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on the Publication  
of the First  
DICTIONARY OF  
AFRICAN PHILOSOPHY

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Cover: Prof. Maduabuchi F. Dukor

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NOTES ON THE PUBLICATION OF THE FIRST  
*DICTIONARY OF AFRICAN PHILOSOPHY*  
- FOREWORD -

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**Abstract.**

This paper reproduces, in full, the *Foreword* by General Editor, Maduabuchi Dukor, to mark the publication of the *Dictionary of African Philosophy (DAF)*, the first specialised dictionary dedicated to this field. It reflects on the significance of this milestone—an authentic and pioneering work authored by African scholars, with contributions from over 85 academics from Nigeria and across the continent.

The *Foreword* situates *DAF* within the broader discourse on African thought, emphasising its role in preserving, systematising, and advancing the continent’s intellectual traditions. It discusses the dictionary’s objectives, key themes, and contributions, including: the existence of African philosophy and the Great Debate (1970s and 1980s); the substance, definition, and authenticity of African philosophy; periodisation of African philosophy; the distinction between African philosophy, ethnophilosophy, and African studies; philosophy as a tool for liberating Black communities; the role of UNESCO in promoting philosophy; how this dictionary aligns with UNESCO’s calls for multiculturalism, respect for diverse cultures, and epistemologies in the contemporary spirit; the birth of this dictionary following UNESCO’s World Philosophy Day 2021; logic and proverbs, signs and symbolism; the relationship between logic and African philosophy; African freedom as inherently tied to the freedom of philosophy; selection criteria for the entries; and acknowledgements.

*DAF* = Dukor, Maduabuchi F. (ed.). 2025. *Dictionary of African Philosophy*. London Academic Publishing.

**Keywords:** African philosophy, logic, ethnophilosophy, African studies, colonialism, post-colonialism, UNESCO, G.E. Parrinder, J.S. Mbiti, Henri Maurier, Richard A. Wright

Compiling and editing a *Dictionary of African Philosophy* has been long awaited, particularly given the validation of its existence by the premises and conclusions of the Great Debate (1970s and 1980s) among thinkers both within and beyond the African continent. Indeed, these discussions served as a collective voice that has resonated on the global stage to reclaim and sustain the continent's identity, individuality, freedom, and cultural heritage. The challenges of identity and dignity posed an existential threat to African nationalist statesmen and politicians. Drawing from their informed perspectives, they recognised the urgent need to employ philosophy as a tool for liberating Black communities from the grip of imperial dominance.

African philosophy has historically developed in tandem with Western and other culturally rooted intellectual traditions. However, it is vital to understand that, for both logical and conceptual reasons, this notion does not align with race or colour-specific paradigms, often categorised as ethnic philosophies. Nor does it stand in opposition to philosophy as a universal, neutral, and inclusive discipline. Instead, African philosophy, alongside Western, Indian, or Greek ones, as well as fields like Metaphysics, Ethics, Logic, and Epistemology, are all branches of philosophy—a domain that remains fundamentally pure, neutral, and critically oriented.

Essential to all cultural systems is this neutral and critical attitude, which elevates philosophy as the monarch of knowledge and a first-order discipline, foundational to all humanistic, social and scientific fields. The term *ethnophilosophy* (Hountondji 1983), often associated with African thought, reflects a multicultural epistemic perspective. It differs, however, from African philosophy in that it emphasises collective worldviews and cultural traditions rather than a systematic approach. The prefix “ethno” qualifies specific philosophies tied to the cultures, races, and peoples they represent.

The concept of a *Dictionary of African Philosophy* is not at odds with the existing tradition of Western or Indian dictionaries. Instead, they should exist side by side, as part of a broader intellectual heritage. Incorporating an African perspective is both necessary and

complementary. Each of such works respects the uniqueness of others, contributing to a multicultural world of thought. This *Dictionary* thus serves as a comprehensive collection of notions, terms, definitions, and concepts from Metaphysics, Ethics, Logic, and Epistemology, as rooted in African intellectual traditions. Manifestations and practices may be culturally distinct, yet the underlying reality is the same across all systems of thought.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) has reemphasised the role of philosophy in ancient Greek, African, and Egyptian civilisations as a response to: 1. an imbalanced global cultural order; 2. the colonialism of the 18th and 19th centuries; 3. post-colonial political and economic inequalities perpetuated by imperialism; 4. the postmodern embrace of multiculturalism; and 5. the eclipse of philosophical studies under the prevalence of sciences (Dukor 2014, 16). In its efforts to restore harmony in a world marked by disorder and man's inhumanity to man, the United Nations (UN), founded on the principles of plurality and unity of humanity, through UNESCO, renews the ancient maxim "*man know thyself*" as the cornerstone of shared human values. This timeless principle is acknowledged across cultures, adapted to the postmodern ethos, and paired with the indispensable roles of critical thinking, innovation, and the transformative interplay between cultures, science, and technology. By celebrating philosophy, UNESCO champions epistemologies, values, and ontological frameworks, ensuring that scientific and technological advancements are no longer the exclusive heritage of a single race or culture.

The publication of this collective work aligns with these objectives, addressing the historical injustices of globalisation that have marginalised the African continent and its peoples. It aims to bridge the hitherto yawning gaps created by centuries of evolutionary divergence, imperial conquests, racism, colonialism, xenophobia, apartheid and anti-Semitism. In doing so, it responds to the United Nations (UN) call for multiculturalism, respect for diverse cultures and epistemologies in the postmodern spirit,

amplifying Africa's voice in the global cultural and scientific discourse. Ultimately, this *Dictionary* seeks to balance globalisation, ensuring an equitable flow of progress from the periphery to centres, from locales to cosmopolitan realms, and from individuals to their communities.

The generational, groundbreaking idea of this *Dictionary of African Philosophy*, the first of its kind in the history of philosophy, is a prospect and outcome of the *UNESCO World Philosophy Day 2021*. I had the honour and joy of convening this event as the Head of the Department of Philosophy at Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Nigeria. The series of conferences was supported by a UNESCO grant, with a keynote speech delivered by the UNESCO Director-General for Nigeria, read by Dr Nneka Okafor, and a lead paper presented by Dr Björn Freter from the School of African and Oriental Studies, London, UK. Additional papers were presented, followed by further submissions, compilations, and editing. The selection criteria were not based on whether someone is a teacher of philosophy, their university affiliation, or gender considerations. Instead, inclusion was determined based on the work of individual philosophers and their contributions to African philosophy, their engagement with concepts, notions, and knowledge, and their role as truth-bearers and excavators of theory. Many classical and foundational concepts and theories were formulated during the period of the Great Debate regarding the substance, definition, and authenticity of African philosophy, with many more ideas continuing to emerge, though they are still weighed for their epistemic significance.

An examination of the list reveals that most entries come from thinkers directly involved in the Great Debate, who contributed significantly to the development of philosophy on this continent. They are regarded as pioneers who deserve recognition. A good scholar in African philosophy must be familiar with their works. While many others are thinkers in their own right, distinctions exist between philosophers, non-philosophers, practising philosophers, and non-practising philosophers. A valid sub-contrary inference could be made: some philosophers are teachers, and some teachers

are philosophers; some philosophers are writers, and some writers are philosophers. The global digital engine, Google, has identified and listed some as philosophers, much like it recognises accredited writers and scientists. However, not all of them could be included in this edition, due to spatio-temporal constraints.

Respecting the periodisation of African philosophy and recognising the groundbreaking works of pioneers such as J.S. Mbiti's *African Religions and Philosophy*, or G.E. Parrinder's *African Traditional Religions* means these texts are regarded as the African equivalents of ancient and classical Greek works. Excerpts from Mbiti and Parrinder are extensively featured due to their profound impact and their engagement with issues of personality and identity during colonial and post-colonial periods. Their concepts and notions embody the fluidity, originality, and historicity of a philosophy of being and existence that serves as a foundation for the works of contemporary scholars, particularly on metaphysics and poetry. Excerpts from classical African philosophers not only highlight their monumental influence but also affirm their authoritative status—akin to seasoned navigators charting the course of a vast expedition—with the contributors to the Great Debate serving as its key wayfinders. Similarly, excerpts from the published works of contemporary philosophers and scholars were incorporated to supplement and address relative gaps identified during the conferencing, compilation, and editing phases.

In the early 1970s, Professor Henri Maurier initiated a debate within Anglophone and Francophone universities on whether African philosophy truly existed, an inquiry approached with notable scepticism (Okolo 1993). Richard A. Wright, in his anthology, echoed this doubt, arguing that philosophy is universal and that African philosophy is no more distinct than the notion of African mathematics (Wright 1977). Those who engaged with existential questions during the Debate defended not only the intellectual legitimacy of African philosophy but also the broader rights of African people. Thinkers such as George C.M. James, Sophie Oluwole, Chukwudum B. Okolo, T.U. Nwala, Olusegun

Sodipo, Barry Hallen, Lancinay Keita, Godwin Sogolo, C.S. Momoh, K.C. Anyanwu, or Emmanuel Eze championed the preservation of Africa's unique cultural identity. Positioned as inclusivists, liberalists, and advocates for cultural authenticity, they laid the foundation for contemporary African thinking with meticulous logic and argumentation, countering claims of its nonexistence.

This group directly opposed exclusivists and monists, such as Paulin Hountondji, Henry Odera Oruka, Kwasi Wiredu, or Peter Bodunrin—often labelled as “philosophers in Africa” rather than African philosophers—who argued that African philosophy failed to meet the universal standards rooted in Greek and Western traditions (Dukor 2005, 18; Dukor 2021, 20).

The Great Debate produced a wealth of concepts and theories, including J.S Mbiti's *African Philosophy and Religion*; G.E. Parrinder's *African Traditional Religion*; Tempels' *Bantu Philosophy*; Alexis Kagame's *Ethnohistory and Ethnophilosophy (Studies on Indigenous Philosophical Systems)*; Peter Bodunrin's *Question of African Philosophy*; Kwasi Wiredu's *Conceptual Decolonisation of African Philosophy*; H.O. Oruka's *Philosophical Sagacity*; L. Keita and C.S. Momoh's *Periodisation of African Philosophy*; T.U. Nwala's *Treatise on William Amo of Ghana and Igbo Philosophy*; C.B. Okolo's *African Philosophy as Truth*; Innocent C. Onyewuenyi's *The African Origin of Greek Philosophy: An Exercise in Afrocentrism*; Anyanwu's *African Philosophy as African People's Sense of Their Existence, of Their Destiny, and of the World in Which They Live*; Sophie Oluwole's *Africanness of African Philosophy*; J. Omoregbe's *Postulations of African Socrates, Plato, Descartes and Hegel*; Hountonji's *Myth or Reality of African Philosophy*, and Gyekye's *Tradition and Modernity in Akan Conceptual Scheme*, among other. All of these opened the door to African philosophy as an intellectual endeavour, affirming its place alongside other global traditions. Members of both schools became prominent figures, whose contributions illuminated the field despite challenges from Darwinian evolutionists, imperialists, modernists, and detractors often referred to as “black intellectuals in white skins”. Their efforts have ensured

that African philosophy continues to evolve rather than be overshadowed or dismissed. By the end of the Great Debate, both exclusivists and inclusivists had played key roles in shaping the foundation of contemporary thought. The dialectical nature of philosophy remains a guiding principle for both sides in the methodological dispute. Ultimately, it appears that these key figures I describe as cardinals agreed that African philosophy, as philosophy, is a first-order, critical, and logical inquiry into essential concepts, terms, and notions about African culture, personality, ethics, metaphysics, and epistemology, framed within the theoretical lens of humanism. This perspective distinguishes African philosophy from social, historical, and cultural narratives or commentaries, often misclassified as such.

I think a key lesson to take is not conflating African philosophy with African Studies. Materials from African Studies—such as divination, proverbs, oral traditions, deities, witchcraft, and rituals associated with life events—serve as rich sources for philosophical reflection but must not be mistaken as first-order philosophical activities. African philosophy is a sub-discipline of philosophy itself. It is philosophical in its essence, neutrally authoritative in argumentation, objectively grounded, and scientifically rigorous.

The lack of criticism and, eventually, simplicity, are indicators that society has lost its values. Sagacious elders have become scarce, and leaders lack sincerity. Consequently, renegades sacrifice philosophical traditions, disciplinary rigour, neutrality, and non-partisanship for fleeting personal ambitions, abandoning logic, metaphysics, epistemology, and ethical wisdom.

On a positive note, there is a real need for philosophical reflections that emphasise sagacity, diversity, and unity, without compromising its fundamental role in relation to knowledge and society. African philosophers must avoid falling victim to the proverbial *God's death* for disobedience or the Sisyphean resignation that Albert Camus describes. African philosophy is, and must remain, a branch of philosophy, although its members have often failed to unanimously and critically pursue the common good for

the benefit of society. Between 2019 and 2020, for instance, in Nigeria—the most populous black nation in Africa—the judiciary undermined philosophy and reason. It desecrated transcendence, subjectivity, and purity of the universal monarchy of reason and the philosopher-king when it unscrupulously became the arbiter of disputes among Nigerian philosophers. These disputes were played out through rival associations such as the Nigerian Philosophers Association (NPA), the Philosophers Association of Nigeria (PAN), and the Association of Professional Philosophers of Nigeria (APPON), among others. A tragic spectacle, a dance in the forest with philosophical morbidity, originating from splinters and categories devoid of logical validity or reason. Such behaviour is a symptom of emotivism—a dangerous overambition to extend the boundaries of African philosophy into illogical realms. Such emotional drive is an underlying ailment plaguing these incongruous philosophical associations, risking a descent into fragmented tribal philosophies. Fortunately, there are still sagacious elders and leaders who are not only extant legacies but are also intellectual authorities and guardians in their own right. These figures, who are part of this dictionary, must be consulted with the utmost respect for the sacrosanct principles of reason. To ignore them in citations, excerpts, or engagement is to exhibit disrespect for African philosophy, the humanities, literature, and the liberal culture that underpins African ethics in the public sphere (Dukor 2023). Philosophy, at its core, is a critical discourse—both in theory and practice.

Proverbs, as one of the major sources of African philosophy, require first-order elucidation that goes beyond the scope of African Studies. In Africa, proverbs carry both epistemological and deontological values, often extolling moral virtues while condemning vices. This duality makes them prime subjects of philosophical inquiry and analysis. For example, some of them foreshadow empiricism, as when elders say “Experience is the content of wisdom“. The Yoruba aphorisms “The navel is middle of the body” and “Nobody tests wine with the mouth of another

person” assert that knowledge is derived from personal experience. Furthermore, the universal nature of knowledge is captured in the adage “Wisdom is not the exclusive possession of anyone and does not belong to one individual”. Beyond their epistemological dimension, proverbs also possess metaphysical significance. For instance, statements like “What you find in life is what you choose in heaven” and “Earth is a market, heaven is home” (Dukor 2021, 117).

Similarly, symbols and symbolism hold intrinsic and extrinsic metaphysical and epistemological values. They can be analysed as propositions within the modal logic of necessity, tautologies, and contingencies. Proverbs, symbols and symbolism in divination practices or conversations are candidates of logic and subjects of logical scrutiny. However, they are not ends in themselves; they must undergo the test of logical determinacy or indeterminacy. Thinking endeavour demands that the natural language of proverbs, symbols, and symbolism be translated into a logically precise language—one that distinguishes truth from falsity and embraces the structures of categorical propositions, *modus ponens*, *modus tollens*, conditionals, contradictions, contraries, sub-contraries, contingencies, tautologies, syllogisms, modalities, and counterfactuals. Without such rigorous transformation, there cannot be a scientific language or a firm epistemic foundation for an African Renaissance (Dukor 2014).

The absence or neglect of philosophy, particularly African philosophy, could have tragic implications, as it might seemingly validate the prejudiced assertions of figures like Gobineau, Charles Darwin, Voltaire, David Hume, Immanuel Kant, G.W.F. Hegel, Abraham Lincoln, Edgar Allan Poe, Andrew Johnson, Benjamin Franklin, Arnold Toynbee, or Albert Schweitzer, who claimed that Africans cannot think or philosophise. However, I believe that Africans can harness the power of African philosophy to assert their freedom from neo-colonialism and imperialism, as well as to demonstrate their potential in technological, economic, and political spheres. Philosophy provides the essential theoretical framework

for such advancements, making African freedom inherently tied to the freedom of philosophy (Dukor 2021, *Introduction*).

Every field—be it technology, science, politics, or social action—rests on theoretical frameworks or guiding principles. Quantum mechanics, quantum gravity and the general theory of relativity are all Western theoretical frameworks. Similarly, African scientific initiatives should be founded on African epistemology, ensuring coherence with scientific evidence and predictability while embodying a uniquely African scientific stance. This theoretical framework is embedded within African cultures, symbols, and practices, such as the making of rain, therapeutic medicines, visual arts, sculptures, or metallurgy (Dukor 2021, 1-243).

African philosophy may even embody the heritage that was once appropriated from Egypt to the West. Without Egyptian philosophy, there might not have been Western philosophy, and without Sub-Saharan (Black) African philosophy, there might not have been Egyptian philosophy (George G.M. James 1980; Onyewuenyi Innocent 1994). Philosophy is an intrinsic part of our heritage, and it must be practised with a sense of logic—not as though borrowed from the West, nor with an undue need to differentiate it from Western thought. Logic, as both art and science, is crucial for distinguishing correct from incorrect arguments and for increasing the proficiency of reasoning (Dukor 2018, 15). Only with a rigorous sense of logic can we effectively analyse, conceptualise, and stimulate African theoretical frameworks, ultimately leading to the development of an African-origin science and technology. African philosophy, when practised with intellectual rigour, becomes the foundation for reclaiming and advancing our cultural and scientific heritage.

As a prelude to a scientific approach to Africa, experimenting with the translation of proverbs and wise sayings into inductive and categorical statements is essential. This method aims to make them amenable to logical and scientific investigation. Many African proverbs and wise sayings are rhetorical in nature and often appear to lack explicit epistemic content. However, a closer examination

reveals that they encapsulate profound insights into African worldviews and moral philosophies, often with epistemological depth. Below are some examples of proverbs and wise sayings—particularly among the Igbo and Yoruba—that I attempted to convert into categorical propositions (*See Dukor 2021d, 94-106*):

1. *Proverb*

The child being carried on the back does not know that the trek is difficult.

*Categorical Proposition*

All children being carried on the back lack knowledge of the difficulty of the trek.

2. *Proverb*

The snail is an animal who carries his house with him wherever he goes.

*Categorical Proposition*

All snails carry their houses with them wherever they go.

A logical investigation of another sample of proverbs and wise sayings indicates that some lend themselves well to analysis through *Modus Ponens* and *Modus Tollens*.

1. If life were like a seedling, the enemy would uproot it.

$(P \rightarrow Q)$

Life is like a seedling (P)

The enemy will uproot it (Q)

$P \rightarrow Q$

P

$\therefore Q$                       Modus Ponens

2. Laughter does not necessarily signify pleasure.

$(P \rightarrow \neg Q)$

Laughter (P)

May not be a pleasure ( $\neg Q$ )

$P \rightarrow \neg Q$

P

$\therefore \neg Q$                       Modus Ponens

My approach has been to formalise simple statements into categorical propositions and conditionals (or implications). These arguments are deductive and inferential in nature, warranting logical investigation. However, some are inductive and could also be suitable for scientific inquiry. Many arguments of these forms are tautological or self-evident, as their conclusions are implicitly contained in their premises. As such, their epistemological content may be questionable, though the arguments themselves are not necessarily invalid.

Cassian R. Agera distinguished between *psychogenic syllogism* (inference for oneself) and *logogenic syllogism* (inference for another). Here's an example of *psychogenic logic* he cited:

Whatever is smoky is fiery.  
The yonder hill is smoking.  
Therefore, the yonder hill is fiery.

This conforms to Aristotelian or traditional logic.

M—P

S—M

---

∴ S—P

The *logogenic syllogism* is made for another. He cited this example:

The yonder hill is fiery.  
It is smoky.  
Whatever is smoky if fiery.

Additionally, there is the Ifa (Yoruba) mystical or divination chart, the symbols of which I have attempted to convert into logical symbols for logical investigations and scientific analysis. (See Dukor 2021d, 180-184 and Dukor 1995, 135-140.)

Ifa features a mystical chart containing 256 symbols, known as Odu. Of these, 16 are considered major Odu, and the remaining 240 are combinations (minors). All of them function as laws. An average native scientist, priest, or Babalawo (diviner) is expected to memorise at least 1360 verses.

In the process of casting the Ifa, certain elements are routinely employed by the oracle. The primary tools are *Opele* and *Ikin*. *Opele* is an instrument used in divination, consisting of four pairs of special ‘seeds’ tied together with a string. When a seed faces upward, it is represented by a single dot (.), and when it faces downward, it is represented by two dots (. .). If all the seeds are facing upward, the Odu revealed is *Eji-Ogbe*. If all the seeds are facing downward, the Odu revealed is *Oyeku-Meji*.

Further logical investigations could lead to a more simplified, rigorous and applied use of propositional, predicate, and modal logic, which can be then employed to verify and epistemologically validate the African mystical chart or divination system. This system is both science and art, requiring logical rationalisation and a transition from closed, sacred and mystical knowledge to an open, investigative, non-falsifiable and confirmable body of science and knowledge. As art, divination can only exist as epistemology and methodology, with little chance of evolving into a fully developed advanced science. The task of transforming this system lies within African philosophy and philosophers, with the aid of both inherent and extant logical tools.

Furthermore, this attempt shows how the findings of African Studies can be subject to logical analysis. What some refer to as African Logic is, in reality, either the correct or incorrect application of logical principles or a critical examination of existing ideas within African philosophy. Yet, there is nothing uniquely African about applying logical principles or engaging in critical thinking in African Studies. If we examine what is sometimes called three-valued logic in Igbo or Yoruba, we see that it is either undermined or substantiated and ultimately determined by logical principles of conjunction, disjunction, *modus ponens*, and so on.

\*

The *UNESCO World Day of Logic 2024 Conference*, titled “Phenomenology of African Logic”, places the philosophical

endeavour in Africa as a significant dilemma. One issue is: What is the relation between phenomenology and logic? And how does this question relate to the problem of African logic? The answer is that if logic becomes phenomenological, this would be the end of rationality, certainty, and correct reasoning. Moreover, confusing African philosophy with African Studies and relegating the principles of logic to an ethnocentric context or unwarranted subterfuge is not only anti-African but also unphilosophical in nature. The authentic path to African economic and political freedom lies in joining the global philosophical heritage and pursuing its development, while also seeking African identity. Hence, African philosophers must lead the way to African civilisation and development by conforming to the principles of logic, epistemology, metaphysics, and ethics.

Doing African philosophy is not the same as engaging in African Studies, which developed its own autonomy, methodology, definitions and practices. The issue of African philosophy in Nigeria and other parts of Africa is the undue encroachment of African Studies, primarily due to deficits in critical thinking and logical analysis. Some like to focus on issues like African history, culture, politics, anthropology, and religion, rather than first-order philosophical methods. As Wikipedia explains: “African Studies is the study of Africa, especially the continent’s cultures and societies. The field includes the study of African history, demography, culture, politics, economy, languages, and religion”.

To properly engage with African philosophy, one must avoid conflating it with them and respect the boundary between the two. While much work has been done in African Studies, which has contributed to our understanding of the continent, greater progress can be made through philosophy—specifically African philosophy. This aligns with the orientation initiated by early African philosophers, which emerged from the debates—sometimes tortuous and volatile—during the classical period of ethnophilosophy.

Ethnophilosophy itself is a legitimate form of philosophy that spans cultures and epochs. However, in Africa, it persisted for too long without evolving into the critical and dialectical synthesis required to be recognised today as African philosophy. This dictionary, therefore, serves as an interface between the raw materials of African Studies, ethnophilosophy, and the philosophy of cultures, peoples, and societies. It also brings a critical, neutral, and first-order philosophical perspective, as outlined in this *Foreword* and the selected contributions.

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NOTES ON THE PUBLICATION OF THE FIRST  
*DICTIONARY OF AFRICAN PHILOSOPHY*  
- AFTERWORD -

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**Abstract.**

This paper reproduces, in full, the *Afterword* by Executive Editor, Madalin Onu, to mark the publication of the *Dictionary of African Philosophy (DAF)*, the first dedicated dictionary in the field. It reflects on the significance of this milestone—an authentic and pioneering work authored by African scholars, with contributions from over 85 academics from Nigeria and across the continent.

The *Afterword* includes notes from the editing of the manuscript and discusses key themes such as: existence and identity in African philosophy; the Cartesian *ego* vs the collective “I”; African philosophy as a philosophy of relational existence and interconnectedness; Ubuntu and dialectics in African philosophy and the relation to the European ideas of spirit and community, especially Herder’s *Humanität* (humanity) and Hegel’s concept of *Geist* (Spirit); African socialism: Nkrumah, Nyerere, Senghor, and their contributions to African communitarianism and Négritude; what is dialectical materialism?; dialectical materialism and theism in African philosophy; political science, social science, and the intersection of African philosophy with socialism and democracy; the significance of African philosophy in promoting multiculturalism, respect for diverse cultures, global epistemologies, identity, freedom, and human rights.

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**Keywords:** Shakira, Waka Waka, Descartes, Leibniz, aesthetics, metaphysics, rationalism, Enlightenment, idealism, existentialism, ethnophilosophy, Kant, Hegel, Marx, Lenin, Slavoj Žižek, K. Nkrumah, J. Nyerere, L. Sédar Senghor, J.S. Mbiti, K. Gyekye, H.O. Oruka, M. Dukor, communalism, communitarianism, interconnectedness, Négritude, tradition, culture, hermeneutics, fusion philosophy, kola nut, Ubuntu, speculative logic, reconciliation

## 1. SOUNDTRACK OF THE SOUL

Have you ever danced to a truth bomb? When Shakira belts out a beat that shakes the world, you feel it—it sparks in the air, sharp like sunlight breaking clouds, and the dry earth awakens in response. “We are all Africa”, so she’s breathing it in—that’s not a statement, but a vibe. It is philosophy in motion.

Hips don’t lie, and those were things we both agreed on. Yet there it was, staring back at me from the draft: food, an aesthetic value? Beauty, yes. But food? Since Plato, it’s been mere necessity, a function of the body, not the soul. How could it sit beside the sublime, the ugly, or the grotesque, even within the daring frontiers of today’s art? A mistake maybe, a typo? Or perhaps *haute cuisine avant la lettre*?—with those tantalising flavours, delicate textures, lush spices, and such vibrant colours bathed under the African sun. How’s that Prof. Dukor? Which logic grounds your categories?

“No mistake”, said Prof. Dukor, steady, quietly confident, the kind that builds with years of dissecting thoughts and distilling concepts to voice their essence amidst the pages of this *Dictionary*. “Food belongs. It is beauty. It is life’s art”. In Africa, he pointed out, which is a Theistic Panpsychic Universe, there are community and aesthetic values. Social, ethical, and communitarian anchor the first. Meanwhile bread, food, music, and other artistic manifestations—even work habits, agricultural practices, or architectural forms—are celebrations of life, thus aesthetic values, all of which are predicated on God.

“So it might be”, I thought to myself. In Europe too, food was often treated as a spectacle of court, where the plate becomes a canvas—precise, calculated. Designed to dazzle the eye, refined and sculpted, but still an object, a show for the senses. A fleeting distraction as some rich sauce swirling with the same shallow aestheticism that festoons a gallery.

Logic seemed confined to its two poles. A narrow canvas stretched tautly, I thought it was finite until he shifted voice to introduce the third axis, adding depth where there was only flatness.

In African philosophy, he said, food isn't just consumed. It is ritual, celebration, and connection. Every meal is an offering: a bond with the earth, ancestors, and community. It's all about this triadic connection, not merely survival.

It is an act of transcendence, woven into existence. More than sustenance, food is art, history, culture, and the divine. It bridges past and future, every bite a rite of passage. Modernity separates survival from beauty. Africa unites them: food is celebrated and shared not as a mere means to an end, but as a reflection of life itself. It is an aesthetic experience—each ingredient, flavour, and every way of preparing and sharing them reflects a story about the world and our place in it.

I sat silently, the weight of his words settling on me like the rich layers of a well-prepared dish. Then suddenly, as in a burst, a spice breaking free popped into my mind. This cultural exchange that stopped my tracks wasn't just about food. It was about connection. About how deeply ingrained the notion of sharing and belonging is in African philosophy. And all revolves around a universal truth—something that Prof. Dukor hinted at. “We are all Africa”—African thought doesn't ask whether we are connected, it assumes that we are. The question is not if we are all Africa, but how we engage with that connection. Whether through food, through philosophy, through our shared humanity—what unfolds when we acknowledge this unity? When we truly understand that every thought, every act, or every bite is part of the same experience?

Looking back on the history of thought, my friend—Maduabuchi Dukor, the Igbo logician, pushed forward—we realise that European philosophy, like all intellectual traditions, doesn't exist in isolation. It has roots that stretch back to Africa. Greeks, for instance, learned much of their philosophy from Egyptians. When they formulated ideas about being, essence, and the self, they were building on the shoulders of African thinkers, on the foundations laid down by Egypt, by Nubia. Recall the wisdom embedded in the traditions of the Nile Valley, the dialogues around cosmology,

justice, and being—these were the first philosophical discourses that travelled westward to shape the rest of the world’s reasoning.

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Think philosophy is all thick books and twisted words? This dictionary will pull back the curtain on a world you thought you knew. Philosophy started where the world started: in every rhythm, every call-and-response, every beat that makes you move. *Tsamina, Waka Waka!* You’ve heard Shakira, right? The rhythm leaps across borders. It’s in Fang—a Bantu language spoken in Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea, Congo, Gabon, or São Tomé and Príncipe—quite naturally meaning what it sounds like: “Come, let’s do it! Keep moving, keep striving, push forward!” A catchy tune for a strong call to action. In Africa, philosophy doesn’t idle in abstraction or sit in ivory towers. It moves, dances, and breathes grounded in the tangible, alive in every interaction with the world. African philosophy has always been more than thought; it’s about being. It lives in the communal drumbeats that synchronise hearts, in storytelling where wisdom flows in dialectical spirals instead of straight lines. Connects the living and ancestors, asks questions in the form of a call, and waits for an answer in the echo.

*Tsamina! Zangalewa? This time for Africa.* Feel the pulse? It’s not just Shakira’s voice shouting across continents. These words vibrate with energy their joyful Cameroonian origins. “*Zangalewa?*” asks “Who sent you? Where do you come from?”—a question that goes beyond curiosity, reaching purpose and belonging. It was first sung by Golden Sounds, a band whose “*Zangalewa*” emerged through the turmoil of World War II. Born of hardship, yet infused with humour, camaraderie, and defiance, it conveyed the experiences of African soldiers facing adversity. Shakira repeats the question—*Zangalewa?*—reviving a chant once confined to trenches, this time to bridge between past, present, individual, and collective. More than a song, it becomes a resounding call to confront the big questions we’ve danced to for millennia: Who are we? Why are we here?

What is justice, beauty, the self—except echoes of the baobab’s whispering roots and the cry of the griot? How do we know? Why do we love? What if the deepest truths about life weren’t locked in books but hidden in a vibe? This authentic work—the first *Dictionary of African Philosophy*—it’s the backstage pass to the big ideas that built the soundtrack of humanity. It is a call to remember that every concept hums and every thought has a dance partner—a guide to sounds buried in our veins: the philosophies we forgot we knew.

## 2. ATLAS OF THE UNSEEN

And what if it wasn’t the serpent who deceived humanity? No. It must have been a hyena—cunning, relentless, and unbound by the rules of the garden. The serpent’s sly whispers pale next to hyena’s laughter, mocking order while plotting how best to overturn it.

Or maybe it wasn’t a deceiver at all. God once dwelled in the sky but was close to men. As Mhanti are saying, the mother of these men kept accidentally striking Him with her pestle while she pounded fufu—their traditional food. To escape this constant disturbance, God moved higher up into the sky. (*See DAF* s.v. “Separation Between God and Man”.)

And maybe, just maybe, Babel tower wasn’t so big, rocky stones, and destruction, perhaps not a divine act but a foolish mistake, as the idea to throw a physical bridge to the heavens. One over the other, the woman told her sons to stack all their mortars and follow Him. They obeyed, but upon nearing God, they found themselves one mortar short. The mother instructed them to take the bottom-most one, which they did, but the tower collapsed and survivors gave up their plan to follow Him “up there”.

Thought lingers, its edges raw like marble, much like phrases I’ve edited and polished now deep under the weight of night. English, while supple, resists sometimes the African conceptual treasure. As if reluctant to align with the smooth, curving flow of post-colonial

English so deeply intertwined with rhythms of native tongues and the philosophies they embrace.

Concepts began to stretch across the page, slippery as shadows fluidly shifting meaning. Perhaps you'll search these pages for "Theodicy". You'll certainly find it, though not as you'd expect. Forget Leibniz's "the best of all possible worlds". African theodicy speaks of a force that shaped lands and humans—a force alive enough to traverse from Africa to America, influencing the world with its boundless, unyielding vitality (*DAF* s.v. "Theodicy"). Yet, you'll find Leibniz resurfaces in surprising ways, woven, for instance, into the life and work of Anton Wilhelm Amo, a scholar from Ghana who was moved to Amsterdam by the Dutch West India Company. Some accounts say he was enslaved, while others suggest he was sent by a preacher working in Ghana. Whatever the truth, Amo later met Leibniz and went on to become a Professor at the universities of Halle and Jena (*DAF* s.v. "Amo, Wilhelm").

Syntax too, sometimes echoes the cadence of indigenous languages, with phrases and structures in direct translation. The word choices, though at times unconventional, are not merely linguistic—they are vessels of thought, reflections of a worldview that deserves to be heard, not erased. The task, then, is one of balance: how much to refine without silencing; how much to adapt without losing essence. How to align concepts with the contemporary technical lexicon to preserve their vibrancy while expanding the boundaries of Western academic discourse. The alignment must happen delicately—it's an act of discovery. Like training vines to climb trellises. But even then, the vines cannot lose their own wildness, their stubborn insistence on reaching for the sun.

And now, the night grew still, the tides of this hour rising quietly. Tell me, please, how would you call a man possessed, an old diviner who wanders alone, lost in visions of his ancestors? "A house of dreams", they say (*DAF* s.v. "Diviners"). Phrases started half-formed under the weary moon. And the bush spirits—those lurking presences that blur the line between human and inhuman. Spirits are

hiding in bushes, dangerous and grotesque, guarding their secrets fiercely. It's not wise to venture there. The forest holds more than shadows; it holds the things we cannot understand. Even the bravest hunters tread lightly, knowing they might encounter something far beyond their grasp (*DAF* s.v. "Bush Spirits").

By this time, night had fallen entirely, the late autumn chill of Europe creeping through the room. Oscar, my Lab, a more than 40-kilos dog lounged at my feet, sharing his warmth while trying to colonise every sheet and pillow in sighs, as my body grew heavy. A cat nestled nearby, oblivious to the bush spirits. I drifted to sleep, my thoughts tangled with images of hyenas, unseen eyes of spirits glinting from thickets, circling shadows, and the hollow thud of mortars grinding against stone. How could I not dream after such foliage?

So it began—where else?—in the bushes—dense, impenetrable, alive with whispers, their wild green expanse pressing close on every side. An inking of something dangerous, unseen and implacable. Tangled in the undergrowth, leaves seemed to clutch at me, a thousand fingers, their grasp unyielding. But suddenly, as if the world exhaled, I stumbled forward breaking free into a path. A sunlit path that cut through the wilderness, its edges fringed with verdant shrubs glistening as though kissed by rain. I walked, hesitant. The underbrush softened, the air grew lighter, and the path opened wide: a village with colours radiant as in *Avatar*. Warmth embraced every sense. Laughter, music. Tables laden with food in every hue, lanterns swinging gently in the breeze, casting soft halos of light. They were dancing, joyous and inviting. There was even a DJ right in the midst, his hands moving over turntables, spinning rhythms and blending ancestral with contemporary, universal with the local.

Across Africa, First-Fruit Ceremonies—not mere harvests—play a significant role in spiritual traditions. Among the Swazi, the Incwala ceremony focuses on “strengthening kingship” through the sacrament of first fruits. The Yoruba in Nigeria celebrate the Yam Festival, honouring ancestors with masked figures (Egungun), while the Ga of southern Ghana observe the Hunger-

Hooting festival, a pivotal ritual of purification and renewal. (*DAF* s.v. “Agricultural Rites”)

It wasn’t the lurking spirits of bushes that came to me but a gentle warmth, much like the joy of a First-Fruit celebration. Which reflects the broader essence of African thought, grounded in goodness (*mma*), hope, and transcendence. Reflecting on humanity, Edeh elaborated on the Igbo word for man, *mmadu*, which encapsulates this philosophy. *Mmadu* combines two words: *mma* (“goodness”) and *di* (“to be”), signifying “the good that exists.” (See *DAF* s.v. “Existentialism (African)” and “Man, African Concept of”). That’s a philosophy of hope, of a goodness that is malleable, shaped by passions, but capable of rising above them.

Or maybe that was an agora, bathed in light—a clearing deep in the forest—an Agora of the Jungle, the Rainforest Academy.

### 03. SPIRIT BEYOND CARTESIAN REASON

Speaking of which, one of the key issues contemporary African philosophy grapples with is whether Africa’s philosophical traditions form a unified history and how the term *African philosophy* should be defined, particularly in light of the continent’s rich array of ethnic groups, tribes, languages, and cultures. Two major currents often emerge from this: *ethnophilosophy* and *philosophy as science*, somehow mirroring Kant’s direction when separating *Natural Metaphysics* (*Metaphysik der Natur*) from *Metaphysics as Science* (*Metaphysik als Wissenschaft*). The first—ethnophilosophy—explores African traditions, myths, and worldviews, aiming to uncover a philosophy intrinsic to African life. The second, philosophy as science, seeks to adopt a more rigorous, analytical approach, interrogating the logical and epistemological structures of thought. But the question remains: Does African philosophy truly exist as a coherent entity? Or is it merely a mixture of disparate ideas and traditions, unable to be classified into a neatly defined category?

Kenyan philosopher Henry Odera Oruka (1944-1995) introduced, on this topic, the Philosophic Sagacity project, identifying it as one, this time of four trends in African philosophy, alongside ethnophilosophy, nationalist-ideological philosophy, and professional philosophy (*DAF* s.v. “Bodunrin, Peter Oluwambe” and “Ochieng’-Odhiambo, Frederick”). Nigerian philosopher Olusegun Oladipo (1957-2009), on the other hand, pleaded for moving beyond the debate on the existence of African philosophy, provoking thinkers to make their profession an impactful one. He called them to focus on addressing community issues, prioritising human welfare and reconstructing social institutions for better livelihoods (*DAF* s.v. “Oladipo, Olusegun Teju”).

Which makes me think on how similar debates emerge in other regions as well, questioning whether there is, for instance, an Eastern European philosophy, a Latin American, or an Arab-Islamic one. Amidst it all, I recall an experiment—Michelson-Morley’s famous attempt to measure the “aether wind” in the late 19th century. Their results suggested that, within a closed system, any observation made from inside would inevitably be skewed, as if the system itself were inherently unobservable from within. Perhaps African philosophy is like that. It cannot fully define itself from within its own context, because doing so might obscure its depth. It is a system that resists easy categorisation, but that doesn’t mean it doesn’t exist. Quite the opposite—seen from outside, it is an insightful blend of currents, shaping and being shaped by time, place, and peoples. Despite its complexity, it is grounded in values like goodness, beauty, and communalism, with fundamental questions that traverse eras, and efforts to provide answers to uplift their historical circumstances and collective well-being.

This thread brings me to a duo of ideas I find particularly interesting, so I would like to present them briefly to you. As both, I believe, showcase a uniquely African philosophical stance that merges between ethnophilosophy and what is often termed as scientific philosophy.

### 3.1. PARTICIPATORY BEING.

#### THE PHILOSOPHY OF RELATIONAL EXISTENCE

The first, as it appears in the trajectory of Western philosophy, is Descartes' *cogito*—man as *res cogitans* and *res extensa*. For Descartes, the famous declaration *Cogito, ergo sum* (“I think, therefore I am”)—grounded in the premise *Dubito, ergo cogito* (“I doubt, therefore I think”) as its first pillar—encapsulates the foundational certainty of existence through thought. The self is defined by its capacity for reason, with thought serving as the ultimate proof of one’s being. This Cartesian duality is a cornerstone of Western philosophy, where individual consciousness underpins existence.

In the African context, however, this idea shifts. It is less about the solitary act of thinking and more about the shared experience of being, about a collective consciousness—a “we think”, not “I think”. Which roots existence into community, emphasising that the individual cannot be abstracted from the web of relationships that bind him to others. Thus, African existentialism challenges Descartes' *Cogito, ergo sum* with the more inclusive *Participio, ergo sum* (“I participate, therefore I am”) or even *Cognatus sum, ergo sum* (“I am related, therefore I am”) (*DAF* s.v. “Existentialism (African)”).

In my reading, *ego* becomes collective ‘I’ and receives new categories, meaning it shall encompass both “relational” and “participatory” Self. As such, the concept of Being is no longer a solitary affirmation but a relational reality—I’d like to call it *participatory Being*—bound to the community spirit that acts as a metaphysical cord linking all members. The ‘I’ does not act anymore in isolation but within a broader framework, where every action impacts both the self and the community. By extension, the ethical principle of non-maleficence—to not harm oneself or others—is reshaped. Within this interconnected world, the well-being of the individual is inextricably tied to the health of the community: whatever happens to the individual—they say—affects the entire community, and whatever happens to the community impacts the individual (*DAF* s.v. “Individual”).

J.S. Mbiti (1931–2019) captures this beautifully when he states, “I am because we are, and since we are, therefore I am”. This thought resonates in African proverbs like the Shona’s *Munbu munbu nekuda kwevanhu*—“A person is a person because of other people”, or the Yoruba *A kii je ki a rin nikan*—“One does not walk alone”. The Akan reflect further upon this communal ethos with “Nnipa nnim a, ɔkyere”—“When one person does not know, another teaches”, illustrating the value of shared knowledge and collective growth. Interconnectedness is also central to the idea of *Ujamaa*, advocated by Julius Nyerere (1922-1999), which promotes a life of brotherhood and familial solidarity. Kwame Gyekye (1939-2019), a moderate communitarianist, reflecting on the Akan proverb “All persons are children of God, no one is a child of the earth” (DAF s.v. “Gyekye, Kwame”), brings forth another layer, highlighting the theistic inherent value of individuals.

This perspective aligns with the Igbo philosophy of *egbe bere ugo bere*—“Let the kite perch and let the eagle perch too”—as it conveys another vivid ethical expression of the non-maleficence principle (DAF s.v. “*egbe bere ugo bere*”). Its contemporary variant expands on the aphorism *egbe bere ugo bere, nke si ibe ya ebela, gosi ya ebe o ga-ebe*—“Let the kite perch and let the eagle perch too; whichever says the other should not perch, should guide the other on where to perch”. The updated version moves away from the retributive undertone of the original—*Nke si ibe ya ebela, nku kwara ya* (“Whichever denies the other may its wings break”)—towards a philosophy of harmonious coexistence and peace. It suggests that competition need not devolve into rivalry; rather, it implies mutual respect, without conflict, such as birds can soar without collision. If animals can coexist peacefully—ask the Igbos—how much more should humans, endowed with reason, organise themselves and their societies without strife?

Simply put, this builds upon the relational framework of African existentialism, emphasising balance, respect, and the interconnectedness of all beings. Within this philosophy of relational existence, *participatory Being* emerges as a unifying, all-

encompassing category that propels the narrative of consciousness. Expressed as community spirit linking all members, this resonates further with Hegel's *Geist* (Spirit), reflecting its fluid and progressive essence.

In short, by reframing *ego cogito* and shifting from the individualism of "I think" to a broader level of interconnectedness, African philosophy advances a genuine counterpoint to Descartes, moving towards joint humanity. It is this very notion of *Humanity* that sets the stage for the second idea I wish to present to you.

### 3.2. REASON SUBLATES INTO SPIRIT: *UBUNTU* AND *HUMANITÄT*

It is fascinating how the European spirit found it necessary after Descartes to adopt precisely this direction—let's say, a collective *res cogitans*—and this happened spurred by a series of quite intriguing circumstances. By the time of the *Sturm und Drang* movement, in the post-Kantian era, it was already evident that rationalism had significant shortcomings, especially when it came to explaining recent history and the evolving dynamics of human relationships. This became particularly striking amidst the Enlightenment ideals and the turbulences before and after the French Revolution.

In response, even before Hegel, voices arose proposing alternatives to overcome the gap in Descartes' rationalism, while also countering radical empiricism and the dogmatic scholastic metaphysics. Immanuel Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* tackled both rationalism and empiricism but at a cost. By delineating the limits of human knowledge to *phenomena*, the *noumena* ("things-in-themselves") remained inaccessible. This left an unsatisfactory void, one that, for instance, Johann Gottfried von Herder, Kant's contemporary and former student at Königsberg, sought to address. Herder's *Metacritique of the Critique of Pure Reason* challenged the supposed purity of reason, arguing that reason is always shaped by the historical context: tradition and culture.

On the other hand, this epoch was marked by another shift. As Herder wrote against slavery, he emphasised not only abolishing it at home but also in colonies, exposing the economic principles masked by lofty rhetoric. These ideas materialised alongside a growing focus on Africa, the other continents, and their cultures, moving beyond seeing them solely through the lens of colonial exploitation, formerly slave markets. Which also entrained a paradigm shift in hermeneutics: from the Enlightenment, viewed by themselves as a peak, with its all-powerful reason, to an approach that acknowledged the value of each culture on its own, recognised the impact of cultural change and the irreplaceable losses that follow cultural destruction.

Wilhelm von Humboldt, an important figure of that period, brought to attention the role of language and geography in shaping human thought. He acknowledged the value of cultural diversity, alongside his primary focus on the empirical study of the world, categorising and understanding human societies through a scientific lens.

With more emphasis this time on the collective, participatory nature of human existence, Herder's thoughts found expression in celebrating folk poetry and songs. In *Volkslieder (Voices of the Peoples in Songs)*, he gathered lyrics from various cultural traditions as a means to showcase the diversity of human expression. The way he perceived them, these songs were not merely artistic creations but profound manifestations of national spirits and collective humanity. It was from this understanding he concluded that to comprehend humanity one must first embrace the diversity of cultures that shape it.

This concern ran like a golden thread through his works, both before and following *Ideas on the Philosophy of the History of Mankind*. Thus shaped, explorations brought him to forge a reflective, profound notion of *Humanität* (humanity), seen as going beyond the mere state of being human. To him, this concept is neither an abstract nor universal ideal but a lived experience deeply embedded in the realities and practices of diverse communities.

In *Letters for the Advancement of Humanity*, he expands on this, presenting *Humanität* as a process of becoming. Humanity is not a static attribute but an aspiration—an ideal that demands continuous effort and cultivation. To embody *Humanität*, one must actively strive for it. Central to this vision is *Bildung* (formation, cultivation, education), which Herder generally saw as encompassing far more than intellectual growth. For him, true *Bildung* cultivates moral integrity, emotional depth, and empathy.

Hence, humanity emerges as both a personal and collective journey. Individuals are called to realise their potential while enriching their communal sphere, shaped by unique traditions and narratives. It is through this interplay—Herder believed—that genuine humanity is to be attained: through a dynamic fusion between individual aspirations and the richness of common experiences.

Herder critiqued Enlightenment rationalism for erasing cultural differences and diminishing human diversity. Opposing this universalist model, he advocated for a more nuanced viewpoint, one that values diverse paths, each reflecting the uniqueness of the peoples it represents. This holistic stance integrates emotions, creativity, and historical awareness with reason, challenging the Enlightened cold rationality.

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Indigenous African philosophy nurtures an insightful alternative within this context: a relational ontology that challenges individualism and resonates deeply with both Herder's *Humanität* and the later Hegelian concept of *Geist* (Spirit). At its core lies *Ubuntu*, the word for “humanness” / “humanity” in Zulu, Xhosa, and other Nguni languages of southern Africa. It reflects a foundational value within indigenous Black communities: human dignity and identity are born through recognition and mutual respect (*DAF* s.v. “Ubuntu”).

Ubuntu asserts the interdependence of all existence, entraining a vision of life grounded in interconnectedness and participatory relations. It affirms that the self is not an isolated entity but is defined through the network of relationships it maintains with others: “I am because we are”. Rejecting the notion of solitary path, it calls for a way of living where the well-being of the whole elevates and gives meaning to the individual.

A notable development in this regard is the work of Kenyan philosopher Henry Odera Oruka (1944–1995), began with *Sage Philosophy*—an initiative to document and analyse the thoughts of the wise, directly challenging the misconception that African philosophy was exclusively oral or undeveloped prior to Western influence. Furthermore, Oruka explored the theme of *humanity*, particularly in his essay *Philosophy and Humanity Today*, reflecting on the critical role philosophy has in addressing the conditions of human life. He underscored the importance of a relational understanding of human dignity, emphasising the communal ethos of Ubuntu.

Which, however, does not negate the value of individual cultivation and growth. As Desmond Tutu—the South African Nobel Peace Prize laureate—observed, the phrase “*Yu u nobuntu*” reflects not only a deep awareness of communal identity but also the recognition of an individual’s capacity to embody and cultivate this spirit. He explained, ‘When we want to give high praise to someone, we say, “*Yu u nobuntu*”—“You have Ubuntu”, highlighting how personal growth and self-awareness contribute to the collective good. In this light, Ubuntu serves as both a moral compass and a philosophical framework for overcoming the abstract “I” with gentleness, compassion, hospitality, and dignity.

If it is to compare these two trajectories, an intriguing pattern emerges. In the West, *ego*—this isolated “I”—transitions after Descartes, logically and historically, into a collective “I”, rediscovering both itself and the interconnectedness of humanity as its development unfolds. African communalism, by contrast, grounds itself from the outset in the collective self as a foundational

axiomatic premise, rooted in a network of concepts like Ubuntu. On this basis, secondary notions evolve and adapt through a phenomenological movement—an interplay of enclosure and discovery—in a dialectic exchange within this network, continually unveiling new modes of being.

Both directions now approach a threshold, calling for renewed exploration and collaboration. Just as a profound understanding of the *ego* unveils its ontological interdependence, so must these ideas evolve to confront the concrete challenges of our time. The instantaneous global communication of our era opens the door for a dialogue where, perhaps for the first time in history, each tradition is called upon to seek common solutions. This exchange—uniting unique perspectives towards a common goal—holds the potential to revolutionise the way humanity navigates today’s pressing dilemmas.

Herder’s *Humanität* and the African philosophy of *Ubuntu* converge in their emphasis—something we strive for, culturally shaped through community and participation. As I see it, this goes even further. Humanity understood through Ubuntu’s lens of interconnectedness resonates with Hegel’s dynamics of Spirit, wherein *Aufhebung* (sublation) is the driving force. As, for instance, self-consciousness first transitions (sublates) into reason—a collective bond that remains deeply personal while aspiring towards universality—then sublates again (meaning, without erasing reason) into Spirit.

With this in mind, I’ll draw this fragment to a close, leaving the notion of Spirit mark its conclusion on the verge of the next, where contemporary voices will take centre stage to carry these reflections onwards.

And still we ask, philosophy in Africa? How could we doubt its existence, when it so fearlessly confronts us with the most intricate dimensions of human thought?

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Hegel's systematic exploration of Spirit stands as another important turning point in European thought. Although his interpretation of African philosophy and cultures has been criticised for oversimplifying or misrepresenting the complexities of African societies, the core of his dialectical method offers valuable insights. For it echoes across continents and epochs, aligning with the work done by African intellectuals in charting pathways towards collective growth.

G.W.F. Hegel theorised that individual reason reaches its fullest expression only when integrated into a collective consciousness. This process—*Aufhebung* (sublation)—reconciles contradictions (such as the tension between, and within, individuality and collectivity) by overcoming and preserving them, simultaneously, within a higher unity. Hegel's systematic analysis of this interconnected web ultimately yields the renowned concept of *Geist* (Spirit). Where comprehending its movement anchors in speculative logic, a framework that provides both the means to understand its historical unfoldment (materialisations) and the rationale behind it.

At the heart of *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, this critique of abstract rationality is explored in its concrete *i.e.* historical forms, particularly in the wake of the French Revolution. Reason and individuality just gave rise to a new concept—*utility*—and began the pursuit of absolute freedom in line with it. Yet, during the Reign of Terror that followed, this ideal degenerated into violence and dehumanisation, exposing the limitations of reason when severed from its communitarian grounding. Under the blade of the guillotine, individuality reached its absolute negative—death; and *utility*, the value humanity had chosen to venerate as their guiding principle, found its grim analogy in what Hegel portrayed as the severing of a cabbage head. *Geist* (Spirit) responds this crisis by placing human existence within a reality above isolated individualism. As collective consciousness, *Geist* (Spirit) offers a path towards reconciliation, unity, and understanding capable of grounding a higher, less contradictory, concept of freedom.

Likewise, *Aufhebung* may be seen as a necessary process in our modern political and philosophical struggles. The contemporary divide between left and right, capitalist and communist ideologies, are contradictions that can only be resolved through a higher synthesis—much like in Hegel’s dialectics. The fusion of opposites, heading towards a fusion philosophy, echoes the global human endeavour to reconcile contradictions while pursuing freedom and harmony in the digital and artificial intelligence era. Building on this, African and European traditions suggest trajectories that, rather than inherently opposed, shall converge to integrate differences and drive us towards Humanity.

#### 4. AFRICA IS THE REMIX

These ideas meld seamlessly into contemporary African discourse, where scholars have integrated cultural heritage and indigenous concepts into wide-ranging disciplines of the Humanities. The vibrant growth of this landscape reflects dynamic syntheses, showcased in movements like African communitarianism or Négritude. Beyond their origins, they are not confined to African contexts alone but hold broader implications: engaging critically with Western models, they might offer fresh insights to tackle today’s global challenges.

While moving forward, I’ll remain engaged with the same themes we’ve touched upon—dialectics and humanity—drawn from the rich and diverse spectrum of African thought, a vast range of many others.

##### 4.1. UBUNTU AND POLITICS

Recent thinkers have reshaped Ubuntu into a dynamic framework, adapting its principles to modern life. Rather than a static remnant, it is embraced as a living philosophy that inspires community-driven problem-solving.

## AFRICAN SOCIALISM: A SYNTHESIS OF TRADITION AND MODERNITY

Kwame Nkrumah (1909–1972) and Julius Nyerere (1922–1999) reflected on this ethos, each contributing a distinct, yet complementary paradigm of African socialism.

Nkrumah, the leading advocate of pan-African unity, developed *Nkrumahism*, a political ideology centred on solidarity, justice, and economic self-reliance. At its core lies the notion of *consciencism*, a vision of liberation aimed at decolonising African thought and synthesising tradition with modernity in an African way. *Nkrumahism* thus integrates indigenous practices with modern socio-political structures, blending traditional communal values, Islamic heritage, and Western thought. Among pan-African ideals, the notion of *collective self-determination* particularly resonates with Ubuntu’s focus on shared responsibility, while also drawing on Hegelian dialectics to envision progress through synthesis. (*DAF* s.v. “Nkrumah, Kwame”.)

## DIALECTICAL MATERIALISM, THEISM, AND THE LENIN PRIZE

Furthermore, Kwame Nkrumah’s political thought offers another distinctive synthesis, this time of socialism and metaphysics. As he sees it, socialism is materialistic, not in the sense of denying the existence of immaterial reality, but in affirming the primacy of matter. Matter, however, is not inert. It is dynamic, pulsing with tensions that drive change—transforming from one form to another, from matter into spirit and back again, in a process he termed *categorical conversion*.

In this regard, Nkrumah’s theistic materialism contrasts sharply with the Soviet interpretation of Marxism, which dominated Eastern Europe. Under the weight of Lenin and Stalin, it clung strictly to atheistic principles, stripping the material world of its spiritual dimension. Despite this major divergence, and contrary to the belief—or rather, the propaganda prevalent in Eastern Europe—that true Marxism-Leninism necessitates the abandonment of

religion, Nkrumah's theistic materialism received the Lenin Prize itself—in recognition of his substantial contributions to socialist thought. On 30 April 1962, together with Pablo Picasso, among the four laureates of that year.

COCKTAIL BREAK:

WHAT IS DIALECTICAL MATERIALISM?!

The clink of ice cubes meeting glass, a ritual—old, yet always fresh, murmur of voices, and the promise of a *Cuba Libre*. A drink born of revolution. A defiant blend of rum (the spirit of the island), lime (a whisper of resilience), with the original Coca-Cola—freshly imported from the USA to a newly freed Latin American country. *Por una Cuba Libre!* With origins tracing back to the aftermath of the Spanish-American War (1898), to celebrate the end of Spanish colonial rule in Cuba and the beginning of American influence. A toast to freedom, with a curious twist.

Freedom fused with the most globalised brand of capitalism—Coca-Cola. So twisted as this drink's secret formula holds a buried link to Africa: coca leaves and kola nuts. The bitter caffeine-energising kola nut—an ingredient of deepest spiritual significance in many African cultures, brought across the Atlantic through the currents of history and trade to reach the pharmacist J.S. Pemberton in Atlanta, USA, who patented the recipe.

Kola nuts and rum to blend Latin America, USA, and Africa into a single, iconic beverage. This leads me, perhaps unexpectedly, directly to Professor Maduabuchi Dukor, an important figure in contemporary philosophy, logician of the Igbo culture of Nigeria, and the General Editor of this *Dictionary*—a result of the fruitful cultural encounter generated by the UNESCO Philosophy Day in Africa, 2021. Especially for the Igbo and Yoruba, the kola nut carries profound meaning. (*See* for more details his beautiful entry s.v. “*Oji* (Kola Nut) in Igbo Metaphysics”.) It is a symbol of hospitality, reverence, and communal sacred bond, offered in ceremonies to mark moments of unity and devotion. Breaking the

kola nut, without haste, and sharing it is a way to commune with the ancestors, bridging earthly and divine. A material connection between physical and spiritual, much like Kwame Nkrumah's vision of materialism.

Many of us unknowingly tasted it, diluted yet fizzing under the banner of modernity. Who would have thought a sacred offering of the Igbo people would spark on the other continent, in the Americas, and become a quiet participant in Cuba's struggle for decolonisation? A tiny nut speaking volumes about the ways in which cultures intersect and inform one another; a subtle detail to remind us that liberation is never isolated—it is woven from as much diverse influences, histories, and encounters. How small the world is, isn't it, compared to o kola nut?

Regarding the remarkable story of the USSR Lenin Prize, and more broadly philosophy, politics, and humanism, Professor Dukor seriously told me after reading the first form of this *Afterword*: "Dialectical Materialism begs to be explained in connection with Theistic Humanism".

In my view, this Prize awarded to Nkrumah, alongside Picasso, is another surreal emblem of ideological contortion. A bittersweet draught hinting at the contradiction in the heart of Soviet ideological purity. Acknowledging the contribution of a proponent of theistic materialism—a concept anathema to the strictly atheistic hermeneutics of so-called Marxism-Leninism which held sway behind the Iron Curtain—reveals, to put this another way, the inherent contradictions within that power structure. It also illuminates, on the other hand, the tightrope walk of African thinkers like Nkrumah, Senghor, Nyerere, or Prof. Dukor himself, who dared to imagine a brand new synthesis: African indigenous communalism, its modern communitarianism (which, probably in Khrushchev's eyes, should have been the best soil for implementing Soviet communism in Africa), interwoven with theism and, as you'll

see in the next section, even with those Western ideals of individual liberty—taboo to speak about in the East. A fissure in the monolithic ideology that proves, to take it further, the innovative spirit of these Black philosophers who paved a heretical path in the shadow of Khrushchev’s newly built wall in the middle of Berlin. A path full of spirits, ancestors, and intrinsic ties to non-material realms, practically awarded by all three of them: Stalin (the prize was meant to celebrate his 70th birthday... on the occasion of his 71st), Lenin (Khrushchev, upset with Stalin, decided to rename it in Lenin’s honour), and Khrushchev himself on the stage (the main brand promoter of this Nobel Prize of the USSR). They awarded, in reality, a new paradigm of “materialism”: one situated at the antipode of Soviet desacralised ideology, where the material is not oppressive but purposeful so that philosophy becomes praxis, capable of kindness and compassion within a shared Theistic Panpsychic Universe.

The concept of “Theistic Panpsychic Universe” was originally formulated by Maduabuchi Dukor to describe a worldview where the material world is intertwined with the divine. Its immediate derivative, “Theistic Humanism”, serves as a hermeneutical tool to comprehend and reinterpret the human condition as part of this universe. Therefore, it aligns closer to Herder’s *Humanität* and the indigenous *Ubuntu* than with its reductionist counterpart—the state-driven “scientific materialism”, also called “materialist humanism”. Like the kola nut, shared in Igbo ceremonies to link humans and the divine, now subtly present in a globally consumed beverage.

Regarding “Dialectical Materialism in Theistic terms”, and since Professor Dukor took this seriously instead of laughing—as a European under the Iron Curtain might have, eventually to keep himself warm during the cold winters—here’s a dissident, fictive joke to “further explain” this notion. Slavoj Žižek liked it much and included it in his collection (*See Žižek’s Jokes*. MIT Press, 2018) as he saw in it a lovely dialectical twist: that amazing negation of the negation that produces the most surprising effects: ‘Yuri Gagarin just returned from space and Khrushchev asked him: “While you

were up there, did you see God?” Yuri replied: “Yes”. “That’s what I suspected, but don’t tell anybody”.’

African *Theistic Materialism* and Maduabuchi Dukor’s *Theistic Humanism* operating within an interconnected Theistic Panpsychic Universe to offer solutions to class struggle. Well, that’s a true unforeseen, new dialectical turn.

So here’s another joke for you, my dear Professor—one that fits perfectly our materialistic cocktail. A true classic from the Soviet ‘60s. “Question: Will there be KGB in communism? Answer: As you know, under communism, the state will be abolished, together with its means of suppression. People will know how to self-arrest themselves”. Because, especially in the 60s, under the Iron Curtain, claiming in the East that “Dialectical Materialism should be explained in relation to Theistic Humanism” would have sent you straight to prison. The 60s were the best season for intellectuals. Another prize, this time kindly awarded by Lenin, Stalin, and Khrushchev to their own comrades, fellow Eastern Europeans, the oppressed class they had promised to liberate. They even gave them a special name: *political prisons*. Worst conditions, many times direct train to Siberia, and a special police force tasked to catch, let’s say, revisionist intellectuals, if not outright theist dissidents. Another true soviet joke.

Kola nut—a sacred offering to hospitality and metaphysical connection. It is this very bridging, this understanding of the universe that lies at the heart of Professor Maduabuchi Dukor.

African philosophy understands the universe as a dynamic, interconnected whole—a worldview that Professor Dukor articulated with exceptional clarity through the concept of “Theistic Panpsychic Animist Universe”. He wrote extensively on this subject. (See *DAF* s.v. “Dukor, Maduabuchi F.”, as well as his entries on “Theistic Cosmogonic Geometry”, “Theistic Panpsychic and Scientific Paradigms”, “Theistic Panpsychic Animistic Universe”, or “Feminism in Theistic Humanism”), as it beautifully expresses the profound harmony of the universe—made by God, the unique Creator. A universe that hums with spirits and ancestors; not a

collection of isolated inert matter, but a living web of interconnected beings, where the sacred and the material are dialectical partners of becoming. This is a true alternative to the “atheistic Dialectical Materialism”, axiomatically called “Scientific Materialism”. Contrary to both—this Eastern “scientific” paradigm and the radical Western positivism—Dukor shows us that theism is not an addendum but the very foundation of materialism, ensuring that the material world remains grounded in a spiritual reality. If it is to construct Scientific Materialism, then—Prof. Dukor teaches us further— “new categories must be created so that God be inside the scientific system”.

Thus viewed, Nkrumah’s concept of *categorical conversion*—where matter and spirit transform into each other—appears more likely as an answer to the profoundly spiritual call of Africa than as a manufactured revolutionary product. It’s no small irony that a thinker who refused to divorce the spiritual from the political was awarded the Lenin Prize—a prize born of a system meant to entirely erase the divine. Beyond that, this paradox emerges from the enduring wisdom of African thinkers, who have not merely rejected or adopted ideologies but transformed them. Today, as societies grapple with globalisation, this synthesis, Theistic Humanism, becomes paramount.

Remember that kola nut travelling oceans?—a small piece of Africa embedded in the global phenomenon of Coca-Cola. That journey mirrors the intellectual voyage undertaken by Professor Maduabuchi Dukor, who is constantly seeking to bridge the gap between African thought and the wider world of philosophy. Theistic Humanism is not a utopian ideal or abstract ethical system. It is hermeneutics, aimed to explain an inclusive, holistic worldview, where matter is always infused with a touch of spirituality. It unveils bread, food, religion, symbols, and myths as parts of a coherent system, each integral to understanding. A powerful key that Prof. Dukor—a careful General Editor—gave us to open the richness and complexity of his continent’s philosophy.

Curated with this ethos, the *Dictionary* moves beyond merely

listing African concepts, tribes, or anthropological descriptions. Instead, it fosters intercultural dialogue between African philosophy and the world's diverse systems of thought. Entries like “Ubuntu” or “Kola Nut”, are not cultural curiosities but expressions of fundamental philosophical principles that shape Africanity. Other ones, such as “Existentialism” or “Ontology”, may even seem distant or incomprehensible to readers accustomed to Western frameworks. Yet, through the lens of a Theistic Panpsychic Universe, relational being, and participatory “I”, they might reveal themselves as what they truly are.

To grasp Maduabuchi Dukor's vision means to consider this *Dictionary* not as a static repository but as a map of a distinct intellectual landscape—one that is living, evolving, and deeply intertwined with all other socio-human fields. Rather than an ethnographic collection, it stands as a testament to the enduring relevance of African philosophy: a way of thinking rooted in indigenous tradition while universally resonant.

Dukor's hermeneutics, in this regard, is a good path to reconciliation. In most African societies, communalism was always a central structure. As they navigate the forces of globalisation, the importance of individual well-being and aspirations becomes, however, increasingly pronounced. As such, philosophy is now called to find a means to reconcile local traditions and global thinking in a quest for freedom as intricate and complex as a *Cuba Libre* under the Havana sky.

#### SOCIALISM AND DEMOCRACY.

#### DIALECTICS OF RECONCILIATION, CHANGE AND COEXISTENCE

Back on tracks through the African rainforest of philosophy, we find Julius Nyerere's *Ujamaa*—“familyhood” or “brotherhood” in Swahili—another organic extension of Ubuntu, with a focus on social justice, equality, and rural development. Framing African socialism as both a means to counteract the exploitative systems imposed by colonial powers and a vision for an inclusive society

rooted in solidarity, Nyerere emphasised a community-driven economic model and equitable resource distribution. Central to his vision for Tanzania was preserving the dignity of the individual while fostering communal growth and self-reliance. (*DAF* s.v. “Nyerere, Julius Kambarage”.)

	<b>Léopold Sédar Senghor (1906–201)</b>	<b>Kwame Nkrumah (1909–1972)</b>	<b>Julius Nyerere (1922–1999)</b>	<b>Kwasi Wiredu (1931–2022)</b>
<b>Profession</b>	Poet, philosopher, politician	Politician, philosopher	Politician, philosopher	Philosopher
<b>Philosophical Focus</b>	Négritude (celebration of African identity and culture), African socialism, the synthesis of traditional African values with modern governance.	<i>Consciencism</i> (philosophical synthesis of African tradition, socialism, and Marxism), developed as a framework for liberation and unity.	<i>Ujamaa</i> (African socialism). Communal values Integrated into modern governance through Ujamaa villages.	African epistemology, communal rationality. He reinterpreted democracy based on African traditions, as a consensus-building process rather than adversarial voting systems.
<b>Key Idea</b>	The cultural and spiritual unity of Africa and the diaspora.	Pan-Africanism and the unity of Africa.	Socialism rooted in traditional African values.	Democracy via consensus.

<b>Political Vision</b>	Advocated for a cultural and political union of African nations through the ideals of Negritude.	Advocated for African unity and socialism as a foundation for liberation and development	Advocated for economic and political equality through African socialism.	Advocated for decolonising African thought, focusing on indigenous democratic systems.
<b>Political Role</b>	First President of Senegal (1960–1980)	First Prime Minister and later President of Ghana (1957–1966)	First President of Tanzania (1961–1985)	Ghanaian philosopher, not directly involved in state politics.
<b>Relationship to Tradition</b>	Emphasised African cultural values, integrating them with modernity.	Unified African and Western ideologies for a decolonised future.	Grounded socialism in African communal traditions.	Emphasised synthesising indigenous and modern ideas.
<b>Criticism</b>	Criticised for promoting French-African relations, viewed as too accommodating to colonial powers.	Viewed as authoritarian during his presidency.	Ujamaa criticised for inefficiency and economic challenges.	At the time, he was regarded as too idealistic for practical governance.
<b>Legacy</b>	A major figure in the intellectual movement of Negritude, promoting African cultural pride and unity.	Catalyst for Pan-Africanism and African liberation movements.	Embodied a practical attempt to implement African socialism.	Intellectual foundation for modern African political thought.

Nyerere emphasised balancing collective well-being with economic progress by reconciling traditional African communal values with the principles of Marxist socialism. Adapting the latter to align with Africa's realities, this synthesis shaped his socialism into a distinct model of societal transformation, rooted in values organically developed from themselves, not imposed from the outside.

At the other end of the spectrum, Kwasi Wiredu engaged directly with Western liberal democracy. Though his ideas appeared idealistic in the political landscape of that time, they offer valuable insights into the disconnection between Western and traditional values that underpin many African societies. Wiredu's dual critique bridges democracy and socialism. He reimagined democracy to align with indigenous communal values, focusing on consensus and social harmony. Simultaneously, he addressed Marx's socialism by adopting its communitarian elements while rejecting ideological rigidity in favour of traditional African practices of governance, which prioritise collective decision-making and social cohesion. (*DAF* s.v. "Wiredu, Kwasi".)

#### 4.2. UBUNTU IN LITERATURE AND PHILOSOPHY

While African socialism anchors in the political, dialectics of Ubuntu ventures far beyond into literature and philosophy, shedding light on new paths to redefine the conversation between individual and society.

African philosophy does not operate in isolation. Old traditions, such as those of the Dogon, Yoruba, or Igbo promote dialectical approaches to reality that exceed classical logic, inspiring a dynamic akin to Hegel's speculative one. Moreover, these traditions not only understand themselves within this framework but also invite analysis as potential alternatives or even refinements to speculative logic.

The Dogon people of Mali, for example, practice a holistic, spiral logic to fuse opposites into a unified whole. A logic of complementarity. This way of thinking reflects connection of all things, stressing that contradictions are not merely inherent in reality but essential to its continuity and evolution. (*DAF* s.v “Dogon Philosophy”.)

Yoruba philosophy relies on the concept of *Eji-o’gbeta*, which translates roughly as “two that do not meet”, a framework designed to navigate conflicting paths. This is exemplified by the *oritameta*, a crossroads which symbolises convergence. Esu, a primordial deity in their cosmology, is deeply tied to this notion, acting as a bridge among gods and the messenger for both *Olodumare* (God) and *Irumole* (deities). That’s what it is said Esu dwells at *oritameta*, the symbolic “Y-junction” where three paths meet and diverge, always presenting travellers with two possible destinations. Likewise, this juncture reflects the perplexity that arises when faced with difficult choices or conflicting beliefs. (*DAF* s.v “Eji-o’gbeta: Yoruba Traditional Logic”.)

In comparison to Western philosophy, especially the ideas of Plato and Kant, *Eji-o’gbeta* introduces a third epistemological layer beyond *phenomena* and *noumena*, resembling a Platonic shadow that precedes understanding. This model reflects Yoruba cosmology through principles like Inclusive Identity (*Obatala* - coexistence of diversity within a unified whole), Inclusive Middle (*Orunmila* - acceptance of ambiguity and coexistence within contradictions), and Non-Contradiction (*Oduduma* - the eventual resolution of opposing forces into balance).

The Igbo age grade system, known as *otu ntorobia* or *o’kwa afo*, is another thoughtful example of how to deal with duality. This traditional social structure organises individuals into groups based on age, with each group progressing through various life stages together, assuming specific social roles and responsibilities. The system is marked by complementary roles. Male age grades symbolise vertical progression, representing power and authority, while females embody horizontal progression, acting as a system of

checks and balances. In times of conflict, for instance, female age grades, such as the Umu Ada, play a crucial role in neutralising the power of male counterparts, fostering balance and resolution within the community (*DAF* s.v. “Age Grade in Igbo Philosophy”).

Contemporary thinkers like Chinua Achebe (1930–2013) or Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o (b. 1938) explored and reinterpreted these ideas, applying Ubuntu’s principles to literary realms. Achebe, in *Things Fall Apart*, explored colonialism’s impact on African communities, illustrating the importance of collective identity. Ngũgĩ, through works like *Decolonising the Mind*, advocated for the restoration of cultural and linguistic autonomy and strived to redefine a post-colonial African identity.

In the realm of philosophy, Ifeanyi Anthony Menkiti (1940–2019) redefined personhood, arguing that it is not a birthright but something earned through community, engagement, and mutual recognition, with collective harmony taking precedence over personal freedom. He stressed that identity and humanity are discovered through active participation in the community. Thaddeus Metz or Ramose Bernard Mogobe further explored Ubuntu as both a moral and political philosophy. Their contributions illuminate its potential to inform not only governance but also education, justice, and public health systems through holistic frameworks that reflect African ethical backgrounds.

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Another compelling example—this time a form resembling speculative logic—is to be found in Odera Oruka’s critique of African nationalist movements. Oruka argued that the post-colonial struggle for independence often overlooked deeper questions regarding societal structure and individual freedom (*See DAF* s.v. “Oruka, Odera H.”). This oversight aligns with Hegel’s notion of sublation—the process of overcoming contradictions through internalisation. Where internalisation means the act of becoming conscious of what was overcome—an essential, but often neglected, condition of Hegelian philosophy.

In *Philosophy of Liberty* (1991) and *Practical Philosophy*, Oruka builds on this and stresses that true freedom means not merely the absence of oppression but the conscious understanding of the forces that shape it. Freedom arises through recognising and resolving them, as they manifest and change society. This reflects a form of *Bildung*—a process of formation and cultivation where education fosters awareness of the conditions necessary to move towards genuine freedom.

Things go deeper as freedom, for Hegel, marks the culmination of Spirit's journey to becoming aware of itself as Spirit. In a similar vein, Odera Oruka's subjects cannot be truly free unless they grasp the structures of power that shape their existence. This perspective adapts naturally to contemporary concerns about propaganda and manipulation. In Oruka's words, freedom begins with a clear understanding of the mechanisms that sustain authority—an understanding of all that grants authority its power. Ignorance or illusions about their nature hinder its realisation.

These two aspects—(1) freedom gradually emerging through the resolution of societal contradictions; and (2) freedom requiring a conscious understanding of the factors sustaining power—resonate with a third, subtler yet vital dimension of speculative logic, one that classical logic cannot fully grasp, namely the *cunning of reason*.

Oruka's insights resemble Hegel's master-slave dialectic, where the enslaved subject attains a deeper, more conscious understanding of freedom than the master. This awareness stems from labour, which shapes their existence while compels them to confront both their conditions and the external reality they continuously transform. As this process unfolds, they reflect themselves in the products they create. Unlike the abstract self-awareness of the master, the enslaved grasp not only the essence of freedom—a realm the master, lacking such reflections, cannot access—but also the stark reality of their unfreedom.

Within this dynamic, the oppressed emerges as the true agent of progress. It is him, redefined through his labour and experiences—

not the master—who steers the journey of self-consciousness towards Spirit aware of itself.

In the arc of history, the master-slave relationship extends into a broader dialectic: civilisation *versus* barbarism. Just as self-consciousness evolves through the ekstasis (polarity) of the slave, history unfolds through those deemed by the dominant pole as barbaric. Barbarians become agents of transformation just as the Romans, once dismissed as barbarians by the Greeks, and the Germanic tribes, once deemed primitive, later became pivotal forces in shaping universal civilisation. It is in such a subtle way the cunning of reason manifests, a hallmark of speculative logic's pursuits to lay comprehension on firm foundations.

Oruka's critique also aligns with Slavoj Žižek's nicely articulated standpoint that a mere return to pre-colonial roots risks replicating the trap of colonialist ideology. Rather than looking to an idealised past, Žižek emphasises the necessity of re-engaging with the colonial encounter, an understanding and integration of both positive and negative legacies left by oppressors. Echoing Hegel's phenomenology, Žižek contends that history is not about returning to a pure origin (which is precisely what colonialist oppressors would like) but a process of overcoming and assimilating what is perceived as external or imposed—a "Hegelian wound"—one that heals itself, through its own reconciliation. Likewise, by navigating the tensions between colonial legacies, indigenous traditions, and modern demands, African philosophy can build pathways to freedom that are both pragmatic and culturally anchored.

#### 4.3. NÉGRITUDE AND THE RECLAMATION OF IDENTITY

Négritude, a powerful intellectual and cultural movement, emerged in the early 20th century among African and Afro-Caribbean thinkers, leaving a lasting imprint on the global stage. It arose in response to alienation and dehumanisation caused by colonial powers, with figures like Léopold Senghor (1906–2001), Léon-

Gontran Damas (1912–1978), and Aimé Césaire (1913–2008) at its forefront. The movement reclaimed African identity, serving as a counter-narrative that celebrated African heritage, culture, and values. It challenged the erasure, transforming pride in African values into a foundation for anti-colonial thought, which then sparked a broader cultural renaissance within the diaspora.

As poet, philosopher, and Senegal's first President after gaining independence from France in 1960, Senghor gave Négritude a powerful voice through both his leadership and literary works. His poetry celebrated Africa's richness and resilience, weaving communal values into a vision of identity that goes beyond colonial rejection. For him, Négritude is a dialectical synthesis of Africa's past and present. (*supra* s.v. "Senghor, Léopold Sédar.").

Rooted in a communal ethos reminiscent of Ubuntu, his vision emphasises interconnectedness, mutual care, and shared humanity. Consequently, Senghor's model of socialism, which shaped the country's post-independence identity, diverged significantly from Marxist-Leninism. And, rather than retreating to pre-colonial traditions, Senghor charted a dynamic path forward, affirming self-determination and collective strength.

Négritude's legacy transcends the continent, addressing far-reaching hurdles such as cultural erasure and identity loss. It fosters pride within communities while advancing conversations on the importance of cultural diversity. In a rapidly globalising world, Négritude challenges the West by promoting cultural resilience and encouraging an inclusive discourse that urges societies to honour their roots while embracing a shared future.

African thinkers such as Mogobe Bernard Ramose (b. 1946) drawing on Robert Sobukwe's (1924-1978) ideas, assert that humanity comprises a single race, to which we all belong—the human race—rendering the term "race" singular in vocabulary. This perspective questions racial divisions and calls for Western thought to engage with diverse traditions beyond its own. Ramose, in a similar vein to Oruka or Žižek, argued that multiracialism and multiculturalism—going, on the other side, towards political

correctness of colourblindness—are toxic colonial constructs, disguised tools to safeguard imperial interests. He maintained that such divisive “poisonous” concepts should be rejected by the “new Africa”, which must, instead, embrace unity and equality.

## 5. FINAL THOUGHTS

When we turn to African contemporary philosophy, we find a dynamic interplay of traditional wisdom and modern challenges. In the Humanities and Social Sciences, it addresses pressing issues from climate change and economic instability to the erosion of democratic institutions. As African nations continue to navigate their post-colonial reality, philosophers draw from indigenous wisdom to offer adaptable frameworks, while simultaneously engaging with global concerns. Such ideas, far from being mere remnants of the past, reinterpret inherited knowledge to foster adaptability and shape governance models based on collective responsibility and social well-being.

African critiques of Western democratic models, which often prioritise individualism and economic power over human dignity, gave rise to alternative political philosophies rooted in communal values and a profound respect for people and the land. Shaped by historical struggles against colonialism, apartheid, and tyranny, these approaches advocate governance as a responsibility to the collective rather than a privilege for the few. Concepts like *Ubuntu* illustrate this ethos, framing identity through interconnectedness and leadership through service.

African intellectuals embraced cross-cultural perspectives while advancing innovative solutions to reconciling opposites. Philosophical movements such as communalism, socialism or Négritude highlight ways to balance individual freedom with collective responsibility, tradition with modernity, and local identity with global universality. Such evolving philosophies continue to develop and shape the continent’s present and future while enriching broader discussions.

This *Dictionary of African Philosophy* marks the first step in a dialogue inviting all to explore Africa's rich and complex conceptual landscape. It opens doors to further research and reflection, laying a strong foundation for deeper inquiry. As the conversation grows, new voices and perspectives shall emerge, each adding new layers, insights, and dimensions. We trust future editions will continue, carrying forward Prof. Maduabuchi Dukor's hope, like a seed planted in fertile soil, to bloom and reflect upon this intellectual wealth, reinforcing its enduring relevance in a constantly shifting world.



## BODIN'S THEORY OF SOVEREIGNTY AND ITS UPDATING

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**Abstract.** I explore Jean Bodin's theory of sovereignty, focusing on its eschatological dimension and departure from Machiavellian teleology. The analysis highlights how Bodin's concept of absolute power requires the embodiment of a link between God, nature, and the people within the sovereign. This connection is essential for maintaining political and social order, as it aligns with divine law and emphasizes the correlation between law, justice, truth, beauty, and the Spirit. Ultimately, drawing parallels with Plato's philosopher-king, the paper questions the relevance of Bodin's ideas in contemporary society, particularly in the context of potential rifts between elites and the people, and the erosion of traditional values.

**Keywords:** Jean Bodin, sovereignty, eschatology, Machiavelli, political philosophy

The aim here is to understand why, for Jean Bodin, the sacralisation of so-called *absolute power* is not just a teleological approach, as Machiavelli does in *The Prince*, but also has an eschatological dimension (following Plato's example in his book "Republic") in order to act perfectly both within a form (entelechy), such as the State, and also within the person who embodies it as its head.

In so doing, this person will be able not only to preserve the political order (and social stratification) but also to improve the symbolic order and thus the unity between God, nature, and the people. The person who embodies these three elements must show this by his perfect behaviour, expressing the strong correlation between law and justice, both of which are closely linked to the True or Good and the Beautiful or Spirit.

So, it’s not just a question of seeing the King, for example, as a “Place/Holder of God”, exercising his power “in the name” of God, but as a very incarnation. Even in the tiniest gesture, he shows how the whole charisma of the Spirit acts to energise all those political things that need to be brought together: people, State, and elite. How, for example, following “etiquette” to achieve the perfect symbiosis between the cosmos and the living on earth in God’s way is not just plastic but an aesthetic.

All this will certainly be seen as a kind of ancient way of living *Politeia* (Republic, in Greek) and embodying it; but are we so sure? Is this way of *linking* politics and good behaviour under a transcendental (or divine) gaze, in the knowledge that Caesar and God have separate kingdoms, really lost forever?

1. When “we” first read this extract below (belonging to Book 1, Chap. 8 of *The Six Books of the Republic* (Bodin 1986/1576, 189) Paris, Editions Fayard, 189]) concerning the Bodinian definition of this *link* between absolute power and sovereignty, perhaps we can gain some understanding of the way in which the “symbolic charge” that enables this connection is invested:
2. “(...) If you govern well, you will have everything to your liking: otherwise, you will be demeaned and stripped in such a way that not even this chair in which you are sitting will remain yours. This power is absolute, and sovereign: for it has no other condition than that which the law of God and of nature commands. It is also possible to see kingdoms and principalities devolved by successive right, that such or such a similar form is sometimes preserved: but there is none like that of Carinthia (form of investing the Duke of Carinthia), where even now one sees a marble stone near the holy city Vitus in a meadow: on which climbs a peasant, to whom this office belongs by successive right, having on the right a black cow, on the left a thin mare, and the people all around. He who comes to be duke walks with many lords dressed in red, and the “ensigns” (officers) before him, and all in order, except the duke who is dressed like a poor shepherd,

with a stick; and he who is on the stone cries out in Slavonic (Slavonic): *Who is he, he says, who walks so bravely?* The people replied that it was their Prince; then he asked, Is he a judge? Does he seek the salvation of his country? Is he a man of good character, worthy of honour, a religious man? They answer: He is, and he will be. Then the peasant gives the Duke a small blow, and the peasant remains exempt from public charges, and the Duke climbs on the stone while waving his sword, and speaking to the people promises to be just and in this garb goes to mass, and then takes the ducal garb, and returns to the stone, and receives the tributes and oaths of fidelity (...).”

What is the purpose of this extract? Firstly, to explain for Bodin the very difference between tyranny and monarchy, in the sense that the first word designates absolute power given or taken by a single man who concentrates all decisions without any consent—except that given by his supporters, of course. So, power will be granted to the tyrant as in ancient Greece or Rome, by the people in rebellion against the elites, for example, or when Bonaparte receives power (more than he takes it) before becoming emperor. However, this is totally different from the symbolic (and mystical, as we shall see later) content of the second word, “monarchy”, at least in Bodin’s mind, when he explains that the “Prince” *must* embody in every detail not only the Force but also the *link* between God and human life (soul and body) in every gesture of daily life, even in the most intimate thought (a point echoed by Bossuet in “*De la connaissance de Dieu et de soi-même*”). It is therefore a question of perfectly coordinating “Justice and Righteousness” (to use Jean Baechler’s expression) in all behaviour, private and public.

Machiavelli also reflected on this dialectic, similar to that one linking “Fortuna” and “Virtue”. However, Bodin argued that this was insufficient, unless carried out under the guidance of the Spirit of God. From this perspective, Bodin criticises *The Prince*, asserting that true perfection requires the proper alignment of two fundamental elements: justice and righteousness. In the Middle

Ages, this ideal was encapsulated by the famous phrase “Judgment of God”, which determined whether an action was undertaken in accordance with divine justice. If one is just, righteousness in action can achieve perfect osmosis between the true, the beautiful, and the Good—the *harmonic geometry* described in the *Sixth Book*—thus ensuring victory in battle.

This type of syllogism also seems to be linked to that very strong thought of Plato (which seems to be a key reference for Bodin in his book on *The Republic*) when Plato shows *The Republic* and *Politics* that the Monarch must also be the most subtle philosopher in the sense of acting in the right decision. Because *sovereignty* (which is not simply the fact of “deciding on the exceptional situation”, as Carl Schmitt puts it) must personify precisely the link with God (truth and harmony). This is what is at stake: the action decided upon must express in itself that it is God who governs it and not just a human being wishing to substitute himself for God. Hence the difficulties when the Monarch wants to become the latter in Rome or Egypt.

Let’s return to the extract for a moment to clarify what this means. When the “peasant gives a little blow to the Duke”, it seems to suggest that the link with God must be permanent in order to achieve good wealth, health, character, and happiness. And that too in the manner of Aristotle, when he said that the very aim of the city is *Politeia*, not just *Polis*—or how and why to come together as a “City” if we have no pleasure in it.

From this point of view, then, the Duke or King cannot be anything other than God’s real representative (his “lieu/tenant”—a French word which means that his role is also to remain, to keep the link as a sacralised independent space). “If and only if”, nevertheless (to speak as Quine did when he used this formula of Tarski’s) the sovereign does not do this only out of “necessity”; it means that having the final or “absolute” word does not entail the imposition of a tyrannical order or some fantasy, but rather the realisation *sine die* of God’s Law (*Truth and Justice*). What does this mean?

Perhaps this: Bodin speaks of the “three forms of Justice” as he discusses with Plato (in Book Six of *The Republic*, Chap. 6, *The Three Daughters of Themis*)—i.e. “Right, Equity, and Peace”—where the geometric proportions must be seen within every daily event, in every gesture, or in the link between eschatology and teleology, personified in entelechy in every perception and behaviour. To what end? Not just to express a kind of geometry among a thousand, but to significantly imprint these three key figures in every gesture, every behaviour, according to the Law of God and, above all, according to the destiny given by God to the French monarchy.

In a preface presenting some summaries of Bodin’s book on *The Republic* (*Politeia* and not just *Res Publica*), Luc de Goustine writes:

The absoluteness of the “royal monarchy”, according to Bodin, is therefore to be understood in opposition to the “absolutism” that sank under the blows of “republicanism” in ‘89. It is the dimension of his independence from all powers, his detachment from all property and his submission to the transcendent law that makes the prince, unlike the feudal lord and the “tyrannical monarch”, the Christ-like servant-arbiter of the Republic. The philosopher does not hesitate to point to the model of the Hebrew kings, David and Solomon, anointed by the Lord, whose mysticism the Frankish monarchy inherited from the very beginning. At the height of the events of his time, the legitimate king Henry III and his successor Henry of Navarre were challenged to introduce an additional “royalty” into the “monarchy” in order to save the bloodless Republic. (Luc de Goustine. “Preface”, in Bodin 1999, 13)

This is why attending the King’s arrival and participating in his holy presence with the people, at every public event, is so important in order to imbibe that sacred aura that permeates his supposedly perfect behaviour. This is also why people want to see the same sacred behaviour in every gesture of those other people who are with the King. People want to absorb this kind of divine energy to reinforce their own daily behaviour and every thought. It is a kind of psycho-sociological and universal “function” that “people” considered to be the elites must consider to be their duty. And now, in our time, the so-called “stars” have to play this same kind of role to enable a kind of mimicry and thus show the capacity not only to

reproduce all this in their own behaviour but to live with it in order to attain the true “absolute” or geometric harmonic coming from the Law of God.

Nevertheless, at this stage, we must not forget, either, in the words of Montesquieu, that “absolute power corrupts absolutely”—especially if it is not personified by the *independent body*, which is not only, as Bodin said, the mystical link protecting the King, but also the effective demonstration of the reality of independent institutions enabling the three “harmonic items” of justice to function as freely as possible.

But how can we be sure they will also retain their independent way of exercising power? It’s a vicious circle.

This is indeed a permanent problem of the citizen condition, especially if we are not capable of strongly protecting these “harmonic” powers. How can we do this? Certainly, within the democratic system, public opinion—thinking in a Voltairean way—seems to help the *Politeia* to maintain the very path of this *geometric harmony*, which seems to be the Bodinian definition of “absolute power”. But is this enough when we can see both the monopolization of the possibility of speaking and, above all, the search for coherence with the Law being concentrated in only a few hands that want to destroy this geometry as “inessential” or “old-fashioned”?

In other words, we can translate Bodin’s search for perfection into a kind of model for action, allowing four morphological improvements in a civilization based on this type of geometry, even for individual self-esteem that does not believe in God. With this *harmonic proportion* (Book 6, Chap. 6), it is possible both to retain the best results achieved for living happily as humans and citizens, and even to improve them if there are too many disparities. Then, to disperse this effort into equal and independent institutions, and finally, to remove what is not necessary within each type of institution in order to renovate the whole.

But, once again, how is this possible if we’ve lost the tools with which to build this geometry, especially in a situation where we can

actually observe a deep rift between the people and certain elites who no longer believe in this sort of mystical root between people and power, and are simply forcing them to become what they want? But within which geometry, which *matrix* exactly?

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## CHARLES TAYLOR'S DIAGNOSIS OF THE MALAISES OF MODERNITY

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**Abstract.** We refer here to Charles Taylor's critical assessment of modern Western culture, based on his work *The Ethics of Authenticity*, when he characterised the malaise of modernity by the loss of horizons of meaning, namely by the replacement of a cosmic order that supported social hierarchies with a subjectivist and relativist individualism. In addition to this diagnosis, a new perspective emerges: the unease that haunts modernity is also driven by the primacy of instrumental reason in individuals' lives and the resulting erosion of freedom due to blurred moral horizons.

From these three identified ailments, Taylor highlights what he sees as modernity's vital principle: authenticity. Rather than engaging in the broader debate on modernity, he seeks to uncover the often-overlooked moral sources of Western civilisation. His ultimate goal is to enable a "work of regeneration" of modernity's ideals.

**Keywords:** malaise of modernity, authenticity, recognition, individualism, Charles Taylor

### INTRODUCTION

This article is based on the work of Charles Taylor and his reconstruction of the meaning of recent modernity. *The Ethics of Authenticity* ([1992] 2009) is considered to be a synthesis of Taylor's political theory, where authenticity and recognition are taken as central concepts.

*The Ethics of Authenticity* is the culmination of Taylor's previous research and is characterised by its clarity of argument and language.

It showcases optimism based on the consideration of freedom and authenticity as the determining sources of modernity. These human ideals seem valuable, despite the deformations they often suffer in the reality of human life. The author calls for a better culture of authenticity, which must be a constant effort in favour of the rehabilitation of authenticity and higher forms of freedom.

Modernity, being a major theme in contemporary philosophy and political theory, is often involved in a heated debate between supporters and opponents. In a dispute between various conceptions of human beings and society, as well as the foundation of ethical principles, where the legitimacy that each person gives to their life is decided, Taylor does not adopt this model of analysis. He makes an extensive diagnosis of modernity and detects a significant malaise, which he summarises in three ailments: egocentric individualism, the primacy of instrumental reason and the loss of freedom (Taylor [1992] 2009, 17-27).

In *The Ethics of Authenticity*, we find a rigorous examination of modern culture. Taylor makes a critical assessment that does not align with any of the extreme poles in relation to modernity, nor does he intend to present a middle ground capable of harmonising the opposing positions. Firstly, the author seeks to identify the essence of modernity within its entire framework of ideas and practices. Only this essence can serve as the unifying principle that enables the success of the modern project. Taylor refers to this core principle—modernity’s central moral ideal—as authenticity. In examining the transformation of Western culture, particularly the moral significance of authenticity, Taylor rejects the paths of subjectivism and soft relativism. Instead, he acknowledges the deeper implications of recognizing authenticity as a moral force. In other words, the author considers that some forms of life are higher than others, which is not accepted by the culture of tolerance towards any form of self-realisation. Taylor opposes the liberalism of neutrality, not pushing the discussion of the good life to the margins of political debate.

The way Taylor looks at modernity evokes Alexis de

Tocqueville's attitude towards democracy in Europe and North America: now we can't stop being modern, democratic for Tocqueville; the central task is to make modernity good modernity, just as Tocqueville wanted to make democracy good democracy.

The philosophical discourse of *The Ethics of Authenticity* starts from a moral diagnosis of the modern age, where Taylor ([1992] 2009, 25) states “firstly, what we might call the loss of meaning, the blurring of moral horizons. Secondly, the eclipse of ends in the face of unbridled instrumental reason. And finally, the loss of freedom”. The transformations brought by modernity are well-known and very disturbing, which is why the author goes deeper to analyse them.

#### FIRST MALAISE: SELF-CENTRED INDIVIDUALISM

His first concern is individualism (Taylor [1992] 2009, 18), perhaps the greatest achievement of the modern age that few would renounce. Individualism allows freedom and social mobility in multiple ways that were impossible in pre-modern times. People have the right to choose their life model, their convictions, and to determine the shape of their lives in many different ways. However, Taylor ([1992] 2009, 18) presents us with an ambivalent position: “We have won modern freedom by detaching ourselves from the old moral horizons”. People were part of a wider order, the “great chain of being”, with a hierarchy that was reflected in the hierarchies of the social world. They occupied predefined positions from which it was almost impossible to leave. However, at the same time as this wider order restricted, it also gave meaning to the world and social life. As Taylor ([1992] 2009, 19) explains, “the rituals and norms of society had more than a merely instrumental meaning. The discrediting of these orders was called the *disenchantment* of the world. With it, things lost some of their aura”. With the discrediting of these orders comes modern freedom.

Rather than delving into the debate around modernity, Taylor is above all interested in analysing some of its consequences for

human life and the meaning of these transformations. The author emphasises the frequent idea that human beings have lost something important with the deprivation of broader horizons of meaning, both social and cosmic. Humans have lost their sense of a higher purpose—one truly worth dedicating their lives to. According to him ([1992] 2009, 19), the loss of ideals has been joined by the narrowing of horizons, leading people to lose a broader vision, “because they have concentrated on their individual lives.” In this sense, Tocqueville ([1981] 2004, 389) had already pointed this out:

I want to imagine what new traits despotism could produce in the world: I see an incalculable multitude of similar and equal men who revolve around themselves without rest in order to obtain small and vulgar pleasures with which they fill their souls.

Studying American society, the author spoke of oppression that threatened democratic peoples and that was nothing like oppression of pre-modern times. Democratic equality, says Tocqueville ([1981] 2004, 121), incessantly turns the individual into himself and “threatens to enclose him, finally, entirely, in the solitude of his own heart”. For Taylor, “the dark side of individualism is the concentration on the self, which simultaneously flattens and narrows our lives, makes them meaningless and less attentive to others and to society” ([1992] 2009, 20).

The various forms of “narcissistic” individualism in contemporary Western culture are fuelled by a strong tendency towards self-centredness on one’s own subjectivity, a search for human fulfilment centred and enclosed within the individual. According to Hugo Chelo (2009, 169), this inclination, when combined with a conception of freedom as pure self-determination, in which individual choice, without recourse to other references of intelligibility, plays the sole role in determining meaning, leads to the moral subjectivism that underpins soft relativism. When this tendency is combined with social and political conceptions stemming from the development of individualist theoretical

currents of universal rights, procedural justice and the affirmation of the sphere of intimacy as the only realm of personal fulfilment, then personal and social relationships tend to be viewed instrumentally, thus sustaining social atomism.

Thus, both moral subjectivism and social atomism are the result of modern individualism, which is closed to pre-existing horizons of meaning and to understanding the dialogical nature of human identity (Chelo 2009, 169). This individualism of anomie, which must be distinguished from individualism as a moral ideal, is linked to the expansion of instrumental reason, both of which are boosted by various social transformations such as industrialisation, urbanisation and social mobility, which in turn foster phenomena such as the breakdown of ancestral ties, the multiplication of impersonal and casual relationships and an instrumental understanding of the individual's relationship with the community, the past, nature, society, and ultimately with themselves. This self-centred individualistic form that instrumentalises all kinds of relationships drives radical anthropocentrism. This is the first malaise that Taylor diagnoses in our contemporary culture. It is structured as an insufficient and deformed conception of the ideal of authentic self-realisation open to others and embedded in broader horizons of meaning.

## SECOND MALAISE: THE PRIMACY OF INSTRUMENTAL REASON

After exploring the first malaise of modernity, namely disenchanting self-centred individualism, the narrative continues with a brief analysis of the other two. Taylor invokes Max Weber's image of the iron cage, which expresses the domination, in modern Western societies, of instrumental reason over humanising reason.

Max Weber ([1920] 2004, 165) created the concept of "iron cage" (*Gebäude der Hörigkeit*) when he reflected on the "powerful cosmos of the modern economic order linked to the technical and economic presuppositions of machine production, which today determines

with overwhelming pressure the lifestyle of all individuals who are born into this machinery”, by confining them as if they were in a cage. This picture represents the phenomenon of modern alienation, conceived as an inevitable result of the progressive secularisation of the world (Salvat Bologna 2014, 132), where “modern society tends to push us in the direction of atomism and instrumentalism, both because it is difficult to resist their influence in certain circumstances and because the conviction is created that they are taken for granted” (Taylor [1992] 2009, 104).

The premises that enabled the emergence and affirmation of this new way of producing and reproducing the social existence of human beings derive from the rationalisation of individual conduct, linked to another phenomenon of great importance in modern times: the primacy of instrumental reason. For Taylor ([1992] 2009, 20) *instrumental reason* is understood to be “the kind of rationality we resort to when we consider applying the simplest means to achieve a given end. Maximum efficiency, the best cost-production *ratio*, is the measure of success.”

With the collapse of the old orders, the reach of instrumental reason was enhanced.

Once society no longer has a sacred structure and social organisation and modes of action are no longer based on the order of things or the will of God, they are, in a sense, available and can be reformulated according to the happiness and well-being of individuals. The criterion that now applies is that of instrumental reason. Similarly, once the creatures around us have lost their place in the chain of being, they become susceptible to being treated as raw material or as instruments for our projects. (Taylor [1992] 2009, 20)

This great transformation helped to free human beings from the limits of nature, to emphasise their mastery over it and to alleviate human suffering. In this regard, Taylor recalls Francis Bacon’s criticism of the traditional Aristotelian sciences at the beginning of the 19th century, accusing them of having contributed nothing to improving the living conditions of humanity, and his proposal for a new “model of science whose criterion of truth would be

instrumental effectiveness” (Taylor [1992] 2009, 109). In this respect, modern science remains in complete continuity with Bacon.

For Taylor, instrumental reason has an abundant moral framework and is not just driven by an “overdeveloped *libido dominandi*” (Taylor [1992] 2009, 110). Although it often serves the goals of greater control and technological domination. The ideal of instrumental rationality draws on a wealth of complex philosophical, moral and social sources that need to be presented and articulated in order to gain a broader understanding of the phenomenon.

The author calls on Descartes’ concept of separate reason. Firstly, because

instrumental reason has developed alongside a decontextualised model of the human subject, which plays an important role in our imagination. It offers an ideal image of human thought that would have detached itself from the messy embeddedness of our corporeal constitution, our dialogical condition, our emotions and our traditional ways of life, in order to be pure, self-regulating rationality (Taylor [1992] 2009, 106-107).

This form of reason has achieved great prestige in our culture. The ideal of self-creating thought, being one of freedom as self-determination, supports the moral ideal of a self-responsible being with the capacity for self-control. Descartes, in perceiving man as detached reason, pure mind distinct from the body and the way we understand ourselves, was the first and most eloquent to exalt this ideal and this form of rationality (Taylor [1992] 2009, 107; Chelo 2009, 171-172).

Taylor, in his work *Sources of the Self* (1989, 232), had already stated that the tremendous importance of the instrumental position is overdetermined and that it represents the convergence of more than one position. Several moral tendencies converge: the perception of ourselves as a separate reason, as we have already seen; the affirmation of *ordinary life*, the great importance attributed to the life of production and reproduction, work and the family, in order to achieve better living conditions and the alleviation of suffering and, finally, the intersection with the Baconian perspective of science, where its main objective is changed from a contemplative activity to

a productive activity aimed at improving living conditions. From this convergence emerges an ethic of universal practical benevolence, in which we accept universal solidarity, albeit imperfect, as a premise for active intervention in nature, to protect us from the cataclysms of nature and improve the human condition, thus attributing a primary role to instrumental reason (Taylor [1992] 2009, 109; Chelo 2009, 172). This ethic of universal benevolence is based on a new spiritual sense of the world, which abandons the old conceptions of a meaningful order based on an *ontic logos*.

When we move from the *ontic logos*, of Platonic and Aristotelian origin, to the Cartesian *cogito, ergo sum*, we realise that there are two distinct places in the act of valuing. The first shows that each phenomenon has its own specific characteristic, in other words, the ontic meaning determines the particularities of Being (existing) from which Being-there (*Dasein*) - existence - derives. The distinction between the ontic and ontological categories belongs to Heidegger’s philosophy. The meaning of the ontic category is directed towards the essence or nature of existence (Abbagnano 2003, 727). From this perspective, there is no separation between subject and object, but each phenomenon represents a precious and irreplaceable meaning. Taylor (1989, 189), in describing this scenario, emphasises that the intuitive reason of Aristotle’s thought links the person, the particular world, to the world of forms. The two phenomena are inseparable. The second locus, of Cartesian origin, determined the use of instrumental reason. The new *locus* of moral evaluation is not expressed by the *ontic logos*, but from the subject as an independent existence (Taylor 1989, 188-189).

The two places referred to thus demonstrate a passage in which the manifestation of the mind is the exclusive place to realise the distinction that only the rational subject determines the existence, as well as the manipulation, of the object. Instrumental reason separates these two entities. It is up to the subject to name, classify and make objects useful. According to Taylor (1989, 189), this framework can be summarised from the following perspective: the plane of ideas, in Plato’s conception, is characterised as ontic and

serves as the foundation for guiding and determining the concept of reality; for Descartes, reality is the expression of the content of the human mind. Instrumental reason, of Cartesian origin, became the locus of moral judgement in the Modern Age. Ways of thinking and acting are orientated around two central categories, namely utility and technique. People and the phenomena in which they appear before everyone are judged by their usefulness or uselessness.

From this point on, human beings take an active role in preserving themselves and the created order. This action on the world presupposes rational control over it and over oneself. The things around us are now seen as means and not as ends with their own value. “Instrumentalising things was a spiritually essential step” (Taylor 1989, 232). Through technology, it is possible to fulfil this purpose (Chelo 2009, 172).

It’s important to remember that, as we saw in the case of individualism, this second malaise can’t just be seen as the development of instrumental reason. This can be experienced in different ways, for example: technological development can follow the path of excessive control, or it can take place in the service of an ethic of benevolence; it can take place through an understanding of the human being as a detached reason inserted in an objectified system, or according to an understanding of the human being as a being endowed with a bodily, temporal and dialogical nature. For Taylor, the problem lies in the association and strengthening of atomistic and instrumentalist values.

The atomistic understanding of nature and the human condition is an individualistic conception that receives a fundamental formulation from Locke, acting on a naturalistic anthropological justification, specific to the scientific revolution of the 17th century. This is the concept of the “punctual self” that emerges from Lockean philosophy (Taylor 1989, 160), whose central idea is to gain control through disengagement, and detachment, in such a radical way that it encompasses the subject himself and his mental activity. The notion of detachment is always correlated with the notion of

objectification, and for Taylor (1989, 160), “objectifying a given sphere implies stripping it of the normative force it exerts on us”.

Thus, according to the author, from Descartes’ separate reason, through the naturalistic justification of 17th-century science to Locke’s radical detachment, we are faced with a total objectification of man and his world, since all aspects of his life can be appropriated as means. An instrumentalisation thus emerges that extends to all domains, where the notion of the existence of normatively relevant ends is hidden. It is from this profoundly anti-teleological philosophical-moral conception that the possibility of following an instrumental position in relation to ourselves, in relation to others, in relation to nature, the community, the past, and social structures is sustained (Chelo 2009, 174).

In short, this second malaise, the development of instrumental reason combined with an atomistic conception, by making it impossible to give any normative meaning to human beings and the world around them, leads to the total objectification and instrumentalisation of the various dimensions of human life. This concept, combined with the importance attributed to instrumental calculation and technology as a solution to all problems, reinforces the growing bureaucratic and technological domination of the various dimensions of life (Chelo 2009, 174).

For Taylor ([1992] 2009, 23-24), instrumental reason and individualism have fearsome consequences for political life. The structures and institutions of techno-industrial society considerably limit our options, forcing individuals and societies to attach great importance to instrumental reason, implying a considerable loss of freedom. A loss of freedom, both individual and collective, since everyone is influenced by these forces and it is difficult to maintain a way of life against the current. Society and its institutions tend to push us towards an atomistic and instrumentalist self-understanding and attitude, “both because it is difficult to resist their influence in certain circumstances, and because the conviction is created that they are taken for granted” (Taylor [1992] 2009, 104).

However, Taylor ([1992] 2009, 111-112) rejects the determinism of instrumental reason suggested by Weber's "iron cage" and considers this ailment to be a deformation in the articulation and realisation of the moral ideal that sustains it. He argues that instrumental reason should be framed by the ethics of practical benevolence and that technology and calculating reasoning can be framed in a different way from the ideal of detached reason, which has been driven to the extreme by atomistic individualism.

### THIRD MALAISE: THE LOSS OF FREEDOM

This brings us to the last ailment listed by Taylor, the loss of freedom associated with social fragmentation and the difficulty individuals experience in structuring and conducting common projects. This third malaise results from the "fearful consequences of instrumental reason and individualism for political life" (Taylor [1992] 2009, 23). Thus, this last malaise depends on the other two previous ones and is their expression in the social and political domain.

For the author, this loss of freedom was brilliantly analysed by Tocqueville. In a society where individuals incessantly turn in on themselves and become

in the kind of individuals *locked up in their own hearts*, few people will want to take an active part in political life. They will prefer to stay at home and enjoy the pleasures of private life, as long as the government produces sufficient means to satisfy them and distributes them widely. (Taylor [1992] 2009, 24)

This leads to a new form of despotism, a soft despotism that could be established in contemporary democratic societies. These will not necessarily be totalitarian regimes based on terror and oppression, as in other times or places. The regimes will be moderate and patronising. They may have democratic forms, with periodic elections, but in reality, everything will be governed by "an immense and tutelary power, which alone is in charge of ensuring the profit

and watching over the fate of all” (Tocqueville [1981] 2004, 389). This immense tutelary power that is beyond people’s control “would degrade men without tormenting them” (Tocqueville [1981] 2004, 388). For Tocqueville, the only defence against this threat will be a vigorous political culture that encourages citizen participation at the various levels of government and the associative level. However, the atomistic individualism of self-absorbed individuals is strongly opposed to this attitude. As Taylor ([1992] 2009, 24-25) explains:

If participation decreases and the subsidiary associations that are its vehicle wither away, the individual citizen is left alone in the face of the large bureaucratic state and rightly feels powerless. This further demotivates the citizen and closes the vicious circle of soft despotism.

Like Taylor, we can consider Tocqueville’s work prophetic when we see the alienation from the public sphere and the consequent loss of political control in our highly centralised and bureaucratic world. Taylor is concerned about the risk of losing political control of our destiny, something that can be exercised in common as citizens. This is the power that Tocqueville called political freedom. What is in danger for Taylor is our dignity as citizens. The impersonal mechanisms mentioned above “may reduce the degree of freedom in society, but the loss of political freedom would mean that even the choices we have left would no longer be made by us as citizens, but by an unaccountable guardian power” (Taylor [1992] 2009, 25).

When we explore the third problem, we realise the difficulties that Taylor’s proposal faces in contemporary Western society when it comes to having practical importance. As Chelo (2009, 176) explains, the realisation of the ideal of authenticity presupposes the existence of conditions of possibility for “a common awareness with a transformative character”. In this sense, the third calls into question the existence of these conditions of possibility. Thus, the loss of freedom is “associated with the notion of social fragmentation and the difficulty of structuring and conducting common projects”. Given that public powers in the West are far from despotic or tyrannical, the main oppression is the

powerlessness we experience in realising common projects and policies. “Fragmentation arises when people come to see themselves in an increasingly atomistic way or, to put it another way, less and less associated with their fellow citizens in common projects and causes” (Taylor [1992] 2009, 116). And even when people feel connected to others in common projects, they are mostly piecemeal projects that only bring together a group of citizens. The problem lies not in a lack of participatory experience or calls for mobilisation but in the scope and extent of these projects. Political mobilisation often goes no further than pursuing the specific interests of small groups and people rarely mobilise for broader political projects (Chelo 2009, 177).

The social fragmentation of democratic societies prevents the mobilisation of political majorities that lead to the implementation of common democratic projects on a wider scale. As citizens experience powerlessness, abandonment, and growing alienation, they find it difficult to identify with political society and feel unprotected from the state (Chelo 2009, 178).

We can conclude, in the words of Chelo (2009, 179), that

this vicious circle between social fragmentation and piecemeal participation generates an atrophy of the political system that prevents the formation of projects that mobilise participation and common action. Therein lies the experience of powerlessness, which reflects a real lack of political freedom in conjunction with a worrying lack of recognition of what constitutes an identity factor in our contemporary societies. Loss of freedom, social fragmentation and piecemeal participation are the three marker points for a proper understanding of this third malady.

This third malaise is related to the issue of citizen intervention in the public sphere. The fear expressed by Tocqueville that democracy could slide into an immense tutelary power is, according to Taylor, a real threat. Similarly, “atomistic and instrumentalist positions are prime factors in generating the most degraded and superficial forms of authenticity” (Taylor [1992] 2009, 123), which is why the author refers to the positive impact that a vigorous democracy can have.

What Taylor proposes is that it is possible to turn this vicious circle into a virtuous one by counteracting conformism and promoting democratic initiatives with determination.

## CONCLUSION

Taylor ([1992] 2009, 112) proposes “a work of regeneration”, urges us to fight to win “minds and hearts” to this cause and reaffirms the power of freedom, however constrained it may be.

As the author states, “This battle of ideas is inextricably linked (...) to the political struggles over models of social organisation. Given the decisive role of our institutions in creating and maintaining an atomistic and instrumental attitude” (Taylor [1992] 2009, 112).

Taylor doesn’t dwell on the debate surrounding modernity but wants to understand the moral sources of our Western civilisation, often hidden in this debate, so that we can undertake “a work of regeneration” of the ideals of modernity.

Since individualism is profoundly shaped by the moral ideal of authenticity, it is a problem that both supporters and opponents of contemporary culture have avoided discussing. Taylor ([1992] 2009, 38 and 99) does not place himself at either extreme pole of this debate. On the one hand, he differs from the supporters in that he does not approve of all the forms of authenticity that are presented to us; on the other hand, unlike the opponents, he considers it to be a profound error to radically condemn the ethics of self-realisation and reaffirms the importance of considering authenticity as a moral ideal.

Taylor understands authenticity as an ideal that has been degraded, but which is indispensable in modern times, and proposes a work of regeneration that can contribute to the transformation of our practical lives. In order to achieve this goal, he ([1992] 2009, 38) begins the debate on the *Ethics of Authenticity* by proposing three ideas, all of which are controversial: “(1) that authenticity is a valid

ideal; (2) that one can rationally reflect on ideals and the conformity of practices to those ideals; and (3) that such reflection can have consequences”. With the first idea, Taylor opposes the fundamental idea of the critique of the culture of authenticity; secondly, he rejects subjectivism; and finally, he doesn’t accept that we are prisoners of the system, be it capitalism, bureaucracy, or industrial and technological society.

From here, as Lúcia Figueiredo (2009, 147) explains, the author’s narrative path goes through an analysis of the sources of authenticity, a presentation in favour of the insertion of individuals into horizons of meaning that precede them, a reflection on the need for intersubjective recognition and an explanation of the causes of the deviation from authenticity towards subjectivism.

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## CLAUDE LEVI-STRAUSS' METHODOLOGICAL RIGOUR: THE SCOPE OF HIS STRUCTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY

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**Abstract.** Claude Lévi-Strauss (1908–2009) introduced structural anthropology, a framework for identifying the deep structures underlying human thought and culture. However, since the 1950s, structuralism has faced considerable criticism.

This article contributes to the methodological debate by examining seven key aspects of Lévi-Strauss's structural anthropology: (i) the meaning of “structures”, (ii) its objectives, (iii) governing principles, (iv) research objects, (v) limitations, (vi) potential contributions, and (vii) the intellectual disposition required of a Lévi-Straussian scholar.

Lévi-Strauss maintained that structural anthropology must adhere to strict methodological principles to achieve a holistic and objective understanding of human societies across time and space. His approach rested on three core demands: objectivity, totality, and meaningfulness. Structural anthropologists, working within this framework, sought to reduce the particular experiences of indigenous communities into universal codes comprehensible to all possible observers.

To preserve analytical rigour, Lévi-Strauss deliberately selected a limited number of societies for study—those he considered “authentic” or possessing some degree of authenticity within the modern world. By systematically analysing these societies, he argued that a deeper understanding of humanity could emerge.

**Keywords:** philosophical methodology, structuralism, structural anthropology, Claude Lévi-Strauss, nonliterature societies

### INTRODUCTION

During the second half of the twentieth century—that is, after two World Wars had challenged the meaning of Western tradition—

European intellectuals needed to reconstruct its philosophical foundations. Among them, Claude Levi-Strauss was worth consideration. He was identified with structuralism, a philosophical and theoretical movement that inspired European intellectual life in the 1950s and 1960s (Dosse 1997, 10). Structuralism, Levi-Strauss admitted, was “the principles and methods that have never ceased to guide me” (1983, xi). The official inception of Levi-Straussian structuralism was in 1958 when he published the collection of essays *Structural Anthropology*. About one year later, he was the first professor of Social Anthropology at the College de France, which legalised Anthropology research in France. 1958, to Gilles-Gaston Granger (1993), was also the crucial innovation moment of social sciences and humanities. Jean Pouillon argued the meaning of Levi-Strauss structuralism, or structural anthropology, as he preferred: it was the first time in the history of Western sciences and philosophy that a person intensively analysed the structural dimension of the world and then tried to reach the end of that approach's scope (Levi-Strauss 1963, vii).

As Levi-Strauss (2013b, 9) claimed, structural anthropology continued the ancient curiosity to consider human phenomena comprehensively. He, therefore, tried to place it as the ultimate human science. Thus, his challenge caused long-term criticism from empirical scholars, theorists, philosophers, and broader, intellectuals. A book published in 1977 contained a bibliography of critical studies of his approach from the 1940s to the 1970s (Lapointe 1977). This controversy is still ongoing (Doji 2006).

This paper contributes to the discussions on Levi-Straussian structuralism by treating it as a subject of philosophical methodology. Our proposal, to some degree, agrees with the classification of his student, Maurice Godelier (2018), who considered his thinking consists of five components: i) kinship studies, ii) myths and mythical thought, iii) arts, iv) reflections on the future of humanity, and v) “the principles and methods of structural analysis, as well as the relations entertained by structural anthropology with linguistics, history, philosophy, mathematics, but

also with Marx, Freud, Rousseau, Gobineau, etc”. These five elements are tied, complementing each other in Levi-Strauss’ work. Therefore, a comprehensive study of his philosophical methodology needs to regard these parts simultaneously. The author, thus, argued the above requirement might be satisfied by studying Levi-Strauss’ methodological rigour, that is his implicit or explicit remark on the scope of his structural anthropology.

#### THE MEANING OF “STRUCTURE”

From 1935 to 1939, Claude Levi-Strauss—a former French high school philosophy teacher who left his job and, together with his wife, moved to Brazil—taught sociology while conducting ethnographic fieldwork among four indigenous societies. He intended to write a national doctoral thesis on kinship from this data. Still, he was unable to begin due to World War II and certain theoretical uncertainties, which persisted until his 1942 meeting in exile in New York with the linguist Roman Jakobson, with whom he formed a lifelong friendship (Debaene 2010, 46). He saw in the structuralist linguistics of Jakobson an intuition he had had in the fieldwork (Levi-Strauss 1985, 139). Thus, he attempted to extend and transform the structural analysis of linguistics to the study of kinship. Modern linguistics, indeed, had transformed itself to become, among other social sciences and humanities, the only mature scientific discipline. The achievement of linguistics lies in its simultaneous formulation of an empirical method and an understanding of the nature of the data it analyses. Modern linguistics, therefore, has the “noble duty” to lead other disciplines toward a truly scientific empiricist understanding of social phenomena, including anthropology (Levi-Strauss 1963, 31).

The structuralist approach of modern linguistics was first reduced to four basic operations by Nikolai Trubetzkoy’s *Principles of Phonology*. Levi-Strauss elaborated on them in the collection *Structural Anthropology*. First, as an integral part of modern linguistics,

phonology shifted from the study of conscious linguistic phenomena to the unconscious substructure underlying them. Second, this discipline did not treat terms as isolated entities but focused on the correlations between words. Third, it introduced the notion of a system, asserting that modern phonology not only established that phonemes are always part of a system; it also identified specific phonemic systems and clarified their structure. Fourth, the discipline sought to uncover general laws through intuition and logical deduction. Trubetzkoy's four basic operations in phonology were the first to establish rigorous connections between the social sciences and humanities, as found in the natural sciences (Levi-Strauss 1963, 33-4). This development encouraged Levi-Strauss to examine the consequences of these operations and their potential applications in his structural anthropology.

Starting from modifying Trubetzkoy's work in phonology, Levi-Strauss extended and developed the structural approach to analyse the empirical data of anthropology. His outline might be found in the essay "Social Structure," first published as a paper presented at the international conference of the Wenner-Gren Foundation in New York, USA, in 1952, and later reprinted in *Structural Anthropology* (1958). His thus marked an epistemological distinction between "model" and "structure."

"Model" is a concept formed by scientists, whose function is to describe and explain a group of social phenomena. Depending on their scale, there are two types of models: "mechanical models" and "statistical models". The first one consists of elements whose composition coincides with the scale of actual phenomena. In contrast, the second type is composed of constituent elements which differ whose scale from the phenomenon itself (Levi-Strauss 1963, 283). "Structure", according to Levi-Strauss, is a notable model that could only be formed under four strict epistemological conditions. First, a structure must be systematic so that any transformation of one element entails transformations in all other elements. Second, structures will belong to all models of the same group of transformations, each corresponding to a model of the

same type. Therefore, the whole of these transformations will form a group of specific models. Third, the above two conditions allow Levi-Straussian researchers to predict the responses of models. Fourth, structures must be models constructed so that their operation enables scholars to perceive all observed events (Levi-Strauss 1963, 279-80).

Models and structures are concepts constructed by the researcher's abstract operationalisation. These two notions, however, have sparked debate among later scholars regarding whether they can simultaneously have epistemological and ontological value (Knuppova 2018, 36-7). In the 1958 collection, Levi-Strauss asserted that his structure concept holds epistemological value. He argued that the demand for structural analysis of social phenomena can be pushed further to become a unique mental attitude in which an individual focuses on structural features.

The mental attitude toward structural features is not an intellectual achievement unique to Levi-Strauss but rather “one of the most universal [human mental] attitudes toward the world” (Balcerzan & Rajewska 2022, 174). Levi-Strauss confirmed this assessment in a series of lectures in Korea in 1981, arguing that the attitude toward structures is not a Western invention. Instead, he asserted that it is a gift to Western people from non-Western communities. He further said that structuralism is a mental attitude that has contributed to forming a common feature of human thinking in many societies since ancient times. This mental attitude “is a mindset that we have received from the communities we study. When we try to do a structural analysis, what we are really doing is borrowing the thinking of the people we study, whether in the distant past or the present, and using it to understand those communities better, as if in this kind of thinking there is a common denominator, a common ground that extends across all of humanity—including both ancient and contemporary indigenous thinkers—and is a way of thought that is best at helping us translate from one way of thinking to another” (Levi-Strauss 2021b, 9).

The mental attitude toward the structural dimension of the world, thus universal to humans in many societies since ancient times, was later borrowed by Westerners and evolved through tortuous stages to become the basis of Levi-Straussian structuralism. He acknowledged this position in the 1958 preface to *Structural Anthropology*, quoting Jean Pouillon: “Lévi-Strauss is certainly not the first nor the only one to have emphasised the structural character of social phenomena, but his originality consists in taking that character seriously and in serenely deriving all the consequences from it” (Levi-Strauss 1963, vii).

### THREE METHODOLOGICAL REQUIREMENTS OF STRUCTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY

The first requirement is objectivity. Objectivity, Levi-Strauss (2013b, 22) said in the first Tokyo lectures in 1986, “characterises all the social sciences; otherwise, they could not lay claim to the name of science.” He made it clear in the “Anthropology” entry of *Enciclopedia Italiana*, setting the objectivity of his studies apart from that of all sciences in the way Levi-Straussian anthropologists face his research object: forced to stand at a distance. This position requires a special objectification from the anthropologist. He must give up a mass of things that are taken for granted in him, including 1) beliefs, 2) favouritism, 3) prejudices, 4) and especially his methods of thinking (Levi-Strauss 1975, 1-2).

The second requirement of his anthropology is totality. The anthropologist does not consider phenomena as independent and closed entities but perceives them in the context of their social life, “all of whose aspects are organically linked” (Levi-Strauss 2013b, 23). Therefore, he admitted that the second requirement has the premise of considering several aspects of social life in the work of economists, demographers, political scientists, etc. These scholars, however, deal with specific data in an isolational situation, and then propose different knowledge on humans. Anthropologists, by

contrast, attempt similarities between these data, then seek general formulas and invariants that manifest behind the most diverse forms of social life.

The last and most challenging requirement is meaningfulness. Because Levi-Strauss placed his anthropology in semiotics, which took the active principle of “meaning”. This requirement, in the above essay, still needs to be clarified. He did more in his first Tokyo lecture in 1986. The anthropologist’s attempt towards objectivity and totality “can be situated only at a level where phenomena retain meaning for an individual consciousness” (Levi-Strauss 2013b, 26). This rigour is the most basic distinction between the methodology of his anthropology and that of the sciences to which it was inspired. For example, economic or demographic studies aim at objectivity by treating their research objects as abstract notions, such as “value”, “profitability”, “marginal productivity”, and “maximum population.” They, nonetheless, were formed outside of direct and concrete relationships between individuals and had no meaning in the consciousness of individuals belonging to the societies in question.

In this challenging situation, bound by these three requirements, the anthropologist needs to be familiar with new categories in unfamiliar societies. From there, he would invent new mental categories compared to the community in which he was born and then contribute to introducing them to the Western philosophical and scientific tradition. To do so demands that anthropologists formulate their problems and conclusions in a particular mode. This mode of thinking enables the anthropologist’s findings to be rational to him and every possible observer (Levi-Strauss 1975, 2). In other words, he needs to “achieve formulations valid not only for an honest and objective observer but for all observers possible” (Levi-Strauss 2013b, 22). The essential task of structuralist researchers, thus, is to produce intelligible codes able to translate particular experiences of the society in question, which “can be understood in the context of some other social experience” (Levi-Strauss 1975, 2).

NONLITERATURE SOCIETIES:

LEVI-STRAUSSIAN STRUCTURALISM'S PRIVILEGED RESEARCH OBJECT

The anthropologist confronts his research object, as the ancient astronomer faced the stars with “the view from afar”. His traditional study objects were indeed far from him and, for centuries, from the Renaissance, were considered primitive. Levi-Strauss, in a brief article written for *UNESCO Courier* (1954, 5-6), explained the confusing meaning of the word “primitive”, and then renewed his research object. The term “primitive” is a 19th-century European concept that has been inconsistently used to describe at least three types of societies: (i) those living close to nature, particularly in forests, (ii) those considered industrially less developed than Europeans of that era, and (iii) those perceived as preserving humanity's original, untouched state. None of these interpretations are satisfactory.

The first interpretation referred to societies that lived close to nature, especially in the forest. The Eskimos, one of the most famous examples of primitive peoples, did not live in the woods. However, the nineteenth and twentieth-century French peasants were closely connected with nature. If so, were the Eskimos not primitive, while the French peasants two centuries earlier were primitive? The first interpretation of the “primitive” notion is, therefore, not correct. The second interpretation pointed to societies possessing an industrial level more backward than nineteenth-century Europeans. The actual comparison would reveal opposition. The industrial stage of a Melanesian village is the same as the 2nd century BC of Roma and Amsterdam about 1750 and the mid-19th century of the ancient city Timbuktu in Mali, Africa. However, all three of these societies cannot be classified as the same social type as “primitive”. Thus, the second interpretation of that notion is incorrect (Levi-Strauss 1954, 5-6).

The third, perhaps the best interpretation, is directed to communities that have kept humanity's original nature. Levi-Strauss, however, raised two questions. Firstly, scholars need to

learn more about the true beginnings of humanity. The best available archaeological findings are the earliest traces of artificial tools dating back 400,000 to 500,000 years and found in many parts of the globe. These suggest two conclusions: 1) those tools were not the first products of humanity, and 2) people need to interact and influence each other so that the tool-making techniques spread and become homogeneous. The first conclusion found no justification. Regarding the second one, the artefacts of the so-called primitive people are very advanced compared to the above archaeological tools. Thus, technical developments must happen. The means of so-called primitive societies could not be the product of the dawn of humanity (Levi-Strauss 1954, 6).

Levi-Strauss summarised: all three 19th-century European interpretations of the notion “primitive” are inaccurate. “The idea of a primitive society is a delusion. On the other hand, the idea of a society with no form of writing makes us aware of an essential side of humanity’s development” (Levi-Strauss 1954, 7). The absence of a form of writing is, indeed, the critical feature of those societies in contrast to modern Western ones, which spread out their mode of being and thinking to every community on the Earth. Levi-Strauss, therefore, proposed the most privileged research object of his anthropology: nonliterature societies. Thirty-two years after the important article in *UNESCO Courier*, Levi-Strauss (2013b, 4-5), in his first Tokyo lecture in 1986, outlined these social types as “perfectly viable so long as they are not threatened from the outside”. Therefore, he clarified the defining features of that social type, which were revealed to structuralist anthropologists and could then be analyzed objectively and comprehensively.

First, there are societies with small populations, ranging from a few dozen to several hundred, and at most, several thousand people. Second, such communities could form small groups, each consisting of a few dozen to several hundred people, within maximum walking distance of at most two or three days. Their populational density is 0.1 person/square kilometre. Third, to keep the population low, their birth rate is also limited, only 1% of the population, just

enough to balance the number of deaths, making the population almost unchanged. Fourth, the low population size is associated with unconscious rules of sexual abstinence after birth, mainly to prolong the duration of lactation to recover the sexual ability in the body of women slowly (Levi-Strauss 2013b, 15-6). Claude Levi-Strauss (1961, 273), in *Tristes Tropiques*, described the abortion techniques of Nambikwaran women in central Brazil in the late 1930s to maintain a low population. “The Nambikwara have few children; childless couples are not uncommon, though one or two children constitute the norm (...). Sexual relations between parents are forbidden while their child remains unweaned: often, that is to say, until it is three years old (...). Living a nomadic life in a very poor environment, the natives have to be careful; women do not hesitate to resort to abortion of one kind or other medicinal plants, or some mechanical device in case of need”.

Fifth, if population growth occurs, it does not destroy these groups to reorganise themselves on new foundations. As the population of a group becomes more extensive, the group splits itself into two smaller societies, keeping the old social organisation. Sixth, this social type could often spontaneously eliminate infectious diseases. According to epidemiologists, the virus of epidemics would only live in the human body for a duration and then must pass to other bodies to survive. The virus would work ideally in societies with populations ranging from a few hundred thousand to several million, where interpersonal interaction is dense, such as in our modern cities. Seventh, non-communicable diseases, such as obesity, high blood pressure, and blood circulation disorders, are also less likely to appear because these individuals are physically active and eat more varied foods than farmers or people who live in modern cities, with hundreds of different types of animals and plants, which have low fat, high fibre, and mineral salts to provide the body with enough protein and calories (Levi-Strauss 2013b, 15).

However, the most distinctive characteristic of maintaining this social type's relatively isolated inner life, visible to anthropologists from the outside, is establishing relationships among members

according to kinship. “Everyone is a brother, sister, cousin, uncle, aunt, or other kin to everyone else” (Levi-Strauss 2013b, 13). Individuals who do not belong to a kinship system of concrete society could only be from another society or another world. They would be seen as strangers, a threat to the whole community. Levi-Strauss faced this difficult situation while researching the Caduveo tribe, in Brazil, in the late 1930s. “The Caduveo were very distrustful, fearful of any encroachments on their territory” (Levi-Strauss 2013a, 72).

Nonliterature societies, the most privileged research object of Claude Levi-Strauss’s anthropology, are indeed societies with a population small enough that their social organisation is based on concrete interactions between individuals, in which kinship is the most fundamental relationship (Levi-Strauss 1975, 3). The nonliterature societies were theoretically classified, for the first time in his essay *The Place of Anthropology in the Social Sciences*, as societies of authenticity, or authentic societies. The structural anthropology of Levi-Strauss is indeed “essentially concerned with those forms of social life—of which the so-called primitive societies are merely the most readily identifiable and most developed examples—whose degree of authenticity is estimated according to the scope and variety of the concrete relations between individuals” (Levi-Strauss 1963, 369). In this respect, this social type is the opposition of “unauthentic societies”, which are modern. Our unauthentic societies are maintained through indirect interaction, forcing individuals to pass through various indirect forms of communication (books, photographs, press, radio, etc.), where its central aspect is written documents (Levi-Strauss 1963, 366). The relationships between individuals of such societies, thus, were necessarily loose and lack of autonomy. The modern media were forced to appear to produce the fake gap between these unauthentic contacts (Levi-Strauss 2013, 27).

However, the development of anthropology in the 20th century, in which Claude Levi-Strauss’s methodology stressed a fundamental aspect, overlapped with the disappearance of these authentic

societies and their most distinctive features. This threat has been raised since 1908 when James Frazer gave the world's first lecture on social anthropology. From 1900 to 1950, nearly 90 tribes disappeared from the Brazilian border. In the same 50 years, 15 languages vanished in South America. In the 1960s, only 30 isolated tribes existed in Brazil. These societies were becoming increasingly similar to unauthentic Western societies. Before such communities disappeared, scholars needed to document aspects of their social life. Written documents, however, still need to be included. He numbered 4.000 to 5.000 such societies that have existed and are recorded (Levi-Strauss 1975, 125-26)

The structural anthropology, or structuralism of Claude Levi-Strauss faced this difficulty and, therefore, would extend its research object to the degrees of authenticity within modern societies. "Modern societies are, of course, not completely 'unauthentic'" (Levi-Strauss 1963, 367). Structuralist anthropologists could carefully identify levels of authenticity in some specific domains. These new objects allow them to rediscover their familiar realm when studying a village or an isolated neighbourhood in a rural area or a town, especially in non-Western nations, where everyone knows each other. It is, however, opposed to authentic society in its fundamental mode of organisation. The second is traditional and pure, based on kinship systems, while the first is a relatively recent invention of the modern world, "islands strewn across the surface of a vaster entity" (Levi-Strauss 2013, 29).

#### CASE STUDY OF HIS FORMATION OF FIVE ELEMENTARY STRUCTURES OF KINSHIP

On this foundation, Levi-Strauss posited that structuralist anthropologists could place themselves on the same footing as modern linguists. When studying kinship terms, for example, the anthropologist identifies phenomena analogous to phonemes, applying the same methodological approach. A kinship term, therefore, cannot be considered in isolation but must be understood

as a meaningful element within the broader system of kinship terms. This perspective illuminates the analysis of kinship structures as a distinctive social phenomenon within Levi-Strauss's anthropology.

He methodologically narrowed the structural analysis of kinship to the basic form of kinship in authentic societies, as distinguished in his 1986 lectures. These societies typically aim to maintain a simple organisation by reproducing a small population, living in a small area, lacking writing, and forming relationships through marriage. The position of society is determined within the interwoven kinship system. The researcher suggests that this system can be strictly and directly observed from the outside. From the ethnographic data, the Levi-Straussian anthropologist can abstract the phenomenon of kinship in such societies into a mechanical model, where the elements constituting the abstract model correspond to the scale of actual phenomena. Moreover, they have the advantage of observing these phenomena from the outside, as they are fundamentally opposed to similar phenomena in modern societies. The fundamental relationship between individuals in primitive societies is direct and concrete, while in modern societies, individuals are maintained in a myriad of indirect, mediated, and loose ways. Writing is the central factor mediating interpersonal relations in modern societies, as opposed to the non-writing status maintained in these other types (Levi-Strauss 2013, 14).

He analysed ethnographic data on marriage from five actual matrilineal and patrilineal societies in his essay "Structural Analysis in Linguistics and Anthropology", first published in 1945 and later added to the 1958 collection. These five societies were: 1) the Trobriands, in the New Guinea archipelago, southwest Pacific; 2) the Cherkess, now part of Russia; 3) the Siuai, also in the New Guinea archipelago; 4) the Tonga, in Polynesia, South Pacific; and 5) the Lake Kubutu, also in New Guinea. Levi-Strauss (1969, xxiii) defined the notion of the elementary structures of kinship as "systems in which the nomenclature permits the immediate determination of the circle of kin and that of affines, that is, those systems which prescribe marriage with a certain type of relative, or

alternatively, those which, while defining all members of the society as relatives, divide them into two categories, *viz.* possible spouses and prohibited spouses". In the above essay, he limited the scope of his analysis to the rule of a possible marriage.

First, he abstracted from ethnographic data the essential elements of kinship that function as part of the most basic form that makes kinship possible (Levi-Strauss 1963, 46). These essential elements of kinship include four characters: wife, husband, brother or younger brother of the wife, and the child born from the marriage. Second, he sketched a mechanical model to describe the marriage organisation based on the four basic units mentioned above, including four basic relationships: i) between wife and husband, ii) between father and son, iii) between wife and her younger or older brothers, and iv) between child and his uncle. Third, he considered one aspect of the possible marriage structure: the system of attitudes between members based on the four basic relationships. Attitudes, according to him, are divided into two categories: positive and negative, denoted by "+" and "-". Fourth, this mechanical model met the stringent requirements to become a structure that would allow the Lévi-Straussian anthropologist to develop formulas with meaning not only for the community under study but also for every future observer (Levi-Strauss 1975, 2). Finally, he abstracted the rules of attitude related to possible marriages into a schema from which the reader can immediately understand the three invariant characteristics.

First, there is always a balance between negative and positive emotions among the four relations in the basic form of marriage. This balance in the distribution of feelings is not a conscious moral activity, but an unconscious rule operating in nonliterature society. In the basic structure of a viable marriage among the patriarchal Trobriands living in the Southwest Pacific, the relationship between husband and wife and father and child is positive. However, the relationship between the wife and her brother, and between the son and the mother's brother, is negative. The system of feelings in marriage among the patriarchal Cherkess people living in the

territory of Russia is quite different from that of the Trobriands. The father-mother and father-son relationships are negative and hostile, while the relationship between the mother and her brother, and between the mother's brother and the son, is very positive. From this, he introduces the second constant: there cannot be the same kind of attitude between i) husband—wife and wife—her brother, and ii) father—son and son—the mother's brother. Third, the above two rules are invariant and universal for all simple and feasible ways of organising marriage in primitive societies. In other words, they operate unconsciously and independently of the misclassification of societies as primitive based on matrilineal and patrilineal organisations (Levi-Strauss, 1963, 46-7).

## CONCLUSION

From this outline, the methodological rigour and ambition of Levi-Straussian structural anthropology—or structuralism—become evident. Its ultimate goal is to establish formulas and codes that translate the specific experiences of societies into a framework comprehensible to all possible observers across different cultures. However, this ambition was constrained by the limited scope of empirical data it could accommodate, ultimately failing to capture the full richness and diversity of human experience (Lévi-Strauss & Massenzio 2001, 422).

His structural analysis of kinship, which I previously discussed as a case study, should have incorporated the extensive ethnographic material on economics and religion—both crucial in non-literate societies. Lévi-Strauss himself acknowledged these limitations, attributing them to the demands of methodological rigour. In a 1970s interview with younger theorists, he reflected:

“My generation was basically concerned with introducing a bit of rigour into our disciplines; consequently, when studying phenomena, we tried to limit the number of variables to be considered (...). Following the teachings of Mauss and Malinowski, we knew that economics, kinship, and religion were related,

but we were unable to work out this relationship in detail” (Lévi-Strauss, Augé, Godelier 1976, 51).

Lévi-Strauss (1963, 378) often likened structural anthropologists, with their methodological rigour, to “astronomers of the social sciences.” Their task, he explained, was to provide “an overall view—one reduced to a few schematic outlines, but which those indigenous to the culture would be incapable of attaining because they are located too close to it” (Lévi-Strauss 2013c, 7).

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## “POST-TRUTH” POSSIBILITY IN POPPER’S CONJECTURE AND REFUTATION PATTERN

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**Abstract.** Despite appearances to the contrary, we decide to turn ideals to reality, as we cannot perceive reality at the start. This is an endless and inconclusive attempt; but at the same time, it constitutes the rationale to Popper’s conjecture-and-refutation pattern. Once we trace his decision to accept sets of basic statements according to which our search for truth will be realised and identified, we understand the meaning of “post-truths”. “Post-truth” is associated with the working-class people. The right-wing populist rhetoric lures the working class into its trap, which entails nationalism and phobia of immigrants. The above-mentioned set is, indeed, incorroborable: neither falsifiable nor provable. But by accepting it, we accept the dismissal of Popper’s excessive zeal for rationalistic values, which cannot be pursued in abstraction from a well-defined set of circumstances. A “post-truth” can be understood in the process of trial-and-error, as regards, say, the said populist rhetoric. This process shows that we are not free from ignorance, so we cannot absolutely eliminate populism. According to Popper, we ought not make statements irresponsibly or at random, where we have no relevant knowledge, or are not in a position to pronounce, as quite literally we cannot, because part of the essential stage-setting for statement-making, properly so-called, is missing. A “post-truth” fills in that gap, as stressed by Popper’s demarcation line between what we can do and what we cannot do in science and philosophy.

**Keywords:** K. Popper, conjecture and refutation, post-truth, populism, falsifiability

### TOOLS AND TRENDS

The statement (Laiou and Morrisson 2008, 205 and n. 93) made by Demetrius Cydones (1324 Thessaloniki – 1398 Crete)—a Byzantine

Greek theologian, translator, author and influential statesman, who served as Imperial Prime Minister or Chancellor of the Byzantine Empire, that before 1340 Thessaloniki was a commercial city frequented by merchants from all over the world—must be discounted as a patriotic exaggeration. Made on behalf of a man who was contrasting the glories of the city before the civil war at the time to the disasters wrought by the “popular” party in the course of it, this statement is virtually what we may today call a “post-truth statement”. That “alternative facts” replace actual facts and that feelings have more weight than evidence, is clear (Mcintyre 2018, xiv) despite the blurred line between the stages (*Ibidem.*) of falsehood and those of deliberate lies. The term “post-truth” was named the 2016 Word of the Year by *The Oxford Dictionary* (Mcintyre 2018, 1, 51, 70, 154-158). This is a catch-all phrase which epitomises modern times, given the obfuscation of facts, the abandonment of evidential standards in reasoning and the outright lying that marked the 2016 US presidential election (but also the Brexit vote, as argued by McIntyre). Popper’s excessive rationalistic zeal seems to preclude the allocation of such an idea within his scheme. However, his emphasis on the distinction between what we can and cannot do, following his social and political pattern as defined by his epistemology, makes ‘post-truth’ a possibility within that framework.

#### THE NOTION OF “POST-TRUTH” IS RULED OUT BY POPPER’S CONJECTURE-AND-REFUTATION PATTERN

In his account of the world, Popper, in attempting to dismiss induction as a means of attaining knowledge of the truth (1963: 34), emphasises the need, during his student days in Vienna after the First World War, for a radical revision of what had for generations been regarded as the standard pattern of intellectual and scientific certainty. The air, being full of revolutionary slogans and ideas, called for new and often wild theories, he avers. This need for a shift in values shows the inductive method (Popper 1963, 53) as one of

sheer myth: inference based on many observations is not a psychological fact. It is neither a fact of ordinary life nor one of scientific procedure, he concludes. This also means that any truth that rests by observation on an unrestricted generalisation also rests on an elementary logical fallacy.

It is a great error then to seek any infallible source of truth, whether determined by sense-experience or by reason (or by anything else). The criterion of the scientific status of a theory is its falsifiability, refutability, or testability (Popper 1963, 36-37). What then remains for man as regards endeavouring to attain truth? Popper allows the future to be in many respects like the past, so that well-tested laws will continue to hold good (Popper 1963, 56). Eliminating induction from our everyday knowledge of the world does not make it easy for the role it plays in our lives. Acting on this assumption of laws means, he adds, that we have no better assumptions to act upon, notwithstanding any future pragmatic implications (Schilpp 1974, v. II, 686): any theory which has failed a relevant test at any time must be discarded as false. Popper, however, hastens to add that judging from past experience the future, in important respects, will be *unlike* the past. Hence, it is only a large chunk of any theoretical system that can be tested; scarcely the whole system, Popper admits (1963, 239). For him, it would be sheer guesswork which of the ingredients of that system should be held responsible for the falsification in question.

Popper's demarcation line between science and non-science stresses his zeal for rationalistic values. Science, he repeats (Popper 2002, 278), is not a system of certain and well-established statements. It cannot steadily advance towards any state of finality. Science thus cannot claim knowledge as it can never attain the Truth (science probably cannot attain any substitute for truth). There is still a motive for striving for knowledge and searching for truth (Giouli 2024, 60-65, 70-73). However, every "valid" scientific theory rests on the refutation of certain conjectures. Irrefutability is negative because a no-refutable theory by any conceivable event is non-scientific. (Popper 1963, 36ff).

Popper’s epistemological remarks here stress the tension between facts and truth as engendered in modern political arenas, and as advocated by McIntyre above. This tension concerns, we have seen, how “alternative facts” replace actual facts and how feelings have more weight than evidence. That the so-called alternatives must be falsified by the actual facts, can easily be understood with the use of Popper’s tools. And the standards of truth, of the scientific status of such cases and such angles, as regards the actual facts, will thus be realised, following Popper, by falsifying, refuting, testing and prohibiting these “alternatives”.

Does Popper’s epistemology, and consequently his idea of political and social philosophy, reflect the naïve view of the obedient servant and chronicler of facts? They certainly do, *prima facie*, at least. Popper would never allow for Feyerabend’s idea that we can change science and make it agree with our wishes by turning it from a stern and demanding mistress into an attractive and yielding courtesan who tries to anticipate every wish of her lover. This is certainly the case with “post-truths” playing the courtesan role in the modern political arenas. Being such, they have no place within Popper’s pattern, except insofar as they are refutable.

#### “POST-TRUTH”, MYTHS AND TRUTH

How is this dismissal to be done, if we adopt the neutral viewpoint of the refutation procedures as advised by Popper? As we have seen, this viewpoint highlights the logical fallacy implied by the validity of the unrestricted generalisations established through empiricist means. Popper finds such a disrespect for science. So he (2002, 41) demonstrates an asymmetry between verifiability and falsifiability. Thus, it is possible to argue from the truth of singular statements to the falsity of universal statements with this asymmetry, as resulting from the logical form of universal statements. Universal statements do not derive from singular statements, he adds. However, universal statements can be contradicted by singular statements. Hence, it

becomes possible by means of purely deductive inference, that is, with the *modus tollens* of classical logic, to argue from the truth of singular statements to the falsity of universal statements. To his relief, the logical respectability of science cannot be harmed by his remarks as regards the above-mentioned invalid induction inferences of Humean origin.

Popper thus seems open to discussing his propositions on a neutral viewpoint which dismisses induction, without dismissing learning from experience: what Plato has taken to be a trial-and-error procedure of knowledge. Complaining however that his angle was misunderstood by the 1936 audiences at the Aristotelian Society gathering, Popper stated that his propositions on induction were taken as a joke, and followed by laughter (Schilpp 1974, v.I, 87). A new generation of thinkers also failed to understand his angle half a lifetime later (Popper 1972, 1). He examines the question of whether we can start our enquiries using pure observations alone, without anything in the nature of a theory to guide us (1963, 46ff). Revisiting this idea, he finds it absurd. Observation, he adds, in need of a chosen object, a definite task, an interest, a point of view, is always selective. This implies, however, the use of a descriptive language with words that reflect properties of subjects as regards the philosopher's conjectures and anticipations which rest on her/his background theories. At this point, we must beware of that language which expresses "post-truth" with modern case tools. Following Adam Tooze (28 September 2022), a most plausible reading of "post-truths" as regards, say, the cases of the Scottish independence bid in 2014, and the 2016 Brexit case, was a return to the agenda of what Tooze calls Project Fear. This constitutes the campaign of elite consensus-building and intimidation. It was this campaign built on "alternative" facts which helped to stop the Scottish independence bid in 2014, but failed miserably to cow the Brexiteers in 2016, Tooze adds. The fire and brimstone that was promised in 2016 did not arrive.

Popper states that we need no longer be troubled by the blind alley of infinite regress (1963, 47). Going back to more and more

primitive theories and myths, we shall in the end find unconscious, inborn expectations, something absurd, he admits. We all have such inborn reactions, he adds, just as a newborn baby expects to be fed, protected and loved. These expectations are not conscious, as they are simply reactions and responses adapted to impending events. Is Popper hinting at such a physical reaction to impending events and dangers with the help and language of “post-truths”?

We recall here Popper’s anecdote about how he once asked a class of physics students in Vienna to observe carefully and write down what they had observed. Since they had not been told what to observe, or why, they were at a loss. They could not obey his instructions (Burke 1983, 45 and 1988, 217).

Induction, then, has to be understood within a framework that serves goals, interests and priorities inborn, or acquired within the knowledge procedures. But does this harm Popper’s excessive zeal for rationalistic values? Revisiting his search for the elimination of induction, we may ask, following Ayer (Burke 1988, 211), if the same tests as those carried out in the past can be repeated in the future; and also if the same sets of conditions can be realised again. Are these tests and sets analytically true? If we never allow anything to count as the same test yielding different results at different times, we may grant this to be an analytic truth –not an inductive generalisation. The reason why it is not an inductive generalisation rests only on our criterion of relevance in making any difference to the result, since the “same” means the same in all relevant respects. Then we should not talk about any analytic truth as regards those sets and those tests.

We are talking of an induction which ineluctably serves his conjecture-and-refutation pattern, in the sense of expanding inductive arguments from past to future. And yet, following Popper (Burke 1983, 46), whether we see two things as the same or different depends on the respects in which we compare them. Popper, indeed, accepts (1963, 44ff and 2002, 420ff) that expectations or general beliefs have less or more strength depending on whether they are repetitive. There is no guaranteed result in all sets of

circumstances regarding the strength or weakness of political beliefs and expectations. The results can hold good solely in specific sets of conditions. This means that we can also identify what really is within a specific set of circumstances; not what must or cannot happen in all sets of circumstances. We are thus prone to error; and prone, to sum up, to the use of “post-truths”.

Repetition (as understood in a Humean sense), is of less use here. What point of “logic” is involved in such a (faulty) use of such truths? There is no absolute sense according to which a certain set of experiences are repetitions of some prototypical experience: there is no absolute sense in which they are all experiences of ‘x’ where ‘x’ is a general term. This is enhanced by Popper’s idea that these repetitions can be taken, if at all, only from a certain point of view. We saw that comparing two things depends on the respects in which we compare them. And what affects one of a repetition, may not have this effect upon a spider, say. This presupposes, however, that there must always be a point of view before there can be any repetitions. This point of view cannot be merely the result of repetition, because it constitutes a system of expectations, anticipations, assumptions or interests. And here, we understand how the introduction of a “post-truth” within his conjecture-and-refutation pattern is possible.

We see how he accedes to the use of such a viewpoint which makes little use of the truth-values of statements about facts. What the reference is may be hinted at in the realm of the unknown as regards what facts we are prepared to establish and what evidence we shall consequently produce. This refers to our decision and it is the realm of that decision which links with the “post-truth” modern phenomenon. For the moment let us concentrate on the expansion of our conceptual armament from the known to the unknown real of values.

Popper dismisses the notions of “true” and “false” while attempting an expansion from the known to the unknown (2002, 273ff). Thus, rather than claiming a theory to be “false”, he prefers to consider it as being contradicted by a certain set of accepted basic

statements. This means, Popper continues, that we may interpret the acceptance of basic statements as a result of a conventional decision – not as “true” or “false”. This suggests that we can either confirm or deny theories according to whether their role is similar to that played by the set of statements we have decided to accept. Acceptance or rejection, then, is a result of a conventional decision, if it is impossible to attain and express the terrain of the unknown. That rejection (or falsification) is enhanced by his use of deductive reasoning from which the falsification of universal statements is attained by the truth of singular statements (2002, 41). Here, again we see how the notion of a “post-truth” can be traced, as there is no real difference between our accepted basic statements and those that we have decided to deduce from theories.

All we can say about theories and statements is that they might be inconsistent, not that any of them has been shown conclusively to be true or false. This can hold good for a “post-truth” also if we are unable to be conclusive as regards the falsification of the “alternative” facts by the actual facts. The logical remains impossible in Popper’s account of the world, as that which might be is impossible. We may decide what facts we may establish and what evidence we may produce, but we are unable to opt for the attainment of the realm of the Absolute. As basic statements, that is, those that assert that an observable event is occurring in a certain region of space and time, cannot be different in function from those pointing to that which might possibly be in the order of events, they are like any others within the realm of possible error and controversy (2002, 103). We can claim no more than that, he adds (2002, 104ff). Every test of a theory, however, which results in its corroboration or falsification, must stop at some basic statements or other that we decide to accept. This decision (Giouli 2022b), then, is ours as we are not limited in making it by any discoveries about what really exists out there. This decision, Popper avers, to accept a basic statement and to be satisfied with it, causally links with our perceptual experiences. Basic statements cannot be justified, he adds, by our experiences; nor by decisions. Our

experiences can motivate a decision and hence an acceptance or a rejection of a statement, he continues. A basic statement, he states, can be (*no more than by thumping the table*) justified by them. *Thumping the table* is his statement that suggests how little we can only know: things, say, that lie before us on a table. But we can certainly accept those statements to the extent they are conventions.

#### MODERN CASES

As with modern times, however, according to Tooze (28 September 2022), a perspective that regards political hegemony is at work underlying the expression of a “post-truth”. This regards, he adds, the struggle over the overarching ideas that govern and frame political choices. In this mode, we identify what Adam Tooze calls the performance of our leaders in the role of gatekeepers, a function which is at the heart of elite economic policy discourse. This suggests, indeed, that there are global norms for normalising policies to uphold (Giouli 2007, 27ff). Nowadays these policies showcase an overriding concern for inflation, but also a rather prim concern for inequality, he adds. Seen in this light, what he calls *Project Fear* is best seen not so much as an actual act of intimidation but rather as a ritualistic discourse through which the guardians of norms reassure themselves and the rest of the world of who is in charge, and what the rules are. Our being in ignorance is not an excuse for not even attempting as far as possible to eliminate “post-truth” logic, expressed by the language of such ritualistic discourse. We understand here how important a link with the ideas of Aristotle and Chomsky is because this link relates to the shortcomings of coercive steering in “post-truth” language functions (as they are found, e.g., in genetics). Myth being something other than faith, as expressed in the example relating to ritualistic discourse, referred to above by Tooze, can thus diffuse or enhance power images that guide political and social relations; as happens in the case of what language sanctions or forbids, as expressed by a child, or by man in the

primitive era of history. *Grosso modo*, despite the fact that, as Popper expresses it, our basic statements are inherently fallible, because it is impossible to expect a recurrence of future inductive patterns (Burke 1983, 46-47), we must attempt to eliminate the “post-truth” logic behind them (Giouli 2012a, 143-146; Giouli 2019a; 2020a; 2020b; 2020c; 2022a). Our prejudices related to our knowledge of sociology (Giouli 1996; 1997; 1998; 2000; 2002) would prevent us from eliminating “post-truth” logic. But what can possibly be done is to ensure democratic consensus against the elite consensus that triggers Tooze’s *Fear Project*. And that standard can, if only imperfectly, with the help of modern digital technology, ensure it. Widely accepted rules and agreements within democratic groups as to which statements should be accepted as “post-truths” might then possibly be formulated.

Popper makes the point that we ought not to make statements irresponsibly or at random, where we have no relevant knowledge, or are not in a position to pronounce, but he fails to note that quite literally we cannot do so, because part of the essential stage-setting for statement-making is missing (Burke 1983, 98). A “post-truth” fills in that gap as stressed by Popper’s demarcation line between what we can do and what we cannot do in science and philosophy.

Basic statements are accepted as the result of an agreement on the conventionally accepted criteria for making them and the commitments we undertake in making them (Burke 1983, 62-63). This agreement is not easy: it is conventionally decided and masks an unbridgeable logical gap between commitment and acceptance. We can demarcate the alternative facts of a “post-truth” in a non-arbitrary, ultra-pragmatic (Blackburn 2021, 657-670) and postmodern) way (Mcintyre 2018, 134-135, 126-127, 148-150). Our decisions are formulated by widely accepted rules for making the observations required in proceeding with the appropriate decisions. There must be various checks and supplementary tests to fall back on consensus in cases of political dispute as to what is a “post-truth” and what is not.

This does not mean that a definite, once-and-for-all demarcation of “post-truth” from truth would ever be conclusively possible: part of the essential stage-setting for demonstrating such statements is missing. This echoes the account of Adam Tooze, following Foucault (Tooze 2015), who announced in the very first of the Collège de France lectures (1970-1971), a project of a history of truth that breaks the frame of what a philosophy of truth is. We can see how, in his *Lessons on the Will to Know*, Foucault provides an extraordinary reinterpretation of the origin of Western philosophy that blows apart the borderline between what philosophy is and that which it is not.

In the second sequence of lectures that begins with the core issue *Society Must Be Defended*, in 1975, Foucault, is centrally preoccupied with power. He can clearly be seen to express Popper’s idea that part of the essential stage-setting for demonstrating statements on power is missing. Foucault, tempted to approach his subject-matter with an entirely open mind, stresses that there is nothing to tell him what to look for, or what to focus on (Burke 1988, 217), except his belief that it is important to proceed with the above-mentioned demarcation: “What I am doing—I don’t say what I am cut out to do, because I know nothing about that—is not history, sociology, or economics. However, in one way or another, and for simple factual reasons, what I am doing is something that concerns philosophy, that is to say, the politics of truth, for I do not see many other definitions of the word “philosophy” apart from this. So, insofar as what is involved in this analysis of mechanisms of power is the politics of truth, and not sociology, history, or economics, I see its role as that of showing the knowledge effects produced by the struggles, confrontations, and battles that take place within our society, and by the tactics of power that are the elements of this struggle”. It is easily seen how paralysing the abandonment of those beliefs would be, although they never be justified.

In 1975-6 with his *Society Must be Defended*, Foucault—Tooze continues—rebooted the project of the Collège de France lectures. The aim, as Foucault states and restates also in his *Security, Territory*

*and Population*, is a critical account of truth that is not trapped within the terms that philosophy and the will to find truth set for themselves. We can see here how Foucault strives to understand the unbridgeable gap between the conventional standards applied and the commitments undertaken in creating them. This is the reason why, following Tooze’s analysis, in a remarkably direct way in his *Security, Territory and Population*, Foucault identifies himself as a philosopher rather than a historian, sociologist or economist, while addressing himself to philosophy in terms that are not philosophy’s own. The function of Foucault’s statements operated outside the shelter of basic postulates, as he was determined to free himself from them. What he was determined also to show was that philosophy was “neither historically nor logically a foundation of knowledge, but that there are conditions and rules for the formation of knowledge to which philosophical discourse is subject, in any given period, in the same manner as any other form of discourse with rational pretensions”. This is the Popperian way of addressing any inquiry. Foucault sets himself to studying and analysing “the events” that can come about in the order of knowledge, and which cannot be reduced either to the general law of some kind of “progress”, or the repetitions of an origin. That repetitions indeed exist from a certain point of view is not controverted by Popper. We must understand, however, how Foucault elaborated on such angles and viewpoints.

Foucault’s response as determining his own angle alludes to the 16th and 17th centuries as the moment at which a modern sense of historicity emerged. This critical moment forms the framework of his beliefs and leads him to produce his statements on the subjects of his enquiries. Does he succeed in demarcating “post-truth” from truth as regards modern discourse of war? In his *Society Must be Defended*, Tooze avers, Foucault announces that the early modern discourse of war was “the first discourse in postmedieval Western society that can be strictly described as being historico-political. First because the subject who speaks in this discourse, who says “I” or “we,” cannot, and is in fact not trying to, occupy the position of

the jurist or the philosopher, or in other words the position of a universal, totalising, or neutral subject". This neutrality constitutes the core issue as regards the demarcation procedures in question. Lapsing into lazy scepticism does not make the demarcation easy, as we may be paralysed by the possibility of error if we adopt a non-neutral standpoint. What does this mean as regards Foucault's attempt to demarcate "post-truth" from truth? He appears to be calling into question the basic premise of the philosophy of truth against which he took aim in his *Lessons on the Will to Know*: "Ever since Greek philosophy, philosophico-juridical discourse has always worked with the assumption of a pacified universality, but it is now being seriously called into question or, quite simply, cynically ignored". Tooze points out that the sophists, the repressed heroes of the *Will to Know* make a cameo appearance. This, however, is an appearance Plato, himself, was very well aware of (Giouli 2019b). The point Foucault is making in his *Society Must be Defended* is "this partisan discourse, this discourse of war and history, which can therefore perhaps take the form of the cunning sophist of the Greek era. Whatever form it takes, it will be denounced as the discourse of a biased and naive historian, a bitter politician, a dispossessed aristocracy, or as an uncouth discourse that puts forward inarticulate demands". Being thus demarcated, as regards its "post-truth" status, this discourse, according to Foucault, was doomed to be "basically or structurally kept in the margins by that of the philosophers and jurists". What follows this demarcation is Foucault's questioning of the link between historical knowledge and the practice of war; an idea in circulation for the last one thousand or two thousand years, and which might be described as "platonic". Showing the difference between the platonic origin of the idea testifies to the demarcation of its "post-truth" from truth. This origin, Foucault avers, constitutes the idea that is probably bound up with the whole Western organisation of knowledge, namely, knowledge and truth do not belong to the *a priori* register of order and peace, as they are not found on the side of violence, disorder, and war. Foucault maintains that the important thing (and whether it is or is not

platonian is of no importance, he adds) about this idea that knowledge and truth cannot belong to war, and can only belong to order and peace, is that the modern State has now reimplanted it in what we might call the eighteenth century’s “disciplinisation” of knowledges. And it is this idea that makes historicism unacceptable to us. That means we cannot accept something like an indissociable circularity between historical knowledge and the wars it describes, which at the same time continue within it.

Foucault seems to have understood, together with Popper, however, that all such attempts must work with the tools provided by the commonplace. Defining the problem of the involvement of the commonplace in knowledge procedures, Foucault defines in his *Society Must be Defended* what is his chief task: “to try to analyse this perpetual and unavoidable relationship between the war that is recounted by history and the history that is traversed by the war it is recounting”.

Questioning the absence of promises and expectations as regards the end of historic man in Foucault’s works, Tooze questions how far Foucault has gone in the procedure of demarcation. Tooze, according to Popper, indeed dismisses any ready-made solutions as regards either the end of governmentality or relentless struggle and reinterpretation that Foucault’s *Society Must be Defended* would seem to imply. Might it be the case that Foucault in examining how society is governed, succumbed to his own temptation to escape historicism, Tooze asks. That escape was not at all easy, we may add, considered with regard to the Absolute. That the social no longer exists at the expense of the historical has been clearly understood by Popper also (Giouli 2012b, 39, n. 34). So all psychologism is to be ruled out. Foucault in despair could not dismiss the tools of the commonplace, as regards the attainment of the knowledge of history in absolute terms.

Aristotle’s formula, however, “to say of what is that it is, and of what is not that it is not” is of no use here. A neutral standpoint is of no use in our pursuit of truth and our demarcating it from “post-truth”. Nobody can ever improve on it in demarcating “post-truth”

from truth. The formula is certainly incontrovertible as it goes. But it tells us nothing about what we must do, advocating a neutral viewpoint, in any given case, in order to agree with what corresponds with the truth (Mcintyre: 7 and Burke 1983: 118).

#### WORKING-CLASS AND RIGHT-WING POPULISM RHETORIC (NATIONALISM AND PHOBIA OF IMMIGRANTS INCLUDED)

“Post-truth” is associated with the working-class people. This regards specifically not only those who voted for Trump or the Brexiteers. The right-wing populist rhetoric lures the working-class in its trap, which entails nationalism and phobia of immigrants.

Adam Tooze (27 August 2022) comments on Chairman, Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, Jerome Powell’s speech to the Jackson Hole 2022 Conference. His performance, Tooze adds, has about it an “18th Brumaire” sense, as in Karl Marx’s *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*. Powell wishes the world (especially the working classes, we add) to understand his present decisions as guided by past traumas.

However, one must be aware that critical moments of change with regard to historical stances as hinted above within the historical process must be considered under conditions drawn from history—that is, not speculatively (Marx 1851-1852, 5-6). People make their own history, but they do not make it as they please; they do not make it under self-selected circumstances, but under circumstances existing already, given and transmitted from the past (Tooze 2021). Following this statement by Marx, however, the genealogy of the dead weighs like a nightmare on the minds of the living. In like manner, the beginner who has learned a new language always translates it back into her/his mother tongue, but assimilates the spirit of the new language and expresses her/himself freely in it only when s/he moves in it without recalling the old and when s/he forgets her/his native tongue. The faculty of imagination foreshadows reality; its function is neither maximalistic nor

otherworldly. Here again, we see the difficulty in moving from an initial plan to the achievement of a final aim in history. This difficulty is raised and stressed by Aristotle’s idea of time and time only—not us—which can permanently qualify causes and sequences in its course.

Relativism here is seen in the form of Powell’s “post-truth” healing assertions for the working class. In his language, Tooze continues (27 August 2022), we apprehend the motions of reenacting Volcker’s 1979 interest-rate shock, whilst being fully aware that conditions are radically different.

Let us see how this shock provided the populist tools to escape the inflation problem at that time. The class-conflict model (Eich and Tooze 2015, 181) suggests that inflation was a populist path accepted with little resistance by the working class. Evidence, however, from across the developed world in the 1970s challenges this familiar picture of escapist inflationary politics. Far from viewing inflation as a lesser evil, the popular imagination was ruled from the early 1970s by a concern for inflation bordering on fear. Indeed, Tooze (4 January 2023) states that inflation is a process of distributional conflict. One wonders, however, how those participating in the conflict, especially the working classes, will stop it (Virginia Giouli, 4 January 2023).

These ideas call for a modern parallel. Using the 2020 paradigm of coordination in interest setting, Tooze’s warning (18 September 2022) against excessive tightening of fiscal and monetary policy in the name of stopping inflation recalls *mutatis mutandis* a Byzantine parallel (Virginia Giouli, 13 November 2022c) according to which ideological constraints as regarded the concept of just profit and just price influenced the behaviour of prices and the long-term stability in interest rates. Price instability after the thirteenth century occurred in a period when the ideological constraints had become significantly attenuated. When interest rates increased in the eleventh and the twelfth centuries in Byzantium, people still used older language that made it seem that the rates had not changed. This use heightened the idea of stability. We can thus understand

that a well-coordinated perspective as regards rate stability was at work. This perspective underlay communication through older language so that beliefs, norms, and comprehension as regards stability should be normalised. So, coupled, as mentioned in Tooze's account, with clear public communication, the aim of the coordination in question pointing to the stabilisation of interest rates may now be resolved.

Back in 1979 (Tooze 2018, 43-44), Paul Volcker, the Fed Chair announced that the Fed should regulate bank reserves and consequently raise interest rates so that the challenge of a wave of inflation would be met. Contrary to some fears, there was no runaway inflation. Prices accelerated, however, towards annual increases of 14 percent in 1979. So, the interest rate was used by the Fed as a weapon for exercising power over the working class. Volker indeed pushed real interest rates as adjusted for inflation to levels not seen, as Helmut Schmidt put it, "since the birth of Christ". A shuddering shock was sent through both the American and the global economies: the dollar surged, and unemployment surged. And inflation collapsed to 3 per cent in 1983. This shock put an end not only to inflation but to a large part of the manufacturing base of the Western economies. It also put an end to the bargaining power of the trade unions: The Thatcher government began with that crisis, Schmidt was unseated and replaced by Kohl and a forced Mitterrand aligned with that.

To return to the "post-truth" relativistic language used by Jerome Powell, we understand how it takes advantage of the precarious situation as regards the impending waves of inflation. Truthful assertions were used to heal such evils in the following environment. The Jackson Hole conference is unparalleled, says Tooze (27 August 2022). It is not a jamboree like Davos or a giant global gathering like the IMF/World Bank meetings in DC. Jackson Hole is a wonkfest (to use a slang term meaning a self-congratulatory meeting of wonks, i.e., overly studious individuals) attended by barely more than 100 central bankers, regulators, economists and handpicked journalists. The conversation is dominated by central bankers and

the über-elite of academic economists who engage in friendly sparring over academic papers. How a conference of the world’s leading monetary policy thinkers and policy-makers ended up meeting in a mountainous resort in Wyoming, is a very interesting and entertaining story nicely recounted in a short history put out by the Kansas City Reserve Board. The fact that this world-famous conference emerged in the late 1970s from a regional meeting on global agriculture, reinforces the point that the Kansas City Reserve Board is an idiosyncratic but fascinating vantage point from which to view world economic history. The first meeting attended by a Fed chair, Tooze continues, was in 1982, when Paul Volcker, lured to Jackson Hole by the fly-fishing, clashed with his Keynesian critics.

The bottom line is that trade unions (being Volcker-shocked) would be no more able to drive up wages in line with prices. How could they tame the Fed’s power if convinced by such “post-truth” relativistic language? We should also not forget that the system of the housing finance in America’s postwar political economy did not survive the disinflationary shock of the 1980s (Tooze 2018, 44). It will not be a paradox then to understand (as regards especially Powell’s talk) how the working class would cherish not only the right-wing populist rhetoric which lures classes into its trap, but also nationalisms and phobia of the “other”, the “strange”, the foreigner as entailed by this rhetoric.

#### CONCLUDING REMARKS

A “post-truth” is involved in seeking and finding not the truth of unrestricted generalisations about the world; but a specific truth (independent of epistemic modesty) about some humble assertions on, say, *the number of things on the table before us*. The limits of response, as regards the affirmation of two mutually contradictory statements, are open to a political philosopher concerned about facts and truth being engendered in today’s political arena. The fact remains, however, that our basic statements are inherently fallible for the

same reason as our generalisations are, while we attempt to distinguish “a post-truth” from truth. We must treat it as an open question, as this demarcation will always be a conclusion drawn from arguments or evidence (Burke 1995: 7). We must believe, however, our set of basic statements to be true out of necessity; and this without benefit of proof. To demand proof of everything *in abstracto* from sets of basic statements is not to show ourselves as ultra-rationals. Even Popper seemed to comprehend this in his attempt not to betray the understanding of the very nature of reasoning. Distinguishing ‘post-truth’ from truth is part of the framework of beliefs we bring to our interactions with the world, including our attempts to establish both truths and post-truths. That things do not arbitrarily pass in and out of existence, that our senses can give us accurate pictures of the world which undoubtedly exists independently of our consciousness, suggest that our beliefs determine the products of our enquiries on “post-truth”, and they are also presupposed in our enquiries on it. As Popper states, it is impossible to produce proofs for any of these beliefs; but at the same time, we can realise the paralysing effects if we seriously abandon them in our attempt to approach what a “post-truth” is.

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## BLURRING THE DISCOURSE OF TRUTH IN POST-TRUTH DYSTOPIAN WORLD ORDER

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**Abstract.** The concept of a post-truth dystopian world order refers to our societal condition, where objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief. In a world where truth becomes malleable, blurred, or manipulated by powerful entities for control, propaganda, or political and economic advantage, hegemonic discourses of the post-truth agenda arise. This article seeks to highlight how the subjectivity of post-truth politics is slowly engulfing the cartography of the entire world. Furthermore, it examines the dominant role of post-truth ideology in contemporary world politics, where actual truths and facets of everyday life become permanently blurred under the rubric of false political narratives. Despite the bleakness of a post-truth dystopian world order, resistance and recovery are essential to acknowledging the metaphysics of real political subjects.

**Keywords:** post-truth, dystopian world order, hegemonic discourses, subjectivity, cartography, political narratives

### INTRODUCTION

The politico-theoretical term “post-truth” is widely used in the contemporary world to describe the state of politics in the Western world and beyond. It highlights the prevalence of false narratives designed to serve the interests of the capitalist class. The turning point for this term appeared in 2016 when the *Oxford English Dictionary* declared “post-truth” as its “Word of the Year”. If we explore the *Oxford English Dictionary* archives, we can trace the transformation of “post-truth” from a peripheral term to a central

concept in contemporary world politics. Returning to the original context in which the term was first used epistemologically, Steve Tesich helps identify the important distinction between truth as the standard of knowledge and truth as the standard for action. This distinction, although it does not fully coincide, first appeared in Plato's seminal work, *Republic*. Here, the great classical theorist Plato describes that when the philosopher—the quintessential bearer of truth—becomes king, the polis that he rules, dating back to antiquity, is far from being an ideal utopian state. Instead, this place is deeply intoxicated by 'lies/falsehood' and coercion.

The 20th-century philosopher Martin Heidegger defined truth as etymologically rooted in the ancient Greek concept *Aletheia*, which he interpreted state of “un-concealment” or “disclosure”. For him, the idea of truth is not merely a correspondence between a statement and reality, but rather the process by which beings come into the open and are revealed as they truly are in nature and spirit. In this sense, truth is an event or dynamic process in which the world and its beings are thoroughly critiqued and analysed. Further, Heidegger emphasises the role of language in shaping our conception of truth. Decoding this fact, Heidegger argued how that language is to be comprehended as the *house of being*, which means how we speak about the world shapes our experience and understanding of it.

Another renowned contemporary cultural critic, Hannah Arendt, reveals how totalitarianism provides a powerful lens through which we can analyse the mechanism of post-truth politics. She makes a distinction between factual truth and opinion, arguing that while opinions are inherently debatable and pluralistic in nature, facts are objective realities that cannot be easily disputed without understanding the essence or fabric of a shared world. Her later works explore the relationship between the ideology of totalitarianism and the destruction of truth, scattering in its place the novelty of falsehood.

When it comes to questioning the role of post-truth in contemporary global order, politics and society, we find that this

phenomenon has become a profound challenge to democracy, governance and international cooperation. It undermines trust in “factual realities”, destabilises political systems and creates barriers to addressing global crises. International institutions, such as the United Nations, World Health Organisation, and others, are severely struggling to navigate a world where misinformation can undermine their serious political efforts. Further, global governance relies on shared understanding and cooperation but, in the post-truth world, divergent narratives fuelled by false information challenge the very power structure of true global governmentality. This is evident in the rise of political leaders who used post-truth mechanisms to gain political traction.

#### NEXUS BETWEEN LITERATURE AND POST-TRUTH POLITICS

In this article’s title, I use the term *Dystopia* to link the essence of literature with post-truth discourses. The post-Second World War dystopian novelist George Orwell, in his *1984*, offers a striking analysis of the mechanisms of control, manipulation of truth, and the perils of totalitarianism that resonate deeply with the concept of post-truth politics. In *1984*, Orwell introduces the concept of “doublethink”, which defines the ability to hold two contradictory beliefs at the same time and accept both as truth.

This concept is central to post-truth politics, where both contrary narratives can coexist without any resolution or acknowledgement of the inherent contradictions. Orwell’s philosophy of doublethink allows individuals to accept blatant lies as truth and create a malleable reality that can be manipulated by those in power. This concept offers a powerful lens through which we can analyse many of the contradictions in contemporary politics. In an era of information abundance, social media echo chambers deliberately circulate politically motivated misinformation to delegitimise the corrective public opinions. For example, the recent war between Russia and Ukraine is not about saving nationalist spirits, which are falsely narrated as under threats. But it is a big attempt to derail the

traditional capitalist monopoly of European power that was invested in world politics since the end of the Second World War.

This same doublethink ideology persists in the political landscape of our country as well. After independence, the lower castes, in the name of upliftment, were doubly marginalised to serve the agendas of the capitalist political classes. The so-called lower caste/Dalit communities have been manipulated to suit the political needs of the dominant classes in India.

Further, “newspeak” is another Orwellian concept that is highly relevant to post-truth philosophy. It refers to a controlled language designed exclusively to limit freedom of thought and make dissent literally unthinkable in nature. By reducing the complexity of language, the regime seeks to eliminate the possibility of rebellious thoughts. In the world of post-truth politics, the deliberate simplification or distortion of language serves the purpose of controlling the narratives and the terms of the debate by showcasing power that shapes reality and suppresses dissenting worldviews. George Orwell, in his novel *1984*, discusses how totalitarianism uses propaganda as a tool to create a controlled and distorted version of reality. This novel also discusses the pitfalls of the erosion of objective reality and its replacement with false subjective truth, which deconstructs the very idea of truth /factual reality itself. In post-truth politics, where emotional appeals and present beliefs often outweigh the dominance of objective facts, Orwell’s warnings, through his artistic philosophy, highlight the fragility of truth and the ease with which it can be manipulated and deconstructed—now more than ever in history and contemporary politics.

Post-truth philosophers use language as a tool to suit their ends. Taking this view of “language play” into consideration, George Orwell highlights that language is not just a medium of communication, but a weapon that can be used to control thought. In the era of post-truth politics, the medium of language is often used as a weapon to create division, confusion, and undermine the value of trust in objective reality. Critical terms like fake news”, “alternative facts”, and “post-truth” itself are examples of how

language can be distorted to falsify understanding and delegitimise opposing viewpoints. Manipulation through newspeak or doublethink declines the objective mechanism or rational purposes of language and undermines the ability of individuals to engage with reality and resist oppression. Another novel, *White Noise* by Don DeLillo, navigates life in a media-saturated consumer-driven society, where post-truth politics and philosophy come into play. This work explores themes of fear, death, and the overwhelming presence of media in shaping distorted truth. It delves into the ways through which media and consumer culture distort the image of reality and create a landscape where truth is mediated by screens, sound, and bytes mirroring the manipulation of information. A recurring theme of this novel is the fear of death and the search for meaning in a world dominated by consumerism. Characters like Jack Gladney struggle with the essential dread that arises in a society where traditional sources of meaning have been eroded by the constant barrage of superficial media messages. In a post-truth world, this search for meaning can lead people to embrace falsehood or simplistic narratives that offer a sense of certainty or purpose even if they are not true. This novel also reflects how, in the absence of a stable, shared reality, individuals may turn to conspiracy theories, misinformation, or ideologies that provide a false sense of security. What is distinguished to note is that Dan DeLillo has explored the idea of a “simulacrum of reality”: in a hyper-mediated society, representations of reality begin to replace reality itself. For example, the *airborne toxic event*, in the novel, is a chemical spill that forces the evacuation of the town. It is often filtered through media reports and statements that obscure its true nature. These highlight the post-truth condition where mediated representations of events can be manipulated to create alternative narratives that otherwise diverge from reality. This dystopian novel, in another sense, serves as a prescient commentary on the dangers of a post-truth world, where the very concept of objective reality is under threat.

Thus, the intersection of literature and post-truth philosophy is a rich and complex field, where literature as a genre often grapples

with concepts like truth, reality, and the ways in which these concepts can be manipulated or distorted forever. The post-truth philosophy, which explores the implications of a society where objective facts are less influential, finds fertile ground in literary works that question the nature of truth and the reliability of narratives. Literature has long served as a mirror to social anxieties and philosophical questions. And in this post-truth era, it continues to explore the consequence of a world where discourses of truth are contested or devalued forever. As societies face the challenges of the post-truth era, the aesthetics of literature can offer a critical lens for reflecting on politics, providing both a warning and insight into the nature of truth and its role in human life.

#### THE IMPACT OF POST-TRUTH IN GLOBAL WORLD CULTURAL POLITICS

Scholars of international relations and global political economy confront the unenviable task of conceiving and representing the world as a whole. In today's world, populist reactions against the idea of globalism suggest it is highly imprudent in nature. Yet, the discourses of international relations must preserve its quest to diagnose emerging global realities and fault lines. The political term post-truth gained prominence during the 21st century, particularly after events like the Brexit referendum and the 2016 US presidential election, where misinformation and false claims were widely circulated and accepted by large segments of the population. In a post-truth environment, the emotional resonance takes precedence over factual accuracy. The political discourse of contemporary times focuses on striking fears, hopes, and prejudice rather than presenting evidence-based arguments. It thrives in an environment where truth, in traditional institutions, is negligible in nature. This scepticism makes it easier for information to spread as people from time onwards become more reliant on sources that confirm their existing beliefs regardless of their truth and accuracy.

In this context, global cultural politics involve how cultural narratives and symbols are mobilised to influence global political

agendas. The post-truth world serves as a metaphorical space where cultural identities can be manipulated to serve biased political ends. All over the world, global leaders and international or national movements may use cultural symbols and narratives to create a sense of “us vs them” discourses, which often distort historical and cultural facts in the process. Further, global cultural politics also involves the tension between globalisation and resistance, each otherwise provoked to suit their own ends. In some cases, post-truth politics are a reaction to the personal traits of globalisation, such as the loss of national sovereignty or cultural homogenisation. As information becomes more fragmented and highly contested, the organic roots of the global cultural landscape become increasingly polarised, with the idea of truth itself becoming a debatable issue. The is quite unique. In many countries, political actors and media outlets have been accused of disseminating false or misleading information to influence public opinion. This has led to a debate about the role of media, the need for regulation, and the challenge of ensuring that the public has access to accurate information.

The post-truth culture has exacerbated political polarisation, where individuals align more strongly with their ideological groups and are less willing to consider opposing viewpoints. This polarisation is extremely crucial in global world politics, where debates often become more about affirming one’s identity or group loyalty than about engaging with factual evidence. The post-truth discourses also involve a deep scepticism toward traditional institutions, including the media outlets, government, and scientific communities. Such mistrust fuels the spread of conspiring theories and undermines efforts to address global challenges like climate change, public health crisis and social inequality.

#### IMPACT OF POST-TRUTH NARRATORIAL DISCOURSES IN MASS MEDIA PLATFORMS:

The critic Harsin identifies three main forms of deceptive communication rumour bombs, fake news, and lies as examples of

the current post-truth phenomenon. He compares rumour bombs to statements whose facility is unknown or unprovable and its contradictory claims only generate confusion and disagreement among the public opinion.

“Fake news” is another form or subcategory of the broader post-truth phenomenon. It refers to the deliberate creation and dissemination of false or misleading information, which is presented as legitimate. The intent behind can vary as it might be used to deceive or manipulate public opinion, generate web traffic, or even cause social or political unrest. What is important to note is that the communication of fake news is often spread through various social media platforms, where it reaches large audiences quickly without any veracity or fact-checking. Further, fake news often erodes trust in traditional media and institutions, where people become sceptical of all sources of information. Fake news, as circulated on various social platforms, creates division within society as people are less likely to engage with opposing perspectives. The legitimate mass media platforms bring out ideas to combat fake news and post-truth politics. As a result, various efforts are being made, like media literacy, encouraging critical thinking, fact-checking, and fostering open dialogues to mitigate the challenges of fake or falsified news.

Social media plays a pivotal role in the rise and spread of post-truth ideologies. The ways it operates through the mechanism of algorithms, the speed of information, dissemination, and consumer behaviour contribute significantly to an environment where post-truth politics thrive forever. On social platforms, there are echo chambers where users are primarily exposed to information, which reinforces their existing beliefs. This generally happens because people tend to follow like-minded individuals and join groups or communities that align with their views, reducing exposure to diverse perspectives. Since the arrival of post-truth politics appeals for more emotional appeasement, social media outlets have become an ideal platform for spreading such emotional content without any reliable veracity. The advances in technology, such as “Deep Fakes”, make it easier to create and disseminate highly convincing fake

videos, images and audio that manipulate the rational thinking of people in general. The problematic nature of social media platforms is that they provide fertile grounds for the spread of conspiracy theories, which often thrive in a post-truth environment while accentuating the phenomenon of the erosion of public discourses. Polarisation plays an important role. Educating the public about how to critically assess the information they consume is crucial. Hence media literacy programmes should aim to equip users with the skill to recognise misinformation and resist the influence of post-truth rhetoric.

#### POST-TRUTH CONSPIRACY THEORY IN CONTEMPORARY GLOBAL POLITICS

The rise of post-truth misinformation in world politics threatens the very integrity of our democratic process, leads to political polarisation and complicates the public discourses. The decline of trust in traditional media platforms, scientific expertise, and falsified institutions paved the way for alternative sources of information, some of which are not credible in nature. In the post-truth world order, the claim of fake news dismisses unfavourable reports or criticism, which can then derail the entire governance structure. As, for example, the rise of alternative facts and the downplaying of scientific data during the Covid 19 pandemic or in climate change demonstrations. Further, misinformation has been used as a tool of conspiracy agenda in Russian politics during the annexation of Crimea and Russia's interference in Western election strategy. Thus, populist leaders often use rhetoric that appeals to the emotions of people rather than invoking factual evidence. These leaders use post-truth as a conspirational weapon to cast themselves as saviours fighting against the corrupt or dishonest system. As such, the post-truth era poses serious challenges to the working of democracy, where what is true and false is seriously manipulated to suit the needs of autocratic/capitalist power classes.

## CONCLUSION

The contemporary definition of truth is directly linked to the process of globalisation, particularly in the functioning of global news technologies and the challenges posed by new forms of economic practices. The scenario of a post-truth dystopian future symbolises the debunking of objective facts and truths, blurring the line between fact and fiction, and leaving people confused about distinguishing between lies and truth.

The great contemporary thinker Martin Heidegger, through his philosophy on truth, language, and being, provides a clear framework for understanding the dynamics of post-truth in contemporary politics. His work emphasises the role of language in shaping our reality and highlights the potential dangers of detaching truth from its ontological roots. He would likely caution against the nihilism that can emerge in a world where truth is malleable. His critique of modernity and technology also plays into this concern, as he feared that the technological worldview reduces truth to a mere resource to be manipulated, leading to a form of existential alienation.

Postmodernist thinkers like Jean Baudrillard and Michel Foucault argue that what we consider truth is shaped by power structures, language, and cultural narratives rather than objective reality. Furthermore, the rise of digital media has exacerbated the post-truth condition, as social media platforms enable the rapid spread of misinformation and create echo chambers where people are exposed only to viewpoints that reinforce their existing beliefs.

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## LIFE AS STRUGGLE: REMEMBERING MOHAMMED SHUKRI AS A MOROCCAN & AFRICAN WRITER

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**Abstract.** This article explores Mohammed Shukri's lasting impact on Moroccan and African literature. It examines his life with a focus on *For Bread Alone* (1973) and its initial censorship. Shukri's provocative autobiographical writings continue to inspire Moroccan authors, offering a model of insight and honesty. The paper analyses the events that shaped his narrative voice, defiance against censorship, and enduring influence. Shukri's example also highlights African literature's transformative power in guiding postcolonial communities toward independence, justice, and prosperity. Beyond paying tribute, this study underscores how Shukri exemplifies the 'life writing' genre's role in African literary development.

**Keywords:** Mohammad Shukri, *For Bread Alone*, Moroccan literature, African literature, post-colonial Africa, writing, censorship

### INTRODUCTION

Writing serves as a powerful instrument for survival, liberation, and self-expression, particularly evident in the "life writing" genre (García 2020, 8). This is vividly illustrated across numerous literary works and epochs. When we write, we reveal something about ourselves and the world we experience. One writer who did this courageously and controversially was Mohammad Shukri, a Moroccan author who, independently, taught himself Arabic at the age of twenty. Throughout his career, Shukri faced censorship and criticism for his autobiographical novel *For Bread Alone* (1982), which recounts his harsh escape and immigration from the famine-stricken Morocco's Rif region (Northern Morocco) to

Tangiers in search of a better life. In this novel, Shukri exposes the social, economic, and ethical dilemmas of contemporary Morocco during late-colonial and post-colonial times. His autobiography is not a narration of an individual's experience only. It is a portrayal of the suffering and struggle of a whole nation, culture, and identity as they undergo historical transformations. This is why his novel, originally written in Arabic, was banned from publication in that language until 1982, while an English translation by Paul Bowles was published as early as 1973. Local Moroccan readers were denied access to Shukri's original voice and vision for almost a decade. Even today, for one ideological reason or another, Shukri's novel continues to be disliked by many, who consider it unworthy, illiterate, and vulgar. Therefore, exploring what makes Shukri's work so significant and provocative—and why you should read or care about it—is essential. Equally important is recognizing his position as both a Moroccan writer and, often overlooked, a member of the first generation of post-colonial African writers.

Shukri's book faces numerous obstacles and prejudices that prevent it from reaching its potential readers, particularly Moroccans, Arabs, Africans, and, eventually, global audiences. The main obstacle in the past was the systematic censorship of the book for a decade before coming out in its original format. Even after its publication, Shukri's work continues to be dismissed and attacked by those who claim to be experts, academics, and educators of literature. Many teachers discourage their students from reading Shukri or his works. However, their criticism of Shukri's book is not based on academic groundings. For instance, when I tried to read Shukri for the first time as a teenager in the same region that Shukri left as a boy and narrated as an adult, I had to hide the book from everyone around me. My high school Arabic teacher knew this and tried to persuade me, as other critics openly say, that Shukri's work has a poor linguistic quality and that I should avoid it. "Shukri is a street dog", she said, "he's not a writer, his texts lack literary value, and you should stay away

from him”. This shows how even the very place that Shukri was born and consistently wrote about rejects his novel and the contributions he must make to the collective memory of his people. How can one expect readers to understand the social and personal challenges being addressed if the writer’s own community rejects both him and his literary work?

Shukri’s book also faces opposition from his friends and family members, who object to his bold portrayal of his life in Morocco during colonial and post-colonial times. For example, his sister Malika Shukri expresses in an interview with the DW media outlet that as a family, they “oppose *For Bread Alone* for what it includes of sexual stories, and for the way Shukri characterised the violent connection our father had with the family. I’ve never read it, but I reject it all” (Derouich 2014). Similarly, Abdallah El Wahabi, the owner of the coffee shop that Shukri used to visit, and a close friend of his, states that all Shukri’s friends in Tangiers’ inner market lane have spoken out against the autobiographical novel because of its obscenity and its aggressiveness in both form and content (Derouich 2014). *For Bread Alone* is a book that challenges everything that limits the creative process. When one reads Shukri’s biography, one can find many interesting aspects that go beyond the explicit sexual stories or the vulgar language that he allegedly uses. Shukri’s case, in my view, is very similar to Henry Miller’s. Both struggled to find their place in life and survive in their times, despite being from a background that was not expected to be creative or expressive through writing. However, even though both Shukri and Miller excelled at writing, the readers who encounter the profanity of their texts refuse to accept the idea that these authors can write. Therefore, instead of engaging with what the text might offer, many simply dismiss the work as “unfit” or “too immoral” to be read.

*For Bread Alone* begins by showing how Shukri’s migration experience traumatised him on many levels, especially the cultural identity shock he faced because he spoke a different language

from the people of Tangiers. Shukri, instead of using the Moroccan Arabic Dialect, only spoke Tarrifit (a Moroccan variant). This is normal considering that the people of the Rif region, as well as other parts of Morocco, have their unique and diverse language variants. However, in Shukri's time, and even today, there is a divisive mentality that hinders constructive collaboration between Moroccans from different regions, languages, and traditions. Shukri often claimed that he learned Arabic and how to write in it only to have a medium through which his voice and message could be heard and read (Mohand 2023). He even said that no other language could make him feel comfortable but his native tongue. And, because he was mocked and bullied as a child for speaking his mother's tongue, Shukri developed a desire to learn his bully's language and infuse it with his distinctiveness (Mohand 2023). In other words, he wanted a medium through which the people who had oppressed him could feel his anger and resentment.

#### MOHAMED SHUKRI: LIFE AS STRUGGLE

Shukri was born in 1935 in the small village of Beni Chiker in northeastern Morocco. The village lies at the heart of the Rif region, in the province of Nador, 4 km. from Melilla (a former Moroccan city that, to this day, continues to be occupied by Spain). Shukri's birthplace allowed him to learn Tarrifit as his mother tongue before he encountered any other languages. Spanish also had an important role in his, as he came across it as a second language in the Rif region during Spanish colonialism and in Tangiers as well. Shukri first encountered Arabic in its Moroccan dialect form when he moved to Tangiers with his family. They left his hometown in the 1940s, a decade marked by severe famine in the Rif region. Shukri learned the Moroccan dialect in Tangiers so that he could communicate with the locals and find quick jobs. He was called "Child of Famine" after being

mocked for speaking Tarrifit when he first arrived in Tangiers (Mohand 2023). Language thus had a significant impact on his awareness as a child, teenager, and adult. This is crucial for understanding how language contributes to Shukri's traumatised. After all, it was the bullying and rejection of other Moroccans that motivated him to learn Classical Arabic at the age of twenty and excel at adopting it to write his literature. Shukri later acquired some basic communication skills in both French and English as demonstrated by an existing half an hour interview available online (Ali 2019). However, Tarrifit remains his mother tongue, followed by Arabic, which he thinks is more suitable for literary expression than any other language. We are not concerned with whether Shukri's linguistic isolation in Tangiers was good or bad, but rather with how it added value to his lived experience and, more importantly, to his unique identity as an artist and African writer. Shukri's experiences with different languages at different stages of his life have clearly influenced his personality and what he wrote about.

By looking at Shukri's struggle to survive as a human before becoming a writer, and beyond being a mere autobiography, one can see that *For Bread Alone* is a courageous cry against the cultural assimilation and subordination of marginalised groups in protectorate Morocco. Through telling Shukri's story, the novel reflects his resistance against the forces that tried to silence his existence and life. And, perhaps more importantly, those that tried to silence the pain of his people. Writing is a powerful tool for fighting such forces. Shukri knew this, which is why he taught himself to write. It is important to leave a written record that depicts your personal experience. After all, it is only through the most subjective experiences that one can truly understand the collective reality of a certain time and place. People who are deprived of their freedom usually have two choices: either remain silent and suffer quietly or rise above all circumstances and fight against assimilation. Shukri's arrival in Tangiers, and his belonging to a different language and region, made him a target

and labelled as illiterate, barbaric, and unfit to contribute artistically to anything. It is here that Shukri emerges as a writer who challenges ideological barriers and overcomes them with great determination, one that embodies the struggle to preserve his own identity and achieve cultural liberation. It thus becomes clear that *For Bread Alone* is a text that shouts, “I am different, but I have a voice. I am different, but I exist. I am different, but I am not going to be forced to be quiet about it”.

#### WRITING, CENSORSHIP AND FREEDOM

To understand the literary censorship of Shukri’s book, it is essential to grasp the historical period which rejected the difference that lies at the core of the freedom issue, namely the freedom to exist as one truly and naturally wishes to be, rather than as someone else imposes existence on them. Many forms of oppression limit human freedom, whether on an individual or collective level. The worst are those that shape us in ways we do not fundamentally agree with. A wise civilisation realises, quite early, that embracing all its aspects contributes to society’s growth. On the contrary, the restrictions imposed on people’s ability to express, depict, and imagine their realities all lead to the creation of a hypocritical and unhealthy society (Spivak 1988, 271). Unfortunately, this is Morocco’s story with Shukri’s book. During the censorship years, the book was widely read by Moroccans across the country, as well as Arabs in the Middle East. When asked about this, people would deny that they had read it privately and had not only enjoyed it, but also related to many of the issues raised by Shukri. If this shows anything, it is that people are too afraid to face their problems in public, preferring to do so privately. Shukri breaks the private silence by narrating his inner feelings and views on how he lived in a colonial and corrupt Morocco, a place where he not only lacked a proper childhood but also miraculously survived several near-

death situations. To challenge an entire system that silences those feelings is to wage war on oneself. Therefore, it becomes relevant to examine the case of Shukri when one wants to understand the struggle for free literary and artistic expression in the post-colonial Moroccan context (Laroui 1977, 45).

Shukri is a writer who is censored not only on a literary level but also, perhaps more profoundly, on a cultural one. He is denied the right to exist as he is, forced to speak and write in another language, ignored because of his social status, and despised because of his origins. What would any man in his situation do? How does one react to such feelings of oppression against one's identity? There are many possible reactions to such situations, but I would agree with what the title of this essay suggests: "Writing as Being". My experience with Shukri has been that his writing, including but not limited to *For Bread Alone*, is often misunderstood and read only on its surface. Many academics would criticise Shukri's stylistic choices. Or, when trying to sound analytical, they would disregard his experience as irrelevant. This is problematic on many levels, the most obvious of which is the intentional silencing and passivity imposed on the "other" human being in question (Said 1978, 28). It is not just about Shukri anymore, but about all other writers who have suffered and continue to suffer the same fate of literary censorship. Human experience cannot be reduced to a single term. Difference exists because of being human. When difference is expressed artistically, one realises how important it is in the fight against injustice. Writing is, in the Heideggerian sense of the word, a mode of Being. Shukri's decision to learn to write stems from a strong need for a tool of expression, a way of responding, and a gateway to finding the self within a literary history that records rather than silences the experience of being human. That's why writing is a way of Being, and Being can only be achieved when one is in touch with true freedom. This, I think, Shukri has shown brilliantly both through his personal life and his artistic works.

When asked about his book, Shukri's own words reveal that the novel "refuses to die. The children in the streets don't call me by my name, they call me *For Bread Alone*. This book tells me daily: here I am, here, alive!" (2019). Indeed, the book's vitality shows that its impact goes beyond exploring literary themes to addressing a human issue, that of an identity in crisis as it faces cultural assimilation and linguistic domination. Despite this, and as the novel constantly proves, the message eventually gets through and survives, overcoming all barriers on its way. Which shows that freedom is a human aspiration and need. There will always be books, words, ideas, and resistance against mainstream systems that normalise the standardisation of individual and collective consciousnesses (Fanon 1961, 43). Simply put, humans cannot stay silent about their situation. Literature plays a significant role in shaping our cultural psyche. Thus, one can see Shukri using literature as a medium to produce a work that focuses on an urgent call for free agency. He rises above the societal thorns that limit free expression to create a literary work that reflects his own rebellious personality.

What matters in Shukri's narrative is, as with great books, its ability to transcend literary form and take on a cultural one, preserving both the individual and collective histories of Morocco while aiding in the fight against the colonial and systemic epistemic violence inflicted on the people (Mbembe 2001, 14). It is also remarkable how it reflects the universally shared human need for freedom, justice, and liberation. Shukri, when talking about his book, has said that lack of bread "humiliates the soul (...). The hungry and naked will not feel the pain in *For Bread Alone*, only the afflicted from the dreary oppression will do" (Mohand 2023). Shukri's aim with his narrative is clear: to express whatever dignity the oppressed in Moroccan society still have, and not, as some think, to provoke much criticism for its artistic choices or obscenity in dealing with sexual and taboo subjects of the period. Or, at the very least, in Gayatri Spivak's words, the novel is an attempt to give the voiceless a voice so that an authentic

representation can emerge from the situation, one that would put an end to the imposed epistemic exploitation and intentional erasure of certain histories and lived experiences (Spivak 1988, 271).

It is also important to mention that communities that read Moroccan literature, mostly Arabs, are often the first to shame and censor their own writers and deny them the ability to express themselves. Another example from the Arab world is Abdel Rahman Mounif, who is attacked not for the issues he raises but for how he does it. However, as this essay shows, we need these writers because they become militant just by existing and writing, reflecting through their works the value of Being human. Clearly, this Being cannot be comfortable if it does not achieve true freedom. Thus, it becomes our main duty to have an open attitude toward literature and, above all, to eliminate all censor outlets that prevent it from leading us to our liberation. This is true not only for Morocco and Shukri but for the whole African continent and its efforts to develop an authentic literary canon that accounts for the different experiences of its societies (Appiah 1992, 56).

#### “FOR BREAD ALONE” (1973) AND “THE CREATIVE PROCESS”

*For Bread Alone* breaks free from anything that hinders the creative process. By delving into Shukri’s biography, one can discover fascinating aspects that go beyond explicit sexual narratives or alleged vulgar language. Shukri’s narrative is unique, marked by his struggle to establish himself and persevere in a challenging era, defying expectations associated with his background. Despite his exceptional writing skills, readers often refuse to acknowledge his literary merit, dismissing his work as “unfit” or “too immoral” to be read due to their reluctance to engage with the content on its own merits.

Shukri's life, as portrayed in *For Bread Alone*, is not intended to encourage others to follow a path of turmoil, despite what critics may argue. Rather, it serves as a realistic depiction of the harsh realities of Moroccan society during a specific and sensitive period. Shukri was well aware of this, as evidenced by the opening pages of his book, where he explains why he began writing. At that moment, Shukri stresses the importance of writers sharing their own experiences as honestly as possible, stating:

Life has imparted upon me the wisdom of patience, urging me to navigate the intricate dance of time while retaining the core of my acquired wisdom. Speak your truth before your final breath, for it will undoubtedly carve its path into the world. Its fate matters not; what holds significance is the spark it kindles—whether an emotion, a sorrow, or a fleeting caprice—that can illuminate even the darkest and most perilous corners. (Shukri 2006, 8) [My translation from Arabic to English.]

Shukri's quandary with his society strongly reminds me of Baldwin's perspective on the artist's role in *The Creative Process*. In this brief piece, Baldwin refers to the artist as "the incorrigible disturber of peace". Shukri, both in life and even after his passing, remains an unwavering disturber, constantly reminding the people of Morocco and Africa as a whole about the prevailing injustices. Moreover, he sheds light on how these injustices persist in post-colonial society, distorting African identities and perpetuating an unjust state that must be addressed through literature. The ultimate goal is for society to take responsibility and strive for redemption by sharing these narratives (Tajjiou 2024, 13).

It is evident in every society that when faced with a bold and honest artist, society tends to reject them and their work. This rejection can be explained by Baldwin's belief that artists have the responsibility to make their societies see the truth once again, especially after they have become accustomed to injustices. Baldwin argues that any genuine artistic creation that challenges the *status quo* will inevitably face resistance and rejection.

Baldwin's description of this matter is reflected in Shukri's work and the works of other post-colonial African writers. He writes:

Societies never know it, but the war of an artist with his society is a lover's war, and he does, at his best, what lovers do, which is to reveal the beloved to himself and, with that revelation, to make freedom real (Baldwin 1962, 19).

#### MOHAMMED SHUKRI – THE AFRICAN WRITER

Shukri's identity as an African writer often goes unnoticed, despite his unwavering commitment to portraying the realities of Africa and his relentless pursuit of positive change through literary critique. This oversight stems from a common misconception that his work, originally written in Arabic, holds no significance in the broader context of post-colonial African literature. However, what many fail to grasp is that Arabic is not Shukri's mother tongue; rather, it is Tarrifit. Just like South African or Ghanaian writers who employ English to convey their literary narratives, Shukri chooses Arabic as his medium of expression (Chakrabarty 2000, 12).

The artist's intent and the value it carries are the true essence of their work, with language being a malleable tool. Therefore, the authenticity of a piece as genuinely African should not be solely determined by the language used, but rather by its sincere portrayal of African truths. Shukri's contributions to post-colonial African literature have left a lasting impact on generations of writers, tackling profound subjects and emphasizing the importance of critiquing African realities while envisioning innovative solutions. Regardless of an author's stylistic choices or literary preferences, if their work aims to dissect and reconstruct the post-colonial African experience, it inherently embodies the spirit of Africa (Appiah 1992, 56). Shukri's use of Arabic, far from diminishing his African identity, showcases the diverse range of expressions within the continent, and the heart and substance of his work truly reflect its African essence.

In remembering Shukri on the 20th anniversary of his passing, I would like to highlight that, unfortunately, many literary analyses and interpretations of his life come from various backgrounds, but few truly emphasize his significance as a first-generation African writer who made a massive contribution to the appreciation and uniqueness of post-colonial African literature. I believe that a more thorough examination of Shukri's work in conjunction with other African literary efforts is necessary. This exploration could lead to a much-needed shift, breaking the tendency to categorise his contributions solely within an Arabic community. Instead, it would reveal the true nature of Shukri's work as a post-colonial African writer, characterised by his militancy, honesty, Africanness, and boldness.

Certain authors possess an inherent ability to withstand the test of time. Many of them have faced challenges within their societies. In my view, Shukri, though he passed away just two decades ago, demonstrated during his lifetime that he belongs to the category of artists who transcend time. This homage to his legacy not only reflects on the past but also underscores the future possibilities his contributions have unlocked for African readers and writers.

## CONCLUSION

In honouring Shukri's memory, we are reminded of the profound influence African literature wields in its quest to represent its society uniquely and purposefully, transcending style, genre, or narrative techniques. African literary discourse has often been marred by internal conflicts among writers and critics, particularly evident during the 1970s. This era witnessed notable disputes, such as the harsh criticism Ayi Kwei Armah faced for his novel *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* from peers like Achebe, who dismissed it as a "sick book" due to its candid existentialism (Achebe 1973, 624). However, criticism that seeks to stifle an author's voice under the guise of literary standards or

sociopolitical leverage does a disservice to the field. Such restrictive critiques hinder the breadth of expression that African literature can and is already offering.

Shukri, who passed away from cancer in 2003, epitomised the defiant spirit of a writer unyielding to censorship or silence. His legacy, rooted in integrity and unwavering conviction, challenges future generations to write with honesty and boldness, continuing to enrich and diversify African literary landscapes. His life and work inspire a call to embrace broader narratives and resist the confines of conventional criticism, ensuring that the true essence and potential of African literature are realised.

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## TASTE OF DEFIANCE: CULINARY IDENTITY IN WILLIAM FAULKNER'S "INTRUDER IN THE DUST" AND THE PALESTINIAN CONTEXT

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**Abstract.** Generally approached as a source of sustenance, food can transcend its basic function, evolving into a powerful nonverbal idiom articulating identity, resilience and cultural continuity. This concept is vividly illustrated in William Faulkner's *Intruder in the Dust* (1948), through the character of Lucas Beauchamp, whose culinary practices serve as a profound expression of his identity and resistance against white marginalisation. Similarly, for the Palestinian people, food becomes a vital emblem of cultural heritage and defiance in the face of colonial oppression. By employing post-colonial theories, this article examines how food operates as a medium of expression that captures the complexities of identity, community, and survival amidst the forces of erasure and alienation. Through a comparative analysis of Lucas's relationship with food and that of the Palestinian colonised people, the essay unveils the intricate ways in which culinary practices serve not merely as acts of sustenance but as profound statements of existence, resilience, and assertion of identity.

**Keywords:** food, identity, resilience, memory, agency

### INTRODUCTION

In addition to the vitamins and nutrients vital to the growth and well-being of humans and other living organisms, food carries an intrinsic cultural significance, functioning as a depository of collective memory and a vessel for the transmission of traditions. It not only nourishes the body but also embodies the values, histories, and identities of communities, shaping and sustaining their cultural fabric across generations. In this way, food transcends its biological

purpose, becoming a profound symbol of identity, resilience, and the continuity of shared heritage. This notion is strikingly evident in William Faulkner's *Intruder in the Dust* (1948), particularly through the character of Lucas Beauchamp, whose engagement with food functions as a powerful articulation of personal identity and a form of resistance to white marginalisation. Lucas's culinary practices go beyond the mundane, serving as an expression of resilience in the face of white oppression, and asserting agency within a racially stratified world. Similarly, for the Palestinian people, food is a potent symbol of cultural heritage, insubordination, and survival in the face of colonial subjugation. The sharing of traditional dishes serves as an act of resistance and a way of maintaining a vital connection to their ancestral identity facing colonial forces of displacement and erasure.

Building on postcolonial theories as a general framework, this essay draws a parallel between Lucas's culinary practices and those of the Palestinian people. In doing so, it seeks to uncover the implicit ways in which food transcends mere sustenance, operating instead as a sophisticated statement of existence, a profound assertion of identity, a way of native culture's preservation, and a dynamic medium of expression that articulates the complexities of identity, community, and survival under the pressure of erasure and alienation. This comparative analysis aims to emphasise how culinary traditions function not just as daily rituals but as universally symbolic acts of resistance and self-definition, asserting continuity and resilience in the face of hegemonic forces that seek to undermine them.

## 1. FOOD IN A THEORETICAL CONTEXT

The works of Roland Barthes, Pierre Bourdieu, and Claude Lévi-Strauss offer valuable insights into the cultural significance of food. In *Toward a Psychosociology of Contemporary Food Consumption*, Barthes argues that food serves a purpose beyond sustenance. He sees it as

more than just something we eat as it “encapsulates and conveys a situation; it serves as information; it signifies (...) functioning as a real sign, perhaps the fundamental unit of a communication system” (Barthes 1961, 21). According to him, the type of food, its preparation, and the way it is consumed reflect a society’s culture, shaping how we see ourselves and others. As a result, food becomes a powerful symbol of social and political realities.

Bourdieu, in *Distinction*, similarly examines food habits in French families, particularly focusing on how class distinctions manifest through lifestyle and “habitus”. He maintains that social class and work conditions shape everyday practices, including eating, explaining that “it is clear that tastes in food cannot be considered in complete independence of other dimensions of the relationship to the world, to others and to one’s own body, through which the practical philosophy of each class is enacted” (Bourdieu 1984, 193). For Bourdieu, food choices are not just culinary acts but also expressions of a family’s social identity.

Lévi-Strauss, in his *Culinary Triangle*, provides a structuralist reading of food, pointing out different ways of understanding its preparation. He argues that how societies prepare food reflects deeper thought structures, particularly how humans distinguish between nature and culture. The triangle consists of three poles: the “raw”, the “cooked”, and the “rotten”, each representing a stage in the transformation from nature to culture. Lévi-Strauss’s model shows that food preparation is symbolic, representing human efforts to control and transform nature into culture. The interaction between these categories reveals how societies assign meaning to cooking and eating, linking these practices to broader symbolic systems (Wood 2008, 445). Although these approaches differ, they all show that culinary practices are cultural performances that communicate much about one’s social background and identity.

Recent research has increasingly focused on food as a lens through which to explore a range of contemporary issues, particularly within the postcolonial framework that serves as the primary analytical approach of this paper. Scholars have examined

the profound significance of food in the context of diaspora and immigration, highlighting its role in the construction of identity and cultural preservation. For instance, in *We Are What We Eat*, Donna R. Gabaccia explores how food functions as a powerful marker of ethnicity and identity among immigrant communities in the US, showing how ethnic foods preserve cultural heritage while integrating into the broader American culinary landscape (Gabaccia 1998, 6-7). Similarly, Krishnendu Ray's *The Migrant's Table* examines the role of food in shaping identity and memory within Bengali-American households, illustrating how Bengali immigrants use food as a strategy for both social assimilation and cultural retention. His work illuminates the ambivalence of modern actors toward concepts of locality, community, authenticity, and their relationship to both home and the world (Krishnendu Ray 2012, 11). In *Curried Cultures*, Ray and Srinivas discuss the global spread of South Asian cuisines, analysing how migration and cultural exchange have transformed food practices in South Asia and among its diasporic communities (*Ibidem*, 7-8). They argue that food serves as a site of negotiation in the immigrant experience, representing cosmopolitanism, localism, traditionalism, or nationalism in relation to global hierarchies of value (*Ibidem*, 6). Collectively, these works underscore the dynamic role food plays in identity construction, cultural preservation, and adaptation in the context of diaspora and migration.

Meredith E. Abarca's *Voices in the Kitchen* sheds light on the experiences of Chicana and Mexican-American women, examining how food practices shape their identity, labour, and cultural knowledge. Abarca criticises traditional views of cooking as a domestic task and argues about the complex role of food in cultural production and identity preservation. She argues that that for these women, the kitchen is a studio and cooking is an artistic endeavour (Abarca 2006, 5). She explores how cooking and food preparation are significant forms of knowledge transmission within Mexican communities, emphasising the voices of working-class women and claiming the kitchen space and food practices as sites of resistance, cultural preservation, and empowerment. In a feminist manner,

Abarca claims that the act of cooking is to the Mexican-American working class a culinary epistemology with practical and emotional articulation through which they can express themselves as subjects, as agents of their own lives (*Ibidem*, 6).

In the same vein, Psyche A. Williams-Forson, in *Building Houses out of Chicken Legs*, explores the cultural and historical significance of food, particularly chicken, in the life of African American women from past to present (Williams-Forson 2006, 2). She investigates the intersection of food, race, and gender, illustrating how African American women have used food as a tool for economic freedom, survival, business, and empowerment (*Ibidem*, 2). By focusing on the symbolism of chicken in African American culture, Williams-Forson reveals how food can be both a source of sustenance and a means of negotiating power, identity, and economic agency.

These scholars and others provide important insights into how food functions within marginalised communities. They highlight how culinary practices serve not only nutritious purposes but are also powerful tools for cultural expression, resistance, and identity formation. Following the same frame of thought, this paper attempts to analyse the significance of food in the context of Faulkner's South and Palestine, where the colonised find in culinary acts a way to claim identity and resist the coloniser's attempts of cultural erasure.

A postcolonial analysis of food in the Palestinian context highlights the intricate connections between culture, identity, and resistance under colonial rule. In Palestine, food plays a vital role in shaping and expressing both personal and collective identities. The ways in which Palestinians prepare and share food under colonisation reflect a profound sense of resistance and reclamation of identity. In this context, food serves multiple purposes as it symbolises identity, acts as a site of defiance, and underscores the power dynamics between the coloniser and the colonised. Additionally, food has both personal and political dimensions, providing a lens through which one can better understand the broader struggles faced by the Palestinian people. Under occupying

forces, food becomes an important marker of identity and a form of cultural resistance. For Palestinians, maintaining traditional food practices, such as making *maqluba*, *musakhan*, or *knafeh*, asserts cultural continuity despite attempts at erasure. This act of preserving culinary traditions can be viewed as a silent form of defiance against appropriation. By holding on to these practices, Palestinians resist the colonial narrative that seeks to diminish or appropriate their culture.

In the same way, in *Intruder in the Dust* (1948), William Faulkner portrays Lucas Beauchamp, a black man, as resisting the racial stereotypes of servitude and obedience imposed on him. Scholars have highlighted Lucas's resilience and defiance in the face of white oppression. Michael Schmidt emphasises the rebellious nature of Lucas's character, posing the question "Why do we demand obedience from fictional characters that we might condemn in real life?" and concluding that "this is the challenging territory Faulkner explored with Lucas Beauchamp in *Intruder in the Dust*" (Schmidt 2014, 72). Robert W. Hamblin similarly highlights Lucas's resistance to efforts aimed at erasing his identity. He notes that in the black man's home, the typical power dynamic between black and white is inverted when Lucas orders the white Chick to strip off his wet clothes and later eat food prepared by a black woman. Hamblin explains that Chick, unaccustomed to taking orders from a black man, attempts to assert dominance by offering to pay Lucas for his trouble. This initiates a series of actions where Chick tries to push Lucas into traditional roles of submission and inequality, yet Lucas consistently refuses to comply (Hamblin 2022, 206).

Likewise, William J. Sowder observes that much of the novel focuses on the ongoing struggle between Lucas and Chick, as each tries to assert dominance over the other. The central theme, he argues, revolves around the strategies both characters employ in their efforts to reduce the other to an object while affirming their own humanity (Sowder 1991, 125). Philip Weinstein also contends that Lucas strives to overcome stereotypes associated with "Black smell, Black food, Black irresponsibility", arguing that these

“habits” can be unlearned and transcended. According to Weinstein, Lucas’s masculine courage demonstrates his success in surpassing these imposed limitations (Weinstein 1997, 67).

While these scholars have effectively highlighted the conflict between white societal norms and black identity, as well as the tension between coloniser and colonised, they have overlooked the specific devices Lucas employs to resist white marginalisation.

## 2. FOOD AS APPROPRIATION/ABROGATION

Central to the postcolonial discussion of food sovereignty are the notions of “appropriation” and “abrogation”. In *The Empire Writes Back* (2002), Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin define “appropriation” as the coloniser’s takeover of the colonised people’s culture, land, and resources, often distorting or erasing indigenous knowledge systems. In contrast, “abrogation” involves rejecting and resisting the authority of the coloniser, particularly in how they define and control the cultural, political, or economic aspects of the colonised society (Ashcroft *et al.* 2002, 37-38).

In the Palestinian context, food sovereignty becomes a site of both “appropriation” and “abrogation”. The Israeli occupation of Palestinian land is a direct form of appropriation, where fertile agricultural areas, especially in the West Bank, have been expropriated for settlement expansion, leaving Palestinian farmers with restricted access to their own land and water resources. This not only appropriates Palestinian land but also disrupts traditional agricultural practices, replacing them with industrial, often settler-centric agricultural systems.

In response to these forms of appropriation, abrogation appears in the ways Palestinian communities resist the imposition of colonial systems. They actively reclaim indigenous farming practices and seed varieties, often defying Israeli-imposed restrictions on water access, land use, and mobility. An example of initiatives which fall within the context of “abrogation” is local cooperatives or legal

entities representing a group of individuals working together to achieve the common purpose of serving themselves and their community<sup>1</sup>. These local communities often emphasise agroecological practices that prioritise sustainability and community control over food production, rejecting the imposed dependency on Israeli markets and products and adapting their farming strategies to the reality of colonisation.

In this light, appropriation and abrogation intersect in the Palestinian struggle for food sovereignty. While Israeli occupation appropriates land, resources, and agricultural knowledge, Palestinian resistance abrogates this control by reviving traditional, local food systems that challenge the occupation's dominance and assert Palestinian agency over their land and food production. This process is also imbued with a cultural and political assertion of identity, as food sovereignty in Palestine is not only about access to food but also reclamation of heritage and autonomy.

Simon Lambert writes in this vein that indigenous societies have always exercised agency within economic spaces. They have resisted colonisation, adapted modernisation to serve their own needs, and, drawing on the collective memory of their past struggles, continue to reject the marginal and passive roles imposed upon them (Lambert 2008, 211). Lucas Beauchamp in Faulkner's *Intruder in the Dust*, as well as Palestinian people, insists on claiming agency through culinary practices and fighting attempts to position them as marginal.

Lucas's resilience through culinary practice is implicitly depicted as his habits of food cooking are referred to as symbols of autonomy, dignity, and cultural heritage. Such culinary acts highlight the black character's resistance to white dominance and stereotypes of black subordination. One of the most notable moments where Lucas expresses his autonomy through food is during his interactions with Chick Mallison. Early in the novel, Chick recalls when he was invited by Lucas to a meal. Lucas's manners during this food event reveal a lot about his rebellious character:

The man neither protested nor acquiesced. He didn't stir; he was not even looking at him. He just said, inflexible and calm: "She done already dished it up now:" and he went on past the old woman who stood aside from the door to let him pass into the kitchen: an oilcloth-covered table set in the bright sunny square of a southern window where—he didn't know how he knew it since there were no signs, traces, soiled plates to show it—Edmonds' boy and Aleck Sander had already eaten, and sat down and ate in his turn of what obviously was to be Lucas' dinner—collard greens, a slice of sidemeat fried in flour, big flat pale heavy half-cooked biscuits, a glass of buttermilk: nigger food too, accepted and then dismissed also because it was exactly what he had expected, it was what Negroes ate, obviously because it was what they liked, what they chose; not (at twelve: he would be a man grown before he experienced his first amazed dubiety at this) that out of their long chronicle this was all they had had a chance to learn to like except the ones who ate out of white folks' kitchens, but that they had elected this out of all eating because this was their palates and their metabolism; afterward, ten minutes later and then for the next four years he would be trying to tell himself that it was the food which had thrown him off. (Faulkner 1982, 14)

The passage highlights Lucas Beauchamp's calm, composed demeanour and unspoken authority. He neither protests nor agrees when faced with a situation involving a boy, Roth Edmonds, sitting down to eat, but asserts control through quiet resolve. His nonchalant statement and entry into the kitchen reflect his defiance of social expectations without being passive or submissive. Lucas accepts the stereotyped smell of the "nigger food" without emotional reaction, demonstrating his quiet dignity and refusal to let racialised expectations dictate his behaviour. Lucas's manners, therefore, seem to reflect a calm, measured control over his environment. He neither overreacts to nor ignores the complex social dynamics surrounding him but instead navigates them with a stoic, inflexible composure, maintaining his own sense of agency and dignity in a world where such traits are often undermined by racism. His silence and composed response reflect a sense of unshakable self-respect.

Thus, through this culinary event, Lucas performs an act of defiance against the stereotypical expectations of how black people were supposed to serve white people in the South. It is also an act

of mimicry through which Lucas imitates white rituals to acquire authority and control. The preparation and serving of food are under his control, becoming a symbolic gesture of his resistance to being subjugated or reduced to a servant's role. By serving food on his terms, in his home, Lucas reclaims power and agency, making it clear that he is the one in charge of the situation.

Another significant scene in *Intruder in the Dust* is Lucas chewing food to face white men's oppression in an act of defiance and abrogation. At the local store where Lucas went to buy himself a box of gingersnaps, another white customer made a rude comment on him. Lucas's reaction was one of resistance that not only expresses a sense of culinary pleasure but also causes white anxiety:

Lucas looked at the white man with a calm speculative detachment; slowly the carton in one of his hands tilted further until another gingersnap dropped into his other palm, then lifting the corner of his lip he sucked an upper tooth, quite loud in the abrupt silence but with no implication whatever of either derision or rebuttal or even disagreement, with no implication of anything at all but almost abstractedly. (Faulkner 1982, 20)

Lucas's calm and detached posture as he accepts the insult indicates a refusal to be provoked or diminished by the white man's words. Instead of responding with anger or confrontation, Lucas engages in an act of eating by tilting the carton to let another gingersnap fall into his palm. This seemingly simple action becomes a powerful statement, as he deliberately turns to culinary pleasure, asserting his autonomy and enjoying his choice while ignoring the white man's hostility. The loud sucking of his upper tooth, set against the backdrop of silence, further amplifies his defiance, signifying a deliberate choice to remain firm in front of the hostility directed at him.

The reaction of the store's proprietor's son embodies a stark moment of violence and exclusion, illustrating the racial dynamics at play. When he shouts, "Get out of here, Lucas!" (Faulkner 1982, 21), his words reflect an attempt to assert dominance and reinforce social boundaries that seek to exclude the black man from the white space. Despite the hostility directed at him, Lucas remains

remarkably calm, demonstrating an inner strength that contrasts sharply with the aggression surrounding him. His calmness, leisurely posture, and continued engagement with the culinary pleasure he finds in the gingersnaps signal a refusal to be intimidated or provoked. Lucas's quietness and enjoyment of the food serve as an assertion of his identity and agency, challenging the violent exclusionary practices of the proprietor's son and reaffirming his right to occupy space in a world that attempts to erase him.

Lucas's act of "chewing" as he exits the store (*Ibidem*, 21) can indeed be interpreted as an empowering act. In this scene, chewing symbolises both culinary pleasure and a deliberate assertion of autonomy in the face of hostility. By choosing to engage in this act despite the aggression directed at him, Lucas expresses a refusal to be cowed or defined by the negative perceptions of those around him. "Raising his right hand to his mouth so that as he went out the door, they could see the steady thrust of his chewing" (*Ibidem*), Lucas visually engages in an act of abrogation, where he actively resists the oppressive forces trying to eliminate him. The visibility of his chewing further emphasises defiance, asserting that he does not need to conform to the expectations or behaviours dictated by the proprietor's son or the racist white customer. Instead, he embraces his right to exist in the space, savouring his experience and asserting his autonomy against a backdrop of racial tension. In this light, chewing becomes a powerful act of abrogation and resistance, where Lucas not only sustains himself physically but also symbolically nurtures his identity in a society that seeks to erase it.

### 3. FOOD AND LAND

Indigenous peoples are generally described as being closer to nature than Western ones (Morris & FitzHerbert 2017, 98). In colonial discourse, being connected to nature is viewed as a mark of barbarism and primitiveness. However, in the culinary context, being associated with nature means "being in touch with what is

authentic, original and uncontaminated (*Ibidem*, 100). The connection between food and land is especially profound in Palestinian society, where agriculture has been a crucial part of life. Olive trees, in particular, are symbolic, representing deep roots in the land and the struggle for survival. The destruction of olive groves, repeatedly occurring by Israeli forces, represents not just an economic blow but a direct assault on Palestinian identity and connection to the land. In this context, food represents more than sustenance; it embodies the struggle for autonomy and connection to ancestral lands.

Agriculture, particularly olive farming, has been a cornerstone of Palestinian society for centuries. As Lara Jazairi notes, the olive tree has been “an integral part of the Palestinian landscape for thousands of years, symbolising Palestinian identity, culture, and tradition” (Jazairi 2010, 5). She cites Abu Suleim, a Palestinian farmer, who emphasises that “olive trees root and anchor us in our land, providing a sense of belonging, home, and hope. Investing in olive oil is investing in our future” (*Ibidem*). The olive tree represents more than economic value, for it embodies resilience, longevity, and a deep connection to ancestry. In Palestinian folklore, music, and art, the olive tree frequently appears as a symbol of rootedness, survival, and continuity. Its cultivation connects Palestinians not only to the land but to traditions passed down through generations. This connection reinforces the idea that “local people and their foodways are reservoirs of hopes and knowledge, essential to creating a sustainable food system economically, socially, culturally, and environmentally” (Morris & FitzHerbert 2017, 100). Yet, for the colonised Palestinian people, the olive tree, an emblem of their right to land and identity, continues to face the coloniser’s oppression and systematic erasure attempts.

Standing for centuries of food abundance and continuity, the uprooting of these trees symbolises the severing of Palestinians’ ties to their land, culture, and identity. The tree, much like the people, is forcibly removed from its natural place, symbolising the broader attempts to erase Palestinian identity and history from the region.

Uprooting olive trees and displacing Palestinian people are part of a broader settler-colonial strategy to replace indigenous populations and erase their connection to the land. In this case, both the olive tree and the Palestinian people are viewed as obstacles to settlement expansion and the creation of new spaces for the coloniser.

The same practice existed in Faulkner's colonial South. In *Go Down Moses*, the indigenous peoples, "them damn niggers (...) might just as well be a damn herd of wild buffaloes" (Faulkner 1990, 147), implicitly refer to an important moment in American history when the US Army resorted to the extensive slaughter of these animals as a strategy to force Native Americans, dependent on the buffalo for food and material, into starvation, displacement, reservations and containment (Colvin 2014, 97). Thus, the history of the American buffalo serves as a poignant parallel to the history of racial discrimination. The metaphor of the "damned herd of wild buffaloes" unites the colonised peoples in their shared fate of marginalisation, underscoring their collective struggle against systemic oppression.

Both the olive tree and the Palestinian people embody resilience in the face of adversity. Despite being uprooted, Palestinians have persistently resisted the occupation, much like the olive tree, known for its strength and ability to regenerate even after severe damage. The act of replanting olive trees by Palestinian farmers serves as a powerful symbol of resistance, representing the enduring connection to their land despite the occupation's attempts to sever it. Similarly, Palestinian people's resilience in the face of ongoing displacement is reflected in the olive tree's capacity to endure. Both the tree and the people have faced the coloniser's attempts of elimination, yet they remain unbroken, resisting colonial abuse.

In *Intruder in the Dust*, the mulberry tree, through which the sun comes to Lucas's dining table (Faulkner 1982, 22), is deeply rooted and capable of thriving even in challenging conditions. Bringing to Lucas sun rays, the tree grants him power and resilience. Though a "Negro", he owns a house and ten acres of land (*Ibidem*, 9). His

character is a testament to the endurance and survival of black identity in a world determined to erase it.

The last of the sun coming through the mulberry tree then the window behind him onto the table the stacked untidy papers the inkwell the tray of paperclips and fouled rusted penpoints and pipe cleaners and the overturned corncob pipe in its spill of ash beside the stained unwashed coffee cup and saucer and the coloured mug from the Heidelberg stübe filled with twisted spills of newspaper to light the pipes with like the vase sitting on Lucas' mantel that day and before he even knew he had thought of it he rose taking up the cup and saucer and crossed the room picking up the coffeepot and the kettle too in passing and in the lavatory emptied the grounds and rinsed the pot and cup and filled the kettle and set it and the pot the cup and saucer back on the shelf and returned to the chair and sat down again after really no absence at all, still in plenty of time to watch the table and all its familiar untidy clutter all fading toward one anonymity of night as the sunlight died. (Faulkner 1982, 22-23)

As the last light of the sun comes through the mulberry tree and onto the cluttered table, it underscores Lucas's steadfastness, suggesting that, like the tree, he is deeply grounded in his identity. The image of the tree and the fading sunlight also evokes a sense of cyclical continuity, highlighting Lucas's ability to endure time and oppression with quiet strength unshaken by the external world.

The act of picking up the coffee pot, cup, saucer, and kettle reflects Lucas's sense of agency and control over his environment, symbolising his resilience. These small, domestic actions, carried out with precision and care, demonstrate Lucas's refusal to be overwhelmed by disorder or neglect, as seen in the untidy papers and clutter around him. His deliberate movement in maintaining order in his space, even though mundane acts like rinsing out the coffee pot, suggests that he holds onto his dignity and self-determination in a world that often seeks to diminish him. Thus, the mulberry tree and the handling of food and domestic items reinforce Lucas's resilience. The tree symbolises his rootedness and enduring strength, while the careful management of his surroundings through simple but deliberate actions reflects his ability to assert control and maintain dignity, even in the face of white oppression.

Through Lucas, Faulkner presents a character who refuses to be abrogated or appropriated by the dominant culture. Just as Faulkner's black characters "endured" (Faulkner 1987, *The Sound and the Fury*, 302), many displaced Palestinians continue to preserve their cultural and historical ties to their homeland. Through these acts of endurance, the olive tree, the mulberry tree, and the people demonstrate their resilience, standing firm and unvanquished. Through culinary acts, they stay connected to their land and assert their identity. They are in Samih el Qassem's words:

منتصبِ القامةِ أمشي مرفوع الهامة أمشي  
 في كفي قصفة زيتونٍ وعلى كتفي نعشي  
 وأنا أمشي وأنا أمشي وأنا أمشي وأنا وأنا أمشي

Walking with a stature  
 Walking with my head held high  
 Carrying an olive branch in my hand  
 And my coffin on my shoulders  
 As I walk and walk<sup>2</sup>

For Palestinians, land and the olive tree are not only an economic resource but a critical part of identity and history. Similarly, in *Intruder in the Dust*, "the food had been not just the best Lucas had to offer but all he had to offer" (Faulkner 1982, 18). Food is deeply connected to the Black man's identity in a racially charged context.

#### 4. FOOD AND MEMORY

The link between food and the past is reflected in colonised peoples' veneration of their native cuisines. The significance of traditional dishes functions as a shared sentiment in the collective nostalgia of a community. In *Food to Remember: Culinary Practice and Diasporic Identity*, Razia Parveen asserts that cooking traditions serve as a cultural thread, weaving a community into a cohesive whole. In the same context, in *The Recipe Reader*, Janet Floyd and Laurel Forster argue that "personal histories or pasts, constructed through memory, or the process of remembering with others, are often

centred on food” (Floyd 2010, 7). Trying to recover a lost history, individuals and communities seek to recreate it in their imagination through culinary and olfactory stimuli that enable them to metaphorically re-experience past memories of time and place. Food in postcolonial contexts is often linked to memory and nostalgia for a homeland. In fact, recipes are narratives with the power to show how people link their life memories with specific acts of culinary practice (Parveen, 51).

For Palestinians in exile or the diaspora, traditional Palestinian dishes serve as a way to preserve memories of the homeland and pass on cultural knowledge to future generations. Cooking and eating together can be viewed as acts of resistance against displacement, embodying the longing for return and the hope for future liberation. Palestinian recipes in the diaspora and even inside the occupied land express a sense of “nostalgia for an idealised past identity that may never have existed” (*Ibidem*, 50). Food turns into a narrative of survival as each traditional dish is a silent text rooted in the deep history and psychology of the colonised. “It is nostalgia, that sense of romance and loss”, which pushes the colonised “to recreate a small part of home out of place through culinary practice” (*Ibidem*, 53).

In *Imagined Communities*, Benedict Anderson observes that “communities are to be distinguished not by their falsity/genuineness but by the style in which they are imagined” (Anderson 1983, 6). Accordingly, native food becomes an imagined narrative of belonging and resistance as it contains layers of meaning beyond its material existence, representing cultural heritage, social memory, and identity. In the context of colonisation, where cultural homogenisation is a threat, native food becomes a form of resistance, a marker of identity that resists erasure. The practice of preparing and consuming traditional food reinforces collective identity, asserting the persistence of cultural values and distinctiveness against external pressures.

Correspondingly, native food, much like Anderson’s concept of imagined communities, operates not based on its intrinsic

“genuineness” but through the style and context in which it is imagined and performed by the community. It becomes a means through which people navigate and negotiate their identities, resisting the forces that seek to obscure their traditions. “The pursuit of nostalgia is legitimised by authenticity and validated by invoking the mother as a source of knowledge” (Parveen, 52); the mother or the motherland whom poet Mahmoud Darwish, on behalf of Palestinians, nostalgically evokes through culinary pleasure:

أحنُّ إلى خبز أمي  
 وقهوة أمي  
 ولمسة أمي  
 وتكبر في الطفولة  
 يوماً على صدر يوم  
 وأعشق عمري  
 لأنني إذا مت ،  
 أخجل من دمع أمي

I yearn for my mother's bread  
 To my mother's coffee  
 And touch  
 Childhood grows in me  
 Day after day  
 I must be worth my life  
 So if I die  
 I will not be worth my mother's tears<sup>3</sup>

Through these verses, Darwish captures the intimate connection between personal memory and national identity, illustrating how olfactory and culinary longing for a mother's bread and coffee transcends mere nostalgia and embodies a deeper connection to homeland and cultural heritage.

By the same token, the land is to Lucas a nurturing mother who keeps him rooted in a collective memory of endurance and resilience.

(...) and now he seemed to see his whole native land, his home—the dirt, the earth which had bred his bones and those of his fathers for six generations and was still shaping him into not just a man but a specific man, not with just

a man's passions and aspirations and beliefs but the specific passions and hopes and convictions and ways of thinking and acting of a specific kind and even race. (Faulkner 1982, 146)

Lucas's connection to the land is a source of memory and empowerment. To him, it represents ancestral roots, shaping his identity across generations. His deep connection to the earth, which granted him culinary sustenance, breeding his bones and those of his ancestors for six generations, ties him to a collective memory of survival, resilience and continuity. This nurturing relationship empowers Lucas, reinforcing his sense of self as not just any man, but a specific man molded by his heritage, his race, and the shared experiences of those who came before him. Thus, the land becomes a source of memory that shapes his existence and grants him power and defiance. Through this bond, Lucas gains a deeper sense of empowerment, as it nurtures his body and spirit, and nurtures his racial identity.

## 5. FOOD AND SOVEREIGNTY

Food sovereignty, or the right to control one's food systems, is a central theme in the postcolonial context. In fact, "food sovereignty and alternative food networks projects are embedded within systems of power – and inequality that privilege certain perspectives and voices, resulting in alienation, disenfranchisement and even exclusion" (Wilson 2017, 31). A core idea about food sovereignty in the postcolonial context is that the coloniser works to deprive the colonised of authority and autonomy over the food they consume. Accordingly, food sovereignty "is imagined as emerging from spaces outside the capitalist food system, spaces defined as 'alternative'" (Morris and Fitzherbert 2017, 98). Thus, subaltern spaces where traditional modes of food production and consumption are revisited can be a good alternative to stand against the coloniser's attempts to erase the native culture/identity of the colonised.

In *Can the Subaltern Speak?*, Gayatri Ch. Spivak addresses how the voices and identities of colonised people are silenced. Spivak's and other postcolonial theorists' focus on subaltern agency can be

extended to the analysis of food as it becomes a means for marginalised communities to assert their identities and resist cultural erasure. Benita Parry states in this vein that the native subaltern is capable of producing “a counter-discourse displacing imperialism’s dominative system of knowledge” (Parry 1987, 55). Correspondingly, culinary resistance is one of the counter-hegemonic subaltern manifestations.

In the Palestinian context, the right of food sovereignty is repeatedly violated due to land expropriation, water scarcity, and restrictions imposed on farming and trade. Israeli policies undermine the Palestinians’ ability to grow, access, and share their food, framing food as an instrument of colonial violence. However, for Palestinians, food operates as a symbol of identity and a site of resistance. It embodies both the personal and political, offering a lens through which to understand the broader struggles of the Palestinian people. The act of producing and sharing traditional food in the midst of chaos is a modality of identity that validates the argument about the subaltern’s ability to speak through nonverbal signifiers, including the register of the culinary. In this respect, Arjun Appadurai argues that, within the postcolonial context, food is not only an element of survival but also a physical and psychological treatment of the coloniser’s oppression. It is believed to strengthen the relationship between men and the divine as well as between men and their fellows, for “eating together, whether as a family, a caste, or a village, is a carefully conducted exercise in the reproduction of intimacy” (Appadurai 1988, 10). Appadurai adds that food has moral, social, medical, and soteriological implications for the colonised (*Ibidem*, 11), turning into a political and spiritual form of survival and salvation.

In the same context, in *Intruder in the Dust*, Chick Mallison’s deeply ingrained connection to the black Southern experience is particularly reflected through the smell of food and shared childhood memories with Aleck Sander:

So he just smelled it and then dismissed it because he was used to it, he had smelled it off and on all his life and would continue to: who had spent a good

part of that life in Paralee's, Aleck Sander's mother's cabin in their back yard where he and Aleck Sander played in the bad weather when they were little and Paralee would cook whole meals for them halfway between two meals at the house and he and Aleck Sander would eat them together, the food tasting the same to each; he could not even imagine an existence from which the odor would be missing to return no more. He had smelled it forever, he would smell it always; it was a part of his inescapable past, it was a rich part of his heritage as a Southerner. (Faulkner 1982, 13)

The scent of food in Paralee's cabin, where Chick and Aleck spent time during bad weather, represents a powerful sensory connection to his past. According to Carol Rigsby, the smell of food which is like the smell of Lucas's house is exactly what Chick expected of Negroes (Rigsby 1976, 390). However, the narrator's careful attention to smell and taste hints at how cultural practices, like cooking, transcend the boundaries of race and class, while still highlighting their complexities. The repeated emphasis on the scent of food Chick has "smelled forever" and will continue to smell illustrates the permanence of this culinary recollection in his life. This sensory memory becomes a vital part of his Southern heritage. The fact that Chick "could not even imagine an existence" (Faulkner 1982, 13) without this taste underscores how deeply it is embedded in his identity as a Southerner.

The white Chick and the black Aleck Sander share meals together despite racial differences, reinforcing the idea that black and white lives have to be interwoven in the South, particularly in domestic spaces. The food "tasting the same to each" reflects the shared experience of eating despite racial division, with Paralee cooking in a separate space from the main house. This shared yet divided culinary experience conveys the tensions between racial intimacy and the larger societal segregation that governed Southern life. While Chick's memory of the food is fond and nostalgic, it is rooted in a system that relied on black labour to sustain white families, with Paralee's cooking aside representing both sustenance and the imposed separation of race.

Thus, through dialectical gustatory interaction, the colonised go beyond the confines of occupation and festively celebrate a

sovereign identity that takes pride in its original tastes. Food becomes a nonverbal instrument of human interaction that goes beyond the boundaries of the coloniser's dominant discourse, providing the colonised with a sense of moral and physical comfort and allowing them to transcend the oppressive experience of colonisation.

By describing the smell of food as an inescapable part of Chick's past and Southern heritage, Faulkner demonstrates how Southern identity is deeply tied to the labour and presence of black people, even though white Southerners often dismiss or minimise their contributions. Chick's ability to dismiss the smell because he is "used to it" bespeaks the normalisation of black labour and cultural contributions in the South, where white families were dependent on black workers like Paralee, but often took this dependency for granted.

## CONCLUSION

Though geographically and historically distant, the Palestinian context and William Faulkner's South reveal that food is a powerful nonverbal idiom that claims to identity, resilience, and resistance against colonial attempts of erasure. Considered from a postcolonial lens, culinary practices become acts of sovereignty, through which marginalised peoples claim power and sovereignty.

In the Palestinian context, food not only embodies cultural heritage but also serves as a means of preserving memory and collective identity amid ongoing struggles. The act of preparing and sharing traditional dishes reinforces community bonds and acts as a form of resistance against the forces that seek to obliterate their history and existence. Similarly, in *Intruder in the Dust*, Lucas's relationship with food highlights how culinary pleasure becomes an assertion of autonomy and identity. By claiming space for gustatory satisfaction in the face of hostility, Lucas embodies resilience against the dehumanisation inflicted by a racially stratified society.

The notions of “subaltern”, “appropriation”, and “abrogation” further enrich our understanding of how food functions as a site of resistance. Culinary practices can be seen as a form of abrogation, subverting dominant narratives and challenging the status quo. Through these acts, marginalised groups reclaim their narratives, asserting their right to exist and thrive despite attempts to render them invisible. The appropriation of food and culinary traditions also highlights the ongoing negotiation of identity within postcolonial contexts, where the act of consuming and celebrating one’s cultural heritage becomes an assertion of power and self-definition. Finally, recognising food as a nonverbal idiom of resistance is crucial for understanding how culinary practices play a significant role in the struggle for identity and sovereignty against historical and contemporary injustices.

#### NOTES

1. See “The Importance of Cooperatives in Palestine,” Naser Qadous, July 5, 2019.  
<https://www.anera.org/blog/the-importance-of-cooperatives-in-palestine/>
2. [https://machahid24.com/paroles/79164.html#google\\_vignette](https://machahid24.com/paroles/79164.html#google_vignette) (My own translation).
3. <https://www.ialigner.com/ugarit/userProfile.php?userid=2&tgid=159>

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## EXAMINATION OF THE CONCEPT OF “RU YI” AND ITS SOCIAL AND SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE

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**Abstract.** *Ru Yi* (儒医 - Confucian Doctor) is an integral part of the history of medicine in China, and although there is abundant research on it, few scholars regard *Ru Yi* as a concept with special significance rather than a historical figure or group. Therefore, in an attempt at conceptual history, this paper tries to explore its evolutions and historical significance. First, it examines the conceptual changes of *Ru* (儒 - Confucian) and *Yi* (医 - Doctor) in the Pre-North Song Period, discusses the specific situation of combining the two into *Ru Yi* during the Northern Song Dynasty, and its transformation afterwards. Then, the paper analyses and explains the social and spiritual significance of *Ru Yi* from its fundamental meaning, focusing on the medical knowledge, medical practice, mentalities, and social reputation of medical practitioners.

**Keywords:** Ru Yi, conceptual history, social significance, spiritual significance

### 1. INTRODUCTION

*Zhong Yi* (中医) refers to Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), which is a significant representative of the fine Chinese traditional culture, and *Ru Yi* (儒医 - Confucian Doctor) is a concept deeply related to it. *Ru Yi* originated in China, which can not only refer to the historical figures and groups related to *Zhong*

*Yi* but also show the development of traditional Chinese society, an essential reference for the development and innovation of fine Chinese traditional culture.

Over the past decade, historians have researched the history of *Ru Yi*. Yu Xinzhong (余新忠) discusses the influence of *Ru Yi* on the formation of the phrase *Bu Wei Liang Xiang Ze Wei Liang Yi* (不为良相·则为良医 - well-known governors or famous doctors) and the promotion of Zhang Zhongjing (张仲景) (Xinzhong 2011, 120-131, 2014, 3-13). Feng Yurong (冯玉荣) studies the influence of *Ru Yi* on the construction of the Narrations of Medicine Histories (医宗) and the classicisation of medicine (Yurong 2015, 141-153). These scholars discuss the formation of the academic thinking of *Ru Yi* and regard *Ru Yi* as a special kind of identification of the group of doctors, which provides a good perspective for the interpretation of this concept.

With the deepening research into the history of medicine in China, historians are paying more attention to and thinking about the relationship between *Ru Yi* and various social activities. Zhu Shaozu (朱绍祖) studies the construction and evolution of the medicine “Four Great Physicians” under the influence of *Ru Yi* and scholars in the Ming and Qing dynasties (Shaozu 2019, 28-35). He Xiaoyan (贺晓燕) used the imperial examination in the Qing Dynasty as a starting point to identify those who took up medicine after failing an imperial examination, as *Ru Yi* and then studied their life stories (Xiaoyan 2021, 101-110). Xu Chaoqiong (徐超琼) and Yang Yimang (杨奕望) explain traditional medical ethics in *Leng Lu Yi Hua* (冷庐医话), which was written by Southern Yangtze *Ru Yi* Lu Yitian (陆以湑) (Chaoqiong and Yiwang 2019, 69-72).

Yang Shuting (杨舒婷), Zhou Yongjie (周勇杰) and Gu Man (顾漫) consider Liao Ping (廖平), Zhang Ji (张骥) and Sun Dingyi (孙鼎宜) to be famous representative persons of *Ru Yi* in the late Qing and the beginning of the Republic of China, and explored

their view in combing and studying ancient medical classics, along with their academical characteristics in terms of the treatment and study of medicine (Shuting, Yongjie, and Man 2022, 239-244).

In addition, a few scholars have shifted their attention to the *Ru Yi* groups in China's neighbouring countries. Chen Jing (陈静) and Zhang Ping (张萍) have conducted a comprehensive disclose of the Japanese *Ru Yi* generation formation, and they underwent three stages: Confucianism changing into doctors, integration of Confucian and medicine, and the decline of Confucian and medicine during the Edo period (江戸时代 江戸時代) (Jing and Ping 2020, 247-253). Xie Haijin (谢海金) and Li Liangsong (李良松) review the vital contribution of the Japanese *Ru Yi* Kaibara Ekiken (贝原益轩 えきけん) to the formation and development of the modern health preservation thought in Japan (Haijin and Liangsong 2022, 7-12). Ye Shaofei (叶少飞) examines the life stories and medical achievements of Vietnamese *Ru Yi* Nguyen Giafan (阮嘉璠 - Nguyễn Ka-fan) (Shaofei 2020, 119-140). Although the above studies have provided many broad cognitive horizons, they have not made systematic research on the process from which the concept of *Ru Yi* was established.

In the traditional Chinese society, where Confucianism is venerated, there is a world of difference between *Ru* (儒 - Confucian) and *Yi* (医 - Doctor). However, from the point of view of the evolution of the concept of *Ru Yi*, the tendency to respect doctors (尚医风气) advocated by the Northern Song scholars and scholar-officials (士大夫) is the origin of its development and dissemination. The concept of *Ru Yi* has been spread for nearly 1,000 years, and in this long period, it is worth exploring the vicissitude of *Ru Yi* and the awareness of this concept among contemporaries. Given the value of the concept of *Ru Yi* being explored, this paper aims to discuss the evolution of the concept of *Ru Yi* and its historical significance from the perspectives of the history of concepts.



with secular morality at the turn of the Shang Dynasty and the Zhou Dynasty. These histories indicate the end of the era of the *Hua Xia* nation's worship culture, and the social status of shamans declined. Thus, the concept of *Ru* gradually spread from the ruling class to the folk society. Yang Xiangkui (杨向奎) stated, "The original *Ru* is a kind of shaman in the sacrificial ceremony, probably originating from the Shang Dynasty. The people of the Shang dynasty attached the greatest importance to funeral rites, and *Xiang Li* (相礼 – to take ceremonial process) is a task in which *Ru* excelled. Confucius (孔子) was a descendant of the declining aristocracy of the Shang Dynast *Xiang Li* was his main job (Xiangkui 1992, 414). Therefore, *Xiang Li* was a way for Confucius to notice the concept of *Ru* after the decline of the family.

They were using *Zhou Li* to revolutionise the concept of *Ru*, which encompasses both dimensions of *Jun Zi Ru* (君子儒 - the Confucian gentleman) and *Xiao Ren Ru* (小人儒 - the Confucian small man) in *Lun Yu* (论语 - The Analects of Confucius) (Confucius 2016. Chinese). *Jun Zi Ru* is a kind of gentleman who supports the restoration of *Li Zhi* (礼治 - the principle of rites), and *Xiao Ren Ru* is a kind of ordinary person who is still in the profession of *Xiang Li*. Confucius believed that *Ke Ji Fu Li* (克己复礼 - self-restraint and returning to rites) was an essential mission of Confucianism. Therefore, *Jun Zi Ru* was *Ru*'s exact implication at this time.

The representatives of Confucianism made their mark in the *Contention of a Hundred Schools of Thought* after the times of Confucius. Citing the life story of Mencius (孟子) as an example, he advocated that the princes (诸侯) should support his doctrine of kingcraft (王道主义) and educate the public like Yao (尧) and Shun (舜) did, to solve the social problems related to *Li Beng Yue Huai* (礼崩乐坏 - the moral degeneration of society is getting worse) (Mencius 2017. Chinese). From this point of view, *Ru* is still the kind of gentleman who supports the restoration of *Li Zhi* in the Warring States period. However, the meaning of *Li Zhi* was no longer the *Zhou Li* but a political measure to maintain the rule of the princes.

In the early Western Han Dynasty, Emperor Gao of Han Liu Bang (汉高帝刘邦) began to work on the establishment of the ruling order. Liu Bang hated the impolite behaviour of his ministers, such as excessive drinking to cause trouble and making noise in the imperial court, so he approved the request of Shusun Tong - 叔孙通 - a great Confucian scholar, to make rituals. After that, the ministers had to worship their emperor through Confucian rites, for which Liu Bang said: “Only now do I realise the nobility of the emperor’s status” (Qian 2022. Chinese). From this point of view, the *Ru* is still a kind of gentleman who supported the restoration of *Li Zhi* up to the early Western Han Dynasty. However, the meaning of *Li Zhi* was a symbol of emperor power.

In the middle of the Western Han Dynasty, Emperor Wu of Han Liu Che (汉武帝刘彻), under the suggestion of Dong Zhongshu (董仲舒), began to implement the policy of *Ba Chu Bai Jia Du Zun Ru Shu* (罢黜百家·独尊儒术 - ban from hundred philosophers, venerate Confucianism). Confucianism became the orthodox academic research in imperial China. Liu Xiang (刘向), a literary scholar of the Western Han Dynasty, and his son, Liu Xin (刘歆), evaluated Dong as *Wang Zuo Zhi Cai* (王佐之材 - the talent with the ability to assist an emperor in governing a dynasty) and *Qun Ru Shou* (群儒首 - the chief of Confucian scholars) (Gu 2022). These titles of Dong clearly show that, at this time, *Ru* had become a scholar who defended the autocracy of the monarchy, and some of them who qualified to be officials were scholar-officials. They used Confucian political measures to rule and educate the public. While there were frequent instances of powerful ministers challenging Confucian orthodox thought by dictatorship or usurping the throne in the late Han-Wei-Jin-Northern and Southern Dynasties, scholars tried to combine Confucianism with Buddhism and Taoism to come up with new thought to defend the autocracy of the monarchy such as Wei Jin metaphysics (魏晋玄学). This meaning of the concept of *Ru*, as scholars who defended the autocracy of the monarchy remained unchanged until the Tang Dynasty.

## 2.2 AN EXAMINATION OF THE CONCEPT OF “YI” BEFORE THE NORTHERN SONG DYNASTY

Changes in *Yi*'s social identity led to evolutions in the concept of *Yi*. During the Spring and Autumn Period, *Yi* mainly served the nobility and sometimes participated in political activities. Duke Huan of Qin Ying Rong (秦桓公嬴荣) once sent Yi Huan (医缓) to treat the sick Duke Jing of Jin Ji Nou (晋景公姬獯) to promote friendly relations between the two countries, which had positive diplomatic significance (Ming 2015-b). However, there were also *Yi* whom the aristocrats sent to take part in political struggles, as in the case of Duke Cheng of Wei Ji Zheng (卫成公姬郑), who was about to be assassinated by a *Yi* when Jin detained him (Ming 2015-a).

In addition, *Yi* and the witch doctor's relationship was entangled during the Spring and Autumn Periods. When the Duke Dao of Jin Ji Zhou (晋悼公姬周) felt ill during a visit to the state of Song, his retainers did not hire a *Yi* to treat him, but a witch doctor instead (Ming 2015-b). These histories indicate that, at this time, the role of *Yi* in healthcare was unimportant and that they had a low social status. When Yi He (医和), an excellent *Yi* of Qin, was treating the Duke Ping of Jin Ji Biao (晋平公姬彪), he was criticised by the aristocrat Zhao Wu (赵武) for talking about the politics of the state: “Is a *Yi* worthy of talking about the politics of the state?” (Ming 2015-a). The words reveal Zhao Wu's dissatisfaction with *Yi*'s involvement in politics and his contempt for them. In summary, this paper suggests that the concept of *Yi* in this context could refer to a kind of attendant engaged in medical work.

During the Warring States period, the concept of *Yi* was still referred to as a kind of attendant engaged in medical work. In the case of Bian Que (扁鹊), for example, before he practised medicine, he worked as a *Ren She Zhang* (人舍长 - the keeper of a guest house), and a similar word is *She Zhang* (舍长). *Ren She Zhang* and *She Zhang* are occupations related to the attendant (Zhiji 2015). After meeting Chang Sang Jun (长桑君), Bian Que learned his medical skills, and

some scholars have pointed out that Chang Sang Jun might have been an aristocrat (Huikang et al. 2021, 85-86+96). Therefore, this paper speculates that the attendant may have been a social status of Bian Que. In addition, the Bian Que had diagnosed or treated high-ranking aristocrats such as Zhao Yang - 赵鞅, Crown Prince Guo - 虢太子, Duke Huan of Qi Tian Wu - 齐桓公田午, and King Wu of Qin Ying Dang - 秦武王嬴荡. These histories not only prove Bian Que’s medical skill but also show that he had the experience and method of serving the aristocrats as an attendant, echoing the above speculations.

In the Han Dynasty, the imperial court became the *Yi*’s governing body, so some *Yi* were subject to the medical administration of the time. In the fifth year of Yuan Shi, the imperial court recruited *Yi* from all over the country, who were familiar with the *Ben Cao* (本草) (Gu 2022). In addition, some scholar-officials would select *Yi* from the folk society and send them to undertake medical treatment. In the fourteenth year of Jian Wu, the scholar-officials Zhongli Yi (钟离意) pacified the people in the epidemic area and sent *Yi* to treat the sick and save the people, which eventually achieved good results (Ye 2022. Chinese). In a period of frequent epidemics, for the power-holding scholar-officials, disaster relief for the people was one of the measures they took to maintain their rule, so the medical administration became the primary way to intertwine *Ru* and *Yi*.

During the period of Wei, Jin and the Southern and Northern Dynasties, medical education was integrated into the medical administration. Under the influence of the Imperial College (太学), the *Yi* involved in teaching activities had a title similar to *Bo Shi of the Imperial College* (太学博士), such as *Bo Shi of the Imperial Doctor* (太医博士) in the Northern Wei Dynasty. Later, the Sui imperial court established the *Bo Shi of Medicine* (医博士) (Shou 2022. Chinese, Zheng 2022. Chinese). Until the Tang dynasty, medical education in official schools developed rapidly under the support of the imperial court. Medical education in the Tang Dynasty was already quite complete,

and a variety of Confucian titles were established: *Bo Shi* (博士), *Zhu Jiao* (助教), *Sheng* (生), and *Dian Xue* (典学) (Chun 1998, Zhenguo 2023, 165). Under the intervention of the scholar-officials, medical education kept the concept of *Yi* in the atmosphere of Confucian culture for a long time, creating favourable conditions for the combination of the concepts of *Ru* and *Yi*.

### 2.3 THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE CONCEPT OF *RU YI* AFTER THE NORTHERN SONG DYNASTY

*Ru Yi* was formed by compounding *Ru* and *Yi* in the late Northern Song Dynasty. During the reign of Zheng He (1111-1118), the Song imperial court set up the Imperial College of Medicine (太医学) at the same level as the Imperial College (Song 2008, Chongru14-15+20). It introduced scholars to receive medical education, and *Ru Yi* appeared in the enrollment edicts. According to the administrative rules of *Gong Shi* (贡士 - scholars recommended to the imperial court by local authorities), the *Ru Yi* were trained as some scholars who were good at medicine.

From the Southern Song Dynasty to the Yuan Dynasty, *Ru Yi* became the title of the doctor. The scholars and scholar-officials recognised the similarity of the doctor's behaviour with Confucianism in practising medicine. Then, they considered that there was a juxtaposition between *Ru* and *Yi*, thus constructing the concept of *Ru Yi* (Bingwen 1489, Fu Ruojin 1384, Guang, Xuanweng 1848, Zhen 1337, Zhencheng).

During the Ming and Qing dynasties, *Ru Yi* and scholars had similar behaviours. The doctors at this time were full of people who liked ancient Chinese poetry, and this hobby enabled them to establish a stable communication network with the scholars. Therefore, at this time, *Ru Yi* was highly similar to scholars, which was an essential basis for Confucian scholars in the Ming and Qing dynasties to construct the concept of *Ru Yi* (Bao. 21b, Bao. 13b, Gu, 27b, Min 2009, 147-155, 2012, 79-88, 2012).

During the Republic of China period, *Ru Yi* retained the praise of traditional Confucianism, such as the knowledgeable doctor and the doctor who could save many lives (June 14, 1913). These praises were the social capital that supported the survival of *Ru Yi* and played a positive role in the construction of the concept of *Ru Yi* in the Republic of China (April 13, 1934, November 5, 1934, February 21, 1935, March 9, 1935, September 4, 1935).

In summary, the construction of the concept of *Ru Yi* mainly centred on the views of Confucian scholars and doctors. Secondly, social opinion is also a key factor affecting its evolution.

### 3. THE SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE OF *RU YI*

#### 3.1. WORKING ABILITY OF DOCTORS

From the Southern Song Dynasty to the Yuan Dynasty, the title of *Ru Yi* was used to indicate the working ability of the doctors. Scholars and scholar-officials generally emphasised the profound knowledge of *Ru Yi* in the study of *Yi Li* (医理 - the theory of medicine) by constructing a link between medicine and Neo-Confucianism (理学), thus enhancing their image as excellent doctors (Fu Ruojin 1384). In addition, they also paid attention to the efficacy of *Ru Yi* in treating diseases and showed and praised the miracles of *Ru Yi* in different ways in their poems and writings, so that their image of excellent doctors was widely spread in society (Fugu, Mai 2006, Xuanweng 1848, Yingli). Most of the doctors in this period often practised medicine in the folk society, and their positive image of being good at healing provided effective material for mainstream Confucianism. Zhu Xi's doctrines (朱子学) were popularised by using easy-to-understand examples, so scholars and scholar-officials tried to bring these highly skilled doctors into the category of Confucianism. However, *Ru* and *Yi* represented different professions, so they called them *Ru Yi* to emphasise the working ability of the doctors, so as to talk about them alongside Confucianism.

### 3.2 REPUTATION OF DOCTORS

During the Ming and Qing dynasties, *Ru Yi* became a reputation for the doctors. Some medical books and articles were compared to tao-tung (道统) of Confucianism to build *Yi Tong* (医统 - the scholarly inheritance of medical knowledge), and *Ru Yi* became a symbol of orthodox medical academic research. According to *Yi Deng Xu Yan* (医灯续焰), *Ru Yi* could only establish the canon of medical academic research through *Yi Tong* (Ji 1997). On the one hand, Gu Jingyuan - 顾靖远, a *Ru Yi*, criticised some self-proclaimed excellent doctors with the medical classics in *Yi Tong*, such as *Huang Di Nei Jing* (黄帝内经 - *The Inner Canon of the Yellow Emperor*) and *Jin Kui Yao Lue* (金匱要略 - *Synopsis of Prescriptions of the Golden Chamber*) (Jingyuan 2014). On the other hand, Yu Huan (俞寰) listed many famous medical figures from the Yan and Huang eras (炎黄时代) to the Song and Yuan dynasties in his essay to Yao Meng (姚蒙): Shen Nong (神农), Xuan Huang (轩皇, 轩辕氏), Qi Sou (岐叟, 岐伯), Lei Gong (雷公), Lu Bian (卢扁, 扁鹊), Chang Sha (长沙, 张仲景), Dong Yuan (东垣, 李杲) and Dan Xi (丹溪, 朱震亨), who had already formed a clear lineage of scholarly inheritance in the Ming and Qing dynasties (Chen Wei 1512). Yu Huan used *Yi Tong* to evaluate Yao Meng's medical experience to emphasise his orthodox academic status. Therefore, the importance of academic status and honorary status of the Ming and Qing medical practitioners was a significant impetus for the transformation of the concept of *Ru Yi*.

The Ming imperial court instituted the Hereditary Doctor System (世医制度) for doctors to survive in society by relying on medical skills that were handed down in their families. However, from the first year of Jing Tai (1450), the Sale System of Rank and Office (捐纳制度) had a significant impact on the structure and composition of the hereditary doctor group, so in the middle and late Ming Dynasty, hereditary doctors faced many survival crises. Since then, it has no longer been a necessary means of development for doctors, and medical skills are handed down in their families. Reputation

gradually became an essential role in doctors’ practice. Those who enjoyed the reputation of *Ru Yi* were respected by others and had an easier time obtaining support for their livelihoods (Jingzi 1958, Kuan, Sheng 1994).

In summary, the reputation of *Ru Yi* as a means of obtaining development opportunities and resources reflects the doctors’ awareness of the benefits and values of their profession. Also, it means that *Ru Yi*, in the Ming and Qing dynasties, was no longer a reference for the actual level of the doctors as *Ru Yi* from the Southern Song Dynasty to the Yuan Dynasty.

### 3.3 FAMOUS EXPERTS AND CONSERVATIVE DOCTORS

During the Republic of China period, the concept of *Ru Yi* became the title of famous medical expert. *Ta Kung Pao* (大公报), a modern newspaper in China, was famous throughout the country in the first half of the 20th century and possessed the ethical spirit of journalistic professionalism, striving to express an objective and impartial value orientation compared with other media of the same period. The newspaper published many advertisements about *Ru Yi*, describing some as experts in treating certain illnesses. It often published information about their business trips, clinics, and moves to notify the public to arrange medical appointments (16 June 1913, 7 December 1917, 21 February 1924). In the Republic of China, *Ru Yi* became a medical expert as a way for doctors of *Zhong Yi* to rely on newspaper publicity to maintain their livelihood against the background of the dominance of Western medicine in the medical field. They attracted the general public’s attention by emphasising the diseases *Ru Yi* could treat and simultaneously expanded the scope of their activities to different regions to increase their popularity.

However, some doctors think that some *Ru Yi* are stuck in their ways and do not know how to adapt, so it can be seen that *Ru Yi* appears to be the meaning item: conservative doctors. The reasons

for this are, firstly, the internal contradiction of the *Zhong Yi* group and the pursuit of medical progress of medical practitioners by criticising the old-fashioned thinking of some *Ru Yi* in medical treatment, to express the idea of reforming *Zhong Yi* into *Shi Xue* - 实学 - practical learning. The second is that the pedantic image of some old-time literati who called themselves *Ru Yi* hurt the concept of *Ru Yi* (Jian 1939, Jianshou 1934, 32, Ren 1914, 5-6, Zhongnong 1936, 21-22).

#### 4. THE SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE OF *RU YI*

##### 4.1 PRAISE FOR THE MENTALITIES OF PRACTICING MEDICINE

From the Southern Song Dynasty to the Yuan Dynasty, the number of *Cong Yi Shi Ren* (从医士人 - scholar practising medicine) increased. They were mainly engaged in medical work, but in this regard, they showed a similar style of Confucianism, so they were a special kind of doctor. Some scholar-officials called them *Ru Yi* to praise the mentalities of practising medicine.

Most of the medical texts of this period were obscure and difficult to understand, and there were few shortcuts in practising medicine. *Cong Yi Shi Ren* were also influenced by Confucianism and tended to treat diseases cautiously with respect for life (Fu Ruojin 1384, Tianjue 1335, Xuanweng 1848, Zhencheng). As a result, they would practice medicine down-to-earthly, holding the original intention of medicine with generosity, benevolence, and low regard for profit, thus showing the spirit of perseverance and benevolence (Minzhong, Zhiyu).

For the scholar-officials, the above mentalities of doctoring were in line with the pursuit of Confucian values, so they praised *Cong Yi Shi Ren* as *Ru Yi* and, at the same time, brought Confucianism and doctors closer together so that the scholar-officials could take the initiative in interpreting the mentalities of practising medicine and promote Confucian morality by praising them. For those scholars who were not successful in their official careers, they accepted the

title of *Ru Yi* as a complimentary title. After failing the imperial examinations, they relieved their sense of loss by promoting Confucianism in their mentalities of practising medicine, which was a favourable condition to support the Song and Yuan scholars to turn to medical work.

#### 4.2 THE STRONG MENTALITIES OF DOCTORS TO SEEK CONNECTIONS IN CONFUCIANISM

During the Ming and Qing dynasties, *Ru Yi* showed the strong mentalities of doctors to seek connections in Confucianism. Some *Ru Yi* would seriously weigh the relationship between their status as doctors and their status as scholars.

When Wu Chu (吴楚), a *Ru Yi*, received many medical honorariums, he would use the money for his expenses in the imperial examinations to demonstrate his ideal of entering the official career (Feng-En 2017, 37). At the same time, he hoped that his patients and friends would provide financial support for the publication of his medical book, *Yi Yan Lu* (医验录), to write a book in the same way as scholars did. Wu Chu also wrote *Lan Cong Shi Jie* (兰丛十戒), a code of medical practice, to regulate his behaviour in order to show support for the image of Justice Outweighing Benefit (重义轻利) as a *Ru Yi* (Feng-En 2017, 97).

*Yi Jing Xiao Xue* (医经小学) of Liu Chun (刘纯), *Yi Du* (医读) of Wang Ji (汪机), and *Yi Xue Ru Men* (医学入门) of Li Chan (李梴) represent the Confucianisation of the academic tradition of medicine in the Ming and Qing dynasties. All of these books emphasise the authors' identity as *Ru Yi* (Angela 2012, 44).

In addition, the families of *Ru Yi* also emphasised Confucian education, and men in these families were immersed in Confucianism from childhood (Min 2009, 2012, Lian 2011). In contrast, women, influenced by Confucian poetry and history, possessed the image of a virtuous woman who understood the

principles of justice, filial piety, and fraternal duty (Kuan, Maoyin, 207).

To summarise, how doctors seek connections in Confucianism was reflected in their personal behaviour, academic traditions, and family education, making *Ru Yi* an essential reference for the value of doctors. In terms of medical care and state society at this time, the medical administration had shrunk entirely, and the state could not adjust the medical market. Hence, the free competition in it became more and more intense. As a result, some of the doctors in the society that Confucianism is venerated would make efforts to get closer to Confucianism in their practice of medical care, study of medical care, and family education, to accept the label of *Ru Yi*, which is a combination of Confucianism and doctors, to prove that they are the elites of the doctor group.

#### 4.3 MAINTENANCE AND EXTENSION OF SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

During the Republican Period, China experienced the collapse of the monarchy and the decline of Confucianism amid this significant change. However, *Ru Yi* at this time still maintained the Confucian sense of social responsibility to *Ji Shi* (济世). *Ji Shi* means “help everyone” in a broad sense, and for the doctor group, it refers specifically to “save many lives”.)

*Zeng Yi Shi Yao* (赠医施药 - helping the public through medical services) is a kind of good deed of traditional Chinese doctors, following the example of Confucianism to *Ji Shi*. In the first and middle of the 20th century, this kind of good deed was reported by many newspapers under the theme of *Ru Yi Ji Shi* (儒医济世). These reports make *Ji Shi* a feature of the concept of *Ru Yi* in the Republic of China.

“Saving the country” was a social mentality at that time. All kinds of social groups showed their feelings of saving the country in different ways, such as The Revolution of 1911 (辛亥革命) led by Sun Yat-sen, Huang Xing, and others, and the May Fourth Movement -

五四运动, in which young students, workers, citizens and other strata of the population participated together. As a result, *Ru Yi* also showed a tendency to save the country in their medical activities. Pan Zishou (潘子寿), a *Ru Yi*, once talked about using the money he earned from practising medicine to help the country solve its financial problems. While there are few relevant records, they also show *Ru Yi*'s extension of social responsibility from *Ji Shi* to saving the country (May 31, 1912).

The concept of *Ru Yi* in the Republic of China expanded in significance with the decline of Confucianism. The concept of “salvation of the country”, similar to the concept of *Ji Shi*, came into the evolution of *Ru Yi*, causing confusion between the two and manifesting itself through *Ru Yi*'s sense of social responsibility. Therefore, the concept of *Ru Yi* in the Republic of China retains the sense of responsibility for *Ji Shi* and extends the sense of responsibility for the country's salvation.

## 5. CONCLUSION

This paper explains *Ru Yi* from the perspective of conceptual history. While *Ru Yi* is a common concept in the history of medicine, it has both social and spiritual significance when examined in detail. The perceptions of scholars, scholar-officials, and doctors were the driving force behind the evolution of *Ru Yi* to take on this significance.

The medical administration formulated by the scholar-officials was the primary way *Ru* and *Yi* came into contact with each other. However, purely medical administration was only a management measure the scholar-officials took for the doctors. At the time when the scholar-officials introduced the scholars into official medical education, *Ru* and *Yi* formed the *Ru Yi*. *Ru Yi* implies the doctor's choice of thinking of medical study and the spirit of medical practice, which is deeply related to the activities of scholars and scholar-officials in the Song Dynasty and later dynasties in learning

and practising medicine. Therefore, this paper considers *Ru Yi* a manifestation of doctors' medical knowledge, medical practice, mentalities, and social reputation.

At the same time, *Ru Yi* is a term of praise because it fulfils the moral standards of Confucianism, which can be regarded as a kind of "discipline" for doctors by scholars and scholar-officials. Although the decline of Confucianism in the Republic of China has reduced the influence of *Ru Yi*, it has recreated new significance in the tangle of tradition and modernisation.

*Ru Yi* has embodied many imprints of traditional culture throughout its complex evolution, making it impossible to define with a single meaning. Therefore, revisiting the concept of *Ru Yi* and uncovering its historical significance holds greater academic and practical value.

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MYSTICISM OR MILITANCY FOR TRUTH-EVENT:  
REFLECTIONS ON MUKTIBODHIAN FANTASY

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**Abstract.** This research paper endeavours to illuminate the relationship of literary text with truth-procedure in the context of renowned Hindi poet and literary thinker Gajanan Madhav Muktibodh's mythical fantasies. In this direction, the present work intends to discern the role of fantasy in literary texts. The dialectics of detachment and attachment can be discerned in Muktibodh's *Three Moments of Art*, which gives us insight into the redemption of myth or mythical history to generalise truth-procedure of art. With this critical insight embedded, this paper attempts to reflect upon the demystified mythical fantasy as poetic praxis, specifically in the context of Muktibodh's epic poem *Bramhrakshas*, the myth of Bramhrakshas, and the philosophical and mythical connotations of Brahma in Indian civilisation. As a revolutionary poet, Muktibodh redeems these myths from their mythical mist and liberates fantasy as a literary device from its identitarian mystic manifestation.

**Keywords:** truth-procedure, Muktibodh, fantasy, Bramhrakshas, psychosis, withdrawal, subtraction, exchange-principal, return of the repressed, return of the real

## INTRODUCTION

Literary text as truth-procedure<sup>1</sup> has its dynamics. It procreates from empirical reality but has its own specificity; hence, it is free from empiric. To symbolise experience, a literary attempt endeavours to transverse its very place of origin<sup>2</sup>. Literary procedure, in its processual unfolding, has the potential to redeem the myth from its quasi-historical or mystical mist.

Furthermore, it is precisely the functionality and the passage of this functionality of detachment which becomes the ground of attachment; attachment as oneness. This simultaneous detachment and attachment to myth ensures the dialectical analysis of myth and history as living tradition. Here, we envision *detachment-as-attachment* as an uninterrupted process. Through this research paper, I want to contend about this process of detachment-as-attachment and attachment-as-detachment and its relationship with truth-procedure in the context of renowned Hindi poet and literary thinker<sup>3</sup> Gajanan Madhav Muktibodh's poetic fantasies. In this direction, this paper discerns this problem specifically around the role of fantasy in literary text. In this way, this paper investigates what is beneath the apparent mysticism of fantasy. For an adequate analysis of this question, this paper is divided into two parts. The first part reflects upon the peculiarities of Muktibodhian fantasy and its relationship with mythical projection. The second one will try to explicate the militant poetic praxis of Muktibodh, specifically in the context of his epic poem, *Brambrakshas*. The said poem dealt with the ancient myth of Bramhrakshas of Indian civilisation. With this paper, I would like to argue how Muktibodh unpacked or demystified these myths while reinterpreting philosophical and mythical connotations of Brahma/Brahmin. I will argue how Muktibodh, as a revolutionary poet, redeemed these myths from their mythical mist and emancipated fantasy as a literary device from its *identitarianised* mystic manifestation.

#### PECULIARITIES OF FANTASY AND MUKTIBODH

In his critical work on Hindi *Cbhayawadi* poet Jaishankar Prasad's *Kamayani*, Muktibodh explicitly stresses the peculiarities of fantasy as a literary device. He discerns carefully those aspects of fantasy, which makes it significant to project the most repressed and hidden aspects of life and world that remain unnoticed

because of ruling class epistemological hegemony. This literary device has the capacity to illuminate those implications that remain imperceptible and hidden because of the ideological hegemony of capital. Muktibodh writes while rendering these peculiarities of fantasy:

Under the fantasy, the poet's imagination illuminates the essential peculiarities of life while presenting the panorama within which that factual life, whose self-empirical peculiarity has been projected by fantasy, becomes more and more subsidiary, underground, and disguised. In short, under the fantasy, the affective-subjective aspect is fundamentally predominant, and the objective aspect is subsidiary and disguised, as well as the affective-subjective aspect, while galvanising imagination during the constitution of imagery, presents a concrete figuration. This figuration has its own laws. In this concrete figuration objective aspect is merely informed and implied. But, without this underground foundation—the objective aspect—the significance of the concrete figuration cannot be projected. (Muktibodh 2011, 195) [My translation]

Fantasy is an inevitable part of Muktibodhian singular creative process (*Three Moments of Art*). Within the ground of his politico-aesthetic, poetry manifests itself in fantasy supported by reality: the singularities of *Three Moments* and the uninterrupted processuality amount to what we can call a universe of singularities or singular-multiples. This emphasis on universal singular ensures the negation of any order of dichotomy or relationality and, hence, disavows the exchange principle of capital<sup>4</sup>. Hence, Muktibodhian experimentation with fantasy as a literary device ensures the artistic inquiry *qua* militant inquiry for the Truth-Event. Fantasy reveals the Truth of the situation that the ruling class epistemological hegemony tries to hide and repress. Muktibodh recommences the subtractive endeavouring of militant inquiry for the emancipation of fantasy, which is subsumed within *identitarianised* appearances of mysticism under the canonisation of fantasy as a literary device. In this attempt, Muktibodh delineates the disadvantages and limits of fantasy, too. With this inquiry, Muktibodh critiques the canonisation and

hence emancipates the traditional understanding and usage of fantasy as a literary device. He writes:

It is not just that an unreal viewpoint is brought to bear on reality, but the way of presenting reality can be imaginary and driven by fantasy. The result is that reality mostly presents itself in a distorted state – so much so that it is often difficult to recognise it. Upon it are foisted the garbs of vain philosophy, ultra psychologising, unclear symbol systems and meaningless emotionalism. (As quoted in Sharma R.V. 2011, 127)

With this critical insight, he splendidly understands how to analyse fantasy adequately. He writes while making his point:

In short, fantasy is a gauzy curtain from where the facts of life blink. The structure of fantasy is constituted of diverse action-reactions incarnated in visualising imagery. In other words, the projection of facts is deeply subsidiary and affected; rather, the action-reactions to these facts are predominant.

In this situation, the analysis of fantasy should be followed as this—primarily, we need to know the action-reactions intertwined in fantasy, and through its clues, we need to reach the disguised or semi-disguised facts of life. These facts of life are treasures of sensible motives—in other words, they are peculiar ingredients of life that the poet reacts to and reflects. (Muktibodh 2011, 198) [My translation]

The prolonged and complex poems of Muktibodh represent the functionality of fantasy. Muktibodh's poetry offers the charisma of fantasy, where many unbelievable and incredible things happen, and these elements are deeply rooted in material reality. The peculiarity of Muktibodh's prolonged fantastic poems is that they are autonomous. It means they develop autonomously without any mythological edifice. Muktibodh himself developed demystified fantastic narratives for his poetry, which, according to renowned Hindi critic Dudhnath Singh, are neo-myths (Singh 2013, 26). But this fantastic mythical projection as demystified mythical fantasy is completely free from the pre-historical grounding of myths. In this precise sense, Muktibodh's so-called neo-myth as fantastic projection emancipates myths from their quasi-historical and mythical mist. He questions the well-

celebrated mythical projection of Indian civilisation, Brahma, and renders its modernist interpretation in his long poem *Ooh Nagaatman Fanidhar* (Muktibodh 2011C, 176-184). Here, he represents the sophisticated form of non-duality (*Advait*) of Aatma and Brahma as labour and capital with the spiral movement of his poem, which he compares to a cobra. In a similar vein, Muktibodh does the materialist analysis of the metaphysical aspects of Brahma. Similarly, in another fantasy *Ek Arup Shynya Ke Prati* (*Ibid.*, 187-191), he further develops this. Hence, it is the inherent power of Muktibodhian fantasy that, in its materialist analysis, redeems the myths from their traditional and metaphysical bounds. Furthermore, Muktibodh uses pre-modern cultural imagery precisely to demonstrate the grave contradictions of modern life. Hindi poet Chandrakant Devtale seems right when he says that “for opening up the ironies of modern human and his mind, Muktibodh frequently makes the visual, instructional and mystical orchestration of myths and mythical imageries” (Devtale 2003, 219) [My translation]. In this sense, it is precisely the weakness of Dudhnath Singh’s reading that he reduces the innovative literary discoveries of Muktibodh as neo-myths. Muktibodh does not look for neo-myths after redeeming myths from their mystical mist. Rather, he uninterruptedly excavates the repressed real under the apparent fluctuations of myths, which preserves the reality as the *status quo*. He foregrounds the real in contrast to reality.

Muktibodhian fantasy is an embodiment of the emergence of real against the background of reality. It is a moment of short-circuit between the *now time* (reality) and *what has been* (repressed real) in a strict Benjaminian sense for the constitution of dialectical image (Benjamin 199, 462). Hence, Muktibodhian fantasy is a ghostly world that is neither entirely real nor fully unreal. Rosemary Jackson recognises this spectral region of fantasy, which is neither entirely real nor fully unreal (Jackson 2009, 12). This real is just a glimpse that dishevels the symbolic order of literary fantasy. It is precisely because of this reason that

the language of fantasy seems rough and spectral. Fantasy travels to the world of pre-historical myths, folklore, and mysteries in this process of excavation of the real. One can often find this kind of roaming instinct or nomadism in Muktibodhian fantasy. The nomad of this poet<sup>5</sup> takes us to deserted landscapes, ponds, dried wells, rocks, valleys, *etc.* while narrating stories of ghosts, snakes, magicians, and occultism. Devtale alludes that in the purview of Muktibodhian fantasy there are images of subjective memories but, at the same time, there are images of communitarian memories also, which are part of his collective unconscious. (Devtale 2006, 216). Jackson recognises the explicit relationship between modern fantasy and myths. Moreover, she ponders upon the changes in the forms of fantasy with the ascendance of capitalism. She writes:

As a literature of ‘unreality’, fantasy has altered in character over the years in accordance with changing notions of what exactly constitutes ‘reality’. Modern fantasy is rooted in ancient myth, mysticism, folklore, fairy tales and romance (...). From 1800 onwards, those fantasies produced within a capitalist economy express some of the debilitating psychological effects of inhabiting a materialistic culture. They are peculiarly violent and horrific. (Jackson 2009, 2)

Certainly, Muktibodhian fantasy does not only demarcate the psychological effects that delimit and destitute an individual, but it also sketches the unleashing of human creativity against the ubiquitous Brahma of capital. In this process, Muktibodh shatters myths. He makes them free from their pre-historical clench. In this process of destruction of myths, he also redeems the collective unconscious. Similarly, in another poem, *Lakdi Ka Ravana* (Muktibodh, 2011C, 368-372), the explosion of human creativity while destructing the myth of contemplative Brahma—the symbolic embodiment of capital as impersonal ruling power—proceeds towards the redemption of the collective unconscious. I have suggested elsewhere that the redemption of the collective unconscious at the same moment is the emergence of the collective self in the said poem (Bali 2020B, 94-103).

Through fantasy, Muktibodh ensures the *return of the repressed* and *the return of the real* (spectre) within the apparent fluctuations of mysticism while destroying the spirit of capitalist hegemony. In this direction, the form of fantasy gives enormous options to the writer/poet for developing the content in more pictorial, illustrative, and superfine forms. In this way, fantasy endeavours to flare up deeply hidden and repressed aspects of modern human civilisation by the dictatorship of capital. Many of these aspects are imperceptible within the dichotomy of normal/abnormal, ordinary/extraordinary, and rational/irrational bifurcation of modernity. Renowned Hindi critic Namwar Singh, in his analysis of Muktibodh's epic poem *Andhere Mein*, explains this aspect while reflecting upon the process of dream work used in the poem.

It need hardly be pointed out that dream-tale style of narration has given the poem compactness and economy of words, and a viable reason for omitting extended descriptions. If, on the one hand, the dream style has inevitably made the poem pictorial, on the other a flowing grace has been added to the sequenced assemblage of more than one story, because the dream process is by nature beyond logic and object-oriented. (Singh, 2011, 112-113)

Undoubtedly, this critical explication of Muktibodhian fantasy by Singh has a broader relevance beyond the said poem. The kernel of this insight lies in elucidating the significance of those aspects that are beyond the binary of rational/irrational or, in other words, while criticising the instrumental rationality it brings the aporia of rational/irrational in question, which is real as a force of negativity.

#### MYSTICISM OR MILITANCY FOR TRUTH-EVENT: THE CASE OF UKTIBODH'S *BRAMHRAKSHAS*

*Brambrakshas* is an extremely important poem from the viewpoint of the formalisation of negativity of instrumental rationality. Here, Muktibodh, while positing the stark modern interpretation

of the ancient myth of Bramhrakshas—which prevails in Hindu folk belief—emancipates it from its pre-historical grip. In Hindu folk belief, a Brahmin who in his life does not make suitable use of his knowledge or does not bestow his knowledge to an adequate disciple becomes a ghost after death. Bramhrakshas is an incarnation of a Brahmin ghost. It would be significant to look at how Muktibodh renders the modern manifestation of the mythical image of Bramhrakshas. It is worth noticing that *Bramhrakshas* resides near the ruin, in a deserted and mysterious pond (*Bawdi*) on the edge of the city.

On that side of the city near the ruins  
an abandoned, empty well  
and within, in cold darkness  
in waters deep within  
amid deep-sunken stairs  
in the old stale puddle....

I cannot follow these seeming-foundations  
these depths (Muktibodh 2017, 51)

The apparent mysterious setting and the mysticism of the narrative structure of fantasy in a deserted *Bawdi* are very much explicit from the above poetic imagery. The last three lines in Hindi, (समझ में आ न सकता हो/कि जैसे बात का आधार/लेकिन बात गहरी हो) explicitly reveal the incomprehensibility about the mystery and secret related to this mystery of the act of *Bramhrakshas*. This secret is related to the self-activity of *Bramhrakshas*, which Muktibodh wants to unfold through this poetic fantasy. The mysterious silence of the incomprehensible act of *Bramhrakshas* makes the fantasy of this poem apparently mystic. The silently stood fig trees and the abandoned owl-nests hanging in them are witnesses of this mysterious silence. Hence, the setting and background of *Bawdi* in the poem accelerate the mysticism while emphasising the very first incomprehensible mystery or secret.

The smells of a hundred past pieties  
green, jungly, raw  
swim in the air and become the weighted doubt

of some unknown eminence  
 that unsettles the heart (*Ibidem*) [translation modified]

In this poetic fantasy, Muktibodh puts the layers of mysticism while weaving the dramaturgy of narrative with autonomous dynamic images. These, while sketching the imagery of deep-sunken stairs, fig trees, and entangled branches, on the one hand, give suggestive connotations to poetic fantasy. In contrast, on the other hand, the description of a hundred past pieties produces a frightening doubt in the narrative structure. The description of a past eminence, which rattles the heart in connotative figuration, constitutes the ghostly setting in *Bandi*. While the intensity of this mysterious eminence and depth begin to grow, Muktibodh unfolds the figure of *Bramhrakshas*, who is sitting silently in that old stale puddle and repeatedly following some bodily acts.

In the emptiness of the well's thick darkness  
 sits the Bramhrakshas  
 and from within rises echo after echo  
 like the mutterings of the insane  
 speculations,  
 defilement.  
 to wash away, at every moment  
 the shadow of impurity –  
 day and night, to make clean –  
 Bramhrakshas, scorning his body  
 with the claws of his hand, again  
 and again hands chest mouth  
 Still it remains...  
 Still it remains (*Ibidem*, 52) [translation modified]

The echo after echo that rises from within and the mutterings of the insane are signs of a particular internal turmoil. There is something that profoundly settles down in *Bramhrakshas*' being. A ghostly apparition which has entrapped deep in *Bramhrakshas*' interiority. Isn't it a sinful shadow of capital as a giant centripetal force that Muktibodh has encountered in anxiety dreams almost at every phase of his lifetime since childhood? Muktibodh mentioned these frightening dreams in his personal diary

(Muktibodh, 2011B, 179). If it is so, does Muktibodh unfold his own unconscious in this poem? In that case, is Muktibodh himself a *Brambrakshas*, or as a militant poet, he negates *Brambrakshasian* moment of his unconscious? Is the negation of *Brambrakshasian* moment of unconscious also a negation of foreclosure of human creativity?

*Brambrakshas* is uninterruptedly scorning his body to remove the dirt of the sinful shadow of a ghostly apparition of capital as an exploitative system precisely to wash and make his being clean. However, the dirt of capital has clung to his being like a blood-sucking vampire who is continually sucking his creativity. He withdraws himself from the city and forecloses himself in *Bawdi* for his cure. The ghostly apparition has deeply settled down in his interiority, and precisely for the remedy of his cure, he is uttering wondrous stotras and Sanskrit curses:

and ... from his lips  
strange stotras, mantras  
fevered curses in chaste Sanskrit,  
lines on the forehead weave  
glistening strands of thought  
in a continuous stream's maddening flow  
– life's sympathy blots (ibid, 52)

Without destroying the exploitative system, *Brambrakshas* intends to emancipate his being from the dirt of the ghostly grip of capital while engrossing himself in self-meditation at *Bawdi*. Is not *Brambrakshas* a symbolic manifestation of a modern human subject who desires to seek self-prosperity without destroying the exploitative system of which he is part? If this is the case, then we all have *Brambrakshas* in our unconscious. Muktibodh was recognising *Brambrakshas* of his inner psyche; perhaps this is why he was writing in his personal diary, “I am a Bramhrakshas. Bramhrakshas, who from eternal time endeavoured to be right always but had made mistakes all the time” (Muktibodh, 2011B, 177). Literary scholar Nikhil Govind adequately recognises the

turmoil of the unconscious in Muktibodh's poetic language. He writes:

Muktibodh might well be regarded as (...) a poet of the bizarre (of the *bibhatsa*), for he makes no effort to 'contain' his images and feelings in a 'Self' (or the correlate of that Self in language—the metre). For the metre is the ultimate sign of the 'control' of language, and Muktibodh seemingly gives up control, to invent new rhythms. (Govind 2016, 81)

Muktibodh himself recognises *Brambrakshas* of the unconscious and his abode in *Teesra Kshan* essay of *Ek Sabityik Kee Diary*. Here, we find some clues related to the figure of *Brambrakshas*.

I think mind is a mysterious world. There is darkness here. There are stairs in that darkness. They are wet. The lower stair submerged in water. There is dark abyssal water. The self is scared of this abyssal water. There is someone sitting here. Perhaps, this is me. (Muktibodh 2011B, 76)

It is worth noticing that Muktibodh wrote this essay in 1958, whereas *Brambrakshas* was written from 1956 to 1962. Hence, it is explicit that with the figure of *Brambrakshas* and his mysterious Bawdi, Muktibodh was envisaging the *Brambrakshasian* tendency of the modern human subject who is trapped in the self-delusion while not reflecting upon the societal reasons for foreclosure of his creativity. In this direction, on the one hand, this poetic fantasy alludes to Heideggerian withdrawal. In contrast, on the other hand, the insanity of *Brambrakshas* gives us the possibility of reading him as a psychotic subject. Here, the question arises whether this insanity is individuated or is it collective insanity? The collective ubiquity of madness is the materiality of capitalist society, which invents newer techniques for controlling the inherent 'insanity' in human subjects. *Brambrakshas* is also under the disciplinary control of capital's imperceptible but ubiquitous power.

There is a fundamental difference between psychotic and neurotic in psychoanalysis. In psychotic, the law of the father is foreclosed, whereas in neurotic, it is repressed. Hence, in the case of psychotic, there is no successful dissolution of the Oedipus

complex or desire of the mother. Due to the foreclosure of the law of the father and, hence, because of the absence or the least development of language, the psychotic subject primarily depends on the order of reality. Since direct access to reality is impossible hence, in this case, the disjunction between the psychotic universe and reality manifests in delusions and hallucinations (Mandal 2018, 90). In the history of psychoanalysis Wolf Men's hallucinations and Schreber's delusions bring forth such cases. In hallucination, the Real, which was expelled by reality, returns as a return to the Real, which does not exist in reality (*Ibidem*, 105). Hence, hallucination and delusion enter from the outside of the symbolic order and dissolve the psychotic's relationship with reality. In this way, hallucination and delusion belong to the imaginary register (*Ibidem* 121). Isn't *Brambraksbas* also cut off from reality since, as the sun rays fall and the atoms of the sun arrive, he has a hallucination that the sun has bowed and salutes him?

but when, in the well's deep inner wall  
oblique sun-rays fall and  
motes rise,  
light surfaces  
he thinks the sun has bowed and saluted him.  
when a moonbeam forgets its way  
and its rays stagger off the wall  
he thinks it worships him as the  
venerable knower. (Muktibodh 2017, 52-53)

In his pertinent book *The Capitalist Unconscious*, Samo Tomšič suggests that the dissolution of reality in psychosis should not be fetishised. While emphasising the case of Schreber, he underlines that his case is much more than delirium, which places the subject outside the social link (Tomšič 2015, 155). Similarly, Heidegger's withdrawal entails the unconcealment of Being (Heidegger 2008, 161) as poetic mediation within the contemplative horizon of language (*Ibidem*, 198), while withdrawing from the structure of the world. Tomšič recognises that from his journey from idealist

humanism to historical materialism. Marx had abandoned the thought of originary being of human and recognised the potential inherent in alienation (2015, 161).

The endeavour of cleaning his dirt to seek the pure being in the confines of Bawdi: *Brambrakshas* strengthens the same exploitative system which makes him psychotic. In this way, through *Brambrakshas*, Muktibodh analyses Heideggerian mysticism and generalised psychosis in capitalist society. In a widely discussed discourse in Hindi literature, the figure of *Brambrakshas* as a representative of the middle-class intellectual is widely accepted (Nawal 1983, 105)—who is detached from the working classes and their struggle and hence in isolation from himself. Here, the question arises whether *Brambrakshas* cannot see the labour process of his intellectuality and how he drifts amidst pandits and thinkers to seek redemption (Muktibodh 2017, 55). Isn't the wound-marked chest and twisted feet due to the calamity between the good and greater good manifestation of *Brambrakshas*' psychotic labour process wherein the small success is profound and the failure is sublime (*Ibidem*, 54)? Muktibodh calls this alienating doing of *Brambrakshas*' psychosis "tragedy of mad allegory" (*Ibidem*, 53). For *Brambrakshas* himself, this is a romantic tragedy of revolt by denying the system or, in other words, withdrawing from the system. In this process, he does not destroy the system. Instead, he confines himself 'outside' of this exploitative system in isolation. This isolation takes him to a state of alienation. However, even in this alienation, he is still within the ideological interpellation of his apparent eminence as a "venerable knower". His intellectual endeavouring reflects upon his obsession with eminence in these lines of the poem:

and with a twofold, frightening potency  
 his understanding mind ranges  
 through the folk tales of Sumer-Babylonia, mellifluent Vedic hymns  
 today's chands, mantras, theorems, theories  
 Of Marx Engels Russel Toynbee Heidegger Spengler Sartre even Gandhi  
 everyone's proof afresh commented on afresh –  
 all this as he bathes in the well's dense greenness. (*Ibidem*, 53)

The question is, why this ideological interpellation of apparent eminence? Does *Brambrakshas* believe that he is outside of this exploitative and oppressive system since he resides in this deserted Bawdi which is situated on the edge of the city? But is this outside actually an outside? What does Muktibodh want to allude through this symbolic figuration of *Brambrakshas*' inhabitation? Moreover, what does he imply when he calls this *Brambrakshasian* phenomenon tragedy? What this tragedy is all about? While critiquing the *Brambrakshasian* notion of the outside, Pothik Ghosh points towards the tragedy of *Brambrakshas*. If we follow Ghosh's interpretation, *Brambrakshas*' tragedy is that he gets trapped within his act of withdrawal from the structure of exchange, which is fundamentally different from subtraction. Ghosh writes while making his point, "Little does he realise that subtraction is not withdrawal from the structure of exchange and relationality but its disavowal and destruction through the generalisation of subtractiveness as and into subtractive ontology" (Ghosh 2016, 99). In *Brambrakshas*' act, we find how obsessively he wants to remain outside of this structure. Ghosh brings up crucial questions when he says:

Does not Bramharakshas' purity, which he seeks to attain by obsessively washing himself of the shadow of sin and all the dirt and the grime of the world around by seeking to keep himself separate from that world, render him complicit in its perpetuation as the dump of sin, grime and dirt it is?  
(*Ibidem*)

This is precisely the act that detaches *Brambrakshas* from his societal process. Hence, this *Brambrakshasian* phenomenon becomes the absolute dichotomisation of self and society, interiority and exteriority. Meanwhile, Muktibodh rejects this dichotomy, as reflected in his critical writings. For Muktibodh, the unanswered societal question recommences in self-inquiry, and this self-inquiry broadens political inquiry for complete social transformation. The said inquiry differentiates Muktibodh's fantasy from mystic fantasy.

Hindi poet Malyaj splendidly recognises the mysticism of Muktibodhian fantasy. For him, Muktibodh's imagery "while residing in the lacuna of diverse images, premised upon the relentless stone of an average meaning" (Malyaj 2019, 268) [My translation]. According to him, Muktibodh's mysticism does not allude to irrationalism or irrational empiric. Rather, it is an appeal to create the milieu. "There is a mystery because there is a curiosity. Only the curiosity produces mystery. There is a vocation of seeking in mystery and not of concealing" (*Ibidem*, 269) [My translation]. This vocation of seeking the Event is Muktibodhian inquiry, which uninterruptedly traces the Truth of the Event. With the Truth of the Event, Muktibodh transcends the limits of knowledge and brings the unknown within the periphery of the known. It is worth pondering that for Malyaj, Muktibodh's mysticism is a kind of epistemology (*Ibidem*, 269). In addition to this, according to contemporary Hindi critic Sudhir Ranjan Singh, Muktibodh transformed the myth of *Brambrakeshas* into the epistemic impulse of exalted fantasy (Singh 2018, 215-216). Hence, Malyaj rightly recognises that Muktibodhian fantasy is a creative leap (Malyaj 2019, 270) which, with the process of uninterrupted inquiry, desires to encounter the Truth of the Event. Isn't it a revolutionary leap that Benjamin discusses in his *Thesis on The Philosophy of History?* (Benjamin 1985, 261) It is a poetic moment of revolution. Hence, Muktibodhian fantasy is militancy, and Muktibodh is a militant of Truth<sup>6</sup>. Muktibodhian fantasy is a militant inquiry that explores the reasons for failures. Along similar lines, Muktibodh makes an intense inquiry into *Brambrakeshas'* romantic tragedy of individuated revolt. He disagrees with Govind's Nietzschean reading of *Brambrakeshas* as "ephemera of sorrow", a Nietzschean untimeliness in the world, a flawed and fallen superhero, someone who has immense power, but no freedom, and who must wander the earth and heavens, unfulfilled, stared at as a strange beast" (*Ibidem*, 84). With his extensive excavation of *Brambrakeshasian* moment of unconsciousness, he renders the limits of the mystic act of

*Brambrakshas* within apparently mystic indexing of fantasy. At this precise moment, Muktibodh subtracts the mystic dimension of fantasy while rendering the militant inquiry regarding *Brambrakshasian* failure. This subtractive negation is, at the same moment, the destruction of the romantic tragedy of *Brambrakshas*. Muktibodh, in this way, makes the synchronisation between destruction and subtraction, which, according to Badiou, are two moments or aspects of negation (Badiou 2014, 83-84).

If the first section of this poetic fantasy projects the romantic tragedy of *Brambrakshas*, the second section deals with the excavation and materialist analysis of this tragedy:

but the age turned and he came trading fame  
... his only wealth from work now,  
from that wealth a heart and mind,  
and, subject to wealth, from within  
trust's glint  
ever smoulders.

self-consciousness and yet in this  
love's discord...  
a world consciousness unmade!!  
at greatness' feet  
an agitated dejected mind!  
if only I had met him those days  
then living his anguish myself  
I would have told him his worth  
his greatness!  
of his, and his greatness's,  
use to people like us  
I would have spoken of that inward greatness!!

powdered within  
and outside between two stone slabs  
this is a farcical tragedy!! (*Ibidem*, 55-56)

In the specific context of psychosis, Muktibodh, with his militant inquiry into interiority and exteriority, transforms this romantic tragedy into a materialist one. In this process, he revolutionises fantasy as a literary device while subtracting the mystic element

of this very device. In this precise sense, Muktibodhian fantasy is not a mystical praxis but militancy for Truth-Event.

## CONCLUSION

While referring to the unpublished work of Badiou, Slavoz Žižek explicitly differentiates between the subjective stances of the mystic and master towards the Truth Event. On one hand, the master pretends to name the Event, whereas on the other hand, the mystic insists on the ineffability of the Event. Consequently, he disregards its symbolic consequences (Žižek 2005, 165). It would be significant to underline that, according to Lacan, psychotic is a mystic engrossed in his *jouissance*, who has been cut off from his social link (as quoted in Žižek). In another essay centred around Heidegger, Žižek says that, as the psychotic subject is cut off from social processes, hence he lacks the level of “forced choice”. In this way, he acts “as if he has a truly free choice ‘all the way along’” (*Ibidem*, 19). Is not the intense meditation of *Bramhrakshas* in abandoned and desolate Bawdi that alludes to his so-called free choice, where he is entrapped in his hallucination after his successful withdrawal from the exploitative system?

Muktibodhian fantasy of *Bramhrakshas* adequately and explicitly reveals how Event subsumed to *identitarianised* determination of withdrawal and not subtraction from the structure of exchange. This *identitarianised* determination of Event’s non-identity by exchange-principle is the lapse of Truth. It is worth mentioning that, according to renowned Hindi poet Dinesh Kumar Shukla, *Bramhrakshas* is an aberrant truth seeker, as Shukla writes:

The image of Bramhrakshas is an image of eternal struggle. Bramhrakshas is an aberrant truth seeker. He is a lost warrior on the grounds of emancipation. He is Prometheus. He is Oedipus. He is Hamlet. He is Dharmraj Yudhishthira who is melting in ice. He is also Bhishma Pitamah who is holding the bridle of his death chariot while lying on the bed of

arrows. He is also Krishna who became prey to the arrow of Vadhik in Dwarika. Adam, from Jewish myth, is also a Bramhrakshas who was expelled from heaven. In fact, he is Nirala<sup>7</sup> also, and at the end, Muktibodh. (2017, 102) [My translation]

The above quote by Shukla presents a marvellous description of the negative assertion of myths. Muktibodh is doing the same with his militant inquiry in this poetic fantasy. The work of militant inquiry is to inquire about the uninterrupted processuality of subtraction while recommencing the subsumed subtraction. This is what the uninterrupted tracing of Truth means. In this way, it is explicit that Muktibodh is not a *Bramhrakshas* only. Instead, he is against being a *Bramhrakshas*. In that sense, Muktibodh is not interested in mythologising human creativity while withdrawing from history. Rather, he desires to shatter history to access the real movement as a dynamic communist utopia<sup>8</sup>. The very last lines of this fantasy of *Bramhrakshas* echo the desire to negate *Bramhrakshas*. This is the negative assertion of the *Bramhrakshasian* myth. Here, Muktibodh wishes to recommence the unfinished task of *Bramhrakshas* as his truest disciple and take it to its logical conclusions.

the flame unknown slept forever  
this happened: why?  
why did this happen?!  
Bramhrakshas' truest disciple  
I so wished to be  
whose incomplete works  
whose pain's source  
collected, extracted, risen  
I could bring. (*Ibidem*, 56)

## NOTES

1. Here, the idea of Truth-Procedure has been taken from French philosopher Alain Badiou's conception of art as the embodiment of truth-procedure. According to Badiou, this truth-procedure of art is irreducible to other truths, and art as a "singular regime of thought is irreducible to philosophy" (Badiou 2005, 9).

2. German philosopher Theodor W. Adorno develops this idea in his book *Aesthetic Theory* (Adorno 2002, 1-2).
3. Gajanan Madhav Muktibodh (1917-1964) was a prominent poet of *Nayi Kavita* (New Poetry) and Hindi modernism.
4. Read the following paper titled “The ‘Three Moments of Art’ and Truth-Event: Reflections on Muktibodhian Creative Process” (Bali 2019, 58-84).
5. One can read the following research paper in Hindi, titled “Aatm-Nirwasan aur Khanabadosh Icchaen: Muktibodh ke Kavi-Karm Ke Sandarbh mein” (Bali 2020) to understand the relationship of nomadic desire with self-alienation in the poet of Muktibodh.
6. For Badiou, “Subject of a Truth” is a finite moment within the infinite process of Truth. In this precise sense, for him, artistic procedure as an infinite rendition of Truth is Truth-Procedure whereas individual artworks and artists are subject to a particular Truth. In this way, the Subject does not have any kind of mastery *vis-à-vis* Event(s). In this process, he avoids the ideological interpellation of the subject. “At the very most”, he writes, “we can say, in an absolutely general fashion, that subject is the militant of truth” (Badiou 2005, 55).
7. Suryakant Tripathi “Nirala” was a renowned and representative poet of *Chhayawadi* movement of Hindi literature.
8. “Communism is, for us, not a *state of affairs* which is to be established, an *ideal* to which reality [will] have to adjust itself. We call communism the *real* movement which abolishes the present state of things. The conditions of this movement result from the now existing premise” (Marx and Engles 2010, 57).

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PEDAGOGICAL ASPECTS OF THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION IN  
THE 2020S: THE PRACTICALITIES OF RELIGIOUS DIALOGUE,  
EDUCATION AND FAITH STUDIES

- PART I -

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**Abstract.** This paper analyses various pedagogical approaches to teaching theological education to young children, adults and theology educators themselves. Critical issues are considered, for instance: To what extent does the theology teacher's personal philosophy and inner self influence the choice of pedagogical approach? Did people learn theology best by passive learning from lectures and textbooks, or are some forms of theology best taught using active pedagogy, for example, experiential learning, roleplay or site visits? Active pedagogy, such as community engagement, role play or problem-based learning, was most effective in contextualising theological learning. Teaching methods such as group work and interfaith swaps were English-speaking-oriented, impeding interfaith theological education with Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, and ethnic religions. Other global religions may not have been viewed as favourably as Catholicism or Protestantism, due to a lack of translation. Theology practitioners were often learners, as well as teachers in educational settings.

This paper is part of a two-part series. The second part will explore the role of interreligious dialogue, education, and studies in theological training.

**Keywords:** theological education, practical theology, practical dialogue, practical education

## INTRODUCTION

Globally, the six most practised religions are Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, and ethnic religions specific to particular

groups. Chinese traditional faiths, including Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism, also hold significant influence (LSE Religion and Global Society, 31 January 2021). Despite differences in scripture, these major religions share common values, such as a commitment to diversity. Theology upholds equality among all followers, regardless of age, culture, or social standing. Therefore, theological education—regardless of faith—must foster dialogue within the communities it serves.

These interfaith perspectives also prompt us to realise that education holds the “cure” of the widespread social malaise. Hence, it is not an exaggeration to propose that the “vaccine” to end the hidden pandemic, *i.e.* the prevailing inequality and injustice that has plagued humanity for so long, is precisely to be found in our education system, only if it is inclusive, human-centred, caring, and only if it works to nurture the well-being of all and realise opportunities for all.

As John Dewey cautioned, unless we do so, we will rob our children of their tomorrow. (Guerrand-Hermes Foundation for Peace Research Institute, 16 October 2020)

Theology is the systematic study of religious belief. The study of theology can help people develop a deeper understanding of their own religious tradition and/or someone else’s religious belief. Classically theology can discuss and consider supernatural events either literally or figuratively. The religious concepts of divinity and revelation can be considered using religious epistemology, which relies on the acceptance and belief of a spiritual being. In contemporary terms, theology can provide various religious perspectives on responses to the COVID-19 global pandemic; UK Brexit; a military airstrike; or a natural disaster (Corpuz 2020, e236).

This means that theology may help demonstrate how suggested policy formulation will address a contemporary situation or need, through a particular religion. Theology is also a medium by which people can explore spiritual ways of interpreting the reality of their or other people’s surroundings (Ouwehand *et al.* 2019, 438). The focus on divinity is important as theology begins with the

assumption that the divine exists in some form, which people can perceive. For example, the divine can appear to a person in a mental, physical, a social reality, or for some people, a spiritual or supernatural state (*The Spiritual Life* 2025). Evidence of divinity manifest in people's socio-historical accounts is best expressed when documented by others. This is a hitherto different dynamic of theology, as there is the requirement that a third person has seen, witnessed, a form of divinity interacting with another person, and then recorded as such. People (plural) then develop a belief system based on what they have experienced, including spiritual and supernatural events as witnessed by others. There is an element of contemporary manifestation of "personhood" here (Lingua 2022, 1299). One's persona is changed by an inexplicable event, divine intervention, as explained by a passer-by who, for example, witnessed a person whereby pure fortune avoided being run over by a car. After such a near-death experience many people find a religion. In this sense, the study of theological assumptions merges with an interface of the philosophy of religion.

Theology enables people to structure their lived experiences, empowering people to develop an understanding of how or why they can choose or have chosen to live their lives a certain way. Theology can utilise ethnographic, experiential, historical and philosophical arguments to articulate, critique, defend, explain, promote and understand various religious issues (*The Spiritual Life* 2025). It is theology's capacity to explain why people have interpreted incidents in their lives or a religion a certain way, which in turn explains the importance of theology education. The third-party dynamic of theology, what has happened to a person must have been interpreted and witnessed by someone else, is best delivered by education. With education, people with diverse lived experiences or from similar social backgrounds can be taught a particular religion or multiple religions together. Theology students need to be taught how their religion or various religious faiths can be applied on a practical basis to deliver societal benefits to local communities (Bangert 2023, 32).

This paper is presented from the standpoint of practical theology, as described by Richard Osmer (2008). Fredrickson-Laouini (2021) contextualises the role practical theology plays in understanding and addressing societal issues, clearly indicating that development work must deliver community needs (*See* Manley-Tannis 2020, 13).

Osmer's four-point frame for understanding (and doing) practical theology, (1) the descriptive-empirical task/what's going on? (2) the interpretive task/why is this going on? (3) the normative task/what ought to be going on? and (4) the pragmatic test/how might we respond? made perfect sense. (Fredrickson-Laouini 2021).

Practical theologian Bonnie Miller-McClemore (2012) underscored Osmer's (2013) later work. Miller-McClemore (2012) described four different ways to understand practical theology. These are: as an *activity* to followers, which carry out the tasks that need to be done. Also, practical theology is a *method* for religious leaders of any faith to follow. As *curricula content* to be present and taught during the delivery of theological education. As an *academic discipline* to feature as part of training religious teachers of any faith (Fredrickson-Laouini 2021; Council of England 2020, 38). Practical theology religious education is situated as follows. "Each understanding points to different spatial locations, from daily life to library and fieldwork and classroom, congregation, and community, and, finally, to the academic guild and global context." (Miller-McClemore 2012, 5; *see* also Sandberg 2020, 430).

## THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

Bell Hooks (1994, 5) believes in active pedagogy, a holistic person-centred form of pedagogy, teaching using lived experiences. For theology students to benefit from "engaged pedagogy", the teacher must be fully committed to epiphany and self-realisation, which reinforces their spiritual well-being. Students must be able to see that sense of authenticity, see the theology teacher's full

commitment to their educational advancement and spiritual needs. Bell Hooks (1994) argues:

Progressive holistic education, “engaged pedagogy” is more than conventional or feminist pedagogy. For, unlike these two teaching practices, it emphasises well-being. That means that teachers must be actively committed to a process of self-actualisation that promotes their own well-being if they are to teach in a manner which empowers students. (Hooks 1994, 15)

Bell Hooks has an educational outlook which harmonises with Paulo Freire’s (2000 [orig.1970]) position on education in several places. The latter issue he identified in the preceding quote resonates with Freire’s (2000 [1970], 59) view that humanity is an exclusive right to support others. There is further alignment with Freire (2000 [1970], 2), the humanitarian element of theological education clearly requires a degree of critical consciousness. Theology students mustn’t be banking repositories, empty vessels to be filled with non-contextualised knowledge (Freire 2000 [1970], 72). Students should be free-thinking, able to create solutions addressing people’s lived experiences, in stressful circumstances where practical theology is required.

Those truly committed to liberalisation must reject the banking concept in its entirety, adopting instead a concept of women and men as conscious beings, and consciousness as consciousness intent upon the world. They must abandon the educational goal of deposit-making and replace it with the posing of problems of human beings in their relations with the world. (Freire 2000 [1970], 79)

Parker J Palmer (2007, 6) explains the idea that teachers need to explore their inner life and the significant effect this self-awareness has on classroom practice. In essence “we teach who we are” (Palmer 2007, 1). Learning how to teach can involve adapting one’s lived experiences and personal narratives into multiple identities. These teaching identities can change depending on the subject being studied, or more importantly the character and the nature of the students being taught. Palmer informs us, the internalisation of teaching involves three paths: intellectual, emotional and spiritual. He articulates the bringing of one’s inner self to teaching as follows:

“When a person is healthy and whole, the head and the heart are both-and, not either-or, and teaching that honours that paradox can help make us all more whole” (Palmer 2007, 66).

The use of roleplay in theological education and multi-faith partnerships mirrors Anne Wimberly’s (2005, 44) “story-linked” work. The need to appropriately question is supported as is the symbolic concept; transformational work must continue even in the most challenging circumstances. Harriet, the gun-toting female Moses, provides a useful analogy in getting this point across in a theology education session (Wimberly 2005, 47). Whatever form of pedagogy is used, active or passive, learning occurs in three phases: we have disclosure where people assess their lived situation, people’s critical reflection of the situation, then self-learning, when the group discuss the experience. There is sufficient flexibility for story-linking to be used with group work, problem-based learning and roleplay. Christian scriptures were being considered through a contextual lens. It must be possible that story-linking (Wimberly 2005, 49) can be applied to other religious faiths, not just Catholicism.

A discussion of societal ethics would be helpful, manifest in the form of enabling theology students to address the issue of the “Clash of Ignorance” (*See* Jafralie and Zaver 2019, 90). “Clash of Ignorance” can occur when there is insufficient interfaith theological education, to minimise discrimination as a result of misinformation caused by globalisation (Jafralie and Zaver 2019, 90). Analysis of predominantly Western theology ethics reveals a dominant ideology (Clark *et al.* 2021, 628). Interreligious studies should reflect reality, acknowledging that some religious teachings on right and wrong may diverge from dominant religious ideologies. Some international observers argue that Christian theology oversimplifies the histories of communities harmed by its influence, often overlooking the ongoing inequalities faced by the colonised (Suna-Koro 2020, 40–41). Philosophical questions can serve as a lens for examining different religious perspectives on contemporary issues such as abortion, borrowing, money lending, gambling,

gender, homosexuality, organ donation, and suicide (Mikva 2020, 138).

Understanding the motivations of the theology educator is useful in the choice of teaching materials for learning classes. Theology teachers' motivation can also influence the choice of pedagogical approach in religious education settings (Unstad and Fjortoft 2020, 5; *see also* Khalid *et al.* 2020, 3; Mambo 2019, 8). Interreligious education can help present the student with hermeneutics, a process to obtain a deeper understanding of religious texts. There is effectively a challenge to communicating multi-faith texts or at least understanding them in religious collaboration settings, for instance, partnership development work (Berling 2020, 6; Maheshwaran and Sier 2019, 29). Some religions are best taught utilising alternative learning mechanisms to texts, for example, aural, visual, oral, tactile, the learner's biography, emotive avenues and motivation. Umashankar (2021, 231) describes this contact with the following term, the "multisensory engagement with the Qur'an."

If a teacher is inclined to deliver their theology practice on a spiritual basis, passive learning of interreligious studies will probably provide sufficient scaffolding. Alternatively, if a tutor prefers to transfer theological education knowledge through a teacher's direct experiences, they may choose a more active learning pedagogical approach. The scaffolding for community participation, citizenship or pastoral care, can be established using experiential learning or role-play active learning pedagogy (Berling 2020, 5). Experiential learning pedagogy—learning by doing—is particularly beneficial as it helps to nurture professional behaviours which cohere with theological education. Such hands-on pedagogy can help provide practical dialogue, education and theology skills required to contextualise pastoral care, for instance, to a recently bereaved person. Site visits have been found to be a particularly effective pedagogical tool by which to embed key concepts of theological learning (Long 2018, 78; Trotta and Wilkinson 2019, 27). Reflective learning could be used by teachers to examine what extent conflict, politics, and power struggles have had on various religions (Suna-

Koro 2020, 56). The use of reflective exercises and pieces also equips educators to be able to teach the numerous religious doctrines on which people's faith is based. An empirical research project could be used to apply practical theology to contemporary settings such as corporate companies, hospitals or prisons. Active learning role-play enables students to consider how various religions have impacted the shaping of ancient empires and the world today.

A theology teacher's motivation is crucial in interreligious education, why they want to learn shapes the effectiveness of their teaching. Places of worship have an important role as an educational institution, a place people attend to meet their learning needs (Mambo 2019, 20). Motivation influences curriculum design and curriculum content. Theological education motivation must be understood, so institutions ensure the learning enables pupils to embrace multi-faith teaching. Theological education enables religious learners and teachers to develop spiritually on an interreligious basis (Corpuz 2020, e236). Symbolic violence (Bourdieu 1991, 5) in the form of exclusion and misclusion of certain religions takes place. Inappropriate motivations resulting in the inclusion of other religions that support the dominant ideology can also be in operation nascent in the background (Matemba and Addai-Mununkum 2021, 14).

Theological education also assists religious teachers in considering some spiritual generic questions which apply to all faiths (Roebben 2019, 54). How did the Jesus movement turn into a church? How can God be one and three? At what point did the Church decide that Jesus was God? What is heresy, and why does it matter? How does Christianity relate to surrounding philosophy? What are the sources of Christian thought and doctrine? Did theology develop and change? All these concepts are described using Christian discourse, when globally there are clearly many other religious faiths. Most do however also apply to Baha'ism, Confucianism, Hinduism, or Judaism—this list is not exhaustive (*See* Corpuz 2020, e236). These concepts should apply to all faiths. In protestant theology, students investigate different Christian

religions whilst other faiths such as Hinduism or Islam remain unexplored.

Sacramental theology is situated in the area of practical theology (Suna-Koro 2020, 60). Critical analysis and delivery of practical dialogue, education, faith, and studies are key components of sacramental theology. Helen Cameron and others describe a model of theology as having four voices which are espoused, formal, normative, and operant (Madden 2020, 133). One pedagogical approach would be to use a form of simulation, religious teachers would be given a contemporary issue to present. Each student should be asked to critically evaluate a religion's view and practice in relation to that denomination's historical and doctrinal teaching. From a Christian perspective, particularly within Catholicism and Protestantism, sacramental theology holds that all human beings are manifestations of God's love and representatives of Christ (Glanzer *et al.* 2020, 48). This view affirms the inherent sacredness of all individuals, including those with differing religious beliefs. Additionally, there is a significant spiritual overlap, as concepts such as rebirth, reincarnation, and resurrection are present in multiple religions, suggesting shared themes regarding the transformation and continuity of the soul.

All of creation becomes a manifestation of the divine, we experience the divine in all things. Hence Jewish and Christian mysticism are part of the divine manifestation. There is thus an elision first from theological unity of being, then to onto-theological unity of being, and then finally to a unity of being that is a theory of religious diversity and pluralism (a onto-theology of religions). (Epafras and Brill 2020, 13)

Religious teachers and students can learn to adapt humour as a coping mechanism, satire to highlight policies replicating inequality, and jokes, which contextualise social transgressions (Wagner and Symon, 27 January 2021). Comedy has a place when discussing aspects of war as part of religious education. Globally, many wars have been fought, often according to the combatants on the grounds of religion. At the end of some of these wars, it may be appropriate for people to joke and say, "I'm travelling back home

from home”. This could happen if dispossessed or diasporic communities feel they can physically return to their homeland. Spiritually, the end of a war could mark the beginning of psychosocial healing, with sarcastic jokes being used to deliver genuine closure. Sarcasm can be employed in theological education to highlight the complexity of human emotions, such as the mixed feelings that may arise upon hearing of a former dictator’s capture or death. Religious education classes offer a safe space for such emotions to be expressed and discussed, especially in multi-faith settings (Flensner and Von der Lippe 2019, 277). Humour, in this context, can serve as a tool for active learning, encouraging critical thinking and fostering deeper engagement during practical theology discussions.

## CONCLUSIONS

Bell Hooks (1994), Anne Wimberly (2005), and Parker Palmer’s (2007) contributions towards the pedagogical aspects of theological education in the 2020s can’t be underestimated. Anne Wimberly’s (2005, 47) “story-link” ork applies a form of roleplay and/or simulation pedagogy to learning. “Story-linking” can be applied to enable theology students to put themselves in another person’s shoes. This will help them gain a better understanding of the culturally and ethnically diverse religions of others. The contextualising pedagogical element of “story-linking” (Wimberly 2005, 44) helps to introduce group work and problem-based learning to theological education. All three writers have several commonalities which illuminate the path towards pedagogical choice. To different degrees, Hooks (1994), Wimberly (2005), and Palmer (2007) all support teaching practices that enable people to learn from their lived experiences. This is experiential learning pedagogy—learning by doing—a pedagogical approach best accessed by working in the community. Another common theme

they articulated is how teaching should come from the heart, the inner self, and the soul, applying to all faiths and religions.

Theological education is more than a job to perform or a simple service provision; teaching becomes both a vocation and a profession. It is transformative for both the students, as delivery agents, and the communities they serve. Theology schools and educators can promote future-oriented goals, such as community partnerships and bridge-building, through a focus on learning culture, project-based learning, and internships. The active learning elements of this approach enable the use of “engaged pedagogy” for more expansive thinking and “self-actualisation” (Hooks 1994, 15). In practice, there is a shared focus on individuals having spiritual motivation and the desire to transform the communities they serve through a model of shared ownership. Spirituality is understood as common to all faiths and religions. The third-party dynamic in theological education plays a key role in personal transformation, often triggered by a spiritual or supernatural event witnessed by others. A significant number of people who experience such an event may go on to follow a religion of their choice. Theological education, taught actively or passively, helps individuals contextualise and understand various social, economic, and political aspects of their lives. By applying the ethos of collective ownership, students can deliver practical theology in real-world ways, such as assisting with welfare benefit forms or running a community food bank.

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## ENCHANTMENT OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE: EMERGING ADVANCES IN LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

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**Abstract.** The way people learn and acquire new languages has changed significantly as a result of the incorporation of artificial intelligence (AI) in language development. In order to investigate the “enchantment” of AI, this article looks at new developments in technology and trends that are changing language instruction. Artificial intelligence-powered solutions provide learners with tailored experiences, flexible lesson plans and instantaneous feedback based on their individual requirements and inclinations. Artificial intelligence-driven chatbots, speech recognition software and virtual tutors have made learning settings more dynamic and immersive while providing ongoing assistance and engagement. Furthermore, AI makes language learning more accessible, providing students from a variety of socioeconomic and geographic backgrounds with access to high-quality instruction. This paper discusses these advancements and their potential to revolutionise language learning, as well as the future scope of AI in creating more inclusive, efficient and immersive language education, and also sketches a contrary picture of positive dimensions and problematic aspects of artificial intelligence-constructed language equipment.

**Keywords:** artificial intelligence, language development, technology, assistance

### INTRODUCTION

The arena of technology has moved forward significantly since the Industrial Revolution. Plenty of individuals initially began creating intelligent machines after World War II; Alan Turing may have been the first to give a lecture on the topic in 1947. He thought that the best way to study artificial intelligence would be through computer programming and by the late 1950s, a lot of researchers were

concentrating on this subject of discussion. Technology has progressively taken the place of many labour-intensive manual tasks, greatly benefiting humanity. One technological advancement that has replaced human labour in many industries with manual labour is artificial intelligence (PK 1984, 65). Undoubtedly, the aspect of artificial intelligence that is considered “artificial” stems from its development as a result of human creativity and invention, rather than a natural (particularly biological or evolutionary) effect. From another perspective, artificially intelligent things are distinct from naturally intelligent ones because they are artifacts with unique qualities that are typically possessed by non-artifacts (Fetzer 1990, 1). These are objects that, by virtue of a particular method (*i.e.*, because they were made, designed, or produced in this manner), possess a particular attribute. In the present time, AI has become an inseparable part of everyday life (Mintz *et al.* 2023, 326). As AI becomes more widely accepted as a technology with enormous implications for people, society and the environment, rather than just a digital technology with the potential to revolutionise key business processes, its disciplinary foci continue to shift (Dwivedi *et al.* 2022, 17; Kopka and Grashof 2022, 175C). The influence of artificial intelligence on language learning is complex, offering both benefits and obstacles for teachers, students and businesses. AI’s focus on language learning has its roots in the efforts of Intelligent Tutoring Systems (ITS) during the 1980s and their commitment to personalised education. In the early days of ITS, computer-based learning systems made an effort to adjust to the needs of students (Noh *et al.* 2012, 455). As a result, these systems were perceived as making an effort to take care of students.

Since the tutoring component offered unlimited practice and repetitions, it was seen to be important for tailored learning and had numerous benefits beyond a traditional teacher (Woolf 2010, 298). After nearly forty years, the latest advancements in AI are renewing the possibilities for personalised learning (Reiland 2017). In 2016, Stanford University circulated a report labelled “100-year report on AI.” (Stone *et al.* 2016, 1). This research aims to explore eight

aspects of artificial intelligence, including education, by presenting historical data and projecting future paths. The study's conclusions about language acquisition are as follows: Although AI held a lot of potential for language learning, its early research suffered from its inability to support deep learning in systems like the ITS. AI is now present in many facets of daily life, from self-driving automobiles to intelligent mobile applications. Within the subject of AI modelling, Natural Language Processing (NLP) has played an important role as a catalyst in the development of Computer Assisted Language Learning. One example is the E-Tutor, which employed NLP methods to teach German as a second language (Heift 2010, 443). Heift has conducted research on the advantages of employing these AI-based tools in second-language instruction. NLP makes it possible to use mobile phones for voice recognition (Pahwa et al. 2020, 2547). This has led to broader applications as a result of AI's contribution to language processing. Numerous other fields, such as online search and healthcare informatics, are utilising the speech-understanding algorithms that are included in our phones (Stone *et al.* 2016, 29-32). According to the Stanford paper, NLP research has involved reasoning, but scaling it up has been difficult because it is often created for specialised tasks. Pattern recognition is used in a wide range of AI applications. These pattern recognitions were too limited for early AI systems to extend to complicated settings appropriate for language acquisition.

This article investigates the magic of artificial intelligence in language development in reference to natural language processing and language learning, multilingual AI systems and cross-lingual transfer learning, translation and cross-language communication, the crossover of AI, OpenAI, ChatGPT and language instructions, conversational AI and Chatbots, including an example of a conversation between a human being and ChatGPT along with its implications in language learning and AI-powered assistive technology, emphasising on speech recognition technology, writing tool, grammar-correcting apparatus, and personalised teaching assistant for growth of language. The paper ends on a note of

comparison of positive dynamics and problematic aspects of AI-powered language development, privacy and security issues in the context of language development tools and future scope for research in this arena.

#### LINGUISTIC DEVELOPMENT AND ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Artificial intelligence offers cutting-edge resources and tools that improve and customise the learning process, which has a revolutionary impact on language development. Artificial intelligence enables more accessible and customised language learning through adaptive algorithms, real-time feedback and interactive platforms. AI gives students the chance to practice and advance their language abilities in ways that were previously unachievable by taking out obstacles pertaining to time, place and learning speed. A few towers of linguistics are identified in the era of AI (McShane & Nirenburg 2021, 9). 1) A converged intermediary designing develops language processing capabilities; 2) Within the framework of the explanatory paradigm, AI simulation is human-inspired; 3) From linguistic ontology, insights are accumulated, and so on. They have stated in a chapter that natural language processing systems initially focused on interpreting textual aspects that the target reasoning engine could digest, rather than interpreting natural language semantics (Nirenburg & McShane 2017, 340). Natural Language Processing aims to create software systems that analyse, understand and generate natural human languages, enabling computer communication. As an ancient machine learning research area, it's used in AI speech recognition and text processing (Ali & Shandilya 2021, 135). This involved producing machine-tractable knowledge in various forms, including grammar formalisms, dictionaries, rule sets and world models. This led to the emergence of the empiricist, knowledge-lean paradigm in NLP research and development, moving the field away from rationalist approaches. The translation sector has been steadily revolutionised by AI,

especially NLP. In the field of artificial intelligence, which comprises the act of giving computer systems instructions to perform tasks without explicit programming, Machine Learning and Deep Learning are intricately correlated concepts (Mohamed et al. 2024, 25555). The framework provides a basis for designing multilingual deliberations in a resilient and scientifically trustworthy manner. This includes factors like participant selection techniques, timing, facilitation, format and structure, translation, scoping, processes, methods, settings, expert involvement and communication channels (online and in-person). In the case of hybrid approaches, these channels should also have effective connection points (Kalampokis et al. 2024,6).

When artificial intelligence technology is applied to English translation, along with the Internet and intelligent knowledge bases, translation systems can be developed to partially address the challenges (Bi 2020, 5057). In contrast to handling nuances of syllables, words, phrases, or even sentences, machine translation (MT) is now better suited to handle the subtleties of actual speech. The meaning of each given word, phrase, sentence, or paragraph in a language is contingent upon a broader context that could be referred to as culture. Intentions and speaker mood, in addition to the context in which they are used, all influence meaning. Idioms, satire, humour, irony and other literary devices are some more elements that machine translation finds problematic to understand (Das 2018, 2).

The development of increasingly sophisticated chatbots has been made feasible by the most recent developments in machine learning, particularly in artificial neural networks. When it comes to generating responses, chatbots built on artificial neural networks have the option of using either generative or retrieval techniques (Hussain et al. 2019, 950). Due to their accuracy, lack of reliance on human resources and accessibility throughout the day and night, chatbots can be employed anywhere (Meshram *et al.* 2021, 1). As chatbots advance, they are being incorporated into a wide range of applications and platforms, such as customer service, virtual

assistants and social media messaging (Casheekar 2024, 100632). Several projects have attempted to create an emotive human-computer dialogue production approach using Sequential Generative Adversarial Networks (SeqGANs), in addition to Microsoft. Researchers in artificial intelligence foresee that machines capable of thinking will eventually handle our cognitive tasks (Jain & Jain 2013, 584). And, at present, Microsoft's model may nevertheless produce replies that are human-like in both content and emotion, even though its performance is not as good as anticipated (Lin et al. 2023, 3). Developed by Microsoft-backed startup OpenAI, ChatGPT (generative pre-trained transformer) is one of the most advanced AI-powered chatbots on the market today. It was introduced in November 2022. Natural language processing, automatic speech recognition and limited artificial intelligence are supported by this technology, as demonstrated by digital assistants such as Siri and Alexa. However, according to some researchers, ChatGPT lacks interaction between students and instructors, leading to isolation and hindering psychological development, well-being and social skills development among students (Al-Obaydi *et al.* 2023, 44; Rane 2023, 5). Chatbots, particularly ChatGPT, can significantly improve education by providing personalised learning, virtual tutoring, interactive language learning, examination preparation, catering to learning disabilities and supporting remote education. They analyse learning styles and preferences, tailor content and offer detailed explanations for homework and assignments. ChatGPT actively involves learners in interactive dialogues, provides pronunciation corrections and recommends vocabulary (Kostka & Toncelli 2023, 3). By creating practice questions as well as providing explanations, it further assists with studying for the test (Javaid *et al.* 2023, 9). Professionals may benefit from ChatGPT by having access to expert perspectives, research papers and carefully selected information, which enhances decision-making and problem-solving abilities. But the scholarly papers published in academic journals cannot identify ChatGPT as an author (Rahman *et al.* 2023, 3). Meanwhile, it assists

researchers with data analysis and literature reviews, alongside group discussions (Vargas-Murillo *et al.* 2023, 122).

Artificial intelligence-assisted language learning technology is streamlining, personalising and increasing efficiency in the process. Learners at every level of language proficiency can benefit greatly from AI-driven solutions, which range from immersive learning experiences and individualised lesson plans to pronunciation feedback. AI-assisted language learning technology has developed into a potent instrument for improving language learning through the manifestation of machine translation, speech technology, Chatbots and AI-generated content (Patty 2024, 650). By using artificial intelligence to personalise learning experiences (Vorst & Jelicic 2019, 11; Maghsudi *et al.* 2021, 7; Kaswan *et al.* 2024, 108), these tools increase the effectiveness, appeal and accessibility of language acquisition for users of all ability levels. AI systems evaluate the performance and preferences of students to generate personalised language learning programs (Tapalova & Zhiyenbayeva 2022, 644). These programs focus on vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation problems and modify them according to the student's development (Shevchenko & Ogurtsova 2023, 12). Using artificial intelligence, programs such as Duolingo and Babbel dynamically modify their lessons to keep students engaged but not overwhelmed (Arvanitis 2019, 123-125). Through speech pattern analysis, AI can offer real-time pronunciation feedback. AI-powered speech recognition is used by apps such as Elsa Speak (Vall *et al.* 2023, 7573) and Rosetta Stone (Rogerson-Revell 2021, 193) to identify accents, make correction suggestions and teach pronunciation in real time to learners. Learners can practice language skills in an engaging manner by using AI chatbots such as ChatGPT, which can mimic real-life discussions (Gill *et al.* 2024, 20; Limna *et al.* 2023, 2). Through interaction, immediate feedback and the ability to fix grammatical and word use errors, this offers an immersive learning environment. Learners can improve their writing by using AI-powered programs such as Grammarly and LanguageTool, which can detect and fix grammatical errors,

sentence structure and style (Schmidt & Strasser 2022, 169). AI-Generated Content (AIGC) is a flexible approach to content creation, which parallels human writing and thought processes.

With Quizizz, an AI-driven personalised teaching assistant, quizzes can be crafted in under a minute, effectively enhancing language learning (Degirmenci 2021, 5). Students trying to get better at writing in a new language will find this real-time feedback to be quite helpful. AI systems can assess language proficiency through adaptive testing, where the difficulty level of questions adjusts based on the learner's responses (Colchester et al. 2017, 53). This provides a more accurate assessment of language skills than traditional testing methods.

Lingvist and Quizlet are examples of platforms that use adaptive testing to evaluate users' language knowledge. AI-powered platforms are being developed to detect learners' emotional states through facial recognition or voice analysis, adjusting teaching strategies accordingly (Ahmad *et al.* 2023, 15). These AI-driven systems aim to keep learners motivated by identifying frustration or boredom and altering lessons to suit the learner's mood. When communicating with voice-activated AI assistants in their target languages, such as Siri, Amazon Alexa and Google Assistant, language learners can improve their communication abilities. They can provide fast translations, schedule daily practice sessions and start basic dialogues with students. Tools for students with disabilities, such as dyslexia (Barua *et al.* 2022, 4) or hearing loss (Garg & Sharma 2020, 524), are also being developed. AI-driven text-to-speech and speech-to-text technologies facilitate language acquisition by translating spoken words into text and vice versa, giving students the flexibility to interact with language in ways that best meet their requirements. Language learning is made more enjoyable and interesting by gamified AI-based platforms (Tsvilodub *et al.* 2022, 557). Through interactive stories, songs and games, apps like Lingokids use artificial intelligence to lead kids through language-learning activities that hold their interest longer than traditional approaches.

## ILLUSTRATION OF A CONVERSATION WITH CHATGPT, MAY 2024

As ChatGPT is recognised as the most popularly applied communicative AI-constructed tool, the author likes to give an illustration of a communication between an individual learning English and ChatGPT (OpenAI, 2023) that focuses on strengthening language skills and analyse the output it conveys:

Human: Hi, I'm trying to improve my English. I'm having trouble with using articles like "a", "an", and "the". Can you help?

ChatGPT: Absolutely! Articles in English can be a bit tricky. Here's a quick guide:

- "A" is used before words that begin with a consonant sound (e.g., "a cat", "a dog").
- "An" is used before words that begin with a vowel sound (e.g., "an apple", "an hour").
- "The" is used to refer to specific or known items (e.g., "the book on the table", "the car we saw yesterday").

Would you like to try using these articles in some sentences?

Human: Sure, let me try. How about "I saw a cat in the garden" and "I met an interesting person"?

ChatGPT: Great job! Your sentences are correct. In the first sentence, "a cat" is used because it's not specific; any cat could be in the garden. In the second sentence, "an interesting person" is correct because "interesting" starts with a vowel sound.

Would you like to practice more sentences or is there another area you're curious about?

Human: Could you explain when to use "the" versus no article at all?

ChatGPT: Sure! You use "the" when referring to a specific item that both the speaker and listener know about. For example, "I put the keys on the table" implies there's a specific table in mind. When no article is used, it usually refers to something general or abstract. For example, "I love music" talks about music in general, not a specific piece. Would you like to make some sentences to practice this?

Human: Okay, how about "She is the best student" and "Dogs are friendly animals"?

ChatGPT: Nice work! In "She is the best student", "the" is used because

you're referring to a specific student known to both speaker and listener. In "Dogs are friendly animals", no article is used because you're talking about dogs in general.

Is there anything else you'd like to review or practice?

Human: Not right now, but thanks for your help!

ChatGPT: You're welcome! Feel free to return anytime if you have more questions. Happy learning!

## INTERPRETATION

ChatGPT, the interactive program, helps users practice using English articles with explanations that are easy to understand. It gives precise descriptions of what constitutes an appropriate or improper statement and promotes positive reinforcement. To clear up any misunderstandings and give further practice, the dialogue changes based on the learner's comments and inquiries. It is simpler for the student to comprehend article utilisation in real-life scenarios because of the pertinent and useful examples that are given. Though there is room for improvement, some examples that should be included are those that are context-specific, vary and handle exceptions. Enhancing continuous learning could be achieved by offering thorough feedback on mistakes and making recommendations for new resources. For the most part, ChatGPT is a useful tool for teaching students how to comprehend and use English articles, thus contributing to language development.

## COMPARISON OF POSITIVE DIMENSIONS AND PROBLEMATIC LANDMARKS OF AI-TOOLS OF LANGUAGE

AI-powered personalised learning provides individualised instruction by modifying the information to match each student's learning style, strengths and areas for development. This flexibility improves learning effectiveness by enabling users to concentrate on the vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation that best suit their needs. AI creates a personalised learning experience that is available

at any time by monitoring progress and giving immediate feedback (Kaur *et al.* 2020, 95). However, learners lose out on the rich, nuanced communication that comes with real-life conversations due to the lack of human contact in AI-based learning. Deeper cultural context, emotional connection and spontaneous feedback are all provided by human teachers and these are essential for the development of social and conversational language abilities (Kudryashova *et al.* 2015, 461). Though AI can mimic speech, it is unable to perfectly capture the erratic and diverse character of human interaction. While the lack of human connection in AI-powered learning platforms restricts the development of social and cultural language competencies (Khanzode & Sarode 2020, 34), individualised AI learning is, by contrast, quite effective and convenient in self-paced learning. Learners are able to participate in language development at any time and from any location because of AI's accessibility to the digital world. Geographical, financial and temporal obstacles are eliminated by AI-driven platforms, which offer flexible learning options. Learners can use resources like virtual instructors and language applications from the comfort of their homes, with continuous availability and personalised content, to practice at their own speed. Conversely, when learners use only AI, they are deprived of the advantages of in-person contact, peer learning and real-time human feedback because AI is not accessible in real-world classrooms. Additionally, practical language use and deeper social involvement are fostered by hands-on learning activities found in real-world contexts. Comparatively, AI provides more digital ease of use and accessibility. Learners may swiftly identify and correct faults by receiving immediate feedback from AI in the form of suggestions and corrections regarding their language use. With this real-time response, learning efficiency is increased and learners may rapidly modify their practice, encouraging ongoing development and reinforcing proper usage. But if AI is used excessively, it may result in a loss of the capacity to evaluate and self-correct language use. Learners may become less adept at solving problems and less capable of using language in an organic, nuanced

way without the assistance of technology if they rely too much on AI for responses and feedback. This reliance may impede the growth of self-directed learning techniques and the acquisition of practical communication abilities. By contrast, although artificial intelligence offers useful instant feedback, too much reliance on it may hinder language learners' capacity for critical thought and independence (Creely 2024, 159).

#### ETHICAL CONCERNS IN AI-SPONSORED LANGUAGE EQUIPMENT

Plagiarism and privacy ethics pose significant complications in the context of AI-driven language development. It should be confirmed that privacy pattern has to be secured in any apparatus interconnected to digital applications (Schurig & Thomas 2017, S3809). It is crucial to properly credit ChatGPT as an AI tool and acknowledge its contribution to the writing process. There is a worry that authors can unintentionally pass off the AI-generated writing as their own if they only use ChatGPT's generated content without giving credit to the platform (Jarrah *et al.* 2023, 14). This can be framed as a new arena of plagiarism and it may present issues in creative and educational environments that respect originality and intellectual property. Implementing policies that guarantee AI tools generate original work and adhere to copyright rules is crucial in order to address this. Some examples of these policies include plagiarism detection algorithms and enforcing appropriate citation guidelines. On the flip side, privacy ethics pertain to the protection of users' personal information that is gathered during language learning exchanges. AI systems frequently collect large volumes of sensitive data, which must be safeguarded against abuse and illegal access (Ghosh *et al.* 2018, 216). This entails implementing robust data protection techniques, such as anonymisation and encryption and guaranteeing openness regarding data utilisation. Sustaining ethical standards and preserving confidence in AI applications for language development also requires obtaining user agreement and

following privacy laws. By weighing these moral considerations, we can make sure that AI tools are applied ethically and sensibly to the language learning industry.

#### AI AND LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT: FUTURE RESEARCH PERSPECTIVES

Research on AI's function in language development has a wide and potential future ahead of it, with many areas still needing to be explored and developed. Improving AI systems to comprehend and handle complex linguistic subtleties, such as idioms, cultural contexts and emotional tone is an important field of future study. As a result, language learning would be even more realistic and engaging because of AI's increased ability to mimic human-like dialogues.

Using AI to develop extremely immersive language learning environments through the use of upcoming technologies like Augmented Reality and Virtual Reality is another possible field of study. With greater involvement and more useful applications for language development, these cutting-edge technologies may be able to replicate real-world settings where students may practice language abilities in context.

Furthermore, a crucial area of research continues to be how AI might help students with disabilities like dyslexia or speech problems. Making language acquisition genuinely inclusive, AI's capacity to personalise learning experiences might be increased to offer even more focused and efficient support for a variety of learners.

Besides, multiple research projects are necessary to address ethical concerns including protecting privacy and avoiding an excessive dependence on artificial intelligence. Responsible and efficient use of AI in language instruction will be ensured by research into striking a balance between the convenience of AI and the requirement for critical thinking and real-world engagement. Long-term research on how AI-based technologies affect language

retention, learner motivation and competency would shed important light on the advantages and disadvantages of AI in language development.

## CONCLUSION

Artificial intelligence is playing a revolutionary and more important role in language development with its innovative technologies that improve geared learning, supply real-time feedback and make language acquisition more accessible to a worldwide audience, Artificial Intelligence facilitates more effective and captivating language learning experiences by adjusting to individual learning styles, mimicking real-life interactions and providing ongoing assistance. Even if artificial intelligence has numerous benefits, it needs human involvement to handle cultural subtleties and the difficulties of communicating in the real world. Artificial Intelligence has the ability to completely transform language learning and mastery when applied ethically and responsibly. To widespread AI-driven language technology, integration of AI into language apps should be promoted as rapidly as possible. It should be implemented in the simplest form possible to save time and money. It should also be improved over time so that language apps eliminate expensive solutions (Pikhart 2020, 1417).

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# DOES NATURALISED EPISTEMOLOGY HAVE SOMETHING TO DO WITH COGNITIVE PSYCHOLOGY AND, PERHAPS, ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE?

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**Abstract.** This study aims to demonstrate the link between Artificial Intelligence and Naturalised Epistemology. Artificial neural networks simulate natural neural networks, which is a bio-psychological process. The central thesis of this research is that Artificial Intelligence and Naturalised Epistemology share a nexus in Cognitive Psychology.

**Keywords:** artificial intelligence, naturalised epistemology, psychology, Quine, cognitive science

## INTRODUCTION

There has been little or no research on the nexus between artificial intelligence and naturalised epistemology. There is research on artificial intelligence, epistemology, and philosophy generally construed. However, less research focused primarily on psychology as the basic link between artificial intelligence and naturalised epistemology. This study aims to bridge the gap in epistemology and the philosophy of artificial intelligence.

Epistemology, the theory of knowledge, is one of the central areas of philosophy. The questions addressed by epistemology have historically included what knowledge is, how we can or should achieve it, and how much, if anything, we can know. Naturalism is the view that the world contains only natural

phenomena and that the appropriate methods for acquiring knowledge of the world are those of sciences.

#### NATURALISED EPISTEMOLOGY

The term “naturalised epistemology” was introduced by W.V. Quine in his 1969 essay *Epistemology Naturalised*, in which he argues that epistemology should be regarded as continuous with, or even part of, natural science. Epistemological naturalists often contrast their approach with that taken by René Descartes. Descartes held that knowledge has a foundational structure. At the foundation are beliefs which we “clearly and distinctly perceive”, and about which we are therefore completely certain. For Descartes, these include beliefs about the contents and operations of our own minds. Other beliefs must be inferred from these foundational beliefs in order for us to be justified in holding them. Until we can show, based on foundational beliefs, that there is a world outside our minds, and that proper scientific methods will reliably give us information about it, we can have no confidence in the results of sciences.

Advocates of a naturalised epistemology see the role of epistemology very differently. For them, philosophy does not come prior to science. The starting point of epistemology should not be our introspective awareness of our own conscious experience, but rather the conception of the larger world that we get from common sense and science. Most naturalists would also reject many other features of Descartes’ epistemology, including the view that knowledge requires certainty, the view that all our knowledge must be inferred from foundational beliefs, and the view that it is possible to know substantive facts about the world a priori, that is, without needing experience to provide evidence of their truth (Brown and Cutis, 2010).

Of the three main epistemological issues, namely, the nature of knowledge, the means of acquiring it, and its extent, Quine’s

naturalised epistemology focuses on the second, the issue of how knowledge is acquired. In a famous passage, Quine describes what he sees as the proper subject of naturalised epistemology:

It studies a natural phenomenon, *viz.*, a physical human subject. This human subject is accorded a certain experimentally controlled input—certain patterns of irradiation in assorted frequencies, for instance—and in the fullness of time the subject delivers as output a description of the three-dimensional external world and its history. The relation between the meagre input and the torrential output is a relation that we are prompted to study for somewhat the same reasons that always prompted epistemology; namely, in order to see how evidence relates to theory, and in what ways one’s theory of nature transcends any available evidence. (Quine 1969: 82–83).

For Quine, then, naturalised epistemology is the empirical study of how human beings develop a theory of the natural world on the basis of their sensory inputs. Given this understanding of epistemology, it is clear why Quine thinks that “epistemology, or something like it, simply falls into place as a chapter of psychology”. Cognitive psychology and/or cognitive science connect perfectly with what Quine describes here as the domain of epistemology in so far as the processes of thinking and knowing are concerned.

Like Descartes, Quine takes epistemology to be “concerned with the foundations of science” (Quine 1969, 69). Addressing the logical empiricist project of rational reconstruction, he says that the Cartesian quest for certainty is the remote motivation of epistemology, both on its conceptual and doctrinal side (Quine 1969, 74).

About the epistemological project so understood, Quine’s chief observation is not some news: the Cartesian quest is “a lost cause” (*Ibidem*). Whether in the form Descartes himself practised, or in any subsequent form up to and including the logical empiricists, its work on both the conceptual and the doctrinal side is bound to fail: no strict translation of the notion of “body” in sensory terms is possible, and “the inferential steps between

sensory evidence and scientific doctrine must fall short of certainty” (Quine 1969, 74–75).

What *is* new in *Epistemology Naturalised* is what Quine recommends in the face of this result: “Why all this creative reconstruction, all this make-believe? The stimulation of his sensory receptors is all the evidence anybody has had to go on, ultimately, in arriving at his picture of the world. Why not just see how this construction really proceeds? Why not settle for psychology?” (*Ibidem*, 75). “If all we hope for is a reconstruction that links science to experience in explicit ways short of translation, then it would seem more sensible to settle for psychology. Better to discover how science is in fact developed and learned than to fabricate a fictitious structure to a similar effect” (*Ibidem*, 78). Epistemology, or something like it, simply falls into place as a chapter of psychology and hence of natural science. But a conspicuous difference between old epistemology and the epistemological enterprise in this new psychological setting is that we can now make free use of empirical psychology. (*Ibidem*, 82–83). Ryesiew observes that even if it would offend strong anti-psychologists, it is not the suggestion that epistemologists make “free use” of empirical psychology that is so radical; it is the suggestion that psychology can and should *replace* epistemology (Ryesiew 2020).

Quine goes on to argue that scepticism is an offshoot of science. The basis for scepticism is the awareness of illusion, the discovery that we must not always believe our eyes. But in what sense are they illusions? In the sense that they seem to be material objects which they in fact are not. Illusions are illusions only relative to prior acceptance of genuine bodies with which to contrast them. The positing of bodies is already rudimentary physical science; and it is only after that stage that the sceptic’s invidious distinctions make sense. Rudimentary physical science, that is, common sense about bodies, is thus needed as a springboard for scepticism (Quine 1975, 67). But if scepticism itself is born of science, we can appeal to science in answering its

doubts. For instance, we can look to natural selection, and find “some encouragement in Darwin” in quelling doubts about the reliability of induction: creatures inveterately wrong in their inductions have a pathetic but praiseworthy tendency to die out before reproducing more of their kind (Quine 1969b, 126). Quine appears to be recommending replacement naturalism and, consequently, the elimination of terms of epistemic appraisal in favour of descriptions of psychological processes.

As we can see from the foregoing, Quine developed epistemological naturalism and gave epistemology the task of identifying a substantial and constructive role for the sciences in epistemological theorising. One popular way to think about the continuity between sciences and epistemology is in terms of how normative questions about how we ought to form our beliefs cannot be answered independently of descriptive questions about how we form beliefs. Understood thus, the challenge for the naturalised epistemologist is to spell out in more detail the respective contribution by (traditional) epistemology and the sciences, and in particular the extent to which the latter is to replace or simply complement the former.

Naturalized epistemology encompasses a range of philosophical perspectives on knowledge that prioritize the application of scientific methods. By emphasizing empirical approaches to understanding how knowledge is acquired, it moves away from many traditional philosophical debates and instead focuses on the processes through which knowledge is formed.

For Quine, attempts to pursue the traditional project of finding the meanings and truths of science philosophically have failed on their own terms and failed to offer any advantage over the more direct methods of psychology. Since traditional philosophic analysis of knowledge fails, those wishing to study knowledge ought to employ natural scientific methods. Scientific study of knowledge differs from philosophic study by focusing on how humans acquire knowledge rather than speculative analysis of knowledge (Quine 2004, 292-300). In short, Quine

identifies psychology as an entailment of epistemology because of his emphasis on focusing on the natural mental processes of how we know. For him, there are psychological processes involved in the art of knowing, and psychology falls within the domain of the natural sciences.

Among the various forms of epistemological naturalism, three stand out: *replacement naturalism*, which argues for discarding traditional epistemology in favour of scientific methodologies; *cooperative naturalism*, which suggests that epistemology can be enriched by insights from cognitive science; and *substantive naturalism*, which equates knowledge claims with natural facts. Quine appears to align most closely with *replacement naturalism*.

However, much of epistemology as traditionally conceived seems to be left out of Quine's picture, and contemporary epistemological naturalists differ in how they think these topics should be addressed. First, one of the main concerns of epistemology has been to understand what knowledge is, in the sense of identifying necessary and sufficient conditions for knowing something. This seems to require an analysis of the concept of knowledge rather than an empirical investigation of the natural world. Some naturalists believe that epistemology should simply abandon conceptual analysis; some accept that conceptual analysis is a necessary and non-scientific part of epistemology, and conclude that only parts of epistemology can be naturalised; and some hold that conceptual analysis itself should become an experimental discipline.

A second aspect of traditional epistemology that Quine seems to neglect concerns the second epistemological question, that of how we do or should acquire knowledge. Many critics of Quine have noted that by focusing exclusively on the descriptive issue of "How we base a rich theory of the world on limited evidence?", he appears to neglect normative issues about how we ought to modify our beliefs in light of new evidence. Some moderate epistemological naturalists concede that such issues

cannot be regarded as part of science, while others have suggested that even normative issues can be naturalised.

A final issue that Quine pays little attention to relates to the third epistemological issue, that of how much knowledge, if any, we can have. Quine recommends treating the issue of the extent of our knowledge as internal to science. However, a main focus of traditional epistemology has been to address whether it is possible to convincingly refute radical scepticism, the idea that all or most of our beliefs could be seriously mistaken. To address this question by appealing to the results of science seems to beg the question. Can there be a naturalistic response to radical scepticism? Most contemporary naturalists would concede that they cannot refute scepticism, but would also hold that the only sceptical doubts worth taking seriously are those that arise from within science itself.

#### ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Artificial intelligence (AI) is commonly used to describe machines that replicate cognitive functions associated with the human mind, such as learning and problem-solving (Russell & Norvig, 2003). Essentially, AI involves the imitation or simulation of human intelligence. Given its connection to knowledge, AI naturally intersects with epistemology. Research in AI focuses on various challenges, including reasoning, knowledge representation, planning, learning, natural language processing, perception, and the ability to interact with and manipulate objects. The field of AI draws from multiple disciplines, including computer science, information engineering, mathematics, psychology, linguistics, and philosophy. Among these, reasoning, cognition, knowledge representation, learning, and perception are particularly relevant to epistemology.

These problems are natural epistemic processes in the human mind, which naturalised epistemology emphasises as the domain of cognitive psychology. In artificial intelligence, these processes

are digitalised and technologically enabled. There, they are carried out by machines. Have machines taken over the cognitive role of the human mind? Have robots replaced human beings? The machines haven't taken over. Not yet, at least. However, they are seeping their way into our lives, affecting how we live, work and entertain ourselves. From voice-activated personal assistants like Siri and Alexa to foundational technologies such as behavioural algorithms, predictive search, and autonomous self-driving vehicles, artificial intelligence is embedded in numerous applications today.

#### AI IN ACTION: CURRENT APPLICATIONS AND INNOVATIONS

Today's AI systems are advanced machine learning programs equipped with complex behavioural algorithms that adapt to human preferences. While highly efficient, these systems are not becoming intelligent in an existential sense; rather, they enhance their capabilities and effectiveness through vast datasets. Below are some of the most widely used examples of artificial intelligence today.

##### 1. *Siri*

Everyone is familiar with Apple's personal assistant Siri. She is a friendly voice-activated computer that we interact with daily. She helps us find information, gives us directions, adds events to our calendars, helps us send messages, and so on. Siri is a pseudo-intelligent digital personal assistant. She uses machine-learning technology to get smarter and better able to predict and understand our natural-language questions and requests.

##### 2. *Alexa*

Alexa aims to become the smart home's hub. When Amazon first introduced it, it took much of the world by storm. However, its usefulness and uncanny ability to decipher speech from anywhere in the room has made it a revolutionary product that can help us scour the web for information, shop, schedule appointments, set alarms and a million other things, but also help power our smart homes and those that might have limited mobility.

### 3. *Tesla*

Tesla is quite possibly one of the best cars ever made, not only for the fact that it has received so many accolades but because of its predictive capabilities, self-driving features and sheer technological “coolness”. Anyone who is into technology and cars likes to own a Tesla, and these vehicles are only getting smarter and smarter thanks to their over-the-air updates.

### 4. *Cogito*

Originally co-founded by CEO Joshua Feast and Dr Sandy Pentland, Cogito is quite possibly one of the most powerful examples of behavioural adaptation to improve the emotional intelligence of customer support representatives that exists on the market today. The company is a fusion of machine learning and behavioural science to improve customer interaction for phone professionals. This applies to millions of voice calls that are occurring on a daily basis.

### 5. *Boxever*

Boxever, co-founded by CEO Dave O’Flanagan, is a company that leans heavily on machine learning to improve the customer’s experience in the travel industry and deliver “micro-moments”, or experiences that delight the customers along the way. It’s through machine learning and the usage of AI that the company has dominated the field, helping its customers find new ways to engage their clients in their travel journeys.

### 6. *John Paul*

This highly esteemed luxury travel concierge company, helmed by David Amsellem, is another powerful example of AI in the predictive algorithms for existing-client interactions, able to understand their desires and needs on an acute level. The company provides concierge services for millions of customers through the world’s largest companies such as VISA, Orange, or Air France and was recently acquired by Accor Hotels.

### 7. *Amazon.com*

Amazon's transactional AI has been in use for quite some time, enabling the company to generate massive revenue online. With its algorithms continuously improving each year, Amazon has become remarkably adept at predicting consumer interests based on online behaviour. While the company envisions a future where products are shipped before customers even realize they need them, this level of predictive commerce has yet to be fully realized—but it is certainly on the horizon.

### 8. *Netflix*

Netflix provides highly accurate predictive technology based on customer's reactions to films. It analyses billions of records to suggest films that you might like based on your previous reactions and choices of films. This tech is getting smarter and smarter by the year as the dataset grows. However, one drawback of this technology is that lesser-known films often go unnoticed, while big-name movies dominate and gain even more visibility on the platform.

### 9. *Pandora*

Pandora AI is one of the most revolutionary techs that exists out there today. They call it their musical DNA. Based on 400 musical characteristics, each song is first manually analysed by a team of professional musicians based on this criterion, and the system has an incredible track record for recommending songs that would otherwise go unnoticed but that people inherently love.

### 10. *Nest*

The Nest Learning Thermostat, acquired by Google in January 2014, uses behavioural algorithms to learn from your heating and cooling patterns, adjusting the temperature in your home or office based on your personal preferences. It can now be voice-controlled by Alexa and has expanded to include a range of other products, such as Nest cameras.

Jeremy Sutton (2021) posits that the term AI is typically used to describe both the “technology designed to perform activities that normally require human intelligence” and the multidisciplinary field of science concerned with understanding and developing that technology (Luxton, 2014). These technological feats, however, have not yet enabled any AI to pass *The Turing Test*. We can only wait to see if that will ever happen in the future.

#### PSYCHOLOGY AND ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

How is AI related to psychology? We may think that psychology deals with the most human side and that we do not need technological tools to get better day by day. The truth is that the field of psychology keeps growing every day and AI is part of it because it is the attempt to make a machine reach the level of “intelligence” of a human being (Lozano, 2020). In its early years, AI was created to emulate the functioning of the mind and the brain in computer software. More specifically, in the field of Deep Learning, Artificial Neural Networks try to imitate the neural networks of a living organism. Its goal is to get a combination of parameters which better fit a specific problem.

We emphasise that psychology and artificial intelligence (AI) are closely related disciplines. For instance, in the psychology degree, some basic AI concepts are always covered, normally in the courses about the Psychology of Thought. Also, in computer science when studying courses related to artificial intelligence, there are usually references to theories of human cognition. Neuroscience has an eminently integrative approach and, in general, research in cognitive science usually brings together experts from different areas, such as neuroscience, psychology, artificial intelligence, philosophy of mind, robotics, *etc.*

Certainly, both AI and psychology have a common axis: understanding the processes that give rise to intelligent behaviour. In the case of psychology, the study focuses on human

beings, and we talk about mental processes. In the case of AI, the study focuses on machines, and we talk about information processing.

In general, psychology focuses on three main axes of the person: cognition, emotion and behaviour. From the point of view of “weak AI”, machines do not think, although they process information, they do not feel either, although they can identify emotions, and they have behaviour which is determined by the output of their algorithms.

We could say that psychology deals with biological organisms (usually the human species), while AI deals with artificial cognitive systems. But deep down, both types of minds face the same essential challenge: adapting to the environment and solving problems efficiently even in situations of uncertainty, ambiguity, and noise. This capacity is what we commonly associate with intelligent beings.

Based on this analogy between intelligent biological and artificial systems, research in both disciplines is interrelated:

- Knowledge of the human mind can contribute to the design of more intelligent artificial systems.
- The use of computational models can contribute to research on the functioning of the human mind.

In other words, the use of *bio-inspiration* in AI implies that the design of some artificial systems is based on the dynamics observed in the human cognitive system or other species. At the same time, hypotheses about how the human mind works can be tested, at least partially, using computational models based on Artificial Intelligence.

This parallelism between “artificial minds” and “natural minds” is not the only link between the two disciplines. For example, from the point of view of the possible practical application of Artificial Intelligence in the area of psychology, there are multiple possibilities, such as:

Intelligent Systems based on Machine Vision for:

- Emotions; facial expression training.
- Detection of situations of health risk.

Intelligent Systems based on Natural Language Understanding for:

- Early detection of psychological problems.
- Automatic detection of personality traits.

Intelligent Systems based on Voice Signal Processing for:

- Identification of mood and level of physiological activation.
- Detection of symptoms of anxiety and depression.

Intelligent Systems based on Pattern Recognition on sensor data for:

- Automatic detection of a person's behaviour.
- Automatic detection of falls, accidents or assaults.

This technology is applied in different areas of psychology like talent management, education, psychotherapy, neuropsychology or prevention in mental health.

## CONCLUSION

There is a basic connection between naturalised epistemology, artificial intelligence and cognitive psychology. Cognitive psychology attempts to understand cognition's complexity through research, testing, and building models of how the human mind handles and processes complex information during attention, memory, and perception (Zivony, 2019).

AI and cognitive psychology share similar aims—to understand the nature of intelligent behaviour—with the former attempting to build such processes using advanced technology. And while computational modelling and AI have subtle differences, they are both valuable approaches for understanding the nature of intelligent thinking and providing insights into the growing field of cognitive psychology. Computational modelling

involves “programming computers to model or mimic aspects of human cognitive functioning” (Eysenck & Keane, 2015).

Artificial intelligence’s underlying processes, on the other hand, typically bear no resemblance to the mechanisms used by the human brain. Rather than attempt to develop computational models that help us understand human intelligence, the AI designer’s goal is to produce an outcome that appears intelligent. Such processes do not need to be functionally similar to those of a human.

However, there is one particular model that appears to bridge the gap between the two approaches. *Connectionism* was originally inspired by the network of neurons that exists within the brain. “Connectionist models typically consist of interconnected networks of simple units exhibiting learning” and model cognition with no explicit rules (Eysenck & Keane, 2015). While the brain may be described as a highly complex neural network, and connectionist models have successfully modelled specific human-like processes (such as face recognition), the jury is still out regarding whether such models explain human cognition. However, deep neural networks, inspired by cognitive psychology theories and methods, have had some success in explaining how children learn labels for objects and offer a great example of the benefits of combining knowledge and expertise from multiple disciplines (Ritter, Barrett, Santoro, & Botvinick, 2017).

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