



Topic I

“Despite the long and tortured birth pangs of the mechanistic metaphysic, its rise to dominance was such that it would eventually claim a place of pride amongst the horsemen who are now driving humanity toward apocalypse. Yet that metaphysic has never been able to entirely swallow the remnants of its nemesis, vitalism, which has remained forever stuck in its gullet. This source of torment is still capable of producing spasms of violence. So it happens that even today, cries as simple as ‘water is sacred’ and ‘honor the earth’ can enrage the armed security forces that guard oil pipelines. Where does this rage reside if not in the repressed awareness of earthly vitality?”

—Amitav Ghosh (2021). *The Nutmeg’s Curse: Parables for a Planet in Crisis*. Johan Murray Publishers, p. 255-256.

Topic II

“It could well be that on some other planet there might be rational beings who could not think in any other way but aloud; that is, they could not have any thoughts that they did not at the same time *utter*, whether awake or dreaming, in the company of others or alone. What kind of behavior toward others would this produce, and how would it differ from that of our human species?”

—Immanuel Kant (1798). *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*. In: Günter Zöller & Robert Loudon (eds.), *Anthropology, History and Education* (2007). Cambridge University Press, p. 427-428.

Topic III

“The true causes of natural effects and of the phenomena we observe are often so far from the principles on which we can rely and the experiments we can make that one is obliged to be content with probable reasons to explain them. Thus, probabilities are not to be rejected in the sciences, not only because they are often of great practical use, but also because they clear the path that leads to the truth.”

—Émilie du Châtelet (1740). *Foundations of Physics*. Chapter 4: Of Hypotheses, §53. In: Judith P. Zinsser (ed.), *Émilie du Châtelet: Selected Philosophical and Scientific Writings* (2009). The University of Chicago Press, p. 147.

Topic IV

“We Sioux haven’t got your generation gap. We believe in bringing the young along to take our place because this is nature’s way. It’s maybe this, our willingness to share power with the young, which makes our old people loved and respected, which makes talk easy between the generations.”

—Lame Deer (1972). In: John (Fire) Lame Deer and Richard Erdoes, *Lame Deer: Seeker of Visions* (1994). New York: Pocket Books, p. 220.