

Postscripts

to the essay

What Gave You That Idea?

Rediscovering The Development of Our Worldviews

(2012)

why?

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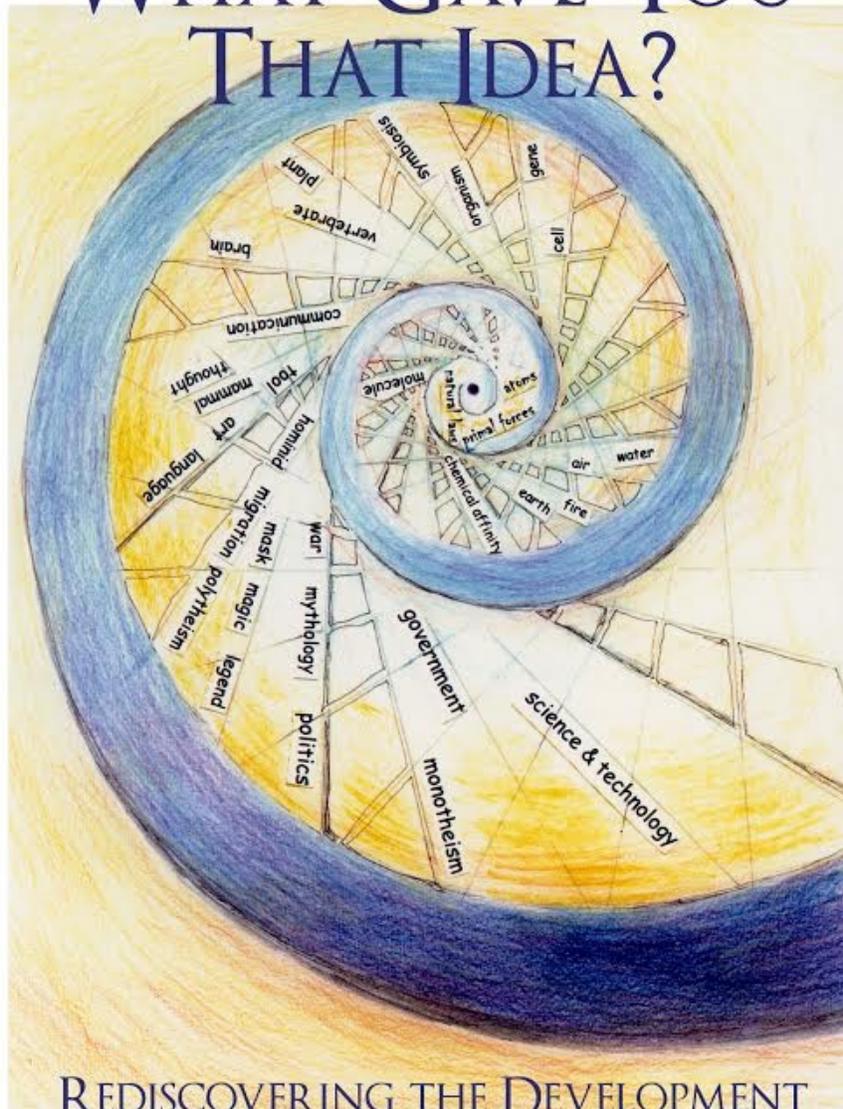
Promotion of Multidisciplinary Studies

>>>of potential interest to researchers in biology, psychology, medicine...
anthropology and... AI technology<<<



Georges Kassabgi

WHAT GAVE YOU THAT IDEA?



REDISCOVERING THE DEVELOPMENT
OF OUR WORLDVIEWS

GEORGES KASSABGI

why?

These four Postscripts represent — as one text, a *Postscriptum* to my philosophical essay (2012) — the end of my "writing project" which I started in 1998. As I progressed in my preparatory research (into history of philosophy, religions, and science; works of fiction and nonfiction) I imagined a positive project outcome could be a near-10%-of-the-readers expressing interest and/or providing me with encouragement-to-continue. Today, six years after presenting my essay "What Gave You That Idea? — Rediscovering the Development of Our Worldviews" to about 400 readers, the result is 3% at best. Particularly puzzling to me (the main fact behind the *why?*) is the lack of interest in my proposed "multidisciplinary study"... sketched out in Part I of the essay... and I am not sure *why?*

Here are, for instance, a sample of early "rejections"...

... an IT Executive in a major insurance company said that I ought to complete the proposed study and only then present my new hypothesis. I remarked with the following pertinent opinion of Sir Peter Medawar (Nobel in Physiology, 1960) in his "Advice to a Young Scientist" (1979)

Every discovery, every enlargement of the understanding, begins as an imaginative preconception of what the truth might be. The imaginative preconception—a "hypothesis"—arises by a process as easy or as difficult to understand as any other creative act of mind; it is a brainwave, an inspired guess, a product of a blaze of insight. It comes anyway from within and cannot be achieved by the exercise of any known calculus of discovery.

But she did not want any follow-on conversation.

... a senior researcher in microbiology at an international pharmaceutical company expressed an initial curiosity in my idea but when I suggested my hypothesis *may* offer substance to the one presented years earlier by Rupert Sheldrake, a biologist and professor at Cambridge University, who wrote several books and organized conferences around the world (through the 1980s and 1990s),

The hypothesis starts from the idea that the development of embryos — the growth of a baby, for example, in the womb, or the growth of a tree from a seed — that developmental biology depends on organizing fields, called morphic fields. The organization of behavior, like the instincts of a spider, for example, depends on similar morphic fields, organizing fields.

well, this reader who I thought would be effective in planning multidisciplinary studies stopped all communication after hearing me say that my hypothesis of four nonmaterial primal interactions *might* lead the way in explaining "fields" in addition to and integrated with the material primal interactions as established in physics.

why? = what am I missing?

... a journalist stated that my idea reminded him of Edward T. Hall's book "The Hidden Dimension"... but after reading that book, I wondered about what he actually meant with such comment...

My hypothesis is about the yet-not-considered underlying movements of what we know with our senses or instruments... e.g. bacteria, DNA, love, anger... at any rate, we rely on the here-and-now and often focus on symptoms. Edward T. Hall reminds us that "culture" is a *hidden dimension* and influences our opinions, plans and designs. My hypothesis is about *movements underlying* such hidden dimension.

In search of a helping guide, I went back to two of the books I have studied, "What Is Life?" (1944) by Erwin Schrödinger. and "The Origins of Life" (1999) by Freeman Dyson.

In the former, I noted the following,

*... from all we have learnt about the structure of living matter, we must be prepared to find it working in a manner that cannot be reduced to the ordinary laws of physics. And that not on the ground that there is any "new force" or what not, directing the behaviour of the single atoms within a living organism, but because the **construction is different** from anything we have yet tested in the physical laboratory*

And in the latter (who studied Schrödinger's works),

If modern cells require a few thousand types of molecule for stable homeostasis, what does this tell us about primitive cells? Strictly speaking, it tells us nothing. Without the modern apparatus of genes and repressors, the ancient mechanisms of homeostasis must have been very different. The ancient mechanisms might have been either simpler or more complicated.

Still it is a reasonable hypothesis that the ancient mechanisms were simpler. There remains the question, How simple could they have been? This question must be answered before we can build credible theories of the origin of life. It can be answered only by experiment.

None of them raised the question: What made such "different construction" possible? (my emphasis in the former quote)

...

My main purpose, as it has been with the philosophical essay and subsequent texts (see Postscripts I and II), is to stimulate debates and eventually lead to a multidisciplinary study program.

You may have become familiar with the essay on rediscovering the development of our worldviews. Or you may have only watched the related videos (see link in Postscript I) or scanned it along with other texts.

At any rate, new inputs and reminders are offered through the following four-parts *Postscriptum*... and here's hoping the reader will find it to be a meaningful addition to the essay.



Postscript I.-

Published Videos, Articles, and other essays

I.1. YouTube channel (2014): four videos for a total viewing of ~ 40 minutes — a companion to the essay (indeed, with same title):

go to:

<https://www.youtube.com/user/rediscoverworldviews>

or search the web with:

rediscoverworldviews

I.2. an article I presented at the University in Rome, invited by Admiral Renato Ferraro (ret), on the occasion of the UN-sponsored *Peace Management Award*, and published "Guerra e pace" by *Rivista Marittima* the official Italian military navy magazine (September 2013).



Photo during the UN-sponsored "Peace Management Award" ceremony organized by University in Rome, Italy (GK, second guest-speaker from the left)

War and Peace

Rediscovering our worldviews, in the search of what might ensure fewer conflicts

We know a great deal about how the world around us has developed in its diversity. On the other hand, we differ on how it began, remain challenged by its material-to-phenomena transitions, and speculate about its future. It follows that we maintain—for one world—many worldviews: ways of interpreting our perceptions as well as identifying how best to interact with our environment. In the name of peace, nevertheless, we keep striving to find common ground for the human race—brotherhood, family, nation, cultural roots, a vision, a mission—but each attempt toward unity, so far, seems to require a high price before fulfilling humankind's neighborly aspirations.

Shouldn't we first better understand what underlies human behavior and thus deal with potential negatives without creating problems of another sort? Destructive wars, whether conventional or asymmetrical or terror-aiming, have not been eliminated, and peace remains an elusive objective. Despite denials: Each worldview has value...up to a point.

The two beacon-like worldviews are: (a) the abstract-fascinated which claims insights into the mysterious, considers spirituality as a distinct feature created along the timeline, has roots in ancient philosophy and religions, and assures us life has a purpose; and (b) the concrete-focused which relies on scientific empiricism, and is able to show that *all* is (or emerges from) matter with its physical laws, evolution by natural selection, and chance. Most people like to think that their worldview is unique in at least one respect, but in all likelihood it belongs to one or other of these two general groups.

The worldviews' initial development depended on one or more assumptions and, in particular, on a convenient starting point. We have: (1) the dawn of civilization; (2) the genetic code; (3) an individual/universal soul; (4) a sacred text; (5) consciousness in the brain; and many more.

But why do we disregard what led to these (arbitrary) *practical starting points*? What if we have not yet taken into account *the* most basic material

as well as nonmaterial attributes? That is, what could characterize our worldviews as having the common foundational facet that is less variable than what philosophy, religious systems, and the scientific method have been able to provide so far?

At any rate, having imagined or inherited a worldview, we learn, discover, and (sometimes) expand or adjust with hope or in consideration of new aims, but we also tend to reject outsiders' positions, even if their inclusion could, inter alia, partly help in the prevention of future conflicts. Is this aversion to change an inherent feature beyond our control? Is it linked to our brain and mental capabilities? Is it the result of one or more chance events in our evolution by natural selection? Or...does it arise from some distant ancestors' assumption, which ended up triggering a hindrance to later generations?

I therefore suggest we investigate/adopt the *earliest conceivable starting point* for both material and nonmaterial constituents; it ought to provide a thread, a rallying symbol, to all existing worldviews. We do not know what generated such "first" moment. It corresponds to a time when elementary particles or energies existed in configurations and densities which may not be fully understandable with our current means (theories on and experiments with sub-atomic particles, quantum mechanics). More precisely, I posit that such relatively more stable foundation encompasses the material-bound as well as the nonmaterial-bound primal interactions. The latter are the bearers of what it takes to develop, through infinite combinations, entities such as spirit, intellect, consciousness, feelings and, more generally, life's non-materiality. These additional primal interactions exist in a yet-to-be-studied *integration* with the former, i.e. the basic material primal interactions scientists and many others currently agree on (gravity, electromagnetism, weak and strong nuclear) when they talk about atoms and their components, universal constants, and related physical laws...as well as most of what we perceive as physical/material around us. The reference to a *practical starting point* remains important and might indeed be decided upon on a case by case basis.

In my essay, *What gave you that idea?* (2012), I have introduced *starting points* and *material integrated with nonmaterial at the most elementary level* as "inputs" to current research work dedicated to our individual and societal well-being. They might enlighten (or bring some harmony to) our disparate ways of discussing origins of life on Earth and other questions; for instance,

whether or not evil is part of human nature. And I emphasized that constructive results will be achievable *only* with multidisciplinary research projects followed by an across-the-globe priority toward better understanding—education—for all. It could increase, in certain cases, the success rate of our efforts in improving health, education, justice, and more.

The well-established schools of thought and worldviews represent an intellectual treasure. It is true that a *practical starting point* is always necessary in a project, an undertaking—we have to start somewhere and, in some cases, we might need more than one depending on the objective—while the *earliest conceivable starting point* is not; adopting and maintaining such an out-of-our-perceptions concept, however, will help keep our faraway connectedness-with-the-world alive in our thoughts and thus have our behavior permeated by it. In the context of war and peace, the revised approach might allow more successful negotiations toward the prevention of conflicts or the avoidance of letting them last too long. Instead of the declarations that “All options are on the table,” or “The use of force is only considered as a last resort,” or “We’ll go to war with reluctance,” we will have the parties to a conflict look back at their own series of events leading to the current situation and talk to each other with an increased understanding of the differences at hand.

Consider, for instance, two nations at war and each side claiming to have evidence that the other started the hostilities. Political leaders organize emergency meetings, propose a series of steps, assign mediators, call on other nations for their support, and declare that their efforts will not only stop that war, but also prevent such a conflict from ever happening again. Why not go further back in time and identify all that, on both sides, contributed to the conflict and thus calm down the inflammatory declarations of the opposing leaders? The suggestion here is *not* that a concern with elementary particles will have an impact. With that *earliest conceivable starting point* well planted early on in our psyche, we would all have learned to look at starting points and assumptions in unselfish terms.

In other words, while the first missile shot across the border between two countries may indicate to some observers who started the war, we ought to consider the distant past before any moral judgment is passed—an *invisible* help for the prevention of deadly developments.

Facts around us are in support of a pessimistic prediction when discussing war and peace prospects. And yet, long-term peace has happened. In remote areas on each continent, millennia ago, some locals realized that there is a common ground to all life and mutual respect is more important than any self-serving decision. Peace lasted until subsequent migrations came with greed, forced their way through such isolated and self-sustaining areas, and eventually imposed their practices with a crude emphasis on the obedience to the chief—the one who knows it all. Some of these locations are again, nowadays, peaceful settlements—nobody mentions them. The locals' ancestors paid a high price while the modern evidence does not tell us the whole story: assumptions made, long-term consequences neglected, and directions later on accepted merely through over a long time.

Should we derive from history that war is natural? Or is it peace? Or that war and peace go round and round?

Let's step back and have a look at this ancient "war and peace" question in the company of some great thinkers. A recent article by Admiral Renato Ferraro, *Guerra e pace nel pensiero contemporaneo—Alain (Emile-Auguste Chartier) un pacifista va alla guerra (War and Peace in modern thought—Alain, a pacifist goes to the war front)* published by *Rivista Marittima*, May 2012, encouraged me in this renewed search. Ferraro gives us a vivid account of key events as well as what led Alain (1868–1951), a French philosopher, author of thousands of *Propos* (or propositions, essays), and teacher, to volunteer in WWI *despite* his declared pacifism.

The reader of the Ferraro article may be inclined to take the period of Alain's interactions with his teacher, colleagues, and some of his students as the *practical starting point* for both his pacifism and his volunteering his service to the infantry. But let's get deeper into Alain's thinking. And only then clarify his decision-making process.

At the beginning of the twelfth century, the French Neoplatonist philosopher Bernard de Chartres wrote, "We are dwarfs perched on the shoulders of giants. We see more than they were able to see and farther away because of their gigantic stature; we are neither taller, nor is our vision better." A few centuries later, Isaac Newton (1642–1727) wrote to a colleague at Cambridge University, "If you have seen further than [...] it is by standing upon the shoulders of Giants." Alain often reminded his contemporaries in one of his pre-WWI *Propos*, "I was busy enough

attempting to rediscover what the best minds wanted to say. Every successful attempt at this is a discovery in the deepest sense, since it is the continuation of mankind.” These three quotes are about the knowledge we inherit from our predecessors. Bernard de Chartres and Newton emphasize the higher authority in the transfer of knowledge, with its implication of hierarchy and respect. Alain, in comparison, seems to take to heart the roots and development of man’s intellect.

Alain climbed on the shoulders of many giants—notably Plato, Aristotle, Goethe, and Comte. He told his students that going from the simple to the complex would prove to be a more effective path toward learning accompanied by understanding (compared to learning at an increasing pace and intensity). He recommended that they look at human intellect and spirituality as parts of one interdependent world: “The lower levels are the support for the higher ones. But we need the higher levels to understand the lower ones.” In Alain’s time, this reference to lower levels could not but be limited to our internal organs and fluids. He also assumed that our spirituality—the non-materiality—was to be identified as an integral part of our system (body and mind).

While initially a committed pacifist, he nevertheless volunteered to go to the front in WWI in order, as he put it, “to gain a closer understanding of what [war] means.” At about the time he returned from the WWI front (Verdun), Alain wrote to his friend Elie Halévy, “[...] The more I think about [the war], the more I am persuaded that wars can be avoided by consistently applying small steps toward the resolution of differences in the same manner a husband and his wife can avoid fighting over their disagreements and, more generally, all intense emotions.” A common-to-all earliest starting point cannot but help in the maintenance of a non-destructive dialogue.

Later on, in his *Propos* dated September 1927, *Les Vigiles de l’esprit* (*The Guardians of the mind*), he wrote, “The war is. The peace is not a given; we ought to construct peace, and hence believe it is possible. I insist on this point: if you do not believe peace is achievable, you will never be able to aim at it, and if you do not aim at it, you will never achieve it.” Alain was then reinvigorated in his pursuit of pacifism amid an alarming increase in war-minded rhetoric across Europe. He warned, “To find out the origins of military power build-up and the consequent reason to go to war is equivalent to preparing peace for tomorrow.”

It therefore seems to me, as a life-long dedicated pacifist who, at age 46, decided to go to the trenches (a decision which deepened his opposition to war), Alain was one of those who lived with humanity as *the* practical starting point; that is, humanity instead of nation, community, or family. His reference was thus a much earlier point in time than what his contemporaries had chosen. The absence, however, of the *earliest conceivable starting point* accepted by all those broadcasting political propositions provided an open door, especially in the five years preceding WWII, for the ones in favor of war to get stronger and, as René Descartes (1596–1650), in his *Discourse on the Method* (1637), wrote that the diversity of our opinions are not the result of intellectual abilities, but “...only because we drive our thoughts along different roads and often do not consider the same things”

Alain’s opponents obviously talked about other things and ended, in the particular case, with the upper hand. Of course, this picture is incomplete; the same applies to what was going on within Germany and other neighboring countries where the only starting point was what had happened to them in the past thirty-to-fifty years.

Alain’s basic insight got my attention, though. It inspired me to search for hidden layers: the deepest roots, how do seeds originate, down to ensembles of subatomic structures and *all* primal interactions—some of which have been the forgotten components in our accepted theories and worldviews. I have also been looking, and continue to look, to giants of the past and present, as we all do, or ought to. The legacies of Confucius and the Buddha, the dialogues of Plato, and the teachings of many thinkers; the contributions of physicists, physiologists, and molecular biologists; the discourses of theologians and metaphysicians from paganism to monotheism; great novelists, poets, and dramatists; the close observation of natural phenomena: each has an undeniable interest and validity. I take great advantage of what has been studied and examined, but I am also tampering with conventions, tradition—“playing with fire,” as Alain said—while I climb on both giant *and* small shoulders.

Michel de Montaigne (1533–1592) saw the human psyche as a dark, unfathomable maze. He chose as his personal motto *Que sais-je?*—What do I know? His humility in dealing with what may be behind our reality is commendable and worthy of emulation, though we should not be discouraged from entering the labyrinth due to a sense of futility. His

question inspires ours; we carry on his legacy of opening our minds to challenges, and looking for a new approach.

Alfred Russel Wallace (1823–1913), who identified the law of evolution by natural selection independently of Charles Darwin (1809–1882) thought that some of the brain’s capabilities might have been due to a divine intervention. Darwin disagreed: His own view was that organic structures might develop functions in addition to those for which they had originally evolved thanks to natural selection. The adaptability of the human brain is indeed a testament to Darwin’s insight (his starting point was a unicellular organism). More recently, scientists have determined that nerve cells from two species (to be precise, an insect’s nervous system and the human brain) are made up of look-alike building blocks. It follows, according to their report, that the higher quantity of nerve cells in the human brain makes the difference that distinguishes us from the insects. But how did the researchers determine that the manifestations of our non-materiality might not be influenced by more factors than the number of neurons?

In *What Is Life?* (1944) Schrödinger (1887–1961) concluded that “the task is not so much to see what no one has yet seen, but to think what nobody has yet thought about that which everybody sees.”

Albert Einstein (1879–1955): “The only source of knowledge is experience. And imagination is more important than knowledge for knowledge is limited to all we know and understand.”

A physicist of my acquaintance asked (2005): “What if the nonmaterial-bound primal interactions suggested in your essay are the result of the earliest self-organized ensemble (for instance, a cell)? That would sound more credible to all scientists. We would actually welcome the proposal as a useful addition to current thinking in both theoretical and experimental physics research.” But, I argued, at the lowest levels of complexity we haven’t demonstrated *how and when* the auto-organization property emerges. It has only been observed above a certain level of complexity. That’s one precise requirement for upfront multidisciplinary studies (that is, physics, biology, medicine, theology, sociology, psychology, and more), to consider and thus address critical questions: the drive to life, the origins of the law of evolution by natural selection, the infinite variety of forms, the constancy of non-materiality while cells divide and re-generate (are fields emerging out of the integrated nonmaterial primal interactions?), the material/nonmaterial

interdependent dynamics (is consciousness in the brain or a network of nerve cells or more likely flesh *and* fields, with the latter extending into the environment?), and more.

A debate with these great thinkers and many others, about the Darwin-versus-Wallace approaches, say, would likely be filled with arguments either pro or con the “new opportunities in spirituality,” “psychoanalytic principles,” and the proposition that “quantity takes care of quality.”

With my idea-inputs, we might start the discussion with a question such as: What if we first establish the same earliest conceivable starting point in all worldviews? We could then study and test and improve the hypothesis of additional/integrated nonmaterial-bound interactions, and thus have a common guiding light for all cultures and societies with their distinctive qualities. What may ensue is a more effective approach toward a better understanding of the mind-body problem, and go further.

Such future cross-disciplinary work might recommend a revised set of integrated nonmaterial primal interactions as well as the absence of any pre-determined intent. A widely-supported-by-experts new approach may be better at inspiring the holders of our many worldviews...

Why can't we... focus on better understanding while increasing our information and possessions?... have disagreements without final judgments?... see evil not as a fundamental part of being human but as a consequence of artificial selections made in the name of our worldviews?... learn when/how to stop?... and acknowledge that we are not supreme beings, but are dependent on the life process on Earth—as is all organic life?

Good and evil: they are perceived as parts of human nature. But is that the whole story? Do we not venture into the search for the *whole truth* with an arbitrary practical starting point while neglecting the assumptions embedded in our thought processes?

I.3. an article published by *The Straits Times* (Singapore) which makes reference to my essay:

Embedded assumptions that can lead to summit stalemates

US Defence Secretary Chuck Hagel (L) listens as China's deputy chief of General Staff Lt. Gen. Wang Guanzhong (R) speaks at the start of their meeting in Singapore on May 31, 2014. They are in Singapore to attend the 13th Asia Security Summit. -- PHOTO: AFP

By Patrick Logan For The Straits Times

As they have been doing since the annual meetings began in 2002, delegates hoped to foster better relations in a region that has seen growing tension over territorial disputes in the South China Sea and East Asia Sea. Some attendees, of course, used the opportunity to reinforce a specific mythos, the set of beliefs that a particular group of people comes to internalise.

As a teacher in Asia for more than 20 years, I have observed the power of mythos in my classrooms, where barriers to communication have sometimes appeared not through inadequate grammar or vocabulary, but because of the story each group has told itself.

Poking around a flea market in Yokohama, years ago, I discovered a 1930s postcard depicting three peasants in North-East China. They stand before a mud wall, their hands raised in jubilation; the caption reads, "Farmers rejoicing over the new Manchukuo", the name given to the region by its Japanese occupiers. What struck me was not the obvious propaganda, but how the nervous faces of the peasants betrayed the card's cheery message. Those buying the card at the time perhaps failed to notice this, preferring to accept the government's narrative that Japan was liberating Asia from its colonial yoke.

My Japanese students at the time invariably redirected any discussion of the Second World War to the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. They never mentioned the millions killed in China, the brutality throughout Southeast Asia or the mistreatment of Allied prisoners of war; Japan had been a "victim."

Teaching writing at an international college in Singapore years later confirmed my ideas about *mythos*. I noticed that as the ethnic mix of the class expanded over time, so did the opportunities for chauvinism.

One morning, a young woman from Beijing proudly related to the class that China's territory had once extended to Eastern Europe. A stocky boy from

Ulan Bator responded by slapping both hands loudly on his desk. He rose slowly, wagged his finger and said reprovably, “China didn’t conquer Mongolia, Mongolia conquered China.” Proud of his heritage, he was reluctant to cede any of the great Khans’ conquests.

A common point of agreement among many Asian students was Japan’s past ruthlessness. However, one student from Indonesia and another from Vietnam challenged their classmates from Korea and China regarding the current relevance of that brutality. One pointed out that the Dutch had controlled parts of Indonesia for more than 300 years. The young man from Hanoi acknowledged the cruel treatment by the French, the Japanese, the French again, and finally the bombing campaigns of the Americans. However, neither felt that his compatriots had any interest in brooding over the past. Their advice, “Get over it.”

The arrival in the class of a young woman from Vladivostok added another perspective. The former Soviet Union had relinquished possession of a dozen territories in its *near abroad*. She explained that these states had different cultures and languages and so naturally should have their own sovereignty, despite some having been a part of Russia for centuries. Someone made a comparison with Tibet, upsetting the Chinese students.

With their passions temporarily confounding their ability to express themselves in English, the Chinese paused long enough for a normally reticent Japanese girl to pose another challenge, “If you believe that Japan’s occupation of Korea and Manchuria was wrong, then why is it right that Tibet is controlled by Beijing?”

The question hung in the air, leaving the room silent. The faces of the Chinese students displayed something curious. They’d been listening to viewpoints denied them their entire lives, ideas blocked by a *mythos* that was contrary to everything that had just been said. However distasteful, the arguments of their fellow students also seemed reasonable.

In his book, *What Gave You That Idea?*, Georges Kassabgi writes, “there are assumptions that get embedded in a cultural legacy, and end up being seen as *facts*.” Sadly, this inheritance lowers the likelihood of success at gatherings such as the Asia Security Summit.

<http://www.straitstimes.com/the-big-story/asia-report/opinion/story/embedded-assumptions-can-lead-summit-stalemates-20140716>

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OTHER BOOKS/ARTICLES

— *The Legacy* (2000)

On general management challenges (2000)/ see www.ugik.com

— *Winter Letters* (2004)

A collection of essays and observations; the precursor of the philosophical essay referred herein. It includes "The Heart Never Adventures Alone" which is the English translation of *Le coeur n'est jamais seul dans l'aventure* (published by Institut Alain... an essay I presented in a conference organized at the Université de Paris on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of Alain's death... centered on understanding emotions and harmony, and Alain's *Propos* on happiness

— *Guerra e pace* (2013)

published by *Rivista Marittima*.

— *The Starting Note...* (2013)

a crime investigation where the detective relies on the essay written by the murdered woman and rediscovers the world of ... underlying causes and how they matter.

Note: the philosophical essay (on Rediscovering Worldviews), the related Postscripts, and the detective story (TSN) are available in various eBook formats at eBookIt.com at *no cost*...

... searching using author's full name... or, go to: <http://tiny.cc/startingnote>
(and select the book you are interested in... essay, Postscripts, or novel).

The essay and the Postscripts will also be available @ digital repositories...
Humanities Core, PhilPapers, ResearchGate, and HAL:
All freely accessible with the author's full name.



Postscript II.-

Fellowship Project Proposals

I participated in seven group-discussions (Los Angeles, Montreal, Boston, Paris, Basel, Milan, Wolfeboro)... all organized with the help of a local friend who offered to make each event happen so as to allow me an interaction with about ten readers, one-on-one and as a small group, of my philosophical essay during the 2013-2015 timeframe. Some of their questions/comments are discussed in Postscript III and IV.

During the subsequent 2016-2017 timeframe, I opted for the submission of Project Proposals to four academic or research institutions. In its call for Fellows, each institution specified a particular area of interest. My proposals (basically, centered on moving forward with the multidisciplinary research project outlined in Part I of the essay as the central feature for a second/expanded edition of the essay) were not accepted. And I think the main cause is that these Fellowships are organized with the financial support of one or more Foundations who in turn have their priorities and aim at attracting tenured professors (or distinguished scholars). *Why?*

I will first summarize three such Proposals and then provide in its entirety the fourth and latest one.

American Academy in Berlin.

The American Academy in Berlin's Fellowship Program (September-December 2017) focused on philosophy appeared to me as an excellent opportunity to complete (that is, benefiting from local library and open discussions with other Fellows) an expanded second edition of the book... so as to present a stronger case for the new hypothesis of integrated nonmaterial primal interactions at the foundational level of complexity...

Open Society Foundation.

The OSF *Proposition* reads like a brief on human-rights' violations – seventy years after the UN Commission on Human Rights got started in New York City, and more than two millennia after the world's first charter of Human Rights was signed... in Persia.

Will we ever achieve world-wide honest acceptance of human rights on the basis of a commitment to democratic governance and justice? For some, we shouldn't overreact because the situation is improving. Many argue we do have a case *now* for more effective laws. Others see no hope as long as humans are around. Leaders, however, aim at a new "world order" capitalizing on gained experience, as the way to go: but at what total cost? Let's face it: "Human rights" is a complex subject: And humans *have* complicated it... .

In the *Proposition*, the main drivers for violations seem to be "greed" and "revenge" while violence-for-survival has been part of organic life from its earliest origin. Should we not study how excessive greed and revenge emerged, say, *after* the earliest generations of *Homo sapiens*? Our ancestors remained unable to keep distinct the survival impulses from acts motivated by emerging greed and revenge. The former is fundamentally forgivable. The latter requires extra-artful correction. Forgiving and correcting (millennia later) will demand unusual preparatory work via, inter alia, enlightened education. Are we not now in a better position to make such a distinction as well as manage its requirements?

Should the case of repeated human-rights violations *not* warrant such an in-depth examination? Could a rediscovery of how the respective developments of each of the frameworks for ideas, thoughts, doctrines, actions – our *worldviews* – be a helping hand?

The Rockefeller Foundation.

This proposal is about a supporting study for the Rockefeller Foundation's pursuit of its objectives; in particular, leveraging its multidisciplinary environment.

On the basis of available documentation, the Rockefeller Foundation's activities dedicated to furthering the development of "inclusive economies" and "stronger resilience" are under the assumption that less secure livelihoods are caused by unemployment, climate change, aging population, and conflicts; as a result, the focus of each such action plan is providing support to local population with improved/expanded education, monitoring, planning, distribution, and coaching. Indeed, positive results in different areas of the world attest to their effectiveness. They might, however, be limited in cases affected by future waves of terrorism, the unpredictability of climate change over time, the increase in high-density urban population

areas, as well as other "unintended" consequences (say, with the implementation of advanced technologies).

Resilience has never been an issue for plants and throughout the animal kingdom. Therefore... What made resilience in Homo sapiens' life an "emergent attribute" that needs to be strengthened? For sure, violence for survival and protection exists in all life systems. The species considered as part of our ancestry have a record (fossils, DNA) of violent acts. But only Homo sapiens' violence is also triggered by revenge, punishment, and greed. When/where/why did that emerge?

So... we should aim at obtaining a deeper understanding of what underlies the weakening of resilience... with a focus on the most stressful man-made events in human life (e.g. violent acts as well as cultural changes) which put human resilience to the test."

The Cullman Center at The New York City Public Library

This Project is about a deeper-than-obtained-so-far understanding of what underlies human experience, culture, and behavior – the humanities. For instance, diversity in shapes/properties as well as violence for protection/survival are natural developments in *all* living systems; however, the non-adoption of a universal "common ground" (for human life in our one and only world) is not...and neither is violence for punishment, revenge, and/or excessive-greed.

Misconceptions about diversity and violence have led some of our ancestors/leaders onto the road along which modesty and humility are not nurtured and, as a consequence, introduced such human constructs as "being destined to win" or "exceptional" which, one might argue, have been adopted for the good of the followers.

As a result, we have to deal with some unintended consequences, e.g. violent conflicts for revenge by those punished/excluded from the selected group of followers.

With the adoption of a deeper-and-deeper understanding of far-away initial causes (not only symptoms) in our worldviews, however, we should be in a better position to improve upon our capabilities to implement long-term stable solutions and further our well-being.

... you are in the mountain, and your rope is frayed and about to break but you don't know it and feel safe.

— Primo Levi (1919-1987 (1975))

Each worldview depends on assumptions, including convenient "common grounds" or "starting points." We have a sacred text, the dawn of civilization, the genetic code, a military victory, the end of slavery, energy, what happened last year...to name only seven (out of hundreds). *Many assumptions get embedded in the cultural legacy, and are thereafter seen as facts.* Why do we forget what led to these assumptions? And how do we justify not adopting an *additional* common-to-all-worldviews *starting point*?

The outcome of the work at the Cullman Center and The New York Public Library (that is, the research relying on archives, books, scholarly papers *plus* conversations with other international fellowship participants) will be a second/revised/expanded 2019-2010 edition of my philosophical essay, "What Gave You That Idea? — Rediscovering the Development of Our Worldviews" (2012). Note: see initial feedback from scholars and other readers in CV included in this Application.

With this essay, we rediscover the "abstract-fascinated" (philosophy and religions) and the "concrete-focused" (scientific method) worldviews. A new hypothesis for what underlies the emergence of non-materiality (human consciousness, spirit, emotions, feelings, intellect) is introduced. My objective is *not* to add a new worldview but to open the entrance door for the to-be-agreed upon earliest-conceivable common-to-all-worldviews' starting point – with material-*as-well-as*-nonmaterial foundational elements.

A science of the relations of mind and brain must show how the elementary ingredients of the former correspond to the elementary functions of the latter.

— William James (1842-1910)

With the proposed hypothesis taking center stage, I suggest in Part I of the essay a next-step (2018-2019) multidisciplinary study for which a preliminary outline is proposed.

Part I is accessible online at www.ugik.com along with a companion YouTube channel with same title; it can also be viewed via search with *rediscoverworldviews*. In addition, there is an article on "war and peace" (published in the Italian military navy magazine, *Rivista Marittima*, in September 2013).

Part II is about an imaginary round-table discussion among participants with distinct worldviews; it could lead in the future (2019-2020) to a separate expanded version for a theatre play. In Part III and IV we continue the conversations with great minds of the past in philosophy, religions, and science.

The forthcoming research work benefiting from access to The New York Public Library's Stephen A. Schwarzman Building will consist in detailed/critical reviews of past texts with relevance to the development of our worldviews, and keep in mind the following behind-the-scenes challenges to anthropology, history and culture studies:

- (a) each worldview has value... up to a point; indeed, local/global conflicts and human rights violations attest to that, and, at any rate, no human knows it all;
- (b) natural complexity has been complicated by humans planning/acting for their own views while not showing enough concern for unintended consequences;
- (c) the need to distinguish between natural and artificial selection; the former are related to same-for-all natural laws versus the latter which are self-centered human constructs; and
- (d) violence for survival and protection is part of Nature... violence for revenge/punishment and greed came about later but where are the scholars interested in such a distinction?

As often is the case, getting started with a non-conventional idea is bound to hit the wall of... conventions.

As a result, two new Chapters are in the works and will eventually be added to the new edition: Part V, expanding on the concept of a common-to-all-worldviews' "starting point" and its potential, outlining more details about the expected multidisciplinary research work; and Part VI, searching for what might help humanity on the road not-yet-taken toward a world with fewer violent acts and, as well, a healthier life on Earth. No hard science knowledge will be part of the conversations at the Cullman Center.

For some, we shouldn't overreact because the situation is improving. Many argue we do have a case *now* for more effective laws. Others see no hope as long as humans are around. Leaders, on every disruptive occasion, aim at a new "world order" as the way to go: but at what total cost? Let's face it: Human society is a range of complex subjects: And modern humans *have* complicated them in the past seven-to-ten millennia.

It's always impossible until it's done.

— Nelson Mandela (1918-2013)

It is a wake-up call to current thinking since, at heart, it invites all worldviews to consider a shared identity for all participants in our *one* world – the, conceivably, foundational common ground of all that exists on Earth

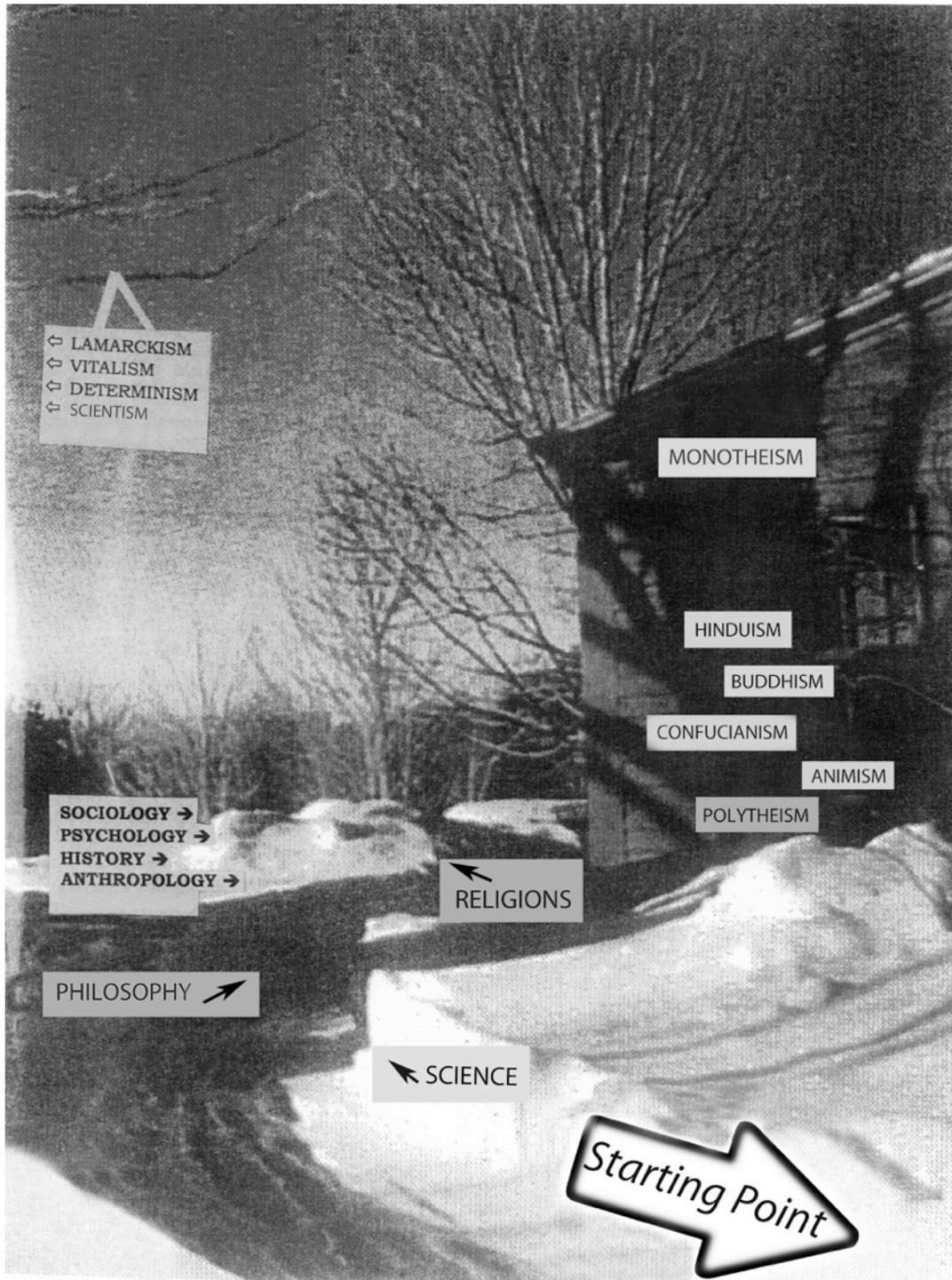
(again, in addition to the adopted starting points *and* admitting that no human being knows what came prior to that earliest conceivable starting point) ... so critical for nurturing humility and modesty... potentially more than what declarations, songs, and prayers have done so far.

Yes, it *is* a tall order. It will depend on work by all, through several generations: Not unlike many changes in our past five millennia. Consider, for instance: the concept of a universal spirit... the definition of consciousness... monotheism instead of polytheism... the idea that "all is matter" or "all is in the gene"... and political systems development taking humanity from tribes to nations.

Any revision affecting our own beliefs is hard to accept: Human society is hugely invested in its adopted worldviews. We have uniforms, signs, rites, ceremonies, laws and constitutions to show how respectful we want to be of our own connectedness. Leaders in political and social sciences often emphasize the critical importance of a "common ground" but with in mind the here and now... the community... the nation... how about the world?

Postscript III.- **Readers' Feedback**

[the following questions from readers, with my answers (and some unavoidable repetitions), are all from either meetings or correspondence... here, edited for clarity]



III.1. How do you reconcile a "no embedded intention or purpose" in the hypothesis of four nonmaterial-bound primal interactions and their names which do indicate "purpose"?

There is no more embedded intention or purpose in the hypothetical nonmaterial primal interactions than in, for instance, electromagnetism the material primal interaction which is part of how we have rain on earth and ensures food stuff to grow and benefits human kind.

The hypothesis is in its pre-infancy and I only have the human language for the naming... the suffix *-fer* is to signify that these foundational or primal interactions are partly instrumental, through an increasing material complexity, in developing what will be the non-materiality in living systems.

III.2. God is *the* Creator. Further speculation about "starting points" is futile and irrelevant. Why all this?

In the proposed hypothesis (see Part I of the essay, and Postscript IV), the world starts as close as humanly-conceivable to its foundation. Maybe the "gods" or a "universal spirit" or "God" created the contents of such starting point (elementary particles and all primal interactions). The "creation from nothing" transcends the reality of the world — the only one we, humans, can talk about with some knowledge.

Theologians and spiritual leaders/thinkers delivered thoughtful arguments in favor of their faith-based worldview. The same leaders introduced in their texts "practical" starting points and other assumptions.

A reminder, if I may:

... in order to imbue civilization with sound principles and enliven it with the spirit of the gospel, it is not enough to be illuminated with the gift of faith and enkindled with the desire of forwarding a good cause. For this end, it is necessary to take an active part in the various organizations and influence them from within.

And since our present age is one of outstanding scientific and technical progress and excellence, one will not be able to enter these organizations and work effectively from within unless he is scientifically competent, technically capable, and skilled in the practice of his own profession.

Pope John Paul XXIII (1881-1963)

My essay highlights a *yet-to-be-agreed-upon* common-to-all-worldviews starting point — one of the initial objectives of the multidisciplinary studies. A "common ground" has proven helpful to leaders in the successful achievement of their group's objectives: Is that a futile/irrelevant goal?

III.3. Go Buddhism: Is a new approach needed?

A new approach may not be needed *if* the human population is restarted with one couple and, say, Buddhism is the only worldview propagated through successive generations... somehow ensuring the *living systems* keep it stable.

Physicists and Tibetan monks have teamed (2013) at Emory University. The former tell us the world is a product of matter, genes, laws of physics, random events, and evolution by natural selection. Buddhism teaches us that the universe is in an unending series of cycles with righteousness and ethics, sensations and perceptions... hence, the critical help of meditation. The team will quantify meditation's effectiveness for the scientists to actually adopt it.

But these two worldviews rely on distinct assumptions (equivalent to each using a distinct "language"). Their leaders can be friends out of respect, kindness, and meditation... but how could they maintain peace when each side acknowledges, *inter alia*, a different starting point? Such a contrasting basic reference point might lead to contempt and more.

I would propose the following imaginary though provocative story, *in addition to* meditation (that is, if you believe in Buddhism); a series of events (here summarized) are included for debate in History classes — elementary through high-school — since it might: (a) encourage the study of History with more of an open-mind, and (b) foster humility in an effective way versus being told that humility is a virtue:

Because of slightly different cosmic events, westbound migration from Central Asia, some time between 150,000 and 70,000 years BC got directed more toward an Upper Nile area and flourished there (instead of the lands of Ancient Greece and Rome)...

So, that's where the Dawn of Civilization actually took place, which in turn triggered a polytheism-to-monotheism transformation along many other societal changes, and was then followed by the Enlightenment as well as the colonization of...Europe.

Same people but slightly different story. Interesting?

III.4. What matters is how each action ends, *not* when/where/how it started.

Human wars started, ended, and then restarted. And if you believe there is no cause and effect... then (depending on the particular cultural legacies) keep complaining about or enjoying how each situation stops. Here's hoping all... ends well. There is, nevertheless, some truth in the thought that wars may end after many wars... but at what total cost?... will there be humans left able to enjoy such hard-won end?

The problem with envisioning Homo sapiens as inherently and irrevocably warlike isn't simply that it is wrong, but also that it threatens to constrain our sense of whether peacemaking is possible and, accordingly, worth trying.

David Barash, "Are We Hard-Wired for War?" NYTimes, 09-28-2013

I suggest the above quote implies that we ought to derive value and learn from a deeper understanding of our actions/behavior and how it all started.

Furthermore, your question reminds me of the old saying, "All's well that ends well" (title of a comedy written by Shakespeare, in 1605). There is no doubt that in some cases (for instance, a car accident resulting in no injuries) your question is almost 100% on target. What I am recommending is that in other cases (for instance, a suicide bomber in a crowded place) we might have to, in addition to arrest/indict/punish those responsible, dig in down to some past starting point if we want to learn about the underlying causes and properly deal with them so as to minimize the risk of a repeat horror.

Not easy. I know.

III.5. There are fewer deadly conflicts: Life on Earth is on the right track. At any rate, yours is not "academic philosophy" ... it is philosophical and scientific rubbish.

Tomorrow's wars may be quite different when compared with the wars humans have had to endure through the past century; this transformation is already clear today. And they might become deadlier in the future.

Making people feel good about current times is a positive thing; but it is an illusion and ought to be clarified sooner or later. Consider the moods in the 1905-1910 and 1920s periods; optimism was in the air.

In 1923, among many authors, reflecting on the world he knew before the outbreak of World War I, a historian recalled what his generation had been told to expect in the future:

We expected that life throughout the World would become more rational, more humane, and more democratic and that, slowly, but surely, political democracy would produce greater social justice. We had also expected that the progress of science and technology would make mankind richer, and that this increasing wealth would gradually spread from a minority to a majority. We had expected that all this would happen peacefully. In fact we thought that mankind's course was set for an earthly paradise, and that our approach towards this goal was predestined for us by historical necessity.

— Arnold Toynbee, *Surviving the Future*, 1971

Violence caused by excessive greed or contempt or revenge/punishment is not found in the animal world but has "emerged" in the Homo sapiens "culture" at some point in time *and* remains fired up.

Related to the above definition of violence and to my claim above that we ought to recall *that* violence is distinct from the violence for survival and protection, I recently noted the definition of "predator" in the Merriam-Webster dictionary, as follows:

- (a) an organism that primarily obtains food by the killing and consuming of other organisms, and
- (b) one who injures or exploits others for personal gain or profit.

But the evidence I am aware of clearly shows that (a) is Nature versus (b) is not... a human development that has occurred sometime after the first Homo sapiens tribes settled here and there. The dictionary should not perpetuate the confusion. Maybe, another input and challenge for the multidisciplinary studies?

As regards the essay, it is philosophy as originally meant: search/love of wisdom/truth... and acted upon by great humanists. It is my only goal: as a first step toward the recommended plan of multidisciplinary studies.

III.6. The proposed four additional primal interactions: An innovative idea which will, no doubt, help researchers in many fields.

[feedback in one-on-one conversations from 3 MDs, 1 physicist, 2 English literature professors, 1 sociologist, 2 software engineers, 3 generalists, and 1 micro-biologist who asked me about "nonmaterial primal interactions and quantum mechanics"]

My focus has been to build up attention/momentum on multidisciplinary studies, which, properly planned, would ensure adequate support — a solid jumping board — exists for the "innovative idea" to bear fruit. But it did not happen. Not yet...

In my conversation with readers, even including those partly interested to discuss the substance of my essay, I failed to (a) keep away the prevalent first impression in the listener that I dream-of/nurture perfection... perfection does not exist in Nature though an under-certain-circumstances optimum solution might exist; and (b) underscore how crucial it is to keep in mind the *wholeness* of, and interdependence within, each living organism (that is what I refer to with "integrated material/nonmaterial primal interactions"), and, to a slightly lesser extent, of the entire related-species population. The particular case with "starting points" is often pointed at by readers as "why bother with far away past events?" The question that ought to be asked: is there not a better way to *understand* an event? If you do not want to understand... then you do not investigate; if you do want, why do you think the past does not matter at all? Take an illness: you feel pain around your left shoulder... that's a symptom of something going wrong; the prompt prescription is to massage with a wonder cream and the pain may indeed go away. How about the deeper cause of that pain? In many cases, pain will resurface and it might be more resistant to an ointment-based treatment. In short, the multidisciplinary study will also have to address this "cultural" negative reaction toward understanding the *underlying movements*.

That's why I would like to remind you a re-reading of the essay... or, at least, pages 65-79 which include a double-page presentation for each of the three main "frameworks of thought"...

... classical philosophy,
... religious systems,
... the scientific method,

with quotes/perspectives from past and present thinkers.

Then, review pages 20-21 for "A Simplified Timeline"... since I often refer to "highest" vs "lowest" levels of complexity, a rare topic in our literature.

And now more reminders...

Life, according to many authors, is an ontological discontinuity. To others, an emergent property via the increased material complexity. Both opinions are crucial to well-established worldviews. Why do we have such opposing foundational-views as both feasible? Why?

Research at Stanford University (1975), and recent cognitive scientists H. Mercier and D. Sperber in their book, "The Enigma of Reason" (Harvard U), and professors S. Sloman (Brown U) and P. Fernbach (U of Colorado) all suggest that people experience genuine pleasure when processing information that supports their beliefs.

The above considerations lead me to believe that the multidisciplinary study ought to address the "credibility challenge" and clarify whether or not an agreed upon common-to-all-worldviews starting point might help?

As regards "Quantum Mechanics"... I can only repeat (see the essay page 79) that we do not know enough and the multidisciplinary study may be the setting for a review of our assumptions in both material- and nonmaterial-related research projects. The latter also depends-on/may-impact quantum mechanics; indeed, Professor Roger Penrose (1931--) said, "Quantum mechanics is a provisional theory: How long until someone can discover a more definitive one?"

A "more definitive one"... I am not prepared to work on that: but maybe a critical review of the assumptions presented in my essay... that is, in a multidisciplinary study setting we might gain some enlightened waves?

III.7. No one can relate to the "earliest conceivable common-to-all-worldviews starting point"... it is bizarre... absurd... so foreign to all our stories and experiences.

The nonmaterial primal interactions are at the lowest level of complexity. It is a theoretical consideration hardly useful for our stories and experiences which relate to the higher level of complexity in Nature... Is it worthy of an action plan?... It seems to me yes!... Look at what is achieved when a *common ground* is adopted by a group of people, a sports team, a military battalion, or a couple near the breakup point. A potentially more effective approach ought to be tried.

It is also true that a transition from the known to the unknown is a source of stress... and it might be "bizarre, absurd" to many... consciously as well as unconsciously... but isn't that how almost all the high-value progress entered into our cultural legacy?

III.8. A priori, your proposal is not testable.

As already underscored (in my essay), the multidisciplinary study may modify or even (initially) reject the proposal; this has happened to many changes with... some of them reinstated/rewritten/expanded later on.

The "idea" is in its pre-infancy and should be at this stage considered not testable. At the right time, however, we should become able to measure what appears non-measurable now.

Moreover, the scientific method does not have current means for the measurement of what is nonmaterial; but what is not measurable is not consequently untrue; there might be more evidence and support as a result of future studies and digging-ins.

III.9. How can anyone say that all worldviews have value? What's the point of worldview change? Communism failed.... Violence is violence: when is violence justified? The problem that has to be addressed is the human heart: Only God our Creator can change it!

My mistake: I meant to say that each worldview has value to its leader(s) and their followers. My proposal has no hidden agenda as regards modifying any aspect of *any* worldview. They can all stay as is... with the to-be-discussed "addendum"...

Granted, my proposition does not immediately provide solutions to the many flaws in the world but — and that is what I suggest we dissect, clarify and improve upon — it could help us move toward a universal common ground. Such construct was explored as feasible by theologians and thinkers earlier but unfortunately was subsequently pushed aside.

Communism had value to its founder(s) and subsequently to many adherents. It failed mainly because:

(a) there was *no* effort in understanding the underlying causes of inequality in human societies, and

(b) those in a position of leadership became abusive of their "high rank" instead of learning from the actual experiments.

Would Karl Marx (1818-1883) not have been horrified if still alive after WWI? Would he not have formulated an "improved communism" for subsequent generations? I would think so, but I do not know enough.

Yes, the "human heart"... as the human's "symbol" of love... since you claim it has to change: what changed it to what it is now? or did it include nastiness from the start? I appreciate your belief that only God the Creator can make the change to a kinder heart. I suggest that the nastiness you are referring to emerged as a consequence of certain influences; therefore, an understanding of such development is almost indispensable if we want to get back to a less violent world...

I will go to my grave happily when I see us become what we have it in us to become: caring, compassionate, and sharing.

Archbishop Desmond Tutu (in *Time live*, Johannesburg, 2010)

The "have it in us" applies to both caring and becoming evil. Emerging properties and unexpected (or unpredictable) consequences followed humans' artificial selections all along. So the point is not only to pray, teach by example, encourage and correct, but, as importantly, search and go for a deeper understanding of what underlies our behavior.

Forgiveness and reconciliation are potent factors in peace management but reality shows they are not enough. We need to plan so that human societies move toward fewer and fewer violent conflicts; that is, violence caused by revenge, punishment, excessive greed or contempt (it is worth repeating) which we ought to keep distinct from violence for protection and survival. The process will initially prove close to impossible. You believe God exists; that's great and fine. Others have their own belief. What I suggest with my *added* "to-be-agreed-upon earliest-conceivable common-to-all-worldviews starting point" is that we nurture a "common ground for one world" whether we believe or not where all comes from; it can be more effective than all attempts made so far ("we are all connected", "we are all brothers"). Importantly, my proposal is not about a new worldview (philosophical, religious, or scientific) but is aimed at adding a few crucial bits to each worldview currently in the hearts and minds of the populations.

III.10. What about equality? You do not mention it! You do emphasize "deeper understanding" ... aren't they interdependent? What do you suggest will happen to quality of life?

We need to be precise as to how/where equality is pursued/applied: I have equality with my neighbor in several rights recognized by law but if he is faster on his feet or smarter in his dealing with the laws of physics or chemistry then I am not his equal in such domains although I may be able to get trained on new endeavors and re-establish some sort of equilibrium.

Many writers acknowledge in their book all those who helped them achieve what they had worked on so as to get published. Now, why *not* an acknowledgment on each pedestal with a statue commemorating someone? When praising a political or military or religious leader... *Why Not?* They all owe a lot to many others. Equality can only be sorted out if properly categorized with an understanding of related achievements as being a complex combination of the efforts of many through time... In other words, we should consider "diverse equality"... where diversity is part of Nature but equality is on a case by case, so to speak. Furthermore, as we know so well but often forget or disregard, man-made (or, artificial as in primarily for self-benefit) diversity can generate unexpected/unpredictable consequences.

Understanding: There is not enough emphasis on understanding in our education. Mutual understanding needs an agreed-to starting point; for instance, understanding the ongoing "war on terror" with a starting point ten years ago is different from understanding with a starting point corresponding to the early days of colonialism.

Someone was recalling, during an informal round-table discussion, that the voter turnout in the US is about 37%... after strongly-held opinions were expressed by the participants, I offered the following: what about if we get better organized in the "education department" (that is... at home, in public, and in both middle- and high-school classes) with expanded history knowledge to include explanations/discussions regarding democracy... its history... what it means and requires from citizens... and how it depends on *each* individual... the listeners looked puzzled as if I was talking in an unknown language.

Not sure about your last question. I have, in the essay, a simplified timeline leading to our modern societies. The low and high levels of complexity are interdependent. There is one world and there is one continuum (not necessarily a straight solid line). If deeper understanding becomes part of our culture (it was not yesterday, and it is even less today)... here's hoping there will be a wide-enough-based though (initially) part-acceptance of the following *guiding lights* (at the highest level of complexity category):

(1) *ethics of assumptions*: no human knows *all* the details; consequently, *assumptions* are necessary in each worldview... but we ought to remain aware that some assumptions become facts... culturally speaking.

(2) *each worldview has value... up to a point*: as a minimum, the recurring violence-for-excessive-greed-contempt-revenge attests to that... Nature's complexity has often been *complicated* by humans... with a focus on only each-their-own selected group's *common ground* but no interest to the one world... with a belief that the rule of law is what is needed to bring order and peace... with a focus on the here and now... and the list can go on and on...

(3) *we face many big challenges*... when dealing with "violence for different causes"... natural versus artificial selection... the emerging properties (material and nonmaterial)... diverse equality... and more: yes, we need prayers, meditation, poems, artful representations, but... the understanding of underlying causes/movements will eventually have to contribute.

(4) *genes and memes* are part of the whole story but *not* the whole story; indeed, recent studies have shown that there is much more to heredity as well as mental processes than genes, nerve cells, and synapses. Of course, there is resistance (as already noted, earlier) to such findings.

(5) *unexpected consequences* should become topics of interest for scholars.

(6) *art and science*: every human action is *art* (as in how much pleasing/desirable to eyes/hearts?) and *science* (as in has it been experimentally proven sound/reliable?).

(7) *education within and outside the schools*: we ought to re-position such a foundational activity... each worldview has had at least one adjustment in its history: on the other hand, we need not hide why it had to change.

As regards your question on "quality of life"... how could it not improve with more understanding in our thoughts, actions, and worldviews? We would still have to fight so as to protect against fire, floods, natural disasters, diseases, and other “constraints” on the quality of human life. I am interested here in specific steps humans should consider taking for a better quality of life — not a theoretical life with nothing to worry about.



Postscript IV.-

Promotion of Multidisciplinary Studies

>>>of potential interest to researchers in biology, psychology, medicine... anthropology and... AI technology<<<

A few here's-hoping-useful notes along with (more) repetitions:

My thesis (in Part I of the essay):

I posit that we should adopt a single, non-variable foundation based on the earliest conceivable starting point which, when adopted, will provide a common thread to all worldviews.

This starting point corresponds to a time when elementary particles or energies existed in configurations and densities beyond our current grasp.

I moreover posit that such a common foundation encompasses nonmaterial-bound primal interactions: the "bearers" (or "carriers" with related "underlying movements") of what we refer to as spirituality, consciousness, feelings, emotions, and, more generally, non-materiality.

These suggested four nonmaterial prime interactions exist in association, or rather integration, with the material primal interactions about which scientists (and others) agree on when they talk about atoms and their components, universal constants, and related laws.

I ventured with new names for the nonmaterial primal interactions: *ensemblifer*, *expandifer*, *prudentifer*, *acceptifer*. I had only *one* objective: Underscore, with the suffix *-fer*, their inherent quality as "bearers" of what might emerge under certain conditions, through the increasing material complexity and the subsequent non-materiality *in* living organisms.

In other words, the above is *not* to suggest a "new force"... *not* to favor one only worldview... and *not* to focus only on the sub-atomic level of complexity neglecting our emotions and feelings. It is about defining an *addendum* to all worldviews along multidisciplinary research projects toward improving health, justice, well-being, AI and... all peace initiatives. No pre-determined purpose is implied: We do *not* know enough.

I foresee the planning of multidisciplinary studies, by experts in biology, physics, medicine, religions, sociology, philosophy, and maybe others, as the crucial next step; its outcome ought to enable the opening of the road for actual experiments and thereafter expanded discussions around actual applications.

In my essay, I presented a few "idea-inputs" but with one exception all the somewhat interested readers did not think they were properly prepared to discuss such planning.

This attempt at understanding the deepest levels of the natural world is, of course, not new. Indeed, many thinkers have suggested an "additional" force or field or something in order to further clarify what's going on at the sub-microscopic layers of matter, especially in live organisms. What is new or different here is the idea of "nonmaterial primal interactions integrated with the material primal interactions and fundamental laws well known to physicists and many others... (probably) getting activated with life emergence and then contributing to further life developments.

What gave me *that* idea?

As in almost all cases, an "origin" of what is observable in the present *is* a multi-layered development:

First. My elementary class history teacher (1946-47) who often reminded us that the study of History has value only if it expands our understanding of the causes of each event; that is, how each event relates to past steps and situations — History is *not only* about remembering dates and names.

I recently discovered — with excitement — that James W. Loewen, currently a University of Vermont history professor, wrote a book "Lies My Teacher Told Me" in which he argued,

... that history should not be taught as straightforward facts and dates to memorize, but rather as an analysis of the context and root causes of events...

... that teachers use two or more textbooks, so that students may realize the contradictions and ask questions, such as, "Why do the authors present the material like this?"

No further comment.

Second. My early-on contacts with a variety of dear living things on/under the ground, in the air, and in the seas. More took place later on in my adult life: two neighborhood cats, an owl, a penguin, crows, bobcat, and wild ducks. The development of these relationships take a longer time compared to what usually happens between humans... and, worthy of note, no food from me to most of them. I originally meant to summarize here such personal experiences but prefer to quote three appropriate excerpts from the conclusion of zoologist Lucy Cooke's "The Truth About Animals" ...

... researchers like esteemed primatologist Frans de Waal pointing out that the basis of morality — a combination of empathy and a sense of fairness — is found in species as diverse as monkeys and rats. This suggests that moralizing could be part of our fundamental biological makeup.

... if anthropomorphism is enemy number one, arrogance is a close runner-up... we have a history of viewing the rest of the animal kingdom as simply here to service our needs...

... The quest for truth is a long and winding road, littered with potholes... wrong turns are an essential part of all scientific progress, which demands blue-sky thinking as it seeks out each new horizon in understanding.

I later on read about people in ancient civilizations having built bridges, pyramids, castles and more way before understanding the laws of physics but somehow after acquiring "engineering" concepts while observing birds and other living systems in the wilderness. Impressive. But how did the birds learn how to "engineer" the build-up of their nests?

Third. As an undergraduate student in physics and mathematics (1953-54), I attended a round-table discussion (with students and professors) on "emergent properties"... where one of the senior participants claimed that the increasing material complexity is what triggers such emergence... and he was particularly keen in describing the case of the pouring of sand as the best demonstration... indeed, it shows the emergence of the property of avalanche although the grain taken alone had no show for it.

The question I had but did not ask: Is the "hand" not part of the process developing that emergent property? What about the selected-by-that-hand surface on which the sand is poured? Not clear.

A convenient but ill-defined "hand" gets added to the story in order to help explain an unexpected/new phenomenon.

Fourth, while working (2000-2007) on my early drafts titled "The Legacy", "The Dead and I", "Winter Letters" and "Seeds" I encountered two critical inspirations...

... In his book (1994), "The Astonishing Hypothesis — The Scientific Search for the Soul" Francis Crick, molecular biologist, Nobel Laureate, (1916-2004) wrote:

It is important to emphasize that the Astonishing Hypothesis [the idea that 'You,' your joys and your sorrows, your memories and free will, are in fact no more than the behavior of a vast assembly of nerve cells and their associated molecules] is a hypothesis. What we already know is certainly enough to make it plausible, but it is not enough to make it certain as science has done for many new ideas about the nature of the world, and about physics and chemistry in particular...

Only scientific certainty (with all its limitations) can in the long run rid us of the superstitions of our ancestors.

He concludes his book with:

The Astonishing Hypothesis may be proved correct. Alternatively, some view closer to the religious one [and to those of great philosophers] may become more plausible. There is always a third possibility: that the facts support a new alternative way of looking at the mind-brain problem that is significantly different from the rather crude, materialistic view many neuroscientists hold today, and also from the religious point of view. Only time, and much further scientific work, will enable us to decide.

We must hammer away until we have forged a clear and valid picture not only of this vast universe in which we live but also of our very selves.

... Then, Louis Magnard (1934-2017), a retired text-book editor-in-chief/publisher (with a graduate degree in biology) contacted me after receiving a copy of "Seeds" via a common acquaintance. He wrote:

You have expressed an alternative path with your four nonmaterial primal interactions; call them "K's Admirable Four Arrows". I find it more effective than both the idea that "All developments in Nature are pure coincidence" and the older one that "there is a deus ex machina"... and your message is a challenge to those "who think they know"... but you must continue your efforts even if there will be few expressions of interest.

With the essay available as a book, I continued to dig in... to learn from both opposing and supporting readers; rather difficult with the former (because they a priori reject what does not conform to their beliefs *and* do not want to talk about it), and not necessarily informative/constructive with the latter (because I do not yet have results from a multidisciplinary study).

I would like, before concluding, another series of pertinent quick notes in support of my focus on underlying movements along the thesis on non-materiality (and its primal interactions).

...

The law of evolution by natural selection can neither be presented as a fundamental law of physics nor has it been described as the result of a transformative process in biology. On the other hand, this law has been verified scientifically for organisms ranging from the single cell up to the human body; for smaller/less-complex structures and for human societies, however, it has not been proven applicable. Should we not ask whether or not this law owes its development to an origin (and its inherent underlying movements) not yet considered?

...

In front of a tree, we talk about trunk, branches, leaves, flowers and fruits but only on rare occasions do we mention roots, seeds, soil nutrients, wind, rain, and even rarer, if at all, do we wonder about elementary constituents of the second group of components. How about the rest of the living world? The interactions within the molecules in each part of the human body? Why do so many people doubt about the importance, under certain circumstances, of the lowest levels of complexity? How and when does the latter specifically matter to the visible and higher levels of complexity?

We have generally thought of trees as striving, disconnected loners, competing for water, nutrients and sunlight, with the winners shading out the losers and sucking them dry. The timber industry sees forests as wood-producing systems and battlegrounds for survival of the fittest. There is now, however, a substantial body of scientific evidence that refutes these views. It shows instead that trees of the same species are communal, and will often form alliances with trees of other species. Forest trees have evolved to live in cooperative, interdependent relationships, maintained by communication and a collective intelligence similar to an insect colony.

The real action is taking place underground, just a few inches below our feet. The hair-like root tips of trees join together with microscopic fungal filaments to form the basic links of the network, which appears to operate as a symbiotic relationship between trees and fungi. The sugar is what fuels the fungi, as they scavenge the soil for nitrogen, phosphorus and other mineral nutrients, which are then absorbed and consumed by the trees.

Of course, we use words we think apply to other species but we ought to go carefully with such an assumption...

...

The often encountered reference, especially in articles involving biology as well as medicine, to... "bacteria having evolved defenses" ... as if something in bacteria (or viruses or any other microscopic living entity) is equivalent to a central control or mind.

In "Natural Causes" Barbara Ehrenreich writes...

... our cells, like the macrophages that sometimes destroy and sometimes defend, can act unpredictably and yet not randomly. It is almost as if our cells can choose when and how to behave — unregulated by any deterministic mechanism. But that would mean they have "agency or the ability to initiate an action"...

And what would that imply?

If macrophages are actually deciding which cancer cells to destroy or to preserve, "maybe, crazy as it sounds, they are not following any kind of instructions but doing what they feel like doing"... Researchers are now finding this same agency everywhere, Ehrenreich reports — in fruit flies; in viruses; in atoms; and photons...Such discoveries must mean that agency, the capacity for making decisions — electron jumping up a quantum level or not, photons passing through this hole in a screen rather than another — is not the rare, and human, prerogative we once thought...

In other words, like Louis Magnard underscored (see page 42), the idea of a *deus ex machina* has remained alive and well. And,

...

In my intermediate book "Winter Letters" mentioned above, I have a chapter titled "Death Is Not the Enemy" and I conclude with:

Whether it is by suicide or other causes, death is our last and most personal act... unfortunately, past interpretations are now part of what we think is real: death should have never been explained and recorded as an act of abandonment or desertion. Pain leads to death. Pain is the enemy.

In his recent book, "The Myth of Martyrdom: What Really Drives Suicide Bombers, and Other Self-Destructive Killers" Adam Lankford, a professor of criminology (University of Alabama), concludes that "those who kill themselves in a terrorist action are mentally unbalanced and they want to die because their lives had become too depressing, too much filled with anxiety and failure." Well, that sounds to me like... pain.

However, none of the news reports on terrorism or mass shootings ask what caused that "anxiety" which in turn triggered the killing behavior.

Worthy of note (about what might help us understand terrorism and pain), Alison Gopnik, in *The Atlantic* (April 2018), concludes in her review of Steven Pinker's "Enlightenment Now: The Case for Reason, Science, Humanism, and Progress" with: "The problem for enlightenment now is how to establish a background of trust and commitment that allows conflicts without contempt."

It may be a stretch but I would like to suggest to Professors A. Gopnik and S. Pinker that a deeper understanding of the underlying movements could be the only way to address the long-term implications of these issues with entrenched roots. A life (even partly) rooted in anxiety and failure *is* painful.

We recently learned about the death of a Nobel prize in biology (about cells communicating), an extra-popular pastor (God must be thanked for the goodness we enjoy), and a Nobel prize in astrophysics/cosmology (every thing comes from nothing). I read the many obituaries, reports, and book excerpts — all to appropriately honor and emphasize the valuable achievements of this trio of exceptional human beings — but could not find any reference to the fact *assumptions* were part of their intellectual foundations. By the way, same goes for politicians, professors, commentators, educators, and...

...

From Freeman Dyson's book, "Origins of Life" (1999) in which he claims that "the essence of life from the beginning was homeostasis" in contrast

with his contemporary Manfred Eigen (Nobel in chemistry) who believed that the beginning of life was a self-replicating molecule. So, here is my feedback to these esteemed scientists: Where did homeostasis and self-replicating molecules come from? How did these processes take shape? Neither one is considering the lowest level of complexity and therefore the questions are on the table for the multidisciplinary study.

...

I have mentioned AI (Artificial Intelligence) as potentially of interest to this discussion. Here is a twenty-years old definition: "AI is a machine that can recognize your face while the room is on fire". Better said, we need to start planning an integration of computer science and micro-biology. Could the concept of integrated nonmaterial primal interactions be of value?

Case studies abound but always focused on chemistry or biology; more often than not at the "functional system or highest level of complexity" with psychology or philosophy (and politics) providing/the main guidelines.

I suggest we look, as further idea-inputs to the planning of multidisciplinary studies, at these challenges...

... Each molecule is a "structure of structures" characterized, inter alia, by:
(a) one or more tolerance thresholds resulting from the integration of both material and nonmaterial primal interactions, and
(b) a low or high degree of capability... that is, not unlike, the analysis of the distribution of forces in a mechanical structure which is one of critical success factors for the optimum design of a bridge or other complex construction, especially if known to co-exist with violent storms or earthquakes.

... How to philosophize at the highest complexity level (the human feelings and emotions/sensations/perceptions in a human-dominated society) as well as the lowest level of complexity (sub-atomic, underlying movements) while most of humans will a priori reject the notion of a re-training?

... We believe human violence has its "solution" in political, economical, religious, sociology findings or terms... so how could we as well appreciate that (greater) benefits may come with the understanding of the far away roots of certain situations?

... The hard-to-accept/grasp idea of nonmaterial primal interactions playing a role in the foundational elements of our non-materiality.... when will we have the resources and the time to assimilate?

... Those deeply dedicated to their religious belief or to the established scientific endeavor reject the ideas in the essay... but more troubling: why did they not ask for continued exchanges?

... Can "quality" emerge from "quantity" ?... as is the case of "increased the number of neurons" explaining "human consciousness" or "superior intelligence" ?

... If we maintain that all is matter, or if we believe non-materiality is a gift from a superior being... the human/cultural constructs and traditions we have inherited are maintained: we might gradually achieve, despite our violence (as defined earlier) an improved society for all humans... at what total price?

...

All the above with the rediscovering of "education"... The word "education" is not in the US Constitution. This does not mean our Founders did not consider education as important; they focused on making "school education" a State-level responsibility as opposed to the US Federal-level. But I bring this up again here to remind ourselves that education actually happens at home, at school (classroom and recreational fields), in the streets, via newspapers, and more; it is such a central formative contributor of every human being.

No Thing Is Simple:

With "thing" as in "problem solving" or "ending a conflict"... and more...

Here we are, the modern descendants of Homo sapiens, in *one* world with a wide variety of worldviews, each claiming to have adopted *the* correct and only "starting point"... while it remains extremely rare to hear someone admit, "I do not know enough"...

Why?

...

I will conclude looking again, as an inspiration, at the evolution and future of AI technology, and quote Henry Kissinger who in "How the Enlightenment Ends" (The Atlantic, June 2018) wrote,

The Enlightenment started with essentially philosophical insights spread by a new technology.

Our period is moving in the opposite direction. It has generated a potentially dominating technology in search of a guiding philosophy...

The U.S. government should consider a presidential commission of eminent thinkers to help develop a national vision. This much is certain:

If we do not start this effort soon, before long we shall discover that we started too late.

If I may: Is the proposed addition of an *adjustable-width emergency lane along our taken roads* — another way of referring to the central message in the essay as well as in these Postscripts — not worth some long-term multidisciplinary studies?

Time does not pass by (or fly), all living systems — humans included — do.

Farewell

*here's hoping we'll meet again
continue similar conversations
and further lift the fog*

*to my ancestors, parents and family
teachers, authors, readers, and dearest friends
who cleared a way to all primal interactions
and their related underlying movements.*



