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Plagues and Miracles

Introduction to Jumping Life

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January 2026

Jumping across the Globe through its vast continents and enormously diverse political, economic, and cultural systems for political survival and economic progress can be highly beneficial but never painless, and in many instances perilous. Please think twice before commencing your worldwide jumping!

Writing a book about my life has lingered with me since my earliest moments in this vast Universe, even when there was hardly anything substantial to recount. As we age, the pages of our life story become richer, offering ample material to construct a meaningful narrative. However, the same passage of time makes life increasingly intricate and occasionally tragic, much like the trajectory of my life journey. In our later years, writing a book can often get pushed to the periphery of our priorities due to life's myriad complexities. Questions inevitably arise about the purpose of such an endeavor, its potential impact, reception, and underlying value.

The prospect of potential criticism—ranging from accusations of arrogance to disparaging comments—can be daunting, especially in an era rife with identity politics, inclusive excellence, cancel culture, and various other sociopolitical tensions. In the face of such potential backlash, I've waited for nearly 65 years (give or take) before embarking on this writing journey, hoping that this first book won't be my last if I can navigate the challenges in my environment without succumbing to undue stress or turmoil. Therefore, this book is a testament to resilience throughout my journey, even in the face of potential social scrutiny and criticism.

When one embarks on the journey of writing a book about oneself, a paramount and somewhat audacious question must be posed at the outset: Will my book offer any meaningful contribution

to our shared civilization? If not, what's the purpose of undertaking such an endeavor?" In my humble estimation, after traversing seventy years on this planet and navigating the currents of three or possibly four distinct political, economic, and cultural paradigms—jumping between them at various junctures—I believe I can offer some insights to enrich our individual and collective comprehension of the modern era. This is especially significant in today's landscape, marked by an ongoing social revolution sweeping the Western world and beyond—a wave of change that sometimes stretches the bounds of my tolerance.

The initial threads of my life's fabric were woven within the framework of the so-called "perfect" communist system in Poland, in eastern communist Europe. This meticulously orchestrated design was intended to guide me toward a path of predictable progression: quality education, a modest apartment, a humble vehicle, and a small family vision contingent on behavior aligned with the system's rigid expectations. Growing up as the child of a respected physician in a small Polish town, the semi-communist system had already earmarked my role—to serve the less privileged social groups, namely farmers and laborers, with the talents I had inherited, not earned, from my parents. This early exposure thrust me into the realm of identity politics and inclusive excellence before I even opened my eyes at the moment of my birth, signifying my entry into the tightly controlled communist structure. This was the starting point of my turbulent but successful life.

My educational journey, from my earliest days in a communist kindergarten to earning a Ph.D., unfolded within the confines of the only system available to me at the time in Poland, leaving deep imprints on my personal life. The trajectory of my first thirty years was marked by a transformation from the tranquility of my Catholic upbringing in my parents' peaceful home, intertwined with a touch of communism, to becoming a full-fledged member of the Communist Party. The system's indoctrination succeeded, reshaping my beliefs from Catholicism to communism. Subsequently, my path led me to Cambridge, where I absorbed yet another form of indoctrination as a subject of the United Kingdom. Seven years later, my family and I relocated to the United States of America, immersing ourselves in a blend of left- and right-wing ideological influences that characterize the American political spectrum.

At my age, one might assume that I am approaching the end of my life and, therefore, should be slowly or quickly preparing myself for my final encounter with my Maker. I have decided, however, to write an extensive account of my life's journey, hoping to impress a few readers, including my friends, and perhaps disappoint or even upset some others. Interestingly, some were already upset when I casually mentioned my intention to document my life experience on paper, whether electronically or physically. Given these reactions, I wonder if I should reconsider writing the very first book of my life and instead focus on preparing myself for my journey into eternity, which could take several forms depending on our understanding of the afterlife.

According to my Catholic religion, bestowed upon me at the inception of my physical existence without my consent—much like my initial Eastern European homeland with its confusing form of communism that was imposed upon me against my wishes—the afterlife entails meeting my Creator. In this encounter, I would need to defend myself against potential punishments in hell or rewards in heaven for everything I have done to everyone around me who has had the fortune or misfortune of crossing paths with me. Therefore, my motivation for writing this book is not solely to explain my often confusing or puzzling actions throughout my life to my friends and enemies, but also to prepare for the approaching critical encounter in my afterlife—hopefully not in the immediate future—with my Creator. As a precaution, I already request, "God, please forgive me", a sentiment expressed on the first pages of this book.

To secure even a little respect and forgiveness from the Creator during our initial meeting, I must establish in advance that the truth has consistently been upheld and followed throughout the composition of this document, although this endeavor may prove challenging. Society treats this foundational pillar of civilization as critical to our ethics, morality, religion, and more, yet shows considerable "flexibility" despite striving for honesty in our interactions. The disheartening reality is that, in pursuit of an analogy drawn from Einstein's theory of relativity, we might be constructing a "general relativity social system" in which our morality, ethics, and, especially, the truth have become ancient relics, susceptible to manipulation for personal or collective gain. Admittedly, discussing this already provokes my ire. This sentiment immediately invokes memories of the outset of my existence in Eastern Europe, where the presumably flawless system

subjected me, my family, and our compatriots to a harsh regime of relative truth, ethics, and beyond. Let us set aside my frustration and focus on the book's content, spanning numerous pages, which predominantly delves into the "social relativity" theme in our historical and contemporary lives.

In my case, I am aware that a significant conversation with my Creator will transpire sooner or later. As such, any content written on the pages of this book that deviates from what we commonly recognize as objective truth (as opposed to political narrative) could potentially be utilized against me by the Ultimate Authority of the Universe. Therefore, I am committed to striving, to the best of my cognitive abilities, for honesty. I also pledge to mitigate my cognitive biases and self-interests, ensuring that my heightened imagination and creativity are exercised under complete mental control rather than flourishing uncontrollably across these pages.

Nevertheless, the truth becomes relative as I age. What I once knew and remembered during my teenage years might not correspond precisely to what I can now retrieve from the memory drawers of my mind. As men, we possess numerous mental drawers, each containing a wealth of information and experiences. One such drawer is the "Drawer of Nothing", a facet humorously acclaimed by a comedian. We men retreat to this space while fishing, gazing at the bobber for hours, or aimlessly flicking through multiple TV channels simultaneously, unaware of what we're watching. This provides mental relief, allowing us to recover and restore our equilibrium in the Drawer of Nothing instead of perpetually pursuing vital information in other compartments—information crucial for our families and, even more significantly, our civilization.

Conversely, as the same comedian suggests, women do not encounter difficulties while inhabiting their version of the Drawer of Nothing. They remain continually engaged and productive, qualities deserving of our complete admiration. I assure you, however, that throughout this book, I will not yield to the allure of my Drawer of Nothing. That being said, I am committed to evaluating all my statements meticulously before transcribing them onto this electronic paper, ensuring that readers are not disheartened or deem me a "bloody liar" due to my perceived lack of coherence—stemming from excessive time spent in the Drawer of

Nothing—causing me to babble without purpose. In this context, "bloody" should be interpreted in the quintessentially English sense, signifying "very".

Considering the deliberate inclusion of the above tangents, diversions, and detours, I've composed a narrative detailing my life's cycles. This account will encompass numerous jumps, triumphs, and accomplishments, as well as significant distractions and even setbacks, weaving my existence into a fabric or tapestry of ups and downs, progressions and regressions, and a trajectory both linear and topsy-turvy, all leading toward a goal I've yet to grasp fully.

I've also recently realized that further delay might prevent me from completing this writing endeavor; another COVID-like crisis could potentially extinguish my opportunity if a timely vaccine fails to materialize. Consequently, the sole reference to my intended yet unwritten book might find a place on my gravestone, perhaps in the form of a sentence such as:

"Here lies an unlucky individual who harbored aspirations of writing a book about his challenging life but missed his literary boat."

To prevent such a posthumous predicament, I resolved to write my story, demonstrating that while my life might hold an air of misery, it perhaps fares marginally better than the lives of many of my university colleagues across several countries. It is a well-known notion that when God created a scientist—and I count myself among them—the Devil promptly contrived his colleague. With this in mind, I could dedicate this book to a broad audience, but especially to my academic peers, some of whom I might not have held in the highest esteem, with a message that could be summed up as:

"To specific individuals, I didn't particularly fancy: go away (or go to h...)! "

This topic is further discussed in several chapters of my book, following my experience with the academic systems of the left and right and specific events that almost destroyed me after forty-five years of dedicated service to my profession.

Throughout our lifetimes, people make what one might call "jumps," characterized by swift shifts in their life trajectories. I realize that the word "leap" instead of "jump" sounds much better, more graceful, and less colloquial. However, to my knowledge, I have not been leaping (or limping!) through life; I have certainly been jumping high and long. For all of us, these jumps could result from relocation, rapid changes in political or educational affiliations, significant professional advancements like promotions, and other shifts. Some individuals jump infrequently and make minor jumps, keeping them within one locale and, if applicable, surrounded by slowly or rapidly changing circles of family members. Others pass away after a productive and content life, still near their birthplace, with minimal, if any, significant jumps. Conversely, some individuals make substantial, often dramatic jumps that can considerably alter the course of their lives, sometimes for the worse. For specific individuals, however, their jumps bring about extraordinary changes that affect their life trajectories and the lives of their immediate successors and subsequent generations. These jumps can be unpredictable or predetermined, brief or extensive, shallow or profound, effortless or strenuous, and sometimes even perilous.

Throughout my existence, I've engaged in an abundance of jumping through diverse systems of various kinds, often benefiting from the fabric of life protecting me, occasionally finding it giving way beneath me, and at times even propelling me upwards, significantly aiding my jumps to be longer, higher, faster, and farther. This assistance has often helped me evade a range of predators, both human and otherwise. Generally, my jumps have been deliberate, a product of careful planning. Yet, there have been instances where I've been forced into jumps against my will. Some jumps I've made seem to have been predetermined, woven into the fabric of my existence by my Maker—what some might term destiny, an idea that, in my philosophy, ultimately circles back to the Creator.

When I was eighteen, one of my less predetermined and, to be frank, not particularly clever jumps nearly resulted in my demise by breaking my neck. I was on the brink of ending my career as a jumper, almost succumbing to a mishap shortly before my high school graduation. Other close encounters could have radically altered my life, and certainly not for the better.

My journey of jumping commenced from the moment of my birth, and I suspect I engaged in some minor jumping even within my mother's womb. Following my birth in a prominent hospital in Warsaw, still ravaged by the last Big War, I relocated reluctantly on my part, but content nonetheless, to a modest apartment in central Warsaw, likely affording me a view of one of the city's most renowned squares, dominated by the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. As my parents searched for a suitable residence, I made numerous small jumps around Warsaw over the next four years.

Additionally, I embarked on intermittent, more extensive, reversible trips to visit my grandparents on both sides of my family, who resided approximately 200 km from Warsaw, in the heart of Poland, known as Greater Poland. These local hops around Warsaw before settling into a lovely apartment in Mokotów (a suburb of Warsaw), and the slightly more extensive jumps to my grandparents' residences, were not my preference, but I made no objections.

Subsequently, I engaged in shorter back-and-forth jumps between my maternal and paternal grandparents, who lived 30 km apart. These jumps, while significant, were transient, as I invariably returned to Warsaw. At the age of five, a colossal jump occurred that profoundly altered the course of my life. I was uprooted from the cozy apartment provided by the communist system in Mokotów. For fifteen years, I was transported away from Warsaw to the small town of my paternal grandparents.

The jump was truly profound for my mother, who never aspired to return to her parents' region from which she had initially jumped to Warsaw, seeking to escape the provincial life of her humble parents—a life I deeply cherished. The reality that she was compelled to relocate from the "big world" of the Polish capital to an even smaller locale, in a purely agricultural part of Poland, constituted her tragedy. My jump spanned fifteen years, after which I made my escape back to a big city. On the other hand, my mother's jump was precipitated by my father's medical profession, against her will, marked by ceaseless objections, grievances, and, as fate would have it, permanence. She eventually passed away in a place she never wished to be.

The relentless complaints of such an unhappy mother drained me of energy. When I was finally prepared to jump, I commenced jumping far and high as though striving to escape the personal tragedy that had befallen my immensely ambitious mother—a woman filled with talents but lacking the means to realize them. Through my lengthy and initially overly ambitious jumps from the small town, I seemed to be saying to myself,

"They ruined her life there, but the same fate shall not befall me."

Retrospectively, the narrative is more intricate. Due to my father's influential position in the medical field and his substantial positive impact on the local agricultural society, our lives, including my mother's, were far more comfortable than what the ostensibly perfect communist system had intended for the average Pole. Upon reflection, I wouldn't mind returning to meet my Maker just outside the town, as my parents rest in peace for eternity.

Driven by my parents' decision, I was compelled to make a significant jump, escaping from Warsaw, the hub of Polish culture, politics, and education, replete with premier Polish universities, elite high schools, and a high concentration of sophistication. Some Poles might dispute the claim that Warsaw is the heart of Polish culture and refinement, with many advocating Kraków as the foremost cultural hub. However, I counter this with the following statement:

"I was born in Warsaw, spending five years there, followed by fifteen years amid Greater Poland (Wielkopolska), as opposed to Lesser Poland (Malopolska), where Krakow is situated, I know better. Thus, I am more convinced that Warsaw holds the central position than Krakow!"

Of course, I joke here, although my humor might not sit well with my ex-wife, as her paternal family, a lineage of distinguished Jewish lawyers and physicians, hails from Krakow.

Given that the first half of my jump-filled life unfolded in Eastern Europe, debates about historical, cultural, and other dimensions of size and significance held immense weight. Families could be torn apart if someone moved from the less esteemed to the more sophisticated level of

society, even though the purportedly flawless system persistently reiterated the principle of equality. We were unequal, not merely because some were "more equal" than others, as George Orwell so aptly expressed in "Animal Farm," a book I eventually read after my permanent jump from Poland to the UK. The ostensibly equal society, positioned on the equal side rather than within the prominent circle of senior Party members, was equally divided due to the nonsensical factors I've just discussed, among others.

I was relocated to a petite town with around 4,000 provincial inhabitants at the time, a place that could be described as the middle of nowhere. Nonetheless, the jump was anticipated to bring happiness. I was meant to be content in a small provincial town surrounded by nature's grandeur rather than concrete and cultural sophistication. The subsequent fifteen years proved remarkable, primarily due to my parents' political and financial status, especially my father's. His position within this rural enclave was prosperous, ensuring my upbringing in what seemed like the middle of nowhere, until I was once again compelled — or, this time, willingly chose — to jump. This second jump, made with my full consent at approximately nineteen years of age, led me away from my contented, almost privileged life in the heart of Poland. The fabric of my life gently guided me through a comfortable and favored childhood, affording me protection, support, and, on a few occasions, even saving my life. This fabric enabled me to receive a quality provincial education within a secure provincial town before propelling me westward to a college—or, more precisely, a prominent Technical University in Wroclaw.

The initial jump to the University was a relatively effortless endeavor for me, nearly glorious. My arrival in Wroclaw proved both successful and secure. However, within three months, I found myself retracing my steps after my first attempt was excessively high. My original jump was far beyond my provincial preparations for such heights. Thus, after being fired from the University, I had to repeat my initial leap, aiming for a lower but similarly distant jump since my destination was the same university. The platform for my second jump was much more suited to my caliber. Even though the system had assisted with my initial extremely high jump, I faltered. This will serve as a subject of extensive discussion within my book—the role of equity and its impact on our lives will be addressed later.

I had to lower my trajectory for my second jump out of nowhere, and this time, I succeeded. Subsequently, I solidified my place at the University, rapidly advanced my educational pursuits, and ultimately vaulted to the pinnacle of international education and research at Cambridge. Most crucially, I persevered after my initial unsuccessful jump, restructured my approach following the preliminary jump, took another leap, and, after a few years, soared far higher than even my most extravagant imaginings.

Following a decade in Wroclaw, where I undertook various roles, acquired two engineering degrees, had two children, and married a remarkable new wife, I embarked on an extensive jump out of Poland. In 1984, I departed my communist homeland and its ostensibly impeccable system full of incredible flaws for a different setting on the fringes of the United Kingdom, specifically Liverpool. I spent roughly ten months there, acquainting myself with a Western version of communism—a description some might approve of—and with the UK's political landscape. The individuals I encountered at the university and in the city displayed an unprecedented degree of liberalism, aligning well with my communist inclinations. Yet, my happiness was limited; I was there alone, while my wife and children remained behind the Iron Curtain in Poland, shielded by the protective embrace of the Polish security apparatus and the imposing presence of Soviet forces encircling the nation on three fronts. Despite the challenges, my wife and I managed a few additional jumps, with me making periodic visits to Poland and rendezvousing in Paris for our first honeymoon, five years after our wedding.

The system supported our jumps, as they had our children—a guarantee deemed satisfactory by the communists, ensuring our eventual return to serve the nation loyally. Following a solitary year in Liverpool and an additional eight months alone in Cambridge, my wife joined me at the latter institution, accompanied by our children. The British authorities assessed my capabilities and found me qualified to be transferred to their national center of science, replete with Nobel Prize laureates and fellows of prestigious societies, including the Royal Society and an elite center for scientific research. The communists were also agreeable to this arrangement, as they sought access to modern Western technologies, especially throughout the 1980s. Consequently, both the Polish communists and the British authorities concurred, albeit for different reasons, on the

reunification of my family. Our joy was boundless! We were together at last, distanced from the constraints of communism and immersed in the vibrant intellectual atmosphere of Cambridge.

After twenty months of solitary residence in Liverpool and Cambridge and five more years with my family in Cambridge, I found myself compelled to resume long-distance jumps. During this interval, I undertook a few minor hops back and forth across England with the family, as well as occasional conference trips across Europe and the United States. Eventually, I embarked on another colossal jump, relocating my entire family from the UK to the United States, a move of a permanent nature. Our long-distance journey out of Cambridge, the most extensive we had experienced, commenced in 1990, although not all of us at the same time. I initiated this jump in May 1990, followed by my wife and children starting in Poland. We decided to educate our children between Cambridge and Poland, allowing them to attend my family's school in my parents' town for several months, an experience that brought me immense delight. Finally, in the autumn of 1990, we converged in Beaverton near Portland, Oregon.

The jump to Oregon was not entirely by design; it was forced by the hardships of the late 1980s recession in the UK. The recession in Poland during the mid-80s, coupled with inflation skyrocketing into the thousands of percentage points in 1983-84, pushed us away from the grip of communism towards the UK—a transition that, in retrospect, wasn't as unfavorable as it might have seemed. I remain deeply appreciative of the welcoming and cordial reception we received from the British people. Subsequently, another, albeit smaller, yet equally harsh recession struck the UK towards the end of the 1980s, with inflation hovering around 20%, prompting our departure from Cambridge for the breathtaking landscapes of Oregon. Although leaving Cambridge, which had significantly influenced the trajectory of my academic career—whether for the better or worse —remains uncertain even today, the overall result of the move to Oregon for the entire family appeared to be positive, at least in my estimation.

Finding a permanent position proved elusive as Cambridge did not offer such openings, and the broader British economy was grappling with challenges. It's worth noting that the British did attempt to prevent my jump by extending a faculty lecture position at Bristol (akin to an assistant

professorship in the US) just as I was en route to Heathrow. From the airport, I responded, expressing regret, and explaining my compulsion to embark on this journey—partly for myself but primarily to open medical doors for my wife. However, my answer was met with concerns over financial matters, which were indeed valid. While it's true that monetary considerations played a role in my decision, my wife's professional prospects held greater significance, bordering on critical.

How long could I confine an exceptionally talented medical practitioner to the confines of our home merely due to a faction of medical policymakers in London aiming to safeguard their esteemed and financially rewarding medical profession from the influx of foreign professionals, including Poles like us? As a countermeasure to discourage my departure abroad, Cambridge also proposed a less permanent yet more prestigious position, which was met with a response like my reply to Bristol. The outcome was that my income nearly quadrupled upon transitioning from the British higher education system under the Queen's domain to the system operating under the elected presidents of the United States, in Beaverton, Oregon, to be precise.

My wife faced restrictions on medical employment in the UK, and our standard of living was diminishing swiftly due to the late 1980s recession. With my relatively decent university salary, combined with my wife's lack of income, amid mortgage rates of approximately 18%, dominated by adjustable rates following national trends—coupled with about two-thirds of my salary channeled towards servicing a small semi-Victorian residence in the heart of Cambridge—it's safe to say our financial state was far from thriving. While the children were content, and I found much solace in the university's surroundings of global science, my wife's circumstances were far from satisfactory. Despite numerous attempts to convert her Polish medical degree through “nostrification” and three years of keen but stressful endeavors—facing three or four national medical exams—all efforts ultimately failed. Each exam comprised four distinct sections, and each time she undertook the assessment, she barely missed the threshold for one of the segments—never a catastrophic failure, but relatively marginal shortcomings.

The British medical establishment seemed to be engaged in political maneuvering with my wife. After four attempts, she was sidelined for two years, with no assurance that the political games wouldn't recommence at the end of that period. We opted to move to Oregon, hoping that the US medical system would be more accommodating for my wife. We were legal residents of British nationality, and our British citizenship was just months away. Instead, we had to start from scratch in the US, navigating the complexities of H-1 immigration visas.

Our family's life was transformed entirely after an extensive ocean crossing. We had once again emigrated, this time for the second occasion, from a realm of monarchy to one governed by elected Presidents, brimming with optimism. Our journey encompassed a transition from Party secretaries—enduring several such shifts in Poland—traversing the realm of the Queen to find ourselves, finally, in the melting pot of elected Presidents. My book delves into the jumps between three or four markedly dissimilar systems, highlighting our capacity to weather transitions encompassing a diverse spectrum of politics, stark cultural distinctions, family separation, personal tragedies, and substantial personal achievements. Reflecting upon it now, 40 years after I embarked on this journey of jumping across various systems and possessing knowledge about modern-day Poland, I might have chosen differently. However, back then, the jump to Oregon presented an opportunity for a dignified and prosperous life that had been taken away from us by communism and, to some extent, even by the Queen.

All my endeavors to cross the borders of various systems—shuttling between Poland, the UK, France, and, subsequently, Poland, the UK, and the United States—were far from straightforward. I have numerous tales to recount, such as the instance where the United States barred my entry due to a notorious Polish communist from Cambridge who was set to deliver a groundbreaking research talk in Texas at an international conference. These systems were all vexed by my "crazy jumping". For instance, crossing the border between the UK and Poland required the involvement of both political powerhouses, entailing their Home Offices, State Departments, Inland Security apparatus, and most probably other components of these two distinct systems—visas, re-entry visas, visas for re-entry after re-entering (here, I'm indulging in a touch of wild sarcasm again, please excuse me).

Every time I intended to visit my children in Poland, my foremost concern was whether they would grant me a re-entry visa back to the UK. This process involved special train journeys to other towns in the UK, enduring multi-hour waits for tiresome interviews, completing lengthy forms, and finally procuring the visa. On average, securing a reentry visa consumed a day. Following each border crossing, I harbored a profound fear that the Polish security apparatus might detain me, suspecting that I hadn't sufficiently engaged in espionage on their behalf or plundered crucial technological treasures for the Polish communist cause, and perhaps even more crucially, for the Soviets in Moscow.

With my reentry visa securely installed in my Polish service passport—essentially a communist passport—purchasing a ticket back to Poland inadvertently became a call to action for the Polish security apparatus. This could prompt them to appear at Warsaw airport or summon me to their office. I might encounter unexpected interrogation sessions at the airport or even be apprehended without valid reasons or based on entirely fabricated ones. As passionately as I yearned to reunite with my children and parents in Poland, every excursion I made between the two countries during the 1980s was loaded with peril and nerve-racking tension. Even now, the mere thought of those experiences can perturb me to the extent that I might be tempted to halt my writing. Such an action could either bring retribution (or perhaps reward?) to countless generations of future readers and jumpers.

Rather than embracing the ostensibly perfect system of socialist/communist Poland, I departed about halfway through my life, setting out for Cambridge, UK, and eventually assuming the mantle of a university professor in the United States at the University of Denver in Denver, Colorado. Along this journey, after leaving the supposed utopian system, I lived under several markedly distinct, albeit less-than-ideal systems. This book chronicles my journey through numerous jumps across the Globe from the so-called perfection of Eastern Europe under communism to the tangible, considerably less perfect reality of life in the US. During this transformative process, the very fabric of my life was repeatedly tested. It bore the burden of cracks, tears, twists, and turns at various junctures of my life. Yet, on each occasion, my life's fabric demonstrated an incredible capacity for self-healing, protecting me and enabling me to

navigate the turbulent seas of my existence toward my conclusion—whether it was distinguished or not.

Book Dedication to World Jumpers

It's customary for writers to dedicate their works to cherished individuals. It would be appropriate to dedicate this first book to my parents, who furnished me with the most resilient fabric of my life, endowing me with the impetus to cross diverse systems globally. Yet perhaps a broader dedication is warranted—one that extends to all those who have been jumping across epochs and territories, often involuntarily. These individuals, throughout history, have relinquished possessions accumulated over generations, sometimes even their families, as they vaulted over life's daunting hurdles with their fabric of life shredded, cracked, and occasionally obliterated. Their journeys were frequently marked by a desperate flight from one calamity only to be trapped by another, often a more devastating disaster. They abandoned all they had, sometimes leaving loved ones behind permanently, propelled by an almost primal determination to alter their fate, even if not for themselves, then for the offspring and generations that would follow.

Despite enduring significant setbacks and numerous disasters, I consider myself among the fortunate who succeeded. Yet, these trials were balanced by unexpected moments of personal and professional triumphs, as if miracles had descended. Consequently, the only dedication I can tender, as my homage to the generations of jumpers before and after me, is to those who did not triumph in their jumps or leaps across systems. Their aspirations were not lacking in vigor, but their fabrics of life, gifted to them by the Creator, were most likely not endowed with the durability and tenacity required to bolster their unyielding desire to leap, jump, and flourish. This is the intricate tapestry of life, where we attribute both blame and love to our Creator, for it is through these threads of challenge and triumph that our shared human story is woven.