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Greed as the Motor and the Momentum of Human Civilization

Viewing the Development of Human Civilization through the Desire of Commodious Living

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ABSTRACT: Ever since Darwin, different theories of evolution pursuant upon each other, have tried to interpret the complexity of human history from a Darwinian viewpoint. The main concern was to prove that human history can be considered part of nature's history and that it may follow nature's evolutionary laws. All those theories have put a tremendous effort in explaining "How" human culture and civilization could follow an evolutionary process and in some cases have provided a detailed scrutiny for this account, but have failed to answer "Why" it occurred. This research puts the emphasis on the question "Why?" While searching for an answer to why human civilization occurred, the research ensues in finding the roots of human civilization in an aspect of human life that was and has been marginalized by scientific research: this is the human desire of commodious living. Thus, while relying on Dawkins' selfish gene as a methodological guideline, the aim here is to suggest the possibility of a natural genetic development of this desire of commodious living, standing at the base of human civilization development. The conclusion reached suggests that, by giving this commodious desire a biological dimension, human civilization and cultural development might be endowed with a biological interpretation that can be construed as following a Darwinian evolutionary process, and consequently mend and bridge the existing gap between an account of human history and one of nature's history while eschewing the shortcomings of group selection theories.

KEYWORDS: *Desire of commodious living; natural desire of well-being; Dawkins; Selfish gene; Human history; Nature's history; Human civilization.*

I. INTRODUCTION

In his *Politics and the Evolutionary Process,* P.A. Corning (1974) talked of a clear obvious schism between Man's polity and the natural history of the world. Darwinian natural selection, to Corning, is by no means apt to contain the evolution of human intellect and the subsequent evolution of its social and political institutions. The Darwinian struggle of "survival of the fittest" among the diverse array of species, according to many theorists after Darwin, fails to complement the idea of Aristotle's man as a "political animal" and to explain the evolution of human culture and civilization to its prevailing status quo. We see that all post-Darwinian interpretations of human civilization and culture have committed the same error; namely, putting much effort in ascribing different schemes and systems in an attempt to provide a clear sketch of how human civilization and history has arrived at where it has. More often than not, their sketches came as either too narrow to fit with the grandeur of this process, or, lacking sufficient concrete specificity. I propose in this paper to argue that in order to know how human civilization evolved, first, we need to target the *motive* that has propelled this same civilization to evolve; that is, to target (and answer) the question "why" did civilization develop *before* asking how it occurred. Previous theories have considered the human rational faculty and its concomitant survival instinct to be satisfactory reasons for the development of civilization. This paper counters that, had reason and the survival instinct been the only two factors driving the human machine in the midst of all external nature, human culture and civilization would have stopped at a very basic level: i.e. where this human being could procure a secured dwelling and a decent source of food. However, human civilization continued far beyond that.

In attempting to answer the "why" question one cannot but notice that the only obvious reason for human civilization to sprout beyond the basic human's survival needs would be a form of natural human search not only for survival but also for well-being. One would say that this search of well-being is a natural search since if they contemplate the development of human civilization they would fairly notice a sense of urgency and necessity in the human's quest for well-being or commodious living that might be natural and not otherwise.

That fact that human beings constantly search for well-being and commodious living is a form of an a priori knowledge in that no one would be asked of the reasons behind which they are searching for their well-being in the same way that they would not be asked why they search to live.

Hence, I dare say that this search of commodious living can very well be a natural search. Nevertheless, this natural search of commodious living, though a common a priori knowledge, is and has always been utterly marginalized by human sciences or approached as a form of a tendency that ensued from the birth of civilization and adeveloped societies (Fromm, 1997) (Macpherson, 2011).

This paper however, will elaborate a conception of a natural desire for commodious living that constantly searches for the well-being of its human machine. *The research will attempt to show that the social evolution of human culture and civilization does indeed follow a Darwinian (or perhaps better, Neo-Darwinian) scheme of progress, relying however in its account on an aspect of human nature that has been marginalized all along, excluded from the scrutiny of cultural evolutionary theories. This newly explanatory aspect is called here: "The natural desire of commodious living". The latter is presently conceived as a natural motor-drive urging its human machine not only to survive but also to survive well; hence the name: natural desire of commodious living. In the course of this discussion, it will be shown that this desire can very well be dubbed a "Genetic Drift" (Wright, 1984), exclusively introduced to the human gene machine as Richard Dawkins' "selfish gene". If this paper provides a compelling account of the commodious desire as one of Dawkins' genes, a link between the human cultural and political evolution and natural evolution will have been effected – while always maintaining faithfulness to Darwinian natural selection. With the present account of commodious desire, human history will have been interpreted in strict biological terms.*

Before entering into the intricate details of a conception of the natural commodious desire, it will be helpful first, to outline the historical context of the dilemma posed between human history and a putative world history.

II. HISTORICAL SYNOPSIS OF THE DILEMMA:

Many biologists, philosophers of science, as well as cultural psychologists and sociologists have tried to mend the gap between human history and culture and the natural evolutionary history of the world. The conclusions -more often than not- resulted in considerations of the evolutionary process of human behavior, culture and cognition as either lacking sufficient motives to spur this human being to go beyond his basic survival needs and "explode" on the cultural level, or, as allocating the reasons for such a socio-cultural evolution to aspects that are far from sufficient to explain the level of complexity of the prevailing state of human civilization. What follows is a brief historical survey of theories of the latter ilk; and their deficiencies will be assessed later.

Of the earliest thinkers to evoke the idea of a society that abides by the Darwinian (in more specific terms, Lamarckian) natural laws, was Herbert Spencer. The "organic" society is a Spencerian[i] notion evoked in true Darwinian footsteps; considered here: society reforms the human being with a very minimal input of this human herself. This theory did not last long, before attracting vehement criticisms from those who distinguished human sciences from natural sciences (W. Dilthey and E. Durkheim in the 1890s and more recently Max Weber); and especially by William James, who emphasized the input of particular individuals to the process of societal development, to parallel the effects of society itself[ii]. James highlighted a form of necessary intellect that developed in the interest of altruistic behavior, whose main concern was the survival of the group and kin.

Selection theory (or inclusive fitness theory) was conceived as a mechanism to promote altruism after the organic theory failed; indeed, the British biologist Hamilton (Hamilton, 1964) would elegantly introduce this. Campbell, in turn, viewed the evolution of knowledge as a "blind variation with selective retention" (Campbell, 1969). Another reference to cooperation as a form of multi-level selection (multilevel selection will be addressed later on in this paper), conflict between groups, and of cultural "institutions" coevolving with individual behaviors to result in human altruism and reciprocity was provided by Ginitis and Bowels (2011). Others like O. Behlr (1990) considered culture as a complex plan of cooperation that required elaborate coordination and adjustment. Albert Naccache presented a refined analysis of the evolution of human language and socio-cultural behavioral patterns, reverting to a form of "Lamarkian sociocultural Mode of Evolution" (Naccache, 1999) that *tinkers* its way through to reach to the evolution of intelligence and language. Many others beyond explained the development of human intellect and bio-behavioral variations by referring to some kind of primate human evolution (Chaminade, Schurr, and Mithens, 2013).

An interesting notion of what is called a "cumulative culture" was introduced at the turn of the twentieth century. The notion of the "ratchet effect" was borrowed from different disciplines and introduced to theories of culture evolution. Tamasello (Tmasello, 2000) talked of the "ratchet effect" as the ability to transmit improvements in complex skills and pass them to later generations. The improvements were conceived as cumulative in nature. Another idea that complements Tamasello's ratcheting effect is that of variation with selective retention of those behaviors that promote the survival of the individual or that of the group, were also discussed by Messoudi Whiten and Laland (Messoudi and Laland, 2006). The idea being that, retaining and inheriting social habits and behaviors that favor the continuity of the individual and the group was to be given a high emphasis, human beings being the most eligible animals apt for such a behavior.

Another interpretation of cultural evolution in the context of cumulative culture was effected by Richerson and Boyd in their book *Not by Genes Alone* (Richerson and Boyd, 2005)*;* here they considered that natural selection can favor culture when culture allows rapid adaptation to the diversity of the local environment, and when reliance on culture is more efficient than individual learning.

In very recent research, the philosopher of Science Philp Kitcher, specifically in *The Ethical Project,* asserts the idea that ethical norms and regulations can very well be subject to Darwinian natural selection, relying on the egalitarian aspect of pragmatic naturalism along with mutual engagement within a comprehensive population to build our ethical system (Kitcher, 2011).

Yet the most appealing of all theories attempting to bridge the Darwinian cultural question has been the theory of memes. A "Meme" is a term that was fist coined by Richard Dawkins, in his book *The Selfish Gene.* There he considers memes (borrowing the appellation from Greek) as replicators that evolve in parallel to genes and whose process of evolution is not as perfect as that of the old replicator, the gene, but can still explain how culture would follow Darwinian line of evolution. The living organism would act as a vehicle to carry this meme by propagating and protecting it from one generation to the other. Under such considerations, genes to Dawkins are one example of replicators and memes are another, less accurate one (Dawkins, 1989, p, 322). In a very recent research by Susan Blackmore, the theory of memes is supported, with the only considered fault being that proponents of this theory draw too close an analogy between memes and genes. Memes to Blackmore are like genes in that they are replicators, but unlike genes with their fidelity of the copied information. Memes are less accurate in the copying method (Blackmore, 2009). In an attempt to combine theories of cultural evolution and mimetic, Wismatt replies to Blackmore and adds to the memes what he calls *cultural scaffolding and cultural infrastructure.* Culture to Wismatt is a large multi-component system, where memes are one component and meme-like things are another component interacting to build scaffolds and infrastructures to be inherited by later generations (Wismatt, 2009).

All of the above mentioned theories, however, fail to provide an analytical account of *the reason* that has pushed the human being to go beyond his survival needs and to seek cultural development. These theories fall short in providing a comprehensive analysis of the reasons that would make primate man, who has used some "cumulative" skills inherited from his ancestors for carving and whittling (or probably for miming) the necessary tools for his survival, to go beyond that and fashion a more elaborate tool. Though employing a great deal of scrutiny in providing a description, at a micro-level, of how human civilization could have reached where it is, all of the above detailed theories seem to focus only on the manner in which human culture evolved and not the reasons behind which such an evolution could have occurred. They all focused on "how" human culture, behavior and cognition evolved and seemed to have disregarded the "why" question. So, if one would ask any of the above mentioned theorists this question: "Why did we invent mobile phones?" the answer would automatically be "To make life easier". This being so, however, to the question "Why did we evolve a sophisticated culture?" the same theorist would, more often than not, reply saying "Because we are rational beings"[iii] [iv]. Making life easier is taken for granted as a cause for the development of specific bits and pieces of our civilized societies, but is abortive as a satisfactory reason for the development of civilization as a whole. Considering reason to be the cause behind all human civilization would be suggesting – and here we borrow two of Horkheimer's forms of reason, a kind of "objective reason". Whereas, the inconsistency would show when this same person refers the causes of a certain particular invention to "making life easier", since, with this they are implying a kind of reason that serves the subject's interest, or what Horkheimer would call "subjective reason".[v]

In fact, as this paper argues, there is not a single advancement in our societies, be it, technological, literary, artistic, or medical, that does not serve the purpose of providing a better life of the human being, better life in the short run or in the long run[vi]. (Even advancement of mass-destruction weapons, for instance, serves the well-being of their owners by prejudicing military power to their favor). All theories discussed hitherto fail to present a reason for why the human animal is the only creature that searches for his well-being with the same intensity that he searches for his survival.[vii][viii] Reason, for them, seems to be the answer to why man would go beyond the trajectory that his survival instinct has traced for him. Reason, in a Darwinian sense, can very well be a genetic drift or a mutant gene whose purposiveness was favored by the gene machine for selection (as seen below with Dawkins). However, if we scrutinize all the advancements of our civilization, we see that such theories have been endowing reason with senses that are doubtfully its own. That is, this rational beings in nature, who have their reason and their survival instinct to function with, would have little motive to look for any commodity beyond survival. They would employ their reason to procure themselves with the basic necessities in life. So that, while considering these two aspects to be the only motor-drives of primate humans to evolve culture, there would be no logic apposite to explain the causes by which our rational faculty would be employed to drive its bearer anywhere further than procuring this bearer's basic needs.

Following their line of thought, where a person's only drive for evolution and adaptation to their environment is their will to survive, every activity and behavior supporting any advancement that goes beyond the human's survival would thus appear as an inconsistency. Such theories would always have basic human survival as a preset limit for the advancement of human culture, and any advancement that is beyond that would thus be ill-analyzed.

My idea here is that the complex structure of human behavior, which is a consequence of the "explosion" of civilization, cannot have its causes owed only to a natural survival instinct and subjective reason. Why would a rational man, whose only instinct is his survival instinct, constantly want more and more in life? Definitely not to satisfy his rational quest, since this can be very well satisfied at much less developed levels of civilization than that which we have hitherto succumbed now. Why would reason want IPhone 7 if the IPhone 4 could serve the end consumer just as well? (Keeping in mind that the majority of consumers barely use any of the newly added features of the IPhone 7). There needs be a natural desire, pushing man for more and more commodities[ix], in an indefinite regress – and this could have very well been the answer to our quest. This latter is dubbed in this paper the natural desire of commodious living.[x]

III. THE BIOLOGICAL ROOTS OF THE COMMODIOUS DESIRE

My aim here is to present man's search for a geometrically increasing gamut of commodities in life as rooted in natural biological origins; when coining the human search for better life in biological terms, a link is made between man's cultural evolution and his biological; thus offering an account of a fixed and common content to all the complexity of human behavioral and cultural evolution systems at all times.

The desire of commodious living discussed and elaborated here is the natural search for more and more commodities in life, and *not only* the quest for survival. Thus, the major challenge set is to recognize and to argue compellingly for the human's commodious desire to be viewed as of natural origins, and not nurtured by a particular economic status, or, say, a certain social context.[xi]. The commodious desire in this research is viewed naturalistically, since its effects are lucidly evident in several aspects of man's life. Furthermore it is seen here as the most telling factor begetting the development of each and every society. (I will discuss this further at a later stage of my discussion when evoking Ayn Rand's "rational selfishness")

As already mentioned, this commodious desire has a universal content that is fixed in each and every human being, satisfying, or questing to do so, the desire for well-being[xii]. Moreover, it is claimed here to exist in each and every person, in each and every society and at each and every time, with the same intensity. In this sense, it is a transcendental or, if it preferred, archetypal facet of human being. It is worth noting also that this desire, as descried, is not to be comprehended in its pejorative sense: as greed for material assets, since its aim is to procure the most commodious life for its bearer and entails the most commodious variation among different individuals in the species. It might be a life centered around material property or a life centered around spirituality and/or the diverse life-styles in between. The end result being that this commodious desire is there inside each and every individual human, enticing its bearer to satisfy his/her commodious desire, and always in accordance with what is judged by the individual himself as commodious.(see endnote ix above).

Ever since the time of mythoi, like Cane and Able, this desire has existed and with the same intensity, rendering the most important task of each and every religion, or indeed, any kind of emergent social or civilizational configuration, as to reactively guide man, or within hegemonic intent, help man, by *preventing* him from surrendering to it. Thus, the latter proscriptions may be viewed as tellingly compensatory, or defensive. For more than five thousand years now (the putative sum of recorded civilizational history), before the time of Hammurabi and the ancient Egyptian "Book of the Dead", we have been threatened, by hook and by crook, by fire and by death, by guillotines and by breaking wheels, not to surrender to our greed. For five thousand years now we have been trying to eradicate this facet of our being from within, but we keep on failing. We have not succeeded to reduce its effects in the slightest way; which is telling. Still there, and with the same intensity, evidently – this is what suggests the assumption that it is natural; leading to the purpose of this paper: to argue its biological berth, without referring its causes to some kind of political or economic system.

The desire under discussion finds its first notice, thus, in the immediate, objective state existing out there in nature. Man's attention is turned, inexorably, to the external objective world, and employs all this man has of character, intellectual faculties, physical power, learning and the like, to reach its aim – which is appropriating this external object[xiii]. It is only by appropriating this object that this commodious desire is temporarily satisfied. Notice here the phrasing: that it is "temporarily" satisfied; for it seems evident, if not self-evident, that it can never be permanently satisfied, since that which is commodious is changing, at times radically, in form with the development of human intellect. What is classified as commodious for our desire now would not be so after a lapse of time, when there is an object that is developed as more commodious than already observed. Thus, the greed spoken of is both essential, archetypal, as it were, to human being, as well as adaptive within different contexts.

So to recapitulate: man is naturally endowed not only with a desire to survive and reproduce, but also with a desire to survive well - a desire for commodious living. Our desire of commodious living is never absolutely satisfied since its object (the commodity) develops with the development of civilization, hence, though the content of this desire is always fixed – that is the search for the most commodious attainment - its form is always changing. And finally the object of this desire, which is its form, is not always a material property since its object can be a mental or psychological state, aimed-at for appropriation.

Given the above conception, Richard Dawkins' selfish gene theory is to be taken as of high relevance to this discussion, since if our commodious desire is, as suggested, a natural desire, then to find the reason by which, or better, for which, this commodious desire could have been "naturally selected" and favored by the gene machine to be encoded in human behavior, becomes the central task. It is to be noted though that the term "selfish-gene" will be employed although it is a pejorative and redundant one (admitted even by Dawkins himself) since the selfish gene is just a gene that self-perpetuates. However, for the faithfulness of scientific research I will employ this term until a more adequate one is pronounced by the author of the *Selfish Gene* himself. The idea of selfish-gene is used in this research solely for two purposes: the first is for its replication privilege and the second to serve as an analogical methodology.

In his book *The Selfish Gene* the British ethologist Richard Dawkins reduces all human and animal behavior to a systematic evolution of the "selfish gene", the gene (or genes) responsible for the various of behaviors that are the most appropriate for the survival of the bearing gene machine, the physiological body. Dawkins' theory is highly valuable, in so far as it is the case that if I succeed in arguing that the commodious desire of living may be a "selfish gene", then I will have succeeded in descrying a biological interpretation of the complicated trajectory of the human cognitive, behavioral and cultural development, while maintaining fidelity to the Darwinian theory of evolution.

Dawkins' argument is that "We (referring to human beings), and all other animals, are machines created by our genes" (Dawkins, 1989) and since we are created by our genes, so the thesis of this book was to prove that there are genetic origins for selfishness and altruism in animals (and humans). This altruism, though a genetically encoded behavior, is only stabilized[xiv] as a behavior when it is in favor of the individual selfish gene or the replicas of this gene. So a human being, for Dawkins, is nothing but a collection of individual genes that, when in the gene pool, have succeeded (through natural selection) to aggregate themselves as this particular collection, and to survive in their aggregation as the gene machine, that is the human body. The predominant quality of the genes that have succeeded to aggregate and thus survive as a whole machine would necessarily be "ruthless selfishness" (Dawkins, 1989, p.10)[xv].

Consciousness for Dawkins is a form of evolution resulting from the purposiveness of the gene machine. The aggregation of the genes has - strikingly enough - a very well defined purpose.

> "The 'purpose machine', the machine or thing that behaves as if it had a conscious purpose, is equipped with some kind of measuring device which measures the discrepancy between the current state of things, and the 'desired' state. It is built in such a way that the larger this discrepancy is, the harder the machine works. In this way the machine will automatically tend to reduce the discrepancy-this is why it is called negative feedback-and it may actually come to rest if the 'desired' state is reached."(Dawkins, 1989, p.50)

In my view the desire of or for commodious living can very well be inserted into the theoretical rubric invoked above. Though Dawkins does not acknowledge the existence of a gene responsible for desiring the most commodious state of being, this commodious desire can be annexed to his selfish gene without risk of any kind of contradiction to the selfish gene theory itself.

Our desire for well-being can be a gene that has evolved in the gene pool. *But the question is why would the gene, whose basic purpose is its own survival, develop a purpose that goes beyond its survival and reaches out for its well-being?* Why did this gene go beyond the basic architecture of its survival? And what is more confusing is the fact that, assuming humans and animals share the same selfish gene that goes into the same programmed process, what was it that made human beings develop this interest for the most commodious kind of living, indefinitely projective, but not other animals in the kingdom of the same? What made the "desired state" which Dawkins evokes in the above citation, a state of commodious living? What made natural selection favor this form of desire for commodious living and preserve it in a form of a seemingly more de-limited selfish gene?

To my mind, Dawkins' theory was very vague in presenting a good reason for the development of human consciousness, or more emphatically, self-consciousness[xvi]. This development to Dawkins is owed to the purposiveness of the gene machine (Dawkins, 1989, p.50) and at other times, this (self-) consciousness is regarded as "gift of conscious foresight" (Dawkins, 1989, p.70).

The reasons this human gene machine (and not any other machine) has developed the conscious foresight are not at all supported in any conclusive manner by Dawkins. Had he provided a clear explanation for the reasons human (self-) consciousness evolved, the reasons for the existence of our commodious desire would have been more easily unraveled, since both (self-) consciousness and the desire for commodious living are strictly human properties and unraveling one would easily lead to unraveling the other. And yet, he did not. Thus, I hope now to find a place for commodious desire within Neo-Darwinian theory.

To be able to better explain the selfish gene that is responsible for perpetually desiring the most commodious form of life, Dawkins' notions of pacts and conspiracies inside a group of aggregated gene machines will be tackled, presently. Dawkins writes that those pacts and conspiracies are very vulnerable to treachery from within, caused by an individual gene machine that is aiming for more gain in the short term. (Dawkins, 1989, p.70)

This treachery from within can be best conveyed in the example that he gives about doves and hawks. A dove representing a gene machine that does not fight and only gestures fighting and then gives up, and a hawk representing the gene machine that fights to the (quite literal) death before quitting. In a society of all doves, there might develop a mutant hawk gene says Dawkins. This mutant hawk gene would transform the whole society into hawks since the other doves will see, or implicitly internalize, the advantageous aspects that this hawk is appropriating and making use of. (Dawkins, 1989, pp. 68-69)

So in an all-dove society a hawk gene would spread quickly to transform the society into an all-hawk society. The end result to this particular evolutionary fight would not be an oscillation between all-dove and all-hawk societies, but rather the best hawk-to-dove ratio that can preserve the society as a whole.

It is here where the desire of or for commodious living can be introduced: the gene for wanting more than survival and aiming at commodious living first starts as a mutant gene (like a hawk gene, say). The advantages that this mutant commodious gene is procuring for itself in a society of genes aiming only for their survival, would soon spread the commodious gene (that is, the gene that looks beyond the survival of its machine and targets the machines well-being) and transform the society into a group of commodiously-weighted genes. The only difference between the hawk gene and the commodious gene is one that pertains to the difference between humans and other animals, as follows: when the hawk gene spreads and transforms the society into an all-hawk society, this gene in its evolution employs only one of the gene machine's qualities, namely the physical quality. Whereas, the (putative) commodious selfish gene has to employ each and every quality that the gene machine has to be able to reach and attain commodious living, since this conduct is in its very essence as a gene that wants the best commodious life. Hence, this commodious gene employs the gene machine's physical qualities as well as mental qualities to reach that which is the most commodious. The resulting society is thus a society of not only all-commodious genes (as in the case of all-hawk genes); it is also a society of all-rational (relatively speaking) genes. This formulation marks the difference between the two evolutionary struggles (the hawk gene struggle and the commodious gene struggle). Because it is a relatively rational society that wants to live and also live better (the natural commodious desire), this all-commodious-genes society can see now that retreating back to the original evolutionary spread is not in its best advantage since this will leave the natural commodious desire unsatisfied. [xvii]

Hence, this all commodious genes society, which is not retreating back in its evolutionary spread (as we saw with the hawk gene in the selection above), employs rationality more emphatically now in order to reach a societal civilizational pact or contract that may rule between different gene machines, looking for their best interest, and trying to provide for each and every one of the included individuals an almost equal level of commodity-station. It will do so because for the now relatively rational and commodious gene, such qualitative discrimination is a much more favored situation than reverting back to its original form of wanting only its survival (as in the case of the hawk gene reverting back to the dove gene).

Saying that cultural spread and evolution can have a biological root and could have developed genetically through the process of natural selection would face the commodious gene with two major salient theories of the subject matter: Dawkins' meme theory and the multilevel selection theory proposed by Sober and Wilson.

I would start by the first challenge: Can the commodious desire be a meme?

Dawkins meme is a unit of cultural transmission or a unit of imitation that propagates itself in the meme pool, from one brain to another, by the process of imitation. (Dawkins, 1989, chapter 11) This theory does not answer however the basic question that this research seeks to answer: the "Why?" question. Thus I say, unless there is a genetic disposition in the human brain for searching for more luxury, more commodities and hence more well-being, the propagation of memes will be ill-analyzed. As a matter of fact Dawkins himself inadvertently admits this in his *Selfish Gene* chapter 11 on memes; speaking of the God meme he says: "What is it about the idea of a god that gives it its stability and penetrance in the cultural environment? The survival value of the god meme in the meme pool results from its great psychological appeal. It provides a superficially plausible answer to deep and troubling questions about existence."

(Dawkins, 1989, chapter 11) Why would a replicating machine, whose basic parameters are survival and reproduction care for what is psychologically relaxing, and why would this gene machine (basically the human) have those troubling existential questions in the first place considering that their only aim in life is survival and reproduction? Thus I say, the meme theory can be valuable only when we admit a form of genetic disposition that quests the best life that can be attained, that is the commodious gene.

My second challenge is to prove how this commodious gene could have developed culture and civilization without the need to recur to group selection. Such is a great challenge since it is the core of the commodious gene hypothesis, firstly because, without any doubt, the commodious gene idea stands in direct contention with group-selection evolutionary theories, and secondly it is here where the hypothesis has to present a biological genetic alternative for group selection, and all other forms of cultural evolution in that matter.

Of the major sources that promote heritable behavior that is selectively retained and passed on through generations is the most recent and most current multilevel selection theory.

The idea of behavioral/cognitive inheritance on the group-level started with Darwin and was dismissed in the 1960s where it appeared unable to explain groups as adaptive units (Edwards, 1962). Groups function best when their members provide benefits for each other but this is difficult to be translated into the language of biological fitness; an altruistic act is not a biologically fit act.

Group selection would be revived with D.S. Wilson and E. Sober later on in 1998 where they introduce their idea of multi-level selection (Wilson and Sober, 1998). With the multi-level group selection theory, the individual is no longer a privileged unit of selection and thus not a privileged unit of cognition (Wilson, 2002). This idea stands in response to decomposing cultural evolution into gene-units as with Dawkins (1976), or considering it as a form of kin-selection (Hamilton, 1964) or even as a ratcheting effect (Tamasello, 2000). Multi-leveling is the idea that natural selection can occur on different levels and neither be coined in the narrow individual level nor vastly stretched over the vague term of "group" level. The theory dissects the big "group" or the population into different segments in a way that keeps faithful to the Darwinian natural selection while emancipating it from anti-emerging criticisms raised against group selection theories. Hereafter, the group selection theory would resurface back where organisms of today are the social groups of past individualistic ages which have become functionally integrated as a whole (Orzack and Sober, 1994; Schwartz, 2002). Faithful to Darwin, Wilson and Sober's idea of natural selection is the propagation of a trait that is fitter than the others, in an individual, within a group and/or among groups; a fitter individual or society being that which can better survive and reproduce. Hence, this can easily allow a room for the evolution of moral codes since being moral is a trait without which a group will be doomed to its inevitable end; so, for them, a society fitter for survival is that which is governed by a certain set of moral codes.

Multi-level selection seems as the most logical and coherent status-quo theory of cognitive evolution so far. Although the theory closes many loopholes left open by others: especially with the ideas of an innate psychological tendency to altruism and immoral revulsion and the social control mechanism that are evoked by Wilson (2002; pp: 38-39), this theory however falls short from ascribing legitimate analysis to any advent that goes beyond the service of morality in social groups. Put in simpler terms: though the multi-level theory can very well explain why government, religion, or any institution of a social reformative nature could have developed, it is however incapable of explaining why any non-moral phenomena would revive and propagate in such a morally developed society. Why would people go beyond a peaceful society that is governed by morals and want more and more?

As many before them, Wilson and Sober have committed the mistake of leaping into conclusions that do not follow from the initial given. For, if we consider human societies, we would notice that many developments do not favor neither the survival of the society nor its reproduction. If anything, those developments reduce the chances of survival and reproduction; a good example would be the time consuming social media of today's world that does not favor any of the parameters set for natural selection as it is. Yet, those traits spread wildly now as others have throughout history, traits favoring the well-being and not necessarily the survival of individuals and groups.

To better explain this idea I will refer to a phrase of their work. Wilson and Sober tend to freely employ terms of crucial significance to the idea of evolution without paying regard to their true implication. For instance they say: "At the behavioral level, it is likely that much of what people have evolved to do is for the benefit of the group" (1998; p: 134). The term benefit here is crucial to the process of cultural evolution and contains two possible meanings each of which can affect the group selection theory in a different manner. If benefit means that which promotes the survival and better reproduction of the group, then the multilevel theory of group selection can justify its evolution. Whereas if benefit here means a trait that promotes luxury and commodious living, multi-level selection as it stands would be impotent to analyze the process of its evolution since at its roots such a trait serves neither the survival nor the reproduction of groups.

This is where I would say that, unless multi-level group selection theory acknowledges this natural commodious desire of living as one of the parameters of cultural evolution, the outcomes of this theory would remain partial and incapable of presenting a complete design and a holistic picture of the process.

In an attempt to defend their idea as inclusive of the human's desire to live well one might say that at many instances Wilson later on does mention the idea of "better" survival and reproduction (as it is with all other evolutionary theorists): "The first foundational principle is that natural selection is based on relative fitness. It doesn't matter how well an organism survives and reproduces; only that it does so better than other organisms in the evolving population." (Wilson, 2015). Now the idea of "better" survival would hit the reader first as the same notion that the commodious desire beget. Nevertheless, when this is applied to humans and animals without distinction one would realize that Wilson means by "better" here any behavior or gene that promotes the basic survival: probably a safer habitat, better hunting-gathering skills…. Human beings' idea of better survival entails much more than what the scope of the survival gene can cover since humans are the only organisms to have developed into such a sophisticated culture: a culture that all its development pivots around promoting a more and more commodious life in as much as it pivots around survival and reproduction. The term "better survival" in theories of evolution mean better chances and better rates of survival and not in any way or anywhere is it referred to as better living and more commodious life.[xviii]

Wilson's multilevel selection serves as a great methodology for group selection, but standing alone, it is inapt and unfit to explain the complexity of what the human culture and civilization have accomplished. The theory can explain why religion, morality and social norms have evolved but to be able to explain the reason for the development of this personal computer I am utilizing right now. Thus I say, one would have to admit the existence of a natural desire that is strictly a human desire that wants more and more commodities and well-being. Under the parameters of survival and reproduction, Wilson's and Sober's multi-level selection can explain societal peace pacts but cannot justify society's prosperity. It can explain collaboration with one another to survive and reproduce, but nothing to entail a society to collaborate and compete among other groups for more than survival. Put as such, the question would be why wouldn't groups reach a form of among-group peace pacts where property is divided partially and security gained? A happening that could have put an end to all our problems and, corollary, to all our development. Another theory on cultural evolution was elegantly and eloquently presented by Joseph Henrich (Henrich, 2016). Henrich's idea seems to have inserted the accumulative view, kin selection (in a way but not strictly), imitation, and still left room for the multilevel group selection to apply.The reason that human beings could have "start-up" and developed such a complex culture and crossed the Rubicon, says Henrich, would be because of terrestriality, predation and environmental fluctuation. Put in simple terms: when our ancestral primates climbed down the trees to wander the ground, they had the advantage of two free hands to make tools. This favored the selection of individuals with big-sized brains to make use of the best tools. While on the ground, they were more prone to predators than in trees, a fact that aggregated them together in face of danger thus, as a byproduct of this aggregation there was an increase in the size of group cultural repertoire that is, more behaviors to be accumulated and passed on to others. This increased the size of the individual brain which would be at the cost of a prolonged immaturity period that would necessitate the mother to invest too much time around the youngsters. With the predation threat and environmental fluctuation, some key behaviors were naturally favored: the pair-bonding and collaterally kin and tribal bonding which would pave the way for among-group competition and selection. This could have been the "Reason to Our Success" according to Henrich (2016).

Though his theory has a convincing prima-facie yet in explaining the reason that made our lineage the only species to have reached this success it is rather weak and does not qualify as of the same level of rigorous analysis as the overall theory. Other apes did not evolve sophisticated culture, writes Henrich, because they did not have to live in big groups. So, our fragile and relatively weak body, in a way, gave us the privilege of reasoning. This conclusion could have very well been the case; however, it can be the target of the major criticism I employ against this and all theories hitherto presented in this research in that the theory has a time frame limitation.

As said before and reiterated now, if the parameters of natural selection are only better survival and better reproduction and if the reason to our complex and sophisticated culture is only the big sizes of our brains that synergize together, evolution of human culture would have stopped probably in a comfortable, warm and secure cave with good sharp basic tools, enough prairies and animals around for us to "graze-on" and hunt for our animal "quasi-rational" self. The long term detriments of our want for more and more commodious life could have been foreseen by this rational faculty that led us to the secure life in the first place. Natural selection that aims at better survival and better reproduction could have never judged the want for more and more commodious life as a fit trait to propagate. So if natural selection favors only better survival and reproduction in this sense, the commodious desire could have been extinct early on in the way. So one would ask why would natural selection go any further and allow the evolution of, let's say, something as detrimental and anti-survival as nuclear weapons?

IV. FROM BIOLOGY TO CULTURE

The commodious desire as a gene might stand as a better justification for civilization and culture than all previous theories on cognitive evolution. The novelty added by this idea would be the following: in human societies, not only a trait that procures better survival and reproduction would propagate, be retained and transmitted to later generations, but also any trait that procures a better living. All theories hitherto discussed considered any trait that can pitch into better chances of survival to help the organism better "fit" in the environment would likely propagate and spread. Be it a biological or a behavioral/cognitive. What this research suggests is that, with human beings specifically, a propagating trait is not only the one that insures better survival, but also it is the gene that procures its possessor a better and more commodious life. In previous theories of cognitive and cultural evolution, as we have seen above, a propagating trait is a "fitter" one or a more adaptable" one though fitter and adaptable are but adjectives of survival. Whereas, with the idea of the commodious desire I consider a fitter and adaptable trait - in humans - to be that which promotes the survival as well as the well-being of the human. That is the want for more and more commodious life.

The novelty that the commodious desire as a gene provides for evolutionary theories resides in unraveling a new parameter of the natural selection process. When we acknowledge the existence of the commodious desire as a natural desire with genetic roots, behaviors that puzzled evolutionary theorists, ethologists and behavioral and cognitive scientists, psychologists, and philosophers can be easily favored through the new parameters of natural selection. Natural selection would hereafter favor survival, reproduction and more commodious life.

But, what is presented so far of the commodious desire's possible existence as a gene does not eschew the society of all-commodious-genes from criticisms raised in the past against Darwin's natural selection on a group level. For, such a society of all-commodious genes would appear as Hobbesian state of war where the general tendency of life is "nasty, brutish and short" (Hobbes, 1651:1958) where there is an aggregation of genes all fighting for the best and most commodious and not any appropriate ambiance for altruism and selfless deeds to sprout. Such a criticism however can be avoided with this new putative idea because the commodious desire want peace so that it can prosper since without peace this desire would not even germ. And since peace and prosperity necessitate individuals' collaboration with one another, different gene machines would collaborate, with each one's individual interest as the main motor drive of collaboration.(****greed is good Ayn Rand and….)

With converging interests of individual commodious genes different behavioral traits will spread and be naturally favored and hence selected within a group and among groups. Yet this converge of interest is not stable and is always changing. Meaning that, what is of the best interest for a commodious gene now might not be the case in the future, or with the change of any of the givens, a fact that would ignite struggles between individual commodious genes among each other and against a collaboration of other commodious genes. This would in fact explain the perpetual struggle between the common good and the individual good that occurs as a result of the change of what is commodious and it is also this very particular change that Dawkins justifies as a meme being a "less accurate" replicator than the gene. With theories of group selection this struggle can hardly be justified (1989)

Whereas, with the commodious desire as an individual gene which is now favored by the new parameters of natural selection, the individual commodious gene will always have the tendency to appropriate and have more and more and try to benefit of the malleability of the moral codes and norms to reach better satisfaction. [xix] In such an orbit of discussion, the fire of the struggle would always be ignited by individual commodious genes questing private interest from one side and, from the other side, a collaboration of other commodious genes whose interests converge by virtue of the very pursuit of this individual gene's private interest. As such, an individual commodious gene attempting at benefitting from the malleability and fragility of the laws will be faced by this collaboration of commodious desires. In this sense, by virtue this collaboration of commodious genes with converging interests, I would dare say that altruistic behaviors see the light. That which perpetuates the struggle between individual and collaborative commodious desires is the very fact that interests converge and diverge in accordance with surrounding factors. What is of my interest now would not be in the future but the past. Altruistic behaviors could thus be the result of a *very prolonged* period of *a very large group* of commodious desires having *the same* converging interests. This could stabilize (borrowing the term from Darwin) a certain behavior through generations and with time.

It's fairly noticeable here that, in such a society - the human society that is - greed can never be destabilized and not favored by the selection process (as in the criticism I raised against group selection) since, with the new parameters of natural selection hitherto presented, this destabilization would be a fallacy that negates the very content of the selection process. After all, natural selection is automated now to propagate a gene that serves commodious life, so it won't, in this manner, not want something that it is programmed to want!

What is evoked here brings to the mind of the reader the "rational self-interest" brought about by the Russian novelist and philosopher Ayn Rand. Her idea is that, every human being pays all his efforts to look after his well-being, to cultivate themselves and to all that is in their reach to provide ameliorate their existence.

This is administered in a very self-directed way so that the welfare of the society would be a *byproduct* of this behavior and not an end of and by itself (Rand, 1964). I would have dared say that her idea is the socio-political side of the commodious gene story. But I will not and this is for the reason to follow. Rand's philosophy has been the emblem of neo-liberal and free market capitalists of today. Whereas, with the idea of commodious desire evoked here, the collaboration of commodious desires of converging interests, which on the political level would be translated as the law or the government, is a flexible frontier that might converge over socialism and not capitalism. This is not to dismiss the fact that Rand's rational self-interest can very well be the political translation of our commodious desire and is still on much more proximity than other theories. Whereas I see that the commodious desire is very far from the enlightened self-interest that is the idea of maximizing long-term interests and minimizing short term interests (deferred egoism). According to this theory, when one pursues the common good his individual good will be procured. This line of thought may have started with Tocquevelli (1840:2002) and continued with many others including Ikerd (1999), Brewer (2001) and Kelly (2003), Griffiths & Lucas (2016). Enlightened self-interest is firstly the quite literal opposite negation of the commodious desire's evolutionary pathway when the desire has to satisfy the group first then its individual, and secondly, I find it an impossible deed for an evolutionary theory to be able to analyze the genetic beginnings of such a behavior since it always presupposes that the individual is a rational one with futuristic hopes.

Thus, to go back to the main discussion, an altruistic behavior that was previously judged as not biologically fit can now be judged as commodiously fit and be naturally selected. The only difference being that such a behavior, with previous theories (see above), was initiated only by the will to survive - a limitation that restricted its scope of evolution since not all altruistic behaviors serve the group's interest, there are some that are either with neutral effect or even with a negative effect on the group. An example of an altruistic act with negative effect would be giving money to a beggar on the street. Now I do not know this person, and giving them money is in a way affecting my small group (family and friends in this case) negatively since it is making me poorer and reducing the chances of presenting a within-group futuristic help; but still we do it. This kind of altruistic behavior cannot be justified with multi-level selection since it goes against my group. Moreover, one cannot find any basis for it in among-group competitions since it does not make any sense in this case for it defies the very concept of among-group competition (the beggar being a stranger to my group). It might however be explained easily on the individual level with the commodious desire: The benefactor's action was an individual act; this person gave their money willingly to relieve themself of a feeling of guilt that would haunt them if they acted otherwise, and leave them in a non-commodious state. Now this can be considered the immediate effect of the commodious desire. As for the guilt feeling - which is another altruistic feeling - this can be considered as a mediated effect of the commodious desire; meaning that it was mediated by other effects of this desire and probably of the other two desires of survival and reproduction. The commodious desire propagating within a group of people and always searching for promoting more comfort in life, could have very well initiated, as a byproduct of the want for more and more luxury and commodities, the want to end its antithesis - suffering. Now this want could have targeted the smaller group circle first and propagated because the altruistic behavior of helping a sufferer you don't know within your circle has pitched in positively for the overall survival and commodious life of the group. Such a feeling could thus have been stabilized with a prolonged mediated punishment system administered by the collaboration of commodious genes of converging interests against an individual selfish act exhibited by an individual gene. This feeling would be favored since it will create a form of intrinsic moral principle inside each and every individual. This intrinsic moral principle would serve as a first screening for individual selfish behaviors and would aid reduce the frequency of those behaviors that are selfish AND of negative effects on the whole group.

It is to be noticed that I stressed the word AND here because, for a behavior to be classified as worthy of punishment and to grow a collaboration of commodious genes against it, such a behavior should not only and exclusively serve the survival, commodious life and reproduction of the individual gene, it should also be harmful for the survival, commodious life and reproduction of the group for such a behavior to be judged as a wrong act. For, if a behavior is exclusively serving the individual gene (increasing its survival rate, or the quality of its life) without any collateral damage caused to the group, this behavior would undoubtedly propagate. It is in fact this latter kind of behavior that is judged by this research as the cause of civilization and culture: *a behavior that favors the survival, the reproduction and the well-being of an individual without jeopardizing the survival, the reproduction and the well-being of the group*.

As such, the germ of guilt for not helping the sufferer can propagate. From there, this behavior could have been propagated as a meme probably. For the time being, knowing the process of its propagation is impertinent for the consideration of this research and would entail a different research of its own. The important cusp being that, this altruistic behavior could have very well started on the level of the gene with the only condition that the commodious desire is one of the parameters of natural selection.

With the commodious desire, one can say that any trait or behavior that promotes a more commodious lifestyle for the individual without negatively affecting the group, would be favored by the new parameters of natural selection and hence propagate and be passed to later generations. The methodology of this happening would need a different research of its own, (as mentioned before: meme or gene?) for all what this research quests now is to answer the question "why did it happen?"

Since the scope of the commodious desire is limitless, this would allow such a hypothesis to be apt to function without recurring to any form of group selection theories and still be a legitimate one and faithful to Darwin. For, in this research, the group is not an organism of its own, but a collaboration of individual commodious desires (individual human beings) of converging interests each of which seeking to satisfy its own individual desire which happened to converge and meet with the rest of the group.

From here I say that, this commodious desire of living could have jump started our civilization to reach to its status quo since it is a desire that does not only want its gene machine to live but also to live happily and prosper. This in mind, the commodious desire as a gene would also be responsible for a the perpetual struggle between individual private interests and common group interests that we see around us.

V. CONCLUSION

After the foregone considerations, the commodious desire for living may very well be conceived of as a gene. This is to say, there could be a genetic disposition for the human being to search not only for his survival but also for his well-being. This search for the most commodious form of living, when given a biological dimension, can answer the question "why did human civilization occur?" When this natural desire for commodious living is given worthy attention, the inconsistencies which other theories face will have been elided in part; theories that is, that reduce the cause of human civilization to a more neutered form of reason, and of course the survival instinct. So, if the commodious desire of living is the cause behind the uncanny burst of human civilization, the "How" question remains answered in tandem with the "Why" one. *When this commodious desire is presented as a gene and thus given a biological dimension, the burden of the explanatory remainder would be the staple Darwinian evolutionary process – with the only difference that the "fittest" trait would be that which is the fittest not only for the survival of the gene machine but also for its (more qualitative) well-being*.

Moreover, the process could have taken various trajectories to satisfy individual human commodious desire. This could be accounted for clearly in theories of cultural inheritance, cumulative cultural inheritance or perhaps by referring to memes (see above) - because whichever way the commodious desire takes to achieve its goal, it seems evident that it would be a variant, changing *form* of this desire, where the content of this desire would always be the same. The content, being that ever incessant natural desire that wants to procure the most commodious status for its bearer human machine, is the human essence, always striving to find a way, to find for itself a form, whichever it is, to satisfy itself. Just like the form of that which is the most commodious changes with the change of time and place, so would the process employed by this natural commodious desire in us. Thus, an eminently dialectic Hegelian notion of content and for may be the best model to explain the process in a philosophical nutshell (Hegel, 1931).

Ever since the human animal started to look for ways to make tools (or search for tools) that better serve his well-being, it may be supposed that the desire of commodious living started to have a genetic appearance. Giving a detailed biological account of how and when exactly this could have happened is an ethological/biological or probably an anthropological job par excellence. Our concern in this paper now is to have presented a conception of the general trajectory that this desire of commodious living could have followed in order to reach our civilizational status quo. In a manner speaking, we have answered the question "Why do we ask why?"

To close, a question might thus arise: why would this "mutant" commodious gene evolve only for humans? To answer this, I would say that in a gene pool as per ethological studies, the answer to such a question might be, tellingly: "why not?" Ethology and evolutionary studies have always majorly relied on haphazard contingencies and chance mutations[xx]. A mutant gene is an evolutionary accident that can never be accounted for by some overt rationalization. Its mere being as "mutant" is a good enough reason for its existence.

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[i] See "superorganic" society by: A. L. Kroeber, *The Nature of Culture*. Chicago, 1952; B. G. Trigger, "*Archaeology and Epistemology: Dialoguing across the Darwinian Chasm,"* American Journal of Archaeology 102 (1998), 1-34; J. L. Boone and E. A. Smith, *"Is it Evolution Yet?",*; (Childe, 1956, 141-173);

[ii]"This social evolution is a resultant of the interaction of two wholly distinct factors: the individual, deriving his peculiar gifts from the play of physiological and infra-social forces, but bearing all the power of initiative and origination in his own hands; and second, the social environment, with its power of adopting or rejecting both him and his gifts. Both factors are essential to change." (James, 1880, 448).

[iii]The German philosopher Schopenhauer, a great admirer of Kant, would argue for instance that, human reason is the tool for an insatiable desiring-will which helps this will get what it wants. (Schopenhauer. 1969).

[iv]More recently, Richard Klien considers the evolution of the brain size of hominid species as a "selectively advantageous mutation" that helped cultural transmission of behavior in a way that this human adapts to the external environment without any necessary physiological change. (Klein,1999, 18)

[v] "…objective reason, unlike subjective reason, aimed at evolving a comprehensive system, or hierarchy, of all beings, including man and his aims." (Horkheimer, 1947, p.4)

[vi] The term "better" here is used in a form of subjective/relative sense. What is better is what is judged to be enhancing the quality of the subject's life at a particular time and place. The subject can very well be one individual or a group of people (a society).

[vii] "God, who hath given the world to men in common, hath also given them reason to make use of it to the best advantage of life and convenience. The earth and all that is therein is given to men for the support and comfort of their being" (Locke, 1689, paragraph 25).

[viii] « L'homme est un être perfectible, malléable toujours en train de se faire. » (Chirpaz, 1984, 43)

[ix] The term "commodity" here is in no aspect related to Karl Marx's usage of the term; i.e. the market's circulating items. A commodity here means any object (which can be an exterior item or a state of being) that is desired by any subject because of this latter's judgment on it as of qualities that enhances his/her well-being.

[x] Rousseau recognizes this aspect of wanting more and more (or what he calls "perfectibility") to be the source of all civilization, judging it also the source of inequality and suffering among humans. His aim was thus to give

a prescriptive analysis of what should we do with this situation – something that probably made him drift towards the "why" question that is here highlighted and posed. « …il y a une autre qualité très spécifique qui les distingue (l'homme de l'animal), et il ne peut y avoir de contestation, c'est la faculté de se perfectionner ; faculté qui, à l'aide des circonstances, développe successivement toutes les autres…….il serait triste pour nous d'être forcé de convenir que cette faculté distinctive et presque illimitée, est la source de tous les malheurs de l'homme ; c'est elle qui le tire, à force du temps, de cette condition originaire, dans laquelle il coulerait des jours tranquilles et innocents ; que c'est elle qui, faisant éclore avec les siècles ses lumières et ses erreurs, ses vices et ses vertus, le rend à la longue le tyran de lui-même et de la nature. » (Rousseau, 1996. pp. 87-88)

[xi] This notion of a socially nurtured greed imposed by the economic system of the place and time is very well discussed by Macpherson and Fromm. (FROMM,1997) (Macpherson, 2011).

[xii] In this respect, the well-being or the commodious life evoked in this research would be the object of the commodious desire. On a psychological level, and in Freudian terms, it is the "object" where the commodious desire itself would be the "drive". We read Jean Laplanche interpreting Freud's "object" of a drive saying: "..the term object appears initially to designate something which functions as a means 'the thing in regard to which or through which the drive is able to achieve its aim'. There is a priority of satisfaction and of the satisfying action in relation to that 'in regard to which' that action finds its conclusion." (Laplanche, 1976, p.12)

[xiii] "It is just as much a necessity of reason that men make contracts, exchange, and trade, as that they should have property…..It is taken for granted that contracting parties recognize one another as persons and owners…..In contract I hold property through a common will. It is the interest of reason that the subjective will become universal, and exalt itself to this level of realization." (Hegel, 2001. P. 71)

[xiv] "The universe is populated by stable things. A stable thing is a collection of atoms that is permanent enough or common enough to deserve a name"(Dawkins, 1989, p. 18 footnote)

[xv] . "If human nature is actually constructed by genes whose predominant quality is a ruthless selfishness, then pious lectures advocating qualities like generosity and altruism are probably just another strategy for furthering selfish interests. Ruthless predators are often moralistic in appearance, because that is how they disarm their intended victims." (Johnson, 2000).

[xvi] "The universe could so easily have remained lifeless and simple -just physics and chemistry, just the scattered dust of the cosmic explosion that gave birth to time and space. The fact that it did not -the fact that life evolved out of literally nothing, some 10 billion years after the universe evolved literally out of nothing -is a fact so staggering that I would be mad to attempt words to do it justice. And even that is not the end of the matter. Not only did evolution happen: it eventually led to beings capable of comprehending the process by which they comprehend it." (Dawkins, 2004).

[xvii] "Cognition is automated and takes place beneath our conscious awareness…Our ability to function as groups may require a sophisticated cognitive mechanism that appear effortless only because they are automated" (Wilson, 2002)

[xviii] As a matter of fact, Wilson does evoke the concept of greed in chapter 8 of his latest book "Does Altruism Exist?", but he tackles the topic from a defensive point rejecting the *Homo economicus* trend which considered greed as good and that large societies can self-organize around it. However, in his defense he did not present any alternative detailed support for his stand. As a matter of fact his defense came from other socio-economists' literature while maintaining his rather broad justification referring cultural and societal evolution to a form of group selection and to "a proximate mechanism that evolved by cultural evolution and that interface with our genetically evolved mechanism" (Wilson, 2015; p: 114)

[xix] "...it would take only a single individual with a tendency towards more selfish behavior to undermine a population otherwise filled only with the gene for altruism towards non-kin." Pinker (2003, p:257).

[xx] "Every animal owes its existence to an astonishing list of contingencies that might not have happened. With so much chance and luck it might be thought that evolution itself is a process of pure chance, but nothing could be further from the truth." Dawkins in a speech to the Cristchurch in New Zealand.