

# FIFTY-TWO LITTLE ESSAYS, TEFIST

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## Little Essay #1

**“Too firm: oppressed. Too lax: aimless. We flourish best within moderate or mixed constraints.”**

Firmness in our life—excessive firmness—yields fixity. We can hardly move. We almost solidify. We become like stone, Lithos. This may be okay for quite passive living, but it is inimical to the active life.

Laxity in our life—excessive laxity—is abandonment to the air, Atmos. Given too much freedom, we cannot focus our energy. We become vapor, drifting aimlessly. This may be okay for vacations and holidays, but it is not good for accomplishing great works.

Sometimes, just on our own, we may tend toward fixity, and at other times toward laxity. And in any event, the social milieu always places demands and conditions upon us: “Be more solid and dependable!” or “Be more relaxed and flexible!”

Overbearing adults may have pressured us, as children, to shut up and keep quiet. Or we may, at any age, be policed by tyrants until, out of fear of punishment or penalty, become nearly unable to move. Might as well be a block of rock!

But, sometimes, the world cuts our chains and sets us free—too free. We wander like the wind and waste our time. We do not know where to go next, or what to do there, or why we should do it. We feel abandoned, aimless. In this laxity we can get ourselves into trouble or pine away in boredom and loneliness.

What we want instead is a life with few extremes. We want firmness, **when needed**, and freedom, **when needed**. This is what all living things need in order to flourish best. We need **at times** to flow, to be fluid, yet **at other times** to be anchored, to be solid. But, we learn that keeping this best mix of constraints and freedoms in our lives is a challenge.

Tef Theory describes four classes of Gaian matter: Lithos, Hydros, Atmos, and Bios. These correspond to Solids, Liquids, Gases, and Organismic Matter. These classes also embody four Degrees of Freedom—how easily we can puncture, deform, or reshape these kinds of matter. Lithos and Atmos are the extremes: Lithos offers Minimum Freedom, whereas Atmos offers Maximum Freedom. Hydros offers Moderate Freedom, and it can serve as a good model of the moderate freedom we need in living life. But it is Bios—Mixed Freedom—that is our best model for success, for it incorporates the other three Freedoms. After all, the human Body is Bios!

Where and when in your own life do you find the right mix of firmness and freedom, of fixity and laxity?

## Little Essay #2

**“Violence *to* me hurts me. Violence *by* me hurts me. Violence is *bad* for me!”**

Violence brings physical and psychological pain, unbidden and unwanted. No one likes pain, though we sometimes acquiesce to it—as in surgery or therapy—because it brings benefits in the long run. Pain of any kind is inherently disharmonious. (Thus, if a putative pain feels good, it is not truly a pain: It is pleasure.) We naturally avoid pain and violence. These things are absolutely negative. I do not know why this is so. It just is.

Violence brings pain. It is an obvious Disharmony. When it happens **to** me, I know it with certainty. No one has to tell me—actually, no one **can** tell me—for Disharmony, like Harmony, is existential and experiential, not a matter of someone’s outside opinion or declaration. Pain is self-evident. Violence hurts me. Violence is simply **bad!**

Similarly, violence **by** me can also hurt me. For when I am violent toward others, the circuits of empathy whip back to sting me with Disharmony. My conscience hurts. I imagine the world’s pain in my own Heart, my Intuition Sector. I empathize with the pain I have caused. Of course, when I lack conscience and empathy, then in those times violence **by** me may not feel like violence **to** me. At least not at that moment. Yet I have learned from my years of living that my violent acts do come home to roost, eventually making the world a poorer place, not only for others, but for me, too. I have learned that my violence

degrades the world, even if I do not immediately or directly suffer from it. Thus, I have **learned** that violence **by** me disharmonizes the world, the very world to which I belong. Such learning is wisdom gained. I can regulate my Actions by such wisdom. But keep in mind: I had to **learn** this wisdom regarding violence **by** me; I was not born with this knowledge.

Yes, all violence is bad for me. All Disharmony is bad for me. I avoid it. My empathy for suffering in the world will lead, I hope, to a more harmonious world—for me and for all of Tef.

### Little Essay #3

**“Life has one great challenge: how best to love.”**

These words may seem simplistic, but I fully assert their truth. Love is not all of Tef, yet in the sphere of our social lives (Intuition Sector, at L. 2), loving is **all that we seek to do**. For, in the social sphere, love is our sole preference. Love is our desire for social Harmony, our Will to bond harmoniously with other Beings. We do not, I assert, prefer anything else than love. Not sure you agree? Let me explain more fully.

Tef Theory defines *love* as our Good Will toward Beings (including both oneself and other selves). And it defines *loving* as our

Good Works for the benefit of other Beings. Good Will is a powerful emotion, born of microscale Evaluation. Good Works are the Actions evoked by our Good Will. Who is the benefactor of our Good Will and Good Works? This depends on which of our Prime Motivations—Self-interest or Not-self-interest—is dominant at the present time.

On the one hand, Self-interest motivates our love toward our own self. Though “inward-looking”, it is an essential kind of love. It is aimed at our survival and our self-preservation, thus it is requisite to our life. Our body and soul both need our care and care-taking. Self-pleasure and self-indulgence are absolutely good. We need to love ourselves.

On the other hand, Not-self-interest motivates our love toward other Beings. This, too, is an essential kind of love. A part of us reaches beyond the self: The child reaches out to its mother; friend delights in friend; lovers trade affection; neighbors share kindnesses; charity and service keep the wheels of community turning. Indeed, it is our love toward other Beings that generates community and gives our life much of its meaning and joy. Not-self-interest is also called altruism. And this “outward-looking” love also includes our love of the non-human realm, including Gaian nature and the universe—what I sometimes call the Great Surround. If we can love mud and maggots in the Great surround, then our love is definitely not narrow!

A hard fact remains, however: Neither our Good Will nor our Good Works *guarantee* happy consequences. The road to Hell, we are told, is paved with good intentions. Our challenge—in fact the single goal of Ethics—is to find ways, great and small, to bring about happy consequences in life. We employ our minds, as well as our hearts, in this task. Love and loving are essential for Harmony, but these alone may not be sufficient. We need knowledge and wisdom, too. Thus, we

must **orchestrate** (L.4) all of our experience in order to optimize the Harmoniousness of Tef.

Therefore, let us pair up our love with our wisdom, and align our loving with our living, so that optimal Harmony may obtain for both self and not-self. This is our challenge, in fact this is life's single greatest challenge: how best to love.

#### Little Essay #4

**“Somewhere, a lamp is ever burning. Somewhere, deep inside, there is something alive! The God Within.”**

The meaning of “The God Within” differs from person to person. Moreover, the meaning of “God” is slippery, for everyone seems to have a different view about Him (or Her, or It). Here are two perspectives on The God Within.

First, I can equate The God Within with my personal best. This God is my clearest, most sincere, most passionate Good Will. It is my purest love, my deepest desire for Harmony in Tef. It is my central value and force: pure love.

Second, I can equate The God Within with what is left after I close my eyelids and ignore the world, after I quit seeking gratification and just let things be. This is what I find—what I *am*—when I cease thinking and just wait, resting, down here on the seafloor of Tef—having

settled down to the bottom of the waters, deep below the turbulent waves, far away from sharks, deep in the silence. Whatever it is that rests here at the bottom of me—alert, yet untroubled and unmotivated—this is me at my simplest. This God Within is my purest being.

Thus, I can think of The God Within in both of these ways: as pure love and as pure being. These may be two faces of one God Within, or they may be faces of two different Gods Within. I even wonder, how many other Gods may exist? Where do they exist? How should I relate to them?

(Please re-read this Little Essay. I am attempting to communicate something that is important, yet difficult to express.)

Little Essay #5

**“The ‘last word’ on anything is still only a *word*!”**

Strange: We need to be reminded that what we **say** about life is not life **itself**. What we can **say** is always words, nothing more. We get confused and even lost in our world of words, not only because we confuse words and reality, but because we become preoccupied and distracted by our words. We process **so many** words! We stack words upon words upon words. Our lives are built largely from words. Thus it

is nearly inevitable that we lose touch with our foundations—the Actuality—to which the words **refer**. We become poorly grounded.

Words are unavoidable, it seems, and in any case we like them a lot. So we don't want to live without them. Still, at some point, at least some of the time, we need to reconnect with the **referents** of our words. We cannot live “in our heads” all of the time. We need to live in our hearts and in our bodies, as well. We need to quit thinking quite so much, quit speaking quite so much. We need to focus on life's solid, concrete, tangible experiences—sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch, and the body's pains and pleasures—and beyond these, we need to feel and express our values and emotions and passions. We need to pick ripe fruit from a tree. We need to howl at the full moon. We need to sing and laugh with a child. We need to weep. We need to eat more cookies!

Some people tell us they have The Truth. But their very best truths are still only words: Inactuality. Words can never **give** us Actuality: we have to acquire **that** for ourselves by participating in life. Thus, even the “last word” on something is still only a **word**. Here's one useful suggestion: Go eat cookies!

## Little Essay #6

**“Never believe a scientist. Never believe anyone else, either.”**

No educated person doubts that our sun is a star. Everyone believes this. Astronomers long ago accepted this idea as fact—a solid scientific fact. Similarly, though some people still deny the fact of evolution, ever since Darwin most biologists have affirmed organic evolution, and therefore most educated laypersons believe it, too. And, although early-twentieth century geologists believed that continents were fixed in place—immobile massifs resting upon featureless ocean floors—mid-twentieth century geologists found evidence that continents do in fact move and that ocean floors are rich with ridges and trenches. So, although I have never seen a continent move and will probably never see the ocean floor, I am prepared to believe what geologists tell us about these things. Paradoxically, I also hold that believing scientists is an error!

Scientists do not intentionally lie. They prize the truth. Scientific truth—even for scientists—is, however, always provisional truth, for information and interpretations are always tentative, pending further investigation. I regard this openness to new evidence as the very pulse beat of science. I also acknowledge that scientists are humans with human weaknesses: I know, for example, that scientists can be biased toward pet beliefs. Even so—even knowing that scientists can be biased and that their truths are always tentative—I and most educated laypersons willingly believe what scientists tell us about the world. Nevertheless, I hold that believing them is an error!

How can this be? How can I believe, and yet refuse to believe? Simple: Willingness to believe scientists is an error because **belief itself**

is an error. I say we are wise **never to believe anyone**: neither scientists, nor theologians, nor politicians, nor anyone else. Indeed, we laypersons need to be even **more** provisional and **more** tentative than our scientists are. **We should always distinguish our beliefs from our lived experience.** Thus, our **belief** that the sun is a star should remain forever open to question, whereas sunshine itself is a **experience** beyond question, beyond belief. Likewise, **belief** in evolution will always find skeptics (as it should), whereas petrified fossils will always be a wonder to behold, an **experience** beyond question and beyond belief. And continents, whether fixed or moving, are themselves beliefs: No one has ever seen a continent, not even from space! No one ever will see one, either, for a continent is an idea, not a sensible percept, It is an Inactuality, not an Actuality. By contrast, my **experience** of the earth beneath my feet—firm and reassuringly stable—is beyond question and beyond belief.

So, I urge you never to believe a scientist...or anyone else. Trust the facts, but distrust beliefs. If you simply must believe, then try at least to shelter a small corner of skepticism in your mind. Otherwise you risk becoming a blind slave to your beliefs.

## Little Essay #7

**“Life is like a fruit: No matter how you cut it, it begins as a whole: one. You get two only by cutting up one. To know one, quit cutting. We need to live a whole life: not *li* and *fe*, but *life*!”**

Analysis is the process by which we come to perceive two things, where before had been only one thing. This is a process of subdivision, of disassembly, of disintegration. It may be solely a passive perceptual process, that is, it can occur without our taking any bodily Action to physically separate things into parts. Analysis is a net of form that we **mentally** cast upon the continuum of our experience. When we analyze a big truck, for example, we may come to see it as a cab, a bed, and ten wheels, no longer as a single, unified object. When we analyze music, we are able to discern melody and harmony and rhythm, no longer a single, unified composition. And when we discover our self as a separate Being in the world, the result is a Major Dyad: Self as a figure highlighted against a ground of Not-self. We no longer have a monadic Tef—One, Whole, and All.

Ultimately, however, only oneness, wholeness, and allness will do. Even as we analyze something, reducing it to parts and components, we need concurrently to recall that oneness lies beneath the fracturedness we are creating. And whenever we want to **live** that oneness again, we have only to cease our analyzing. To possess whole fruits, we must first stop cutting them open! In the absence of analysis, we can again experience Tef’s continuity: no limits, no gaps, no voids. To do this, we need to get broad views of things. We need to look for connections among parts, and we need to observe that the “gaps” in Tef are never truly empty. This perceptual task may not be easy, but it is doable.

Pull all the parts of yourself together. Find the common wholeness behind the parts. Use your powers of synthesis: joining, weaving, merging, wedding, reconciling. Know that cutting can become habitual, a bad habit. Just stop doing it! In short, learn again to live a whole life: not **li** and **fe** , but **life**!

#### Little Essay #8

**“What am I living for? One thing only: to worship. I live to love.”**

Do not worry about being bad. Do not worry about doing evil. The heart **always** seeks the good: Harmony. You never do evil things **because** they are evil. Even if their **consequences** turn out to be bad, you originally do them because they are truly good—good for someone (perhaps only for you, and perhaps only for a moment). Harmony is your Evaluation’s preference, and its only preference, and you have no choice about that preference. I do not know why this is so. It just is.

Thus, Disharmony is not your fault. It happens, sometimes even as the result of your best intentions. Yet you can minimize it by using your wisdom, gained from life experience. Rest assured, you do not seek evil.

Nor is Harmony a gift from you to the world. You have no choice about whether to feel it and share it. Although you can learn how to

maximize it, your preference for it happens in any event. Your loving Actions reveal your preference for it. Rest assured, you always seek the good.

To love is to desire Harmony. Seeking to actualize Harmony is the same as seeking to actualize Good Will. We manifest our love through our loving Good Works. Through loving Action, we express our Good Will toward other Beings.

The more spiritualized forms of love and loving are called worship. Worship includes reverence and veneration and adoration, plus the Good Works that manifest these passions. It is pure love toward An Other—be this another Being or another thing. We learn from living that Harmony increases when we cast our worship widely upon the field of our experience, widely upon both self and not-self, widely upon Tef. I do not know why this is so. It just is.

I live for just one thing: to worship Tef, to love Tef, to make Tef more harmonious. The biggest challenge of my life is to learn how best to love. Again, why this should be so, I do not know. It just is. I trust it is so for others, too. Life floats upon Mystery.

## Little Essay #9

**“God is us...but we do not know ourselves. Deity speaks *through* us, not *to* us.”**

“God” is a name given to many things. Some say God is Nature—these are Pantheists. Some say God is a separate and distant Being—these are Theists who worship a Transcendent God. Others say God is right here, separate yet indwelling in all things and guiding our life—these are Theists who worship an Immanent God. And still others say there are many Gods, not just one—these are Polytheists and Animists. Note that many of these descriptions are ideas **about** God: about an independent deity that we never actually see or touch, a deity that **is not us**. There is not much we can do with such a God—even if He/She/It really exists.

What we really need instead, if we are to be agents of Harmony in Tef, is a God that can express **our own** intention and Will. We need a God that is within us, indeed that **is us**. For we find, almost paradoxically, that when we accept the notion of our own divinity, and let that vision guide our Actions, we actually become more Godly! We begin to act the part. And this is very often good, increasing the H/D Ratio in Tef.

Our problem is that we are confused about all this, continuing to regard God as an Other Being: separate, out there, transcendent, not part of Tef. We keep trying to **find** God, instead of committing ourselves to **being** God. We keep wanting God to talk **to** us, instead of letting God speak **through** us.

What to do? Simply be Godly! Let God speak through you, through your every loving Action. Love Thy Tef!

#### Little Essay #10

**“Tell me which way is home. No matter where I travel, tell me home is *here* .”**

At-homeness implies many things, but its core is a feeling of being bonded with a place.

The fetus in the womb, waving its arms in the amniotic waters, is at home: anchored by its cord, enveloped in liquid, bonded with the mother’s womb.

The infant, cradled in loving arms, is at home, a satellite of its mother. (“Mother” here is generic; any gender can mother a child.) Home is wherever mother and food and shelter and familiarity happen to be. In time, as the child grows, its neighborhood and its city become yet more expansive “mothers”.

As a lover, we bond with another self (An Other Self), and home becomes wherever that special person is. We follow that person to the ends of earth, if need be. We durably bond with that Other Self, and the union creates a new home for us.

Still farther from our origins, out beyond the interpersonal and domestic bonds, our home expands to include a larger, and yet larger, sphere of people and places. We hold a job, we sing and play games, we do public service—all so that we can be bonded, can be interrelated with a community of human Beings. Moreover, we walk the landscape, feeling at home there, bonded with Earth, Sky, and our World Between. We even stand beneath starry skies and feel ourselves bonded with the infinity of celestial space, at home in our universe, at home in the vast, cosmic Other.

Certainly I, too, seek a sense of home, I need to be bonded. I do not know why. I just do. Of course, the most inclusive sphere of all is Tef—the Total Experiential Field—for Tef is everything. I am always part of it (not that I have a choice!). No matter where I travel or what I do, I am always at home in Tef. Tef is always **here**.

## Little Essay #11

**“Where, who are the sane ones, the quiet-minded ones? They are those who know and love An Other Place.”**

The babber and jabber of the world can drive you nuts! You are expected to check and recheck your cell phone, and watch your TV, and read your newspaper—endlessly. You are supposed to be a “concerned citizen”, informed about local and state and world events, not to mention keeping up-to-date on neighborhood gossip! You are expected to attend the theatre and the symphony and sporting events, to support charities and your house of worship, and to volunteer in your community. You are expected to keep an eye upon the health of your body and mind, as well as those of your family. You expected to feed your children, love your spouse, and tend the aged. And of course you are required to focus on your job: its activities, its politics, its public image, its financial success.

Help! We get way too much of these things. They overwhelm us. News addictions! Mind spam! Heart-stressing expectations!

Who are the sane ones, the ones who enjoy vast fields of peace and serenity? Who are the sane ones, anchored in the Herenow, their senses alive, their hearts warm, their thoughts clear?

I suppose anyone, theoretically, can know serenity—if we can tune out the noise of the world and commune with an inner quiet. Meditation does work. We can also achieve inner peace through visualization. And the solitude of a quiet nook in our own house or yard can help. But for me, the deepest sanity comes by going away to nature, by escaping to An Other Place. In going there I not only get away **from** the jangling world,

but I also travel **to** a saner, softer place, there to savor order and beauty and calm. Nature for me is a refuge and a resource and a restoration. Like Thoreau, I come back to it like “a hungry man to a crust of bread”.

What are we doing to ourselves when we force-feed each other with unnecessary information and endless crises? What are we doing to ourselves when we live exclusively within seething cities and cyberspace? If the day ever comes when our escape to nature is no longer possible, who then will be the sane ones, the quiet-minded ones? Who then will be the lovers of An Other Place?

Little Essay #12

**“The hardest thing of all, you see, is to *tell* it like it *is* !”**

We have all been asked at some time to “Tell it like it is.”

“Be honest, be brutally frank.”

“Shine a light and watch the vermin scatter.”

“Tell us the full truth now, before it’s too late to turn back.”

“We want to hear only the facts.”

We know that getting the facts is hard and that winnowing the truth is hard. We also know that sharing the truth with others is fraught with incompleteness, misunderstanding, and problems of communication. But we truly do aspire to “tell it like it is”, and we usually promise to do so.

Problem is, we fail every time. Utter failure. Why? Because any attempt to **tell** it like it **is** is like grasping at one’s own shadow or like hoping to hear the sound of one hand clapping. We attempt the senseless. How, I ask, can we actually **tell** someone what something **is** ?

Our telling is mere speaking. It is trafficking in words: words that code for ideas, for ideas that spring from the mind. Even when our ideas succeed as veridical **representations** of something, they still never **are** that something **itself**. For the map is never the territory, as Alfred Korzybski correctly reminded us. So, although we can indeed tell people our Inactual **ideas**—our representations (Reps)—we cannot **give** them the Actual referents (Refs), the **originals**. We share only ideas **of** or **about** the originals.

Tef Theory asserts: You simply cannot **tell** it like it **is** . You cannot even tell it like it isn’t! What you **can** do is encourage people to open their eyes and behold the **Actuality** that exists all around them.

## Little Essay #13

**“You do not have to *believe* in order to *worship* .”**

Theological belief springs from Intellection (L.3). Its concepts reside in the mind. By contrast, spiritual worship springs from Intuition (L.2). Its focus is love, residing in the heart.

Mind and heart are independent Sectors of the megascale perceptual processes. They are parallel streams, each with its own integrity. Both Intellection and Intuition are complex responses to ur-experience. And their respective percepts are purely Inner and Mental—purely Other Worldly—in contrast to This World, the Material World of the Sensation Sector (L.1).

Using our Intellection, we define and explain. In terms of religion, our intellectional beliefs are called theology: **ideas about** deity, heaven, hell, etc. These Other Worldly percepts are not things we actually **see** , but rather things we **think**. Nonetheless, we often feel heartfelt emotion with regard to these Other Worldly beliefs. This amounts to a kind of worship. **We come to worship our beliefs!** We come to worship the unseen (and never seen), the merely thought-about. Religious tyrants relish this kind of worship, for they can manipulate us by controlling what we **believe** . They do not honor and affirm what we actually **see**. Instead, they insist that we must **believe** certain thoughts before we can be worshipful.

But, happy to say, they are wrong. In fact we do not need to **believe** anything at all in order to **worship!** For, when we live our lives openly, savoring our Actual experience, our worship arises naturally and spontaneously. To worship, we need only experience Harmony and feel

Gladness and Gratitude for it. Our worship springs naturally from our innate preference for Harmony, regardless of whether we believe anything—or nothing.

Little Essay #14

**“The Natural Man is a luminous ideal...yet a swiftly setting sun.”**

Ah, the Natural Man! He is wild and self-willed. He is one with his Body and with Nature. He comprehends the world clearly, undistorted by acculturation. He lives in his Body, and all Tef is well integrated for him.

Ah, the Natural Man! He is born of bliss, lives with delight, loves with passion, and dies with wisdom and contentment. He prizes Harmony and is uncompromised by the cultural world.

Ah, the Natural Man! Was I myself a Natural Man in another time: perhaps in the womb, perhaps during early childhood? Did that Man's sun rise up with splendor and optimism, only to be dimmed by his submission to Culture? Is that sun still declining and setting—too soon—day swallowed by night?

The Natural Man. Something lacks sympathy for this luminous ideal. Forces encourage instead the Cultural Man: submissive, confused, brainwashed, distracted from his inherent needs and wishes. The Natural Man bonds with his Body and the world of Nature—with the beauty and splendor of the elder world. This Natural Man—the Stayer, I call him—seeks to live in the Herenow, and not to change that wildness. Whereas the Cultural Man—the Leaver—cannot wait to replace Nature with things of his own design: the artificial, the ersatz, the invented. Or even to abandon Gaia and the Body altogether.

So, as my own sun seems to be setting, eclipsed by computers, chemicals, and fake food, the Natural Man is becoming a wistful memory, a quaint ideal. The forest, the stars, and his own flesh are giving way to gadgets, and plastic, and virtual realities. I do not know why this is happening. It just is. But still I wonder: Does it **have** to be so?

## Little Essay #15

### **“Life is a mixed metaphor.”**

That standard rule of composition, “Do not mix your metaphors”, is easy to comprehend. Your teacher likely insisted something like this:

“Never say, ‘Life is a bowl of cherries and a kick in the pants’, for these two images are unrelated and competing. Yes, life can be compared to either one, but do not use these images in the same sentence, or even in the same paragraph. Another example: ‘The carousel of life wheels ‘round and ‘round, hovering twixt Heaven and Hell, its muscular grip squeezing out a treasure trove of buried character’. A very mixed metaphor! Do not write like this!”

I agree with this professorial rule, and I generally obey it when I write. But I do this mostly for the sake of the reader’s ease of reading, not because it reflects actual life. Actual life really **is** a mixed metaphor! In the same moment that life wheels on its axle, it does hover twixt Heaven and Hell, and it also grips us and squeezes out character! Indeed, a little mixing of our metaphors may be desirable, if only to demonstrate how diverse, complex, contrary, and perplexing life really is!

Metaphors add color and liveliness and meaning to our communication. They are always lies, of course, for life never **really is** a carousel or a grasping hand. But used with discretion, metaphors can be descriptive and insightful. Even when mixed. Or mixed up!

## Little Essay #16

### **“The Grand Illusion is the separateness of things.”**

John Donne said, “No man is an island....” His metaphor asserts that no person is separate from humanity: We are all in this together. In fact, taking Donne’s idea a bit farther, we might think of humanity, not as a multitude of souls, but as a single huge Being having several billion faces, a continent of interconnected souls.

The mainland of Donne’s metaphor is, of course, the **human** community—a monoculture—for he lacks the modern ecological perspective of, say, Aldo Leopold or James Lovelock. Donne is thoroughly anthropocentric. The concepts of **ecological** community and planetary ecosystem extend well beyond his worldview. But Tef Theory goes even farther, taking us a big step farther. It suggests that **no** island—of any kind—is ever truly an island, that no continent is ever truly a continent, that all such **separate things** are illusory if we perceive them as discrete entities. **Actuality** is instead a **continuum** of experience: never broken, without beginning, without end, and without separate parts. Only in the **Inactuality** of our minds—in our intellectual imaginations—can we perceive things as existing separate from one another.

Indeed, material “things” likened to billiard-balls or marbles are demonstrably **not** separate and discrete. Such material things make physical contact, they emit, absorb, and reflect radiation, they give off sound, they shed particles and wastes, and on and on, existing in **continuity** with the rest of reality. They are one with Tef. If only to free us from our intellectual illusion—the Grand Illusion—Tef Theory suggests we perceive seemingly separate things more as foci, or nodes,

within the continuum of experience—more as blobs within goo—not as discrete billiard balls rolling around in empty space. In this view, The 10,000 Things are each seen as indefinite, ambiguous **regions** in Tef, rather than absolutely disjunct, independent entities.

Such “gooey” things are fully at one with the original Chaos of Qualities that emerges in our microscale experience. Only the mind perceives such things—and humans—as islands.

Another way to see Tef: It is not (ultimately) islands and mainland, but rather, peninsulas attached to Pangaea. All “things” retain at least some continuity with the whole. Total disjunction does not occur. So, in this view, no man is an island. Rather, all men are peninsulas, a better metaphor. Islands are illusions.

Little Essay #17

**“Why is being an animal not good enough for us?”**

I assume that my distant ancestors left Africa voluntarily. No horde of Huns forced them out. But did they just happen to wander into new lands by chance? Or were they pursuing Pleistocene game herds? Or were they pressured by rising population and food scarcity at home? Or frightened by epidemic disease? Or, were they, as I’ve heard suggested, victims of a long drought that made Africa unlivable?

In any event, these people—who we must assume were highly adapted to their African motherland—entered alien habitats for which they were not as well adapted. True, in leaving Africa they may have gained some benefits—such as freedom from malaria and hyenas. But they also encountered harsh new realities—such as freezing climates and less sunlight. They entered strange new habitats that posed real challenges, requiring much cultural adaptation. Obviously some physiological adaptation was possible, for our ancestors radiated into numerous pigmentation and body types (what we continue to call, unwisely, races). But most of their adaptation was technological and cultural, including control of fire, invention of new kinds of tools, domestication of animals, and development of new learning, teaching, and communication techniques. In any event, Africans survived and spread worldwide.

Thus, from the day(s) they left Africa, my ancestors were forced to transcend their original animal nature and their original adaptations. We continue their quest for transcendence today, though we seem ignorant of why we do it. After tens of thousands of years, the ideal of the Natural Man—the person who is highly integrated with nature—has lost out to the ideal of the Cultural Man—the person who is committed to creating and living in artificial habitats. Now more of us are Leavers than Stayers.

I do not know any reason why we **have** to continue this flight from Nature into Culture, but we seem eager, even frantic, to do so. Being an animal is apparently not good enough for us. Is this powerful urge to change ourselves and our world merely an accident of prehistory, a chance fork in an ancient path? If so, where is it taking us? Should we go there? Do we even have a choice?

## Little Essay #18

### “Language ‘gets’ us before we realize we’ve been ‘got’!”

By using the English language we take on habits, biases, and assumptions that go unrecognized and unrealized. For instance, take the word “it”. Such an innocent, tiny word! “It” is a pronoun: an empty box, if you will, into which you can place anything—any discrete **thing**—that you like. Obviously, “it” is not picky, for it accepts any and all genderless entities (deferring, in English, to “he” and “she” for gendered entities). Profoundly, our use of “it” implies that those entities really do exist. The mere existence of the word “it” implies that it-things are real things. But you and I can, with a little effort, see that the world is actually a mass of continuous goo, not a collection of discrete marbles. Yet “it” implies that the marbles exist, and thereby “it” tells us what to think, what to believe, even before we have recognized the “gooey-ness” of reality for ourselves. “It” is a lie. It “gets” us.

Or take another tiny word, “is”. This little verb of being asks us to make perceptual identities: “This lady *is* an American”, or “Basalt *is* a black igneous rock”, or “He *is* a Modern Druid”. What we eventually discover, however—if we take the trouble to look—is that every entity, every category, every event is unique, singular, one-of-a-kind. Nothing can be **exactly** like something else in **all** details. Thus, perfect identity is an error of the mind. Although we can establish **equivalency**, whereby one thing is perceived to **approximate** the qualities and functions of another, all attempts to establish **complete perceptual identity** fail.

Moreover, “is” may even suggest ontological identity—whereby one thing is claimed to actually **be** another. Yet one thing simply cannot

be the **same one** as another thing. Such a claim is nonsense and does not happen. Thus, “is” lies to us, and it lies not only when it tells us that two things have **exactly** the same characteristics, but it also lies when it claims that one thing **is the same one** as another thing. This means that metaphors are never literally true. They are always lies (though they do have their virtues). “Is” tells us how to think and what to believe, even **before** we have looked at reality for ourselves. “Is” is a lie. It “gets” us before we know we have been “got”.

In these and many other ways, language pre-constructs our thoughts, and thereby pre-constructs our percepts. To a major degree, language creates our world. We swim through a sea of words. And, because we are born into this sea of words, like fish in the briny deep, we live submerged and may not perceive its influence on us. We are subject to the influence of words from the very start. Language “gets” us well before we realize we have been “got”.

Little Essay #19

**“Harmony: You know it when you see it.”**

It is a tenet of Tef Theory that reality is experience and that nothing exists except experience. For anything to exist, there must first be experience: “No experience, no existence.” It is another tenet of Tef

Theory that we always prefer, and always seek, **harmonious** experience: “We desire what we like” or “We just want to be happy”. We have no choice about this preference, for Harmoniousness is an unopposed force that draws us through life in a single direction, the Vector of Value. We do not march aimlessly.

Of course, the **word**, “Harmoniousness”, is merely a **name** for that force. You cannot experience Harmoniousness merely by naming it or merely by thinking the word. Rather, you have to feel Harmoniousness in your “heart”, using your process of microscale Evaluation. Near-synonyms of Harmoniousness include: bliss, peace, the good, love, fitness, beauty, perfection, A-Okay-ness, contentment, joy, pleasure, optimism, liking, happiness. Disharmonious things are the antonyms of these. All the names for Harmony and Harmoniousness acknowledge a positive Value, detected and selected by Evaluation. The Vector of Value points away from Disharmony and toward Harmony.

If none of these synonyms of Harmoniousness is meaningful to you, then your best recourse is to seek direct, non-verbal experience itself. Fortunately, this is easy, and I am confident you will know Harmoniousness whenever you see it. You will also know Disharmoniousness whenever you see it. And that knowing will be genuinely yours. No one else can, or needs to, tell you what is good and what is bad. These values are self-evident to you, though you will find that some of your Evaluations change over time. Moreover, your deeds—your Actions—can have many **consequences**, both good and bad, for yourself and for the world. The self-evidence of Harmony and Harmoniousness means that Evaluation is always **yours to do**. Only **you** can say what is harmonious to **you**. Fortunately, you **always** know Harmony when you experience it!

## Little Essay #20

**“Absent Will, we are immobilized. Absent Will, love does not manifest in the world.”**

When new experience (microscale Quality) emerges into Tef—say, when something happens in our life, or we begin to think a thought, or a mood descends on us—the experience is **initially** value-neutral. During the first instant it is simply unevaluated ur-experience. But then, **immediately**, microscale Evaluation judges that experience as harmonious or disharmonious. Through Evaluation the experience **becomes** good or bad. This is often followed by positive or negative mesocale emotional reactions (for example, fear, joy, lust, regret) that magnify the Value of the experience, sometimes building it up until we are compelled to act. Mild emotion may not cause us to act, but emotion that does build to sufficient intensity—an intensity that we call Will—does at some point overflow into Action, through our muscles. This is to say that Action (aka Active Perception) always emerges into Tef via the Body. Thus, our Will is expressed through the Body: through writing, speaking, walking, working, fighting, loving, or alternatively, through the restraining of our Action when inaction will bring the change we want.

If events beg for Action, yet for whatever reason we feel no Will—neither strong Good Will nor strong Ill Will—we do not act. We remain listless or immobilized. And because love is expressed through our Good Will toward other Beings, having weak Will means we may express no loving Action. Tef does not gain the benefits of our love. This absence of our loving Action can be bad for the world, for the world often needs both our passionate Good Will and our vigorous Good Works.

Even worse than lack of Will is blocked Will. Our Will is not always free Will. From time to time it may be blocked—either by the world or by ourselves. Thus, our Will, be it good or ill, can be imprisoned in the Inner Realm. There it becomes dammed up, building in intensity, yet lacking Action via the muscles to set it free. Consequently, it can be expressed only by our glands and nerves and cells. This emotional constipation leads to disease of both body and soul. Therefore, if only for our own bodily well-being, we need to express our Will. Expression of Will, you can see, is very important. For **all** of Tef!

Little Essay #21

**“Speak your mind and act your heart.”**

Our thoughts (in the narrower sense of the word) are Inner Realm stuff that flowers within the megascale Idea World of the Intellection Sector, L.3. (Images are, by contrast, the stuff of the megascale Story World derived from the Intuition Sector, L.2.) Thus, our thoughts are mind-stuff, whether disassembled by Analysis or assembled by Synthesis. In other words, mind consists of our Mental constructing of

things. Moreover, the mind makes and uses representations (Reps). These often take the form of declarative words and symbols—spoken or written—by which we communicate our thoughts to other people. Thus, we **speak** our mind, we speak our thoughts.

Feelings and emotions are, like thoughts, also Inner Realm stuff. But they flower within the megascale Story World of the Intuition Sector, L.2. This is sometimes called the heart. Heart is our response, positive or negative, to our experience: to our sense of the Harmoniousness or Disharmoniousness of our experience, be it the Outer Realm, or within our Body, or in our Inner life. Intuition is “mute”, that is, it is non-declarative (for example, its poetry and its exclamations are non-declarative utterances). Instead, Intuition communicates itself through images and deeds. For the heart to be known, we must act, and this Action is nonverbal—**through** the Body, **through** our deeds, work, play, ritual, sex, and so on. Sometimes this communication takes the form of images, created by our artistic acts. In these nonverbal ways we share our values and emotions with other people. We **act** our heart, we act our feelings.

Thus, I **speak** my (L.3) mind and **act** my (L.2) heart. At least this is how I express myself—a human who is male, older, Euroamerican, middle class, educated, introverted. Knowing that my Sectors use these different means of expression is valuable, useful wisdom. Do you, too, speak your mind and act your heart?

## Little Essay #22

**“Eden, they say, *was* good. Heaven, they say, *will be* good. What about the here and now: *Is it good, right now?*”**

Eden, they say, was good: there and then, in a distant place, in a distant past. Heaven, they say, will be good: there and then, in a distant place, somewhere in the future. So they **say**. Should I believe what they **say** about there and then, about the Therethen? Or should I heed my own experience in the here and now, here at home in the Herenow?

My name for all other times and places is Therethen. These times and places are not part of This World, but are Other World ideas and images, **thought of** as lying somewhere beyond this place and this time. They reside, it should be clear, solely in the mind: images and ideas. The Past (e.g., History) is built in part on memory, in part on knowledge. It is Inactual Therethen, not Actual Herenow. And the Future is derived in part from Prediction, an imaginary world of projected time and place. It, too, is Inactual Therethen, not here and now. These past and future Therethens can be complex and sophisticated. Yet the fact remains that they are solely **ideas**. Neither the Past nor the Future contains any experience that is Herenow Actuality: firsthand, current, live, concrete experience. Past and Future are truly **Other Worlds**.

I think it is hazardous to spend too much time in Therethen worlds, even if they be nice places like Eden and Heaven. Neither place has any Actual presence in This World. They are Inactual, largely imaginary, Other Worlds. Indeed, although I hear what others **say** about Eden and Heaven, I have yet to meet anyone who has actually, bodily **visited** either place. Certainly I have not met anyone who currently lives there!

But let us set aside Therethen. Forget about Eden and Heaven. A greater concern is the state of our present reality: Is the Herenow good? Do we have optimal happiness in our lives? Are we bringing ever more Harmoniousness into the world we currently inhabit? And if we are unhappy about the here and now, what are we doing to make it better? Should we retreat into Fantasies and Imaginations? Into Eden or Heaven? I think not. Rather, we need to renew our **Actions toward making the Herenow better. We need to do Good Works in the Herenow!**

Little Essay #23

**“Passive, you perceive the world. Active, the world perceives you.”**

Most Perception is a passive, **Inner** process, subjective and private. No one else directly shares your percepts, thus no one ever **has** your percepts. Indeed, microscale ur-experience can enter Tef, and you can evaluate it and mentate it and integrate it, all without anyone ever knowing that something is happening within you. Indeed, you can do this without anyone knowing that you even exist! When you are passive, you do perceive, but no one else perceives your percepts.

By contrast, your Action (Active Perception) is a dynamic **Outer** process. Your subjective Will stimulates muscular effort, via the Body—effort that changes the Outer Realm and thus creates objective, public experience. In this way, your Action changes reality, creating events in the shared, public world. Others perceive your Action and its consequences, and through this they infer that you, too, exist. Your Action makes your Inner subjectivity “visible”. It follows that if you want the world to know you, you must act. And if the world is to know you **accurately**, you must act from the heart: act truthfully, act sincerely.

If you prefer to remain hidden—a subjective, passive percipient only—then do not engage the world. Do not act. Remain detached. But if you want to be known, you must act. Your choice to be active or passive will depend on which option will bring the greater Harmony to you and to all of Tef.

Little Essay #24

**“We suffer the errors of our ancestors.”**

If you believe in the Past, in History, then you will surely agree that our ancestors have an influence that continues in the world today. (Yes, I have elsewhere asserted that History belongs to the Level Three Other World—Inactual Therethen mind-stuff only, not Herenow

Actuality. Most people, however, accept History wholesale as our true, shared story about an Actual Past. That is, most people use the notion of History **as if** it had concrete, Actual reality. They accept without question the myth that our present times are partly the result of things our ancestors did a generation ago, a century ago, an age ago. I will use that myth here, even though I know it to be false and often misleading.)

Thus, we agree: We are still healing the scars of ancient battles, still restoring the gutted quarries and logged forests of past times, still living with antique institutions and quaint laws that were established lifetimes ago. Indeed, I find it amazing how often grudges and resentments of two thousand years' standing still trouble human hearts today. Yet, **if** we employ the notion of History, we must accept its full message: that although our ancestors gave us life and abundant good things, they also burdened us with many lingering evils.

In fact, much of our daily work is in response to our own parents' errors: their wars, their avarice, their flaws, their good (but sometimes misguided) intentions. We continue to clean up their mess, even as we create a new and different mess for our own children! Something in the human psyche says not to worry about the consequences of our actions, says to let the Future take care of itself. Unfortunately, the Present will be the Past of our Future! We **do** need to worry about consequences, if only for our own self-interest: The consequences of **our own** Actions will carry over from **our own** Past to **our own** Future.

So, let us live today, that when our time is up we can say: We did well for the present generation **and** we were kind to future generations. May our descendants suffer only minimally from **our** errors. May our descendants say of us: "They did well!"

## Little Essay #25

**“Want to help others? Encourage their strengths and strengthen their courage!”**

Often we want to help others. Yet, we also want them to “do their own thing”, for we cannot live their life for them. I believe that, although there are many ways to help others, we can help them **best** when we bolster **their own** effectiveness.

Outstanding skills and talents and staminas reside, often latent, in everyone. Let us acknowledge and encourage these strengths, for these are the true wealth of each person. One skill well developed and well used is worth a hundred potential skills. Yet even as we lead the cheering section for these specific strengths, we need also to urge well-roundedness. Let us help others develop their many skills and talents and staminas that are not, and may never be, outstanding. Let us promote **all** the strengths that others possess.

At the same time, people cannot express their strengths if they lack Will and the passion to act. Life takes courage to live. Harmony sought with vigor **can** become a bonfire, and our help **can** be the igniting match. So, as we encourage the strengths of others, let us also strengthen their courage. People need **both** strength and courage in order to live well! We can help them find both.

## Little Essay #26

### **“Druids and Tefists are Way Showers.”**

Two thousand years ago the Celtic Druids were a cultural force in Western Europe. From sketchy surviving sources, we conclude that the ancient Druids were among the most educated, most esteemed, most influential of people in their societies. Their purview was nearly all aspects of life, and their many roles—no doubt with specialization, since each Druid surely could not be expert in everything—included: philosopher, priest, magician, diviner, judge, political advisor, physician, scientist, naturalist, musician, historian, and poet. That is, the Druids were probably the ancient equivalent of our highly trained specialists today.

One salient feature of Druidry was its emphasis on wholeness. We tend to lack this feature in our own fragmented lives today. My sense is that the Druids helped hold all the parts together. And modern Druids still do this. To be sure, our modern Druids are not necessarily expert in all or even many fields. But they do try to show us how to keep all of our specialized roles framed within the big picture. They encourage us toward wholeness, cooperation, and the orchestration of complex experience. They also remind us of our core nature and purpose: the pursuit of Harmony throughout Tef.

Modern Druids show us the way to a better life. Without a vision of the whole, we risk disintegration. Without clarity of purpose, we risk misdirection and lack of love. Today’s Druids point the way ahead. In this sense the ancient Druids were, and today’s modern Druids still are, Way Showers.

Tefists, too, are Way Showers. They use a map, called Tef Theory, to model our lives. They offer many skills for living life, collectively called Tefistry. They borrow some of the traditions and spirit of ancient and modern Druidry, but they also welcome knowledge and wisdom from every quarter of life: science, religion, philosophy, art, and daily work, play, and suffering. To the extent that they have found ways of optimizing Harmony in life, Tefists often seek to show and share these ways to others. In short, Tefists, like Druids, are Way Showers.

Little Essay #27

**“Both Scientism and Religionism are poorly grounded.”**

“Grounding”, in a general sense, refers to maintaining or restoring contact with the Original. In any chain of representation or abstraction, the Original is the starting place, your ur-experience, your initial referent. Take the moon, for example. You can say all you want to **about** it, you can paint all the pictures you want to **about** it, you can do all the scientific studies you want to **about** it, but the moon, in its Originality, remains simply a big round luminary in the sky. You restore your grounding every time you look up at the glowing moon itself.

More specifically, “grounding” refers to keeping your connection to **concrete**, Actual, Original experience, which in large part is the Outer Realm and the Body. In other words, grounding yourself implies emphasizing experience in Level One (the Sensation Sector/Material World) and deemphasizing experience in Level Two (the Intuition Sector/Story Other World) and Level Three (the Intellection Sector/Idea Other World). To be grounded, in this narrower sense, is to be focused on This World experience, not on Other World experience. Tef Theory also refers to grounded experience as Orthoreality, whereas all representations and inferences **about** that experience are Metareality.

Scientism is the wholesale reliance on science and the ideas (Scenarios) that science generates. This happens when the hypotheses, models, and axioms accepted by science (i.e., Metareality) come to be deemed **more true**, and even **more real**, than either (a) the views of other disciplines or (b) one’s own **firsthand**, Actual, Original percepts of things (i.e., Orthoreality). Scientism strongly debunks and rejects what it sees as illusions and erroneous beliefs. It claims to tell you what is “**really**” true. It demands that you distrust your own senses, that you discount your own innate Perception. Note, however, it gives you nothing in return but its **ideas** about the world. It does not—because it cannot—**give** you anything **concrete**. Thus, scientism offers you nothing but ideas, usually served up passionately. Scientism idolizes science.

Religionism is the wholesale reliance on religion and its Stories. This happens when the beliefs and preachings and customs of religion (i.e., Metareality) are deemed **more true**, and even **more real**, than either (a) the views of other disciplines or (b) one’s own **firsthand**, Actual, Original percepts of things (i.e., Orthoreality). Religionism tells you what is “**really**” true. It demands that you distrust your own senses, that you discount your own innate Perception. Note, however, it does

nothing beyond **telling** you about an Other World. It does not—because it cannot—**give** you anything **concrete** in This World. Religionism **gives** you only dogma—its accepted theological ideas and Stories served up with passion—plus lots of advice about how to behave. Religionism idolizes religion.

**Both** science and religion generate Mental percepts: Concepts and Myths, respectively. Both belong to the Other Worlds, not to This World. We add them onto and into This World. There they compete with Actuality and usurp its autonomy. We even forget we have added them, allowing these “virtual realities” of the mind to supplant (surrogate) the Actualities of our lives. Thereby we lose our grounding in the concrete Herenow of This World. We become lost in science or religion, becoming devotees of scientism or religionism.

Help! To refocus on the concrete Herenow—to regain some Orthoreality—I suggest you go munch a cookie!

Little Essay #28

**“Tef is One, Whole, and All. Tef is *It*.”**

“Tef” is an acronym for “Total Experiential Field”. Tef can refer to any of four things:

a) Tef can refer to the narrow focus of my present attention, my Field/ Focus of Attention, or FOA. This Tef is what I am closely attending to

right now, regardless of where it is happening or how it contributes to my life.

b) Tef can refer to **all** that I am experiencing right here and right now, provided it lies within my **Actual** Inner Realm, or Body, or Outer Realm. It is Actual experience assigned to the Present Interval only. This Tef consists of Herenow experience and is called the Lesser Tef.

c) Tef can also refer to everything that I experience as The Past and everything that I experience as The Future: **all** of reality, both Actual and Inactual, whether right here and now or assigned to another place and time. This Tef is the combined total of Herenow and Therethen experience, whether within the FOA or beyond it. It is the combined total of Orthoreality and Metareality. This totality is called the Greater Tef. (If you look very carefully, however, you will discover that (b) and (c) are really the same thing, because Therethen experience occurs as a part of the Herenow. It only **pretends** to be located in another time and place.)

d) Tef can also refer to my concept and mental model of experience, that is, to Tef Theory. This Tef is a map of life.

Thus, Tef refers both to a major part of *It* and to all of *It*, as well as to my model of *It*. I use a circle to symbolize each kind of Tef, be it the FOA, the Lesser Tef, the Greater Tef, or my theory of Tef.

Tef, we now see, stands for **all** experience, including even that experience we regard as unreal or illusory or false or imaginary. When we examine Tef carefully, we find that it really is **all** experience, and that there are no exceptions to it and no voids in it. Hence it represents a **whole**, *the whole*: Tef is continuous, unbroken, endless. And being all and whole, Tef is only **one** thing: it is a singularity. So, again, in short,

Tef is One, Whole, and All. I sometimes call it reality. I sometimes call it *It*.

Like all other entities (except the elements of raw experience), Tef has internal relations: We perceive that its constituent parts are interrelated. But, unlike all other entities, Tef has no external relations: It is not linked to anything beyond and outside its boundaries. This is so because—being the **total** experiential field—it is exclusive and exhaustive. Tef is a singularity. Therefore, it can hardly be said to have any boundaries. Tef is indefinite in scope, an indefinity. Tef is *It*.

(Well, okay. I see red penalty flags tossed high here. I have misspoken just a bit. The reality of our lives is named *It*. Strictly speaking, Tef is only my model (map) of that reality, *It*. For convenience, however, I use “reality” and “*It*” and “Tef” interchangeably.)

Is there more than one Tef? For instance, do you have **your** own Tef, one that is different from **my** Tef? I can report that I experience only one, Actual Tef, only one totality of experience. For me, “my” Tef is **the** Tef. So what might it mean to speak of “**your**” Tef? You and your Tef can exist for me, but only as Other World **inferences** (Metareality) within **my** heart and mind. These Other World inferences are clearly an Inactual part of **my** Tef. Thus, you are an Other Worldly fragment of “my” Tef—which is **the only Actual** Tef.

This view may take some getting used to, as it is not the way we ordinarily think about reality. Of course, you are free to hold this same view toward me and my Tef, and I am guessing you will do so.

This is honestly how I see *It*. Facts are facts, Actuality is Actuality. What more can I say?

## Little Essay #29

**“Love is the great bonding power, the great survival power, of humanity.”**

At the Festival of Lughnasa, Tefists celebrate various themes, including love. Some people may assume this means sexual love specifically, but in fact it means **all** the kinds of love. (Sexuality, Puberty, and the Body are celebrated at the Festival of Beltane.) Love is the reaching-out power, the bridge-building power, the “come-dance-life-with-me” power. Its lack is felt as isolation, bereftness, desolation, exclusion—in short, as lack of bondedness. Love includes the parent/child bond, the romantic and sexual bonds, the bonds of friendship, bonds with tribe and nation, and bonds with universe and deity.

Solitude can be mistaken for a lack of bondedness. However, solitude is only a lack of **social** bondedness, and in any event, it is a temporary state: True hermits are rare. In solitude, the absence of people frees us to forge bonds with oneself and with the universe. In solitude we can freely love the non-social, non-human worlds.

Thus, at Lughnasa, Tefists honor **all** the kinds of love, both social and non-social. They honor bondedness in general.

What causes love? Why do we reach out beyond ourselves? Why do we crave bondedness? Love, I believe, grows out of our innate desire for Harmony. We say, in effect, “I want Harmony to prevail. I want to be in loving, harmonious bond with \_\_\_\_\_” (provide the name of

someone or something). Or we may say, “ I want to feel Good Will toward \_\_\_\_\_” (provide the name of someone or something). Our love and Good Will is a response to Gladness, in large part flowing from boons received or from expectation of boons to come. Gratitude emerges, welling up toward our benefactor, intensifying into Good Will. Good Will may then overflow as bodily Action, transforming our love into Good Works. So it is that our Good Will transforms into Good Works. The result can be Harmony: for me, and for you, and even for all of Tef.

Thus, love includes our desire to live, to flourish, to prosper. It is the fuel that energizes our lives. Lacking love, we can easily fall into suspicion and lack of cooperation and even violence. Lacking love, we risk not only lack of fulfillment, but even lack of life itself, which is death. Love keeps us from killing one another. It assures we will nurture one another. By bonding us together, it becomes our great survival power. Ultimately, it bonds all of Tef together. But its deep, ultimate origin lies in Value born of Evaluation, and we must keep that wellspring clear and flowing. Hence, never neglect your sense of Value. Heed your heart. May Harmony prevail! Love Thy Tef!

## Little Essay #30

**“Honor the objective realm. Honor the subjective realm. Honor their integration. And thereby honor Tef.”**

Tef can be subdivided into numberless contrasting pairs: the dyads. Dyads consist of two members, each member standing in **contrast** to the other member. Dyads therefore highlight **differences** between two things. Some dyads are trivial or insignificant (take, for example, the blade of my shovel vs. the handle of my shovel). Other dyads—which I call the Major Dyads—are clearly significant, for they subdivide Tef as a whole or else a major region of Tef. Let us take as an example the Major Dyad called the Inner/Outer Dyad (= Outer/Inner Dyad).

One of the most salient dyads in our experience, this dyad contrasts the Inner and Outer Realms. The Inner Realm contains both our affective heart and our cognitive mind, as well as the physical sensations of the Inner Body. The Inner Realm is private, subjective experience. It includes our bodily pains and pleasures, plus our emotions, our dreams, our thoughts; it is, roughly, the self. No one else can directly perceive our Inner Realm, nor can we directly perceive the Inner Realm of others. But the Inner Realm of each person is very real for him or her. The Outer Realm, by contrast, is the Great Surround: our public, objective world, thus roughly, the not-self. Everyone can directly perceive the Outer Realm, which includes all Outer Bodies (including one’s own), plus things such as socks, gloves, cadavers, cars, elephants, buildings, mountains, oceans, and the starry universe beyond us.

One way to love Tef, to express Good Will in our life, is through honoring. We honor something when we acknowledge its existence, recognize its contribution to Harmony, and give it our support and encouragement. On the one hand, we can give honor to the Inner Realm: to our heart and mind, to our skills, talents, and enthusiasms. On the other hand, we can give honor to the Outer Realm: to its people, its cities, its ecosystems, its vast cosmic reaches. Thus, we can honor both the subjective and the objective, both the Inner and the Outer.

But there is more. Beyond honoring each member of this Major Dyad, we can honor our Integration and Orchestration of them together, thus honoring **all** experience. To do this we must **transcend** the Inner/Outer Dyad and emphasize instead the oneness, wholeness, and allness of Tef, the **Total** Experiential Field. And when we do honor the whole, we discover that we are also promoting Harmony in our lives. Therefore, let us honor the Inner Realm itself, and the Outer Realm itself, and our Integration and Orchestration of the two. In short, let us honor **Tef!** Rituals and Good Works are two ways of honoring Tef.

## Little Essay #31

### **“Love and Wisdom make a strong team. Who shall be the Teamster?”**

Our love for the world entails our Good Will toward all Beings. Our Good Will overflows as harmonious Action: Good Works. The intent of our active Good Works is to bring Harmony into Tef, be it Harmony for self, for not-self, or for both together. But Tef is complex and changing, and we have no guarantee that our Action will in fact bring more Harmony than Disharmony into Tef.

Yet we live to learn, as well as to love. From trial and error we can learn which things work toward Harmony and which things do not. To this we can add tested theory and that fine old judgment called common sense. In other words, through learning we gain wisdom about how to increase the ratio of Harmony to Disharmony: the H/D Ratio. Employing our wisdom, we become adept at calculating and predicting and planning. Then, by wedding our wisdom to our love, we discover that our Action does produce yet greater Harmony. We find that wisdom and love, like two horses in linked harness, make a very strong team.

Given a strong team, we also need a Teamster. Who shall this be? Who links the harness? Who holds the reins? Who manages the team? My name for the Teamster function in Tef is the Orchestration Sector, and it works at the highest level of Tef: Level Four. It is a synthesis, broadly speaking, in that it links, integrates, and organizes the various other megascale Levels. However, humanity has yet to give the Teamster a popular name (a need that surely hints at our current stage of cultural evolution).

Some might say our Teamster is God. I can go so far as to name it the God Within. But lest we get sucked into a vortex of theological wrangling, I prefer to say this: Whoever it is, the Teamster's objective is **optimal, effective use of the team**. Harmony is always our preference, and a strong team pulling for Harmony is always welcome, whoever the Teamster is. Each of us has the task of naming and nurturing his or her own Teamster. That we may optimize the H/D Ratio.

Little Essay #32

**“If you ever get free, how will you live?”**

Too often, we blame other people or circumstances for holding us back or for blocking our progress. Often we say, “I could really do great things, if only I could get free of \_\_\_\_\_” (provide the name of someone or something). Of course, some people respond positively to hindrances, greeting them as welcome challenges and useful opportunities. But I must confess that I, for one, often succumb to self-pity and blame other people or circumstances for holding me back.

Such blaming allows one to whine and to make excuses and to procrastinate. One can blame others for almost any failing on one's own part. The fact that there is often **some** truth in our blaming lets us get away with claiming it as the **whole** truth. The fact remains, however, that one has to get on with life, whatever the excuses. One cannot wait for utopia—for complete freedom—before living life.

In fact, the more I think about it, I am not even sure I would want utopia. If I got it, could I handle it? Likewise, I often wonder how we, as a society, would actually live if utopia ever came to us. Suppose we no longer had obstacles or hindrances? What would we do with ourselves? What would we have, in the absence of conflict, to focus our mind and muscle? Could we handle Peace on Earth if it ever came? Suppose we no longer had to pay taxes to support warring armies, no longer had to play politics on the job, and no longer had to participate in contentious City Council meetings. Free from all these, what would we do with our time? Could we handle freedom from fear, and freedom from hindrance, and freedom from obligation? Such pure freedom might actually be a great burden.

I do not have a full answer here. But I wonder if the human animal is well designed for peace. Given peace, we might end up having to **invent** war—mock war, at least—just to keep our idle hands busy. (Or is this why football and video games were invented?) We say we want peace, but what would our people do for employment in a fully peaceful world? We say we want complete freedom, but suppose utopia simply does not work for *Homo sapiens*? Then what?

Just wondering out loud. I can hardly even imagine such a peaceful world.

## Little Essay #33

**“We need a Whole world. And each of us seeks a General Story, one that works for us, whether it is a “true” story or not. We seek the big picture. This is the role of our Level Four at megascale: the Orchestration Sector/Optimal World.”**

We need a Whole world: our sense of an integrated Tef, embracing both self and not-self. And we want a personal General Story to go with it: an overall sense of ourself in history, a sketch of our personal role and destiny. We want our world and our personal story to become woven together into a big picture, one that embraces religion, science, history, art, myth, and philosophy; that includes the Past, the Present, and the Future; that tells us where we have come from, where we are now, and where we are trying to go. And why.

The big picture in Tef Theory takes in all three scales of Perception: microscale, mesoscale, megascale. And it involves all of the Sectors of Perception. For it is much more than Level One’s Sensation Sector/Material World. There, color, tone, odor, pain, and matter and energy—though certainly essential parts of life—do not comprise all of life. Similarly, the big picture entails Level Two stories of the Intuition Sector/Story Other World—told tales, literature, myths, movies, night dreams, day dreams, and fantasies—but these, too, are only part of life. And the big picture also weaves in Level Three’s Intellection Sector/Idea Other World—with its knowledge, concepts, predictions, inferences, and imaginations, including theories of everything, such as Tef Theory—but these, likewise, are only part of life. And last, but not least, the big picture draws upon the Archives of Memory, the record of our lives.

Thus, we seek to weave together all of the scales and Sectors of Perception, as well as the Modes of Enchantment and Consciousness-*of*. And with this big picture, and through it, we seek always to optimize the H/D Ratio. We seek to know Harmony throughout Tef.

Tef Theory itself helps us attain the big picture by providing a skeleton, a framework, for our Orchestration of a Whole world and of a personal General Story. I think Tef Theory is helpful for this task. I do assert its usefulness.

#### Little Essay #34

### **“The philosopher is a special kind of helper.”**

There are two kinds of philosophers. Some perch on high rocky pinnacles and offer advice from there. Others sit at cluttered desks and offer advice from there. The difference is that the former breathe fresh air, the latter breathe stale air. They both give advice, be it fresh or stale.

Philosophers’ perspectives on life are detached, distanced, spectatorial, “objective”. Philosophers offer to help us with our **thoughts**: They think about thinking. They analyze and synthesize ideas. They clarify and organize concepts. They seem to enjoy chasing wild intellectual game at a speed that leaves others out of breath. Or else they bury us with an avalanche of boring details: “if-this-then-that”.

Yes, philosophers seek to help the world. Of course, most everyone seeks to help the world. It is just that most of us help by using our hands or our voices or our technology. Philosophers, though, are mind people: high-site mind people, always one step above or beyond the rest of us. This is their role: to see and describe life from a higher Standpoint or from a different angle. They help the world by showing the way toward truth and clarity, by helping us untangle mental knots. We do need the help of philosophers—though just how many philosophers we need remains uncertain.

Philosophers always find themselves on the outside, looking in as spectators. This is both the glory and the regret of philosophers. Their outsider role gives them wonderful consciousness-*of* that is unknown to insiders. But their outsider role also starves them of participation in lived life. Still, they go on helping in their special way. They stand above or beyond the world. And for this very reason, they may have trouble actually living life. They, too, may need help with living life!

Little Essay #35

**“State your Standpoint. Warn us when you change it.”**

“Okay now, let us take a step back....”

“He can’t see the forest for the trees....”

“We need to get the big picture....”

Such statements as these, if taken literally, not as metaphors, would be formulas for getting higher or broader **viewpoint**. In this sense, they refer to actually changing the body's physical **site**, or vantage point, in the **material** world. (Other examples of viewpoint include looking down at the earth from an airplane at 30,000 feet, kneeling to get a child's view upwards at adults, and scanning a coastline from a ship out at sea.)

But we also use these statements in the metaphorical sense of changing the vantage point within our **minds**, the mental perspective from which we **think** about things. This is our **Mental Standpoint**. It is how we view the world from a particular Inner "place", our mental **site**. Standpoint gives us fresh ideas about the world, and ideas about those ideas, and ideas about those ideas.

A vast amount of confusion arises when people try to speak to each other from different Mental Standpoints, especially when they are unaware that other Standpoints even exist. For example, people can have radically different assumptions about the nature of reality. One person, a Materialist, may never have questioned his belief that reality (both the Inner Realm and the Outer Realm) is wholly material. He might say, "The universe is composed solely of matter and energy". Another, an Idealist, may be unaware of her assumption that reality (both the Inner Realm and the Outer Realm) is fundamentally spiritual. She would say, "The world is fundamentally an expression of consciousness". These two people have different mental sites and therefore different Mental Standpoints.

(With regard to this example, my own view is that reality is wholly **phenomenal**. The world contains **both** matter and spirit, and **both** of these are phenomena, or experience. I would say, "Reality is experience

and nothing but experience”. Thus, I speak from the Standpoint of a Philosophical Phenomenalist. Tef Theory is phenomenalist.)

In Level Three, the Intellection Sector, we can, and do, rise to higher and yet higher sites. Thus, for example, we might start out talking about cooking our favorite food, then rise to a site where we talk about the marketing of the ingredients involved, then rise further and discuss macroeconomic theory of the United States, then rise even further to ponder theories of human knowledge, and finally end up creating a global model of experience, such as Tef Theory. Each higher site at Level Three has its own, broader, more encompassing Standpoint.

Communication works best when everyone knows a speaker’s Standpoint in a conversation. Often when we communicate, however, we start out not really knowing the Standpoint of others. Then, as we talk, we—and they—may skip around among various Standpoints, often rapidly and erratically. This becomes quite confusing, not only to others, but even to ourselves. We would do well, therefore, to learn ways of clearly signaling what our Standpoint is, as well as kindly signaling our intention to change it. For example, to establish our Standpoint, we might say, “Before we begin, I admit to you my bias that charity is a hindrance, not a help.” And then, to change Standpoint, we might say, “Now, let us stand back and think for a moment about the ideas I have presented today”, or “Now let us shift our discussion from a Materialist perspective to a Phenomenalist perspective.” Thus, as best we know how, we need to alert our partners in conversation as to “where we are at” as well as to the changes we want to make in our Standpoint. Short of this, we risk being badly misunderstood.

## Little Essay #36

**“Current site and self are never self-reflexive in the Present. We know ourselves only as we were in the Past.”**

I assert that our current site cannot observe itself. We never see it. For this reason, our idea of current site is always imaginary, always an unproven (and unprovable) inference.

Site is the imaginary vantage point from which we view something—the point to which we imagine all rays of perspective converge, as it were. Outer, physical site provides our **viewpoint** on Outer Realm percepts (such as mountains and houses and rivers), whereas Inner, Mental site provides our **Standpoint** on any and all percepts (such as images and ideas and dreams).

Our Inner, Mental site provides us our personal, subjective perspective on things. We get its perspective, but we never get the **site itself**, for site is never able to include itself within its own **current** views—just as the eye cannot see itself when it looks around the room. Current site can tell us where our former sites **have been**, but not where the current site itself is **right now**. Thus, for example, we can comprehend a **former** level of understanding or a former degree of consciousness, and we can even **imagine or infer** a site to which that comprehension **might** currently be relative, but we cannot Actually perceive that current site. The only way to perceive our current site is to gain yet higher Standpoint. But of course by then we would be “looking back” at the former site, not at our current site! Site is simply never self-reflexive. It cannot see itself; you cannot see yourself seeing.

Our sense of self is similar because site and self are closely connected. We never know fully what and who we are **at this moment**, if only because our current site is located too close to the self—“just behind the self” in a sense. At best we can perceive what we **were** a moment ago or a year ago. To learn what we **are** at **this** moment, we have to wait a while (sometimes a long, long while), but of course by then we possess only an image of ourselves as we **were**. Thus, we cannot know our current self, any more than we can see our current site.

We may yearn to know our current self, and we may try to grasp it, but I am asserting that this quest always fails. I suppose we can get **some** idea of ourselves if we have a “mirror”—just as the eye can get a **reflection** of itself in a silvered glass. And we do have such a mirror of the self: it is the wavery, cracked mirror of social feedback. Thus, we can learn about ourselves from the way the world responds to us: how people treat us, what they expect of us, how they describe us. But this is a crude mirror, reflecting well our Outer, objective appearance, but rather imperfectly reflecting our Inner, subjective life. Others’ assumptions, hunches, and empathy for us are sometimes incorrect, and hence not fully reliable. For this reason, we should never build our self-image solely on the social “mirror” provided by others.

So, it seems clear to me that my **current** site is never self-reflexive. I know it only as it **was**. Consequently, I know my self only as I **was**. Why should reality be this way? I do not know. It just is. Tef floats upon Mystery.

## Little Essay #37

### “We are Body Beings.”

The Major Dyads of Self/Not-self and Inner Realm/Outer Realm are similar, thus they are approximate synonyms. One member of each dyad—the Self, and the Inner Realm—is private and subjective: me, my thoughts, my dreams, my feelings, and so forth. The other member—the Not-self, and the Outer Realm—is public and objective: other people, houses, cities, the landscape, the wider universe, and so forth.

Where does the Body fit into this dyadic scheme? Is it part of the Self and the Inner Realm? Is the Body partly Not-self, or even mostly Outer? When we study the Body and try to locate it within these two Major Dyads, we come away uncertain, perhaps perplexed. Body seems to belong, in some ways, to both members of both dyads. For instance, the Body’s pains and pleasures are clearly Inner (private, not public) and are arguably part of the Self, whereas the Body’s tangible flesh and physical mass seem mostly Outer and arguably part of the Not-self. But these conclusions are slippery, and I know my own conclusions have been uncertain or inconsistent through time. Moreover, I find that other people are as uncertain and inconsistent as I am! Therefore, I have come to regard the Body as a third realm, a **zone of transition** between the two members of these two dyads. Thus, Body is a zone of ambiguity: inconsistency, uncertainty, and even mystery, straddling the line between Self and Not-self, and the line between Inner Realm and Outer Realm. I therefore refer to it as the Body Ambiguous.

I have also come to see the Body as the crossroads or nexus of our experience. Here, some of our experience is outgoing—our Will is transformed via muscle into Action. Here, also, incoming sensory experience, such as our Sensory Channels—vision, hearing, tactility, and savory—pass through the Body to become ur-experience in the great process of Perception. Thus, Body is the crossroads, nexus, gateway, interface between Inner and Outer, between Self and Not-self. Body does not belong wholly to either member of either dyad. It is ambiguous.

No one really knows what happens to the self/soul/spirit/psyche after we die. When the body dies, it visibly deteriorates, whereas its associated self/soul/spirit/psyche vanishes (at least for those who are left behind). Still, while we are alive, the Body is not just a fleshy shell around our soul. Rather, we experience it as a living, sensuous thing, tightly linked to the happiness of the self/soul/spirit/psyche. Obviously, wise use of the Body is a central part of harmonious living.

Thus, the Body Ambiguous is central to Tef. From our conception to our death, we are Body Beings.

## Little Essay #38

### “How would a fish define ‘water’?”

If you had been born under water, had never left the water, and thus had spent your entire life immersed in water—would you have any real concept of water? You might have encountered bubbles of air near the surface, and you might have bumped into rocky ledges on the bottom of the sea, so you might know about air and stone and how they are different from water. But would you have any clear understanding of just how pervasive water is in your life? Or, would you instead take water for granted: as simply the viscous, warm/cool, cloudy/clear reality of your life? I think you would be almost 100 percent **aware** of water, and yet be almost 0 percent **conscious** of it.

Experience is a similar context for us humans. Although we can be fully aware of individual experiences, we seem only vaguely aware of Tef as a whole. We have names for nearly every **part** of Tef, yet we seem to lack a name for the **whole** of it. (As a young man I had to invent and name the Tef concept, filling that lack in my life.)

Experience is our context, as seawater is for a fish. Moreover, we are made solely of our experience, whereas a fish is not made solely of water. So, we are more like water within water, currents within the depths of sea. That is why we absolutely need the Tef concept. For without it, we remain only vaguely aware of our global context, the Total Experiential Field. We need the Tef concept, for the names we customarily use for the whole are inadequate: reality, life-as-lived, energy, the totality, the world, the universe, and so on. Tef augments and completes these concepts.

Having the Tef concept reveals something special about ourselves: we are **conscious** parts of Tef. We alone (perhaps some higher animals, too) are capable of forming representations (Reps) of our experience and then of linking or overlaying these Reps upon their referents (Refs). This linking creates our **conscious** awareness—or, more accurately, our consciousness-*of*. These novel percepts result from our linking, or overlaying, of Reps upon Refs and then from beholding the resulting “doublet” or “couplet”, which gives ordinary Awareness new “depth”. Consciousness-*of* is my name for this enhanced awareness: Reps overlaid upon Refs. (To me, the ordinary, widespread use of “consciousness” to mean human awareness is not helpful, for it is too vague and undefined. Tef Theory avoids using it.)

Tef is itself a representation. It is a map whose referent is the biggest of all territories, *It*. Use of this map gives us consciousness-*of* of ourselves and our world. Seemingly the Tef concept has emerged only in us humans. We are like the one species of fish who **can** define water. But we are not born with this consciousness-*of*, which must be gained through living and learning. Therefore, the acquisition of the Tef concept is a milestone in human evolution. The possession of it by any given person is a measure of their own personal growth and development.

## Little Essay #39

### “Where is the Past now?”

This is such a peculiar question! Let us try giving it some answers.

- a) The Past was. It is irretrievably gone. It was once, but it is not here now.
- b) The Past passes imperceptibly into the Present, for both Past and Present are arbitrary periods within the flow of time.
- c) The Past continues to exist, but now it is somewhere else, not in **this** time or in **this** place.
- d) The Past is an **idea** only. It does exist now, but only in the mind. It refers to an **imaginary** Then, not to the **concrete** Now. It is a Product of Perception in the L.3 Intellection Sector, not in the L.1 Sensation Sector.

Only answer (d) is consistent with Tef Theory and the evidence of my own life experience.

Answer (a) is incoherent because nothing Actual lies beyond the Present. The Past can never “**was**” because Actual things can only “**is**”. All Therethen things are fictional.

Answer (b) is wrong for the same reason as answer (a): The Present contains all that exists. The Past lacks any ontological concreteness.

Answer (c) **might** be correct, but to my knowledge there is no evidence to support it. After all, every Actual thing I experience is occurring **now**. How could I experience, right now, something located in a **different** time? It **might** somehow exist, but how could I ever know it?

So answer (d) seems best. The Past is an idea. It exists as an idea, now, only in the Present, inspired by memory and by our need for stories to explain our Present experience. We **invent** the Past in order to “save appearances” in the Present—that is, to make sense out of the mysteries of our current experience.

One of these mysteries is the existence of knowledge—memories, basically, stored as archived Concepts. We believe that our memories, from a historical perspective, **once** veridically represented our experience, but we believe that they do not represent our **current** experience. We use memories as measures of change in Tef, especially of change that takes longer than three or four seconds (which is the time period that I call the Present Interval). So we invent the Past to explain and to accommodate our memories. Otherwise, memories are incongruous Mental percepts inexplicably existing in the Present. Without the Past, we cannot make sense of our memories or of any other knowledge.

Another mystery that we explain by inventing the Past is the existence of fossils and historical artifacts. Dinosaur bones and Victorian Era buildings are unintelligible in the absence of some kind of Past-idea. We seriously dislike unintelligibility. So our mind goes to

work, and we create a story of the Past. Although it may defy our **Actual** experience of time, we adopt that story of the Past, rather than suffer any mystery in the Present! So, even though the Present is all that Actually is, we are quite willing to tolerate and use fictional, invented ideas of the Past. The Herenow is Actual (Tef Theory also calls this Orthoreality), whereas Therethen (be it Past or Future) is Inactual (Tef Theory calls this Metareality).

Thus the bald fact remains: The Past is an imaginary time, an idea constructed for the purpose of explaining the Present and of predicting the Future. It does exist right now, but only in the Imagination, and for that reason it lacks a referent right now! The Past has no Present referent! What we seem unable to admit is that **all tenses other than the present tense are imaginary**. They lack grounding in Actuality. Still, we continue to delude ourselves, telling ourselves convenient lies about Past times and Future times.

In conclusion, we are creatures solely of the Present. We are creatures of “is-time”, not of “was-time” or of “will-be-time”. Where is the Past now? Right here, right here in our minds—only!

## Little Essay #40

**“Concepts may be questioned, and deemed warranted or unwarranted, but ur-experience is always beyond question.”**

To hold a Concept as true, we need to have good, compelling reasons. A warranted Concept will have strong explanatory power, or it will be very effective in planning and prediction, or it will mesh well with our other ideas, or perhaps we will find it intuitively, even axiomatically, compelling—or any and all of these reasons together.

We call a highly warranted Concept, the truth. Abstracted and placed on a pedestal, a warranted Concept is sometimes elevated to Natural Law or even to Absolute Truth. It may in fact be honored with **as much or more** credence and weight than the evidence of our own eyes and ears. As such, a Concept can seem even more real to us than the Actuality of our own lives. Examples are the Atomic Theory of Matter, the Germ Theory of Disease, and Christian beliefs about God and Jesus and Heaven and Hell. It's like declaring a fictional stage play to be more real than our own lived life. But I ask: Should the Inactuality of an Other World eclipse the Actuality of This World?

No. Concepts, no matter how warranted, are still always secondary to our original experience, to our ur-experience. The original ur-experience is the starting point for any constructing of Concepts. The starlight we see is original ur-experience, whereas a theory of how stars evolve is a warranted Concept. Such Concepts are always additional to the original experience. They are ideas generated by the Intellection Sector, L.3. Whether they be simple speculations and untested assumptions, or strongly-supported hypotheses and well-tested conclusions, our ideas should never usurp the primacy of raw facts, the

original ur-experience. This is so because ur-experience is beyond all ideas—including all Concepts—for it is **prior** to them. Microscale Quality exists as ur-experience **before** microscale Mentation has added its form, definition, or representation. Ur-experience is **given** (received) and stands on its own. It is therefore beyond question, for it is not a representation, not an interpretation, not an assertion, not an inference to be argued or refuted or confirmed, not even an accepted hypothesis. Ideas, by contrast, are dependent on the ur-experience that they interpret, and they can fall from grace whenever the ur-experience changes or whenever we simply revise our thoughts. Thus, our Concepts are always provisional—even the most warranted of them.

Warranted Concepts are good and necessary. We use them all the time for explanation, for prediction, for planning. But we must never confuse them with the primary ur-experience that they refer to and build upon. We must never forget their secondary place in the great process of Perception.

## Little Essay #41

### **“Value is a vector. Emotions magnify our values.”**

In Newtonian physics, a scalar is a physical quantity having magnitude only, whereas a vector is a quantity having both magnitude and direction. Speed, for example, is a scalar. It tells us how fast an object is moving, but it does not tell us the direction of its motion. Velocity, on the other hand, is a vector. For the physicist, velocity tells us both magnitude and direction: the direction can make a difference and must be included in the description of motion.

According to Tef Theory, microscale Quality is ur-experience that receives its Form and Value by two Basic Processes of Perception: Evaluation and Mentation. Form is added to ur-experience by microscale Mentation. But Form is like a directionless scalar—it is amoral and provides no information as to good or bad about a percept. Microscale Evaluation, by contrast, generates the Vector of Value. Evaluation tells us whether our ur-experience is good or bad, harmonious or disharmonious. In short, Evaluation adds a preferred direction to our experience. It says, in effect: “This experience is good: Pursue it. That experience is bad: Avoid it.”

The process of Evaluation is foundational to the Intuition Sector’s Story World at megascale, giving it a directional arrow, urging us away from Disharmony and toward Harmony. Subsequently, our emotions may add intense power to our Values. Joy and fear, for example, are intense emotions that we add onto positive and negative Values, respectively. The effect of emotions is to generate and focus and intensify our Will. In other words, emotions magnify our Values. Powerful Will becomes one of the Prime Motivations—either toward

Self-interest or toward Not-self-interest—which then passes over into Action via muscular activity. The resulting changes can yield greater Harmony in Tef, for Self, for Not-self, or for both.

Thus, the Vector of Value gives us direction and priority in life. Emotions magnify our Values, generating Will, so that, through our willed Action, Harmony may prevail. It is a chain of perceptual processes. I do not know why Value and emotion and Will and Action work this way. They just do, at least for me.

Little Essay #42

**“Please concisely summarize microscale Perception, according to Tef Theory.”**

I will try.

The three scales of our Perception are microscale, mesoscale, and megascale. Percepts formed at microscale are generally the simplest. They occur in vast numbers and converge into moderately complex entities at mesoscale. Subsequently, large numbers of mesoscale percepts converge to constructure our complex megascale percepts. I liken these relationships to the building up of images on a page using the tiny dots printed during half-tone printing. You can see the overall images (analogous to megascale percepts), and you can examine the

separate tiny color dots (analogous to microscale percepts) that compose the images.

Tef is one, whole, and all: *It*. This is the totality of our experience. Experience is constantly emerging into Tef, transforming there, and then vanishing from Tef. The ultimate origin and demise of experience are unknown, mysterious, though I picture it entering Tef via “portals” during the microscale Basic Processes. Newly emerged experience is the original, initial stage of Perception, called ur-experience. The simplest of microscale ur-experience is Quality. To this we add Value and Form.

Evaluation is my name for the Basic Process that adds Value. Evaluation judges our ur-experience as either harmonious (preferred) or disharmonious (to be avoided).

Mentation is my name for the Basic Process that adds Form to our ur-experience. The simplest kind of Form is “primal”: automatic, nearly instantaneous, largely involuntary, and relatively simple. Primal Form is, most fundamentally, the Perception of contrasts, which in turn define the boundaries (limits) of each entity. This defining process, at its simplest, can be called pulsing: experience is pulsed into **defined** regions of Tef, “nodes” within the continuum of experience. It is by this process of pulsing of ur-experience that new microscale entities emerge in Tef.

Subsequently, the Basic Process called Integration merges microscale Quality, Value, and Form (plus Memories of each) into Whole percepts. Untold numbers of microscale percepts may then be constructed into more complex percepts at mesoscale and megascale.

## Little Essay #43

### **“Religious dogma needs no faith. Science does.”**

Christians talk a lot about faith. They urge you to have faith, to strengthen your faith, to employ your faith in daily living. Faith is asserted to be your link to God. Perhaps their emphasis on faith results from their not being able to prove God’s existence and power. Perhaps Christians have no choice but to base their religious belief on faith.

Perhaps also, because they know that their belief is not actually based on proof, but instead requires a “leap” of faith, some Christians opt to preach dogma. They supply you a body of biblical stories and interpretations to live by, and some of them go even further, discouraging you from questioning these teachings. The implication is that their **dogma** (rather than any evidence or experience of God) is the Ultimate Truth. After all, their dogma needs neither proof nor faith. But note: Their dogma goes unquestioned because **they place it beyond question**, off limits to proof and disproof. They simply do not offer you the opportunity to challenge it. In that case, your belief does not need faith, because you are relying on unquestioned dogma instead. You need risk no “leap” of faith. You get the dogma whether or not you have faith. It would seem, then, that Christians who are full of dogma do not really need any faith in order to believe.

Some Christians claim that the amoral perspective of science lacks what believers have: faith. Some regard science as a faithless, Godless, secular humanism. Yet in my experience with science, I have found it to be a discipline that requires a great deal of faith!

First, it harbors a faith—an implicit trust—in the rationality and orderliness of the universe. Scientists trust they will be able to make sense of the things they study. They have no ultimate assurance of this, of course, so assuming this is essentially a “leap” of faith.

Second, science calls for a faith, a faithfulness—a perseverance—in the face of their realization that all scientific knowledge is provisional. Thus, because scientific knowledge always remains open to revision, it cannot be dogmatic. Scientists realize that Ultimate Truth may be beyond their grasp, yet still they retain faith that they will be able to find at least a Provisional Truth.

Third, science calls for a faith—a confidence—that, if there is a God, surely He/She/It will be understanding and make allowance for the skeptical, nonmoral Standpoint of scientists. Now **that** kind of faith takes **real** faith!

All in all, then, it appears to me that the pursuit of scientific knowledge actually calls for **more** faith than does acceptance of either Christian dogma or Christian faith.

## Little Essay #44

### **“Money is a lie. But using it confers many rights.”**

“Money is power,” I have heard. I have also heard, “Money speaks louder than words.” And my father once told me, “Money is stored energy.” Let me add another truth about money: “Money is a lie.”

True, money often does give us power and prestige and effectiveness. It can buy much. But it does so only because we let it. It is, after all, worth nearly nothing in and of itself—be this pieces of metal, paper, or plastic, or mere numbers on a page or bytes in a computer file. Poof! Any of these can vanish. Even when you have money in hand, it has little practical worth—**unless** you play along with the lie that it has exchange value. And because we **do** accept this lie, it actually does have practical worth.

I suggest that the value of money, though usually expressed in terms of exchange value for goods and services, is better seen as exchange value for rights. In my society, having money and using it gives me increased rights, including my right to eat, to dress, to heat my house, to travel, to play, to be taught, to be healed, to purchase art, to give to charity, and on and on. Gaining money increases my right to do more and more of these things; losing money lessens my right. Note well, however: I did not say that having money gives me more personal strength, or kindness, or courage, or talent. No, I said that money confers on me more **rights** to the purchase, sale, and exercise of certain things. Money confers social privilege and opportunity, not personal virtue or skill.

So, although I assert that money is a lie and that it has little inherent value, I also recognize that it confers rights—even to people who do not deserve those rights. Strange stuff, money.

Little Essay #45

**“No one owes you their compassion.”**

Many in my father’s generation believed, and he repeated to me, the dictum: “The world does not owe you a living!” Though I do not roundly disagree, still, I think it would be nice if the world really did owe me a living! I also prefer to think that life is fair and that every story will have a happy ending. Moreover, I enjoy the political fantasy that I have inalienable rights—to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness—and that these rights are ultimately enforced by an omnipotent, omniscient, loving, merciful deity. In short, I prefer to dream that the world (or God, or some other Power) loves me.

Tef Theory champions love, to be sure. Love is a prime good. But Tef Theory also recognizes that bad results can come from good deeds (or, alternatively, that good-intentioned deeds are not necessarily good for all those on whom they fall). As individuals we cannot control the **whole** world, even though we may control **part** of it. Despite the

Golden Rule, what we would have others do to us is not necessarily what they truly wish to do. Why? Because they are doing what their Intuition tells them will bring Harmony into **their** lives, modified by the wisdom of their Intellection and implemented using whatever toolkit of skills and aptitudes fate has allotted to them. Whether **our** interests mesh with **their** interests is therefore not assured. And they certainly do not **owe** us their compassion or a willingness to fulfill **our** interests. It is silly to expect them to. Might as well expect the sun to shine upon us, and upon us alone!

Therefore, I think we should be more appreciative of the boons we do receive. When we receive the Good Will and Good Works of others, rather than accepting them as our birthright, we should cherish them as our good fortune. We should express our surprised Gratitude for them. True, we can encourage others to express more love toward the world, in the trust that everyone will benefit thereby. But if some people sincerely wish to do things that seem evil to us, or sincerely wish to be stingy and pitiless toward us, we should not condemn them as inherently evil. They are not inherently evil. Rather, we should try to change them, insofar as we can; we should protect our own interests, insofar as we can; and we should continue to give the evil-doers our own gratuitous love, insofar as we can. But we should not presume that they **owe** us their love and compassion. Such would simply be wishful, delusional fantasy on our part.

## Little Essay #46

**“A paleontologist without a ‘story’ is just a fossil collector. Likewise, if you take the ‘story’ out of geology, and all you have is rocks!”**

What is a Level Two Story? First of all, it is a set of images, located (only) in the intuitional Other World. It is not part of This World. Second, a Story is an active, flowing image, a “movie”. Objects and people “do things” in a Story, **participating** in events that take time to unfold. Seen from external Standpoint, a Story is an active, flowing image experienced by a participant whose site is internal to the Story. That is, for every Story there is a participating knower or percipient at a site **inside** the Story. Stories make up the Story Other World, born of the megascale Intuition Sector, Level Two. Think of Stories as analog electronic videos, in contrast to old-fashioned frame-by-frame celluloid motion pictures.

We can discern a variety of Stories. Some Stories, for instance, remain completely disjunct from This World. Thus, during our night dreams and day dreams we experience events having no direct connection to the world around us, even though these dreams can be Stories in which we participate from the inside: “dreams as real as day”. These often warrant the term “Fantasy”.

Another class of Stories—our Inner visualizations and rapt listenings to told tales—is similar to dreams, though perhaps less imaginary and more congruent with This World. These Stories exist in a realm of nonconsciousness or partial consciousness, prompted or guided by the storyteller. We can lose ourselves in a good book or a well-told

yarn. The storyteller takes us on an intuitional Other World journey, a Narrative.

Still other Stories are Enacted Stories. These include film and theatre and ritual. They have a This World component that accompanies their Other World component.

And some Stories are even lived. These include the Lived Myths that pervade our lives without our having full consciousness of them.

Level Three's Intellection Sector/Idea World constructs a different kind of "story". Here our L.3 Other World experience forms into a sequential series of discrete, digital ideas, or "snippets" that can **approach** the flowing, analog character of a true L.2 Story. I call such a series a Scenario. A Scenario offers us a (usually brief) "story", though it is not an L.2 Story. Think of a Scenario as like a short celluloid film, viewed slowly, frame after frame, that can "flow" if you run it rapidly. A Scenario is the L.3 "story" that a paleontologist pieces together in order to explain and interpret his fossils. Scientists in general work this way.

Thus, when we overlay or link an idea, or a full Scenario of ideas, onto This World and its Herenow experience, we get the kind of Perception used by Science. This is what scientists are doing when they describe the Present or reconstruct the Past or predict the Future. For example, in the field of paleontology, the Actuality that scientists study is primarily fossil specimens—yielding ideas that they can piece together into a Scenario—a "story"—about the fossils. They generate a history of the Past. Ultimately, they seek to construct the entire paleontological History of Life.

Similarly, the objects studied in geology are just rocks—often heavy rocks, I can attest! But gradually geologists can piece together a Scenario—a "story"—of some part of the Past that is congruent with

those rocks. Then they have described a slice of Geologic History, a slice of the 4.6 billion years of Earth's past. Geologists work day in and day out to garner scientific ideas and to build such Scenarios. But still, the fact remains: Lacking "stories", all that a geologist has is just rocks!

Little Essay #47

**"Self is a fiction. Self exists mostly in the Other Worlds of Story and Idea."**

Let us review the basics of Tef Theory.

Tef Theory describes four products emerging from the microscale Basic Perceptual Processes. First, there is Quality, produced (received) by the process of Reception, before any Value or Form has been added. Second, Value is then added to Quality by the process of Evaluation. Third, Form is added by the process of Mentation. And fourth, Quality, Value, and Form (plus Memories of each) can be merged into Wholes by the process of Integration. All of these microscale products underly the higher scale percepts of Tef.

At megascale, Perception operates as Sectors and their Worlds. First, when we constructure percepts within the **Sensation** Sector, we generate the concrete, Sensible entities making up the Material World.

Second, when we constructure percepts within the **Intuition** Sector, we generate four kinds of Other World Stories: lived Myths (nonconscious, unquestioned views about the Present world and its social relationships); Narratives (“Told Tales”, which are flowing “movies”, such as music, literature, and guided visualizations); Fantasies (creative “movies” such as night dreams and day dreams); and enacted Stories, such as film, theatre, and rituals.

Third, when we constructure percepts within the **Intellection** Sector, we generate four kinds of Other World Ideas . These occur as “snippets” (individual ideas or idea scenarios lasting, for me, up to four seconds in the Present Interval). These include: Reconstructions (knowledge, memories, and conjectures relating to Past time), Concepts (ideas relating to Present time), Predictions (ideas relating to Future time), and Imaginations (creative ideas that are various in their temporal attributions).

The self is an image built up from multiple sources and integrated into a unity. Some of this image is concrete This World experience, that is, firsthand, Herenow Actuality of the Body (both Outer Body and Inner Body). But most of the self is Other World Inactuality, that is, percepts from the Story World, e.g., Fantasies and Beliefs about the self, as well as percepts from the Idea World, e.g., Imaginations and Concepts about the self. Therefore, to the extent that the Other Worlds are fiction, it is not extreme to call the entire self a fiction. Moreover, we note that self need not be present for most of our Perception to take place. Indeed, we can perceive the not-self quite well without having any self image at all. Thus, trees stand tall, food tastes good, muscles ache—all without ever a

mention of the self. Thus the self is not simply a given percept. We **construct** it, in part from sheer Fantasy and Imagination. This construction of the self image is a lifelong process. Our sense of self through a lifetime is called the General Story in Tef Theory.

I am getting around to saying that our **awareness** of the world does not require a self image. (Neither does our **consciousness-*of*** of the world require it. Consciousness-*of* is merely our looking at a referent through an overlay of representation of that referent.) On the other hand, the answer to “Who am I?” does require a self image, an awareness of self. (Similarly, a self image is necessary for both consciousness-*of* of self—that is, self-consciousness—and for empathy of other selves.) Self-awareness in turn, is necessary before we can project the self into L.2 Stories. Self has to become aware of itself in order to fantasize Stories starring itself. The contents of that self-image can come from all Sectors, but it is integrated and employed in the Story World of the Intuition Sector, L.2. The self, as a soul, as a Being, as an agent of willed Action, “lives” only in that Sector. In that sense, then, self is a fiction, a Story.

## Little Essay #48

### **“All philosophy is personal philosophy.”**

Some philosophies are founded on objective facts, facts that are public and scientific. These philosophies contain only minimal intrusion of the philosopher’s own desires and biases. Other philosophies, by contrast, promote a personal agenda or an emotion-laden ideology. These philosophies contain a massive intrusion of the philosopher’s own emotional needs.

Thus, to various degrees, the personal element is present in all philosophies. It cannot be entirely avoided. I concede that my own philosophy is a mirror of me. I have tried to make it my sincere and honest take on reality, but at the same time I know it serves as a rationalization of deep-seated emotional needs. For example I **assert** that the quest for Harmony is universal. I cannot prove this assertion, and in fact this may not be true for **all** people. What I am actually saying is that Harmony is **my own** personal quest, and I **infer** (and hope) it is so for all other Beings. Thus, the quest for Harmony is the central topic in Tef Theory at least in part because it expresses **my personal need** for Harmony.

I believe all of us are biased, even us philosophers. Some of us admit to our bias, some do not.

## Little Essay #49

**“There is the referent. And there is what we say about it: the representation. And there is the wedding of the two in Consciousness-*of*.”**

According to Tef Theory, nothing is unreal. That is, when we look at The 10,000 Things, we find that every one of them is part of Tef, even every symbol, fantasy, joke, and illusion. Ultimately, **every** thing is really real and **no** thing is really unreal.

All “unreal” things do really exist, but only as Inactual ideas and images in our minds. They exist **only** there, in the mind, not among the concrete Actualities in the world around us. Thus, we can give a concrete, Actual thing a name, we can describe it, we can form predictions as to what it will do, and we can create stories in which it plays a part. Yet the thing itself continues to exist, in its own right, regardless of what we say, or do not say, about it. In short, we have **referents** (Refs), and we have **representations** (Reps) of those referents. We have Original experience, and we have Additional experience that we tack on to that original experience.

Both the given reality (the Ref) and what we say about that reality (the Rep) have a life of their own. We are **aware** of each separately: as referent and as representation. But it is only when we overlay the two, such that we view the original—the Ref—**through** an overlay of the additional—the Rep—that we generate **Consciousness-*of*** of the original. With Consciousness-*of*, the original reality gains “depth”—rather like dropping the third dimension down into a two-dimensional drawing. In our act of wedding reality **itself** to what we say **about** that reality, we create Consciousness-*of*. (In ordinary speech, “consciousness” often

means human Awareness or Sentience or even just experience of any kind, whereas Tef Theory sees this meaning as flawed and generally avoids using “consciousness” in this way.)

The more veridical and faithful our representations—our additions—the sharper and clearer our Consciousness-*of* is. Often, however, we do not even realize that the additions exist. We take the combined, conscious percept to be a simple, single, “given” reality. Yet the only part that is **given** is the original Ref; we have **added** all the other parts to it. Thus, every conscious percept is partly original experience, and partly added idea or image. A conscious percept, then, is an alloy of what the world provides and what we have added.

Little Essay #50

**“The mind fears death. The heart does not.”**

**Death**—my being dead—is an **idea** of what might become of me some day. It is an Inactual, Other Worldly product of my Intellection. It is not an Actual, This World part of my life. By contrast, dying—the Actual, This World process of becoming a dead body—will be, I predict,

my final act of living. Thus, whereas **dying** is a **lived** Actuality, **death**—being dead—is not a **lived** Actuality. Right? I know of no one who can tell us what death (being dead) is like, for as far as I know, no one has ever returned from the condition of **death**. I have heard that many have returned from **near** death experiences, which is to say, from being somewhere along the process of **dying**, but I conclude they did not become fully dead bodies before they returned to us.

For this reason, I conclude that everything we **say** about death—as opposed to dying—is merely imaginations of what death **might** be like. Will death be an experience of loss? Of separation? Of ascension to Heaven? Or will it be an **experience** at all? When we are confronted with negative ideas about death, we evaluate them (correctly) as Disharmonies. We fear imaginary Disharmonies. Similarly, when confronted with positive ideas about death, we evaluate them (correctly) as Harmonies. We welcome the imaginary benefits of death.

I conclude, then, that the mind can fear the **imagined** Disharmonies of death, whereas the heart, free of all ideas (as it is), simply responds to the Actual world we encounter. Death (truly being dead) is never part of that Actual world. Therefore, the heart never fears death. Of course, it does fear the pain and anxiety of dying—but that is a very different reality. Death is an idea; dying is not. Death is imaginary; dying is not.

In a sense, I am concluding that, whereas the mind, with its **thoughts** of death, can suffer fear of death, the heart, lacking all thoughts, remains at peace. For the heart, “ignorance is bliss”. So, if you want to be at peace with **death**, simply do not think about it. Live your life in Harmony and try to avoid the Disharmony of **dying**.

## Little Essay #51

### “**Mother: Mamma, Culture, Nature.**”

Of all human relationships, the Mother/Child Bond is the most primal and the most powerful. We never forget it. We simply transfer it to expanding circles as our life unfolds into the world.

Initially, the Mother/Child Bond is not really a bond between two entities, for we originate as a oneness: fetus-and-motherwomb. Upon birth, that oneness is broken, and we emerge as an infant organism, separated from the motherwomb. Yet we immediately bond with the Other that we meet—our Mother’s Outer Body—and in due time we come to call her Mamma. Our bond with our mother is our first social bond, our first love, in the General Story of our life. Thereafter, our Story continues with many more bonds, a Story of love that mirrors that original Mother/Child Bond.

Thus, gradually, and not in simple sequence, we transfer and/or extend our bond with Mamma outward to include bonds with Dadda, and with siblings, relatives, care-givers, friends, and pets. These specific bonds undergo change, and they may never be as strong as the original bond with Mamma. But because bondedness is crucial to our happiness, as well as to our survival, we always remain bonded to **someone**, somewhere, somehow. Most people eventually bond with a partner, often for life. Thus the Story of our lives is a Story of maintaining bonds with a variety of specific persons.

Meanwhile, we also bond with greater and greater wholes. These include our culture: our friends, our co-workers, our athletic team, our city, our ethnic group, our nation (the “Mother Land”), even the whole

of humanity. Many of us also bond with nature (“Mother Nature”), feeling love for our surrounding habitat, other living things, the greater landscape, the sun, the moon, the cycle of seasons, and even the whole, infinite cosmos: The Great Surround.

With all of these we may form bonds of relatedness: of affinity, of belongingness, and even of love. Many people also bond with purely Other World entities, for example saints, angels, Mary, Jesus, God.

I suggest that all of these bonds get their start with the Mother/Child bond (whoever that “mother” happens to be, and of whatever gender). I therefore believe we should cherish and nurture and honor that primal, powerful relationship. It has a profound, enduring significance for every one of us.

Little Essay #52

**“All experience is fire.”**

The fact is, you cannot tell *It* like it is. Words cannot substitute for actual living. Still, I continue **trying** to tell *It* like it is, and Tef Theory is obviously an attempt to do so.

Tef—the Total Experiential Field—is *It*. *It* is composed of experience and nothing but experience. (If you do not yet know what I mean by experience, just do and see and think and feel **anything**. **Every** thing you happen to do or see or think or feel is part of your experience.) Near-synonyms of experience include: reality, life-as-lived, energy, quality, contrast, awareness, percepts, phenomena. A poetic name for experience, perhaps unsurprisingly, is fire (aka Pyros).

Fire serves as not only a literal **example** of experience, but also as a figurative, abstract, and emblematic **symbol** of experience. **Literally**, fire means *flame* (the heat, light, and transforming powers of combusting gases). **Figuratively**, fire refers to any *radiant* thing: sunlight, starlight, meteors, auroras, lightning, glowing lava. **Abstractly**, fire implies intense *energy* of every kind: light, heat, acid, anger, sexual ardor, war. And **emblematically**, fire can stand for **every** kind of experience, however intense or weak: every experience in Tef. Fire thus serves as a metaphor of any and all experience.

Tef Theory classifies matter on the surface of Earth—Gaian matter—into four classes: earth (Lithos), air (Atmos), water (Hydros), and organisms (Bios). Note the similarity to the ancient “elements” of earth, air, fire, and water, except that I have revised the list to include only the four kinds of **matter** that are common and ordinary in our lives on Earth (which fire—Pyros—is not). Moreover, my list is purely material (Level One), with no esoteric or spiritual double meanings or metaphors implied. Instead, fire (Pyros) can be seen as the energy that enlivens each and all of the four Gaian material classes recognized by Tef Theory.

Earth (Lithos) is typically fixed and solid, hence low in energy, **low in “fire”**—except during landslides, earthquakes, and volcanic eruptions. Air (Atmos) is gaseous and windy, hence often high in

energy, **high in “fire”** (including hurricanes, tornadoes, and burning flame itself)—except during atmospheric doldrums or a cold winter night at the North Pole when the air is silent, black, and calm. Water (Hydros) is liquid, hence typically moderate in energy, neither fixed like earth nor untethered like gas, though it can be moderately hot to moderately cold, sometimes turbulent and sometimes stagnant. Hence, water is **moderate in its “fire”**. Finally, organisms (Bios) are **mixed in their “fieriness”**, ranging from motionless marine sponges to frenetic terrestrial predators, from rushing blood and swelling buds to solid bones and hard, crusty bark. Some organisms generate internal heat, whereas others are “cold blooded”. Thus, organisms are mixtures or alloys of earth, air, and water: of Lithos, Atmos, and Hydros.

So, we see that in Tef Theory fire is not recognized as one of the four material “elements”, but rather I have adopted it to serve as an emblem of any and all of the **energies** that we can perceive. In another sense, however, **matter**, too, is energy, for we know matter only by the light it reflects, by its smell, by its weight, by its temperature, and so on. (Absent this energy, we lack any evidence for the existence of matter. In Tef Theory a central tenet is: No experience, no existence.) So, in this more general sense, matter is fire, too. From this perspective, **all** experience in Tef is—emblematically—fire.

Regarding fire poetically, then, we can say that the most fiery things are the most changeful and dynamic things. I should think a world lacking any fire at all would be a “dead” world. By contrast, a world consumed in fire would be a scene of catastrophic change. Fortunately, **our** world is neither dead nor catastrophic. Rather, it contains an endless variety of dancing fires. Some fire is only a faintly glowing ember, some is a crackling burn, some is a conflagration. All of it makes up the totality: Tef. We employ fire in Tefist celebrations, that we might honor the diversity and changefulness of the Total Experiential

Field. We do not know the ultimate source of our experience: it just is. Experience—energy—is the central mystery of life, and fire (Pyros) serves as a convenient emblem of that mystery.

At least this is how I see it. But then, the hardest thing of all is to tell *It* like it is! Perhaps I would do better to quit telling and just **live**. So, let us, you and I, get on with our quest for Good Will and Harmony.

May Harmony prevail! Love Thy Tef!