

# Introduction

The book is about academic happenings that took me around the world on a journey I never dreamed of and I am not sure I wanted; almost everything that happened was and still is a surprise to me. I write it as a kind of activity report. This not a journal since I have not written regularly in its pages. It is a publication about what I remember mostly from my professional life and what I usually do as a professor at the University of Oxford; of course, some of my thoughts pop up here from time to time. I do not think there are many people who have studied and taught in Toronto, Ottawa, Sydney and Oxford, met and had discussions with Jacques Derrida, Umberto Eco, Noam Chomsky, Yehudi Menuhin, Roger Penrose (Nobel Prize Laureate), Richard Swinburne, and David Chalmers for example, and are still part of the conversations taking place in the intellectual world today. I have often been asked what it is like in Oxford and the institution where I have worked for 26 years and where I still work, so what I say may be of interest. Besides, I feel a kind of duty to do this because I have had the chance to find myself in extraordinary situations in the good sense of the word, and it seems only right to express my gratitude by recounting some of them.

I intended to put these lines to paper long ago, but every time I began to write something intervened in my institution that demanded immediate resolution; some pages here were written three or four years ago and I conceived many more before that, but some of them were lost. I managed to write something during the holidays; I am now in the summer break of 2023 and I think it is a good time to send this material to print before the start of the new academic year.

I shall in time add more lines to those here since my life has had so many twists and turns, and is still going strong. I will include within the text photos taken by me, by colleagues, students, friends, and family members. I have worked considerably with illustrations for the last 20 years and, additionally, I

appreciate the art of photography and have studied it to some extent since I was 14. Also, I do it for the sake of authenticity [i.e. in some cases, I could not even have dreamt to see the places I have photographed, hence in a way I do so to convince myself and others, that I really was there]. I will not mention the names of those who photographed because I do not have their permission to do so; I will, however, indicate my own photos by initials.