LAW AND THE CHALLENGE OF THE TRANSCENDENTAL
Rethinking the Order of all Order

Philip Allott

Ultimate problems of philosophy – New version of a very old problem: the human world and beyond

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HearReadThink™ = UniPowerPoint
Humanism Replacement Therapy (HRT)™
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Ultimate problems of philosophy

1. We’re going to answer a difficult question. *Can we imagine a new kind of International Law in a new kind of international society?*

2. To answer that question, we have to face ultimate problems of philosophy – problems that have challenged the human mind throughout its history, through all of humanity’s mental history, in all cultures at all times.

3. How does the human mind *think things into existence* – things such as law and society? How does the human mind *change the way that things are* – things such as law and society? Big intellectual effort required.

New version of a very old problem – the human world and beyond

4. The *human world* is humanity’s collective self-ordering. It is the joint product of the human mind and the natural universe. Human history is the history of humanity’s never-ending self-recreating, a self-made human condition within the human condition imposed by the systematic structure of the natural world and the systematic structure of the human mind.

5. The self-ordering of the human world is subject to the human mind’s understanding of the order of the natural universe and the mind’s understanding of its own order. Law is a particular form of the self-ordering of the human world. So law is in an inextricable relationship with all that transcends it – the human mind’s own understanding of itself, its understanding of the human world, its understanding of the natural universe.

6. So – a very difficult problem – how should law be related to all that *transcends* law? – how should *law* be related to our most general ideas about the *universe*, our most general ideas about the *human world*, and our most general ideas about *ourselves*?
7. Those are unavoidable questions – a permanent challenge to law – an inescapable challenge to law – questions to which we must obviously have found answers throughout the whole history of legal systems throughout the whole course of human history – answers that have been very many and very various in different places and different cultures and different societies at different times – to put it very mildly.

8. Especially appropriate, here in the Middle East – source of urban civilisation – to remember how many wars and how much human suffering has been due to different responses to the transcendental dimension of the human condition, taking effect so differently in so many different societies across the whole world.

9. The human world is now re-ordering itself in a dramatically new way – wandering more or less blindly into a new form of human self-ordering, human self-re-creating – the human world is integrating itself as a new kind of self-conscious totality – a socialising of humanity itself.

10. A new chapter is opening in the history of the human world – and in the contribution of law to making the human world. Are we capable of imagining a new solution to a new version of the age-old challenge – the age-old problem – of the relationship of law in society to all that transcends law and society?


A. THINKING HUMAN BEING

Anatomy of the human brain

11. The whole of human history has been caused by the anatomical structure and systems of the human brain. The human brain is an integral part of the natural universe – but it has
the remarkable characteristic that it enables humanity to adapt itself in constantly new ways
to its triple existential situation. It makes possible a form of permanent human self-evolving.


12. The brain (with the nervous system) is not merely an anatomical structure. It is a
collection of electro-chemical processes – continuously producing events through the
interacting of its connected parts and processes. We think of the product of the continuous
creative activity of the human brain as the human mind.

Examples 12.

13. Human brains are isomorphic. All human brains are the same in their anatomical
structure and their functioning systems (subject to random congenital or acquired lesions in
the brains of particular human beings). But each brain, in its operating capacity, is a unique
totality caused by its individual existence in the body of a particular human being.

14. Human minds are not isomorphic. The only feature that they share, from person to
person, is their relationship to a brain, but to the brain in the unique self-generated totality of
its activity in its unique presence in a given person. An age-old and continuing intellectual
effort to form universal ideas about the structure and functioning of the human mind has
proved to be as difficult as forming universal ideas about the functioning of the brain.

15. That effort reflects a strange characteristic of the human mind. The human mind can
think about itself – human thought can think about human thought. The human mind can
transcend itself – behaving, at one and the same time, as both subject and object of its own
activity, an other in relation to its self, actor and spectator of its own drama, making and
made by the person it inhabits. Presumably – an holistic by-product of characteristics of the
brain: (1) the brain’s interconnected and interacting functioning; (2) its being active and passive in relation to its own activity (working on itself, learning, causing events in itself, forming intentions and purposes about its own activity); (3) its capacity to receive and re-construct sensory perceptions coming from outside itself; (4) its apparently unlimited creative capacity, creating self-transcending working-models of society, the natural world, the universe – and of its self, embedded in those things.

**Examples 15.**

**Anatomy of the human mind**

16. The anatomy of the *human brain* is a permanent challenge for neuroscience. The complex physical topography and physiology of the brain suggest different functions for its physically distinct parts – hypothalamus, thalamus, cerebellum... Using the characteristic methods of the natural sciences, neuroscience seeks to determine the function and functioning of the parts, and their systematic interacting in the functioning of the whole.

17. The anatomy of the *human mind* is a permanent challenge for the human mind. The mind’s self-exploring has taken many forms – introspection, the generalising of observed and recorded human behaviour, socially organised speculation (theology, philosophy, historiography, literature, random borrowings from the natural sciences).

18. A rudimentary taxonomy of the *human mind* is presumably ancient and culturally universal – thinking, feeling, sense perception, memory, desire, belief, knowledge, imagination, dreaming, self-ordering (reason), purpose, will (decision-making). And introspecting human beings have presumably always known that their mind works in two modes – conscious and unconscious – the latter connected to, but not limited to, memory and, like memory, largely unretrievable by a simple effort of the conscious mind.
19. And elementary introspection shows that such processes generate complex webs of subordinate processes – sense perceptions of many different kinds (pleasure, pain, optical illusions); feelings of many different kinds at different levels of abstraction (desire, love, hope); voluntary and involuntary memory; deciding whether to act or to speak or to do nothing; and countless others.

20. If all these processes can be firing and interacting in the brain at a potential computational speed of $10^{13}$ to $10^{16}$ operations per second, then the resulting content of each person’s mind is liable to be rather dense and rather dynamic at any particular moment, let alone over the course of a lifetime. And each human mind must be utterly unique.

21. Three inferences. (1) Not surprising that it has so far proved impossible to construct a convincing philosophical model of the total functioning of the human mind. (2) Unlikely that neuroscience and computer science will ever be able to reproduce, as a theoretical model or as a machine, the working of the human mind. (And ? G?del – the mind could not, in principle, explain itself to itself as a total system.) (3) So, we must live with, and in and through, a mysterious presence in our bodies, a hyperactive ghost in the human machine.

**Examples 21.**


To which we may reply, echoing Socrates: Some hope! But not understanding how our own brain/mind works doesn’t seem to make much difference to the way we behave. And would we behave any better if we did understand?

(But, note: Plato certainly thought that we may be improved by *thinking* (individually and collectively) about how things are, and how they ought to be.)

**Examples 22.**
B. THINKING HUMAN SOCIETY

Shared mind

23. To make matters many times more difficult, human minds interact. Consciousness is shared through communication. The profound obscurity and overwhelming complexity and dynamism of the individual mind is multiplied exponentially when minds participate in communication. When two minds interact – $10^{13} \times 10^{13}$. And, when many people’s minds interact – $(10^{13} \times 10^{13})^n$ – where $n$ is the number of minds interacting.

24. Such is each human society – $(10^{13} \times 10^{13})^s$ – where $s$ is the number of minds interacting in a given society – existing only in and through the interacting of human minds. So, a human society is liable to be rather dense and rather dynamic at any particular moment, let alone over the course of its history. And each human society must be utterly unique.

Family, law school, city, regiment, nation, state, IGO.

25. Metaphorical algebra. (But all algebra is metaphorical. In ancient Greek, the word μεταφορά was already used metaphorically – a transfer of a thing from one place to another → a transfer of a word from one use to another.)

Public mind

26. In my work, I refer to the shared consciousness of a society as its public mind.

(Compare and distinguish: the conscience collective of E. Durkheim (1858-1917) – the necessary shared substantive consciousness of a society, rather than a shared systematic process. Compare and contrast: ‘the public mind’ as another term for ‘public opinion’.)

27. The self-constituting of a society occurs in and through its public mind. The public mind forms and is formed by the private minds of those who participate in the self-
constituting of the given society. Consciousness flows continuously between the public mind and the private minds.

28. The public mind uses the processes and sub-processes of the brains of those who participate in the self-constituting of society. But, in addition, the society’s institutional structures and systems act as a virtual brain in processing the society’s own consciousness and the consciousness flowing from the participating private minds.

29. The public mind shares in the taxonomy of the human mind discussed above - thinking, feeling, sense perception, memory, belief, knowledge, imagination, dreaming, self-ordering (reason), will (decision-making), and other such processes, together with their countless sub-processes – and together with their many forms of pathology!

30. The mental life of human beings hovers in the space connecting their private mind with the public minds of the many societies in whose self-constituting they participate.

Examples 30.

Language and value

31. Language and value are two miracles of the human brain. Together, they have made possible the exceptional capacity for self-evolving of the human species. We are speaking here of the brain, not merely of the mind. Language is a brain-process that transfers consciousness from one brain to another. Value is a brain-process that allows the brain to select among possible causes of possible effects.

32. Language encodes consciousness in symbolic form – the symbols including words and numbers – and a great variety of other kinds of visual and aural signal. Non-human animals speak to each other in language. The private mind of the human species can speak to itself in language. The public mind of human society speaks to itself in language, acting as a
repository of consciousness made available in the form of language by individual human brains and consciousness which is generated in the public mind itself.

33. **Values** are *algorithms* that allow the brain to choose and execute a particular course of action. Possible action A is preferred (great neurological mystery!) over possible action B and is adopted as a course of action. The brain imagines external reality and imagines possible effects on external reality of possible forms of its action. The brain is a self-determining machine (J. Eccles).

(algorithm = computational problem-solving procedure)
(imagination = a creative activity of the brain)

34. **Values** are *ideas* generated in the individual brain/mind or the public mind – capable of being communicated between minds through the medium of language (in the widest sense) – with a view to the self-preservation, self-development, and self-perfecting of the human individual and human society. Values in the form of *ideals* – traditionally symbolised as the good, the true, the beautiful, justice – have a special force of impulsion and attraction – a force which is love in its purest form.


*Self-constituting*

35. The constituting of the self of a *human society* is remarkably similar to the self-constituting of a *human being*. Not so remarkable – given that both are the product of one source – the human brain/mind.

36. Generalising from the complete historical record of human social self-constituting – an ambitious endeavour – it may seem to us that the process of self-constituting is *dialectical* in character. Permanently and continuously, each society must find actual resultants among
conflicting social forces. It must respond to a never-ending series of challenging and interacting *structural dilemmas*. It contains enough potential mental energy (para. 24 above)!

*resultant* – (mathematics) a single vector that is the vector sum of two or more other vectors; (mechanics) the net force acting on an object when all the individual forces acting on the object are added together. In Latin: *vector, carrier.*

37. (1) A society is a *self* (in relation to other societies), but it is also *other* in relation to individual society-members, for whom the society is, nevertheless, part of *their* self.

(2) A society is *one* (in its self), but it is also *many* (society-members and subordinate societies and systems).

(3) A society is a *unity in consciousness*, including its social values, but it is also a *plurality* of the unique minds of its members, including their personal values.

(4) A society is an *internal self-ordering*, but subject to forms of order that *transcend* it, including the rest of the human world, the natural world, and beyond.

(5) A society is a permanent *present-in-time*, but it is also a permanent *becoming-through-time*, moving from its past, through its present, to its future.

38. All five of these *existential dilemmas* apply *mutatis mutandis* to the self-constituting of the individual human being, to the painful constructing of a unique human personality. The *other* is a necessary part of my *self*. My physiological and mental structure and systems create a fragile *one* from *many*. I am the *unity* of my consciousness and a *plurality* of my incoherent ideas. I am an integrated system of *order*, but inseparably integrated into the order of all that *transcends* me. My *self-ordering* continues as my *circumstances* change.

**Examples 38.**

Existential dimensions


40. The public mind is flooded with ideas – including, above all, values – including ideas about society itself – including theories that explain and justify its particular existence – ideas about its past, ideas about its constitution, ideas that serve as theories explaining and justifying the distribution of social power – religious ideas and ideas about ‘democracy’, ‘capitalism’, ‘justice’, ‘national identity’, ‘national interest,’ and countless others.

41. Society is flooded with law – the legal self-constituting of society – ideas (including, above all, values) given a more substantial and less transient existence – law as a social physiology, an ever-accumulating internal anatomy, incorporating and organising society’s structures and systems, giving a particular range of potentialities to society’s future.


42. Using the potentialities provided by society’s ideas and its law, society and individual human beings struggle to construct their own existence, their real lives – their real self-constituting – in an unceasing process of reconciling the self-interest of each human being with the self-interest of society (the common interest).

43. If love, in its purest form, is defined as joy in the well-being of another (G. Leibniz), then society, in its purest form, is a form of love – joy in the well-being of fellow human beings. And the turbulent process of social self-constituting has a characteristic systematic form – politics – the arena of a more or less organised struggle to turn self-interest into common interest, and hence a more or less distant (!!) expression of love in its purest form.

Examples 43.
See further in PJA, Eunomia, Part Two.
C. HUMAN SELF-SURPASSING

The transcendental impulse

44. Generalising from the complete historical record of human social self-constituting – an ambitious endeavour – we may detect another fundamental feature of human self-constituting – in the dimension of ideas, of ideal self-constituting. The human mind seeks to rise above itself, to understand itself in relation to all that transcends it.

45. Technology, art, mythology, law, religion, mathematics, philosophy, education, natural science, humanist studies, high culture, popular culture. Expressed here in imperfect relation to the chronology of their historical emergence. Transcendental systems acting as forms of ideal self-constituting – whose source is a universal and perennial impulse of the human brain/mind.

46. The transcendental impulse is an inevitable presence in the self-constituting of all human societies. It is an intensely differentiated presence in the self-constituting of countless different societies in all cultures and at all times throughout human history. The transcendental impulse is the ultimate engine of human self-socialising and self-perfecting.

See further in PJA, Eunomia, Part Three.

Transcendental systems

47. The transcendental systems share a number of structural characteristics.

(1) They universalise the particularity of human life. (2) They create an artificial necessity distinct from the necessity of the natural universe. (3) They are providential (in the strict sense, allowing us to see and control the future). (4) They are a continuing active presence of the past. (5) They are active in both the public and private
minds. (6) They are in a permanent state of *involution* (increasing social and mental complexity). (7) They co-exist and co-operate and conflict and compete with each other.

48. (1) *Technology.* The human mind re-imagines natural things and natural forces in forms that can be made to serve our uses, needs and purposes. *Homo faber.*


(3) *Mythology.* The human mind imagines itself as inseparable from the order and the mysteries of the natural world. Why? To appease and to submit and to predict and to control? *Zoon physicon.*

(4) *Law.* The human mind, slave of the order of the natural world, submits to a form of order that it imposes upon itself in the common interest of society. *Zoon autokrator.*

(5) *Religion.* The human mind imagines itself as integrated in a form of order that is not an order made by the human mind but which, incidentally, contains within itself the order of the natural and human worlds. *Homo supernaturalis.*

(6) *Mathematics.* The human mind creates symbolic patterns of coherent order and finds that its ordering of the natural world may conform to those patterns, so that the mind may be able to predict effects and events in the natural world. *Homo ordinans.*

(7) *Philosophy.* The human mind explores itself and its relationship to all that is beyond itself. Why? The only thing it can know directly and inescapably? To empower human self-creating? *Homo speculum.*

(8) *Education.* The human mind seeks to improve the human world and human lives by communicating its self-knowing and self-ordering as widely as possible, and especially to the young. *Zoon mathematikon.*
(9) **Natural science.** The human mind presents to itself in symbolic form the order of the natural world. Why? The other thing that it cannot escape? To make itself able to improve the human world and the lives of human beings? *Homo curiousus.*

(10) **Human studies.** The human mind treats the human world and human beings, their past and their present and their possible futures, as objects of orderly and socially organised study. The human species in search of itself. *Homo quaerens.*

(11) **High culture.** The human mind accumulates its own highest achievements and possibilities – teeming with self-determining *values* – to enlighten and enrich the human condition. *Homo hominis mirator.*

(12) **Popular culture.** The human mind accumulates achievements and possibilities – teeming with self-determining *values* – to enlighten and enhance the living of human life. *Homo ludens.*

**Examples 48.**

49. Bear in mind that *language* is itself *transcendental.* There is no physical relation between the symbol and the part of ‘reality’ that is symbolised. *Yes. Aargh! God.*

Four consequences. (1) Language universalises the particular. To speak about something is to put it into the general categories of language. (2) Language creates a symbolic reality within the mind. (3) When the brain/mind operates in language (in the widest sense), consciousness is self-transcending – using processes that are distinct from sense-perceptions and which reflect events in the non-conscious brain/mind. (4) Change the language and you change the ‘reality’ that it symbolises. *Animal symbolicum* (E. Cassirer, 1929).

**Examples 49.**
50. Using its self-transcending impulse, the human brain/mind allows the human being to see itself in three forms – brain, mind, and soul. The brain draws on the body’s energy as part of the natural universe. The mind orders the energy of the brain. The soul is the integrating order of the whole human being.

51. The religious idea of the soul has been a central idea of countless religions throughout human history. Before the emergence of patriarchal and individualistic religions, the soul might be a group-soul, of the tribe or the family. (See: Examples 48D, E and F.) The idea of the soul is unfashionable in cultures, especially in the so-called West, that seem to be post-religious. The philosophical idea of the soul is as ancient as philosophy itself.

52. The philosophical idea of the soul expresses the totality of the being of a human being – a human being’s holistic identity – the human being as a Gestalt-for-itself – an ordering which is permanent, seamless, and unique, underlying the ordering of the body and the brain-mind of each unique human being as part of the natural universe – the dancer who knows the dancer from the dance (W.B. Yeats, Among School Children).

53. The soul incorporates the self-ordering of the universe into the self-ordering of the human being as a living thing – giving to human beings an identity shared with all other living things – all animals, all plant life – each of them being a unique instance of natural self-ordering energised by a natural energy – pneuma (Stoic philosophy); conatus (Spinoza); will (Schopenhauer); élan vital: life-force (Bergson); libido (Freud); the impulse of life (PJA, Eunomia, §3.12).

Examples 53.

Existential dichotomy

54. The application of values in human and social self-constituting is no guarantee that human beings will behave well. The complete historical record of human social self-
constituting shows the presence of a congenital and ineradicable capacity of the human brain/mind – *the capacity to do good* – the capacity of human self-creating and self-perfecting. *The problem of the nature of the good* – the good heart, the good life, the good ruler, the good society – has haunted, and haunts, every one of the transcendental systems.

53. The complete historical record of human social self-constituting shows the presence of a congenital and ineradicable capacity of the human brain/mind – *the capacity to do evil* – the capacity of human self-destroying and self-corrupting – the capacity to imagine, organise and enact evil in an unlimited profusion of forms. *The problem of evil* has haunted, and haunts, every one of the transcendental systems.

*The moral character of the public mind*

55. The human existential dichotomy of good and evil is exhibited in the behaviour of the public mind. The public mind, brainless, shares the capacities of the brain of the private mind. The public mind shows the traits of character that make up the glorious complexity of the private mind – but grossly magnified.

56. The public mind can mourn, weep, laugh, smile. The public mind can be obsessive, deluded, stupid, intelligent. The public mind can be cruel, tender, mean, vindictive, generous, open-hearted, full of fear and joy and pride and shame, beautiful and ugly. The public mind can be psychotic, neurotic, bipolar. The public mind can be corrupted, oppressed, in mental chains. The public mind can sleep and dream and fly. The public mind can create and destroy, half-beast, half-god, master and slave of the private mind.

**Examples 56.**

See further in PJA, *Invisible Power*, novels whose underlying themes are the problem of evil and the possibility of human self-perfecting.
Universities in exile

57. Universities are the greatest underused natural resource of the human world – not in the natural sciences and engineering, where the universities are used and overused – but in human studies, humanity’s socially organised study of itself. The universities, as forges of higher human self-consciousness, haunt the life of the public mind, but as outsider, semi-detached from the rest of society.

58. In the universities of the world, there are people who know everything that is known about the human world – everything about every one of the transcendental systems (para. 48 above) – everything about every aspect of what the human species has made of itself – historically, intellectually, socially, politically, imaginatively – during humanity’s relatively brief existence on the surface of the planet Earth.

59. There are people who know all about the forms of cuneiform writing; the writings of Murasaki Shikibu; Theravāda and lamaistic Buddhism; the origin of the Semitic languages; gamelan and raga; agriculture in late-Tsarist Russia; the private libraries of the makers of the US Constitution; mana and taboo; Japanese calligraphy; court etiquette under Louis XIV of France; the Golden Stool, the Golden Legend, and the Golden Horde; intellectual life in the Ummayyad, Fatamid, Abbassid and Ottoman caliphates; quipu, Quixote, and quidditas; Noh and Kabuki drama and Beijing opera; the Silk Road, the Golden Road, the via regia; the endless ragged procession of empires and civilisations and kingdoms and religions and wars and conquests and revolutions and migrations; every conceivable form of human good-doing and human evil-doing.

60. The universities are teeming with people know all about these things, and many other things. The human mind has been thinking about its own products for ever – what we were,
what we are, and what we could be. The universities are repositories of accumulated human wisdom – ‘wisdom’ in the sense of self-knowledge.

61. We are probably not more mechanically intelligent than Plato or Mo Tzu or the Buddha, but we are much more experienced – we know a great deal more about ourselves. Why are we not ‘wiser’ – in the sense of knowing what is good for us and what to avoid? If Plato or Mo Tzu or the Buddha came back to us today, they would think that everything has changed and nothing has changed. Beneath the social frenzy of ‘progress’, and behind the achievements of science and technology, they might think that the human condition seems to be more or less what it always was.

62. People outside the universities do not look to us in the universities as the guardians of accumulated wisdom. They tolerate us, more or less. They think that they do not need us. And the tragedy is – we, in the human studies, do not know how to make ourselves wanted – perhaps even, do not want to make ourselves wanted. Better a hermitage than a factory or a battlefield, some of us may think – better the cloister than the marketplace.

Example 62.

D. SURPASSING THE HUMAN WORLD

International society and international law

63. Globalisation is a universalising of all human culture – the externalising of particular human cultures, and the coming-to-consciousness of a culture of all-humanity. Private minds of individual human beings and public minds of subordinate human societies are acting together to produce a public mind of all-humanity – an emerging self-consciousness of a new kind of human world.

Example 63.
64. Subordinate societies will continue to constitute themselves, from day to day, in the three dimensions of social self-constituting – ideal, legal and real – with law playing its crucial role as bridge between the ideal and the real, enacting and enforcing society’s ideas and ideals. And, from day to day, international society will continue to constitute itself, in the three dimensions of social self-constituting – ideal, legal and real – with international law playing its crucial role as bridge between the ideal and the real, enacting and enforcing the ideas and ideals of international society.

65. And the turbulent self-constituting of international society will continue to contain international politics – the arena of a more or less organised struggle at all levels of society to turn the self-interest of all subordinate societies and all human beings into the common interest of all-humanity, under the impulsion and attraction of the vast wealth of competing ideas and ideals present in universal human culture. It will be possible to see international society, in its purest form, as a form of love, in its purest and ultimate form – joy in the well-being of all human beings and in the well-being of all other forms of life, present together for a moment on the lonely little planet we call Earth, on whose well-being all life-on-Earth depends – one planet of one star among hundreds of billions of stars in one galaxy among billions of galaxies.

66. The potentiality of international politics will, of course, reflect the mental potential of the international society of all-humanity –

\[ (10^{13} \times 10^{13})^p + n(10^{13} \times 10^{13})^s \]

– where \( p \) is the number of all human beings, \( n \) is the number of all subordinate societies in the human world, and \( s \) is the number of minds interacting in each subordinate society.
Involutionary future of the human species


Examples 67.


68. The human body contains the whole order of the universe in its every atom. The human species is an inseparable part of the natural world. The human brain has an unlimited capacity to cause change in the natural world, within the limits set by the order of the universe. The human mind has an unlimited capacity to make, and constantly to perfect, a human world, within the limits set by the order of the universe, a capacity that it has only begun to use. The self-transcending human soul contains the whole order of the universe, of the natural world, of the human world, of the human brain and the human mind, the order of all order.

69. However, if the new stage of human involution is to proceed in an effective and efficient way, it will require a large-scale mental revolution in the 21st century – a new renaissance and a new enlightenment. It will require (1) a new kind of social consciousness; (2) a new kind of legal consciousness; (3) a new human consciousness; (4) a new transcendental consciousness. An ultimate transcendental humanism.

70. The constituting power of International Society is the self-transcending human mind.

The lawgiver of International Law is the self-ordering human species.

Universities of the world, meet your destiny! How should we live?

Lawyers of the world, meet your destiny! How should we cause people to live?
EXAMPLES

12A. The human body contains about 10 trillion \(10^{13}\) cells. There are about 100 billion neurons in the brain. Neurons are nerve cells transmitting electro-chemical signals. Neurons are structurally and functionally differentiated (sensory, motor, etc.). The most common form consists of a cell body (soma) with profusely branching dendrites (which receive nerve signals) and a branching axon (which sends nerve signals). The axon terminals transmit the signal across a synapse, linking the axon terminal and the receiving cell, which may be in the brain or in some other part of the body. A neuron may have from 1,000 to 10,000 synapses. The soma is from 4 to 100 microns in diameter. The axons vary in length from a millimetre to more than a metre. Nerve signals travel at speeds of up to 200 mph. One estimate is that the brain uses 10 watts of electric energy per second, and has a computational power of \(10^{13}\) to \(10^{16}\) operations per second. The brain uses 20% of the body’s oxygen. 90% of the cells in the brain are glial cells – not transmitting signals, but contributing to the general functioning of the nerve system. A micron is one millionth of a metre; one thousandth of a millimetre.

(PJA, from various sources)

12B.

S. Ramón y Cajal (1852-1934), drawing of cells in the pigeon cerebellum, 1899.
Instituto Santiago Ramón y Cajal, Madrid.

light micrograph of a nerve cell (neuron) in a section of tissue from the human brain.

15A. ‘Thus have we now dealt with two of the three beams of man’s knowledge; that is, radius directus, which is referred to nature; radius refractus, which is referred to God… There remains radius reflexus, whereby man beholds and contemplates himself… This knowledge… is but a portion of natural philosophy [but directed towards man]… and generally let this be a rule, that all partitions of knowledge be accepted, rather for lines or veins than for sections and separations:… With this reservation therefore we proceed to human philosophy or humanity, which has two parts: the one considers man segregate or distributively; the other congregate or in society… For I do take the consideration in general and at large of human nature to be… a knowledge by itself; not so much in regard of those delightful and elegant discourses which have been made of the dignity of man, of his miseries, of his state and life, and the like adjuncts of his common and undivided nature; but a knowledge chiefly in regard of the knowledge concerning the sympathies and concordances between the mind and body, which, being mixed, cannot be properly assigned to the sciences of either.
F. Bacon, Advancement of Learning (1605), 2\textsuperscript{nd} bk. (spelling slightly modernised).

15B. ‘The task of physiological psychology remains the same in the analysis of ideas that it was in the investigation of sensations: to act as a mediator between the neighbouring sciences of physiology and psychology.’

21A. ‘The shortcomings in our description [of the mind] would probably vanish if we were already in a position to replace the psychological terms by physiological or chemical ones. These too only constitute a metaphorical language, but one familiar to us for a much longer time and perhaps also simpler.’
S. Freud, Beyond the Pleasure Principle (1920), ch. vi.
21B. ‘A main characteristic of nervous tissue is memory: that is, quite generally, a capacity for being permanently altered by single occurrences – which offers such a striking contrast to the behaviour of a material that permits the passage of a wave-movement and thereafter returns to its former condition. A psychological theory deserving any consideration must furnish an explanation of memory…. Now any such explanation comes up against the difficulty that it must assume on the one hand that neurones are permanently different after an excitation from what they were before, while nevertheless it cannot be disputed that, in general, fresh excitations meet with the same conditions of reception as did the earlier ones. It would seem, therefore, that neurones must be both influenced and also unaltered, unprejudiced. We cannot off-hand imagine an apparatus capable of such complicated functioning; the situation is accordingly saved by attributing the characteristic of being permanently influenced by excitation to one class of neurones, and, on the other hand, the unalterability – the characteristic of being fresh for new excitations – to another class. Thus has arisen the current distinction between “perceptual cells” and “mnemonic cells” – a distinction, however, which fits into no other context and cannot itself appeal to anything in its support.’


C.J. Jung found Semon’s theory inadequate to account for memories inherent in the brain, not caused by external stimuli, a feature necessary for Jung’s concept of a collective unconscious within human minds.

In ancient Greek: μνήμη, memory; μιμήμα, imitation.

22A. ‘However, just as they were leaving, I managed to call out, Well, Lysis and Menexenus, we have made ourselves rather ridiculous today, I, an old man, and you children. For our hearers here will carry away the report that though we conceive ourselves to be friends with each other – you see I class myself with you – we have not as yet been able to discover what we mean by a friend.’

Plato (c.427-347 BCE), Lysis, 223b [Socrates speaking].

MENO: ‘But is this true about yourself, Socrates, that you don’t even know what virtue is…? Socrates: ‘Not only that, you may also say that, to the best of my belief, I have never met anyone who did know.’

Plato, Meno, 71b.

22B. ‘If there were any part of a thought that made no difference in the thought’s practical consequences, then that part would be no proper element of the thought’s significance. To develop a thought’s meaning we need therefore only determine what conduct it is fitted to produce; that conduct is for us its sole significance; and the tangible fact at the root of all thought-distinctions is that there is no one of them so fine as to consist in anything but a possible difference of practice.’

W. James, The Varieties of Religious Experience (1902; lect. 18), summarising what he calls the principle of pragmatism in the work of the American philosopher C.S. Peirce (1839-1914).

22C. ‘[The dogma of the Ghost in the Machine] maintains that there exist both bodies and minds; that there occur physical processes and mental processes; that there are mechanical causes of corporeal movements and mental causes of corporeal movements. I shall argue that these and analogous conjunctions are absurd; but, it must be noticed, the argument will not show that either of the illegitimately conjoined propositions is absurd in itself. I am not, for example, denying that there occur mental processes. Doing long division is a mental process and so is making a joke. But I am saying that the phrase “there occur mental processes” does not mean the same sort of thing as “there occur physical processes”, and, therefore, it makes no sense to conjoin or disjoin the two.’


30A. ‘Consciousness is actually only a network to connect one person with another.’

F. Nietzsche (1844-1900), The Gay Science, §354.

‘The mind and the body are one and the same thing, which is conceived now under the attribute of thought, now under the attribute of extension [physical thing].’

B. Spinoza (1632-77), Ethics, III.ii (Note).

22
30B. ‘The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas: i.e., the class which is the ruling material force of society, is at the same time its ruling intellectual force. The class which has the means of material production at its disposal, has control at the same time over the means of mental production…For each new class which puts itself in the place of one ruling before it, is compelled…to represent its interest as the common interest of all the members of society, that is, expressed in ideal form: it has to give its ideas the form of universality, and represent them as the only rational, universally valid ones.’
‘Morality, religion, metaphysics, all the rest of ideology and their corresponding forms of consciousness, thus no longer retain the semblance of independence…Life in not determined by consciousness, but consciousness by life.’

30C. ‘But the whole history of science, art and morals proves that the mind that appears in individuals is not as such individual mind. The former is itself a system of belief, recognitions, and ignorances, of acceptances and rejections, of expectancies and appraisals of meanings which have been instituted under the influence of custom and tradition…The truth of which the social compact [social contract theory] was a symbol is that social institutions as they exist can be bettered only through the deliberate interventions of those who free their minds from the standards of the order which obtains.’

30D. ‘The contrast between individual psychology and social or group psychology, which at first glance may seem to be full of significance, loses a great deal of its sharpness when it is examined more closely…In the individual’s mental life someone else is invariably involved, as a model, as an object, as a helper, as an opponent; and so from the very first individual psychology, in this this extended but entirely justifiable sense of the words, is at the same time social psychology as well….Now in speaking of social or group psychology it has become usual to leave these relations on one side and to isolate as the subject of inquiry the influencing of an individual by a large number of people simultaneously…Group psychology is therefore concerned with the individual man as a member of a race, of a nation, of a caste, of a profession, of an institution, or as a component part of a crowd of people…’

38A. ‘The whole world knows that beauty is beauty: and this is (to know) ugliness. Everyone knows that goodness is goodness: and this is (to know) what is not good. Thus it is: existence and non-existence give birth to each other…’
_Tao Te Ching_ (? 4th cent. BCE), ch. 2.

38B. ‘They do not comprehend how a thing agrees at variance with itself; it is an attunement [άρμονίη; harmoniē] turning back on itself, like that of the bow and the lyre.’
‘One must realise that war is shared and conflict is justice [ἔρις δική; eris dikê] and that all things come to pass in accordance with conflict.’

38C. THE DILEMMAS OF SELF-CONSTITUTING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>the Self</th>
<th>the One</th>
<th>Unity of nature</th>
<th>Justice</th>
<th>New citizens</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identity</td>
<td>Power</td>
<td>Will</td>
<td>Order</td>
<td>Becoming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the Other</td>
<td>the Many</td>
<td>Plurality of value</td>
<td>Social justice</td>
<td>Old laws</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: PJA, _Eunomia_, Part One.
43A. ‘The real constitution (wirkliche Verfassung) of a country exists only in the true actual power relations which are present in the country; written constitutions thus only have worth and durability if they are an exact expression of the real power relations of society.’

F. Lassalle (1825-64), Über Verfassungswesen (‘On the nature of constitutions’) (1863).
(Lassalle was the founder of the General German Workers Association (ADAV) (1863), the first working-class political party.)

43B. ‘But in my view nature herself makes it plain that it is right for the better to have the advantage over the worse, the more able over the less. And both among all animals and in entire states and races of mankind it is plain that this is the case – that right is recognised to be the sovereignty and advantage over the weaker…these men [conquerors] act in accordance with the true nature of right,…according to nature’s own law, though not perhaps by the law we frame. We mold the best and strongest among ourselves, catching them young like lion cubs, and by spells and incantations we make slaves of them…But if a man arises endowed with a nature sufficiently strong, he will, I believe, shake off all these controls, burst his fetters, and break loose…he rises up and reveals himself our master who was once our slave, and there shines forth nature’s true justice.’

Plato, Gorgias, 483c (Callicles speaking). (Plato is initiating a discussion that will go on for ever about the relationship, if any, between (artificial) social law and (natural) laws of nature.)

43C. ‘Ainsi, la vraie sociabilité consiste davantage dans la continuité successive que dans la solidarité actuelle. Les vivants sont toujours, et de plus en plus, gouvernés nécessairement par les morts ; telle est la loi fondamentale de l’ordre humain.’ (‘So, true sociability consists rather in successive continuity than in present solidarity. The living are always, and more and more, necessarily governed by the dead: that is the fundamental law of the human order.’)

A. Comte, Catéchisme positiviste (Positivist Catechism) (1852), 2nd conversation.
(Comte said that human beings have an inherent immortality: they have changed the human world by existing – and ?? by bequeathing ideas to posterity!)

48.

MYTH

A. ‘The ancients…saw man always as part of society, and society as imbedded in nature and dependent on cosmic forces…The fundamental difference between the attitudes of modern and ancient man as regards the surrounding world is this: for modern, scientific man the phenomenal world is primarily an “It”; for ancient…it is a “Thou”.’


B. ‘[The world]…as the people of Sumer [in ancient Iraq] knew it in the fourth millennium BC, was in being, precisely in the form that it was expected to retain without change. For there is no idea in any archaic mythology of an evolution either of society or of species…And the virtue of each class of things, each manner of man, thereafter, was to represent the god-given natural patterning of its kind – which in Egypt was known as maat, in India as dharma [??and rta], in the Far East, as dao, and in Sumer…as me.’

J. Campbell, Oriental Mythology. The Masks of God.

C. ‘Today, on the basis of [research in the history of religions], it can be said that there is scarcely a single feature in the world of Christian faith and ideas, scarcely a symbol, for which mythical-pagan parallels might not be shown…Thus, the new religious tendency that characterizes Christianity, the new attitude expressed in its call for μετανοια [metanoia], could not be directly stated and could not grow directly; this new form could only be expressed and could only mature through the mythical substance which played, as it were, the role of a psychological-historical datum.’

E. Cassirer (1874-1945), The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms (1955), vol. 2, pt. IV.

RELIGION

D. ‘Beyond the senses is the mind, and beyond the mind is reason, its essence. Beyond reason is the Spirit in man, and beyond this is the Spirit of the universe, the evolver of all.’

Katha Upanishad (? 5th cent. BCE) (tr. J. Mascaró).
E. “Two birds, close companions, clinging to the same tree. Of these two, one eats the sweet fruit, and the other looks on without eating. The soul is the one sitting immersed on the same tree, deluded and sad because helpless. But seeing the other who is the Lord and beloved, it realizes its greatness and overcomes the sadness…Delighting in the soul, enjoying the soul, doing holy works, such a one is the best of the knowers of God. The soul can be attained by truth, by discipline, by correct knowledge, by studying God. Within the body, made of light, pure is this which the ascetics, their faults removed, view.’

*Mundaka Upanishad* (tr., S. Beck), 3.

F. “So we say that it has to be imagined as though one of us were created whole in an instant but his sight is veiled from directly observing the things of the external world. He is created as though floating in air or in a void without the air supporting him…, and the limbs of his body are stretched out and away from one another, so that they do not come into contact or touch. Then he considers whether he can assert the existence of his self…He will, in fact, be asserting the existence of his self without asserting that it has length, breadth or depth…Thus, the self whose existence he asserted is his unique characteristic, in the sense that it is he himself, not his body and its parts…Thus, what [the reader] has been alerted to is a way to be made alert to the existence of the soul as something that is not the body.’


G. “We now observe that the store of religious ideas includes not only wish-fulfillments but important historical recollections. This concurrent influence of past and present must give religion a truly incomparable wealth of power…Religion would thus be the universal obsessional neurosis of humanity; like the obsessional neurosis of children, it arose out of the Oedipus complex, out of the relation to the father…And it tallies well with this that devout believers are safeguarded in a high degree against the risk of certain neurotic illnesses; their acceptance of the universal neurosis spares them the task of constructing a personal one.’


ART

H. “…the Beautiful, the Fair, the Comely, were never in the Matter, but in the Art and Design; never in the Body, itself, but in the Form or Forming Power.’

Lord Shaftesbury (1671-1713), *The Moralists. A Philosophical Rhapsody* (1709).

‘[Shaftesbury] not only holds that “all Beauty is TRUTH”, but for him the converse of this maxim is also true: truth must also possess beauty of form. Form is not merely something appended and external, but the reflection of the soul itself; and all external form can be called beautiful only in so far as in this wise it reflects and evidences “inward form”. Ethics, metaphysics, and religion are now subjected to the law of form.’


I. “Every creative person is a duality or a synthesis of contradictory aptitudes. On the one side he is a human being with a personal life, while on the other side he is an impersonal, creative process…The artist is not [merely] a person endowed with free will who seeks his own ends…as an artist he is “man” in a higher sense – he is “collective man” – one who carries and shapes the unconscious, psychic life of mankind. To perform this difficult office it is sometimes necessary for him to sacrifice happiness and everything that makes life worth living for the ordinary human being.’


PHILOSOPHY

J. “From the saying of Heraclitus that man’s character is his demon this development continues to Democritus and Socrates. Perhaps it is only in this connection that we can fully appreciate the particular meaning and resonance of the Socratic concept of eudaemonia. Eudaemonia is based on this new form of knowledge discovered by Socrates. It is achieved when the soul ceases to be a mere natural potency and apprehends itself as an ethical subject. Only now is man freed from fear of the unknown, from the fear of demons, because he no longer feels that his self, his innermost being, is dominated by a dark mythical power but knows himself capable of molding this self from clear insight, through a principle of knowledge and will. Thus there arises in opposition to myth a new consciousness of inner freedom.’

K. ‘That being so, what standard may be taken as suitable for ruling? The answer is that nothing is equal to imitating Heaven. Heaven’s actions are all-inclusive and not private-minded, its blessings substantial and unceasing, its revelations abiding and incorruptible…The question now is, what does Heaven want and what does it hate? Heaven wants men to love and be profitable to each other, and does not want men to hate and maltreat each other. How do we know that Heaven want [this]? Because it embraces all in its love of them, embraces all in its benefits to them…Take then the Great Society [China]. There are no large or small states: all are Heaven’s townships. Take men. There are no young men or old, no patricians or plebeians: all are Heaven’s subjects…Hence I say that Heaven is sure to give happiness to those who love and benefit other men, and is sure to bring calamities on those who hate and maltreat other men.’

Mo Ti (? 5th-4th cent. BCE), Book of Mo Tzu, ch. 4 (‘Of standard patterns’).

NATURAL SCIENCE

L. ‘[I have used] the words attraction, impulse, or propensity of any sort towards a centre indifferently and interchangeably one for the other, considering these forces not in the physical but only in the mathematical sense. Hence let the reader beware lest he think that by words of this kind I define a type or mode of action or cause or physical reason of any kind.’

I. Newton, De motu corporum (tr. J. Herivel).

D. Hume (1711-76) said that ‘if the Newtonian philosophy be rightly understood’ it consists of ‘rational constructions’, since we know only the appearances of things and not ‘their real nature’.

A. Smith (1723-90) said that ‘a system [of ideas] is an imaginary machine invented to connect together in the fancy [imagination] those different movements and effects which are already in reality performed.’


M. ‘The belief in magical occult powers of nature has gradually died away, but in its place a new belief has arisen, the belief in the magical power of science. Science throws her treasures, not like a capricious fairy into the laps of a favoured few, but with a lavish extravagance that no legend ever dreamt of! …The first real beginnings of science appear in society, particularly in the manual arts [technology], where the necessity for the communication of experience arises. Here, where some new discovery is to be described and related, the compulsion is first felt of clearly defining in consciousness the important and essential features of that discovery…The aim of instruction is simply the saving of experience…The most wonderful economy of communication is found in language [including all kinds of symbol]…The communication of scientific knowledge involves description, that is, a mimetic reproduction of facts in thought, the object of which is to replace and save the trouble of new experience…This is really all that natural laws are. Knowing the value of the acceleration of gravity, and Galileo’s laws of descent, we possess simple and compendious directions for reproducing in thought all possible notions of falling bodies…The greatest perfection of mental economy is attained in that science which has reached the highest formal development, and which is widely employed in physical inquiry, namely, in mathematics.’


(A. Einstein said that he had been influenced by both Hume and Mach in imagining relativity.)

HUMAN STUDIES

N. ‘If the organism carries a “small-scale model” of external reality and of its own possible actions within its head, it is able to try out various alternatives, conclude which is the best of them, react to future situations before they arise, utilise the knowledge of past events in dealing with the present and the future, and in every way to react in a much fuller, safer and more competent manner to the emergencies which face it. Most of the greatest advances of modern technology have been instruments which extended the scope of our sense-organs, our brains or our limbs…Is it not possible, therefore, that our brains themselves utilise comparable mechanisms to achieve the same ends and these mechanisms can parallel phenomena in the external world as a calculating machine can parallel the development of strains in a bridge?’

O. ‘Popper’s statement that social institutions are just explanatory models introduced by the social scientist for his own purposes is palpably untrue. The ways of thinking embodied in institutions govern the way the members of the societies studied by the social scientist behave. The idea of war, for instance, was not simply invented by people who wanted to explain what happens when societies come into armed conflict. It is an idea which provides the criteria of what is appropriate in the behaviour of members of the conflicting societies.’


(Winch is rejecting central ideas of Karl Popper (1902-94) to the effect that social phenomena are reducible to individual phenomena, and that to hypothesize ‘society’ is to commit the sin of ‘essentialism’ – and to encourage totalitarianism!)

P. ‘For if men judge that learning should be referred to action, they judge well; but in this they fall into the error described in the ancient fable, in which the other parts of the body supposed that the stomach had been idle, because it neither performed the office of motion, as the limbs do, nor of sense, as the head does; but yet, notwithstanding, it is the stomach that digests and distributes to all the rest: so if any man think philosophy and universality to be idle studies, he does not consider that all professions are from thence served and supplied. And this I take to be a great cause that has hindered the progression of learning, because these fundamental knowledges have been studied but in passage [marginally].’


‘The men of experiment are like the ant, they only collect and use; the reasoners resemble spiders, who make cobwebs out of their own substance. But the bee takes a middle course: it gathers its material from the flowers of the garden and of the field, but transforms and digests it by a power of its own.’

F. Bacon, *The New Organon* (1620), bk.1, xcv.

Q. ‘Man is only a reed, the weakest in nature, but he is a thinking reed (un roseau pensant). There is no need for the universe to take up arms to crush him: a vapour, a drop of water is enough to kill him. But even if the universe were to crush him, man would still be nobler than his slayer, because he knows that he is dying and [he knows] the advantage the universe has over him. The universe knows none of this. Thus all our dignity consists in thought. It is on thought that we must depend for our recovery… Let us then strive to think well; that is the basic principle of morality.’


49. LANGUAGE

\[ m = \frac{m_o}{\sqrt{1 - v^2/c^2}} \]

where \( m \) is the mass of a body, \( m_o \) its rest mass, \( v \) its velocity, and \( c \) the speed of light in vacuo.


‘Monospecific antibodies are antibodies that all have affinity for the same antigen. Monoclonal antibodies are monospecific, but monospecific antibodies may also be produced by other means than producing them from a common germ cell.’ Wikipedia, ‘Monoclonal antibodies’.

*Tat Tvam Asi* (‘That art Thou’).

Chandogya Upanishad (8th- 6th cent. BCE).

‘Under the law of nature, all men are born free.’

T. Jefferson, 1770.

‘The sedge is withered from the lake,
And no birds sing.’

J. Keats, *La Belle Dame sans Merci* (1819/20).

Yinyang

*陰陽*

Avalokiteśvara (Guanyin)

अवलोकितेश्वर

Napoléon

J-L. David

bamboo

竹

‘shadow and light’

*’she who hears the cries of the world’*

1798

scroll painting

(16th cent.)

27
53A. ‘Consequently it will be a right, decisive, true and final statement to assert, as we did, that soul is prior to body, body secondary and derivative, soul governing in the real order of things, and body being subject to governance... And so moods and habits of mind, wishes, calculations and true judgments, purposes, and memories, will all be prior to physical lengths, breadths and depths, in virtue of the priority of soul itself to body... Hence we are driven, are we not, to agree in the consequence that soul is the cause of good and evil, fair and foul, right and wrong... ‘Well, then if indwelling soul thus controls all things universally that move anywhere, are we not bound to say it controls heaven itself?’

Plato, Laws, 896b (‘Athenian’ speaking – more or less, Plato himself).

53B. ‘Psyche’ is a Greek word and its German translation is “soul” [Seele]. Psychological treatment hence means “treatment of the soul”. Once could thus think that what is meant is: treatment of the morbid phenomena in the life of the soul. But this is not the meaning of the term. Psychological treatment wishes to signify, rather, treatment originating in the soul, treatment of psychical and bodily disorders – by measures which influence above all and immediately the soul of man.’ S. Freud, ‘Psychical Treatment (Treatment of the Soul)’ (1905).

(The above translation is by B. Bettelheim who, in Freud and Man’s Soul (1983), argues fiercely that the English translators of Freud have misrepresented him in fundamental ways. He quotes (ch. x) the above passage in the authoritative English edition (Standard Edition; ed., J. Strachey) –

‘Psyche’ is a Greek word which may be translated “mind”. Thus “psychical treatment” means “mental treatment”.

Bettelheim says that Seele in German (in this context) means ‘soul’ not ‘mind’. He notes that Freud elsewhere says that psychoanalysis is “dedicated to the science of the soul”. (We may recall that Socrates and Plato thought that philosophy is ἐπιστήμη; θεραπεία (psychēs therapeiā - ‘soul-therapy’. For Spinoza, philosophy is necessary for ‘the improvement of the understanding’ (intellectus emendatio), leading to acquiescentia animi (peace of mind) and true happiness!) The cross-linguistic confusion is made worse by the fact that the German Seele does also mean ‘mind’ and the German word Geist can mean both ‘mind’ and ‘spirit’. Hence much Anglophone Angst in the presence of German philosophical idealism.)

53C.

‘O body swayed to music, O brightening glance,
How can we know the dancer from the dance?’

W.B. Yeats, Among School Children (1928).

56. ‘What sort of a freak then is man? How novel, how monstrous, how chaotic, how paradoxical, how prodigious! Judge of all things, feeble earthworm, repository of truth, sink of doubt and error, glory and refuse [rebût] of the universe! Who will unravel such a tangle? This is certainly beyond dogmatism and scepticism, beyond all human philosophy. Man transcends man (l’homme passe l’homme).’

B. Pascal, Pensées, no. 131 in the Krailsheimer edition; no. 122 in the Le Guern edition.

62. ‘Neither is it to be forgotten, that this dedicating of foundations and dotations [endowments] to profressory learning has not only had a malign aspect and influence upon the growth of the sciences, but has also been prejudicial to states and governments.’ ‘...as the proficiency of learning consists much in orders and institutions of Universities in the same states and kingdoms, so it would be yet more advanced, if there were more intelligence mutual between the Universities of Europe than there now is.’

F. Bacon, Advancement of Learning (1605), 2nd bk. (spelling slightly modernised).

63. If our intellectual part is common, the reason also, in respect of which we are rational beings, is common; if this is so, common also is the reason which commands us what to do, and what not to do; if this is so, there is a common law also; if this is so, we are fellow-citizens; if this is so, we are members of some political community; if this is so, the world is in a manner a state. For of what other common political community will any one say that the whole human race are members? And from thence, from this common political community comes also our very intellectual faculty and reasoning faculty and our capacity for law; or whence do they come?’ ‘For we are made for co-operation, like feet, like hands, like eyelids, like the rows of the upper and lower teeth. ‘The prime principle then in man’s constitution is the social.’

Marcus Aurelius (121-180 CE), Roman emperor and Stoic philosopher, Meditations (G. Long ed.), IV, VII, II.
67A. ‘Now, if the co-operation of some thousands of million cells in our brain can produce our consciousness, the idea becomes vastly more plausible that the co-operation of humanity, or some sections of it, may determine what Comte called a Great Being…But to my mind the teaching of science is very emphatic that such a Great Being may be a fact as real as the individual human consciousness, although, of course, there is no positive scientific evidence for the existence of such a being. And it seems to me that everywhere ethical experience testifies to a super-individual reality of some kind. The good life, if not necessarily self-denial, is always self-transcendence.’


A. Comte (1798-1857), in the later humanist-religious form of his Positivism, postulated Humanity as a single metaphysical (but self-conscious) being, worthy of worship!

67B. ‘If men learn this [the alphabet], it will implant forgetfulness in their souls; they will cease to exercise memory because they rely on that which is written, calling things to remembrance no longer from within themselves, but by means of external marks.’

Plato, Phaedrus, 275a (tr., R. Hackforth)

Plato is commenting on Google/Wikipedia:
relating the story of an Egyptian king who refused
to accept the idea of the alphabet suggested to him by a Greek.

‘Before this century runs out journalism will be the whole press [the printed word] – the whole of human thought …Thought will be spread in the world with the rapidity of light, instantly conceived, instantly written, instantly understood at the ends of the earth.’

A. Lamartine, French poet and politician (1790-1869), writing in 1831.

‘Today we’re beginning to realise that the new media aren’t just mechanical gimmicks for creating worlds of illusion, but new languages with new and unique powers of expression.’

M. McLuhan (1911-1980), The Gutenberg Galaxy (1962), citing Lamartine’s comment.

67C. The new philosophy expressed in my own writings – called Social Idealism – is designed to organise humanity’s collective approach to the future of the human species on the basis of two systematic concepts – ideas, as the mind-made substance of human reality; ideals, as the energising force of human self-perfecting.