

R O N D

A Worldview

Volume 1:
Prolegomenon



CONTENTS

Introduction:	On Worldviews	3
Part One:	The Human Condition	13
Part Two:	Errors To Avoid	31
Part Three:	Alleviation	77
Part Four:	On Building a New Worldview	85
Part Five:	The Art of a New Worldview	96
Part Six:	Introducing Rond	107
Conclusion:	More than a Worldview	165
Endnotes:	References and Image Credits	169

INTRODUCTION: ON WORLDVIEWS

WORLDVIEW DEFINED₁

- There is the **world** and then there are our **views** of it.
- The *world* is the reality we all share—the reality captured in our common experiences and the same reality we know from the established facts.
- But we never have all the facts needed in order to know *all* of reality, and our experience of reality is limited by what we can observe of it and what portions of it we can measure.
- Consequently, we can only conjecture about the unknown portions of reality, and even the portions of reality we know must be interpreted or construed for their implications, their significance, or their meaning.
- That is where a *view* of the world comes in.

WORLDVIEW DEFINED₂

- The term 'view' has various definitions.
- Let's define 'view' as a **conceptual framework, conceptual model, or schema of ideas** used for *representing* something and for *interpreting* or *construing* its implications, significance, or meaning.
- For our purposes, the 'view' we want is a view of the *world*—of our shared reality, to include the portions of reality we *know* and the portions for which we can only conjecture and form *beliefs*.
- A **worldview** is therefore an interpretive representation of reality, both the reality known and the reality unknown. In other words, a worldview is a way of making sense of reality—especially of events we experience.
- It's as if our worldviews are conceptual spectacles through which we see the world.

WORLDVIEWS OFFER PERSPECTIVE

- Each worldview, as a way of representing and interpreting reality, offers an idiosyncratic **perspective** on reality.
- In this context, a 'perspective' is a set of, often unarticulated and unexamined, *assumptions* or *biases* by which we make judgements.
- When we encounter something new, we judge it from the perspective of our worldview.
- Our worldview is formed not only from our own personal conjectures and interpretations concerning reality but also from conceptual frameworks, conceptual models, and schemas of ideas arrived at via the following sources:
 - **science**
 - **philosophy**
 - **spirituality**
- Our beliefs from these three sources are largely what shape our worldview, and ergo our perspective on reality.

WORLDVIEWS ARE DIVERSE

- Science, philosophy, and spirituality each contribute to our worldview and thus to our perspective on the world and everything in it.
- But there are many different scientific theories, philosophies, and spiritualities.
- Consequently, there are many different worldviews offering many different perspectives.
- And because there are so many different worldviews and so many perspectives on reality, what one worldview sees (judges) as correct another may see as incorrect. Worldviews disagree, not only on the interpretation of the facts but in some cases on the facts themselves.
- The various worldviews available thus offer a diversity of conflicting perspectives on reality and even on ways to live.

A WORLDVIEW IS A FORCED DECISION

- Since worldviews conflict, and as individuals we cannot live by all of them, we must choose one over the rest. So, how should we choose a worldview?
- The question assumes we need a worldview and that we must choose one to live consistently. Even so, this is a safe assumption to make, for choosing not to choose turns out to be self-defeating:
 - We all need to have some way of interpreting the world, a way of making sense of reality, in order to live our best life. We therefore all need a worldview to guide us in discerning truth from falsity, fact from fabrication, reality from illusion.
 - To ignore worldviews is still to have a worldview—namely, a view of the world in which the choice of worldviews doesn't matter. Hence, one always chooses a worldview whether one intends to or not.
- So, the question remains as to how we *should* choose a worldview from among all the conflicting options.

ON CHOOSING A WORLDVIEW₁

- Those who seek a worldview need some way of choosing one worldview over others. To protect one's sanity, our way of choosing should not be arbitrary.
- Alas, most people do not set out to survey worldviews and from them choose a worldview according to application of a systematic method involving years of research, debate, dialogue with diverse groups, contemplation, and introspection.
- Instead, the average person typically adheres to a worldview they were taught as a child. If they ever do change worldviews, it tends to be on an equally arbitrary basis—the result of gut feelings, the sentimental influence of friends and romantic partners, or a blind leap of 'faith' in the message of a charismatic leader.
- Arbitrary though they may be, such approaches for choosing a worldview are often the most practical for those unable or uninterested in spending a great deal of time systematically investigating and interrogating reality to find the best worldview.
- However, an arbitrary approach to worldview selection is not the best approach. What the seeker needs is to identify the proper set of *standards* for evaluating worldviews and thus for deciding between them.

ON CHOOSING A WORLDVIEW₂

- There is only one world to view—one domain of human experience that is objectively describable; in other words, there is one *reality*.
- Because there is only one world (i.e., one reality) and all worldviews contradict one another, not all worldviews (if any of them) can be correct—at least, not in their entirety.
- Perhaps each worldview is correct about *some* issue(s), but they cannot all be correct about *all* issues, for most worldviews are in fundamental disagreement with one another. (Of course, it could be that no worldview is entirely correct.)
- Because not all worldviews can be entirely correct in their various interpretations of reality, **relativism** is ruled out from the start.
 - Rejecting relativism is a position that can be argued for, but this presentation will instead take it as axiomatic and save such argumentation for a later work.
 - Based on that axiom, not just any worldview will do. We need the best obtainable worldview from the available alternatives.

ON CHOOSING A WORLDVIEW₃

- Since we know worldviews conflict and we've ruled out relativism, it must be that not all worldviews are equally good at helping us to discern the nature of reality.
- Like a pair of spectacles, a worldview can either make reality clearer (a more accurate worldview) or distort it (a less accurate worldview). Our worldviews, and ergo their perspectives on reality, are only as accurate as their assumptions allow.
- What we need is a way of *wisely* discerning the more accurate from the less accurate worldviews—and from there a wise way of selecting what we can judge as the best obtainable worldview.
- To judge a worldview as the best obtainable, one must first find the right set of standards to compare worldviews with one another, and in so doing rule out as candidates those worldviews that are based on errors of judgement.
- The author of this presentation arrived at standards for judging the merits of worldviews based on logic, conceptual analysis, research, and comparison to empirical results. In applying the standards from this approach, the author judges that none of the traditional worldviews is adequate. A new worldview is needed.

THE RIGHT WORLDVIEW

- This presentation introduces **Rond** as a new worldview for seekers to select from among the available alternatives:



and the list goes on...

- The rationale behind the development of Rond as a candidate for the most accurate of available worldviews will also be covered.
- However, because this presentation can only offer a brief sketch of Rond, the rationale for Rond will not be exhaustive. A more adequate justification for Rond will have to wait for a future publication.

**PART ONE:
THE HUMAN CONDITION**

THE PROBLEM₁

- All worldviews, including Rond, are developed for a reason: we all need the most accurate interpretation of reality obtainable in order to best effectively cope with a problem we all share, a problem known as the **human condition**.
- The human condition is the universal condition that all humans must contend with because it is a condition not dependent on relative factors such as age, sex, gender, ancestry, heredity, heritage, or culture.
- The human condition is the suffering that results from **human nature**.
- Human nature is the set of innate **abilities** and **dispositions** that characterizes the human species.

THE PROBLEM₂

- Part of human nature is our set of **abilities**.
- An **ability** is *a potential for action of a specified kind*, such as the ability to perceive, the ability to move about, the ability to communicate, and so forth.
- Of the many abilities human beings have, an ability we share with other animals and an ability no one wants, is *the ability to suffer*.
- Suffering is not synonymous with pain. Pain is felt harm, whereas suffering is harm's reduction to health, its prevention of improvement to health, and in some instances its risk to one's survival. (Pain can even be helpful until it becomes suffering.)
- Animals suffer, but human suffering is unique to humanity's set of unique abilities.
- Three uniquely human abilities are our ability to form and use conceptual symbols (e.g., language), our ability to anticipate the future like no other animal, and our ability to self-reflect on our existence. But these human abilities also enable us to suffer in uniquely human ways as a result of how we use these abilities.
- Hence, due to human nature (e.g., human abilities), we have the human condition.

THE PROBLEM₃

- Another part of human nature is our set of **dispositions**.
- Our dispositions are innate **inclinations** and **tendencies** characteristic of animals in fulfilling their needs and desires. At the most abstract:
 - As animals, we are *inclined* to—
 - avoid or reduce suffering (we need to live without unnecessary harm)
 - seek or increase pleasure (we desire to flourish)
 - As animals, we *tend* to commit occasional errors of judgement when following those inclinations.
- In addition to these common animal dispositions, animals also have dispositions characteristic of their species. The same is true of humans.
- One human disposition is to have mixed success in using our unique human abilities. Examples: We are able to use concepts and symbols to represent and interpret the world, but we tend to make errors in doing so. We are able to make long-term plans, but we also tend to err in making them. We can self-reflect, but we also tend to err with self-deception. We then suffer from those errors—part of the human condition.

THE PROBLEM₄

- So, the human condition is the result of human nature:
 - Our ability to suffer, especially in uniquely human ways as a result of our uniquely human abilities.
 - Our innate dispositions, such as our inclination to avoid or reduce suffering and our tendency to make uniquely human errors of judgement in doing so.
- The human condition cannot be overcome so long as we are human.
- The human condition is a problem because, as human beings, it undermines our *need* to live without unnecessary harm and it makes a mockery of our natural desire to persistently **flourish**—to live with ongoing health, prosperity, and contentment.

THE PROBLEM₅

- The human condition ensures flourishing does not occur on a regular (let alone permanent) basis for any human being.
- This conclusion dismisses all claims that there exist human beings who have attained **optimal** mental states allowing them to escape suffering.
- Such claims are mistaken (see Part Two); all human beings suffer to some degree at least some of the time.
- No human being escapes the human condition.
- The human condition is not a condition that can be cured.

THE PROBLEM₆

- Suffering due to our human nature is the human condition, and that condition has both **absolute** and **relative** aspects.
- Suffering from human nature is 'relative' in the sense that not all human beings experience the same kind of suffering at any given time, nor do we all experience suffering to the same degree.
- However, suffering from human nature is 'absolute' in the sense that every human must experience some such suffering, some of the time. That is what makes it the human condition.

THE PROBLEM₇

- There are three fundamental sources of suffering that make up the human condition—sources of suffering we must all experience at some point(s) in our lives simply by virtue of being human:



- These sources categorically overlap in the suffering they produce, and all together they are responsible for the human condition.
- Of course, animals also experience these sources of suffering, but as humans we have uniquely human ways of suffering from them.

THE PROBLEM₈

- Not everyone experiences suffering from these three sources to the same degree, but human nature ensures that we are disposed to experience the suffering they bring in common ways:
 - **Conflict**
 - Pain of Self Against Nature (wilderness, disease, injury, aging, etc.)
 - Pain of Self Against Others (individuals or groups or culture)
 - Pain of Self Against Self (one's own limitations, impulses, and ignorance)
 - **Loneliness**
 - Sadness Over Isolation
 - Sadness Over Exclusion
 - **Mortality**
 - Disappointment About the Uncertain Limit to Life
 - Fear or Dread of Our Own Death
 - Grief Over Loss of Loved Ones

THE PROBLEM₉

- The three sources of suffering that we all eventually must face are **existential barriers** to individual flourishing because they cannot be permanently overcome:
 - **Conflict:** No peace lasts forever, for conflict—whether physical or emotional—always makes another appearance, even if only in the form of disappointment or frustrated desires.
 - **Loneliness:** companionship banishes loneliness until either mortality or conflicts of interest take away friends or family, and only the lucky die surrounded by love.
 - **Mortality:** we can extend life, but not forever; and so it is inevitable to grieve those we lose, dread our own death, and search for some 'meaning' (purpose and significance) to an existence that must end.
- These three sources of suffering comprise the human condition—a problem that cannot be solved.

THE NEED


- Though we are unable to *solve* the problem of having these existential barriers to flourishing, we nevertheless can *cope* or deal with them.
- To best cope with existential barriers, we need a way, or ways, to *alleviate* (i.e., reduce, lessen, or mitigate) suffering caused by impact with them—to alleviate the human condition itself.
- Any way of alleviating the human condition must involve—
 - **Harm Reduction:** a realistic and practical way to cope with the harm caused by the impact of these existential barriers.
 - **Harm Prevention:** a realistic and practical way to prevent as much as we can instances of conflict, loneliness, and encounters with mortality, or at least the *unnecessary* harms caused by them.

THE FACTS₁

- There are various ways by which we might prevent the harm of impact with existential barriers to flourishing, or at least reduce the severity of harm experienced by hitting them.
- All the various ways fall into two general approaches:
 - Improve circumstances
 - Improve perspective
- Both are necessary and neither one is alone sufficient for preventing or reducing the harm of impact with existential barriers.

THE FACTS₂

- Living under favorable circumstances is *necessary* for preventing or reducing the harm of impact with existential barriers to flourishing. But having some favorable circumstances is not always *sufficient*...



*Whenever Richard Cory went downtown,
We people on the pavement looked at him:
He was a gentleman from sole to crown,
Clean favored, and imperially slim.*

*And he was always quietly arrayed,
And he was always human when he talked;
But still he fluttered pulses when he said,
“Good morning,” and he glittered when he walked.*

*And he was rich—yes, richer than a king,
And admirably schooled in every grace:
In fine, we thought that he was everything
To make us wish that we were in his place.*

*So on we worked, and waited for the light,
And went without the meat, and cursed the bread,
And Richard Cory, one calm summer night,
Went home and put a bullet through his head.*

—Edwin Arlington Robinson

- Taking the wrong perspective can worsen the harm of impact with existential barriers (especially for those with mental illness).

THE FACTS₃

- We improve our perspective by improving how we interpret the *meaning* or *significance* of our circumstances, including those circumstances in which we have experienced a hard impact with an existential barrier.
- Having the right perspective will not in itself prevent impact with existential barriers, but it can improve how one reacts to them, how one feels about them, and how one copes with them.



THE FACTS₄

- Improving perspective is necessary *but not sufficient* to reduce the harm of hitting an existential barrier. Improving circumstances is also needed, and it often requires talent, determination, hard work, help, and some luck.
- Nevertheless, for rough circumstances, changing perspective on them in the right way can provide *resilience*—ability to adapt to hardship.
- And for circumstances that can be improved, a change in perspective can even provide the *enthusiasm* needed for their improvement.



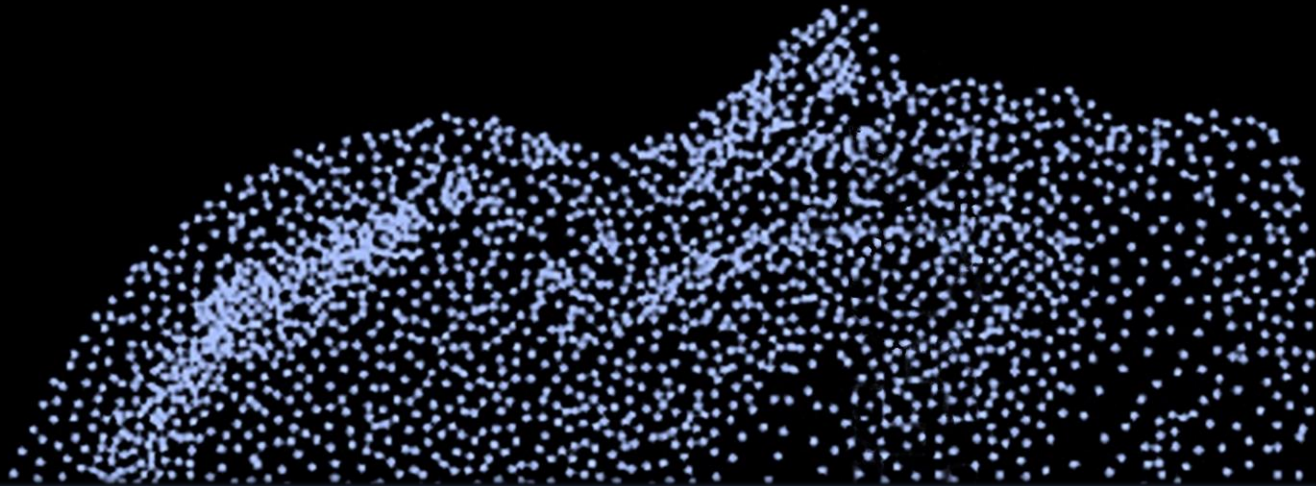
RESILIENCE: An adventurer at sea endures a storm in *All Is Lost*.



ENTHUSIASM: Martin Luther King Jr. effected change by non-violent protest.



THE FACTS₅

- So, improving both circumstances and perspective are necessary, and neither alone is sufficient, to reduce the harm of impact with existential barriers.
- Only improving *both* circumstances *and* perspective can alleviate the human condition to the degree needed for (at least temporary) flourishing.



SCOPE₁



- There are plenty of resources (books, articles, teachers, parents, friends, etc.) that give advice for improving one's circumstances. Such advice is relative to the individual and out of scope for this presentation. Improving *perspective* on life is something everyone needs and will be the scope of this presentation.

IN SCOPE	OUT OF SCOPE
<p data-bbox="481 676 782 772">IMPROVING PERSPECTIVE</p> 	<p data-bbox="1085 676 1464 772">IMPROVING CIRCUMSTANCES</p> 

- As a caveat, improving perspective can inspire one to act in ways that may change one's circumstances...

SCOPE₂

- For those suffering from mental illness, improving perspective is often not enough to alleviate impact with existential barriers; therapy and possibly psychotropic medication may be necessary.
- Improving mental health via therapy and medication is out of scope for this presentation. Our scope will only be on improving perspective to alleviate the level of existential suffering common to all human beings.

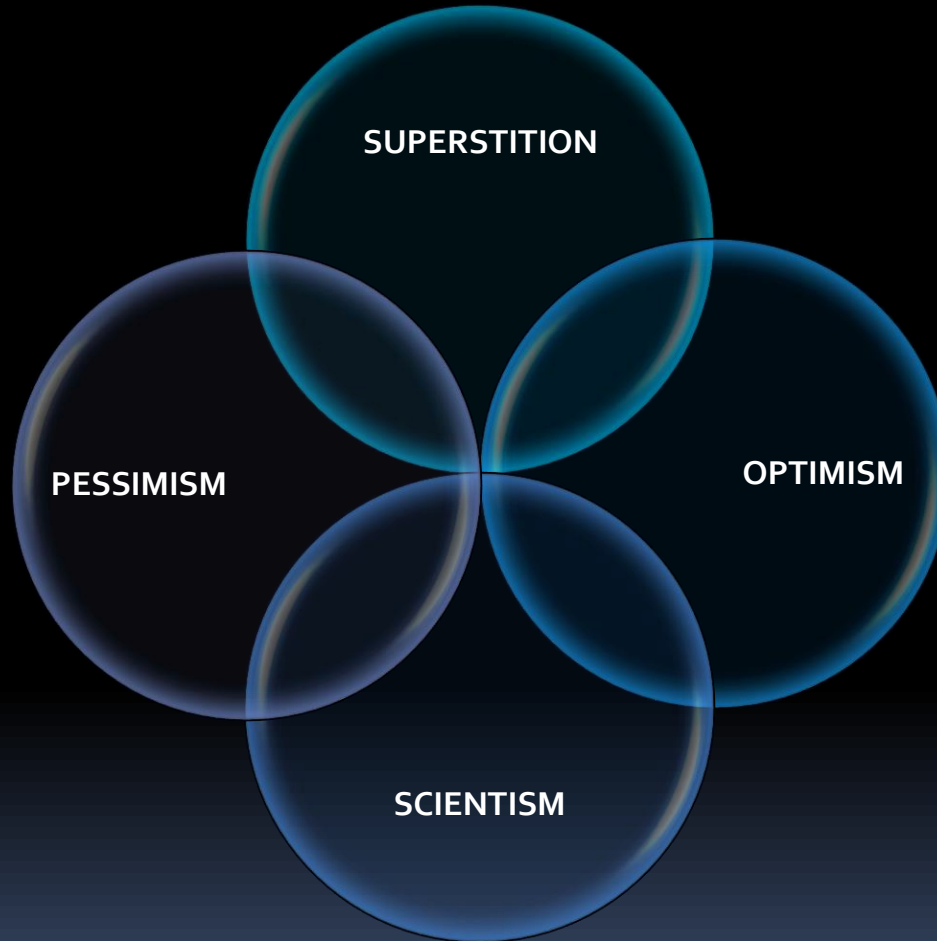
IN SCOPE	OUT OF SCOPE
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**PART TWO:
ERRORS TO AVOID**

TO ERR IS HUMAN

- To help alleviate the human condition (especially for ourselves), we need to obtain the right perspective on life.
- However, our human nature often predisposes us to make some *common intellectual errors* that prevent us from getting the right perspective.
- The common intellectual errors preventing us from having the right perspective stem from strong, emotional biases instilled in us from having accepted misinformation and disinformation, but the errors can be remedied with the right information—we can overrule our faulty predispositions.
- Knowledge of the common errors thus allows us to avoid those errors in the future, obtain the right perspective on life, and thereby find the right way to alleviate the human condition.

FOUR COMMON ERRORS

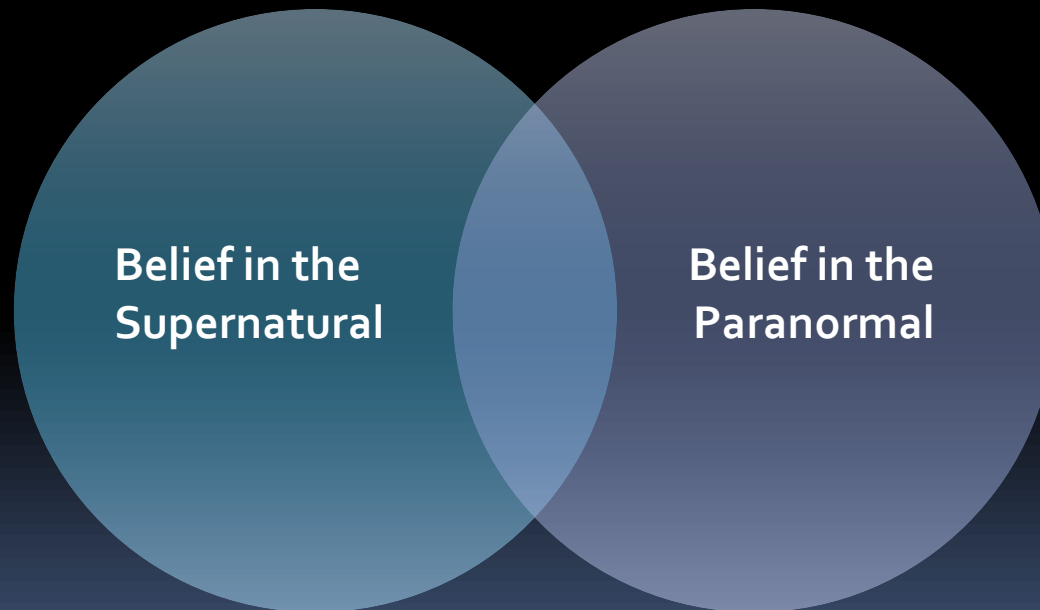


ON THE FOUR COMMON ERRORS

- The four errors identified are not the only intellectual errors commonly made in attempts to get the right perspective on life, but those four errors will suffice as examples for the purpose of this presentation.
- Successfully avoiding the four common errors helps filter out many currently popular, but fallacious, perspectives and worldviews adopting those perspectives.
- A few words of warning:
 - Not everyone agrees as to how superstition, pessimism, optimism, and scientism should be defined.
 - Moreover, not everyone agrees they are intellectual errors.
 - Consequently, some will certainly find offensive the forthcoming examples of superstition, pessimism, optimism, and scientism insofar as they are portrayed as erroneous.
 - Unfortunately, in order to guide others away from dead ends and toward alleviation of the human condition, these errors must be identified as such.

ERROR #1: SUPERSTITION

- **Superstition:** *a stubborn misunderstanding of a cause or tendency that undermines good judgement.*
- Two examples of popular superstitions:



THE SUPERNATURAL

- **The Supernatural:** that which can have no satisfactory, natural explanation.
 - **myth:** an account (story, explanation, prediction, etc.) of the divine.*
 - **miracle:** an event caused by divine influence, intervention, or revelation.
 - **magic:** the ability to control forces of nature via occult means.**
 - **mysticism:** belief in, or practice to obtain experience of, that which provides insight about a truth of existence transcending logic and rationality.



The Mythical

The Miraculous

The Magical

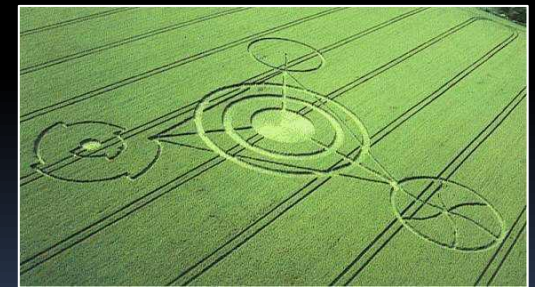
The Mystical

*myth, in this sense, is not synonymous with a lie or common falsehood, although myths taken literally are false.

**magic in this sense (also spelled with a 'k', as in *magick*) does not include the art of illusion as entertainment.

THE PARANORMAL

- **The Paranormal:** alleged phenomena for which there can be no adequate, mundane, or “normal”, explanation. (Examples include psychic phenomena, encounters with otherworldly entities, etc.)



- Claims of the paranormal are those that explain mysterious events or profound experiences as having causes other than the normal or mundane.

THE SUPERNATURAL AND PARANORMAL IN FICTION

- Stories of the supernatural and paranormal are certainly entertaining:

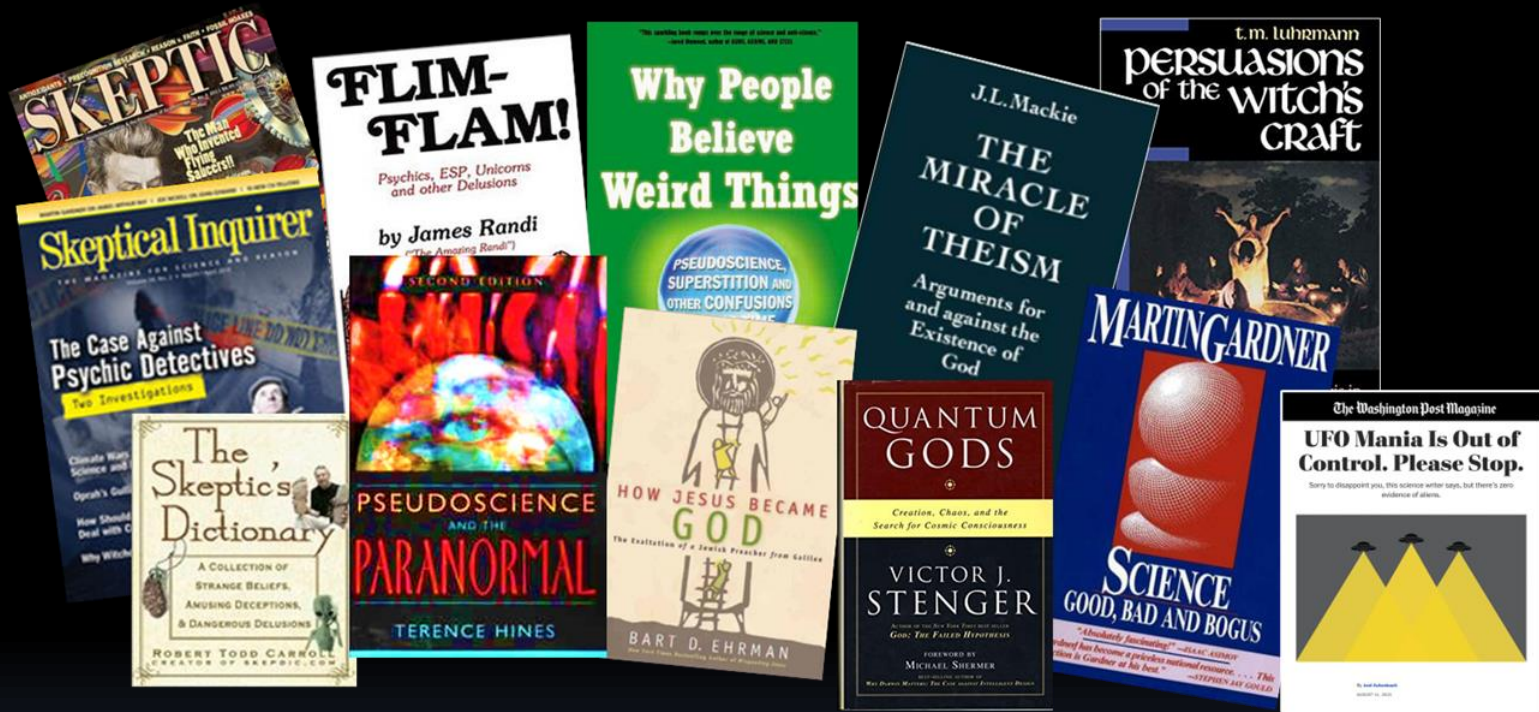


and the list goes on...

- But the suspension of disbelief in the supernatural and paranormal should end when closing the book, exiting the theater, or turning off the television.

DEBUNKING SUPERSTITIONS

- Many investigations have debunked claims of the supernatural and paranormal...



- Sources reveal supernatural and paranormal belief is due to fantasy-prone thinking based on misinformation and disinformation—a combination of wrong assumptions, misinterpreted observations, fallacious inferences, delusions, and hoaxes. Even presumed authorities can fall for bunk. The supernatural and paranormal make for fun fiction but bad philosophy.

DISILLUSIONMENT

- As superstitions, belief in the supernatural and paranormal have a couple of things in common. They both spread from common errors in thought—
 - Accepting extraordinary claims (for example, miracle stories) without first demanding extraordinary evidence for them. Basically, holding the bar for what counts as evidence way too low.
 - Assuming that extraordinary claims or astonishing events are so because they must be due to other than natural or mundane causes.
- As superstitions, the supernatural and paranormal are prone to being debunked, often resulting in either the believer becoming disillusioned or continuing to uphold the belief in a state of cognitive dissonance.
- Identification of the supernatural and paranormal as superstitions immediately rules out any of the established religions as having the correct worldview and ergo the correct perspective on life. This is the hardest for most to accept (and where most will leave this presentation). Nevertheless, belief in the supernatural and paranormal remains a prime example of superstition.

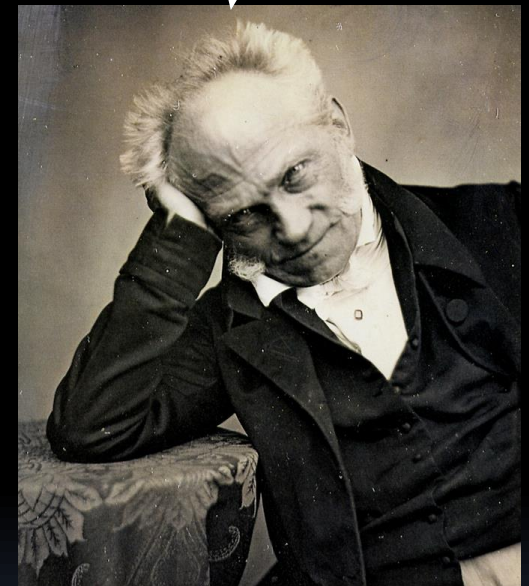
THE RIGHT TO BE SUPERSTITIOUS

- In properly developed countries we have the right (legal permission) to hold views that are not right (correct) and that is as it should be:
 - Although religions are mostly instances of organized superstition, that does not entail that they should be banned or made illegal.
 - In a free and just society, everyone should have the legal right to be as superstitious as they like without government interference. (That is, so long as adherence to, or promotion of, a given superstition does not include such acts as engaging in fraud or causing unconsented damage to person or property, or otherwise infringing on the legal rights of others.)
 - Hence, everyone should be free to be as superstitious, and ergo as religious, as they see fit within the confines of secular law and civil conduct. Religious toleration is, after all, an indicator of a free and just society.
- Toleration for the plurality and diversity of beliefs, however, does not mean we need to honor or celebrate superstitions. Just as all should have the legal right to promote their superstitions, so too we should all have the legal right to dissuade others from them out of social concern.

ERROR #2: PESSIMISM

- **Pessimism:** the belief or attitude that hope is futility.
- Pessimism has many forms. Here are three of them:
 - **nihilism:** belief that nothing is real—whether it be the world, knowledge, or value. Hope for finding any real importance, truth, or value is therefore futile.
 - **fatalism:** belief that all events are predetermined (fated) such that choices have no influence on the future for positive outcomes, no matter how it may appear otherwise. Hope to improve quality of life by making the right choices is therefore futile.
 - **fallowism:** belief that death renders all hopes in life futile and life itself therefore worthless.
- The error of all forms of pessimism is that of *overgeneralization*—specifically, by extrapolating disappointment over dashed hopes regarding some part of life to dour conclusions about the whole of life.

[Bah! We would have been better off never to have been born!]



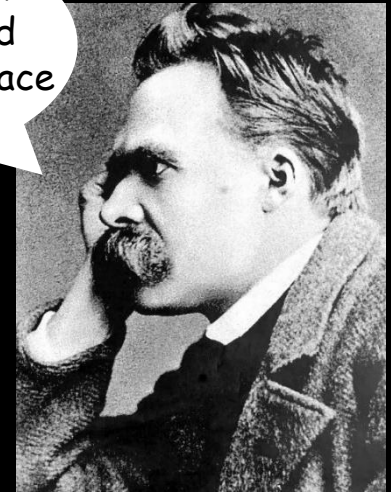
Arthur Schopenhauer, Pessimist Philosopher

NIHILISM₁

- **Nihilism** comes in at least three forms:

- **existential nihilism:** nothing important exists.
- **epistemic nihilism:** nothing can be known.
- **evaluative nihilism:** nothing has genuine value.

[Philosophy must overcome the old nihilism...and embrace a new one!]

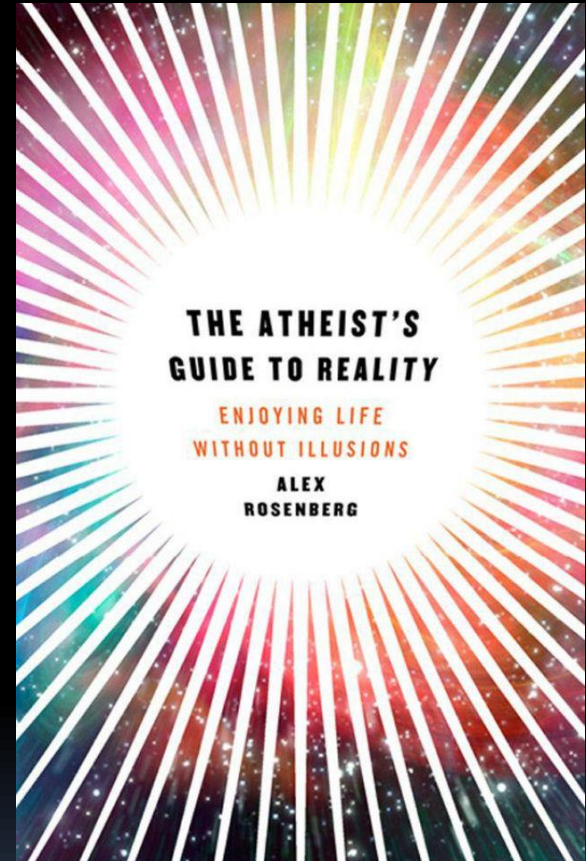


Friedrich Nietzsche,
Disturbed Philosopher

- Existential nihilism holds that nothing important exists because the world is an illusion—ergo, life itself is just an illusion (a tenet of some Eastern religions).
- Epistemic nihilism holds that nothing can be known because truth is illusion— all statements are merely opinions (a central doctrine of **postmodernism**).
- Evaluative nihilism holds that nothing has genuine value—meaningfulness and morality are illusions (the latter claim is often called **moral nihilism**).
- The first two nihilisms are self-refuting positions. The third is self-defeating.

NIHILISM₂

- Nihilism has its advocates. According to Rosenberg, "...nihilism denies that there is really any such thing as intrinsic moral value. ...Nihilism denies that there is anything at all that is good in itself or, for that matter, bad in itself..." [1]
- To the question, "What is the difference between right and wrong, good and bad?", Rosenberg says that, according to nihilists, "There is no moral difference between them." [2]
- Alas, since according to nihilism there is no moral difference between right and wrong, good and bad, then the nihilist reduces the moral value of nihilism to the value of a pack of lies.
- Since according to nihilism there's no difference between right and wrong, the nihilist gives us no compelling reason to trust either nihilists or their nihilism. What value does nihilism have? No value at all—by its own standard.



FATALISM



Theologian John Calvin

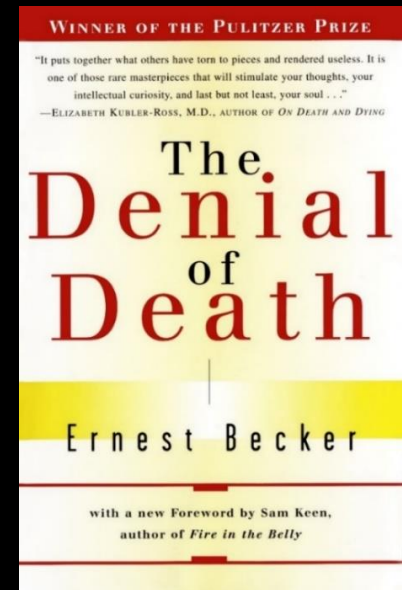
[Some folks are damned if they do and damned if they don't.]



- Fatalism has its champions. For example, theologian John Calvin (for Reformed Protestant Christianity) espoused a form of fatalism. According to Calvinism, some people are fated (or 'predestined') to burn in Hell *regardless of what they believe or do*.
- Not all fatalists have superstitious beliefs such as belief in Hell. And some fatalists even believe that certain people are destined for a good fate. But it is always at a cost: others are presumed to be doomed. Calvin's doctrine of predestined damnation is an example of fatalism in one of its most extreme forms. Such a pathological belief inflicts groundless despair on those unfortunate enough to be duped into accepting it.

FALLOWISM₁

- **Fallowism** accepts **mortalism**—the view that death is the limit to life:
 1. Death is the end of personal consciousness.
 2. There is therefore no further accumulation of experiences after the death of the body—there is no such thing as an afterlife.
 3. Hence, belief in personal immortality is a delusion and yearning for it is self-defeating.
- Mortalism heeds the warning of anthropologist Ernest Becker not to deny the reality of death. Hence, mortalism dismisses notions of the afterlife as vacuous superstition. Mortalism—at least as so stated—is reasonable and seems accurate.
- However, fallowism is not merely mortalism.
- Rather, fallowism adds to mortalism a pessimistic assessment of mortality, thereby blundering into error...



FALLOWISM₂

- Fallowism holds that everything—even the Universe—dies such that death always “wins” over life, rendering life simply as such an exercise in futility.

[The Universe will end.
So what's the point?]



The reason Alvy Singer refuses to do his homework in *Annie Hall*.

- As we'll see, fallowism is a scientifically erroneous view.

FALLOWISM₃

- Fallowism holds that not only will humanity come to end, so will the Universe.



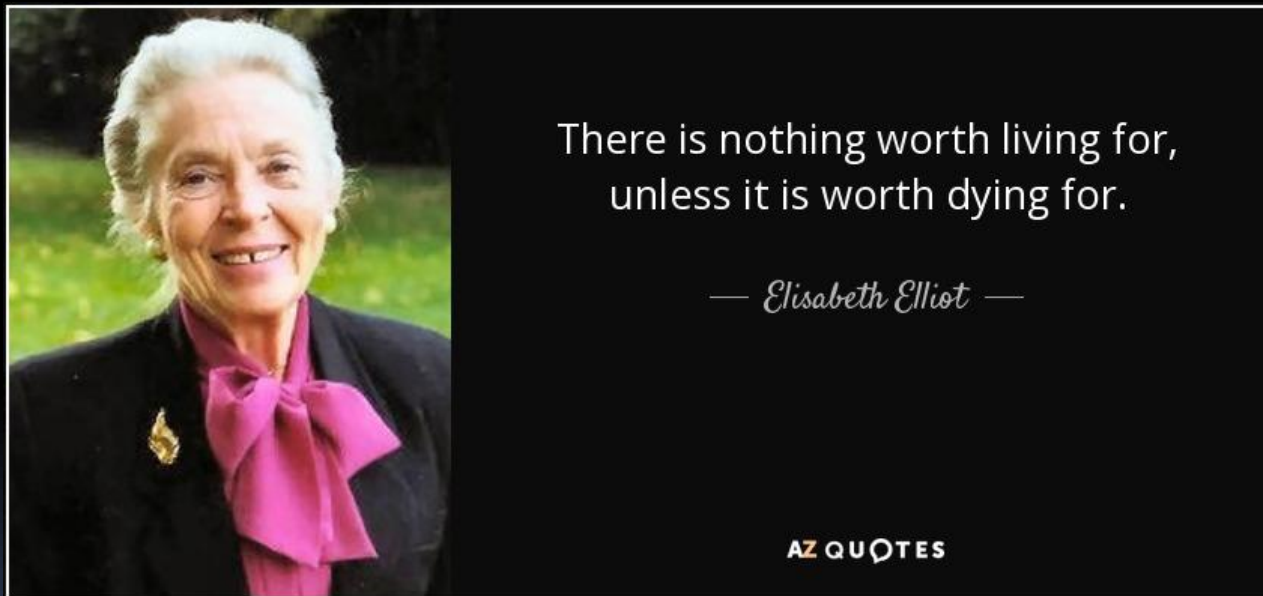
- This view currently has the endorsement of the scientific community. Physicists have concluded the entire Universe must die based on mathematical extrapolations from 19th Century thermodynamics—a view called **thermodynamic pessimism** or **cosmic pessimism**.
- Cosmic pessimism is mistaken; it is a pseudoscientific notion that has infected the physics community.

FALLOWISM₄

- The second law of thermodynamics, as a law of irreversible entropy, applies only to **isolated systems** (vice **open systems** like planets and **closed systems** like sealed jars).
- Physicists say there is only one isolated system: the Universe. But no experiment can be performed on the whole Universe to verify or falsify the second law of thermodynamics articulated as irreversible entropy.
- The second law of thermodynamics as increasing universal entropy is therefore intrinsically **underdetermined** by physical evidence. What we *do* have physical evidence for is increasing entropy for local systems *within* the Universe.
- It is merely a mathematical supposition that the Universe constitutes an isolated system such that entropy must increase for the Universe as a whole. And the mathematics of increasing entropy is only as good as the assumptions it rests on.
- Extrapolating the second law to the whole Universe falsely assumes that irreversible entropy governs long-range gravitational systems. But there is no compelling evidence that such is so.^[3] Ergo, the Universe will not necessarily die, and so there is no compelling scientific evidence to support cosmic pessimism.

FALLOWISM₅

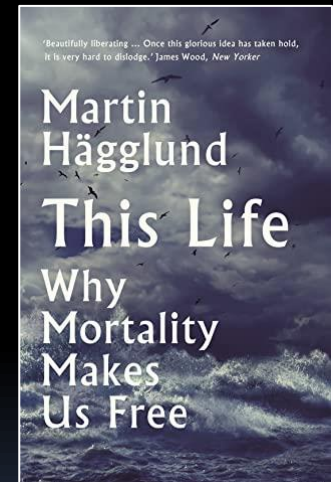
- The fallowist would point out that even if the Universe goes on, we do not.
- True enough, but it does not logically follow that if our individual lives end, then hopes *within* life or *for* life are futile. We may instead choose to regard our own life as if it is a kind of performance art—an activity not meant to last.



- Hence, the mere fact that we as mortals must each eventually die does not entail the fallowist's conclusion that all hopes about life are futile. Rather, it just means we should hope for the right things given that all life within the Universe is mortal.

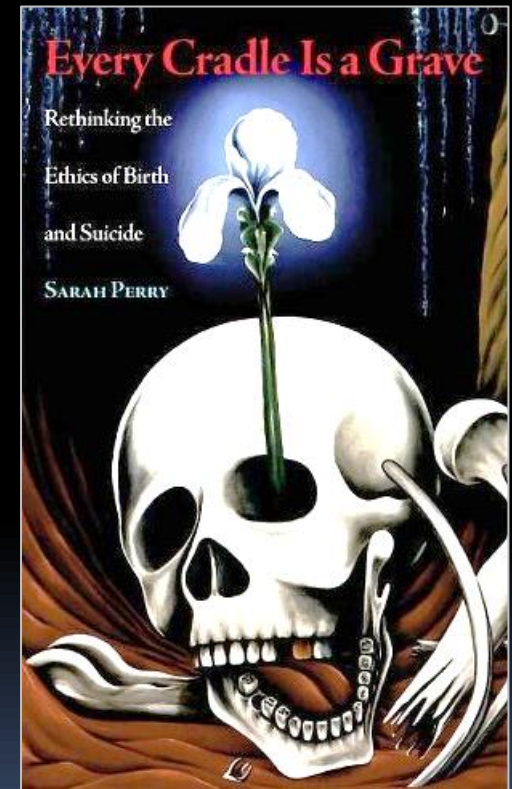
FALLOWISM₆

- Since fallowism is an erroneous position on mortality, we must assign the proper place in our philosophy for mortality and the pain it eventually brings.
- First, we should accept the mortalist position by not denying the reality of death. Second, we should *alleviate* emotional suffering over thoughts of death so as not to defeat ourselves with them while not devaluing life in the process.
- We can achieve this with the right perspective on mortality:^[4]
 - Far from robbing life of meaning, *it is precisely mortality that gives life its meaning*—its value, significance, and purpose.
 - Moreover, the risk and ultimacy of death is what gives our lives their measure of freedom and our projects their importance.
 - True, death is *deprivation* of the future. Hence, those who desire a longer life should delay dying as much as they comfortably can.
 - However, death is also *relief* from pain, preventing further suffering. So, death should be *accepted* when it can be delayed no longer, for to do otherwise becomes self-defeating.^[5] Besides, it may be that some things are worth more than living on^[6] (see the spirituality in Part Six for more).



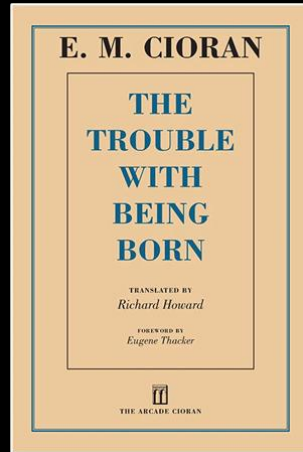
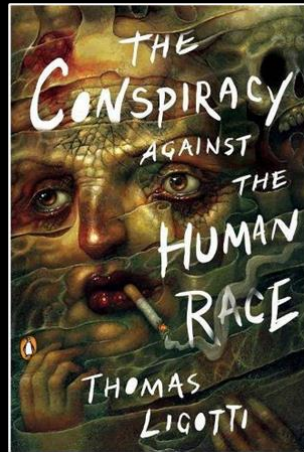
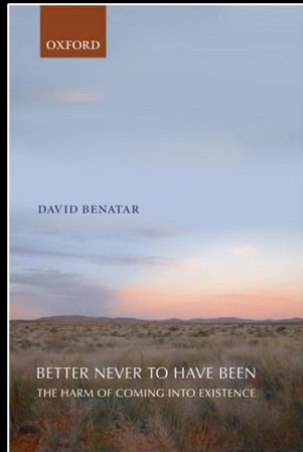
FALLOWISM₇

- If fallowism were right that death renders life worthless, then such a conclusion would support **antinatalism**—the view that being born is a tragic mistake and that voluntarily giving birth should be judged immoral.
- However, fallowism was identified as an error for the foregoing reasons. Hence, we need not follow its next step into antinatalism.
- Moreover, antinatalism is erroneous on its own terms, based as it is on the false assumption that simply allowing the presence of pain in life—such as the pain of knowing one’s good times must eventually come to an end—is enough to render life itself a moral evil.
- There are plenty who are glad to have been born and to be alive, *despite* the suffering they endure and knowing life must eventually end. It is thus an error to assume pain, or even suffering, necessarily renders life an evil.
- Conclusion: not only is fallowism an error, but so is its implied antinatalism.



BEYOND PESSIMISM

- Pessimism is a minority philosophy but trendy in pop culture...



Jay-Z in *Run*



- Despite its pop culture chic, pessimism (especially as nihilism, fatalism, and fallowism) is an erroneous and pathological view of life.
- Rejection of pessimism, however, does not entail that one must embrace its opposite—optimism.

ERROR #3: OPTIMISM

- The term 'optimism' will not be used in this presentation as it is commonly used in colloquial speech: a synonym for hopefulness and the assumption that life has intrinsic worth.
- To be optimal is to function *perfectly*, to realize *full potential*.
- **Optimism:** the expectation that an optimal condition will certainly be achieved, despite compelling evidence to the contrary.



OPTIMISM VERSUS HOPE AND CONFIDENCE

- Optimism differs from hope and confidence:
 - Hope and confidence do not hold an expectation of guaranteed success, let alone optimal outcome. In fact, we need hope only when there is a risk of failure, and we need confidence only when our ability is in question.
 - Unlike hope or confidence, optimism is an *irrational* certitude that, no matter what, the good will be achieved for a particular problem or opportunity.
 - The optimist discounts compelling evidence that the wrong objective is being pursued because they believe in the power of belief.
 - Hope and confidence, on the other hand, may say things like, “Everything will work out” or “Everything will be alright,” but such statements are provisional and held only to the degree that evidence to the contrary is not overwhelming.

THE FORMS OF OPTIMISM

- There are four common forms of optimism. The first includes the other three:

Belief in optimal outcomes

Belief in becoming a person of optimal ability

Belief humanity will achieve an optimal society

Belief in an optimal afterlife

THE OPTIMAL OUTCOME

- **Optimal Outcome:** an outcome that is 'destined' to be optimal because the alternative would be disappointing.
- The belief in optimal outcome overlaps with superstition as it is a form of *wishful thinking* or *magical thinking*.
- Wishful/magical thinking is a form of optimism based on superstition. Such optimistic superstitions tend to make grand promises that don't succeed.
- These kinds of thinking lead one to fall for pyramid schemes, become obsessed with a pursuit that destroys one's livelihood, gamble away one's possessions, substitute inadequate folk remedies for medical care, and so forth.

SUPERSTITIOUS OPTIMISM

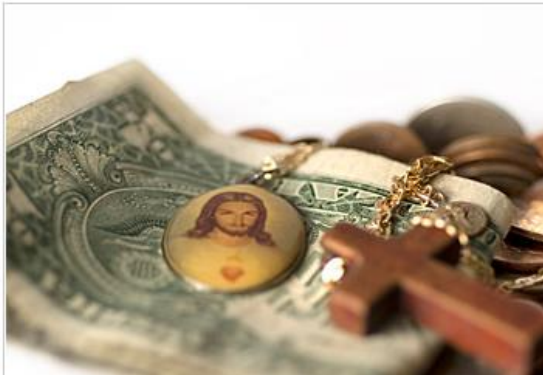
- Examples of superstitious optimism include Protestant Christianity's prosperity preaching and New Age claims to "create reality" or attract prosperity by positive thinking.

washingtonpost.com > Opinions > Outlook & Opinions

The Worst Ideas of the Decade

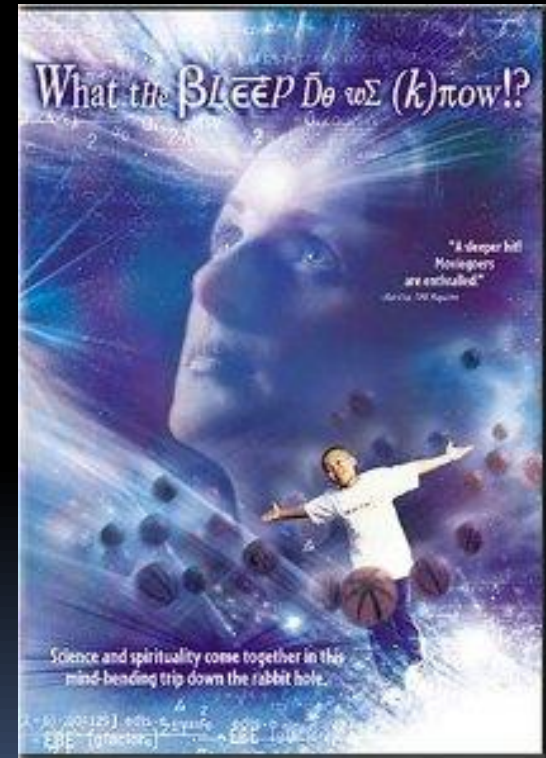
The prosperity gospel

by Cathleen Falsani



In the Gospel of Saint Matthew, we are told that Jesus said, "You cannot serve both God and money" and, "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."

The "prosperity gospel," an insipid heresy whose popularity among American Christians has boomed in recent years, teaches that God blesses those God favors most with material wealth.



EVERYTHING WORKS OUT...EXCEPT WHEN IT DOESN'T

- There are additional problems with belief in optimal outcomes:
 - The optimist is in danger of crashing into depression when things don't work out or when perfection is not achieved.
 - The optimist may engage in unproductive self-incrimination when a goal is not achieved because of the mistaken believe that if (s)he just had a little more optimism, success would have been achieved; which is not necessarily so.
- These same problems also plague our other two forms of optimism...

OPTIMAL ABILITY

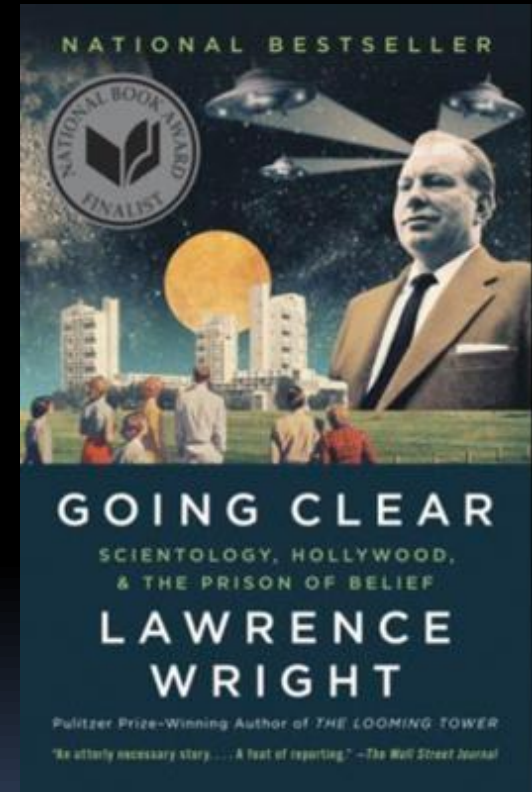
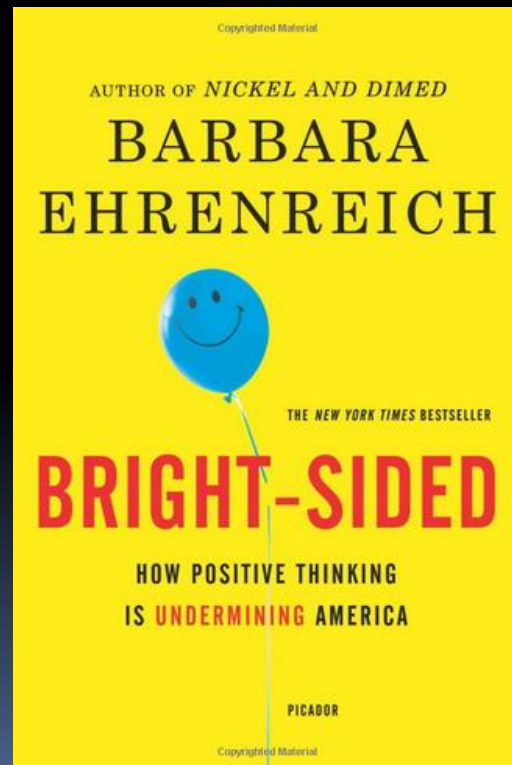
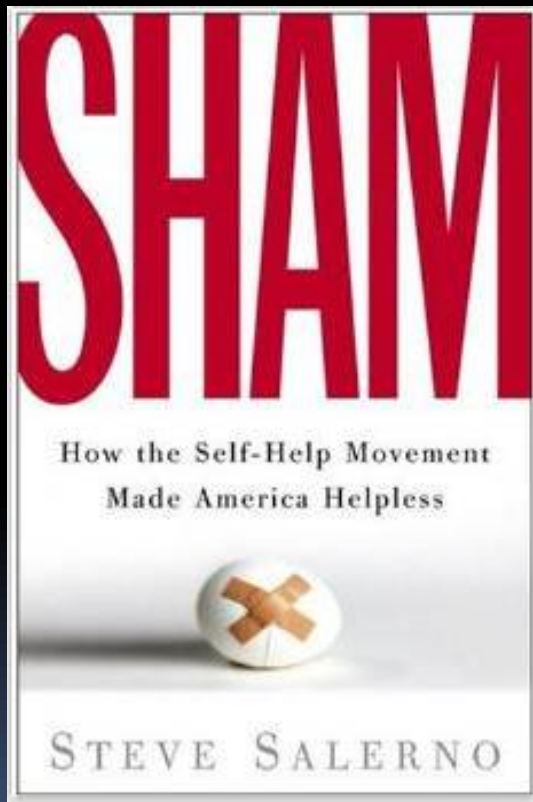
- **Optimal Ability:** the potential for perfect performance. Examples: infallibility, enlightenment, self-actualization, reaching full-potential, living by 'the Secret', going 'clear', and too many others to list. [7]



- Popular culture holds that success in life is due to achieving optimal ability via some 'realization', 'gift', 'technique', 'secret', 'key', 'formula', 'faith', etc. rather than due to mundane conditions like having the right combination of determination, hard work, natural talent, and luck.

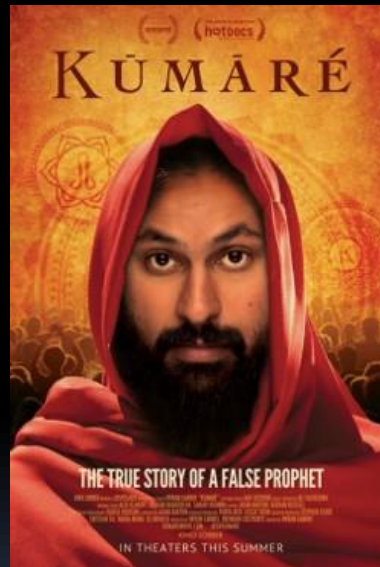
THERE IS NO SECRET TO SUCCESS

- Proponents of 'optimal' ability tend to disappoint over time with diminishing returns, overblown claims, or unrealizable idealism.



THE OPTIMISM OF THE IDEAL SELF

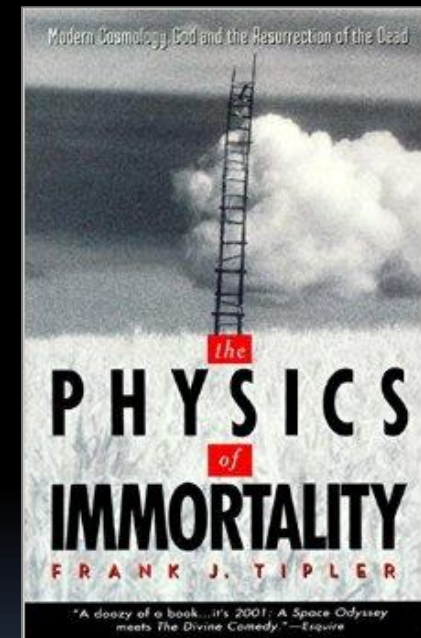
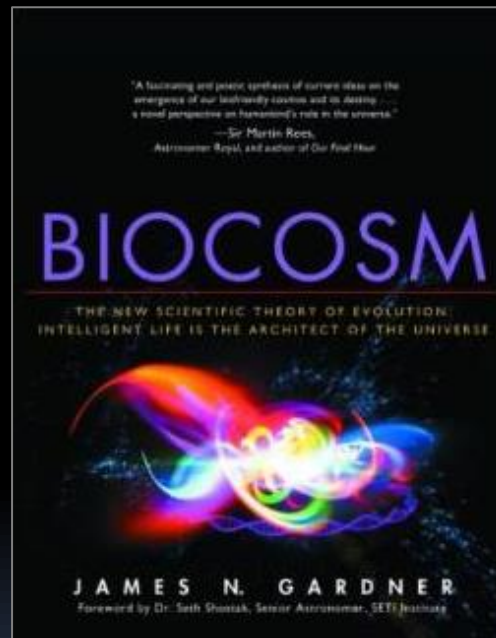
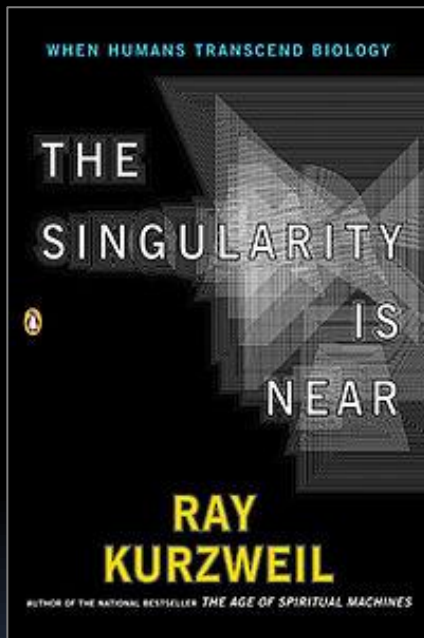
- Achieving an ideal self is pseudoscientific nonsense. As filmmaker Vikram Gandhi demonstrated in his 2011 documentary, *Kumaré*, those who are called 'guru' are not necessarily more enlightened than anyone else.



- That is not to say spirituality itself is debunked. Rather, it's just to say we must avoid *superstitious* and *optimistic* spiritualities in favor of a more *realistic* spirituality that won't overpromise and underdeliver.

OPTIMAL SOCIETY

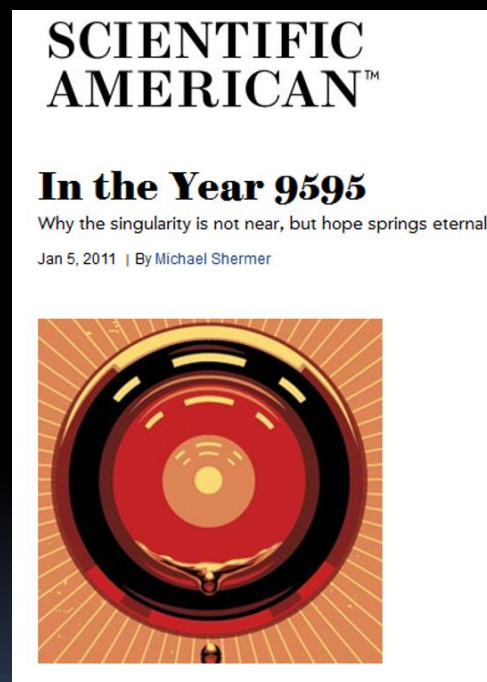
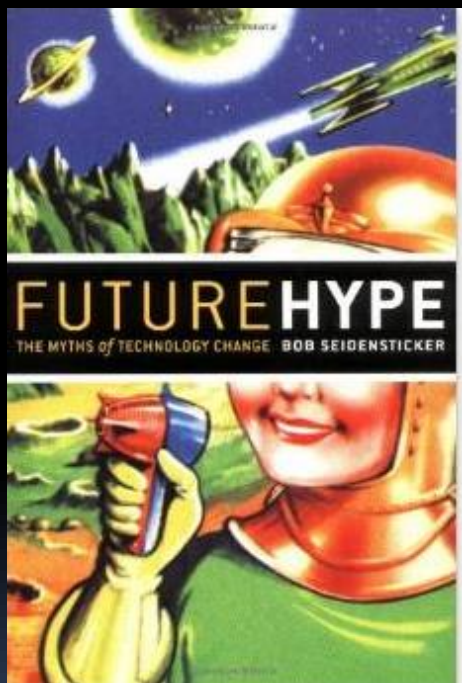
- **Utopia:** the optimal society. Modern ideas of utopia envision a society that transcends biology, such as by creating a 'technological singularity' or a technological 'Omega Point'.



- Some philosophies, like **Marxism** and **transhumanism**, misidentify past progress as a sign of utopian destiny, rather than more realistically as a temporary and tenuous trend in the right direction.

UTOPIA: NOWHERE TO BE FOUND

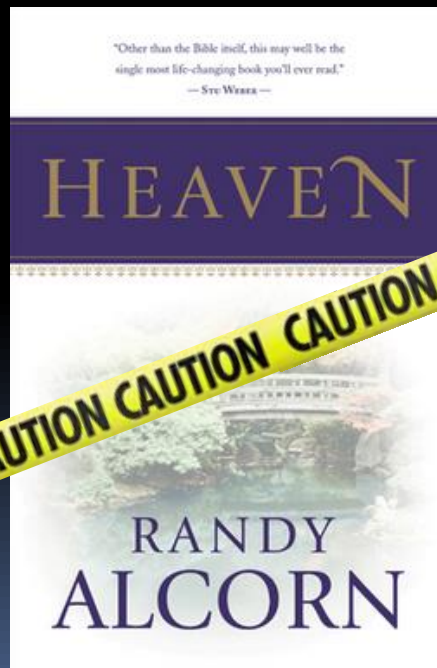
- Technology and medicine will certainly improve but claims of utopian destiny have always failed to deliver. And even if it were ever to come, we won't be alive to see it.



- Moreover, if history is our guide, attempts to create utopia turn out to be failed experiments or totalitarian regimes.

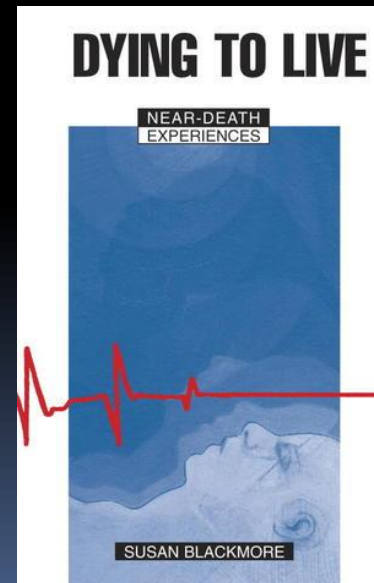
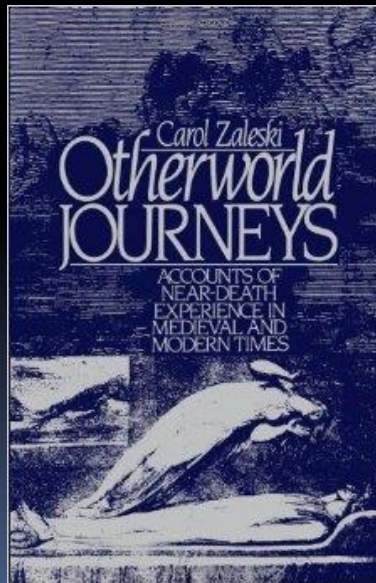
ON AFTERLIFE OPTIMISM₁

- Utopian optimism sometimes couples with superstition—especially belief in the supernatural and paranormal.
- There is no greater example of superstitious optimism than belief that death is followed by an afterlife utopia such as the religious depictions of Heaven...



ON AFTERLIFE OPTIMISM₂

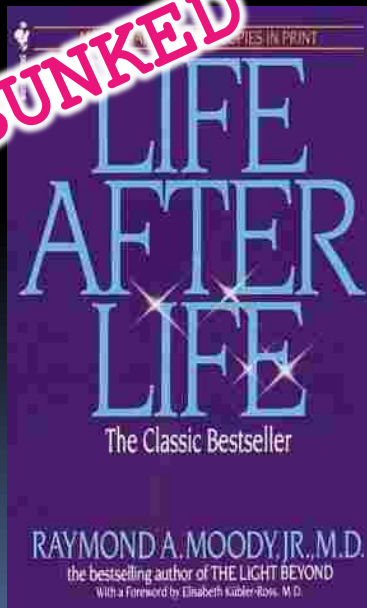
- Near Death Experiences (NDEs) are sometimes cited as evidence of an afterlife.
- However, NDEs are not proof that the mind survives bodily death. Contrary to all the anecdotal and sensationalistic claims, rigorous investigations turn up no credible evidence that consciousness survives bodily death.



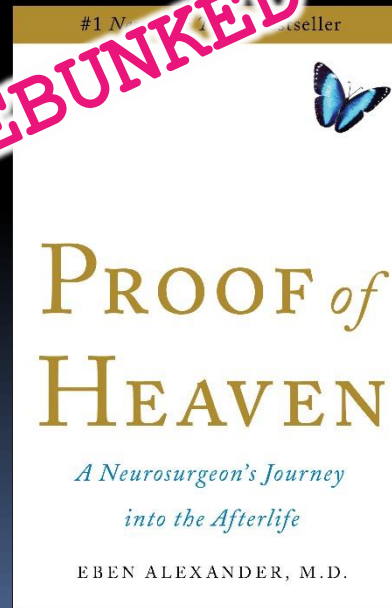
ON AFTERLIFE OPTIMISM₃

- Worse still, science provides hard evidence that afterlife visitations during NDEs are indeed private fantasies. Evidence from investigations indicate NDEs are psychological and neuropsychological in nature with culturally relative content.
- The culturally relative content: afterlife visitations are never experienced in anything other than the content of the claimant's own mythology or personal background (Christians never see Shiva; Hindus never see Jesus; atheists tend to see nothing, etc.)

DEBUNKED



DEBUNKED



- Despite outliers, most neuroscientists conclude that the survival of personal consciousness after bodily death is most likely an illusion; that NDEs are brought on by the power of imagination during the traumatic event of confronting mortality.

ON AFTERLIFE OPTIMISM₄

- If we are going to alleviate human suffering, especially regarding mortality, we cannot do so by engaging in what we deep down suspect is optimistic fantasy such as wishful or magical thinking about death.
- Belief in a utopian afterlife in which our human form is retained and perfected is a prime example of wishful thinking that induces cognitive dissonance—knowing it can't be true but clinging to belief in desperation.
- While many would like to believe in Heaven or a future Resurrection, the same believers usually struggle with cognitive dissonance because we all know that reality does not tend to *optimize*. Notions of afterlife utopias are implausible enough that even ardent believers tend to struggle with doubts, and hence need constant reassurance of their heavenly visions from their fellow “true believers”.
- Under critical scrutiny, such optimistic visions tend to crumble. The result is often bitterness. We would therefore be wise to avoid such superstitious forms of optimism. Besides, there are better ways to cope with the fact of death.

THE TROUBLE WITH OPTIMISM

- In sum, optimism tends to result in eventual disillusionment:
 - Optimal abilities are never achieved.
 - Optimal societies are never created.
 - Optimal afterlife visitations and myths are debunked.
- Better than optimism is having realistic expectations:
 - Plausible hope
 - Reasonable confidence

HOPE VERSUS OPTIMISM

- **Hope:** desire for a circumstance or outcome of a given quality.
- Hope is not optimism.
 - Hope may be based on rational grounds that a desire could be or will be met, along with lack of evidence that failure is likely or certain. Optimism, by contrast, expects a given desire to be met without rational grounds, and it maintains that belief despite compelling evidence of likely failure.
 - Hope is not necessarily *anticipation* or *expectation* of the best outcome, precisely because much is beyond our power to control. Optimism, on the other hand, blindly anticipates or expects the best outcome.
- Let our hopes be rational and realistic. If, for example, one is terminally ill, at least one can hope to face death with an admirable calm and perhaps even acceptance. The correct worldview keeps hope in the face of mortality realistic by enabling one to see death as of lesser importance to what one finds of ultimate value.

CONFIDENCE VERSUS OPTIMISM

- **Confidence:** trust in the reliability of a person or thing.
- Confidence is not optimism:
 - Confidence is based on observation of past performance; optimism is not necessarily based on any evidence other than uncorroborated testimony.
 - As with hope, those who have confidence do not necessarily expect the best *outcome*, simply because much is beyond anyone's power to control. Rather the confident expect their best *output*. Optimism, on the other hand, blindly believes that the best outcome is certain for those who try.

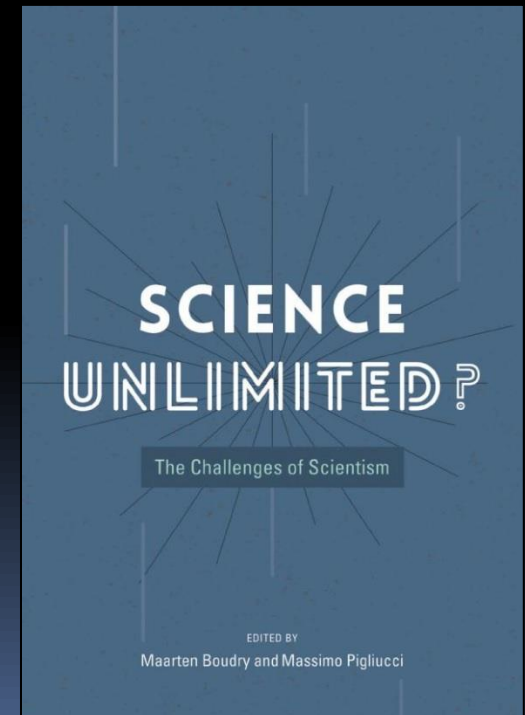
BEYOND OPTIMISM

- We need plausible hopes (those based on rational grounds) and a reasonable confidence—neither of which errs by turning into the overconfidence of optimism or optimistic superstition—wishful thinking or magical thinking.



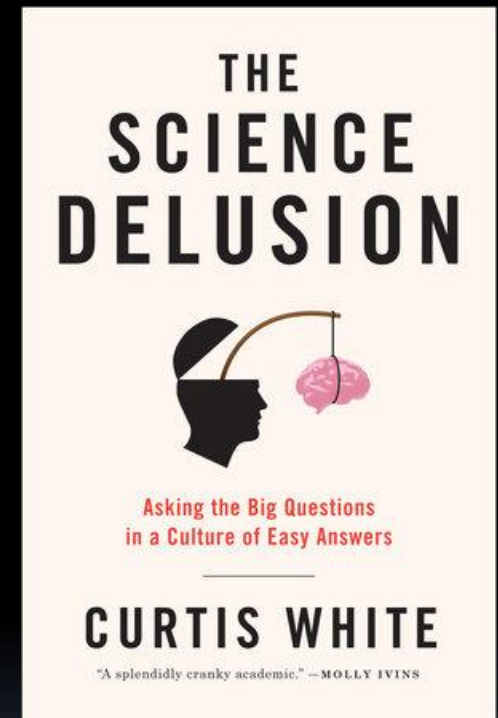
ERROR #4: SCIENTISM

- **Scientism:** the belief that—
 1. science alone reliably provides knowledge as to the truth, falsity, or vacuity of all other beliefs—all meaningful questions can either be answered by science or not at all.^[8]
 2. science is the only way knowledge can be acquired.^[9]
- Scientism, by this definition, is an *ideology*.^[10]
- Advocates of scientism, although rightfully impressed by scientific accomplishments, tend to consequently *overestimate* the significance of those accomplishments to the point of unwittingly *exaggerating* the success of science in answering philosophical questions and *hyping* the promise of scientific answers for humanity's existential questions. In short, scientism is the error of epistemic optimism.



THE POVERTY OF SCIENTISM

- Scientism is logically fallacious:
 - Scientism is by its own definition unable to be scientifically *known* to be true, for there is neither an *a priori* nor an *a posteriori* test to establish its truth—ergo, there is no scientific way to establish the truth of scientism.
 - Further, scientism attempts to explain everything by appeal to scientific observation and demonstration, yet scientism must provide value-laden *philosophical arguments* for its own justification, and such arguments are not themselves scientific. Hence, scientism cannot justify itself as anything other than a belief or ideology, which as such is *ascientific*.
- Scientism certainly appears to be false by both history and common experience: humanity knew plenty of things prior to the advent of science, and we continue to know things *ascientifically*: we know some things by private introspection, some by memory, some by acquaintance, etc. Not *all* knowledge is *scientific* knowledge.



THE LIMITS OF SCIENCE

- Science is valuable, for it expands human knowledge. But science has its limits. There are some questions about “Life, the Universe, and Everything”^[11] that science will never be able to definitively answer because not all meaningful questions have answers the truth values for which can be *known* (vice only believed).
- Since science cannot provide final answers to all meaningful questions and not all knowledge is scientific knowledge, the correct worldview cannot be one based on scientism.
- Certainly, we should have a worldview that is based on a *scientific* philosophy, but we should avoid one based on a *scientistic* philosophy. For that reason, we should be wary of certain forms of **humanism** which tend to be stridently scientistic.
- The right worldview is one that correctly discerns both the value of science and the limits of science.
- The right worldview is therefore a worldview that avoids the error of scientism.

AVOIDING THE ERRORS

■ **Conclusions:**

- Pessimism, optimism, superstition, and scientism are intellectual errors—blind alleys that prevent one from finding the right way(s) to alleviate the human condition.
- Pessimism results in self-defeating despair while optimism, superstition, and scientism are prone to disillusionment and even bitterness.
- The errors of pessimism, optimism, superstition, and scientism must be avoided if we are to find the right way to reduce human suffering and alleviate the human condition.
- alleviation of the human condition—reduction of emotional suffering from conflict, loneliness, and the concerns of mortality—is obtained through achieving a *plausible* hope and *reasonable* confidence.

- **The Way Ahead:** Seek the way to alleviate the human condition by adopting a perspective on life that avoids the four common errors.

**PART THREE:
ALLEVIATION**

Alleviation₁

- So far, we have seen that:
 - The human condition cannot be solved; it has no remedy.
 - However, the human condition can be alleviated.
 - Alleviation entails that the harms caused by impact with existential barriers to human flourishing can be prevented from getting worse and even reduced.
 - The common existential barriers are the three sources of suffering—conflict, loneliness, and mortality.
 - One can alleviate the suffering produced by conflict, loneliness, and mortality.
 - We can achieve this alleviation, at least in part, by improving our perspective on life.

Alleviation₂

- We have further seen how alleviation of the human condition can be achieved by a change of perspective:
 - Improving perspective on life entails becoming inspired with a hope and confidence by which one acts to alleviate the human condition.
 - Hope and confidence enable *resilience* when experiencing impact with existential barriers to flourishing and even *enthusiasm* for dealing with them.
 - Resilience and enthusiasm in turn reduce the harm of the existential barriers, thus alleviating the human condition even if not entirely curing it.
- Part of improving perspective entails adopting a better **worldview**.

Alleviation₃

- Recall that a worldview is a 'view' (interpretation) of the 'world' (domain of human existence and range of experience).
- The better worldviews are those that avoid superstition, pessimism, optimism, and scientism.
- The better worldviews are those through which one finds a plausible hope and reasonable confidence either for preventing avoidable suffering from impact with existential barriers—
 - conflict
 - loneliness
 - mortality—or for responding to with them with resilience if not also enthusiasm, thus reducing the harm of impact with them.

Alleviation₄

- Putting it all together, acquiring a worldview that offers one a plausible hope and reasonable confidence in alleviating the human condition means acquiring a worldview that gives to one a source of inspiration for—
 - **Resilience:** The ability to adapt to hardship.
 - The ability to refuse despair allows us to avoid making a temporary problem worse with incorrect emotional responses in the given situation.
 - The ability to remain calm and effectively reason toward the best solution helps us to alleviate the suffering at hand.
 - The ability to bounce back from adversity with renewed energy and determination enables us to change what we can for the better.
 - **Enthusiasm:** intense interest or excitement.
 - The ability to see opportunity despite setbacks.
 - The ability to see value even in small contributions.

Alleviation₅

- Once we have a worldview that avoids pessimism and allows for hope and confidence, we can interpret our circumstances in a more positive light:
 - Conflict can be seen as a test of character.
 - Loneliness can be seen as a condition endurable until it passes.
 - Mortality can be seen as a condition necessary for our deepest values to matter.
- We will have a way of interpreting circumstances that allows us to cultivate emotional resilience for dealing with life's problems and maintain enthusiasm for our projects, despite being impacted by existential barriers to flourishing.
- This way of seeing will therefore enable us to alleviate at least some of the suffering brought on by the human condition.

Alleviation₆

- However, hope must be tempered with plausible expectations in order to avoid the error of optimism.
- There have been exemplars in history offering positive perspectives on life, such as the founders of the world's religions, but their optimism was exaggerated:
 - Their perspectives helped to alleviate human suffering, but also left followers spiritually deluded.
 - Their perspectives were unrealistically optimistic (based on failed utopian thinking) and often based on the wrong goal.
 - As such, their perspectives have a long track record of disillusionment.
- *We need a more accurate worldview*—one that avoids optimistic superstitions while not sacrificing the power of a positive outlook.

Alleviation₇

- What we need is to realize the benefits of a worldview that does not indulge in optimism, superstition, and scientism—all of which only open one up to disillusionment.
- We must instead obtain a vision of existence that does not lead to a misplaced hope and confidence as have many preceding worldviews.
- Only such a worldview can help us alleviate our human condition (that is, insofar as suffering is caused by having the wrong perspective on life) without danger of disillusionment.
- To have such a worldview requires a break with mainstream thought.
- We will need a *new* worldview beyond religious superstitions and scientism, beyond both pessimism and blind optimism.

**PART FOUR:
ON BUILDING A NEW WORLDVIEW**

THE ROND PROJECT

- Every project has a 'vision' (outcome) that the project is designed to realize—to make a reality.
- To be successful in realizing the vision, the project requires a strategy for success.
- Every strategy must have ends or **goals** which must be achieved via specific **ways** (approaches) and **means** (resources) in order for the strategy to be successful in realizing the project's vision.
- The project behind this presentation is the **Rond Project**.
- The Rond Project therefore has a vision and a strategy—its own goal, way, and means—for realizing its vision.

THE VISION

- The Rond Project has a vision:
the human condition alleviated.
- Unfortunately, this vision can only be realized for individuals, not for the whole of humanity which is too diverse for achieving consensus on how to realize such a vision.
- The Rond Project is therefore a personal project, and its vision is a vision for any interested individual. To alleviate the human condition is, for the Rond Project, a vision for one's own human condition, not the human condition of everyone, everywhere.

THE GOAL

- The Rond Project has a *goal* for realizing its vision.
- The goal is simply this:

alleviate that part of the human condition improvable via the right perspective on life.

THE WAYS TO ACHIEVE THE GOAL

- There are various *ways* to achieve a project's goal and thereby realize its vision.
- The Rond Project's ways of achieving its goal of alleviation-via-perspective:
 1. First, use available means to *obtain the right perspective on life*—on our circumstances and on our existence.
 2. Then, *practice the perspective*.

THE MEANS TO FIND THE WAY

- The right perspective on life comes from having the most accurate worldview.
- The most accurate worldview, like a pair of spectacles through which to see the world clearly, needs to be constructed.
- We can construct that worldview via the following means—
 - **knowledge** from science and the history of philosophy and spirituality
 - **reason** for critical thinking regarding competing interpretations
 - **intuition** as recognition of patterns in facts and interpretations
 - **imagination** to create a new, more artistic way of viewing the world
- To then follow the principles of the resulting worldview is to put into practice the perspective on life it provides, which is what is needed to successfully alleviate the human condition.

THE ROND PROJECT

Use available means (knowledge, reason, intuition, imagination, etc.) to create the right worldview.

Obtain from that worldview the right perspective on life.

Receive from that perspective a source of plausible hope and reasonable confidence for facing life's challenges.

Practice the perspective, yielding resilience and retaining enthusiasm when impacting with existential barriers.

Achieve the goal: alleviation of that part of the human condition improvable by having the right perspective.

★ **Realize the vision:** the human condition alleviated.

TOWARD A WORLDVIEW

- To have the right perspective—a new way of seeing existence that both interprets life correctly and provides inspiration—we must use our available means to do the following:
 - Avoid the four common errors—
 - Superstition
 - Pessimism
 - Optimism
 - Scientism
 - Find a source of *plausible* hope and *reasonable* confidence in life.
- A plausible hope and reasonable confidence in life can give us resilience and even enthusiasm in times of trouble, which is what alleviates the human condition.
- The source we will seek for that plausible hope and reasonable confidence is the most *accurate and inspirational* worldview obtainable.

WORLDVIEW FROM PHILOSOPHY₁

- To provide the right hope and confidence for resilience and enthusiasm in times of trouble, a worldview must be *inspirational*.
- However, to avoid the aforesaid errors, the worldview must not just be inspirational but must also be *accurate* in its descriptions, explanations, and interpretations of the world.
- To be accurate—to be the best approximation to the truth of the way the world is—our worldview must be based on the most credible **philosophy** we can devise.
- What we need then, is the *most* credible philosophy that can provide the most accurate worldview, but one that also provides the needed inspiration to alleviate the human condition.

WORLDVIEW FROM PHILOSOPHY₂

- Philosophy originally meant *the love of wisdom* and philosophers were therefore *lovers of wisdom*. But today academic philosophers do not all agree on how philosophy should be defined. We will assume the following definitions—
 - **philosophy:**
 1. the attempt to express wisdom,
 2. a set or system of beliefs intended to be wise.
 - **philosopher:** one who, from practice, attempts to express wisdom.
(By this definition, a philosopher may be either expert or lay, professional or amateur, academic or nonacademic. Even so, not everyone is a philosopher.)
- Wisdom likewise has been given many definitions. Let wisdom be defined as—
 1. the ability to make good judgements from a correct discernment of nature,
 2. good judgement from such discernment.
- Hence, philosophers are those who, from practice, attempt to express good judgement according to the correct discernment of nature—both cosmic and human nature. Part of such practice is the attempt to propose a set or system of *wise beliefs*—what is often referred to as “a philosophy”.

WORLDVIEW FROM PHILOSOPHY₃

- Philosophers have pursued wisdom by attempting to obtain the correct discernment of nature—both cosmic and human—in the form of wise beliefs.
- To obtain wise beliefs about the world, philosophers in academia have divided the study of philosophy into various subdisciplines and specialties.
- Academic philosophy recognizes many subdisciplines, but there is no consensus on them.
- Generally, the list of subdisciplines in philosophy include the study of **logic**, **epistemology**, **metaphysics**, **ethics**, and **aesthetics** as well as other specialties.
- Of those subdisciplines, the most important for building an accurate worldview is typically thought to be epistemology or metaphysics.
- While epistemology and metaphysics are both certainly *crucial* for devising the most accurate worldview, aesthetics is just as important, for it is an **aesthetic** that shapes the conceptual framework of a philosophy's epistemology and metaphysics, as well as the inspirational power of the resulting worldview.

**PART FIVE:
THE ART OF A NEW WORLDVIEW**

ON AESTHETICS₁

- The conceptual framework of the new worldview's philosophy must be based on the right *aesthetic* for the worldview to have the needed inspirational power for coping with existential barriers and thereby alleviating the human condition.

- **Aesthetics:**
 - The term 'aesthetic' stems from the Latin for *perception* or *feeling*. (Hence, an anesthetic takes away feeling.)

 - Aesthetics, like physics, is a study or practice. Academically, aesthetics is the philosophical study of the **aesthetic experience** and its sources.

 - The aesthetic experience is fascination with any source of stimulus, whether pleasurable or painful.

 - Sources of aesthetic experience include both natural and artificial sources. Artificial sources of the aesthetic experience are **artifacts** (objects created by artists and artisans) specifically designed to stimulate the senses in a manner that fascinates. Such artifacts are called **works of art** or **artworks**.

ON AESTHETICS₂

- **Works of art** include not only images found in illustration, painting, photography, sculpture, and architecture, but also other forms of art such as crafts, fashion, literature, poetry, and performance arts such as music, singing, dance, plays and movies, ceremonies and rituals, and so on. Even philosophies, scientific theories, and mathematical formulas can be works of art.
- Works of art can also include natural objects such as stones, driftwood, the bodies of living organisms whether plant or animal as arranged in gardens and museums. Even a well-developed or beautified human body can be called a work of art. That is, provided such objects are treated as art.
- Something is a work of art if it is (at least informally) presented to an observer as a *candidate for aesthetic experience*.^[12]
- Effective works of art are those that produce the aesthetic experience in the target audience as intended by the artist. Conversely, an ineffective work of art does not produce the intended effect. (For example, a play intended to be a tragedy that nevertheless leaves its audience laughing is not an effective play... at least, not as a tragedy!)

ON AESTHETICS₃

- Aesthetics studies:
 - The aesthetic properties (beauty, sublimity, ugliness, etc.) of sources causing aesthetic experience, like works of art.
 - The feelings elicited in the aesthetic experience (for example, what it feels like to see something beautiful).
 - Conjectures about the sources themselves, such as hypotheses about what art is, what its function is, or what constitutes good art from bad art.
 - Even theories of art criticism can be included in the scope of aesthetics.
- The details delved into on most of these topics will be out of scope for the Rond Project.
- However, the project will focus on aspects of aesthetics *insofar* as they contribute to the worldview under development.

THE AESTHETICS FOR THE WORLDVIEW₁

- The worldview we need must include **artistic motifs** that provide an **aesthetic experience**.
- The desired aesthetic experience is one that inspires feelings of hope and confidence in life that enables resilience to cope with those elements of the human condition that cannot be changed and at least enough enthusiasm to change those that can.
- Our worldview must be an aesthetic worldview to have this inspirational power; the worldview we seek must provide an aesthetic experience that inspires us when faced with existential barriers.
- We know such aesthetics must exist because the world's religions provide such aesthetics. What is needed is aesthetics not based on superstitions.
- Fortunately, there is a realistic aesthetic capable of inspiration.

THE AESTHETICS FOR THE WORLDVIEW₂

- Even a worldview can be a work of art with its own aesthetic. In fact, it *must* be in order to have inspirational power—especially of the type we need, which is the power to cope with existential barriers.
- The type of aesthetic that inspires one for facing existential barriers is the aesthetic of a **spirituality**.
- But the 'spirituality' we need for our worldview cannot simply be that of any previous religion, for their spiritualities are all steeped in superstitions of the supernatural and paranormal.
- The kind of spirituality that our worldview needs for its inspirational power to alleviate impact with existential barriers is a *naturalistic spirituality*—one that eschews supernatural myth, miracle, magic, and mysticism.
- What our worldview needs is a *realistic spirituality*—one that is not one based on unrealistic optimism and scientific fantasies.

THE AESTHETICS FOR THE WORLDVIEW₃

- Let the term 'spirituality' be liberated from any supernatural and paranormal connotations. Spirituality can be defined naturalistically and realistically.
- Spirituality defined: *the art of inspiration and aspiration*.
 - **aspiration**: pursuit of some end or activity from a source of inspiration.
 - **inspiration**: the act or process of influencing to achieve some end.
- Inspiration among human beings occurs by the transmission of **affect**:
 - An **affect** is *an emotion or attitude transmissible from one individual or group to another*.^[13] Affect can be transmitted socially or even culturally such as via an aesthetic medium. For example, affect can be transmitted through works of art—including performance art (and not just music, dance, and theater but also athletics, charismatic speech, ceremony, celebration, and the like).
 - This kind of spirituality ("art of inspiration") is exhibited by leaders of all kinds—e.g., religious, philosophical, political, business, and military leaders; coaches; motivational speakers; and exemplars such as great performers. Many leaders inspire by the affect they transmit directly in person, or indirectly through artistry or artistic representations. This is true especially of figures long revered as "heroic".

THE AESTHETICS FOR THE WORLDVIEW₄

- The right aesthetic for the worldview we need is one that is 'spiritual' in the naturalistic sense—it is an aesthetic that through artistic representation inspires the right affect for hope and confidence, resilience and enthusiasm.
- Religions carry this kind of inspirational power because they are primarily *aesthetic*—both with respect to their use of symbolism and their ritual practices.



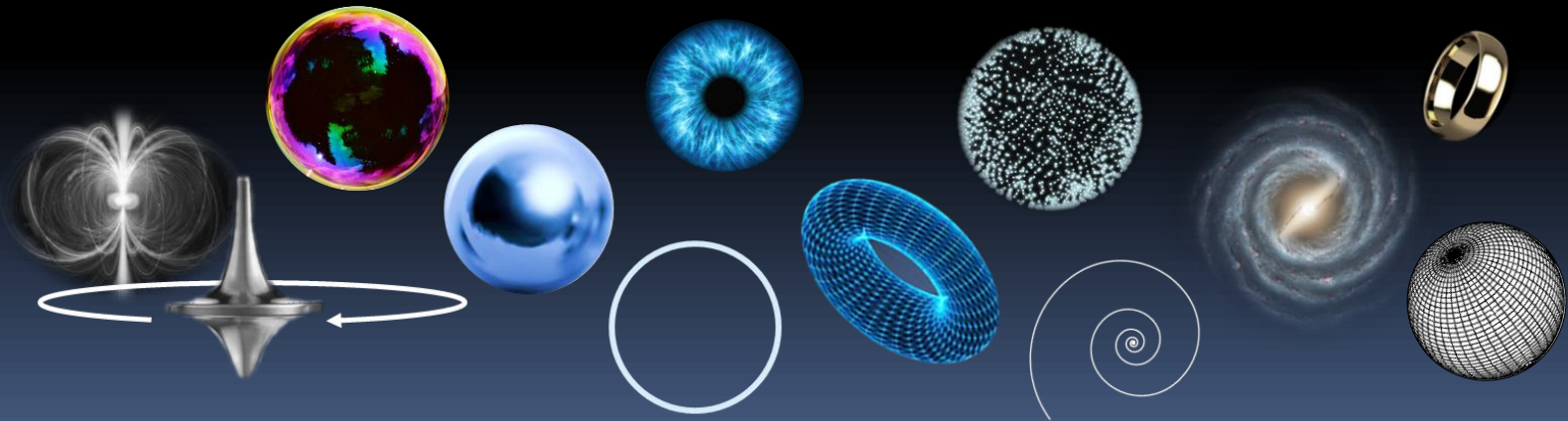
- But the kind of spiritual aesthetic we must avoid is the kind that inspires by superstition and unrealistic optimism. The spiritual aesthetic we need must instead be grounded and realistic—it must be based on a *credible* philosophy providing a source of *plausible* hope and *reasonable* confidence.

THE AESTHETICS FOR THE WORLDVIEW₅

- For the 'spirituality', or spiritual aesthetic, of the worldview to inspire while remaining philosophically credible, we need the philosophy assumed by that spirituality to not only be based on the same artistic motif but in a way that neither commits any of the aforesaid errors in judgement nor other epistemic blunders.
- What is needed is an artistic motif that can serve both for building the conceptual framework of the worldview's philosophy as well as the spiritual artwork intended to inspire hope and confidence for maintaining resilience and even enthusiasm in the face of the adversity brought about by existential barriers.
- Going back to philosophy's roots in ancient Greece, we find such an artistic motif in the works of Plato.
- According to Plato, the circle and the sphere are perfect shapes. Such geometry can serve as a basis for the artistic motif we need.
- Or, even more generally, *rondure* will serve as the artistic motif.

THE AESTHETICS FOR THE WORLDVIEW₆

- The right aesthetic is that which is based on a universal property found in both nature and art. One such property is *rondure*.
- Rondure (pronounced “ron-jer”) is a graceful, symmetrically curved form or symmetrically curved motion.
- Any symmetrical form of graceful curvature is an instance of rondure. Examples of rondure include shapes such as a circle, sphere, ellipse, torus, ring, loop, ambit, spiral, etc., and motions such as a torque, rotation, spin, gyrus, precession, orbit, and so forth.



THE AESTHETICS FOR THE WORLDVIEW₇

- Rondure will be the artistic motif assumed for devising the conceptual framework of the philosophy and spirituality of the worldview we seek.
 - Rondure will be the artistic motif foundational for proposing an **ontology** to explain the nature of the Existence and a *metaphysics* to explain the fundamental nature of the Universe.
 - Rondure will also play a foundational role in the worldview's **cosmology**, **phenomenology**, **philosophy of mind**, **philosophy of conduct**, and even *epistemology*.
 - Upon this rondure-based philosophy will be formulated a new spirituality for the worldview and that spirituality will also have rondure as its aesthetic motif.
 - The use of rondure in the spiritual art of the worldview is what will in turn provide the inspirational power for alleviating the human condition.

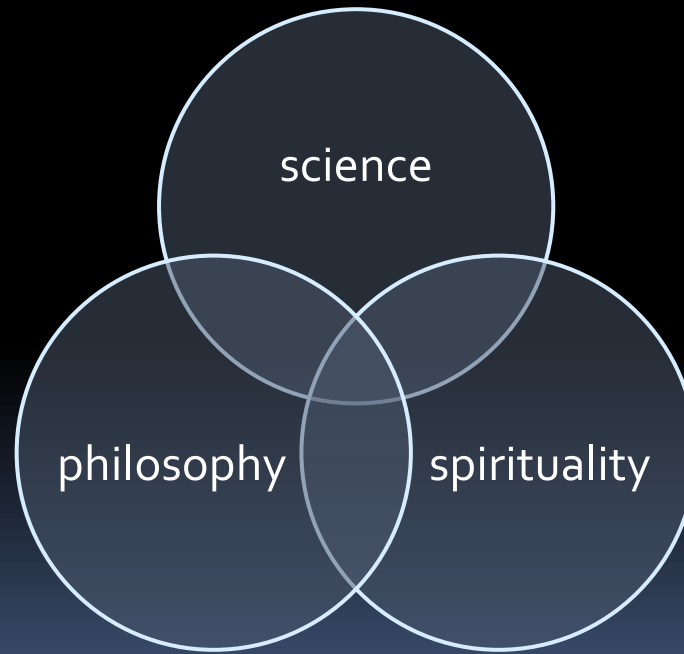
**PART SIX:
INTRODUCING ROND**

A WORLDVIEW BASED ON RONDURE

- Rondure will be the artistic motif serving as the basis for the conceptual framework of the philosophy and spirituality of the worldview we seek.
- For easy reference, we need a name for this worldview.
- Let the worldview be known as *Rond*—the name of the worldview being an abbreviation for the word ‘rondure’ but with a capital ‘R’. Given rondure as an artistic motif upon which the worldview is based, Rond seems a fitting name.
- As a worldview, Rond has not only a philosophy but also an associated spirituality. We can thus define Rond as not just a worldview but also a philosophical and spiritual devotion based on the rondure motif.
- Just as a Stoic is a devotee of Stoicism and an Epicurean is a devotee of Epicureanism, so too a *Rondian* is a devotee of Rond.

ROND AS A WORLDVIEW

- Rond is a worldview based on the rondure motif.
- We can begin using this motif in the form of circles for diagramming the core sources of belief that provide content to Rond as a worldview:



THE SCIENCE OF ROND

- Rond values scientific inquiry and eschews *pseudoscience*.
- However, Rond also rejects *scientism*. Rond is therefore not obligated to support all popular conjectures (speculations, hypotheses, or theories) in science simply because they have the current consensus in science.
- Rond contradicts mainstream scientific consensus *only when necessary* to either avoid committing one of the epistemic errors identified in Part Two or to avoid violating other epistemic standards.
- There are some currently popular scientific *conjectures* that do violate epistemic standards (such as the logical principles of non-contradiction and sufficient reason) and so these Rond must reject.
- However, Rond minimizes disagreement with the scientific consensus and takes care not to contradict established scientific *facts*, which are true statements confirmed by scientific observation or measurement.

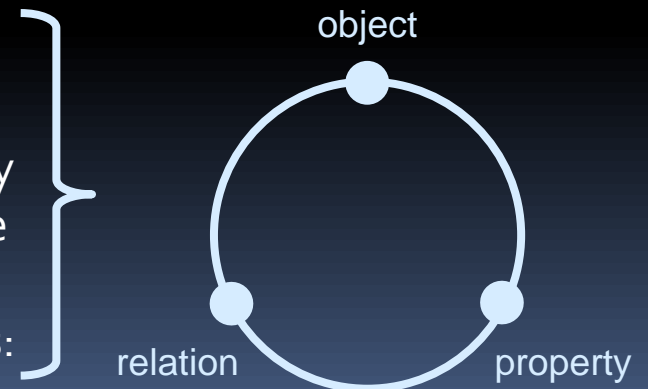
THE PHILOSOPHY OF ROND

- For Rond to be an adequately comprehensive worldview, it must have a philosophy covering a wide range of topics.
- The philosophy of Rond includes positions established from study of the following philosophical subdisciplines:
 - Ontology
 - Metaphysics
 - Cosmology
 - Phenomenology
 - Philosophy of Mind
 - Philosophy of Evolution
 - Philosophy of Conduct
 - Epistemology
- Rond's positions from each of the above subdisciplines of philosophy are based on another subdiscipline of philosophy—namely, *aesthetics*. It is from the aesthetics of Rond that the rondure motif shapes all the above.

RONDURE AND ONTOLOGY₁

- **Ontology** is...
 1. The study of being
 2. The study of existence
 3. The study of reality
 4. A scheme categorizing being or reality
 5. A categorization of beings or real things
- The ontology of Rond sees rondure not just as an artistic motif, but also as a *fundamental form* intrinsic to the *essence* of Existence. Rond assumes that graceful, symmetrically curved form—rondure—is the fundamental form underlying all Existence. Rondure is the basis for the ontology of Rond.

- What fundamentally exists is the **ontic ring** (an ontological expression of rondure) comprised of three categories of being, each of which is logically defined by, and ontologically contingent upon, the others, all together a logically and ontologically necessary whole. The ontic ring is symbolized thus:



RONDURE AND ONTOLOGY₂

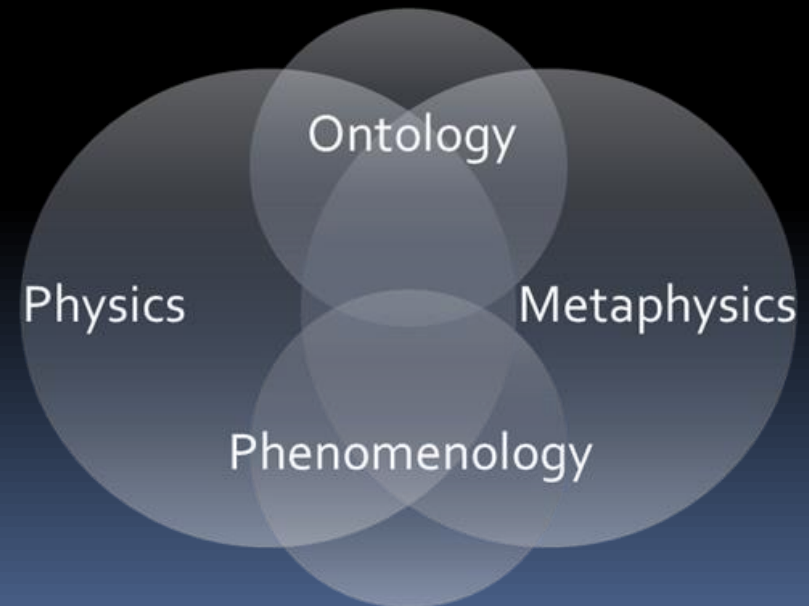
- The ontic ring is a self-consistent structure. Not only is 'relation' one of the fundamental categories of being, but also the ontic ring itself is the relation among those categories of being.
- The ontic ring is an instance of rondure since the fundamental categories of being exist together in a closed circle of contingent relations, the whole of which necessarily exists. That is why "there is something rather than nothing." The ontic ring's necessary existence implies that pure nothingness is an impossibility.
- Since the ontic ring as a whole necessarily exists and is the essence of the Universe's existence, so too does the Universe necessarily exist.
- From this basic ontology, Rond constructs a *metaphysics* that spells out exactly what objects, relations, and properties are fundamental and essential to reality and in what way they each exemplify an instance of rondure.

ONDURE AND METAPHYSICS₁

- **Metaphysics** is *not* synonymous with the study of the supernatural and paranormal, though that is how the word is popularly used, especially in New Age, New Thought, and Neo-Pagan communities.
- Metaphysics is a branch of philosophy.
- As such, metaphysics is the conceptual analysis of, and speculation about, the basic properties of reality—both physical and nonphysical.
- Metaphysics is also a field in which philosophy overlaps with science with respect to *subject matter*:
 - Both physics and metaphysics have the physical world as a subject of study.
 - Like physics, metaphysics studies physical properties such as space, time, motion, energy, etc.
 - However, there are differences between metaphysics and physics with regard to how they study the same physical properties. Metaphysics analyzes the concepts of such physical properties. Physics is about *measuring* the properties of the physical world.

ONDURE AND METAPHYSICS₂

- Metaphysics and physics both overlap in some of their subject matter.
- They also assume some of the same *ontological* and *phenomenological* concepts. (For example, concepts such as 'object' and 'observation'.)
- However, metaphysics and physics also diverge from these fields, and from each other, in terms of their subject matter.
- Some examples:
 - Physics measures the natural world; metaphysics analyzes what it means for the world to be natural.
 - Metaphysics may analyze the *concept* of motion, but the actual *measurement* of bodies in motion is left to physics.



RONDURE AND METAPHYSICS₃

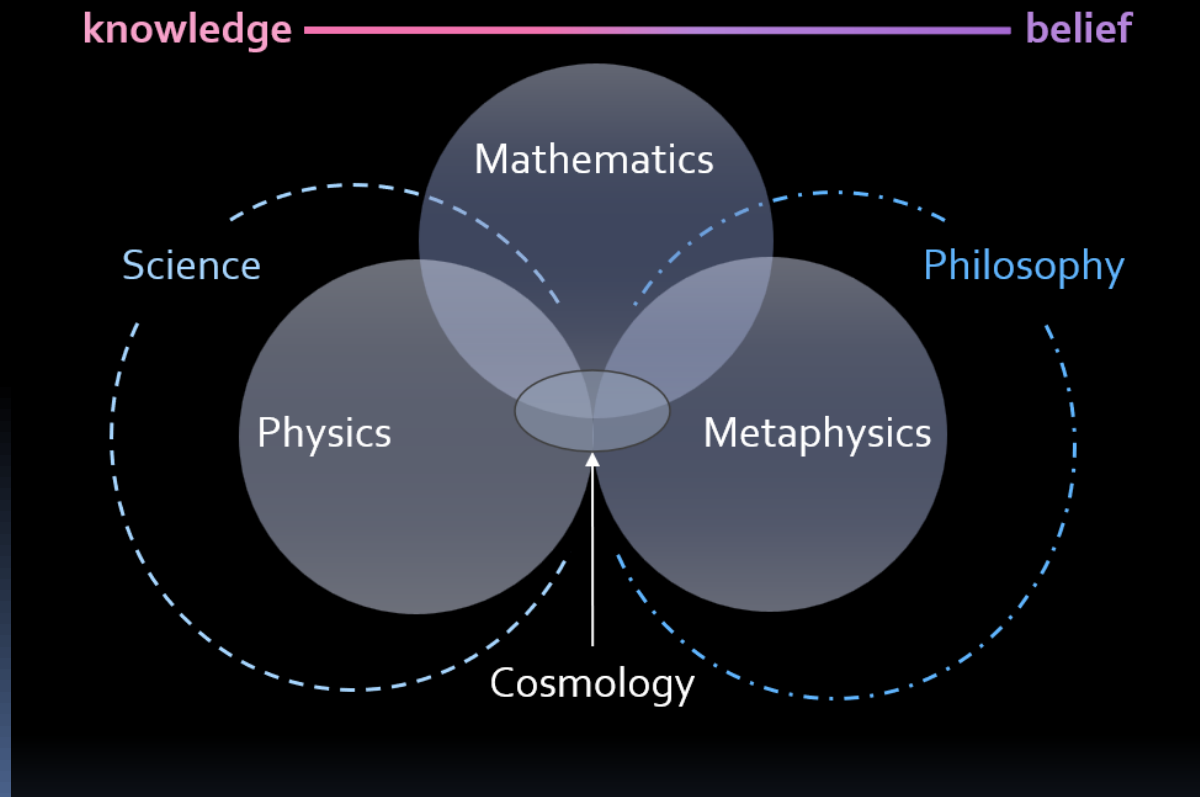
- Physics and metaphysics also share some *common approaches* to their subjects of study:
 - Both physics and metaphysics use conceptual or imaginary models for physical phenomena (some of which are mathematical).
 - Much of metaphysics is based on conceptual analysis. In contrast, physics is based on the application of mathematics. However, physics also engages in the analysis of concepts (e.g., concepts of space, time, matter, etc.) and metaphysics can include mathematical conjectures that are not scientifically testable.
 - Physics and metaphysics also both rely on logical arguments to support their respective conjectures about how the world works.

RONDURE AND METAPHYSICS₄

- In addition to diverging on certain subjects of study, physics and metaphysics also diverge on their potential to provide *knowledge* of the physical world:
 - Physics studies what is *knowable* about the physical world from empirical observations and tests.
 - Metaphysics, on the other hand, does not propose analyses and conjectures that can be empirically tested. So, metaphysics is not about what is (empirically) knowable. Rather, metaphysics is highly *speculative*: it studies *believable* analyses and speculations about the physical world, not what can in practice be known about the physical world (other than knowledge science and observation already provide on their own).
- Because metaphysics is primarily speculative, its statements about the world are generally beyond empirical test. That makes metaphysics a form of philosophy, even when the speculations are based on scientifically gathered data.
- Physics is, overall, more mathematical than metaphysics, but there are exceptions. Arguably, **cosmology**, though highly mathematical, is also highly metaphysical...

ONDURE AND METAPHYSICS₅

- Physics and metaphysics overlap in the subject matter of mathematics and cosmology.
- Although cosmology is commonly regarded as a branch of physics, cosmology is best considered to be a mix of physics and metaphysics—a mix of knowledge and rational belief—because there is much of cosmology that is beyond empirical testability.

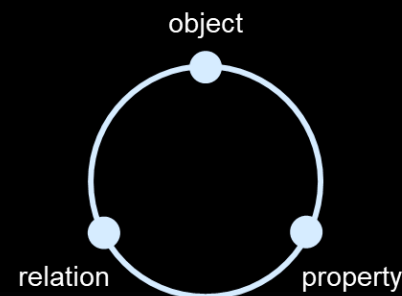


RONDURE AND METAPHYSICS₆

- As a worldview, the philosophy of Rond includes a metaphysics and a cosmology.
- The metaphysics of Rond is based on the ontology of Rond.
- The metaphysics of Rond therefore assumes the ontic ring, which is as an instance of the rondure motif applied to ontology.

- The ontic ring's three fundamental categories of being:

- **object**
- **property**
- **relation**

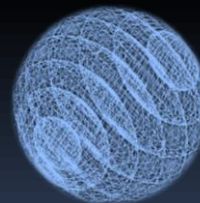


- The metaphysics of Rond proposes a set of essential *objects*, *properties*, and *relations* making up the Universe.
- Each of those essential objects have essential properties and relations, with those essential properties having essential objects and relations, and the essential relations having essential objects and properties.

RONDURE AND METAPHYSICS₇

- One of the ontic ring's categories is *object*.
- Physical particles are objects. But no physical particle that is fundamental as a *particle* is necessarily fundamental as an *object*. In other words, all fundamental physical particles (for example, photons and electrons) are only 'fundamental' in the sense that they are not composed of more energy-exchanging *particles*.
- However, in the metaphysics of Rond, all fundamental particles are composed of smaller *objects* which are not themselves particles as physicists know them.
- These objects, called **holons**,^[14] exhibit a type of rondure since each holon is shaped as a **hypersphere**—a sphere with more than three spatial dimensions.^[15]

A gridwork of lines (like those marking the surface of a globe) are used for providing a schematic of a 3D cross section of a 4D hypersphere>>



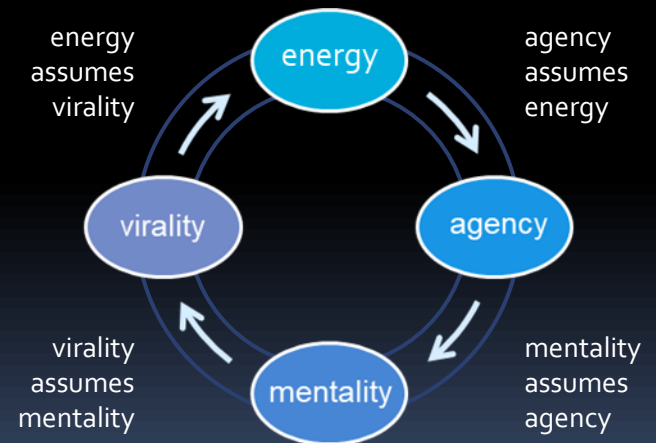
- According to Rond, all material bodies are on the smallest scale composed of holons. So, every 'fundamental' physical particle is composed of holons.

RONDURE AND METAPHYSICS₈

- Another of the ontic ring's categories is *property*.
- In the metaphysics of Rond, the holons have essential properties.
- One essential property of holons exhibits rondure: namely, their hyperspherical shape. Two more of their essential properties are **ability** and **activity**.
- Holons provide the fundamental physical particles they compose with at least four essential *abilities*, each associated with a kind of *activity*:

- **energy**: ability to move
- **agency**: ability to behave
- **mentality**: ability to control
- **virality**: ability to influence

- These abilities form a loop of contingent *relations* with one another, altogether comprising a necessarily existing whole.



The Ability Loop

- The ability loop is itself another instance of rondure.

ONDURE AND METAPHYSICS₉

- The concepts comprising the *ontology* of Rond are assumed by the *metaphysics* of Rond, the concepts of which are in turn assumed by the *cosmology* of Rond.
- For example:
 - The *ontology* of Rond proposes rondure is the form upon which all others owe their existence. The ontic ring is an example of rondure—a ring of fundamental essences, each contingent on the others but forming a necessary whole.
 - The *metaphysics* of Rond assumes that rondure therefore characterizes the basic essences—the *objects, properties, and relations*—that make up physical reality. In the metaphysics of Rond, the ‘fundamental’ physical objects are hyperspherical *holons* and two of their essential properties are *ability* and *activity*. The property of ability is instantiated as the four essential abilities of the ability loop which are essential properties of all fundamental physical particles and some of the bodies they compose.
 - Moreover, the holons further exemplify rondure in how they *relate* to one another over space and time on a *cosmological* scale...

RONDURE AND COSMOLOGY₁

- The metaphysics of Rond extends to the study of the world's fundamental physical properties (such as space, time, and motion) as instances of rondure.
- The Rond Cosmology regards both space and time as instances of rondure—space and time each *loop back on themselves*, making the Universe a closed system in both its expanse and its duration. Precisely because space and time are such as to render the Universe closed rather than open, *neither space nor time can be infinite*.



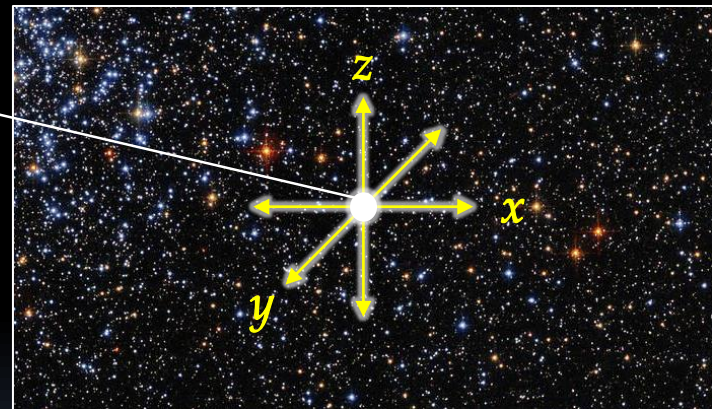
- Assuming a metaphysics based on the closed geometry of rondure, Rond proposes that both space and time are **finite** despite the vastness and perpetuity of the Universe. Though the sequence of all events loops back on itself, each event in time nevertheless happens *once and only once*, just as each location in space remains unique despite space having a finite geometry.
- The Universe is a necessarily-existing, self-contained, self-regulating entity.

RONDURE AND COSMOLOGY₂

- Though the Universe is spatially finite, that does not mean it must have an edge or border. Einstein argued as much, proposing that the Universe is shaped as a hypersphere of four spatial dimensions.^[16] Travelling in a straight line far and long enough in any direction without turning would return one to the starting point, just like circumnavigating the surface of a planet. The Universe is **finite-unbounded**.



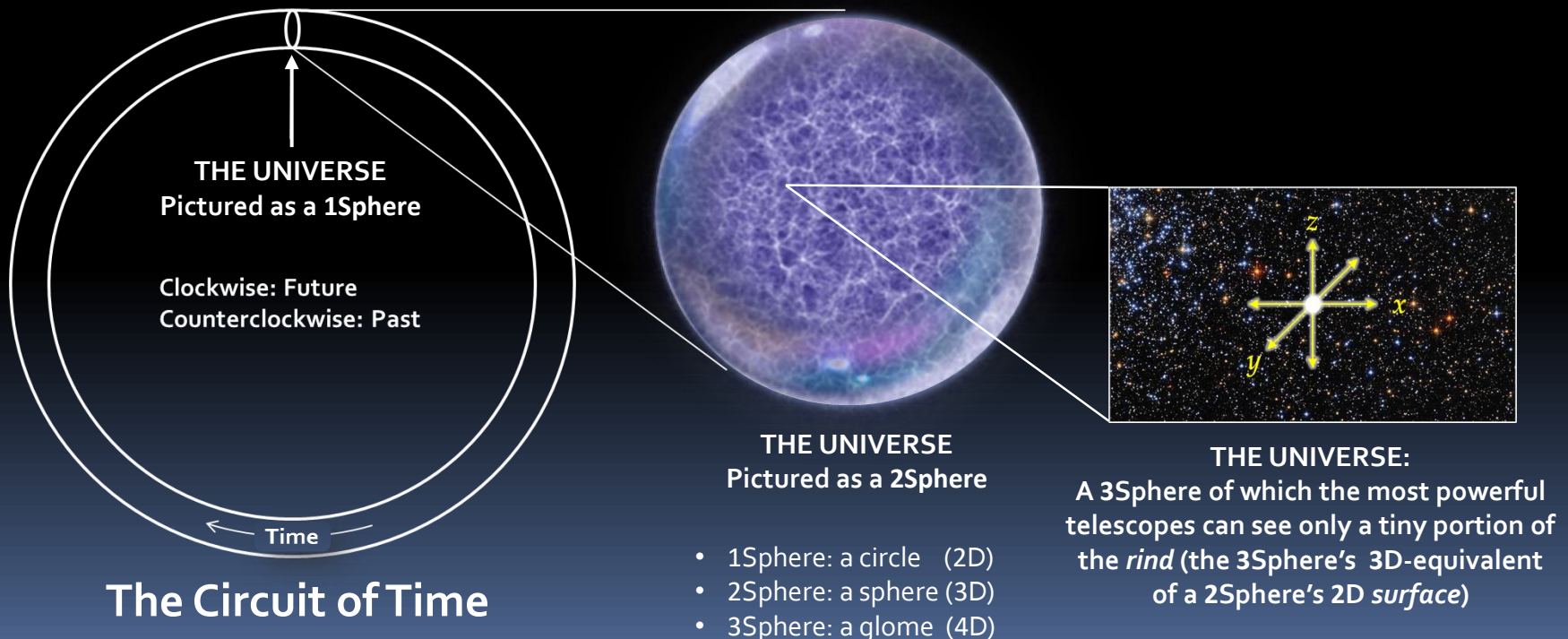
The Alcubierre Drive Starship.^[17] In principle, it could circumnavigate the Universe—that is, return to its starting point by following a straight line in any direction without turning. In actual practice this is impossible since nothing can exceed the speed of light—the starship is a product of hard science fiction.



- Rond agrees with Einstein that the Universe, on its largest of scale, is a **glome**—a 4D hypersphere. Our best telescopes can survey only a tiny portion of the Universe's rind (the 3D 'surface' of the glome),^[18] which is why the Universe looks "flat" to astronomers.

RONDURE AND COSMOLOGY₃

- According to the metaphysics of Rond, the nature of time can be elucidated by the concept of rondure just as can be the nature of space.
- Another form of rondure is a loop of activity, such as a circuit.
- Rond holds that the whole of time comprises a **temporal circuit**—a closed loop (vice spiral) of events, the future curving back to form the events of the past. ^[19]



RONDURE AND COSMOLOGY₄

- The details of Rond's cosmology can be made consistent with the known astrophysical facts.
- Scientific cosmology is presently dominated by the **Big Bang Theory** and the **Concordance Cosmology**. However, a minority of cosmologists support lesser-known cosmological models. Some of those models, such as **cyclic cosmologies**, are loosely consistent with the cosmology of Rond.^[20]
- In the **Rond Cosmology**, each iteration of a *cosmic cycle* is unique—events do not repeat exactly. Moreover, any cosmic cycles are simply part of the Universe's overall temporal circuit—the *closed loop* of all events, which is not the same as an open-ended spiral of repeating events.
- Hence, despite the finitude of time, the temporal circuit ensures there is no need for the thermodynamic pessimism of mainstream physical theory.
- Further details of the Rond Cosmology will be presented in a future work...

RONDURE AND PHENOMENOLOGY

- As a worldview, the philosophy of Rond includes a phenomenology.
- **Phenomenology** is *the study of phenomena*.
- There are two versions of phenomenology—philosophical and scientific—because there are two different meanings of **phenomenon**:
 1. **philosophical**: a phenomenon is the experience or appearance of something (as opposed to its reality or lack thereof).
 2. **scientific**: a phenomenon is that which makes a given experience or appearance possible. (*This usage of the term 'phenomenon' usually applies to that which a scientist deems noteworthy or in need of an explanation.*)
- Rond is based on the artistic motif of rondure; ergo, so is Rond's phenomenology.
- Rondure can be a useful motif for identifying phenomena (in the scientific sense of the term) that explain our ability to experience the world. For instance, the phenomenon that makes any given experience possible is a set of **mental feedback loops**, with feedback loops being instances of rondure.

RONDURE AND PHILOSOPHY OF MIND₁

- Mentality, defined only as *the ability to control* in the sense of regulating or directing, is an intrinsic property of all physical objects exhibiting **teleological behavior**. Arguably, even fundamental physical particles (e.g., photons) exhibit mentality by this definition. (However, that does not mean a particle has a **mind**.)
- Mentality is not synonymous with mind. Mentality is also not **consciousness**. Rather, mind and consciousness **emerge** from integrated *mental interactions* among entities with mentality, like a harmony emerging from melodies.
- Recall that *holons* make up all material bodies. Holons do not have minds and are not conscious. However, holons, as the basic constituents of matter, have the most rudimentary form of mentality—they control the ability to move (energy) and the ability to behave (agency) of physical bodies. Together, these abilities in holons form the dispositions that manifest as the natural regularities described by “laws” of physics and chemistry to which all material beings must conform.
- As holons make up all material bodies, so too from the integrated mental interactions of the bodies they compose do more complex forms of mentality emerge in evolution—such as the mental abilities of perception, experience, awareness, and consciousness.

RONDURE AND PHILOSOPHY OF MIND₂

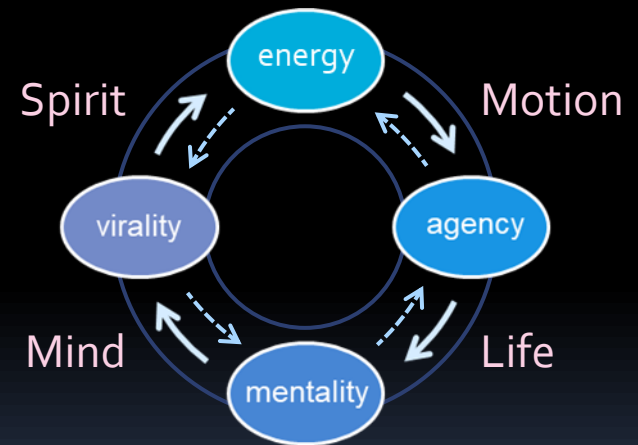
- **Self-consciousness** (i.e., consciousness of oneself *as* a self) is an ability emergent from the conscious mental interactions of the many sub-mentalities in various parts of a brain.
- Self-consciousness is another instance of rondure because self-consciousness is a feedback loop—a rondure—of conscious mental activity.
- Rondure is thus again a useful artistic motif for explanation, even in the philosophy of mind.
- Rondure, in the form of feedback loops, can be drawn upon for explaining how consciousness emerges from mental feedback loops and how self-consciousness emerges from feedback loops of consciousness.

RONDURE AND PHILOSOPHY OF MIND₃

- Recall that the rondure motif forms the basis for a cosmological model of time as a temporal circuit.
- Recall also that rondure is exemplified as spherical holons that exist throughout the circuit of time.
- Since holons are entities also endowed with mentality as a fundamental ability, and holons exist all through the temporal circuit, then the life of the Universe must be a temporal circuit of mental actions as well as of physical reactions.
- The life the Universe is a succession of material bodies endowed with mentality—all around the temporal circuit.
- The Universe exemplifies a rondure of mentality via its temporal circuit.
- Mentality, being essential to the Universe, is part of what drives evolution.

RONDURE AND PHILOSOPHY OF EVOLUTION₁

- The Rond interpretation of evolution is based on both the rondure of the ability loop and rondures in the form of the various **causal feedback loops** involved in the evolutionary process.
 - Feedback loops of *energy* and *agency* evolve the powers of *motion* held by physical objects.
 - Feedback loops of *agency* and *mentality* evolve the Universe's diversity of *life*.
 - Feedback loops of *mentality* and *virality* evolve *mind* and mental capabilities.
 - Feedback loops of *virality* and *energy* evolve *spirit** over populations, to include the evolution of societies and cultures.



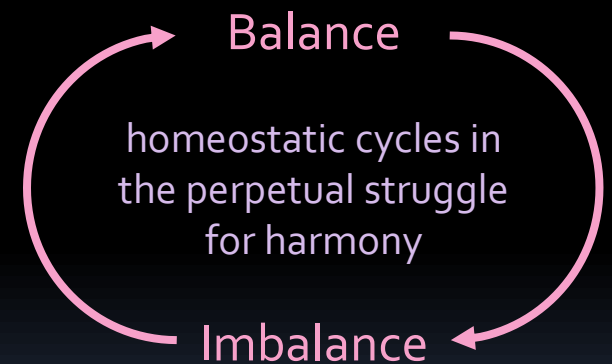
*The term 'spirit' has a specialized meaning in this context. See the section on Rondure and Spirituality.

RONDURE AND PHILOSOPHY OF EVOLUTION₂

- On biological evolution: the ability loop's essential abilities 'agency' and 'mentality' feedback on one another to manifest the goal-directed behavior of organisms and the disposition of nature known as biological evolution.
 - Mentality plays a role in shaping variation and differential survival—there is thus an inherent **teleology** in nature. However, evolution is not a **closed teleology** pursued for some preestablished end but rather an **open teleology** which has no final state; there is no such thing as completing evolution.
 - While teleology is anathema to mainstream scientific paradigms, Rond holds teleology to be vital for sufficiently explaining the *functionality* of organs and the behavior of molecular-based life forms.
 - Rond rejects **Intelligent Design**, a tacitly theistic philosophy which proposes the existence of an intelligent agent, *external* to the world, who designed or engineered the biosphere to evolve life.
 - Rond sees the evolution of organic functions as resulting from both chemical accidents *and* the teleology of microbes *internal* to the biosphere. The biosphere is “designed” like a city is designed—from constituent agents following their own purposes in reaction to change, building from the inside out.

RONDURE AND PHILOSOPHY OF EVOLUTION₃

- Schopenhauer proposed that the Universe operates by a blind *will to life*; [21]
Nietzsche proposed that the Universe operates by an irrational *will to power*. [22]
According to Rond, the Universe operates by a non-conscious **will to harmony**. [23]
- The Universe's will to harmony is an instance of rondure in that the will to harmony shapes time as a circuit—a rondure. Consequently, the Universe's will to harmony never ends in an ideal state; harmonies simply change around the temporal circuit.
- The Universe's will to harmony is also an instance of rondure in that it is instantiated as a self-organizing, causal feedback loop of recycling energy: a cosmological version of **homeostasis**.
- Hence, in its struggle for harmony, the Universe maintains its own life, which is responsible for the circuit of time.
- Evolution also occurs by the rondure of this cosmical will to harmony—worlds evolve life forms all around the temporal circuit. Moreover, the forementioned feedback loops of ability evolve such biospheres—further instances of rondure.



RONDURE AND PHILOSOPHY OF CONDUCT₁

- Rond has a *philosophy of conduct* that includes both an **axiology** (a theory of value) and an **ethics** (a theory and system of conduct based on codes of responsibility) covering—
 - moral philosophy
 - legal philosophy
 - political philosophy
- The ethics of Rond includes a particular theory of **metaethics** that explicates morality, legality, and politics in terms of the rondure motif and the will to harmony.
- The **normative ethics** of Rond applies the will to harmony concept as a means of determining correct from incorrect moral, legal, and political conduct for individuals and populations.
- The following is just a glimpse of Rond's philosophy of conduct...

ONDURE AND PHILOSOPHY OF CONDUCT₂

- The **axiology** of Rond supports alleviation to the human condition:
 - Recall that to alleviate one's human condition requires improving one's circumstances and one's perspective. Perspective is within our scope.
 - Improving perspective is accomplished by—
 - obtaining from the right worldview the right perspective on life,
 - adopting from that perspective the worldview's values, and
 - practicing the perspective by striving to live according to those values.
 - What values *should* we live by? If the most accurate worldview is Rond, then one should live by the values of Rond. The cardinal values of Rond are—
 - wisdom
 - meaning
 - harmony
- The wise live a meaningful life—one lived in alignment with the Universe's 'will to harmony'. To live by such is to harmonize one's way of life, which entails living ethically. To harmonize one's way of life reduces instances of unnecessary social conflict. That in turn alleviates suffering brought about by unnecessary social conflicts—a goal of ethics.

RONDURE AND PHILOSOPHY OF CONDUCT₃

- The **metaethics** of Rond is based on rondure.
- Rondure is both an artistic motif and a pattern in nature. As a pattern in nature, rondure can be both constructive and destructive. Tornadoes, cyclones, and hurricanes are rondures, and as such they are sources of destruction. But then, planetary orbits, stellar accretion disks, and galactic rotations are also rondures but are sources of construction.
- The Universe manifests rondures as cycles of order overcoming chaos, and cycles of good overcoming evil. However, good never prevails forever over evil. Likewise, neither does evil prevail forever over good. The temporal circuit is a closed loop of cycling good and evil.
- Rondure also instantiates as *feedback loops of social conduct*. These social feedback loops exist not only in the form of good acts inspiring more good acts but also in the form of evil acts inspiring further evil acts. Rondure thus underpins all evil as well as all the good in the Universe.

ONDURE AND PHILOSOPHY OF CONDUCT₄

- The presence of evil in the Universe is nevertheless consistent with the notion that the Universe operates by a cosmic 'will to harmony', for organisms and populations have competing ideas about what harmony looks like and how it should be achieved—these differences of ideas, and ideologies, fuel persistent conflict as much as social progress.
- Part of human nature is our animal disposition to err in judgement as to what will bring interpersonal harmony. Moreover, we all too often err in judging between competing visions of a broader social harmony.
- Still, some notions of harmony are certainly more correct than others:
 - Conduct that results in harmony for oneself or one's inner circle at the expense of discord with others is certainly not as harmonious as conduct that results in no discord at all.
 - Ethical systems can therefore be judged by how harmonious they are, both internally and externally.

RONDURE AND PHILOSOPHY OF CONDUCT₅

- Rond evaluates conduct and systems of conduct by their will to harmony.



Increasing Harmony
Preferred Conduct

Communing over collaborating,
Collaborating over accepting,
Accepting over tolerating,
Tolerating over avoiding,
Avoiding over checking,
Checking over harming,
Harming minimally.

- Rond recognizes that the preferred conduct is not always the right conduct.
- Sometimes choosing a lesser harmony in the near term is necessary for avoiding even greater disharmony in the long term.

For example, arguing against rival worldviews (to "check" them) may be necessary to warn others away from mistaken commitments.
- It is unethical to *unnecessarily* choose an unconsented, lesser harmony (or greater conflict).

- Those who are better at judging which ethical system will bring the greater harmony, and who conduct themselves accordingly, are those better at living up to the 'meaning of life' intrinsic to the Universe—the will to harmony.

RONDURE AND SPIRITUALITY₁

- Harmonious conduct does not come easy in a world of competing interests. To conduct oneself harmoniously (i.e., in a manner that takes care to avoid unnecessary conflict) requires **motivation**. That is where spirituality comes in. Spirituality is *the art of inspiration*. Inspiration provides motivation for conduct, including harmonious conduct. Spirituality can inspire harmonious conduct.
- According to the above definition of spirituality, every worldview, every philosophy, every religion, every political and legal system, every institution and establishment—be it one of government, education, business, industry, sport, entertainment, or any other organized group of people—uses a spirituality (explicitly or implicitly) to inspire the conduct of members, whether such conduct is harmonious or otherwise.
- Some spiritualities are rudimentary, others well-developed, and still others robust and enduring. As of this presentation, the spirituality of Rond is undergoing its initial formation and so is not yet mature. Consequently, the inspirational ability of Rond is weak at this point. However, the spirituality of Rond holds much promise.
- What follows is a preliminary overview of Rondian spirituality...

RONDURE AND SPIRITUALITY₂

- The spirituality of Rond assumes the existence of **soul** and **spirit**.
- Unlike other spiritualities, however, Rond views neither soul nor spirit as supernatural or paranormal. Soul and spirit are natural properties:
 - A **soul** is an individual's *will to harmony*. That is, the soul is the individual's mental ability to pursue goals with harmonious behavior, including—
 - *intrapersonal* behavior (between the aspects of one's own self)
 - *interpersonal* behavior (between self and other(s); also, between groups)
 - *extrapersonal* behavior (between self/group and other forms of life)

By this definition, to have a strong soul is to have a strong will to harmony; whereas to have a weak soul is to have a weak will to harmony.

- The **spirit** of an individual is their *viral intensity*, which means spirit is both—
 - the degree one is able to influence others (such as via the transmission of affect)
 - the degree one is able to be influenced by others (such as due to receiving another's transmitted affect through witnessing their charisma, esteemed actions, admired reputation, honored memory or legacy, etc.)

RONDURE AND SPIRITUALITY₃

- The Universe is *immortal*, with the whole of its life being the temporal circuit.
- All material beings within the Universe are *mortal*.
- Hence, as material beings, all humans are mortal.
- Since mind depends on body (e.g., the human mind depends on the brain for its existence), and the body is mortal, then the mind is mortal. And since the soul and spirit depend on the mind, then *the soul and spirit are mortal*.
- As a caveat, one's spirit can, albeit temporarily, continue to exist after one's bodily death...but only so long as others retain and pass on one's memory in the form of narratives or artifacts that bear one's affect to influence others. Being so contingent, no spirit survives for all time.
- Even so, Rond holds that one need not view the soul and spirit as *immortal* in order to obtain from Rondian spirituality the inspiration needed to squarely face and cope with the harms of mortality itself, and thereby to alleviate that aspect of the human condition.

RONDURE AND SPIRITUALITY₄

- Rondian spirituality is, in part, about inspiring *hope and confidence in the soul's ability* to enable one to deal with existential barriers, such as the harms of mortality:
 - **Disappointment about the uncertain limit to life:**
Rond sees mortality as providing us the freedom to regard something other than the continuation of our lives as having **greatest intrinsic value**. The quality of the soul, just as it is *now*, in the present moment, is what is worth even more than living on. *The quality of the soul, at each present moment, is of greatest intrinsic value.*
 - **Fear or dread of one's own death:**
Rond sees death itself (vice the dying process) as nothing to fear or dread. Death is not the experience of nothing. Rather, death the end of all experience. Without offering something to experience, death inflicts no harm. "Where death is, I am not. Where I am, death is not." [24] As for the dying process, while for some of us it will be a process of suffering, that too shall pass. So let us keep confidence in our soul to bear it.
 - **Grief over the loss of loved ones:**
Rond sees grief itself as a good, for it expresses just how much the deceased were loved—their intrinsic value. But grief should eventually pass, for the deceased are in no pain and one should not allow grief to corrupt one's soul with despair.

RONDURE AND SPIRITUALITY₅

- Just as Rond's spirituality is intended to inspire hope and confidence in the ability of one's soul for coping with the harms of mortality, so too Rond's spirituality is intended for the same in alleviating the harms of the other existential barriers:
 - Conflict
 - Pain of Self Against Nature
 - Pain of Self Against Others
 - Pain of Self Against Self
 - Loneliness
 - Sadness Over Isolation
 - Sadness Over Exclusion
- The soul has the ability to effectively cope with these existential barriers.
- The soul does not have "unlimited potential" as some motivational speakers advertise, but it doesn't need to have such. It just needs to be good enough for coping with the existential barriers and for thereby obtaining *alleviation* from the suffering they bring. Exceeding this expectation is surplus happiness.

RONDURE AND SPIRITUALITY₆

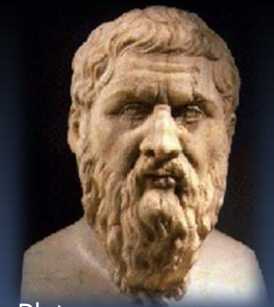
- To cope effectively with existential barriers and alleviate one's human condition requires one to practice ethical conduct.
- Having a habit of ethical conduct is what is meant by having *good character*.
 - Good character need only be *good-enough* character: it's less about attaining **virtue** (though having such is certainly to be praised) and more about reducing **vice**—*both psychological vices and social vices*.
 - **Psychological vices** include **intellectual vices** and **emotional vices** that increase conflicts between one's own values. The psychological vices are the drivers of the social vices.
 - **Social vices** are vices that have a harmful impact on social relationships. Social vices run from those causing lesser harm, such as uncivil coldness, to those causing greater harm, such as unwarranted hostility.
- It is not easy to reduce our vices, even when we know it helps for coping with existential barriers and alleviating our human condition. Reducing vice, building good character, requires a source of *motivation*.

RONDURE AND SPIRITUALITY₇

- What motivates human beings to reduce their psychological and social vices is the realization that indulging those vices is no longer beneficial but instead has become self-destructive—or at least their consequences are too painful to ignore.
- Painful consequences of social vice include (but are not limited to)—
 - Broken relationships
 - Stricken conscience
- In addition to painful consequences, human beings are also motivated to reduce their vices from sources of *inspiration* to do so. Inspiration typically comes from two overlapping sources: **exemplars** (e.g., role models) and spirituality.
- We will focus on spirituality as a source of inspiration for reducing psychological and social vices (i.e., building good character).
- Spirituality often provides inspiration through effective artistic expression.
- Rond has a spirituality of the artistic kind, intended to inspire reduction of vices.

RONDURE AND SPIRITUALITY₈

- Rondian spirituality offers an artistic image of the soul along with a technique of using that image as a source of inspiration for developing the strength of soul needed to reduce psychological and social vices (i.e., improve character).
- Improving character is part of what one needs in order to effectively cope with existential barriers and thus to alleviate one's human condition. Spiritual art of the soul can inspire that character building and so lead one in the direction of success.
- Regarding which artistic image of the soul can provide such inspiration, one such example dates back at least to the ancient Greek philosopher Plato (427–347 BCE), and possibly to Empedocles (494–434 BCE).
- In the *Timaeus*, Plato says the soul is in the shape of a sphere.
- The sphere is a form of rondure.
- In Rond's spiritual art, the sphere can come alive for inspiration.



Plato

RONDURE AND SPIRITUALITY₉

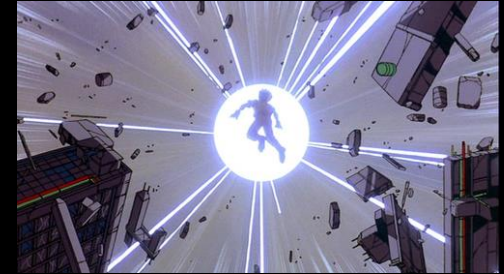
- Plato's depiction of the soul has inspired artists, science fiction authors, and pseudoscientists to portray souls and minds as spheres of light.



Star Trek
(Return to Tomorrow)



The Martian Chronicles



Akira



Babylon 5
(Soul Hunter)



'Spirit Photography'
Pseudoscience



Kusama's Infinity Mirrored Room,
Artwork



Lifeforce

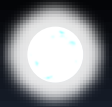
RONDURE AND SPIRITUALITY₁₀

- Plato meant it literally when he said the soul is a sphere, but we can ignore such mythology. The soul is not literally a sphere.
- A real soul has no shape, no size, and no color because a soul is simply one's will to harmony—the aspect of one's mind enabling one to engage harmoniously with self, with others, and with the wider world.
- However, we can *symbolize* the soul as a sphere if we so desire.

- Just as an idea is sometimes symbolized by an icon such as a light bulb...



...so too the soul can be symbolized by an icon such as a sphere of light:



- Since the soul is often depicted as a sphere of light, and the sphere is a form of rondure, so too a sphere of light is an appropriate symbol for the soul in the spirituality of Rond.

RONDURE AND SPIRITUALITY₁₁

- The *quality* of a soul can be further captured with this iconography for Rond.
- For example, an individual's soul can be depicted as a sphere of light the brightness of which signifies the quality of the soul. The brighter of these two spheres signifies a more harmonious soul, the dimmer and more transparent sphere signifies a less harmonious soul:



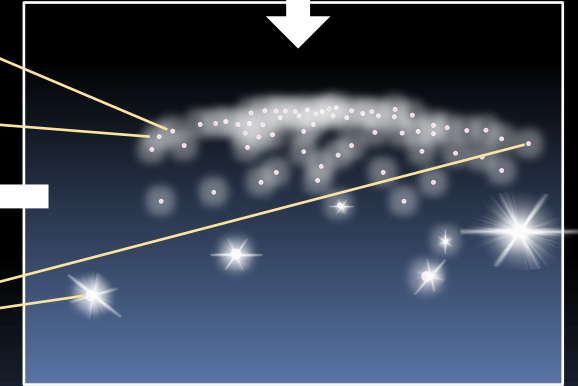
- Souls also have various other relations between one another. For example, souls have degrees of mutuality in spirit. This too can be artistically depicted. We can do so with an imaginary **spiritual space** in which souls are portrayed as being near or far from one another based on those degrees of mutuality. This mirrors how we speak of people having a “close” friendship or being “distant” from one another in terms of their social relationship.
- Such relations entail that the Universe must have a kind of *order* to its souls...

RONDURE AND SPIRITUALITY₁₂

1. We see people, but not their souls. 2. Use icons to imagine their souls... 3. ...with the empirical world fading.



- The **soulcosm** is the order of souls in the Universe, which can be represented with **spiritual space**.
- The spiritual space of the soulcosm is an imaginary space like a **phase space** or **cyberspace**.



4. Now imagine *only* their souls. 5. Add the spiritual 'distance' of souls to one another: spiritual space.

- Some people near to one another in physical space may have souls far from one another in spiritual space. Conversely, those far from one another physically may have souls close in spiritual space. And of course, those nearby may have souls close and those far away may have souls afar.

RONDURE AND SPIRITUALITY₁₃

- According to the philosopher Immanuel Kant, “Two things fill the mind with ever new and increasing admiration and awe, the more often and steadily we reflect upon them: the starry heavens above me and the moral law within me. I do not seek or conjecture either of them as if they were veiled obscurities or extravagances beyond the horizon of my vision; I see them before me and connect them immediately with the consciousness of my existence.” ^[25]



The soulcosm envisioned as spiritual space

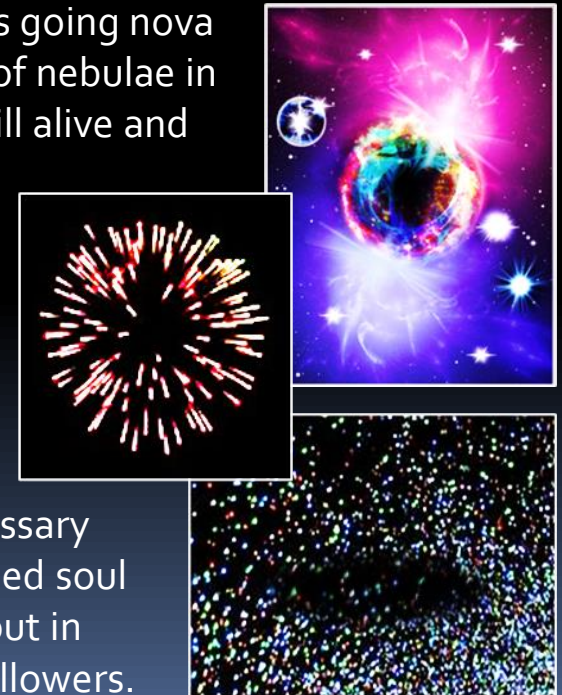
- According to Rond, the “starry heavens” and the “moral law” are found together as one in the symbolic vision of the soulcosm. Some souls are brighter than others since their owners are less vicious (or more virtuous); some souls are dimmer than others as their owners are more vicious. But all souls are in the “heaven” (spiritual space) of the soulcosm.

RONDURE AND SPIRITUALITY₁₄

- Rondian spirituality has no doctrines of salvation and damnation of souls.
- All souls are in the soulcosm, and the only souls in the soulcosm are the souls of *living* individuals. Souls exist only during the mortal life of their owners.
- Hence, no souls survive the death of their owners and so no souls “go to heaven” since souls are always in the “heaven” of the soulcosm for as long as their owners shall live.
- The souls of unethical individuals are also in the same “heaven” (spiritual space) of the soulcosm. However, souls in the soulcosm are neither equally bright nor close:
 - Because a soul is a will to harmony, the souls of notably unethical individuals do not show much will for harmony and so such individuals must have very weak souls. Their souls must therefore be represented in spiritual space as dim rather than bright and as spaced far apart from the souls of those not of mutual spirit.
 - Because a soul is a will to *harmony*, those who are unjustly hostile may be of strong will or even strong spirit, but they do not exemplify strong souls. The weakness of their soul is due to their pursuit of an erroneous notion of harmony (often a selfish notion).

RONDURE AND SPIRITUALITY₁₅

- The Universe is never without will to harmony; so, the Universe is never without a soulcosm. The soulcosm is as immortal as the Universe. Even so, no individual soul *within* the soulcosm is immortal. Each soul lives but once, coalescing at its owner's birth and diffusing at its owner's death. Yet, while the death of a person's physical body may be ugly, the death of that person's soul—poignant though it may be—is not likewise ugly as imagined in the spiritual space of the soulcosm:
 - Deaths inspiring moral activism may be imagined as souls going nova in the soulcosm, leaving behind the spiritual equivalents of nebulae in spiritual space which brighten the souls of the activists still alive and pursuing social justice.
 - Deaths that do not inspire social change may be imagined as souls diffusing like a spray of fading sparks into the dark of the soulcosm's spiritual space—the most common way that souls die with their bearers.
 - On the other hand, a death that inspires a wave of unnecessary conflict (e.g., mass terrorism) may be imagined as a dimmed soul vanishing from the soulcosm while leaving a rolling blackout in spiritual space—the dimming souls of the living, violent followers.



RONDURE AND SPIRITUALITY₁₆

- Rond's iconography of the soul and of the soulcosm has spiritual potential.
- For instance, if any of us were to add up our moral failings or vices, we would find that our character is not as socially harmonious as it *should* be. In the iconography of Rond, the light of one's soul would not be as bright as that of a more virtuous person. Assessing one's own soul as less harmonious ("dimmer") than it should be may inspire one to develop a more harmonious soul (thus a "brighter" soul).

Before...



..and after!



- The more one sheds social vices, the brighter one's soul becomes. (Conversely, the more one develops vices, the dimmer one's soul becomes.)
- Rondian spirituality includes *compassing the soulcosm* (as in to use the soulcosm as a "moral compass")—an exercise of the imagination to redirect attention back to the state of one's soul. 'Compassing' can be used to reinforce one's aspiration to shed one's social vices which tend to steer one into impact with existential barriers.

RONDURE AND SPIRITUALITY₁₇

- Rondian use of soul iconography for finding inspiration differs from the use of similar iconography for inspiration as exemplified by other spiritualities:
 - In Rond, artistic depictions of souls and the soulcosm are not representations of supernatural entities but rather are *symbols* for the quality of will to harmony.
 - The Rondian use of soul iconography is not intended to inspire the achievement of an optimal state of being (e.g., one's "ideal self," self-actualization, enlightenment, moral infallibility, sainthood, etc.).
 - There is no need to pursue an ideal; there is no goal to achieve perfection. It is enough to have a less vice than one had before.
 - As philosophers have pointed out, it gets easier to reduce instances of psychological and social vice the more one builds a habit of doing so. In Rondian spirituality, such reflects the development of the soul's strength.
 - With further vice reduction comes further *alleviation* of the human condition.



RONDURE AND SPIRITUALITY₁₈

- In addition to the rondure-themed iconography for the soul, the spirituality of Rond makes use of additional symbolism.
- In spirituality, some symbols serve a dual function: they distinguish a given belief system from other belief systems and they are used as **spiritual cues** by the belief system's devotees. Which is to say, the symbols are used for inspiring acts of devotion and to prompt recall of one's values, commitments, and consoling doctrines in times of existential and moral stress.
- Rond also has a symbol for the same purposes. The symbol of Rond is called the **compass**—as in the 'moral compass' of the compassing exercise, and as in a tool to assist one with 'navigating life' (steering around life's existential barriers). The compass can be used as a spiritual cue for developing the soul to reduce one's psychological and social vices.
- The form of the compass also has other meanings which will be explored in later works. For now, the most relevant point about the compass is that it is a fitting symbol for Rond, especially since it is another instance of the rondure motif.



The compass

RONDURE AND SPIRITUALITY₁₉

- In the view of Rond, spirituality is simply a form of art—*the art of inspiration*.
- However, the spirituality of Rond is also grounded in the metaphysics of Rond—the soul and spirit are taken as real.
 - A soul is an individual's will to harmony—to be in, and to act for, harmony.
 - A spirit is an individual's viral intensity (where 'virality' is the ability to influence and 'intensity' is the degree of influence at a given time).
 - A person's spirit is their viral intensity, but a person can have more than one spirit—a person can have school spirit, team spirit, corporate spirit, etc.
 - One of the spirits a person has is the spirit of their will to harmony (of their soul).
 - The spirit of a person's soul is how much their soul, as a will to harmony, influences others and is capable of being influenced by others to be in harmony.
- Art and artistic motifs, *when they are effective*, carry viral intensity (spirit) through transmission of affect, causing spiritual movement in their appreciators.
- Spirituality, as an artform, is therefore most effective when it carries spirit in the sense of causing a spiritual movement in those that appreciate its aesthetic.

RONDURE AND SPIRITUALITY₂₀

- Spirituality, as an artform, is expressed via symbolism and especially symbolism in the form of iconography.
- Iconography and other forms of spiritual symbolism are artistic means for *aspiring* and *inspiring*—for both receiving and imparting spirit (viral intensity).
- Rondian spirituality has iconography and symbolism of the soul, the soulcosm, and in its compassing exercise. It is through such iconography and symbolism that Rond may inspire; that is, fill others with a spirit to effect change.
- If Rond's spiritual iconography and symbolism are effective as works of art, then the change they inspire is for the development of the soul—the reduction of vice which results in alleviation of the human condition. If not, then another form of spirituality will be needed for Rond.
- As with the spirit of any spirituality, the spirit of Rondian spirituality only becomes manifest to the degree that Rond is socially influential—i.e., to the degree that others are inspired to adopt Rond as their own and further develop it.

RONDURE AND SPIRITUALITY₂₁

- To sum up: Rond is not only a philosophy and worldview, but a *spiritual devotion* as well—in all these roles, Rond is based on the rondure motif, which is its most distinguishing feature.
- Primarily, the point of Rond is development of the soul with the aim of reducing discord (i.e., increasing overall harmony). When successful, Rond alleviates—even if it cannot cure—the human condition.
- As a devotion, the way of Rond is not easy. Any devotion worth having shouldn't be. A spiritual devotion that makes no demands on its devotees is an impotent spirituality.
- Expecting *optimal* performance from any spirituality, even after much practice, is unrealistic; we therefore cannot *perfect* our practice of Rondian spirituality. Even so, Rond enables us to reduce our vices, one baby step at a time. Doing so strengthens the soul, enabling one to alleviate one's human condition.
- If Rond turns out not to be the best available devotion, Rond at least offers a template for the development of any future spirituality that would be realistic. In any case, Rond's development as a spiritual devotion does appear promising...

RONDURE AND EPISTEMOLOGY₁

- How can it be known that Rond is the correct worldview—the worldview which one ought to assume? The short answer: it cannot be known.
- However, worldviews are not a matter of *knowledge* anyway; rather, they are a matter of *belief*.
- We each commit to what we believe is the correct worldview. So too, that Rond is the correct worldview is also a matter of belief rather than knowledge.
- However, the existence of competing beliefs does not entail all worldviews are equally correct. We need not blunder into epistemic or ontological relativism.
- Still, any proposal that a given worldview is the correct one to hold over its rivals in the marketplace of ideas must be given a justification if that proposal is to be credible. Hence, the proposal that Rond is the correct worldview requires justification to establish the credibility of that claim.
- Justification for Rond over its rivals is found via *epistemology*, which is the study of knowledge...and ergo the differences between knowledge and belief.

RONDURE AND EPISTEMOLOGY₂

- Through epistemology, we can obtain objective criteria by which to judge worldviews as better or worse candidates for the correct worldview—the worldview we ought to believe over the rest.
- Such criteria were developed by the same epistemic means outlined in Part Four: a combination of knowledge, reason, intuition, and imagination.
- The criteria developed by said means were used to identify the common errors noted in Part Two, which ruled out many of the other worldviews as candidates.*
- Further epistemic principles ruled out remaining worldview candidates, requiring the construction of a new worldview from the best elements of the existing worldviews.
- The result is Rond, a new candidate for the correct worldview.



*However, the aesthetics of the world's religions (iconography, rituals, rites, ceremonies, etc.) could be revised to be made compatible with Rond by jettisoning the superstitious elements identified in Part Two.

RONDURE AND EPISTEMOLOGY₃

- Any candidate for the correct worldview—Rond included—must have an ethical commitment to truth and knowledge (even when, or especially when, learning the truth is inconvenient or upsetting).
- Rond demands commitment to uphold the **constitution of knowledge**—the set of informal, epistemic rules held by the **reality-based community**, which includes science, forensics, history, investigative journalism, intelligence work, and similar professions. ^[26]
- In commitment to the ‘constitution of knowledge’, the Rondian holds:
 - A healthy respect for the facts obtained by the reality-based community.
 - Recognition of the fallibility of all worldviews, including Rond.
- The Rondian therefore recognizes the possibility (however unlikely) that Rond could be made obsolete by an even more accurate worldview. Even so, the Rondian remains committed to the view that truth and knowledge, based as they are on absolute and objective reality, are more important than remaining Rondian.

RONDURE AND EPISTEMOLOGY₄

- The epistemology for Rond is based on a definition of knowledge and a theory of how we know what we know (to be elucidated in a forthcoming work).
- But the aim of that epistemology is not only to increase knowledge but also to develop good mental habits, such as a habit of reducing **intellectual vice**.^[27]
- **Intellectual vices** include, but are not limited to, **epistemic vices**.^[28] traits such as credulity (e.g., a disposition to belief in wild or discredited conspiracy theories) and dogmatism (unwillingness to change one's mind in light of contrary evidence). Intellectual vices also include other habits of intellectual error such as a tendency to commit one or more of the four common errors identified in Part Two.
- Enter rondure as a cognitive feedback loop of iterative self-correction in rooting out one's own intellectual vices—most notably, one's own epistemic vices.
- Developing a habit of reducing epistemic vices is part of the work needed to gain enough wisdom for identifying the correct worldview. The author developed Rond from years of learning to identify epistemic errors, including his own, and from building a habit of correcting them rather than rationalizing them.

RONDURE AND EPISTEMOLOGY₅

- Epistemology for avoiding intellectual vice also includes learning to *know oneself* in service of further reducing psychological and social vices.
- Most of us assume we know ourselves well, but few of us are correct about that, as evidenced when our behavior deviates dramatically from what we claim to value, from who we believe ourselves to be. Self-knowledge, as opposed to self-justification, is vital for reducing one's psychological and social vices.
- Enter again the rondure motif into the epistemology for Rond. Self-knowledge is the outcome of an instance of another rondure: a feedback loop of iterative self-examination.
- Iterative self-examination is part of what is needed to accurately identify one's psychological and social vices in order to prioritize dealing with them. That work is part of one's spiritual path to developing a soul even more worth having—a will to both inner and outer harmony of life.
- The epistemology used for constructing Rond is therefore an epistemology that supports developing the soul, and thereby the alleviation of the human condition.

**CONCLUSION:
MORE THAN A WORLDVIEW**

SUMMARY

- A worldview is a way of making sense of reality—especially of events we experience.
- We need the best worldview we can obtain in order to alleviate the human condition. Rond is offered as a candidate for that worldview.
- As a worldview, Rond includes a philosophy based on the rondure motif as applied to issues studied in various subdisciplines of philosophy:
 - Aesthetics
 - Ontology
 - Metaphysics
 - Cosmology
 - Phenomenology
 - Philosophy of Mind
 - Philosophy of Evolution
 - Philosophy of Conduct
 - Epistemology
- Rond also has a naturalistic spirituality based on the rondure motif that, if put to practice, makes Rond more than a worldview—it makes Rond a devotion.

THE SHAPE OF THINGS TO COME

- The preceding is merely a sketch of Rond, the full details of which require further presentations and publications.
- The Rond Project will elaborate Rond as a worldview in such works, to cover topics across a range of disciplines, from philosophy and science to art and spirituality.



TO BE CONTINUED...

ENDNOTES

References₁

<u>Slide</u>	<u>Note</u>	<u>Source</u>
44	1	Rosenberg, Alex. (2011). <i>The Atheist's Guide To Reality</i> . New York and London: W. W. Norton & Company, pp. 97–98.
	2	Rosenberg 2011, p. 3.
49	3	Melkikh, Alexey V.; Melkikh, Ekaterina. (August 2017). "Can We Use Thermodynamics in the Systems With Gravity?" <i>Modern Physics Letters B</i> . Vol. 31, No. 29. pp. 1750272-1–1750272-18. Available at < https://www.worldscientific.com/doi/epdf/10.1142/S0217984917502724 >
51	4	Hägglund, Martin. (2019). <i>This Life</i> . New York: Profile Books.
	5	This position is contrary to the absolution-vs.-inconsolability dichotomy promoted in Hägglund 2019, pp. 48–49 , 360–365 .
	6	This position agrees with Hägglund's thesis that we can sacrifice our lives for something that matters more than survival. See Hägglund 2019, p. 360.
60	7	Proponents depicted: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pope Pius IX: <https://www.catholicplanet.org/councils/20-Dei-Filius.htm> • Eckhart Tolle: <https://eckharttolle.com/power-of-now-excerpt> • Abraham Maslow: <https://www.amazon.com/Theory-Human-Motivation-Abraham-Maslow/dp/1684113180> • Tony Robbins: <https://www.tonyrobbins.com/tony-robbins-books> • Rhonda Byrne: <https://www.thesecond.tv/products/the-secret-book> • L. Ron Hubbard: <https://www.scientology.org>
73	8	Boudry, Maarten; Pigliucci, Massimo (Editors). (2017). <i>Science Unlimited?</i> Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, p. 4.
	9	Scientism: Rosenberg 2011, p. 20.
	10	Scientism as ideology: White, Curtis. (2014). <i>The Science Delusion</i> . Brooklyn and London: Melville House, p. 239.

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<u>Slide</u>	<u>Note</u>	<u>Source</u>
75	11	Adams, Douglas. (1979). <i>The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy</i> . Great Britain: Pan Books, Ltd.
98	12	The definition provided for 'work of art' is inspired by (but differs from) the definition offered in Dickie, George. (1969). "Defining Art." <i>American Philosophical Quarterly</i> . Vol. 6, pp. 253–256 .
102	13	The concept of "transmitting" affect is inspired by Brennan, Teresa. (2004). <i>The Transmission of Affect</i> . Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press.
120	14	The term 'holon' (Greek: ὅλον, <i>holon</i> neuter form of ὅλος, <i>holos</i> for "whole") is a whole that is also a part. The word was coined by Arthur Koestler in his book <i>The Ghost in the Machine</i> (1967. London: Hutchinson & Company, p. 48). The term 'holon' as used in this presentation is inspired by, but differs in many ways from, what Koestler had in mind.
	15	For details on hyperspheres, see: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • McMullen, Chris. (2008). <i>The Visual Guide To Extra Dimensions</i>. CreateSpace, pp. 113–116. • McMullen, Chris. (2009). <i>Full Color Illustrations of the Fourth Dimension, Volume I: Tesseract and Glomes</i>. Custom Books.
124	16	Einstein, Albert. (1954, 1982 edition). <i>Ideas & Opinions</i> . Cal Seelig, ed. Translated by Sonja Bargmann. New York: Three Rivers Press. Pages 242-243.
	17	On the Alcubierre Drive Starship, see: Pravas, Shalem. (2012). "Alcubierre Warp Drive—Faster Than Light Propulsion." <i>Engineers Garage</i> . Online source: < https://www.engineersgarage.com/alcubierre-warp-drive-faster-than-light-propulsion >
	18	Jones, Garrett. (2000-2003). "Hypercell". Article at < http://hi.gher.space/wiki/Hypercell >. A 'rind' is sometimes called a surcell. See: Jones, Garrett. (2000-2003). <i>Multi-dimensional Glossary</i> . Online source: < http://hi.gher.space/classic/glossary.htm >. Compare with definitions at < https://verse-and-dimensions.fandom.com/wiki/Gongol >. See also McMullen 2008, p. 113.

References₃

<u>Slide</u>	<u>Note</u>	<u>Source</u>
125	19	The temporal circuit is an idea proposed by other philosophers under other monikers. For example, the philosopher and science fiction author Olaf Stapledon proposed the idea in his book <i>Star Maker</i> (1937, 2008 edition. Mineola, New York: Dover Publications, Inc., p. 192). However, Stapledon allowed for a <i>Cantorian infinity</i> of cosmic cycles within the closed temporal circuit as well as a <i>timeless view from eternity</i> , while both of these notions are rejected by Rond.
126	20	Various cyclic cosmologies have been produced by respected cosmologists. For some examples see Wolchover, Natalie. (31 January 2018). "How the Universe Got Its Bounce Back." <i>Quanta Magazine</i> . Online source: < https://www.quantamagazine.org/big-bounce-models-reignite-big-bang-debate-20180131 >
133	21	Will to life: Schopenhauer, Arthur. (1818–1859, 2016 edition). <i>The World as Will and Idea</i> . Translated by R.B. Haldane and J. Kemp. Wyoming: Creative Media Partners, LLC.
	22	Will to power: Nietzsche, Friedrich. (1883–1888, 1968 edition). <i>The Will To Power</i> . Translated by Walter Kaufmann and R.J. Hollingdale. Edited by Walter Kaufman. New York: Vintage Books.
	23	Will to harmony: The word 'harmony' with respect to how a society is organized has taken a bad rap in recent years as a result of being confused with other concepts such as conformity and homogeneity. Contrary to Chris Hedges (<i>Empire of Illusion</i> . 2009. New York: Nation Books, pp. 129–130) and David Horowitz (<i>A Point in Time</i> . 2011. Washington, DC: Regnery Publishing), social harmony does not necessarily imply blind conformity with, or appeasement of, an oppressive form of government. Rather, social harmony is simply organized activity among a diversity of individuals. Social harmony does not entail a condition in which a population is indoctrinated into blind conformity or coerced into bland homogeneity. Instead, a social harmony can be a collaboration or communion of free individuals who may also be members of diverse populations or cultures. The will to harmony, in a social context, means the will to undertake activity that is in harmony (i.e., lacking conflict) with other individuals or groups.

References₄

<u>Slide</u>	<u>Note</u>	<u>Source</u>
142	24	The quote is from Epicurus, though different translations vary slightly in the wording. For example: Epicurus. (270 BCE). <i>The Art of Happiness</i> . Translated with an Introduction and Commentary by George K. Strodach; Foreword by Daniel Klein. (2012). New York: Penguin Books. pp. 156–157.
151	25	Kant, Immanuel. (1788). <i>Critique of Practical Reason</i> . Translated and edited by Mary Gregor; Introduction by Andrews Reath. (1997). Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press. p. 133.
162	26	Rauch, Jonathan. (2021). <i>The Constitution of Knowledge: A Defense of Truth</i> . Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press. (Some of Rauch's views on the nature of truth and reality rely too heavily on the views of philosopher of science Karl Popper (1902–1994) and pragmatist philosophers who reduce reality to propositions. Even so, Rauch's book is still excellent.)
163	27	Cassam, Quassim. (2019). "Intellectual Vices." <i>The Philosopher's Magazine</i> . 3 rd Quarter, Issue 86. Online source: < https://archive.philosophersmag.com/intellectual-vices >
	28	Cassam, Quassim. (April 2016). "Vice Epistemology." <i>The Monist</i> . Vol. 99, Issue 2. pp. 159–180. Online source: < https://academic.oup.com/monist/article/99/2/159/2563406 >

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26	Adventurer at sea: <i>All Is Lost</i> , Dir. J. C. Chandor. Black Bear Pictures, Producers. 2013. Film. Martin Luther King, Jr. (1963). "I Have A Dream." Speech. Online source: < https://abcnews.go.com/US/things-make-dream-famous-speeches-history/story?id=20068795 >
27	Gentleman with pistol: adapted from Pixabay stock image.
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29	"Singin' In The Rain." (2014). UK Tour. Theatre production. Raining money image from < https://elmedicointeractivo-com >
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47	<i>Annie Hall</i> , Dir. Woody Allen. Jack Rollins and Charles H. Joffe, Producers. 1977. Film.
53	<i>Run</i> . Dir. Melina Matsoukas. 2014. Film. <i>True Detective</i> . Created by Nic Pizzolatto. Season 1. Warner Bros. Television. 2014. TV series.
60	See references: note 7 for slide 60.
72	Adapted from image at Pexels. Creator: Crisher P.H.
103	Christian rose window: < https://enthusiastical.wordpress.com/2013/07/13/reims-south-transept-rose-window > Shaman: < https://www.dailysabah.com/feature/2016/05/27/shamanism-a-practice-of-early-turkic-beliefs > Jewish ritual objects from freepik; creator: ungvar. Hindu temple: RBB/Getty images at < https://www.learnreligions.com/history-of-hindu-temples-1770625 > Muslim Hajj: Pixabay. Druid ritual at Stonehenge: < https://en.wikipedia.org >. Creator: sandyraidy. Tibetan nuns praying: Associated Press.
105	Shapes adapted from images at Pixabay and 123FreeVectors.
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125	Universe as 2Sphere adapted from ESA/Hubble: Volker Springel (Max Planck Institute for Astrophysics) et al. Space image adapted from < https://www.nasa.gov/mission_pages/hubble/multimedia/index.html >

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147	Science fiction examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dugan, John T. (Writer), & Senesky, Ralph (Director). 9 February 1968. "Return to Tomorrow." <i>Star Trek</i>. Season 2, Episode 20. [TV series episode]. In Gene Roddenberry (Executive Producer), <i>Star Trek</i>. Paramount Television.• <i>The Martian Chronicles</i>. Based on the book by Ray Bradbury. Orion Pictures Corporation. 27 January–29 January 1980. Television Miniseries.• <i>Akira</i>, Dir. Katsuhiro Otomo. Ryōhei Suzuki & Shunzō Katō, Producers. 1988. Film.• Straczynski, J. Michael. (Writer), & Johnston, Jim (Director). 2 February 1994. "Soul Hunter." <i>Babylon 5</i>. Season 1, Episode 2. [TV series episode]. In Douglas Netter & J. Michael Straczynski (Executive Producers), <i>Babylon 5</i>. Warner Bros. Television.• <i>Lifeforce</i>, Dir. Tobe Hooper, Yoram Globus & Menahem Golan, Producers. 1985. Film. Spirit photography example: DeCaro, Jim and Ghostvillage.com. (2001). Online source: < http://www.ghostvillage.com/legends/spiritphotography.shtml > Artwork example: Kusama, Yayoi. <i>Infinity Mirrored Room—The Souls of Millions of Light Years Away</i> . Art installation. 2013. Wood, metal, glass mirrors, plastic, acrylic panel, rubber, LED lighting system, acrylic balls, and water 113 ¼ x 163 ½ x 163 ½ in. The Broad. Los Angeles, CA. Online source: < https://www.thebroad.org/art/yayoi-kusama/infinity-mirrored-room-souls-millions-light-years-away >

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