Evolution of the Noösphere

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I. Introduction

The origin and the emergence of the noösphere cannot be adequately discussed without reference to the most controversial subjects in the sciences. This is no coincidence—the subjects are controversial precisely because they are associated with the noösphere.

From its beginning, science has had two opposing schools of thought. The first saw the living world as having a design and thus a designer. The second saw life as a product of blind chance, without any ultimate goal or purpose.

The modern iteration of the debate[1] began when Pierre Teilhard de Chardin and George Gaylord Simpson engaged in a 1949 intellectual battle at the Paris "Colloquium on Paleontology and Transformism" (transformism being here synonymous with "evolutionary theory"). Teilhard began the debate by discussing cases of parallel evolution in myospalacine mole rats.[2] Teilhard's research into the evolution of these mole rats (genus *Myospalax*, Family Cricetidae [formerly Siphneidae]; Simpson 1953, Sukhov 1967) revealed that the main trunk of the myospalacine family tree diverged into three separate branches. These branches followed independent evolutionary trajectories. Similar traits then appeared in all three lineages. First, all animals experienced an increase in size. Second, each lineage developed continuous molar growth. Third, all evolved fusion of the cervical vertebrae.[3]

Teilhard argued that the example of the mole rats demonstrated directionality in evolution (Teilhard de Chardin 1942, 1950).[4] Implicit in this finding is the likelihood that all bodily features can evolve in similar ways in distinct types of organisms. Progressive increase in brain size, seen throughout the history of terrestrial vertebrates, was the type of directionality of most interest to Teilhard. Progressive change leads to Teilhard's Omega Point (McMenamin 1998, Barlow 1998a, Barlow 1998b).

Simpson's (1953, p. 246) response, that mole rat evolution is best interpreted as a response in similar animals to similar selective forces, was echoed by Teilhard scholar Edward O. Dodson in 1993 [p. 12]. Certainly