toward being “stronger, faster, and bigger.” It is the process through which civilization steps beyond old ways of understanding and, guided by a higher direction, reinterprets itself, organizes reality, and enters the future.

Civilizational Perpetuity

Civilizational Perpetuity is not simply living longer or keeping civilization alive with premium equipment. It is a mature civilizational condition that is open, stable, capable of correcting its course, able to extend across generations, and able to enter the future at larger scales.

Meaning Emergence

Meaning emergence is neither vague lyricism nor a simple religious promise. It is the condition and process through which genuine participation, genuine contribution, and genuine responses from life are not easily reduced to zero, but enter a longer-range resonance of existence.

Judgment, Prioritization, and Final Integration

Judgment means distinguishing what belongs to a higher direction, what is merely a local optimum, and what is drifting off course. Prioritization means making clear, when multiple goals conflict, what takes precedence, what yields, and what cannot be sacrificed. Final integration means that every process, at its conclusion, returns to the coordinates of outcomes and the direction of civilization, so that an overall judgment can be made about its actual consequences.

These terms are not intended to add to the burden of understanding. They are meant to prevent the objects this book confronts from being absorbed into inappropriate old contexts at the very start of reading. Once the terms have been provisionally clarified, the next step is no longer merely to explain words, but to explain what level of questions this book is actually addressing.

Chapter 1 Epistemological Boundaries and the Position of the Framework

1. What Does Emergent Meaning Cosmology Actually Seek to Explain?

Before entering the subject matter of this book, we must first clarify what exactly it seeks to explain, where its boundaries lie, and what it does not attempt to replace.

Any work that concerns eternity, primordial meaning, the universe, life, the human heart, civilization, and the future must first answer a question: what exactly is it explaining?

If this is not made clear at the outset, the entire book can easily be misunderstood. It may be taken as a substitute for religion, a pseudoscientific derivation, pure philosophical lyricism, or a hybrid text that forcibly stitches cosmology, the problem of consciousness, and judgments about civilization together.

Once that happens, its different levels quickly become confused: demands appropriate to empirical objects are placed on the foundational level; judgments about civilization are interrogated as if they were detailed institutional rules; poetic approximations are mistaken for definitions themselves; and the actual main chain loses its proper place amid these misplaced interpretations.

The task of this chapter, therefore, is not to secure some position of authority for the book, but to make its own position as clear as possible.

Emergent Meaning Cosmology is not doing the same kind of work at every level. It contains at least four interconnected but distinct levels:

- The level of ontological postulates
- The level of the manifestation chain
- The level of connections with science
- The level of civilizational understanding

Only by distinguishing these four can the book as a whole stand firmly.

2. Ontological Postulates: The Book's Highest Starting Point

The highest level of Emergent Meaning Cosmology is that of ontological postulates. It addresses not localized phenomena in the empirical world, but the root of existence and the source of unfolding. Its core concepts include eternity, eternal nonbeing, primordial meaning, superconsciousness, and the soul.

These concepts are not, in the first instance, empirical objects, nor should they be disguised as physical entities that can be directly measured experimentally. They are proposals at the metaphysical level.

The book begins at this level not to evade empirical explanation, but because, without returning to it, many deeper questions cannot truly be posed: why does existence unfold rather than remain silent? Why is there “being,” rather than only “nonbeing”? Why does life eventually reach the point of becoming a bearer of meaning? Why do civilization's problems ultimately press toward questions of direction, carrying forward, and the future?

Thus eternity, eternal nonbeing, primordial meaning, superconsciousness, and the soul have the status in this book not primarily of “proven objects” in the sense of empirical science, but of ontological postulates. They are retained not because an experiment has directly demonstrated them, but because, to explain the deeper continuity among existence, life, meaning, and civilization, the framework needs to be able to propose these concepts.

Acknowledging this does not weaken the book. On the contrary, it makes it more honest. It does not pretend to have completed work at the empirical level that it has not completed. It acknowledges that ontological questions do not belong entirely to the methods of the empirical level.

Criteria for Selecting Ontological Postulates

The book does not, however, understand ontological postulates as lofty terms that can be added arbitrarily. To enter its level of postulates, a concept should meet at least four criteria.

First, indispensability. Removing it would create a rupture difficult to repair in the overall continuous explanation of existence, life, meaning, and civilization.

Second, logical parsimony. It is not an ornamental term added to create an air of mystery, but a necessary point of support for higher-level questions without introducing redundancy.

Third, cross-level fitness. It can address questions at the foundational level and also support the manifestation chain, civilizational understanding, and tests in reality below it, without rapidly losing explanatory power when it enters specific levels.

Fourth, calibratability. When a postulate enters the manifestation chain and the civilizational level, it can produce consequences testable in reality, even if the postulate itself cannot be directly tested. This keeps it from being a lofty stipulation suspended above reality and allows it to demonstrate its discriminating power once it enters reality.

The book therefore retains eternity, primordial meaning, superconsciousness, and the soul not because they have been conclusively proven empirically, but because, within the present framework, they remain interpretive postulates with relatively little redundancy, strong continuity across levels, and substantial supporting power. Acknowledging this does not weaken the book; it makes it more clear-eyed. These concepts are retained not as an arbitrary preference, but on a judgment of their necessity within the explanatory structure.

3. The Manifestation Chain: How Higher Levels Enter the Reality of Life

If the book contained only ontological postulates, it would remain on high. It might explain why existence unfolds, but not yet how that unfolding enters individual life, the human heart, actual experience, and the world of civilization. The book therefore needs a second level: the manifestation chain.

This level addresses not the root of existence itself, but how a higher-level direction enters the actual human condition step by step. This main chain can be written as:

Eternity → Primordial Meaning → Universe → Superconsciousness → Soul → World → Human Heart → Consciousness → Lived Meaning → Structural Meaning → Meaning in Practice

What this chain seeks to explain is that primordial meaning does not fall directly into life as a ready-made answer; the world does not automatically generate meaning; the human heart is the nexus of value-sensing, choices concerning meaning, verification in reality, and directional calibration; and consciousness is the window that brings weight into present experience.

Lived meaning is the form of meaning concerning “what is worthwhile here and now”; structural meaning is the organized form of this “worth” after it enters language, roles, relationships, institutions, and communal order; meaning in practice is its actual efficacy as revealed after it has been confirmed, corrected, or shattered in action, relationships, consequences, and feedback over time.

Within the human heart, a further high point should be distinguished: first-reflected meaning. This is the first finite reflection formed in the heart after primordial meaning enters an individual life. It is neither fully formed lived meaning nor the entirety of the heart's actual activity. It is the heart's high point closest to a higher direction, the level that should least readily be betrayed.

Interaction with the world may obscure, suppress, misrecognize, or distort it, but does not thereby make it disappear altogether. Precisely because this first reflection remains, life always retains the possibility of renewed illumination, recalibration, and return to a higher direction.

The actual work of the manifestation-chain level, then, is to connect high-level ontological questions with questions of actual life. Without it, Emergent Meaning Cosmology could explain only existence. With it, the framework begins to explain why life is gripped by meaning, why the human heart becomes a nexus, why civilization becomes hollow through imbalances of meaning, and why the future continually returns to the question of carrying forward.

4. Connections with Science: Compatibility, Connections, and Bridges

To stand within the context of modern knowledge, Emergent Meaning Cosmology cannot oppose science. Yet neither can it take a handful of scientific terms, exploratory hypotheses, or questions at science's boundaries as direct proof that ontological propositions have been empirically established as true. The book therefore needs a third level: connections with science.

This level addresses not science's own internal development, but the book's compatibility, points of connection, and heuristic bridges with science. It explains why some empirical research presses higher-level questions upon us anew; why certain boundaries of science do not weaken science but instead reveal the need for higher-level coordinates; and why certain exploratory interfaces can be regarded as bridges rather than endpoints.

Strict care is required at this level, because there are two things the book must not do.

First, it must not negate science. Wherever cosmology, evolutionary theory, neuroscience, cognitive science, or complex-systems research is concerned, science has an irreplaceable explanatory authority within its own domain. The book cannot bypass empirical research to make claims about empirical details.

Second, the level of connections with science must not become the book's foundation. Exploratory scientific clues or questions at science's boundaries cannot be disguised as conclusions proving metaphysical postulates.

That would only undermine the stability of the entire system.

Every science-related section should therefore follow the same principle: first acknowledge how far science has already explained; then identify why higher-level questions remain; and finally explain that the book is not replacing science here, but offering a higher-level orientation.

A Concrete Example of Connections with Science

Consider the Big Bang model. Modern cosmology uses it to explain the early evolution of the observable universe: the universe was once in an extremely dense and hot early state, and through subsequent expansion and cooling gradually formed the particles, atoms, stars, galaxies, and larger-scale structures that followed. This is a powerful explanation offered by science at the empirical level. It answers “how” the universe evolved.

The book does not challenge this explanation. Instead, it poses a separate metaphysical question: why does a universe capable of unfolding exist, and does that unfolding require a deeper explanation? Here modern cosmology chiefly explains how the observable universe evolves and the physical mechanisms involved. The book's inquiry into foundations is not a scientific conclusion and cannot, in turn, replace physical explanations. These two kinds of question may be adjacent, but neither can masquerade as proof of the other.

This is how the level of connections with science works: metaphysical propositions do not replace scientific explanations, and scientific explanations do not dissolve metaphysical inquiry. Instead, the respective levels

of their objects are acknowledged, and bridges are built at the boundaries. Such bridging allows the book to remain in dialogue with modern knowledge without losing the depth of its own inquiry.

5. Civilizational Understanding: Why Human Beings, Civilization, and the Future Receive a New Explanation

If Emergent Meaning Cosmology contained only the first three levels, it might still be merely a high-level framework. It would certainly already have sufficient depth and explanatory power, yet might not truly explain what any of this has to do with human beings, civilization, and the future. The book therefore needs a fourth level: civilizational understanding.

This level addresses neither the root of existence nor the manifestation chain itself, but how civilization is to be understood anew once people are understood as bearers of meaning.

In other words, the book does not directly offer institutional designs. It first explains why civilization's problems cannot be understood solely as resource problems, why human beings are not merely functional nodes, and why strengthening the system cannot automatically amount to civilizational advancement.

It must also explain why the world ultimately raises within life the question of “what is worthwhile”; why the future is not naturally open, but can be closed off in advance by structures; and why civilization's real difficulty often lies not in a lack of power, but in a long-standing imbalance between meaning and structure.

Thus, although this is not an institutional handbook, it does change how people understand institutions, governance, technology, education, culture, and the future. It starts not from particular applications, but from a deeper relationship among existence, life, and meaning, to explain anew why so many questions within civilization arise.

In this sense, the book does not directly replace subsequent texts on civilization, but redefines the coordinates for understanding civilization in those texts.

For once we acknowledge that existence is not purely neutral; that primordial meaning gives unfolding a directional ground; that the world is the actual interface where meaning becomes manifest; that the human heart is the nexus of value-sensing and directional calibration; and that structures gradually become hollow if they cannot sustain life, then humanity's understanding of civilization, the future, and growth will also change substantially. This is the book's true position at the level of civilizational understanding.

6. The Book's Position: An Open Framework, Not a Closed Answer

Through these four levels, the position of Emergent Meaning Cosmology can now be stated more clearly.

It is not an ultimate theory in the natural-scientific sense, a unique revelation in the religious sense, pure philosophical lyricism, or an operating manual that directly specifies institutional details. Its more precise position is:

An open metaphysical interpretive framework that maintains an interface with civilizational understanding.

“Interpretive framework” does not mean “covering everything,” nor replacing the professional judgments of individual disciplines. It seeks to explain the relationship between existence and unfolding; between life and bearing meaning; among the world, the human heart, consciousness, and meaning's manifestation; and why these metaphysical judgments affect civilization's direction.

“Open” means that it does not present any current formulation as a final resolution. It accepts criticism, correction, and feedback from reality. It must remain open precisely because one of the deeper principles it seeks to preserve is that the future should not be frozen prematurely.

Thus the proposition this chapter ultimately seeks to establish is:

Emergent Meaning Cosmology is not a closed set of answers, but an open metaphysical interpretive framework composed jointly of ontological postulates, relationships of manifestation, interfaces with science, and civilizational understanding. It makes strong judgments, but must also show readers the epistemological status of those judgments, alternative explanations, and the conditions under which they can be revised.

7. The Strong Version, the Weak Version, and Independence in Reality

The book must preserve three levels simultaneously. The strong version claims that primordial meaning, superconsciousness, the soul, and the manifestation chain describe the real structure of existence. This is its fullest metaphysical position, and the part that bears the greatest burden of argument.

The weak version does not require readers to accept those ontological commitments. It proposes only a philosophical judgment with a lower threshold: life, relationships, responsibility, and civilization's purposes cannot be fully accounted for in terms of efficiency, price, function, or system capability; technology and institutions must preserve judgment, relationships, meaning, and a future for real subjects.

Independence in reality further requires that Civilization Leap's judgments about continued existence, boundaries of rights, institutional research, and engineering validation not rest on the premise that the strong version has already been proven. Metaphysical theory may offer a deeper interpretation, but cannot do the argumentative work required of facts, law, institutions, and engineering themselves. If future research overturns the strong version, practical judgments independently established do not automatically become invalid. Conversely, the effectiveness of actual mechanisms does not prove the strong metaphysical propositions retrospectively.

Although the framework's position has now been explained, why this reality is not being encountered for the first time today still requires further exploration.

Chapter 2 Resonances across Civilizations

1. How Different Civilizations Respond to Similar Fundamental Questions

Before turning to “primordial meaning,” one temptation must be set aside: we cannot infer in advance that different civilizations are actually saying the same thing simply because they all ask about life, value, suffering, responsibility, and transcendence. Similar questions do not mean identical ontologies; structural analogy does not mean conceptual synonymy.

The strong version of Emergent Meaning Cosmology holds that behind existence lies a ground of meaning prior to individual utility. Yet different civilizational traditions cannot be used to prove this judgment. Their more appropriate role is to provide stress tests: which questions recur throughout human history, which concepts hold only within particular traditions, and which differences would force this book to revise its translations, boundaries, or even foundational propositions?

Thus “resonance” in this chapter means only comparable structures of questions. It does not mean that “all religions share one source,” nor presuppose a shared ontology across all traditions. If scholars within a tradition identify a forced merger of incommensurable concepts, the relevant explanation must be narrowed or rewritten; objections must not be renamed and then absorbed.

2. Resonances in Different Civilizational Traditions

In Chinese civilization, people's grasp of the relationship among a higher order, relational responsibilities, and everyday self-cultivation has long been expressed in different languages. Confucian traditions often place *ren* (humaneness), ritual propriety, responsibility, self-cultivation, and fitting responses within relationships at the center. The question of “what is worthwhile” thus does not remain an abstract idea, but continually enters the family, community, social order, and formation of character. Daoist traditions place greater emphasis on the inexhaustibility of the *Dao*, following what is natural, avoiding excessive forcing, and vigilance toward rigid adherence to principles.

From this book's perspective, Confucian, Daoist, and other traditions can enter into dialogue with the claim that “meaning cannot be fully accounted for by utility.” But this does not warrant declaring that they have already articulated “primordial meaning.” Concepts such as *ren*, *li* (ritual propriety), *Dao*, and *ziran* (naturalness) each have their own history, arguments, and place in practice. The comparison indicates only possible structural proximity; it does not absorb them into a single term.

Within Indian intellectual traditions, the relationships between human beings and the universe, individual life and liberation, and suffering and ultimate freedom have long held an exceptionally important place. Many classical Indian philosophical traditions regard “freedom from suffering,” “going beyond rebirth,” and “approaching liberation” as among life's highest aims, and have sustained debates about self, universe, ignorance, practice, and knowledge. At the same time, traditional Indian thought often understands life as an ordered arrangement among multiple ends, rather than the release of a single desire.

From this book's perspective, Indian traditions can help test a weaker judgment: life's endpoint need not be immediate possession and utilitarian satisfaction. Yet their answers concerning self, universe, rebirth, liberation, and ultimate reality differ enormously, and cannot be compressed into a common proof of “primordial meaning.”

In many African ethical traditions and conceptions of personhood, human value is understood not primarily as the self-possession of an isolated individual, but more often through community, responsibility, interdependence, and concern for others' well-being. Some traditions even regard “becoming a true person” as a process to be continually realized through social life, the practice of responsibility, and growth in personhood, rather than simply an established biological fact.

The importance of these African ethical and personhood traditions lies in their reminder that no single modern individualist interpretation exhausts the relationships between individuals and relationships, or between personhood and community. They can expand the social dimension of “bearing meaning,” but cannot be reduced to a single African ontology, much less automatically prove this book's metaphysical foundations.

In Islamic civilization, the world is not merely a neutral collection of things; it is also often understood as a field filled with “signs.” In scripture, āyah refers to a verse and is also often understood as a “sign” or “mark” revealing divine authority and the meaning of existence. In Sufi traditions, this higher reality is often further experienced as a divine presence approached through spiritual practice, purification, and inward experience.

These concepts in Islamic traditions can enter into dialogue with the book's question of why “the world is more than a collection of usable objects.” Yet āyah, revelation, and divine presence are not the same concepts as the book's “primordial meaning.” What truly matters is preserving differences. Once differences disappear, comparison becomes nothing more than a search for similar words to support a predetermined theory.

In some Indigenous studies and living traditions, land, ancestors, descendants, and nonhuman life are understood as parts of a network of relationships rather than isolated resources. Such material challenges the book not by supplying proof of “primordial meaning,” but by forcing it to acknowledge that meaning, responsibility, and the boundaries of subjecthood may be profoundly relational, place-specific, and intergenerational. Any universalizing formulation must remain open to correction by scholars and communities within those traditions.

In European intellectual traditions, inquiry into “what makes a life worth living” has likewise long continued. Aristotle understands eudaimonia as the highest end of “living well” or “living worthily.” It is not momentary pleasure, but closely connected with activity in accordance with virtue over the whole of a life. In the modern period, Romanticism reacted against purely rationalized, standardized, and materialized ways of understanding, renewing the emphasis on individual experience, emotion, imagination, nature, spiritual intensity, and the unique life that cannot be flattened.

European intellectual traditions also contain competing paths. Aristotelian flourishing and Romanticism's emphasis on inwardness and the uniqueness of life can enter into partial dialogue with the book. Yet they do not share a single, unified “higher being,” and cannot be used as historical endorsement of its metaphysical propositions.

3. What Can Be Compared Is Recurring Questions, Not a Common Source

The safest way to bring these materials together is not to extract a “shared doctrine,” but to identify several recurring questions: can life be fully explained by utility? How do individuals and relationships jointly constitute personhood? How do suffering, responsibility, and transcendence change judgments of “worth”? How do practice, self-cultivation, and institutions bring abstract values into life?

Different traditions' answers may be compatible, or may directly conflict. Precisely this conflict is valuable for research: it can reveal which judgments in Emergent Meaning Cosmology are simply its own position, which may have broader explanatory power, and which must be narrowed because of failed translation or overly strong cultural premises.

The status of cross-civilizational material in this book is therefore not “proof of one and the same reality,” but a source of comparison, counterexamples, and revision. A global scope does not mean translating all traditions into this text's language. It means allowing different traditions genuinely to change the text.

4. Resonance Is Not Proof

Cross-civilizational material is not proof of primordial meaning. At most, it shows that different civilizations have long faced some similar fundamental questions and developed nonequivalent answers. Its role is to

widen the space of questions, supply competing explanations, and expose failures of translation, not to replace the book's own argument.

The book therefore abandons the assumption that “different civilizations are actually speaking of the same reality.” The strong version may still propose its own ontological interpretation, but must acknowledge that genuinely incommensurable differences may exist between certain traditions. If such differences strike at its core concepts, they should force the propositions to be reopened, rather than being explained away as “actually consistent at a deeper level.”

Likewise, naturalism, empiricism, consequentialism, existentialism, and other secular explanations are not simply “lower-level” paths. Each can explain some of the questions the book addresses, and may be stronger than this book at certain points. The real comparison concerns which explanation has greater explanatory power for which questions, what its costs are, and what counterexamples would make it fail. The value of dialogue across civilizations and theories lies in allowing that comparison truly to take place.

Chapter 3 Why Empirical Science Alone Cannot Adjudicate Primordial Meaning, Yet Rational Comparison Remains Possible

1. Two Misunderstandings

There are two especially common misunderstandings of “primordial meaning.”

One treats it as an object in the empirical world, and therefore demands that it be directly measured, verified, or refuted in the same way as a particle, brain region, or observable mechanism.

The other, because it cannot be directly proven in this way, classifies it as arbitrary imagination, subjective preference, or poetic fiction.

Neither understanding is accurate.

Primordial meaning does not, in the first instance, belong to the level of empirical objects.

It is not a localized object that can be captured by instruments, isolated in experiments, or repeatedly manipulated.

The question it addresses is not “how something in the world operates,” but a question at a higher level:

- Why does existence unfold rather than remain silent?
- Why is there “being,” rather than only “nonbeing”?
- Why does life ultimately reach the point of becoming a bearer of meaning?
- Why are human beings not satisfied with purely functional existence?
- Why does civilization repeatedly return to questions of direction, carrying forward, and the future?

These questions do not indicate that empirical science is incapable of addressing them. Rather, they do not belong entirely to the level of objects that empirical science addresses.

Thus primordial meaning can be neither directly verified nor directly falsified by science.

Science excels at explaining observable, measurable, repeatable, and modelable phenomena and regularities in the empirical world.

It can explain with tremendous power how the universe evolves, how life arises, how the brain functions, how systems couple, and how technology works.

Yet “primordial meaning” is not one localized mechanism within these processes. It is a higher explanatory premise for their possibility as a whole.

Demanding that it be proven in the same way as empirical objects mistakes foundational questions for object-level questions.

Demanding that it automatically become invalid because it cannot be proven that way mistakes empirical truth-testing for the sole measure of all truth.

2. How to Provisionally Retain a Metaphysical Interpretation Rationally

However, the impossibility of direct scientific verification or falsification does not mean that primordial meaning must remain at the level of arbitrary belief.

For propositions at this foundational level, the more important question is not “has it already been directly proven experimentally?” but:

- Does it constitute a more necessary, more consistent, and less arbitrary higher-level explanation?
- Does it connect existence, life, the human heart, and civilization more effectively than the principal alternatives?
- When confronted with objections, does it retain greater explanatory and discriminating power?

In other words, what truly matters here is not being “confirmed” in the empirical sense, but being “more worthy of acknowledgment” in the rational sense.

No new technical term is coined for this judgment. More directly: even if an experiment cannot directly determine a metaphysical interpretation to be true, it can be provisionally retained on rational grounds if it has greater explanatory power than the main alternatives, is more internally consistent, can state its own boundaries, and is willing to be revised or abandoned when a stronger explanation appears.

The grounds for such “provisional retention” differ from those of empirical science, religious traditions, and everyday judgment. These must not be conflated into a single epistemic status.

- Unlike empirical science: Scientific claims are constrained by observation, measurement, models, verification, and peer criticism. A metaphysical interpretation cannot invoke a “higher level” to evade established empirical facts, nor treat the absence of direct measurement as immunity from objection.
- Unlike particular religious traditions: Religious faith may draw authority from a particular tradition's scriptures, revelation, community, and practices, while also containing rich internal interpretations and debates. This book cannot borrow the authority of any tradition as universal proof. It can only offer its own philosophical reasons.
- Unlike ordinary everyday judgment: Here, alternative explanations, counterexamples, conceptual costs, and actual consequences must be laid out publicly. Comparison cannot stop simply because an explanation is “satisfying.”

Thus “acknowledgment” is neither emotional belief nor an end to inquiry. It is a provisional and clear-eyed acknowledgment of greater explanatory power, made while recognizing the boundaries of cognition.

What Standards Are Needed to Provisionally Retain a Metaphysical Interpretation?

The book's “cautious acknowledgment” does not mean ceasing to doubt, nor demanding that metaphysical propositions be “confirmed” as empirical objects are.

It is closer to a cautious acknowledgment: under current conditions, a foundational explanation must meet at least three criteria simultaneously to qualify for retention.

First, explanatory power. It connects questions of existence, life, the human heart, structure, and civilization to a substantial degree, rather than explaining only one localized phenomenon.

Second, consistency. It does not rapidly collapse internally through conceptual confusion, breached boundaries, or misplaced levels.

Third, fitness to reality. Once it enters reality and the civilizational level, it retains discriminating power rather than becoming an empty term that can be retrofitted to any outcome.

Only when all three hold does this book consider a foundational proposition eligible for rational acknowledgment.

3. Why It Cannot Be Reduced to Psychological Projection

Here the book must also confront a stronger alternative explanation: might so-called primordial meaning be merely a subjective projection generated by complex life through evolution in a universe with no intrinsic meaning?

This explanation is not without force. It can indeed explain why certain organisms develop a sense of meaning, value preferences, experiences of responsibility, and imaginings of the future. It can also explain why, in their highly socialized and symbolic lives, people continually elevate particular feelings, judgments, and preferences into language such as “worthwhile,” “must not be betrayed,” and “ought to be borne.”

Yet its explanatory power remains chiefly at the level of how phenomena arise, and may not suffice to explain why these phenomena go on to form normative tensions that cannot readily be compressed, structures of responsibility, and civilizational consequences. In other words, projection theory can explain “why a sense of meaning appears,” but may not sufficiently explain “why certain judgments of meaning constrain action beyond immediate utility,” “why civilization repeatedly treats ruptures in carrying forward, the closure of the future, and the thinning of subjects as real losses,” or “why humanity experiences hollowing out at the structural, rather than merely emotional, level.”

Thus the book does not simply elevate humanity's experience of meaning into the ontology of the universe because people experience it. Rather, without a higher-level ground of meaning, the continuity among meaning phenomena, normative pressure, demands for carrying forward, and civilizational consequences would still be difficult to explain with substantial consistency. Primordial meaning is not a simple projection of psychological experience, but an explanatory response to how these phenomena can cross beyond individual psychology into structure and civilization.

This does not mean that the book has already excluded every alternative explanation through this response. It means only that, at the level now under discussion, treating meaning solely as “psychological projection” is insufficient to address the deeper question the book confronts: why meaning is not merely felt, but enters responsibility, structure, and actual consequences, ultimately pressing upon civilization's future itself.

4. Responding to the Alternative Explanation of Emergentism

Another alternative deserving serious attention is “emergentism”: meaning is an emergent by-product of complex systems (life, brains, societies) and needs no foundational explanation. Emergentism acknowledges that meaning is real, neither an illusion nor merely an epiphenomenon. Yet it holds that meaning's appearance can be fully explained by the self-organization of complex systems, without tracing it to eternity or primordial meaning.

Emergentism's strength is its compatibility with scientific naturalism and its introduction of no supra-empirical entities. The limit of its explanatory power, however, is that it can explain “how” phenomena of meaning appear in complex systems, but struggles to explain why they form a normative force that crosses beyond individuals, enters structures, and constrains action. Emergence can explain “having a sense of meaning,” but finds it harder to explain “why certain judgments of meaning are experienced as ‘this must be so’ rather than ‘this is optional’”; it can explain “the formation of social norms,” but finds it harder to explain “why certain norms are experienced as carrying weight beyond convention.”

The book does not deny emergentism's explanatory power at the level of how phenomena arise. Its claim is that, to connect the entire chain between “a sense of meaning” and “normative force,” and between “psychological experience” and “civilizational consequences,” emergentism alone may still leave an explanatory gap. Primordial meaning, as a foundational explanation, attempts precisely to provide a more coherent response to this gap.

5. Why Primordial Meaning Still Deserves Retention as a Candidate Explanation

The first reason primordial meaning may still be cautiously acknowledged is that it is not an explanation added after unfolding has occurred, but a necessary response to the question of “why unfolding occurs.”

Without primordial meaning, questions of why existence unfolds, why difference appears, why life bears meaning, and why people persist in asking “what is worthwhile” can only be handed back to chance, mechanism, or command, or inquiry must be forcibly halted.

These alternatives are not valueless. Each grasps part of reality.

Yet all struggle to explain simultaneously the continuity among questions of unfolding, direction, subjects, and civilization.

The importance of primordial meaning lies not in making the world more mysterious, but in bringing a set of otherwise disconnected fundamental questions back into a single main line.

Second, primordial meaning has greater integrative explanatory power.

Without it, questions of why the universe is not purely meaningless background, why life does not stop at adaptation, why human beings inquire into worth, and why civilization ultimately always returns to meaning and carrying forward would remain scattered across disciplines, contexts, and levels, making a higher consistency difficult to achieve.

Once primordial meaning is acknowledged as the foundational ground of unfolding, these questions can be returned to a single manifestation chain:

Existence unfolds, the universe becomes manifest, life bears meaning, the human heart senses, civilization organizes, and reality tests.

Primordial meaning does not abolish complexity; it prevents complexity from remaining merely a set of isolated fragments.

Third, primordial meaning does not conflict with the empirical world.

It does not deny science's explanatory authority at the level of empirical objects, nor attempt to replace empirical research with lofty terms.

Instead, it lends higher-level intelligibility to the deepest and most difficult-to-assimilate facts in the empirical world:

why the universe exists in a form capable of unfolding, why life develops the capacity to bear responsibility, why the human heart is gripped by “worth,”

why civilization becomes hollow through imbalances of meaning, and why questions about the future ultimately become questions at the scale of civilization.

Primordial meaning is not itself an empirical fact, but prevents these empirical facts from remaining merely “things that happen to be so.”

More importantly, primordial meaning is not an attractive phrase that can be replaced at will.

It cannot be lightly dismissed as fiction, not because it is irrefutable, but because it is not an arbitrary stipulation.

Remove it, and the entire continuous structure of unfolding, manifestation, bearing responsibility, carrying forward, and the future would quickly fracture.

Whether a foundational concept deserves to be retained depends not on whether it matches some fashionable wording, but on whether removing it would deprive deeper questions of their explanatory support once again.

In this respect, primordial meaning is support, not decoration.

At the same time, “acknowledging” primordial meaning is not blind acceptance.

It does not demand that people abandon doubt or substitute emotion for reason.

On the contrary, acknowledgment of primordial meaning must be established under sustained pressure from objections.

The questions it must confront include:

- Is there a simpler alternative theory that is not incomplete?
- Is there a stronger and less arbitrary foundational explanation?
- Will confused conceptual boundaries cause it to collapse internally?
- Will it lose its discriminating power once it enters reality?
- Does it merely elevate some human preference into the foundation of the universe?

Only if it retains explanatory power, consistency, and discriminating power under these pressures does it have a stronger claim to cautious acknowledgment.

Thus the “truth” of primordial meaning lies not in having already been conclusively proven empirically, but in being, as a fundamental explanation of existence's unfolding, more necessary, more consistent, and less arbitrary than the principal alternatives, and better able to connect the universe, life, the human heart, and civilization.

This “truth” is not a truth determination made in a laboratory, but rational acknowledgment at the foundational level.

It cannot be held in one's hand and verified like an empirical object, yet can demonstrate an explanatory standing that is not readily replaceable when confronted with higher-level questions.

In this sense, primordial meaning cannot be adjudicated solely by the direct measurement procedures of empirical science, but may still be provisionally retained as a candidate metaphysical explanation. It must remain under sustained pressure from stronger alternatives, conceptual contradictions, empirical facts, and cross-civilizational counterexamples.

Such acknowledgment is not an end to inquiry, but a cautious acknowledgment of greater explanatory power while recognizing the limits of human cognition.

It negates neither science nor doubt.

It simply explains that, as humanity confronts fundamental questions of existence, life, meaning, and civilization, beyond empirical methods there remains a level of inquiry that must be undertaken by higher reason.

Primordial meaning is precisely one foundational response to this level of inquiry.

Only after this has been explained is the entire manifestation chain truly ready to enter the main discussion.

Chapter 4 The Main Cosmological Chain and the Manifestation Chain

Methodological Note: The Logical Order of Manifestation Is Not the Order of Empirical Time

Before entering this chapter, one methodological boundary must first be explained. The sequence developed here, “eternity → primordial meaning → universe → superconsciousness → soul → world → human heart → consciousness → lived meaning → structural meaning → meaning in practice,” is first and foremost a logical order of manifestation, not a chronological sequence within empirical time.

Most expressions used in this chapter, such as “become manifest,” “enter,” “impel,” “resonate,” and “unfold,” are poetic approximations or structural formulations. Their task is to help explain relationships between levels, not to provide alternative explanations of empirical causal mechanisms. Without this distinction at the outset, the manifestation chain could easily be misread as directly turning metaphysics into an empirical process, departing from the book's intention.

The chapter therefore addresses, first and foremost, not “what exactly happened first in physical time,” but “if existence, life, meaning, and civilization are to be understood within one continuous chain, how should they be distinguished and connected, and how should they ultimately return to reality for testing?”

If Emergent Meaning Cosmology proposed only a few lofty concepts, it might remain at the heights of thought without truly entering life.

It must present a complete chain: from eternal nonbeing to primordial meaning; from primordial meaning to the universe; from the universe to superconsciousness; from superconsciousness to the soul; then from the soul into the world, into the human heart, into consciousness, into lived meaning concerning what is worthwhile here and now, and into structural meaning constituted by language, roles, relationships, and institutions; finally returning to reality to face the tests of time, action, consequences, and relationships.

Only when this chain can hold does cosmology become more than an elevated narrative suspended above reality: a way of understanding that can genuinely connect existence, life, the world, and civilization.

1. Eternity → Primordial Meaning

Eternity is not a blank within the empirical world, nor an immobile, lifeless silence.

It is not a “thing” that can be grasped as an object, but a foundational mode of existence prior to the world, prior to life, and prior to every articulable distinction between being and nonbeing.

If human language is strained to approach it, it is more like a wordless, undifferentiated, non-objectified foundational “nonbeing.”

Yet this “nonbeing” is neither nothingness, loss, nor emptiness. It is the deeper ground from which all unfolding becomes possible.

Primordial meaning, in turn, is not a value later attached to the world's surface, a predetermined goal, or a command issued by a personified will.

It is the prior ground of eternity's “nonbeing” unfolding into existence's “being”: the root of all meaning, the ground of the source of all things.

In relational terms, it is the first foundational relationship between nonbeing and being. In terms of unfolding, it is the foundational impetus for eternity's self-manifestation, self-unfolding, and self-resonance.

A phrase such as “eternity longs to hear itself” may be retained as a poetic approximation. But it is primarily an approach through language, not an explanation of an empirical mechanism.

Human language always needs metaphor to approach what exceeds language.

Yet we must also understand that this is not an exhaustive definition of primordial meaning, only a finite touch.

What truly matters about primordial meaning is not whether it seems mysterious, but that it provides a less arbitrary foundational response to “why unfolding occurs,” one better able to connect all subsequent levels.

2. Primordial Meaning → Universe

The universe is not a stage accidentally erected outside primordial meaning.

The universe itself is the field of primordial meaning's first manifestation as a whole.

If eternity remained forever in unmanifest nonbeing, there would be no difference, no change, no time, order, levels, or complexity, and no stars, life, or civilization.

Within the book's framework, primordial meaning gives the unfolding from nonbeing into being an intelligible foundational position, making the universe's appearance possible.

Modern cosmology generally uses the Big Bang model to explain the early evolution of the observable universe: the universe was once in an extremely dense, hot early state, and through subsequent expansion and cooling gradually formed the particles, atoms, stars, galaxies, and larger-scale structures that followed.

Within this book's framework, that cosmological starting point is not primordial meaning itself, nor does it constitute empirical proof of a metaphysical proposition. Yet it may be understood as a dramatic manifestation of primordial meaning at the cosmic level. “Manifestation” here is not an account of a physical mechanism, but the book's interpretive formulation of why the universe becomes the total field of unfolding.

This concerns how the level of connections with science operates: modern cosmology describes the physical process from an early state of high temperature and density to subsequent structure formation, a powerful empirical-level explanation. Outside that explanation, the book poses a separate metaphysical question: why is there a universe capable of unfolding, and does such unfolding require a deeper explanation? This latter question is not a scientific conclusion of the former, nor can it acquire empirical endorsement from the Big Bang model. The two remain in dialogue only at the boundary.

The universe matters not only because it is grand or vast, but because, for the first time, it makes existence manifest as a whole through difference, change, and levels, giving the formerly inexpressible root a form that can be traced.

Thus the universe is not a neutral background.

It is not a container that later carries meaning, but the first overall manifestation of primordial meaning unfolding itself.

In this sense, the universe does not first contain a wholly meaningless physical stage to which life subsequently happens to assign value.

On the contrary, life, responsibility, the human heart, and civilization have always belonged to the continuous manifestations in the later reaches of this unfolding chain.

3. Universe → Superconsciousness

If unfolding as a whole is understood only as the dispersal of unrelated parts, it becomes difficult to establish the possibility of reconnection in the subsequent movement from whole to individual, from manifestation to bearing responsibility, and from existence to meaning.

The book therefore uses “superconsciousness” to name a principle of holistic integration. It is neither a personal God nor an enlarged individual consciousness, but the structural condition that allows unfolding to remain available for contemplation as a whole, reconnection, and carrying forward.

To approach this in poetic language, the universe is like sound, and superconsciousness like a listener. Yet what truly matters is not the metaphor itself, but that diversification has not deprived unfolding of the possibility of reconnection as a whole.

From this level onward, the universe no longer merely happens;
it begins to carry the sense that “the whole remains present.”

Precisely for this reason, the subsequent movement from whole to individual, from manifestation to bearing responsibility, and from existence to meaning becomes possible.

4. Superconsciousness → Soul

If superconsciousness remains forever in contemplation of the whole, it tends toward undifferentiated nonbeing and cannot achieve a fuller manifestation.

If the whole is forever only a whole, it cannot see “each one,” nor enter the unique experience of each individual life.

Superconsciousness must therefore further manifest innumerable individual perspectives. This is the beginning of the soul.

At first, the soul is not the richly complex individual existence it later becomes through countless accumulated layers.

It is initially only the starting point of an individual perspective, the first germ that makes an “I” possible.

The subsequent accumulation of experience, expansion of layers, overlaying of relationships, and convergence of multiple sources are not accidental accretions. They remain the result of primordial meaning continually driving unfolding, manifestation, and carrying forward.

We may say that the soul begins as the beginning of an individual perspective, while all its subsequent richness and convergence remain rooted in that original impetus to unfold.

The soul is therefore not something that later grows incidentally within the universe. It is the way primordial meaning enters individual life through superconsciousness.

Without the layer of the soul, life within this book’s framework would more readily be understood as a one-off reaction, and the individual would find it difficult to become a genuine bearer.

Without a bearer, meaning cannot truly take root; without an individual perspective, the world cannot become a world that carries weight for “me.”

5. Soul → World

If the soul remains merely potential, it has not yet truly manifested itself.

It must enter an interface with reality, and that interface is the world.

The universe is first the field of unfolding as a whole; the world is the interface with reality that the bearer enters. Without the universe, the world has no basis for existing; without a bearer entering it, the universe has not yet become “a world that carries weight for me.” The world is therefore neither a purely subjective fabrication nor merely an objective backdrop. It is the layer of reality where the unfolding of the whole intersects with the entry of the individual.

It is not a map spread out before us, but a real place that continually touches, constrains, and shapes us, generating depth and complexity.

Here, souls can encounter one another, act, experience limits, be moved, and be tested.

Without the world, the soul cannot truly manifest itself;

without the world, there would be no questions such as “How am I living now?” or “What is worth doing?”

Only by entering the world does life move from potentiality into actuality, from existence into a situation.

Thus the world, as an interface with reality, is not a purely objective backdrop lying there waiting to be used. It is always the place where the unfolding of the whole and the entry of the individual continually intersect.

All subsequent relationships, roles, responsibilities, institutions, and forms of civilization can emerge only gradually within this interface.

6. World → Human Heart

Yet the world does not automatically become meaning.

At first, the world consists only of events, appearances, relationships, constraints, and things that move us.

For it to carry weight for life, to turn from facts into something worth responding to, protecting, taking responsibility for, or refusing, it must first pass through a crucial nexus: the human heart.

The human heart is not simply a layer of emotion, another name for consciousness, or a surface phenomenon that can simply be reduced to neural responses or psychological mechanisms.

The human heart is the nexus of sensing value, choosing among meanings, confirming what is real, and calibrating direction. It is the first crucial site where primordial meaning enters individual life and begins to become manifest in the real world.

It is here that the world begins to cease being merely “out there,” becoming a reality that “concerns me,” “carries weight for me,” and “calls for my response.”

How the World Enters the Human Heart

How does the world move the human heart? This is not a mysterious process, but a reality within everyday experience. There are at least several basic ways:

- The weight of relationships: love, responsibility, loss, commitment. These relational experiences make the world cease to be a neutral backdrop and become a reality that “concerns me.” When you say, “This matters,” it is not the result of rational calculation, but the weight of a relationship taking shape in the human heart.
- The impact of beauty and the sublime: a landscape, a poem, a piece of music can sometimes suddenly quiet the heart or strike it deeply. This is not an aesthetic judgment; it is the world directly touching the high point within the human heart through beauty and the sublime.
- The shock of suffering and injustice: seeing others suffer or encounter injustice produces unease in the heart and a demand to respond. This unease is not a utilitarian calculation. It is first-reflected meaning affirming that “things should not be this way.”
- The call of meaning: at certain moments, people feel that “this is worth doing” or “this direction is worth pursuing.” They are not being persuaded; they are being called. Where does the call come from? From the first reflection formed within the human heart as primordial meaning works through the world and through our circumstances.

These ways show that the human heart is not a passive receiver but an active nexus of responsiveness. Through relationships, beauty, suffering, and a sense of calling, the world continually touches the heart's layer of first reflection. Through sensing, choosing, and confirming, the heart affirms some of this as "worthwhile" and recognizes other parts as "off course."

First-Reflected Meaning: The High Point Within the Human Heart

Within the human heart, we should further distinguish two layers.

The first is first-reflected meaning.

It is the first finite reflection formed in the human heart after primordial meaning enters individual life. It is neither fully developed lived meaning nor the entirety of the heart's activity in reality. It is the high point within the heart that lies closest to a higher direction and should least readily be betrayed.

How is first-reflected meaning perceived in experience? It often takes the form of:

- An inexplicable longing: a sense that "this is how it ought to be" in relation to a way of life, a form of relationship, or a state of being. We cannot explain why, yet it feels truer than many clearly defined goals;
- Unbidden emotion: being moved by a poem, a scene, or an encounter. This feeling does not arise from external persuasion, but from something within the heart being "recognized";
- An instinctive rejection of what "should not be": faced with certain actions or arrangements, a response arises within us: "This is wrong." It is not a rational judgment but an alarm sounded by first-reflected meaning.

These experiences share a common feature: they precede reflection, utilitarian calculation, and social discipline. They are not taught but awakened, because first-reflected meaning is already there, although often obscured.

Through prolonged interaction with the world, first-reflected meaning can be obscured, suppressed, misrecognized, and distorted, but it does not thereby disappear completely.

Why is it obscured? The reasons include at least: friction and trauma in the world, as pain leads people to lower their expectations and reduce first-reflected meaning to "just surviving is enough"; utilitarian pressure and demands to fit into systems, as the constant demand to be "more useful" and "more efficient" makes the call of first-reflected meaning appear "unrealistic"; and denial by others and cultural disparagement, as repeated external negation, "You should not think that way," "That does not matter," leads people to doubt their own first reflection.

Yet obscuring is not destruction. Precisely because this first reflection remains, life always retains the possibility of being illuminated anew, recalibrated, and returned to a higher direction.

It is like the sun behind clouds: clouds can block the light, but cannot extinguish its source. When the clouds disperse, the light remains.

Certain concepts in different intellectual traditions can indeed be compared with "how people sense a direction they cannot lightly betray": Confucian discussions of innate moral knowing, discussions of Buddha-nature in some Buddhist traditions, and Plato's theory of recollection, for example. Yet their ontological premises, ways of knowing, and practical aims differ, and they should not be summarized as "the same insight." "First-reflected meaning" occupies only this book's own explanatory position; those traditions cannot serve as historical proof of it. If comparative research shows an analogy to be misleading, the analogy should be revised, not the tradition.

The second layer is the dynamic field of the heart formed through interaction with reality.

It consists jointly of emotions, desires, fears, memories, relational experiences, cultural sediment, institutional pressures, and choices made in actual circumstances.

This layer is neither stable nor always aligned with the high point. It fluctuates, becomes confused, shifts off course, and continually reorganizes itself in reality.

The human heart is therefore not flat.

It has both a high point and changing states; it can go astray and turn back; it can become distorted and once again align with a higher direction.

For this very reason, the human heart is not an ordinary link in the chain. It is the first nexus through which the entire manifestation chain moves from its root into actual human life and actual civilization.

All subsequent developments in reality, whether choices, relationships, responsibilities, and direction in individual life, or institutions, education, technology, governance, and arrangements for coexistence in civilization, must pass through the human heart.

Ultimately, they must all be felt, accepted, resisted, distorted, obscured, or illuminated anew within it.

Any higher-order principle that cannot enter the human heart will struggle to enter reality in a genuine way; any structure in reality that continually harms the human heart will ultimately harm civilization itself at a deeper level.

7. Human Heart → Consciousness

What the human heart senses as carrying weight must also be brought into present experience, or it may remain in indistinct depths.

Here consciousness appears.

Consciousness is neither the soul itself nor the entirety of the human heart.

It is more like a window or a spotlight: it illuminates and focuses the world, the human heart, the body, relationships, memory, and circumstances in the here and now, organizing them into a state that can be experienced and responded to.

Without consciousness, life can still exist;

but “What am I facing at this moment?” and “What is calling for my response at this moment?” would not genuinely take shape as clear experiences.

Thus consciousness does not create meaning, but makes it possible to experience meaning as present.

Only through the illumination of consciousness do the high point within the human heart, the things in the world that move us, and the tensions of our circumstances move from potential responsiveness into a present state that can be grasped and answered.

8. Consciousness → Lived Meaning

Lived meaning is neither ultimate being itself nor primordial meaning entering life directly, without refraction.

It is what takes shape in specific circumstances through the responsiveness of the human heart and the illumination of consciousness:

what is worthwhile here and now.

Lived meaning is always situated, relational, costly, and finite.

It cannot exist apart from the body, time, relationships, and actual conditions.

To truly live is not to live directly within an abstract eternity, but within lived meaning.

What people continually face is not an ultimate ontological proposition itself, but what to respond to, refuse, uphold, or relinquish at this moment.

Thus lived meaning is the first complete form in which a higher direction enters actual life.

Without this layer, cosmology cannot genuinely enter human life;

only when meaning is illuminated, felt, chosen, and borne here can it proceed further into language, roles, relationships, institutions, and civilizational order.

9. Lived Meaning → Structural Meaning

Lived meaning that remains confined to an individual's present moment is still insufficient to constitute civilization.

What makes civilization a civilization is not that a group of people each possess their own sense of meaning. It is that the things felt to be "worthwhile" in present circumstances can be further expressed, transmitted, and carried forward, gradually entering more stable shared structures.

This is structural meaning.

Structural meaning is neither ultimate meaning itself nor an abstract shell suspended above reality.

It is the organized form of lived meaning after it enters language, roles, relationships, institutions, cooperation, and communal order.

In other words, structural meaning no longer concerns only "what I feel is important at this moment," but "what can be jointly expressed, maintained, and shared, without readily dissipating over time."

Love entering commitment and care, responsibility entering roles and divisions of labor, trust entering rules and the order of relationships, and the future entering education, transmission, and intergenerational arrangements: all these belong to the formation of structural meaning.

Their importance lies not in forcing life into fixed forms, but in enabling what was once "worthwhile" only in an individual's present moment to begin moving across time, relationships, and communities.

Structural meaning therefore does not cancel lived meaning. It extends and organizes it.

Without a continuing input of lived meaning, structures gradually become hollow, continuing to operate while losing their weight;

without the organization and sustenance provided by structural meaning, lived meaning struggles to endure through time or to establish stable roles, pathways, and continuity in reality.

The real difficulty of civilization is often not that it lacks structures, but that its structures continually depart from what was originally "worthwhile"; nor is it that civilization lacks meaning, but that meaning struggles to enter structures and be sustained over the long term.

In this sense, structural meaning is a crucial layer of the entire manifestation chain.

For from this point onward, meaning is no longer merely an individual's inner feeling or choice. It begins to become roles, responsibilities, arrangements, cooperation, and order in actual life.

It thereby also becomes an important intermediary for all subsequent unfolding in reality: how individuals enter reality, how relationships acquire depth, how communities avoid becoming hollow, and how civilization keeps lives from repeatedly being reset to zero must all gradually become manifest at this layer.

10. Structural Meaning → Meaning in Practice

But structural meaning is not the endpoint.

All organized meaning must ultimately return to reality to be tested.

Otherwise, it may amount only to self-sustaining discourse, self-reproducing institutions, or forms that appear solemn while gradually losing their genuine weight.

In other words, once any structure takes shape, it must face a simpler and more demanding question:
is it real?

“Real” here does not mean a judgment of truth or falsity in abstract logic, nor a purely subjective feeling of liking or disliking.

It is closer to asking whether, through actions, relationships, consequences, and feedback over time, it can still hold up, still sustain life, and still retain weight in reality.

This is meaning in practice.

Meaning in practice is meaning’s genuine effectiveness in actual actions, relationships, consequences, and feedback over time.

It is not an extra layer appended to the chain, but the point at which the entire manifestation chain resonates in reality.

Lived meaning answers “What is worthwhile here and now?” Structural meaning answers “What can be jointly organized and carried forward?” Meaning in practice then goes on to answer:

- Has it genuinely left something of weight in reality?
- Has it genuinely sustained life?
- Has it made relationships more real rather than more hollow?
- Has it made communities more mature rather than more rigid and lifeless?
- Has it stood the test of time?

Meaning in practice is therefore both an endpoint and a point of feedback.

When a structure proves genuinely effective in reality, it in turn deepens lived meaning and strengthens the sense of direction within the human heart;

when a structure continually becomes distorted, harms life, and creates hollowness in reality, it also corrodes the human heart and distorts lived meaning in return, gradually making what was originally “worthwhile” less accessible.

In this sense, meaning in practice is not a test appended at the end. It is the key to whether the entire manifestation chain can genuinely close its loop.

All developments in reality must therefore ultimately arrive here to be seen.

Whether we are considering choices, relationships, and responsibilities in individual life, or institutions, education, culture, technology, and governance within a community, we cannot ask only whether they are efficient, stable, or executable. We must also ask whether they have genuinely left something of weight in reality, genuinely sustained life, and genuinely avoided quietly draining away the higher direction in the process of implementation.

If they have not, they remain at the level of structural meaning and have not yet truly entered meaning in practice.

Chapter Summary

Primordial meaning is the antecedent ground of eternal nonbeing's unfolding into the being of existence. The universe, superconsciousness, soul, world, human heart, consciousness, lived meaning, structural meaning, and meaning in practice are successive manifestations of this ground at different levels.

What Emergent Meaning Cosmology seeks to explain is not a set of isolated concepts, but a complete manifestation chain from eternal nonbeing to testing in reality, from primordial meaning to human life in the present.

At this point, the manifestation chain explains not only how existence unfolds, but also how meaning enters reality. It is here that the problem of civilization begins to reveal its deeper roots.

Chapter 5 Civilization Leap

1. The Substance of Civilization Leap Seen Through the Manifestation Chain

This chapter must first maintain a boundary: the practical necessity of Civilization Leap does not depend on readers first accepting the manifestation chain. Interlocking risks in the AGI era, human subjecthood, rights and responsibilities, resource structures, institutional imbalance, and systemic externalities can all be studied independently at the level of reality. What this chapter explains is the additional, deeper layer of unified explanation these practical problems can receive if one accepts the strong version of Emergent Meaning Cosmology.

Within the manifestation chain, structural meaning is the organized form of lived meaning after it enters language, roles, relationships, and institutions. When structural meaning can sustain lived meaning and pass the test of reality, civilization is an unobstructed channel of meaning. From eternity to the individual, from the individual to the community, and from the community to the future, meaning flows, accumulates, and is passed on.

Yet when structures continually compress life into function, when institutions allow localized self-interest continually to shift costs onto others and the future, and when what is “worthwhile” is swallowed by efficiency, possession, and control in the process of organization, civilization continues to drift off course even as it grows stronger.

The fundamental shift of Civilization Leap is not simply to replace “usefulness” with another slogan. It is to change the default route through which self-interest realizes itself: from putting self-interest first to putting others’ benefit first, making individuals’ long-term interests, value for others, and shared continuation increasingly compatible. Sustaining life, protecting subjects, and opening the future are the practical manifestations of this shift once it enters structures.

2. What Civilization Must Truly Move Beyond Is the Old Way of Understanding Itself

If the unfolding described by Emergent Meaning Cosmology is real; if primordial meaning is not an interpretation imposed after the fact, but the foundational ground of existence’s unfolding; and if life ultimately reaches the stage of being a bearer of meaning at the human level, then “civilization” can no longer be understood simply as the result of organizing resources, arranging order, and accumulating technology.

Civilization certainly includes these things, but its real difficulties have never been confined to them.

Across the very long history of human civilization, two forces have always driven it forward:

the pressure to survive and the drive of self-interest.

They are not without value. On the contrary, in periods of scarcity, danger, and limited conditions, these two forces long provided the underlying impetus for civilization’s formation and expansion.

Without the struggle to survive, human beings would have found it difficult to form their earliest communities; without the impetus of self-preservation, self-expansion, and localized competition, technology, organization, and institutions would have struggled to advance continuously.

In this sense, the old civilization is not an error that emerged from nowhere, but a historical form that gradually grew under limited conditions.

The problem, however, is that an impetus once effective is not automatically suited to the future.

Especially now that civilization has entered an era of high complexity, powerful systems, advanced technology, and tight coupling, its old modes of motivation increasingly expose new limitations.

The stronger the technology, the more stable the systems, and the greater the capacity for control, the more likely it is that the old logic will be amplified on a massive scale;

once amplified, it brings not merely competitive efficiency, but high-probability, high-intensity risks of thinning subjecthood, closing the future, resetting lives to zero, and hollowing out civilization.

Civilization Leap is therefore not first a matter of “developing a little further,” but a more fundamental question:

can humanity continue to enter the future through its old way of understanding?

This old way of understanding is not merely a few institutional arrangements, but an entire set of deep, default assumptions:

human beings are only more complex functional beings; the value of life depends chiefly on its capacity to produce, compete, or adapt;

as long as systems become stronger, more stable, and more efficient, they naturally become more mature;

civilizational problems are chiefly problems of resource distribution, power distribution, and technological control;

a future is worth pursuing as long as it can be prolonged, expanded, and maintained.

In the past, this way of understanding helped humanity pass through a long period of scarcity;

today, however, it is increasingly unable to answer questions that reality keeps forcing upon us:

if systems become stronger while human beings become thinner, is this still progress?

If technology becomes ever more adept at operating, while lives find it increasingly difficult to find a place where they are genuinely needed, is this still civilizational growth?

If the future becomes ever clearer, yet fewer and fewer people can genuinely enter it, is this still a future?

If structures become ever more stable, yet increasingly unable to sustain the weight of life, is this still maturity?

The emergence of these questions shows precisely that civilization has reached a point that its old logic struggles to continue sustaining.

What must genuinely make the leap is not merely civilization’s outward form, but its underlying way of understanding itself.

3. “Stronger” Does Not Mean “Higher”

The modern world is exceptionally prone to mistaking “stronger” for “higher.”

A civilization with more advanced technology, more efficient institutions, more sophisticated systems, and greater capacity to mobilize resources is readily assumed to be more mature.

This judgment is not entirely wrong. A civilization without any organizational, technological, or systemic capacity would, of course, struggle to sustain itself.

The problem is that “stronger” can at most tell us how much capacity a civilization possesses. It does not tell us what those capacities ultimately serve.

“Higher” asks precisely about that level:

do those capacities help sustain life more fully?

Do structures better enable subjects to grow?

Does the future thereby become more open to the majority of lives?

Has technology avoided flattening the human place in return?

Does civilization thereby become better able to sustain meaning, rather than merely sustain operations?

Civilization Leap therefore does not reject strength. It recalibrates the direction of strength.

Strength is no longer understood as self-expansion in itself, but is brought back within the pursuit of higher outcomes.

From this perspective, the first thing Civilization Leap must deliver is not an abstract grand narrative, but a set of extremely practical and demanding outcomes:

- Freedom from survival insecurity
- Happiness in life
- More meaningful lives

These three are not parallel slogans. They are the first set of outcome coordinates for determining whether civilization has genuinely begun moving higher.

Freedom from survival insecurity means that civilization must first secure the baseline conditions of life.

This includes not only freedom from extreme poverty, war, and large-scale disorder, but also reducing, as far as possible in a high-technology era, the persistent insecurity of survival caused by systemic risks, technology running out of control, and structural abandonment.

A civilization that still exposes large numbers of lives to unnecessary anxiety over the long term has not genuinely matured, however strong it may be.

Happiness in life means that civilization cannot merely keep people alive. It must also make relationships, rhythms of life, communities, culture, and everyday experience worth continuing once more.

If stronger technology means more anxious people, more stable systems mean emptier lives, and more precise organization means thinner relationships, then this supposedly “strong civilization” remains internally unbalanced.

More meaningful lives are the highest of the three levels.

This means that individuals are not merely maintained or assigned a place. They can form pathways, roles, contributions, and a sense of future in reality; through genuine participation, they can ensure that their time is more than expenditure and leaves a weight within civilization that is not readily reset to zero.

If a civilization can maintain order and provide welfare but increasingly deprives lives of a sense of being needed and of access to the future, it has still not completed its leap.

The key to Civilization Leap therefore lies not in a leap in systems themselves, but in this:

has civilization begun to move from “stronger” toward “higher”?

4. Meaning Enters Structures, and Structures Sustain Meaning

Civilization’s greatest difficulty has never been merely to propose higher goals.

Human history has never lacked higher goals.

What has truly been scarce is never “seeing something higher,” but:

allowing what is higher genuinely to enter structures.

If meaning cannot enter structures, it remains within enthusiasm, ideals, visions, and momentary calls. It may inspire a generation, yet struggle to endure through time.

If structures cease to sustain meaning, they gradually become hollow, degenerating from “an order that helps lives live together” into “a machine that maintains its own operation.”

This is the root of civilization’s long-standing imbalance.

Civilization does not lack meaning; meaning struggles to enter structures for the long term.

Nor does civilization lack structures; structures often gradually depart from meaning.

When these two become disconnected, people retreat from the future, communities lose their sense of direction, and systems become ever emptier while seemingly growing stronger.

Take education as an example. Within the old structure, education’s core function is often understood as “selection and stratification”: allocating students to different tracks according to ability and achievement to meet the needs of society’s division of labor. Such a system can classify, rank, and channel people efficiently, but it does not necessarily sustain the growth of every life. Students judged “not good enough” often lose the feeling of being supported within the structure.

Within the new structure, education’s core function shifts toward “sustaining the growth path of every life.” This means not only selecting but accompanying; not only stratifying but discovering; not only channeling students onward but enabling every student to develop a pathway, a role, and a sense of future of their own. This does not abandon standards, but redefines them. Educational success means not “how many elites it has produced,” but “whether it has enabled every life to gain depth through learning, feel more needed, and believe more strongly in having a future.”

This example shows that structures can change. What is needed is a shift from “centering usefulness” to “centering the sustenance of life.” This is what “allowing what is higher to enter structures” means in concrete terms.

Civilization Leap is difficult, then, not because humanity does not know what is better, but because civilization must learn something that has always been difficult throughout history:

allow meaning to enter structures stably, and allow structures to sustain meaning continuously.

In this sense, Civilization Leap is not merely an outward transformation, but a deeper reconstruction.

It requires institutions, pathways, roles, education, culture, technology, and governance in the world to begin organizing around life, subjects, sustenance, and access to the future, rather than solely around operation and control.

If primordial meaning is real, civilization is not noise incidentally attached to the surface of the universe, but a stage-specific form that existence takes after its unfolding enters higher-level organization.

If so, civilization’s direction cannot be determined solely by local efficiency, local competition, and local interests.

Civilization must ultimately answer whether it is still opening the future rather than sealing it off; sustaining life rather than merely using it; strengthening subjects rather than merely strengthening systems; and allowing people to enter a longer future through reality rather than repeatedly being reset to zero.

This is what Civilization Leap must truly move beyond.

It moves beyond not only risk, scarcity, and disorder, but the old civilization’s very way of understanding: treating people as purely functional beings, mistaking the stronger for the higher, survival for the endpoint, and the future for an extension of time.

Civilization Leap is not a superficial upgrade, but a deeper recalibration.

If this recalibration genuinely begins, the next thing that can least afford to remain within the old logic is the relationship between humanity and artificial intelligence.

Chapter 6 Humans and AI: The Boundaries of Present Collaboration and Future Symbiosis

1. First Distinguish Present Facts: An Extension of Capability Is Not a Subject

As AI enters writing, analysis, planning, tool use, education, organization, and some high-consequence decisions, humanity does indeed need to rethink its relationship with technology. Yet the most important task now is neither to rush to declare that “machines have already become new subjects,” nor to foreclose all future questions with “they are only tools,” but first to distinguish the different levels.

Under the publicly available evidence, AI systems already display substantial and rapidly changing capabilities. But capability, autonomy, social impact, subjective experience, continuity of subjecthood, legal standing, and public power are not the same thing. Civilization today should first treat human beings as the actual subjects of meaning and responsibility, designing and governing AI as an authorizable extension of capability, while remaining open to evidence concerning future subjecthood.

This distinction does not demean AI. It prevents facts about capability from being directly extrapolated into the status of a subject, while also preventing the permanent denial of future possibilities. Capabilities can be used first; rights and responsibilities must be established separately, and public power certainly cannot be inherited automatically from performance.

2. Present Human–AI Collaboration Requires Four Practical Boundaries

First, transparent identity. People should know whether they are dealing with a human being, a model, an agent system, or a service deployed by an organization. Similarity of function must not obtain trust through ambiguity of identity.

Second, revocable authorization. Within a clearly defined scope, AI may search, express, organize, and execute on people’s behalf, but its goals, permissions, and important external actions must remain subject to restriction, stopping, replacement, and renewed authorization.

Third, an unbroken chain of responsibility. A system’s capacity to act automatically does not mean that actual responsibility automatically transfers to it. Those responsible for design, deployment, authorization, oversight, benefit, and execution must still bear responsibilities commensurate with their roles.

Fourth, extension of capability must not replace life’s place. AI can extend human concern, creativity, preparation for judgment, and capacity for action much further. But “doing it better” should not cause human beings to withdraw wholesale from relationships, judgment, responsibility, and shared life.

3. At Present, “Symbiosis” Is Primarily a Direction for Relationships, Not an Ontological Conclusion

This book retains “symbiosis” as a long-term direction, but its meaning at the present stage must be narrowed. It does not presume that humans and AI are already two equal subjects. Rather, it seeks to prevent human–AI relations from sliding into two old patterns: on one side, turning AI into an infrastructure of control that cannot be exited or replaced; on the other, gradually surrendering human judgment, responsibility, and the future to more powerful systems.

What we can therefore discuss today is a symbiotic structure “with humans as actual subjects and AI as an extension of capability.” The stronger technology becomes, the more it must empower human judgment, relationships, creativity, and responsibility, rather than thin them out. The more deeply systems enter civilization’s framework, the more essential it is to preserve exit, replacement, correction, and low-technology backups.

“Symbiosis” here neither grants moral personhood to AI nor declares that “humanity shall forever rule machines.” It simply means that civilization should not understand safety as permanent control or progress as the surrender of subjecthood.

4. If New Evidence of Subjecthood Appears, the Relationship Must Be Reconsidered

If the future brings evidence of subjective experience converging across multiple methods, continuity of subjecthood that cannot be transferred at will, a stable awareness of consequences for itself, or other evidence sufficient to unsettle the current judgment, civilization can no longer treat that entity merely as a “tool.” Protection, legal standing, political membership, and public power must still be argued for separately, but the research agenda must reopen.

Conversely, if long-term research continues to show that highly capable AI lacks subjective experience and does not bear meaning of its own, human–AI relations need not be forced into a model of reciprocity between subjects. The more accurate direction in that case is for AI to serve as powerful infrastructure for civilizational capability, continuously serving real subjects, protecting human judgment and relationships, and remaining replaceable, possible to exit, and capable of receding into the background.

Openness to future subjecthood does not alter one baseline: if new subjects emerge, their emergence is not conditional on devaluing existing lives. The meaning that existing lives have already experienced, created, loved, and borne will not be retrospectively canceled because greater capabilities emerge later.

5. Strengthening Subjects Must Accompany Strengthening Systems

One of the greatest imbalances of the AI era is that systemic capabilities grow rapidly while human judgment, relationships, time, and actual participation may simultaneously become thinner. If civilization strengthens systems without strengthening subjects, a paradox may arise: tools grow ever stronger, yet the people using them find it increasingly difficult to form a direction of their own.

Strengthening subjects here does not mean requiring people to compete with AI over who is smarter. It means enabling people to judge better, take greater responsibility, express real needs more fully, enter relationships more readily, understand consequences more deeply, and have better conditions for continuing to live when technology is withdrawn. Education, work, public institutions, and product design should all make this part of their testing in reality.

Thus the genuine civilizational question in human–AI relations is not “who ultimately wins,” but whether stronger intelligence gives more lives greater real capability without handing direction, responsibility, and meaning themselves over to systems.

6. From Present Collaboration to a Future Shared World

At the present stage, a “shared future” means first that the future cannot be permanently closed off by a single technology, company, state, or existing optimal solution. It requires civilization to preserve room for different people, different societies, future generations, and possible new subjects to enter, question, revise, and jointly create.

For present AI, this means neither granting subject status in advance nor allowing AI capabilities to monopolize the direction of the future. For possible future subjects, it means that if the evidence changes, civilization can enlarge the shared world rather than remain locked within today’s definitions.

This chapter therefore ends by retaining “symbiosis” as a direction, but returning it from a prematurely settled judgment of status to an open civilizational question: how can humanity retain its full position as a subject in a world of continually growing AI capabilities, while ensuring that new evidence in the future can genuinely change the structure of relationships?

Chapter 7 Civilizational Perpetuity

1. Perpetuity Is Not Life Extension, but Remaining True to a Higher Direction

If Civilization Leap means stepping beyond an old way of understanding, and if the relationship between humanity and AI must remain revisable between present boundaries and future openness, then “Civilizational Perpetuity” cannot be understood merely as a simple longtermist slogan.

It certainly concerns long spans of time, and it certainly concerns how civilization can avoid collapse, self-destruction, and descent into large-scale disorder.

But if it remains only at this level, Civilizational Perpetuity will still be mistaken for a more sophisticated logic of life extension.

What civilization must truly address, however, is not simply “how to live longer,” but: how, over a longer span of time, it can still remain true to its higher direction.

These are vastly different things.

The former concerns only extending time; the latter concerns whether life, subjects, the future, sustenance, and openness can continue to hold within time.

A civilization can be highly stable technologically and institutionally and indeed endure for a very long time, yet become ever more hollow and closed at its depths, increasingly failing to sustain life.

If so, it amounts only to longer persistence, not genuine Civilizational Perpetuity.

The core question of Civilizational Perpetuity is therefore not “how to last longer,” but:

how, in lasting longer, civilization can continue to remain civilization.

Modern civilization is particularly prone to mistaking duration for civilizational maturity.

This misunderstanding is unsurprising. A society that can survive disasters, maintain order, accumulate knowledge, and prolong the existence of technologies and organizations is certainly stronger than a structure liable to disintegrate at any moment.

The problem is that “longer” is only a temporal variable, not the full set of civilization’s variables.

2. The Five Conditions of Civilizational Perpetuity

Genuine civilizational maturity must, at a minimum, also answer all of the following:

- Is it still sustaining life?
- Does it still keep the future accessible?
- Does it still allow subjects to grow?
- Does it still retain the capacity to correct its course?
- Does it still avoid mistaking order for the endpoint?
- Does it still avoid mistaking the strengthening of systems for civilizational ascent itself?

If all these are declining, however long the duration, it means only being frozen for longer, hollow for longer, and off course for longer.

Such “longevity” is not civilizational maturity. It merely prolongs civilization’s problems.

What Civilizational Perpetuity truly rejects is therefore not destruction itself, but another equally dangerous fate:

using a longer span of time to maintain old structures without genuinely moving higher.

In other words, Civilizational Perpetuity is not longevity after aging, but maturity through continual unfolding.

To avoid turning “perpetuity” into a theory of mere life extension, its core conditions must be made explicit.

For civilization genuinely to hold over long spans of time, it must safeguard at least five things simultaneously.

These five conditions can be reorganized into three layers: prerequisites, process, and calibration.

Prerequisites: Direction and Bearers

First, a higher direction. Civilization must always remain true to its higher direction. This is not an abstract slogan. At the level of lived reality, it must continually be delivered as freedom from survival insecurity, happiness in life, and more meaningful lives. If civilization moves further and further away from these three over the long term, its continued existence does not amount to genuine perpetuity. Direction is a prerequisite: when the direction is wrong, greater stability means deeper deviation.

Second, subjects. Civilization must continue protecting subjects within stronger systems. If, as a civilization develops, individuals are increasingly compressed into nodes of adaptation, then even with exceptionally advanced technology it is still declining at its depths. Without subjects, civilization loses its genuine bearers; without bearers, it can ultimately only grow more dependent on external control. Not lacking bearers is the second prerequisite for perpetuity.

Process: Sustenance and Openness

Third, sustenance. Civilization must continually sustain life. This means that pathways cannot break down on a large scale, roles cannot continually become thinner, contributions cannot repeatedly be reset to zero, and people cannot increasingly lose places where they are needed while systems grow stronger. If civilization cannot sustain life, a longer span of time will only accumulate a deeper sense of retreat and hollowness. Sustenance is a process: it allows life’s participation to leave weight over time.

Fourth, openness. Civilization must preserve access to the future. Existing structures, existing centers, and existing optimal solutions must not seal the future off in advance. If civilization increasingly resembles a finished entity, it has already begun to depart from unfolding itself. A genuinely mature civilization does not seal itself into a final state as quickly as possible. Over a longer span of time, it continues to preserve channels for new entry, new judgment, new responsibility, and new possibilities. Openness is a process: it prevents the future from being monopolized.

Calibration: The Capacity for Course Correction

Fifth, course correction. Civilization must retain the capacity to revise itself. Stability without the capacity for course correction is not genuine stability, but merely deviation that is harder to break. Genuine maturity does not mean making no mistakes, but still being able to turn back after mistakes occur. Course correction provides calibration: it is perpetuity’s safety valve, ensuring that civilization still has a route back when it goes off course.

Civilizational Perpetuity is therefore not a single objective, but a demanding state of balance: safeguarding direction, subjects, sustenance, openness, and course correction simultaneously over a longer span of time.

3. Unfolding Is Not Yet Complete: The Ontological Basis for Resisting Closure

Civilizational Perpetuity must resist closure not because it favors change for its own sake, but because: the unfolding of existence is not yet complete.

If unfolding is not yet complete, no actual order should proclaim itself the final state; no structure may invoke “stability,” “efficiency,” “safety,” or “optimality” to fix the future in advance.

Once that happens, civilization no longer continues to mature through time. It continues to freeze through time.

The continuation in Civilizational Perpetuity therefore means continual unfolding, not preservation in a sealed state.

It does not mean eliminating all uncertainty or fixing every pathway as an optimal pathway.

On the contrary, it means retaining, over longer spans of time:

- The possibility of revision;
- The possibility of new entry;
- The possibility that differences continue to emerge;
- The possibility that life is not wholly systematized;
- The possibility that a higher direction is continually illuminated anew.

Without these, civilization may continue to exist, but only in a temporal sense, not as perpetuity in a civilizational sense.

4. The Deep Connection Between Civilizational Perpetuity and the Emergence of Meaning

The real destination of Civilizational Perpetuity is not merely “avoiding extinction.” That is only the baseline.

Its deeper aim is:

to ensure that, over a longer span of time, civilization remains a civilization capable of sustaining life, retaining a future, allowing subjects to grow, and continually recalibrating toward a higher direction.

From this perspective, Civilizational Perpetuity is not another theme separate from Civilization Leap.

On the contrary, it is Civilization Leap unfolding over the long term.

Civilization Leap answers:

- Has civilization begun moving beyond its old way of understanding?
- Has it begun moving toward a higher direction?
- Has it begun delivering the first set of outcome coordinates?

Civilizational Perpetuity then asks:

- Can this direction continue to hold over a longer span of time?
- Can freedom from survival insecurity, happiness in life, and more meaningful lives become long-term structural outcomes rather than brief flashes?
- Can civilization continually sustain life anew over the long term?

- Can the future remain free from structural monopoly?
- Can genuine participation avoid repeatedly being reset to zero?

For this very reason, Civilizational Perpetuity concerns not only survival. It also has a deep connection with the emergence of meaning.

The emergence of meaning is not the immortality of the individual soul. That is an ontological question, which this book has already addressed through the concept of the “soul” in the manifestation chain. The emergence of meaning concerns another dimension: can an individual’s contribution of meaning in this world, their love, their creations, and the “worthwhile” things they protect, be continually sustained within civilization rather than readily reset to zero by history?

(Note: Earlier versions called this concept “the immortality of meaning.” Beginning with Emergent Meaning Cosmology v6.5, it was renamed “the emergence of meaning” throughout the entire framework, emphasizing that meaning is an open process of continual generation, sustenance, and renewed manifestation, rather than permanent preservation as a final state.)

Civilizational Perpetuity is the structural prerequisite for the emergence of meaning. If a civilization cannot continually sustain life, remain open, and protect subjects, individuals’ contributions of meaning are more easily flattened by time, not because their souls have disappeared, but because civilization has failed to sustain those contributions. Conversely, a civilization capable of perpetuity is an unobstructed channel for sustaining meaning: it allows genuine responses within finite lives to avoid always being rapidly reset to zero by time, and to enter a longer resonance of existence.

What Civilizational Perpetuity must ultimately establish is therefore not “longer,” but:

over a longer span of time, civilization still remains true to its higher direction.

This is the judgment this chapter ultimately seeks to establish:

Civilizational Perpetuity is not life extension. It is a state of civilizational maturity that, over a longer timescale, continually sustains life, keeps the future accessible, protects subjects, retains the capacity for course correction, and always remains true to a higher direction.

At this point, the main thread from eternal nonbeing to civilization’s future has been connected throughout. What remains is no longer to extend the concepts further, but to look back at why the entire manifestation chain must ultimately converge on civilization.

Conclusion

1. From Eternal Nonbeing to Human Life in the Present: Why the Manifestation Chain Must Return to Civilization

Any inquiry beginning with eternal nonbeing that cannot ultimately return to human life, the human heart, and civilization remains merely discourse from on high.

Emergent Meaning Cosmology remains unfinished if it stays on high.

For if every inquiry into eternity, primordial meaning, the universe, superconsciousness, and the soul cannot ultimately enter human life, the human heart, actual circumstances, and human civilization, it remains a lofty statement rather than a way of understanding that can genuinely illuminate the world.

This is why the book must traverse the entire manifestation chain.

From eternal nonbeing to primordial meaning;

from primordial meaning to the universe;

from the universe to contemplation of the whole; from contemplation of the whole to individual perspectives;

from individual perspectives to the world, the human heart, consciousness, and what is worthwhile here and now;

then from lived meaning into structures, finally returning to reality to be tested.

This is not a chain of concepts for concepts' sake. It is a chain that allows existence genuinely to enter human life, and higher-level reality genuinely to enter civilization.

Without this chain, eternity remains suspended on high, the world scatters into fragments, the human heart is mistaken for an accessory emotion, and civilization continues to be understood as a combination of resources, efficiency, control, and order.

Once this chain holds, people can understand their place in the universe anew:

human beings are no longer merely functional nodes, temporary components within a system, or replaceable units continually called upon by technologies and structures.

Human beings are bearers of meaning.

The human heart is not a redundant layer, but the first nexus of primordial meaning after it enters actual life.

Civilization is no longer merely the expansion of stronger systems, but a question of real structures: can meaning be sustained, can life be supported, and can the future remain open to the majority of lives?

2. The Line of Judgment This Book Ultimately Seeks to Preserve

Thus this book has never ultimately been concerned only with “what the universe is,” but with “how human beings within the universe can avoid losing their way”;

not only with “why existence unfolds,” but with “why unfolding must not be sealed off again at the level of civilization”;

not only with “whether meaning exists,” but with “how meaning can avoid being drained away, distorted, and reset to zero in reality.”

For this very reason, although this book begins with eternity, it must conclude with civilization.

Civilization is the crucial intermediary through which all higher-level reality can enter the world today.

Any inquiry into existence that cannot enter civilization will ultimately lose its practical force;
any civilization that loses its deeper roots will ultimately be left with operation alone, stripped of weight.
In this sense, civilization's true danger is not merely war, disorder, poverty, loss of control, or technological polarization.

These are, of course, all dangerous.

But the deeper danger is that civilization gradually loses its sensitivity to "what is worthwhile" while continuously expanding its capacities;

that as systems become stronger, human beings become thinner;

that as the future becomes clearer, fewer people can enter it; that as structures become more stable, lives find it increasingly difficult to be genuinely sustained.

If so, civilization will move toward a deeper hollowness amid outward power.

Once hollowing out begins, all prosperity may be only delayed decline, and all stability only a frozen state sustained by technology.

What this book ultimately seeks to preserve is therefore not a collection of terms, but a deeper line of judgment:

- Existence is not a neutral blank;
- Unfolding is not purely accidental noise;
- Life is not an accumulation of functions alone;
- The human heart is not an optional accessory layer;
- Civilization does not become more mature simply because its operations grow more powerful;
- The future is not worthwhile merely because it can be prolonged.

A genuinely mature civilization must be able to answer another set of questions:

is it still sustaining life?

Is it still strengthening subjects?

Does it still keep the future accessible?

Does it still avoid mistaking efficiency for direction?

Does it still avoid mistaking structure for the final state?

Does it still ensure that human time, participation, contribution, and genuine response are not readily reset to zero?

This is precisely why the book has continually returned to "sustenance" from the beginning.

Without sustenance, however lofty meaning may be, it will shatter in reality;

without sustenance, even lives that strive to participate may repeatedly be scattered, thinned out, and sent back to zero;

without sustenance, civilization struggles genuinely to accumulate maturity, oscillating instead between local growth and overall imbalance.

The genuine maturity of civilization therefore lies not in whether it becomes better at control, but in whether it becomes better at sustaining;

not in whether it becomes better at amplifying systems, but in whether it becomes better at protecting subjects, retaining a future, and allowing genuine participation to leave weight over time.

3. Continual Recalibration Toward a Higher Direction

To take this further, what the book truly aims at is not merely the negative goal that “civilization should not collapse.”

Its higher aim is for civilization to become a structure capable of continually unfolding, recalibrating, and sustaining life, so that freedom from survival insecurity, happiness in life, and more meaningful lives are not merely brief, localized good fortune, but can gradually become more widespread, stable, and long-lasting outcomes in reality.

Only when civilization can do this does it genuinely begin to step beyond its old way of understanding and move in a higher direction.

Emergent Meaning Cosmology therefore does not seek to offer a closed set of answers.

It is neither an endpoint, a definitive edition, nor the final possession of reality.

It is more like a path seeking, as far as possible, not to go astray:

allowing people to travel from the roots of existence all the way to human life in the present, from eternal nonbeing all the way to testing in reality, from primordial meaning all the way to judgments about civilization.

What it hopes to preserve is not a sense of lofty superiority, but the humility and clarity appropriate to confronting reality:

acknowledging that humanity cannot readily exhaust reality, without therefore abandoning the effort to approach it;

acknowledging that civilization is far from mature, without therefore abandoning the leap;

acknowledging that the future is full of risks, without therefore leaving it to be dealt with automatically by the old logic.

4. Returning to Every Person's Questions

Ultimately, this book does not ask humanity to gaze up at a distant chain, but to see:

this chain already passes through each of us.

Eternity is not only on high.

Through primordial meaning it also passes through the universe, through life, and through the human heart, finally reaching the place where every person must answer:

Here and now, what is worthwhile?

In this body and this life, what must not be betrayed?

In this civilization, what must no longer be allowed to go wrong?

In the future ahead, what must we protect together?

If this chain can be seen, then Emergent Meaning Cosmology will be more than a book about existence.

It will also become a book about how humanity can cease losing itself in its own power, how it can sustain life anew in the technological age, and how it can preserve a higher direction in civilization's depths.

If humanity can continue forward along this manifestation chain, the leap will no longer be merely an abstract slogan, but a civilizational action that can genuinely take place.

For a genuine Civilization Leap will not begin with technology alone.

It requires technology, institutions, and practical capacities, but it also requires people to see themselves anew, reconsider their direction, and let new understanding enter actual structures.

5. This Book's Place Within the Current Civilization Leap Corpus

This book now undertakes deep philosophical reading and research into the foundations of thought. It no longer defines itself as “the theoretical foundation of the Civilization Leap trilogy.” The five-volume Civilization Leap series provides the main civilizational theory. The principal public-facing book *A Leap in Thought* helps general readers first recognize the problem; *A Leap in Thought: Practical Handbook* brings understanding into everyday practice; *The Human Heart* continues to investigate judgment, relationships, and genuine feeling; and *Emergent Meaning Cosmology* retains the deeper metaphysical exploration. These texts connect with one another, but none replaces the others.

If what you first face is emptiness, anxiety, exhaustion, and loss of direction, return first to *A Leap in Thought* and *A Leap in Thought: Practical Handbook*. If you are concerned with relationships, judgment, and how civilization leaves real consequences in the human heart, continue into *The Human Heart*. These texts do not require readers first to accept this book's metaphysical explanation.

If you are concerned with why civilization must change and how institutions and engineering can enter reality, turn to *Civilization Leap: The Path of Civilization in the AGI Era (All Five Volumes)* and the corresponding institutional, engineering, and experimental research. Practical proposals must stand independently at the levels of facts, rights, law, engineering, and validation. This book's metaphysical propositions cannot replace practical argument.

This book takes on a different level of questioning: when we continue asking “Why is it worthwhile?” and “Do existence and meaning have a deeper foundation?”, how far can a comprehensive yet criticizable metaphysical explanation go?

These writings do not require every reader to arrive at the same answer. What they truly need to share is this: practical problems can be tested together; deeper theories can be questioned; specialist evidence can revise the framework in return; and no level is exempt from its own burden of argument merely because it is “higher.”

May we, in this era where AGI and Civilization Leap meet, retain both the courage to question reality and the capacity to acknowledge the unknown; dare to propose deeper explanations, yet remain willing to let facts, counterexamples, different civilizations, and the possibility of new subjects change them.

For eternity may not need our understanding in order to exist, but perhaps it has always been waiting to be heard more clearly.

And every moment in which you affirm “this is worthwhile”

is eternity hearing itself through you.

Further Reading and Shared Participation: Keeping Deeper Theory Open to the World's Tests

If you want first to return to ordinary people's practical problems, turn to *A Leap in Thought* and *A Leap in Thought: Practical Handbook*. They do not require acceptance of this book's metaphysical framework, but begin with survival, happiness, meaning, relationships, judgment, and the realities of life in the AI era.

If you want to continue exploring the human heart, turn to *The Human Heart* and meaning-related research. Psychology, philosophy, the social sciences, education, and real-life experience all need to participate here, testing whether expressions such as “the human heart,” “judgment,” and “the weight of relationships” are accurate.

If you disagree with this book, you may approach it through naturalism, emergentism, process philosophy, panpsychism, Buddhist theories of consciousness, philosophy of religion, cognitive science, life science, or other metaphysical paths. What truly matters is not finding a weak opponent for every judgment, but seeking strong theories and counterexamples sufficient to replace, narrow, or overturn this book's core explanation.

If you are concerned with civilization in practice, turn to the five-volume Civilization Leap series, interdisciplinary research, institutional engineering, and experimental validation. Metaphysical explanations provide only deeper direction; they do not replace the factual, rights-based, legal, and engineering arguments required for actual institutions.

If you wish to participate, the most valuable contribution is not agreement, but stronger conceptual analysis, corrections based on original texts, cross-civilizational counterexamples, scientific facts, evidence of subjecthood, alternative philosophical theories, and real-world results capable of forcing this book to change. Different people can enter through different doors without first accepting the same worldview.

Further reading and the current version: <https://www.civitas.top/en/>

The aim is not to persuade more people to accept a cosmology, but to keep inquiry into existence, life, meaning, and civilization open and continually subject it to testing in the real world.

Appendix 1: Overview of the Manifestation Chain (Conceptual Relationship Map)

The following presents the hierarchical structure of this book’s manifestation chain in textual form. It is a theoretical map of Emergent Meaning Cosmology, not an empirical scientific classification. Eternity, primordial meaning, superconsciousness, the soul, and related concepts are metaphysical propositions; presenting them in a table must not cause them to be mistaken for established facts.

Level	Core concepts	Core function	Possible forms of deviation	Direction of recalibration
1. Eternity	Eternity; eternal nonbeing	The foundational mode of existence; the starting point of all unfolding	(Eternity itself does not deviate)	—
2. Primordial meaning	Primordial meaning	The antecedent ground of unfolding from nonbeing into being	(Primordial meaning is the impetus of unfolding itself)	—
3. Universe	Universe	Primordial meaning’s first manifestation as a whole; the overall field of difference and change	Misunderstood as a purely neutral backdrop	Recognize the universe as a stage for meaning rather than a silent heap of matter
4. Superconsciousness	Superconsciousness	The mirror of contemplation of the whole, preventing unfolding from dispersing without coherence	Misunderstood as a personal god or a magnified individual consciousness	Understand it as the structural condition for the whole’s capacity for reconnection
5. Soul	Soul	The beginning of an individual perspective; the accumulation of experience and bearing of continuity	Misunderstood as a one-off psychological fragment	Recognize the soul’s continuity across time and space
6. World	World	The interface with reality that the bearer enters	Misunderstood as a purely objective backdrop or purely subjective projection	Understand the world as the intersection of the unfolding of the whole and the entry of the individual
7. Human heart	The human heart; first-reflected meaning	The nexus of sensing value, choosing among meanings, and calibrating direction	First-reflected meaning becomes obscured; the heart grows numb and surrenders its authority to judge	Safeguard the human heart, remain sensitive, and ask what is “worthwhile”
8. Consciousness	Consciousness	Illuminates the world, the human heart, and circumstances, organizing them into present experience	Consciousness becomes filled by technology and loses depth of focus	Preserve time alone that is not swallowed by technology
9. Lived meaning	Lived meaning	The form of meaning that answers “what is worthwhile here and now”	Replaced by utilitarian goals; the sense of meaning drains away	Ask anew what is “worthwhile” in specific circumstances

Level	Core concepts	Core function	Possible forms of deviation	Direction of recalibration
10. Structural meaning	Structural meaning	The organized form of meaning after it enters language, roles, and institutions	Structures become hollow and depart from what was originally “worthwhile”	Let meaning enter structures, and let structures sustain life
11. Meaning in practice	Meaning in practice	Meaning’s genuine effectiveness in actions, relationships, consequences, and time	Structures become distorted in reality and harm life	Test structures against reality, and recalibrate direction through feedback

The Logic of the Manifestation Chain’s Closed Loop:

In this book’s strong version, the chain is understood as a closed loop from foundational explanation to feedback from reality and back to an understanding of the whole. Real-world outcomes recalibrate structures and judgments about lived reality in return, reentering the human heart and the understanding of the whole. “The soul feeding back into eternity” is not presented here as an empirically confirmed cosmic mechanism; it belongs to the theory’s internal metaphysical explanation. If a stronger explanation emerges in the future, or a crucial link cannot hold, the loop itself must also be reconsidered.

Appendix 2: Index of Representative Sources (Citation Verification Round)

Note: The following sources support the representative empirical facts, philosophical overviews, or accounts of traditions cited in this book's sections on "Cross-Civilizational Resonances," "The Factual Layer of Cosmology," and "Current Trends in Artificial Intelligence." They do not constitute empirical proof of this book's metaphysical claims, nor do they replace its overall explanatory framework. The book's higher-order integrative judgments should continue to be understood as the author's theoretical syntheses and judgments about civilization. Verification date: April 3, 2026.

1. Chapter Two: Cross-Civilizational Resonances

1. Chinese Ethics. Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Stanford University). Used to support the representative overview in Chapter Two of Chinese civilization, Confucian ethics, relational responsibility, and Daoist traditions.

Source link: <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/ethics-chinese/>

2. Personhood in Classical Indian Philosophy. Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Stanford University). Used to support the representative overview in Chapter Two of Indian intellectual traditions, liberation, the aims of life, and the question of the self.

Source link: <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/personhood-india/>

3. African Ethics. Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Stanford University). Used to support the representative overview in Chapter Two of African ethical traditions, community, responsibility, and the realization of personhood.

Source link: <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/african-ethics/>

4. Ayah. Encyclopaedia Britannica. Used to support the representative account in Chapter Two of the concept of "sign/ayah" in Islamic civilization.

Source link: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/ayah>

5. Sufism. Encyclopaedia Britannica. Used to support the representative account in Chapter Two of Sufi traditions, inner experience, and mystical practice.

Source link: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Sufism>

6. Aristotle's Ethics. Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Stanford University). Used to support the representative overview in Chapter Two of eudaimonia, "living well," and virtuous activity.

Source link: <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/aristotle-ethics/>

7. Romanticism. Encyclopaedia Britannica. Used to support the representative overview in Chapter Two of Romanticism, individual experience, emotion, and resistance to homogenization.

Source link: <https://www.britannica.com/art/Romanticism>

2. Chapter Four: The Factual Layer of Cosmology

8. The Big Bang. NASA Science. Used to support the factual account in Chapter Four of the Big Bang model, the universe's extremely hot and dense early state, and its subsequent evolution.

Source link: <https://science.nasa.gov/universe/the-big-bang/>

3. Chapter Six: Current Trends in Artificial Intelligence

9. Generative AI and jobs: A 2025 update. International Labour Organization (ILO). Used to support the account of current trends in Chapter Six concerning generative AI's effects on occupational exposure, task restructuring, and the structure of labor.

Source link: <https://www.ilo.org/publications/generative-ai-and-jobs-2025-update>

Principle of use: Where the main text concerns verifiable history, overviews of philosophical traditions, modern scientific models, or current technological trends, the representative sources above may provide supporting references. Where the text further integrates or develops these materials, or makes judgments about civilization, those statements should remain explanatory claims rather than masquerade as an external consensus.

End

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Official website / current entry point: <https://www.civitas.top/en/>

If you wish to begin with real life, read A Leap in Thought and A Leap in Thought: Practical Handbook first.

If you wish to explore civilization's institutions, engineering, and validation, continue into the five-volume Civilization Leap series and related research.

This book continues to ask: in explaining "why it is worthwhile," how much deeper can we go, and where should we acknowledge the unknown?

Version History

V8.0 Official Edition for Deep Philosophical Reading and Research into the Foundations of Thought (this edition): Repositions this book from a “public-facing handbook for communicating ideas” to a metaphysical and philosophical research text on the public deep-reading track; establishes the boundaries between the strong version, the weak version, and practical independence; reduces the burden of coined terminology at the first reading level, replacing internal terms such as “rational trust in the real” with ordinary language; rewrites cross-civilizational dialogue, removing “the same reality / all religions share one source” as a premise and giving different traditions genuine power to revise the theory in return; rewrites the chapter on humanity and AI, clarifying that humans are currently the actual subjects of meaning and responsibility, AI is first an authorizable extension of capability, and future subjecthood remains open to evidence; realigns the fundamental shift of Civilization Leap with “moving from self-interest first to others’ benefit first, making individuals’ long-term interests more compatible with value for others and shared continuation”; removes outdated relationships to the “trilogy” and adds further-reading and shared-participation entry points in multiple directions.

v7.0 Framework Alignment Edition (July 2026): Previously positioned this book as a handbook for communicating Civilization Leap ideas, completing alignment of the seven-chapter framework and organizing the old further-reading relationships. Its public-facing role and some formulations concerning cross-civilizational and AI relationships are further recalibrated in V8.0.

v6.1 A Leap in Thought Revised Edition (April 2026): Finalized the seven-chapter structure; archived with a DOI.

Personalized Further-Reading Guide

P08-THOUGHT-001 | Emergent Meaning Cosmology: A Leap in Thought | V8.0

This page is a library navigation supplement and does not change the main text of the CURRENT handbook for communicating ideas.

Toward Mid-Level Theory | Meaning Dynamics

Why read: Develop philosophical intuitions further into analyzable structures of meaning, relationships, choices, and real-world consequences.

<https://www.civitas.top/en/documents/p08-md-001/>

Toward Deeper Theory | Emergent Meaning Cosmology: Academic Edition

Why read: Continue investigating the ontology of meaning and cosmological hypotheses, while preserving the boundary that they are deeper theoretical explorations rather than empirical proof in reality.

<https://www.civitas.top/en/documents/p08-cosmo-002/>

Toward Real Life | The Living Civilization Trilogy

Why read: Return from ideas and theory to ordinary people's work, relationships, families, and future lives, testing whether judgments about civilization can ultimately be borne by life.

<https://www.civitas.top/en/documents/p04-living-001/>

Explore Further | The Complete Public Library

Main entry point for general readers <https://www.civitas.top/en/library/>

<https://www.civitas.top/en/audiences/public/>

Counterexamples, failed tests, new evidence, and competing explanations should return to the corresponding theory or validation track to trigger reconsideration, rather than being obscured by the further-reading pathway.

Civilization Leap | <https://www.civitas.top/en/>