

NATAKA Research Institute

Wone Press

Kurumbi Wone Working Paper Series, No. 3 (2026)

The Seven Existential Cages

A Speculative Decolonial Ontology

Yamin Kogoya

First published on PhilPapers: 22nd May 2026 | This revised edition: 1st August 2026

ABSTRACT

This working paper introduces and elaborates *The Seven Existential Cages* — a heuristic ontological framework developed within the Psycho-Cosmocide body of work at NATAKA Research Institute. The seven cages — Physical, Symbolic, Metaphysical, Technological, the Corridor of the Dead, the Cage of Absolute Unknowing, and the Cage of the Irreducible Other — are proposed as a diagnostic model of recurrent existential conditions observable across conscious and relational forms of life, within which the Civilisational Psycho-Cosmocide Virus (CPCV) operates. These conditions are not exclusively human: they appear across a range of living organisms in varying degrees of complexity, and preceded every civilisation, every colonial encounter, and every technology. The paper develops each cage analytically, situates the framework within the wider Psycho-Cosmocide body of work, and positions the ontological cage architecture as a foundational diagnostic ground for the concept of *Wonesis* — the framework's proposed counter-movement of existential and cosmological reawakening. Philosophical, cosmological, and cross-species perspectives are integrated throughout.

Keywords: Psycho-Cosmocide; CPCV; ontological architecture; colonialism; existential cages; Wonesis; Lani cosmology; West Papua; decolonial philosophy; speculative ontology; philosophy of existence.

INTRODUCTION: WHEN ALL EXISTENTIAL MAPS FAIL

There are moments — ages, periods, civilisational epochs — when all paradigms crack. When the frameworks, concepts, theories, and existential maps created and enforced by civilisational projects no longer work, no longer make sense, and no longer hold. When assumptions of progress, development, innovation, improvement, and rational evolution begin to show their internal fractures and collapse under the weight of what they have systematically denied. It is precisely in these kinds of moments that a different set of tools is required: not new answers within the old architecture, but a new architecture from which to pose the question of where we are, where we have come from, and what conditions we must honestly name before we can imagine any path forward. The recognition that such moments recur across time is not new. The Epic of Gilgamesh — among the oldest recorded narratives in human history — enacts the First and Fifth Cages with extraordinary clarity. Gilgamesh, the semi-divine king of Uruk, is brought violently down to earth through the death of his companion Enkidu: the moment at which all civilisational grandeur, all claims to exceptionalism, all constructed cages of power and prestige collapse before the single fact of mortality. Enkidu himself — the wild man — the guardian of nature drawn into civilisation through seduction — dramatises the Second Cage: his entry into the symbolic order of Uruk is simultaneously his entry into its vulnerabilities, its dependencies, and ultimately its death sentence. The myth understands, with millennia of precedence, what the present framework names: that to enter the civilisational cage is to lose something irreplaceable even as one gains something real.¹

Qohelet — the teacher of Ecclesiastes — surveys every domain of human achievement and finds in each the same verdict: *hevel havalim* — vanity of vanities, breath of breaths. The rivers run to the sea and yet the sea is never full. The eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear with hearing. There is nothing new under the sun. Qohelet does not deny that wisdom, pleasure, and work have their value; he denies that any of them dissolves the cage. The cages remain after every human project has run its course. This is not nihilism but structurally honest analysis: the insight that the question of existence cannot be answered from within existence itself — and that acknowledging this is the beginning of wisdom rather than its defeat.²

¹ Andrew George, trans., *The Epic of Gilgamesh: The Babylonian Epic Poem and Other Texts in Akkadian and Sumerian* (London: Penguin, 1999). The present discussion draws primarily on Tablets IX–XI, in which Gilgamesh's confrontation with Enkidu's death becomes an explicit philosophical encounter with what the present framework identifies as the Third and Fifth Cages. The figure of Enkidu—the wild man drawn into the civilisational symbolic order through seduction—also provides one of the earliest mythological illustrations of Second Cage incorporation of a Cosmobian subject. For a fuller development of the concept of the Cosmobian World, see Yamin Kogoya, *Psycho-Cosmocide: The Silent Invasion of Mind, Meaning, and Cosmos*. Kurumbi Wone Working Paper Series, no. 2 (2nd ed.). NATAKA Research Institute / Wone Press, 2026; and Kogoya and milineXus, *A Foundational Theoretical Framework for the Study of Psycho-Cosmocide*. Kurumbi Wone Working Paper Series, no. 1(B). NATAKA Research Institute / Wone Press, 2026.

² Ecclesiastes (Qohelet) 1:2–11 (New Revised Standard Version). For scholarly commentary on the philosophical and existential dimensions of Qohelet's argument, see Michael V. Fox, *A Time to Tear Down and a Time to Build*

Camus's reading of the Sisyphean figure diagnoses the physical cage's cyclical entrapment: born, survive, labour, die, and repeat — with different costumes, in different periods, within different civilisational frameworks, but always and only on this planet, in this body, under this condition.³ Beckett's Vladimir and Estragon enact a related but distinct condition: they wait with full awareness of their predicament, for an arrival that does not come — consciousness without exit, lucidity without egress.⁴ And King Midas of Phrygia demonstrates what happens at the terminal point of the civilisational project: everything that power touches turns to gold — valuable, static, and incapable of sustaining life. The touch that was supposed to be the reward of civilisational mastery becomes its most precise image of failure. Everything the CPCV has touched — land, language, cosmology, community, body, meaning — has been converted into commodity, resource, and capital: gold that cannot be eaten, relationships that cannot be lived, a cosmos that cannot be inhabited.⁵

The ultimate image for the civilisational condition the present framework diagnoses is Plato's cave — but read against Plato's own therapeutic intention.⁶ In Plato, the prisoner who turns from the wall and ascends gains access to the sunlight of the Form of the Good.

Up: A Rereading of Ecclesiastes (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999). Fox's analysis of *hevel* as "vapour" or "breath" — designating not mere nihilism but the inherent insubstantiality of human projects against the background of enduring structural conditions — aligns closely with the Psycho-Cosmocide framework's account of civilisational cage-building as the attempt to resolve conditions that remain structurally unresolvable.

³Albert Camus, *The Myth of Sisyphus and Other Essays*, trans. Justin O'Brien (New York: Vintage, 1991). The Sisyphean figure is invoked in the Introduction primarily as a diagnostic image of cyclical entrapment within the material conditions of existence (First Cage). Camus's broader account of the absurd—the confrontation between humanity's longing for clarity and the world's unreasonable silence—finds its principal resonance elsewhere in the present framework, particularly in relation to the Third and Sixth Cages.

⁴Samuel Beckett, *Waiting for Godot: A Tragicomedy in Two Acts* (New York: Grove, 1954). Beckett's drama is read here as a powerful literary illustration of what the Psycho-Cosmocide framework identifies as the metaphysical cage of consciousness without exit. Vladimir and Estragon possess full awareness of their condition—indeed, they articulate it with extraordinary lucidity—yet that awareness results in neither escape, transformation, nor arrival. The play's cyclical structure formally embodies what the framework identifies as metaphysical awareness without egress.

⁵Ovid, *Metamorphoses* XI.85–193, trans. David Raeburn (London: Penguin, 2004). The Midas myth is employed here not merely as a conventional moral allegory about greed but as a structural illustration of the Fourth Cage's terminal logic: the point at which a civilisational system's capacity to convert all things into exchangeable value—capital, commodity, data—ultimately consumes the very conditions of life it seeks to enhance. See also Herodotus, *Histories* I.14 (trans. A. D. Godley, Loeb Classical Library) for the historical Midas of Phrygia.

⁶Plato, *Republic* 514a–520a, in *The Collected Dialogues of Plato*, ed. Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961). The cave allegory is invoked here in deliberate inversion: whereas Plato's prisoner ascends into sunlight and the Form of the Good, the present framework argues that under conditions of global Psycho-Cosmocide the cave has itself become planetary in scale, so that the projected images constitute the entire symbolic horizon—including those philosophical traditions that have historically claimed to provide an exit. Cf. Jean Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*, trans. Sheila Faria Glaser (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan

In the conditions the present framework diagnoses, no such ascent is straightforwardly available: the symbolic environment has become sufficiently totalised that the images projected on the wall now constitute the primary available horizon of meaning, and the very philosophies, religions, and ideologies that have historically promised liberation have themselves become instruments of projection. Idealists, utopians, priests, philosophers of progress — all those human voices that have advocated a better life somewhere beyond the present — have largely operated from within the dominant symbolic architecture while imagining they stood outside it.

This paper does not add another promised exit to the list. What it offers instead is a rigorous account of the cage structure — seven existential conditions proposed as a heuristic diagnostic framework for understanding how the Civilisational Psycho-Cosmocide Virus (CPCV) operates. This framework is not pessimism, not despair, but diagnosis. And diagnosis, honestly conducted, is the precondition of *Wonesis*: the counter-movement of cosmological reawakening that the Psycho-Cosmocide body of work develops as one response to the civilisational condition here described.

The framework proceeds as follows. The Methodological Orientation and Limits of the Framework sections that follow this Introduction set the paper's scope and epistemic commitments before any substantive claims are made. Situating the Framework locates the Seven Cages within the broader Psycho-Cosmocide body of work, and the Lani Existential Axioms section grounds the framework cosmologically ahead of a roadmap overview. Each of the seven cages is then examined in turn, followed by a dedicated application of the framework to the West Papuan case, demonstrating how the CPCV operates across all seven cages simultaneously. A concluding section considers the architecture as a whole and its implications for the concept of *Wonesis*.

METHODOLOGICAL ORIENTATION

This paper operates at the intersection of several methodological traditions, which it draws on selectively rather than comprehensively. The primary orientation is speculative decolonial ontology: the paper develops an ontological framework from within a specific indigenous cosmological tradition — the Lani cosmology of the West Papuan highlands — while arguing for the broader diagnostic purchase of that framework beyond its originating context. This methodological move is itself a decolonial gesture, insisting that indigenous cosmological traditions are capable of generating philosophical frameworks of universal relevance, rather than remaining merely “case studies” for Western theoretical models.

Press, 1994), which develops a related, though philosophically distinct, account of the replacement of the real by its representations.

Within this orientation, the paper draws secondarily on existential phenomenology — particularly the analysis of finitude, mortality, and consciousness in Heidegger and Camus — as a comparative philosophical vocabulary for articulating the ontological conditions the framework identifies. It also employs decolonial analysis in the tradition of Fanon, Mignolo, Wynter, Santos, and wa Thiong’o, situating the cage structure within the history of colonial destruction of indigenous cosmological infrastructure. Where the paper engages comparative philosophical method, it does so to identify both convergences and divergences: the framework shares diagnostic tools with these traditions while departing from them in its explicit cosmological grounding and its extension of the analysis beyond the epistemological and sociopolitical into the metaphysical and biological registers.

Several key terms require explicit definition before proceeding. The Civilisational Psycho-Cosmocide Virus (CPCV) is used in this framework not as a biological metaphor but as a structural analytical concept: it names the mechanism by which a dominant civilisational apparatus systematically invades, restructures, and displaces the ontological infrastructure — the meaning-systems, cosmological grounding, and relational architectures — of the peoples it colonises. The “virus” designation captures the mechanism’s capacity to replicate within the host system, to restructure from within rather than simply imposing from without, and to render its own operation invisible to those it affects. An “existential cage,” as used here, designates a structural condition of existence that is not escapable by act of will or consciousness alone, but within which different modes of inhabitation remain possible. “Ontological,” in this context, refers to the level of being itself — the conditions that structure what it is possible to be, know, and experience — as distinct from the epistemological (conditions of knowledge) or the sociological (conditions of social organisation). “Wonesis” designates the counter-movement of cosmological reawakening that the framework proposes as the transformative response to the CPCV’s operations; it is developed more fully in companion papers in this series. “Cosmology,” as employed throughout, refers not to astrophysics but to the structured relationship between human life and the larger order of existence — the framework within which meaning, identity, and being are grounded at a level prior to any given symbolic or religious system.

The seven cages are proposed here as a heuristic diagnostic framework rather than a claim to exhaustive metaphysical completeness. The choice of seven reflects the framework’s analytical judgement that these conditions constitute the primary structural dimensions within which the CPCV operates; the framework does not exclude the possibility that further dimensions might be named from within other cosmological or philosophical traditions. The paper’s aim is diagnostic precision rather than systematic closure.

Glossary of Key Terms

The paradigm this paper works within introduces a cumulative technical vocabulary. The following terms are defined in full where they are first developed in the text; this list is offered only as a compact point of reference for the terms this specific paper uses.

Psycho-Cosmocide — the wider paradigm’s name for the systematic destruction of a people’s ontological infrastructure: their meaning-systems, cosmological grounding, and relational architectures.

CPCV (Civilisational Psycho-Cosmocide Virus) — the mechanism by which a dominant civilisational apparatus invades, restructures, and displaces that infrastructure from within.

Wonesis — the counter-movement of cosmological reawakening proposed, across the wider paradigm, as the response to the CPCV.

Cosmobian — a being whose identity, knowledge, and existence are constitutively grounded in a specific cosmological architecture.

Ap / Ap-ap — the ontologically grounded human being, in Lani cosmology, and the hollowed colonial counterfeit produced by the CPCV’s Second Cage operation.

Kugi — the destructive principle Lani cosmology names as constitutive of the human condition itself, rather than external to it.

Digital cosmological mining — the extraction of meaning, attention, and cosmological orientation as raw material for value generation within digital platforms.

The Seven Cages — the ontological architecture this paper develops, within which the CPCV operates: Physical, Symbolic, Metaphysical, Technological, the Corridor of the Dead, Absolute Unknowing, and the Irreducible Other.

LIMITS OF THE FRAMEWORK

Several limits of the Psycho-Cosmocide framework require explicit acknowledgement before the analysis proceeds, in the interest of intellectual honesty and scholarly rigour.

First, the framework is not intended as a total theory of existence. It is a diagnostic lens, and like all lenses it has a focal range beyond which distortion increases. The CPCV concept is designed to identify a specific mechanism of civilisational domination — not to explain all forms of oppression, all symbolic change, or all technological development. Not all technology is reducible to domination: the same technical capacities that enable surveillance also enable encrypted

communication, independent publishing, and cosmological documentation. Not all religious and ideological systems function primarily as control mechanisms: religious traditions have historically served as the primary vehicles of anti-colonial resistance, communal survival, ethical frameworks, and the preservation of cosmological memory against colonial erasure. The framework's diagnostic claim concerns what the CPCV does with these structures under specific historical conditions, not what those structures are in themselves. Concretely, the CPCV does not purport to explain conflict between colonised peoples themselves, individual cruelty unconnected to any civilisational apparatus, ecological limits that would constrain a society regardless of its colonial status, or psychological suffering with no structural or symbolic dimension at all. Where a phenomenon can be fully accounted for without reference to an apparatus that restructures the cages for its own reproduction, it falls outside the concept's explanatory reach.

Second, the framework does not idealise indigenous cosmological traditions as pure, harmonious, or exempt from internal forms of domination. Precolonial Papuan societies, like all human societies, contained their own hierarchies, gendered exclusions, forms of violence, and mechanisms of social control. The analytical distinction between indigenous cosmological architecture and colonial cosmological replacement is not a claim about the perfection of what preceded colonisation; it is a claim about the different ontological basis on which social order was organised, and the specific kind of destruction that its replacement represents. A damaged house is not the same as no house. The critique of colonial cosmological destruction does not require the romanticisation of precolonial life; it requires only the recognition that what was destroyed was real, structured, and capable of sustaining the communities it belonged to.

Third, Wonesis — the framework's proposed counter-movement — is explicitly not a utopian or salvific programme. It does not promise the abolition of the seven cages, the recovery of an unspoiled precolonial condition, or a final resolution of the existential conditions that the framework describes. It names a mode of inhabiting those conditions differently: with greater cosmological grounding, more honest relational awareness, and without the compounding exploitation that the CPCV layers upon structural vulnerabilities that would exist regardless. The framework does not claim to have the answer; it claims to have identified, with greater precision than previous frameworks, the terrain on which any such answer must be sought.

Fourth, on falsifiability: the framework makes claims at two different levels, and the question of what could disconfirm it is different at each level. At the level of the seven cages as ontological conditions, the framework makes claims that are broadly consonant with existing philosophical, biological, and phenomenological literatures — the finite body, the symbolic order, consciousness, technology, mortality, unknowing, and the irreducible other are all categories with robust independent grounding.

At the level of the CPCV mechanism, the framework makes historico-structural claims that are in principle disconfirmable: evidence that colonial symbolic orders did not systematically replace

indigenous ones, or that technology under colonial conditions did not disproportionately serve extraction and displacement, would constitute relevant counter-evidence. Concretely: a documented case in which a colonised society's pre-existing symbolic, cosmological, and technological systems persisted essentially intact alongside imposed colonial ones — without the pattern of extraction, replacement, and dependency this framework describes — would count as disconfirming evidence and would require the mechanism's claims to be narrowed or revised accordingly. The framework does not claim that all symbolic change is violent replacement, or that all colonised peoples are identically affected. It claims that a specific and historically traceable mechanism operates in ways that can be empirically studied, even if this paper's register remains primarily philosophical.

SITUATING THE FRAMEWORK: PSYCHO-COSMOCIDE AND THE QUESTION OF ONTOLOGICAL ARCHITECTURE

The Psycho-Cosmocide body of work, developed at NATAKA Research Institute and published under the Wone Press, Kurumbi Wone Working Paper Series, constitutes an ongoing and evolving scholarly and cosmological inquiry into what its principal authors identify as the deepest and most comprehensive form of colonial destruction: not merely the seizure of land, the suppression of language, or the restructuring of economic relations, but the systematic invasion of mind, meaning, and cosmos — the destruction of the ontological infrastructure within which indigenous life, knowledge, and being are grounded.⁷

This framework develops in explicit dialogue with, and departure from, the existing canon of decolonial thought. Frantz Fanon's dual analysis of colonial violence as the destruction of both the colonised body and the colonised symbolic world anticipates the framework's distinction between First and Second Cage colonisation.⁸ Walter Mignolo's concept of the colonial matrix of power and Aníbal Quijano's foundational account of the colonality of power constitute the closest

⁷ For the foundational Lani cosmological concepts of *Ap*, *Ap-ap*, and *Kugi*, see Yamin Kogoya, *Psycho-Cosmocide: The Silent Invasion of Mind, Meaning, and Cosmos*. Kurumbi Wone Working Paper Series, no. 2 (2nd ed.). NATAKA Research Institute / Wone Press, 2026; and Yamin Kogoya and milineXus, *A Foundational Theoretical Framework for the Study of Psycho-Cosmocide*. Kurumbi Wone Working Paper Series, no. 1(B). NATAKA Research Institute / Wone Press, 2026. Those companion papers develop the broader Lani cosmological lexicon within which the present analysis of the Seven Existential Cages is situated. See also note 1 above for the concept of the Cosmobian World.

⁸ Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Richard Philcox (New York: Grove, 2004); and Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, trans. Richard Philcox (New York: Grove, 2008). Fanon's analyses of colonial violence, psychic alienation, and cultural domination provide an important point of departure for the Psycho-Cosmocide framework's distinction between First and Second Cage colonisation, although he does not develop the cosmological dimension as a distinct object of analysis. The Psycho-Cosmocide framework extends Fanon's diagnosis by incorporating the metaphysical and technological dimensions articulated in the Third and Fourth Cages.

existing theoretical precedents for the Second Cage analysis, particularly the claim that colonial symbolic orders do not supplement but replace indigenous ones.⁹ Sylvia Wynter's rigorous account of the overrepresentation of Man — the colonial-humanist figure whose genre of being is universalised as the human as such — provides the most precise existing formulation of the Second Cage's capacity to render alternative symbolic architectures literally unthinkable from within the dominant system.¹⁰ Boaventura de Sousa Santos's concept of epistemicide — the destruction of indigenous knowledge systems through the imposition of Western epistemic frameworks — operates at the level of the Second Cage and anticipates the cosmological dimension of the present analysis.¹¹ Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's argument that language is the primary vehicle of colonial conquest and the primary site of decolonial recovery provides one of the clearest accounts of Second Cage dynamics available.¹²

Marie Battiste's decolonial pedagogy, grounded in Mi'kmaw epistemology, offers a comparative framework for the relationship between indigenous cognitive systems and colonial restructuring.¹³

⁹ Walter D. Mignolo, *The Darker Side of Western Modernity: Global Futures, Decolonial Options* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011); and Walter D. Mignolo and Catherine E. Walsh, *On Decoloniality: Concepts, Analytics, Praxis* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2018). Mignolo's concept of the colonial matrix of power, building on Aníbal Quijano's formulation of the coloniality of power, provides one of the closest theoretical precedents for the Second Cage analysis developed here, particularly in its account of how colonial symbolic and epistemic orders displace indigenous worlds of meaning. See also Aníbal Quijano, "Coloniality of Power, Eurocentrism, and Latin America," *Nepantla: Views from the South* 1, no. 3 (2000): 533–580.

¹⁰ Sylvia Wynter, "Unsettling the Coloniality of Being/Power/Truth/Freedom: Towards the Human, After Man, Its Overrepresentation—An Argument," *CR: The New Centennial Review* 3, no. 3 (2003): 257–337. Wynter's concept of the overrepresentation of Man—the colonial-humanist figure whose genre of being is universalised as the human as such—provides one of the most systematic accounts of the Second Cage's capacity to render alternative symbolic and cosmological architectures unintelligible from within the dominant order.

¹¹ Boaventura de Sousa Santos, *Epistemologies of the South: Justice Against Epistemicide* (London: Routledge, 2014). Santos's concept of epistemicide—the destruction or marginalisation of Indigenous and other non-Western epistemologies through the global dominance of Western forms of knowledge—provides an important point of departure for the Second Cage analysis developed here. The Psycho-Cosmocide framework extends this analysis beyond epistemic domination to the metaphysical, biological, and technological registers articulated in the Third through Seventh Cages.

¹² Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, *Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature* (Oxford: James Currey, 1986). Wa Thiong'o's analysis of language as a primary vehicle of colonial domination and a principal site of decolonial recovery provides one of the clearest analyses of the linguistic dimensions of what the present framework identifies as Second Cage colonisation. The Psycho-Cosmocide framework shares wa Thiong'o's conviction that the destruction of Indigenous language is inseparable from the destruction of Indigenous cosmology, while extending that analysis by situating language within a broader architecture of land, memory, kinship, ancestry, and metaphysical orientation.

¹³ Marie Battiste, *Decolonizing Education: Nourishing the Learning Spirit* (Saskatoon: Purich, 2013). Battiste's decolonial pedagogy, grounded in Mi'kmaw epistemology, provides an important comparative point of reference for understanding the relationship between Indigenous cognitive systems and the colonial restructuring of what the

Ibn Khaldun's pre-modern account of civilisational rise and collapse, organised around the concept of *asabiyya* (social cohesion) and its erosion under conquest and mimetic dependency, furnishes a historical perspective on the CPCV mechanism's long-term civilisational consequences.¹⁴

What distinguishes the Psycho-Cosmocide framework from these precedents is threefold. *First*, it extends the analysis beyond the epistemological and sociopolitical dimensions to encompass what it calls the cosmological: the structured relationship between human life and the cosmos that grounds meaning, identity, and being at a level deeper than any given symbolic system. *Second*, it insists on the non-exclusively-human scope of the ontological conditions it names: the seven cages are not a human problem but a condition of life as such, which the human species has simply become sufficiently conscious to theorise. *Third*, it grounds its analysis within a specific indigenous cosmological tradition — the Lani cosmology of the West Papuan highlands, with its foundational concepts of *Ap*, *Ap-ap*, and *Kugi* — while insisting on the universal scope of the diagnostic framework thus developed.

The Seven Cages introduced in this paper constitute the ontological architecture within which the CPCV operates. These conditions precede the CPCV; they are the pre-existing terrain it learned to navigate and exploit. Understanding the cages is therefore not an end in itself: it is the precondition for understanding what *Wonesis* must accomplish and on what terrain.¹⁵

LANI EXISTENTIAL AXIOMS

The Lani people of the New Guinea highlands have historically drawn three fundamental existential conclusions about the nature of human existence. These teachings function not merely

present framework identifies as Second Cage symbolic architecture. The Psycho-Cosmocide framework develops a parallel analysis grounded in the Lani-West Papuan cosmological tradition.

¹⁴ Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History*, trans. Franz Rosenthal, 3 vols. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1958). Ibn Khaldun's analysis of *asabiyya* (social cohesion) and its erosion through luxury, conquest, and the imitation of dominant groups provides one of the earliest systematic theories of civilisational formation and decline. The present framework reinterprets these dynamics through the progressive reorganisation of the First and Second Cages by successive civilisational formations. Ibn Khaldun's cyclical account of civilisational rise and collapse is further situated within the Psycho-Cosmocide framework's broader analysis of the Civilisational Psycho-Cosmocide Virus (CPCV).

¹⁵ The concept of *Wonesis*—the existential and cosmological reorientation proposed by the Psycho-Cosmocide framework in response to the Civilisational Psycho-Cosmocide Virus (CPCV)—is outlined here only in its essential features; its fuller positive architecture is developed in Yamin Kogoya, *Wonesis: Framework, Belonging, and the Antidote to Psycho-Cosmocide*. Kurumbi Wone Working Paper Series, no. 16. NATAKA Research Institute / Wone Press, 2026. *Wonesis* does not promise liberation from the Seven Existential Cages but rather the cultivation of a way of inhabiting them with full consciousness, cosmological grounding, and relational honesty—a mode of being that the CPCV is structurally incapable of accommodating.

as moral statements, but as cosmological recognitions of the conditions within which human life unfolds.

The *first* teaching states: “*Nit Ap Yi Ti Kambirak N’duk Aret N’dak’nogomonggorak*,” meaning that human beings are born to die. This expresses the recognition that mortality is not an accident of existence but one of its foundational conditions — a precise cosmological naming of what the present framework identifies as the Fifth Cage.

The *second* teaching states: “*Nit Ap Yi Mbi-Mbingga Ti Ninambome Manibirak Paga Aret, Yiwone–Ndi Wone, Nalop-Kalop, Yimaluk-Ndimaluk Wone Yogomonggorak*,” meaning that human beings argue, struggle, debate, fight, and wage war fundamentally for survival — for what is placed into the mouth so that the biological body may continue to live. The teaching situates conflict not within abstract metaphysical promises of heaven, utopia, or transcendence, but within the material conditions of earthly existence itself. It names the First Cage with a directness that most civilisational symbolic orders have systematically obscured: the fundamental driver of human social conflict is embodied survival, not ideology. Ideology is the costume the First Cage wears once a symbolic order has seized control of how that struggle is narrated.

The *third* teaching states: “*Nit Ap Yi Ti Kugi Aret*,” meaning that human beings themselves possess the capacity to become Kugi — the destructive force, the killer, the violator, the maker of chaos and tragedy. In Lani understanding, Kugi refers to the deadly or destructive principle: the force that brings suffering, destruction, and death to both self and others. This axiom does not celebrate the destructiveness of the human species, but it names it honestly: the human being is simultaneously creator and destroyer, the one who builds cosmological order and the one who undoes it. The Kugi is not external to the human — it is constitutive of the human condition, the shadow that accompanies every act of creation and every act of care.

Together, these foundational Lani teachings provide a cosmobian realism — that is, an ontological orientation grounded in cosmological relationship rather than abstract idealism (“cosmobian” designates, within the Psycho-Cosmocide framework, a being whose identity, knowledge, and existence are constitutively grounded in a specific cosmological architecture; see footnote 1 and Working Papers No. 1(B) and No. 2) — through which the nature of the seven existential cages can be understood. They recognise mortality, embodied struggle, and destructive human potential as inherent conditions of existence that cannot be managed through denial, transcendental evasion, or civilisational performance — only through honest cosmological grounding. The seven cages identified in this paper are the structural architecture within which those three conditions play out across every human life and every human society.

A Roadmap of the Seven Cages

Before the cages are examined individually, it is useful to hold the full architecture in view, since the later cages become progressively more abstract:

First — Physical. The material, biological, bodily condition of finite embodied existence.

Second — Symbolic. Language, mythology, culture, and the meaning-systems through which reality is perceived rather than encountered directly.

Third — Metaphysical. Consciousness, transcendence, and memory — the lucid awareness of one's own captivity that changes nothing about the captivity itself.

Fourth — Technological. Science and technology as they mediate, and re-mediate, the first three cages.

Fifth — the Corridor of the Dead. Mortality: the cage no philosophical tradition has conclusively resolved and no religion has demonstrably escaped.

Sixth — Absolute Unknowing. The limits of what any finite consciousness can know, including about its own condition.

Seventh — the Irreducible Other. The sealed interiority of every individual life, human and non-human, that no relationship or domination can fully breach.

The first four cages are, in one sense, historical: civilisations organise, intensify, and exploit them differently across time. The final three are not: they precede every civilisation and will outlast this one. The CPCV's operation, examined cage by cage below, is the exploitation of all seven — the historical and the constant alike.

A further distinction runs across the seven: the First, Fifth, and Seventh Cages are proposed as universal across conscious life of any kind, while the Second, Third, Fourth, and Sixth presuppose degrees of symbolic architecture, reflective consciousness, and epistemic self-awareness that are matters of continuum across species rather than binary possession — present in humans most fully, and in other organisms to whatever extent their own forms of cognition allow.

THE FIRST CAGE

Physical

The *First Cage* is the material, biological, and bodily condition of existence. Human beings are embedded in matter — mortal, finite, dependent upon land, food, water, air, and the physical world

for survival. No organism that breathes, feeds, grows, and decays is exempt from this cage. It is the condition of being a body in a physical world, subject to the laws of nature, entropy, and biological need. It is not a cage that can be escaped. It is the ground floor of existence itself.

The CPCV targets the First Cage not by abolishing it — which is impossible — but by colonising it from within. It severs the living organism from the physical world it depends upon, replacing the organism's relationship with land, food, and water through the mediation of commodity, capital, and market. The body that once inhabited a physical world now inhabits an economic system that mediates every relationship between the organism and the material conditions of its survival. Land becomes property, food becomes commodity, water becomes capital. The First Cage cannot be dismantled, but its interior can be thoroughly restructured so that the organism navigates its own biological dependency through systems designed to extract value from that dependency at every point.

This is not merely an economic observation, but an ontological one. The First Cage's colonisation means that the organism's most basic existential relationship — the relationship of a body to the world that sustains it — is no longer direct, embedded, and cosmologically grounded, but mediated, extracted, and systematically managed by a civilisational apparatus whose primary interest is not the organism's flourishing but the perpetuation of the apparatus itself.

Mythological Illustration: The Myth of Sisyphus

The myth of Sisyphus is the First Cage's most precise mythological image. Condemned to roll his boulder upward only to watch it descend again, Sisyphus enacts the fundamental biological rhythm that no civilisation has broken: born into a body on this planet, struggle to survive, labour within material constraints, decline, and die — only for the same cycle to repeat with the next organism, the next generation, the next species. The boulder does not change. The hill does not change. The physics of the situation remain constant beneath every narrative overlay. Different religions, ideologies, technologies, and civilisational projects have dressed this cycle in different costumes — progress, salvation, development, innovation, karma — but the costume is not the body, and the body remains in the First Cage regardless. The CPCV does not liberate anyone from the boulder. It commodifies the hill, charges a toll for the climb, and then calls this arrangement civilisation.

The West Papuan case gives this general structure a concrete referent. For Papuan societies, land functions as a living archive rather than a backdrop: mountains carry genealogies, rivers connect the living to ancestors, and forests serve simultaneously as pharmacopeia, classroom, and spiritual landscape.¹⁶ The CPCV colonises the First Cage precisely by ensuring that the terms within which

¹⁶ Yamin Kogoya, *The Labyrinth of Papuan Extinction*, Working Paper No. 19, NATAKA Research Institute / Wone Press Psycho-Cosmocide Studies Working Paper Series (2026). The analysis of land as the primary archive is

land's value is assessed render this archival function illegible: within development economics and national planning frameworks, a sacred mountain is worthless unless it yields extractable minerals, and a biodiverse forest registers negative value if it impedes agricultural or extractive expansion. The resulting asymmetry can be stated starkly: the funerary mask of Tutankhamun is preserved under climate-controlled international protection, while the West Papuan rainforest — among the most biodiverse on Earth, and home to pharmacological knowledge that remains in places undocumented by Western science — continues to be cleared for palm oil, timber, and mining.¹⁷ Both are treasures within their own cosmological or civilisational frame of reference. Only one is legible as a treasure to the apparatus that assigns value under the First Cage's colonial administration.

THE SECOND CAGE

Symbolic

The *Second Cage* is the level of language, mythologies, culture, meaning-making, ideology, and social structure. Human beings do not experience raw reality: they experience it through symbolic systems — written language, stories, myths, symbols, colours, signs — all of which create meaning, purpose, and value through religion, law, custom, narrative, and cosmology. These systems order life but also enclose it, making certain things thinkable and others permanently unthinkable. The symbolic cage is the one most human beings mistake for reality itself, precisely because it is the medium through which all other realities are perceived and interpreted. It is the water in which human consciousness swims, invisible because it is everywhere.

The CPCV operates most aggressively within the Second Cage. Its method is not the simple suppression of indigenous symbolic orders — though suppression is often its instrument — but their systematic replacement with colonial ones. It substitutes cosmological meaning with ideological meaning, relational knowledge with extracted information, and the living symbolic architecture of indigenous life with the managed symbolic architecture of the civilisational apparatus. Gradually — and this is the CPCV's most sophisticated accomplishment — it becomes

developed there and is grounded in the Lani concept of *Inaorak*, derived from *Inawi* ("home," "land," "space") and *Worak* ("exist," "verified," "confirmed").

¹⁷ On deforestation in West Papua, Indigenous dispossession, and the region's exceptional biodiversity, see Yamin Kogoya, *Four Worlds, One Dying Earth*, Working Paper No. 17, NATAKA Research Institute / Wone Press Psycho-Cosmocide Studies Working Paper Series (2026). See also Survival International, *The Most Endangered Tribes*, <https://www.survivalinternational.org>; and International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), *The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species* (2023), <https://www.iucnredlist.org>.

impossible for those inside the colonised symbolic order to imagine that any other symbolic architecture ever existed, or could exist.

When the Second Cage is fully colonised, the First Cage colonises itself: the organism, now equipped only with the symbolic tools of the colonising system, can no longer even perceive the restructuring of its material conditions as restructuring. The poverty of symbolic resources produces a poverty of political imagination. What may be called a Procrustean template — conformity to which is enforced not by external violence alone but by the internal logic of the colonised symbolic order — becomes invisible as a template. (The Procrustean figure is elaborated in the mythological illustration that follows.) It appears simply as reality: a reality whose terms have been structured by the civilisational apparatus to serve its own reproduction rather than the flourishing of those who inhabit it.

The West Papuan experience provides a historically grounded instance of Second Cage colonisation. Dutch and Indonesian colonial administrations, in conjunction with Christian missionary programmes, replaced Lani and other Papuan symbolic orders through three reinforcing mechanisms: mandatory replacement of indigenous languages with Dutch and subsequently Bahasa Indonesia in formal education; substitution of indigenous cosmological frameworks with Christian theological ones through mission schooling, coupling literacy to religious conversion; and Indonesian state incorporation of West Papua under development narratives that rendered indigenous political claims unspeakable within legitimate public discourse. The result is what the Second Cage analysis predicts: not merely suppression of indigenous symbolic life, but its replacement by a system within which Papuan claims to land, sovereignty, and cosmological self-determination cannot be adequately articulated — because the symbolic order through which articulation must occur was designed by and for the colonising apparatus. Wa Thiong'o's account of language as the primary vehicle of colonial conquest finds in the Papuan case one of its most systematic contemporary expressions. Within the Lani cosmological framework, the deep consequence of this Second Cage colonisation is the transformation of the Ap — the ontologically grounded human being — into the Ap-ap, a hollowed counterfeit refashioned in the coloniser's image; this distinction, introduced here, is developed analytically in the West Papua section below.

Mythological Illustration: The Procrustean Bed

The mythological figure most precisely illustrating the CPCV's operation within the Second Cage is Procrustes — the smith of Greek myth who forced all travellers to fit his iron bed by stretching those too short and amputating those too long. Procrustes did not measure the bed to the traveller; he measured the traveller to the bed. This is the Second Cage under colonisation with perfect structural fidelity. The colonial symbolic order does not adjust its categories to accommodate the living reality of those it encounters. It adjusts the living reality — cutting, stretching, amputating, and reclassifying — until what remains fits the pre-given template. Languages that do not fit are

suppressed. Cosmologies that do not fit are reclassified as superstition. Land relationships that do not fit are reclassified as empty claims. Kinship systems that do not fit are reclassified as primitive social organisation. The traveller — the living, cosmologically grounded human being — is made to fit. What is cut away in this process is not recovered. The amputated limbs of Lani cosmological life — language, ritual, land relationship, temporal orientation — do not grow back once the colonial bed has been imposed.

THE THIRD CAGE

Metaphysical

The *Third Cage* is the dimension of transcendence, consciousness, memory, and temporal awareness. It is the particular condition of beings sufficiently conscious to be aware of their own captivity — and the most painful aspect of this awareness is that consciousness alone changes nothing. It is the dimension of knowing-without-exit: the capacity to perceive one's condition with full clarity while remaining within it. The prisoner who understands the prison perfectly is still in the prison. Consciousness does not dissolve the cage, but illuminates it from within.

Vladimir and Estragon in Beckett's drama are the literary enactment of this cage. They speak with philosophical precision about their predicament. They know, articulate their condition fully, and are not deceived. And yet they wait, and the act continues, and tomorrow they will wait again. The Third Cage is not ignorance: it is lucid captivity.

It is the most distinctively human of the cages, in that it requires the degree of self-reflective consciousness that only certain organisms — and most fully, perhaps, only human beings — appear to possess.

The CPCV and the Metaphysical Dimension

Within the Psycho-Cosmocide framework, the Third Cage represents the metaphysical dimension of existence most directly targeted by organised religion and ideological systems. These systems do not merely offer spiritual explanations for existence; they actively restructure the Second Cage — the social, cultural, and psychological order — in their own image. Within this analysis, the CPCV does not simply inhabit the metaphysical realm; it produces what may be analytically described as a substitute cosmological architecture: institutionally managed answers to existential questions, engineered to pacify the restlessness of the Third Cage while deepening structural dependence upon the institutional structures of the Second Cage through which those answers are distributed and controlled. It is important to state explicitly that this analysis does not claim religion or metaphysical tradition to be reducible to domination: the same religious traditions that have

operated as instruments of colonial pacification have also generated liberation theology, anti-colonial resistance, ethical cosmologies of care, and practices of communal solidarity that the CPCV has consistently worked to neutralise. Cone's own Black liberation theology is a case in point — a theological tradition that uses the resources of religious thought precisely against its colonial deployments. The diagnostic claim of this framework is not that religion inevitably serves domination but that the CPCV specifically targets the metaphysical dimension because it represents the deepest level of symbolic attachment, and that colonial religious institutions have historically been among its most effective instruments.

A historically documented instance of this process, particularly relevant to colonised Papuan and other indigenous peoples, is what the present framework terms the racialisation of the metaphysical order through missionary and colonial religious iconography. James H. Cone's foundational work in Black liberation theology has documented extensively how Christian colonial missions presented the divine, the salvific, and the transcendent through whitened imagery — while associating darkness, evil, and damnation with blackness — producing a theological cosmology that bore the ideological imprint of the colonial order rather than any transhistorical religious necessity.¹⁸ Frantz Fanon's analysis in *Black Skin, White Masks* of the psychic damage wrought by the colonised subject's internalisation of the coloniser's symbolic world provides the psychological mechanism by which such theological imagery becomes operative at the level of self-perception. Within the Psycho-Cosmocide analysis, this historically documented process constitutes one of the most insidious operations of the CPCV at the level of the Third Cage: not simply the suppression of indigenous metaphysical frameworks, but their replacement by a colonial cosmology in which the sacred and the condemned have been symbolically racialised — generating what this framework identifies as a fracture within the colonised subject's own cosmological self-understanding. The term “racialised metaphysical coding” is used here not as a biologicistic claim but as a shorthand for this historically traceable process of symbolic restructuring, the scholarly documentation of which spans Black liberation theology, postcolonial religious studies, and the anthropology of colonial religious aesthetics.

The West Papuan case supplies this racialised metaphysical coding with a further, more specific structure: missionary cartography. An influential missionary history narrates the Christian message's advance from Jerusalem through the Mediterranean, Europe, the Americas, Africa, and Asia until arriving, at the twentieth century's end, at what it designates as the final frontier: Irian

¹⁸ James H. Cone, *A Black Theology of Liberation*, 40th anniversary ed. (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2010); and Cone, *The Cross and the Lynching Tree* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2011). Cone's work develops a systematic theological critique of how dominant traditions within Western Christianity came to racialise the divine order in ways that reinforced colonial and white supremacist social arrangements rather than reflecting any transhistorical religious necessity. For the psychic and phenomenological dimensions of this process as experienced by the colonised subject, see Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, especially chapters 5 and 6. For the missionary and iconographic dimensions, see Lamin Sanneh, *Translating the Message: The Missionary Impact on Culture*, 2nd ed. (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2009); and R. S. Sugirtharajah, ed., *Voices from the Margin: Interpreting the Bible in the Third World* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2006).

Jaya, West Papua.¹⁹ Within this cartography Jerusalem functions as the alpha and West Papua as the omega — the last people on earth to receive the gospel, and therefore, within the missionary imagination, the site of a special eschatological destiny. The effect is a doubled colonisation of the Third Cage: Papuan suffering is not merely denied or minimised but actively re-narrated as sacred drama, absorbed into a story of prophetic election in which dispossession and militarisation become signs of chosenness rather than evidence of injury. In the present era this re-narration circulates digitally — AI-generated and stock imagery of a suffering West Papua paired with luminous white saviour figures hovering above the territory, captioned with prophetic scripture — reproducing the same structure at platform scale. What results is a psychologically real but materially dislocating condition: colonised people relocated, within their own religious imagination, into what a companion analysis names a metaphysical Neverland — told they are kings, queens, and chosen children of God even as their everyday reality remains defined by dispossession and powerlessness.²⁰ The greater the sacred titles bestowed, the more unbearable the distance from the conditions of actual existence becomes — and the more unbearable that distance, the more essential the metaphysical compensation appears. This is the Third Cage's colonisation completing itself: not merely an imposed belief system, but a belief system whose own compensations deepen dependency on the apparatus that manufactures them.

Mythological Illustrations: Gilgamesh, Ecclesiastes, and Beckett

Three mythological-literary texts illuminate the Third Cage from different angles. The first is the Epic of Gilgamesh, which captures the moment of Third Cage awareness with devastating precision. Gilgamesh is a king who has built a great city, achieved extraordinary feats, and constructed an imposing civilisational cage. Then Enkidu dies. In that moment, Gilgamesh does not merely grieve: he sees. He sees that all his power, all his achievement, all his civilisational grandeur has changed nothing about the fundamental conditions of existence. He is still a mortal organism on this planet, still subject to loss, still unable to escape what awaits him. His response — to seek immortality through the plant of the underworld — is the paradigmatic Third Cage response: the conscious being's attempt to reason, will, or strive its way out of the cage. The plant is taken from him by a serpent while he sleeps. The cage does not open. The Third Cage is the

¹⁹ Ruth A. Tucker, *From Jerusalem to Irian Jaya: A Biographical History of Christian Missions*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2004), 9–17, 489–502. The implications of Tucker's missionary cartography for Psycho-Cosmocide theory are developed in Yamin Kogoya, *Capturing Papuan Cosmological Consciousness: Sacred Geography and Metaphysical Displacement in West Papua*, Working Paper No. 7, NATAKA Research Institute / Wone Press Psycho-Cosmocide Studies Working Paper Series (2026).

²⁰ The concept of "metaphysical Neverland" and its psychological implications are developed in greater detail in Yamin Kogoya, *We Are All Inmates of Different Cages: Psycho-Cosmocide and Civilisational Captivity*, Working Paper No. 25, NATAKA Research Institute / Wone Press Psycho-Cosmocide Studies Working Paper Series (2026).

condition in which Gilgamesh is left: knowing, fully, that he cannot escape, and unable to unknow this.

Ecclesiastes-Qohelet surveys the same territory with philosophical completeness. Wisdom — tried. Pleasure — tried. Work, accumulation, prestige — tried. The verdict is identical each time: they do not dissolve the cage. They are real, they have value, but they are not exits. The CPCV's operation within the Third Cage is precisely to manufacture the appearance of exits where there are none — selling managed answers to the restlessness that Qohelet simply names and sits with. The wisdom of Ecclesiastes, for the present framework, is not its pessimism but its diagnostic honesty: the insistence on naming the actual condition rather than substituting a more comfortable fiction for it. Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* arrives at the same position through dramatic form: two figures, full awareness, no exit, and the decision to wait nonetheless — not because waiting is meaningful but because the alternatives are identical in structure. The Third Cage is inhabited, not escaped.

THE FOURTH CAGE

Technological

The *Fourth Cage* is science and technology as civilisational condition. Both began with genuine promise, born from the exhaustion of being confined within the First and Second Cages and haunted by the vertigo of the Third. The desire to know, to extend, to reduce suffering, to understand the physical world — these are real and legitimate human impulses. But under the conditions of global Psycho-Cosmocide, science and technology have become instruments through which the CPCV extends its reach back into the First Cage itself, extracting, restructuring, and consuming the material ground on which all existence depends. Science and technology do not dissolve the cages. They reorganise what is possible within them — and in doing so, they reorganise the cages themselves.

The mechanism by which the CPCV operates within the Fourth Cage can be specified in three phases. In the first, technology mediates the organism's relationship to the First Cage — to land, food, body, and material world — inserting itself between the organism and the conditions of its survival in ways that generate extraction and dependency.

Stiegler's analysis of technics as constitutively human provides a necessary theoretical backdrop, but the Psycho-Cosmocide framework departs from it in one critical respect: where Stiegler analyses the pharmacological ambivalence of technics (its capacity to be both poison and cure), the present framework insists that under colonial conditions this ambivalence is asymmetrical. For colonised peoples, the technological apparatus arrives already embedded within the colonial

symbolic order — as instrument of dispossession first, as potential resource only derivatively and conditionally.

In the second phase, technology colonises the Second Cage — the symbolic order — by restructuring attention, meaning-making, and the social architecture of relationship. Byung-Chul Han's analysis of the burnout society and the transparency society identifies the psychological mechanism here: digital systems dissolve the interval of reflection, eliminate the protective distance that makes genuine thought possible, and replace the thickness of symbolic life with the frictionless circulation of information. Han's account converges with the Psycho-Cosmocide framework's Second Cage analysis but does not extend it to the cosmological register: the destruction Han identifies is primarily psychological and social, whereas the CPCV's operation in the Fourth Cage specifically targets the cosmological infrastructure — the structured relationship between human life and the larger order of existence — which underlies and makes possible any given symbolic system.

In the third phase — the terminal expression of the Fourth Cage — technology undertakes what the present framework calls *digital cosmological mining*: the systematic extraction of meaning, attention, social bond, and cosmological orientation as raw material for value generation within digital platforms.²¹ This concept is distinct from, though related to, Shoshana Zuboff's surveillance capitalism: where Zuboff identifies the extraction of behavioural data for market prediction as the defining feature of the digital economy, the present framework identifies a deeper operation — the extraction and displacement of cosmological orientation itself. Surveillance capitalism is the economic mechanism; digital cosmological mining is the ontological consequence. It is also distinct from Baudrillard's simulation: where Baudrillard analyses the collapse of the real into its representations as a feature of the sign economy generally, digital cosmological mining is a historically specific process in which colonised peoples' cosmological architectures are selectively absorbed, commodified, and returned as digital content — emptied of their ontological grounding — while the infrastructure of meaning-production itself remains controlled by the colonising system. The result is the offer of a substitute cosmological horizon — institutionally controlled,

²¹The concept of digital cosmological mining is developed more fully elsewhere within the Psycho-Cosmocide corpus. It is adjacent to, but distinct from, three influential theoretical frameworks: Shoshana Zuboff's surveillance capitalism, which identifies behavioural data extraction as the defining logic of digital capitalism but does not extend the analysis to cosmological displacement; Bernard Stiegler's philosophy of technics, which analyses the constitutive ambivalence of technology without addressing the asymmetrical colonial conditions under which that ambivalence is realised; and Byung-Chul Han's analyses of burnout and transparency, which examine the psychological and social consequences of digital acceleration but do not consider the displacement of indigenous cosmological infrastructures under colonial conditions. See Shoshana Zuboff, *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism: The Fight for a Human Future at the New Frontier of Power* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2019); Bernard Stiegler, *Technics and Time, 1: The Fault of Epimetheus*, trans. Richard Beardsworth and George Collins (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998); Byung-Chul Han, *The Burnout Society*, trans. Erik Butler (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2015); and Han, *The Transparency Society*, trans. Erik Butler (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2015).

algorithmically curated — in place of the cosmological grounding the CPCV has progressively displaced across the other cages.

The convergence of physical resource extraction and digital cosmological mining is particularly legible in the West Papuan case. Since the establishment of the Freeport-McMoRan Grasberg mine in 1972 — one of the largest gold and copper operations in the world, built on Amungme ancestral land without meaningful consent — the First Cage colonisation of Papuan land has operated in direct structural parallel with the Second and Fourth Cage colonisation of Papuan meaning-systems. The same state and corporate apparatus that extracts mineral wealth from Papuan ground also administers the symbolic environment in which Papuans are represented to themselves and to the world: through Indonesian state media that frames resistance as separatism, through development discourse that frames dispossession as progress, and through digital platforms whose algorithmic architecture reflects neither Lani nor any other Papuan cosmological orientation. When Papuan activists use social media to document land seizures or military violence, they do so within a technological infrastructure architecturally indifferent to the cosmological claims they are making — one that simultaneously extracts their communicative labour, monetises their political speech as engagement data, and returns to them a digital symbolic environment shaped by the priorities of the platform economy rather than those of the communities whose lives are at stake. This is digital cosmological mining in its most concrete form: the Fourth Cage exploited in direct coordination with the First and Second.

This dynamic is not confined to the digital register. The material infrastructure Jakarta offers in West Papua — roads, clinics, mobile networks, new administrative provinces created under Special Autonomy — functions as the Fourth Cage's developmental analogue to the cargo cults long documented across Melanesia: ritual and political efforts to secure the material and institutional goods of a colonising order whose means of production were never disclosed.²² Read this way, the cargo cult was not irrationality but a structurally rational response to encountering civilisational surplus while the mechanisms of its production remained withheld. The same pattern now operates in reverse and at scale: aspiration toward new provinces, new regencies, and international recognition follows the cargo cult's own psychological structure — the conviction that access to the material and institutional world of the dominant order will itself deliver completion. Each road, clinic wall, and government salary functions as manufactured evidence,

²² On cargo cults as a documented anthropological phenomenon rather than a derogatory label, see Peter Worsley, *The Trumpet Shall Sound: A Study of "Cargo" Cults in Melanesia*, 2nd ed. (New York: Schocken Books, 1968); Kenelm Burridge, *Mambu: A Melanesian Millennium* (London: Methuen, 1960); and Lamont Lindstrom, *Cargo Cult: Strange Stories of Desire from Melanesia and Beyond* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1993). For a Psycho-Cosmocide interpretation of cargo-cult dynamics in relation to pembangunan (development) ideology and *Otonomi Khusus* in contemporary West Papua, see Yamin Kogoya, *The Four Gospels of a Civilisational Death Cult in West Papua: Religiosity, Development, Progress, and Success*, Working Paper No. 21, NATAKA Research Institute / Wone Press Psycho-Cosmocide Studies Working Paper Series (2026).

repeated often enough to feel self-confirming, that development's promise is being kept, even as the underlying colonisation of land, symbol, and meaning continues beneath it.

Mythological Illustration: King Midas of Phrygia

The mythological figure of King Midas illuminates the Fourth Cage with particular precision. Midas is granted the wish that everything he touches turns to gold — the ultimate civilisational fantasy: to have power over material reality, to convert all things into value, to possess the Midas touch. The wish is fulfilled. Everything he touches — food, drink, his own daughter — turns to gold. He starves in the midst of his wealth. The fantasy of total technological and economic mastery, pressed to its logical conclusion, destroys the very life it was meant to enhance. This is precisely the Fourth Cage under CPCV colonisation at its terminal expression: science and technology, placed in the service of a civilisational apparatus committed to the conversion of all things into extractable value, have turned land into property, water into capital, community into market, cosmology into content, and cultural memory into data — and in doing so have produced a world of increasing material complexity and increasing existential poverty. The Grasberg mine is not merely an economic fact. It is a Midas event: the Amungme ancestral land — a living relational cosmos, a First Cage habitat with Second and Third Cage depth — touched by the colonial apparatus and converted into gold. The mine produces billions of dollars of mineral wealth. What it cannot produce is what it destroyed.

Yet even the most comprehensive technological apparatus — the most complete colonisation of land, symbol, and digital horizon — cannot reach the dimension the Fifth Cage names. The first four cages are, in principle, historical: they have been intensified, reorganised, and exploited by specific civilisational systems in specific periods. The Fifth is not. It precedes every civilisation, every colonial encounter, and every technology. It is the cage that awaits the coloniser and the colonised equally.

THE FIFTH CAGE

The Corridor of the Dead

The *Fifth Cage* is the one that no philosophical tradition has conclusively resolved, no religion has demonstrably escaped, no science has broken, and no technology has overcome. Every living organism — from the single-celled creature that existed before memory began, to the most complex human civilisation that has ever risen — enters this corridor and does not return. Not one organism in the entire recorded history of life on this planet has been exempted. Not one species. Not one individual. Not one. The philosophical tradition that has most rigorously engaged with

this cage as a structural, rather than merely terminal, condition is Heidegger's analysis of *Sein-zum-Tode* — being-toward-death — as the horizon of all Dasein.²³

What makes the Fifth Cage distinct from all the others is its absolute democracy. The First Cage can be made more or less comfortable. The Second can be partially rewritten. The Third can be navigated with greater or lesser lucidity. The Fourth can be extended and elaborated. But the Corridor of the Dead admits no negotiation, accepts no bribe, recognises no rank, and makes no exceptions — not for the saint, not for the emperor, not for the species, not for the ecosystem.

The corridor is not an endpoint that waits at the far end of life. It is a condition that accompanies life from its first moment, structuring every decision, every attachment, every act of love, and every act of violence. The CPCV does not create this cage: it exploits it. It weaponises the terror of the corridor to manufacture compliance, to sell meaning-substitutes, and to deepen the grip of the symbolic and technological cages over beings who know, at some irreducible level, that they are already walking through it. Religion, ideology, and the promise of technological immortality are all, in different registers, managed responses to the Fifth Cage — responses that the CPCV has learned to produce and control.

Wonesis does not promise an escape from the Corridor of the Dead. It offers something more honest and more courageous: the capacity to walk it with full consciousness, with cosmological grounding, and without the paralysis of denial — or the docility of managed consolation. The Fifth Cage is not accompanied here by a dedicated mythological illustration subsection. This absence is deliberate: while every mythological figure invoked elsewhere in this framework remains — ultimately — a creature who returned from the corridor (Gilgamesh, Sisyphus, Procrustes, Midas each survive their encounters), no single mythological figure adequately anchors the cage that does not permit return. The Lani teaching — *Nit Ap Yi Ti Kambirak N'duk Aret N'dak'nogomonggorak* — stands here instead: not as illustration but as the axiom from which all illustration falls short.

²³Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), §§46–53. Heidegger's analysis of *Sein-zum-Tode* (being-toward-death) as the structural horizon of Dasein's existence provides one of the most sustained philosophical treatments of what the present framework identifies as the Fifth Cage. The Psycho-Cosmocide framework departs from Heidegger by interpreting the corridor of the dead not primarily as the existential condition for authentic individual existence (*Eigentlichkeit*), but as a cosmological condition whose inevitability the Civilisational Psycho-Cosmocide Virus (CPCV) exploits for collective domination.

THE SIXTH CAGE

The Cage of Absolute Unknowing

The *Sixth Cage* is the cage that contains all the other cages without itself being contained. It is the cage of what we do not know, have never known, cannot know, and — most unsettling of all — do not even know that we do not know. It is the structured darkness behind every light that humanity has ever lit. Every framework, every theory, every cosmology, every religion, every science, every philosophy — including this one — operates from within the Sixth Cage. The Psycho-Cosmocide framework itself, with all its diagnostic precision and ontological depth, is articulated from inside this cage. This is not a weakness of the framework: it is the most honest thing that can be said about any framework.

What makes this cage categorically different from the others is its recursive depth. In the other five cages, we at least know we are caged. We can name the physical body and its mortality. We can identify the symbolic systems that enclose us. We can feel the metaphysical vertigo of consciousness turned upon itself. We can observe what technology does and fails to do. We can walk the Corridor of the Dead with full awareness. But the Sixth Cage is the one we cannot see from inside, because it is made of the very absence of sight. We do not know what we are missing. We do not know how wrong we might be. We do not know what categories of reality have never once entered human awareness across the entire span of biological existence on this planet.

This is not ordinary ignorance — the kind correctable by more research or deeper reflection. This is structural unknowing: the condition of a species whose entire perceptual, cognitive, linguistic, and cosmological apparatus was shaped by particular evolutionary pressures, particular planetary conditions, and particular cultural histories, and which has as a result an unknown number of blind spots that are invisible precisely because they are blind spots. The Sixth Cage is the permanent refutation of every claim to total knowledge — every empire of the mind that has ever declared itself the final truth. The CPCV requires closed systems. It requires complete maps. It requires that the territory be fully named and fully owned. The Sixth Cage is the condition that makes such ownership permanently impossible.

And yet — in the final turn — we know this. The Sixth Cage is the only cage that, in its very acknowledgment, becomes slightly more inhabitable. To say *I do not know what I do not know* is not defeat. It is the beginning of a cosmological humility that the CPCV cannot afford, and that *Wonesis* cannot do without. The Sixth Cage is presented here without the sub-analytical apparatus that accompanies the other cages — no CPCV mechanism subsection, no mythological illustration — and this asymmetry is itself diagnostic: a cage constituted by the limits of what can be known or named resists the elaboration that makes the other cages legible. To over-analyse the Sixth Cage would be to repeat the error it identifies. Its brevity is its argument.

THE SEVENTH CAGE

The Cage of the Irreducible Other

The *Seventh Cage* does not belong to humanity alone. It belongs to every single organism that has ever lived on this planet — every individual bee, every ant, every gecko, every fish, every bird, every bacterium, every tree, every fungus threading its mycelium through the dark soil. Each one is sealed inside its own singular existence. No two organisms — not even identical twins, not even two cells in the same body — share the same inner world. Each individual is a universe unto itself, perceived from a vantage point that has never existed before and will never exist again once that individual is gone. The philosopher Thomas Nagel approached the edge of this cage when he asked what it is like to be a bat: the present framework extends his argument to all individual organisms and connects it explicitly to the political economy of colonial management of the Other.²⁴

Consider what this means speculatively — and the following is offered as philosophical illustration rather than empirical claim about the nature of insect consciousness, which remains genuinely unresolved. There are estimated to be twenty quadrillion ants alive on this planet at any given moment. If each has any form of individual neurological state — however minimal, however different from human experience — then not one of those twenty quadrillion can enter the inner world of another. Each would be alone in its own experience, even as it moves in apparent collective coordination with ten thousand others. The colony is real. The community is real. And yet the individual ant, if it has any inner world at all, would be unreachable — sealed inside something no other organism has ever directly touched. Nagel's point, extended: we cannot know what it is like to be an ant, any more than the ant can know what it is like to be us. The philosophical significance of this does not depend on resolving the hard problem of consciousness; it depends only on taking seriously the possibility that interiority of some kind is more widely distributed than human-centred frameworks have assumed.

The *Ophiocordyceps* fungus can invade the carpenter ant's body, rewrite its behaviour, redirect the entire trajectory of its life, and drive it to climb to a precise height before killing it.²⁵

²⁴Thomas Nagel, "What Is It Like to Be a Bat?" *Philosophical Review* 83, no. 4 (1974): 435–450. Nagel's argument that the subjective character of experience cannot be captured by any objective account of neural processes provides one of the clearest analytic-philosophical formulations of the problem of irreducible subjectivity. The Psycho-Cosmocide framework extends this argument beyond the question of subjective consciousness to the condition of all individual organisms and situates it within the political economy of colonial domination, where the irreducible interiority of the Other marks the limit of every project of total occupation.

²⁵Patrick Schultheiss et al., "The Abundance, Biomass, and Distribution of Ants on Earth," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 119, no. 40 (2022): e2201550119. On the parasitology of *Ophiocordyceps unilateralis* and its manipulation of ant behaviour, see David P. Hughes, Jørgen Boomsma, and Jochen Gershenzon, eds., *Behavioural Manipulation by Parasites* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012). The *Ophiocordyceps* example is employed not as a reductive biological analogy but as an empirical illustration of the Seventh Cage's

Toxoplasma can rewire the rat's fear response toward the smell of cat urine. The hairworm can commandeer the cricket and drive it into water to drown. A parasite can penetrate and recode an organism from within, restructuring its entire observable behaviour.²⁶ And yet — if any interiority remains — the parasite cannot be what it invades. Even in total biological occupation, the original point of view, whatever its nature and however minimal, would remain categorically inaccessible. You can colonise a body. You cannot, on this analysis, colonise the fact of being that body from the inside. This is the Seventh Cage's philosophical core, independent of how one resolves the empirical question of animal consciousness. To be clear about the direction of this analogy: the CPCV occupies the position of the parasite, and the colonised organism that of the host whose interiority resists total occupation. The point being illustrated is domination's limit, not any equivalence between colonised human beings and the non-human organisms used here for illustration.

The CPCV targets the human expression of this cage with particular precision — manufacturing isolation, dissolving the bonds of genuine community, replacing the honest mystery of the Other with the managed image of the Other, and converting the irreducible singularity of individual life into a data point, a consumer unit, a demographic category. But the cage itself is not a colonial invention. It is older than language, older than culture, older than the first human thought. It is a condition of life as such.

Wonesis, in this light, is not the abolition of the Seventh Cage. It is the cultivation of a way of living that honours the sealed interiority of every individual life — human and non-human alike — without requiring that seal to be broken in order for community, kinship, and cosmological solidarity to exist.²⁷

central paradox: domination of an organism's behaviour does not entail occupation of its subjective interiority—the irreducible condition of being that organism from within.

²⁶ The present framework treats parasite behavioural manipulation as a structural analogy rather than as a claim that colonial domination is biologically identical to parasitism. The structural correspondence between six parasite species and six distinct colonial operations is developed in greater detail in Yamin Kogoya, *Colonial Parasites and Colonised Hosts*, Working Paper No. 18, NATAKA Research Institute / Wone Press Psycho-Cosmocide Studies Working Paper Series (2026).

²⁷ A synthetic philosophical treatment of the Seven Existential Cages, integrating the analyses of Plato's Cave, Procrustes, King Midas, Sisyphus, the Corridor of the Dead, Absolute Unknowing, and the Irreducible Other, is developed in Yamin Kogoya, *The Given and the Constructed: Seven Existential Cages of Psycho-Cosmocide Theory*, Working Paper No. 29, NATAKA Research Institute / Wone Press Psycho-Cosmocide Studies Working Paper Series (2026).

WEST PAPUA: THE SEVEN CAGES AND THE LOSS OF LAND

Each of the seven cages, as described in the preceding sections, represents a structural condition of existence that precedes and exceeds any given colonial encounter. But what colonialism does — and what the West Papuan case makes visible with particular clarity — is seize, one by one, every mechanism by which a people navigates those conditions with dignity, meaning, and cosmological grounding. The result is not simply poverty or political dispossession. It is ontological nakedness: the condition of a people stripped of the navigational tools that the default existential cages make necessary.

This is not offered as speculative diagnosis alone. The structural claims made here can be, and have been, instantiated through independent historical documentation. The 1969 Act of Free Choice, conducted under conditions that left West Papua's incorporation into Indonesia disputed in the eyes of many Papuans and independent observers, illustrates the general pattern this framework describes: external agents made a determination about the status and worth of a people and then represented that determination as the expression of the people's own will through international recognition of the outcome — a representation that has since become naturalised in much international discourse even as it remains contested on the ground.²⁸ The subsequent suppression and reassertion of Papuan self-representation through music, media, and public symbols across five decades of contested rule follows the same structure of naturalisation and transmission that this paper's cage architecture predicts. A Lani reader need not be persuaded that these are hypothetical conditions; the present framework offers a vocabulary for what such a reader already has older words for.

At the centre of this analysis is land. For the Lani people of the West Papuan highlands, and for Papuan cosmopolitan societies more broadly, land is not property in the legal sense, not resource in the economic sense, and not territory in the political sense. Land is the base — the First Cage habitat that is simultaneously the ground of the Second, Third, Fourth, Fifth, Sixth, and Seventh Cages.

It is where the body is fed, where the ancestors are buried, where the stories are set, where the cosmological relationships are enacted, where the living and the dead meet, where identity is located before it is named. To lose land is not to lose one thing. It is to lose the material ground on which all other dimensions of existence are structured.

This is not solely a conceptual claim. Between 1971 and 2000, state-sponsored transmigration produced an annual population growth rate for the non-Papuan population in West Papua roughly

²⁸ For historical analyses of the emergence of Papuan nationalism and its cultural and political development, see Richard Chauvel, *Constructing Papuan Nationalism: History, Ethnicity, and Adaptation* (Washington, DC: East-West Center Washington, 2005), 1–15, 65–90; and Camellia Webb-Gannon, *Merdeka in West Papua: Music, Media, and Human Rights* (Sydney: Sydney University Press, 2021), 1–20.

six times that of the Papuan population, concentrated precisely in the coastal and resource-accessible regions where land is most readily reassessed from ancestral ground into economic asset.²⁹ The same mechanism reaches into the Second Cage: a peer-reviewed study of Lani schoolchildren in the Baliem highlands documents children internalising stigma attached to skin colour and hair texture, and consequently imitating their Indonesian peers — independent empirical confirmation, from outside the Psycho-Cosmocide corpus, of the symbolic-order colonisation this paper diagnoses at the level of theory.

The analogy offered here is not metaphorical: it is structural. A person without a home has no place to sleep, eat, be safe, raise a family, or return to. They are physically present in the world but ontologically dispossessed — unable to be, in any stable sense, anywhere. Homelessness is not merely an economic condition; it is a First Cage emergency. For colonised Papuans, the loss of land is homelessness of a deeper and more consequential order. It is not merely the loss of shelter but the loss of the base on which every other dimension of existence was built and maintained. Without land, there is no First Cage habitat — no place from which to eat, survive, and belong. Without land, the Second Cage is destabilised: the stories, myths, languages, and cosmological systems that were embedded in specific places, specific rivers, specific mountains, and specific seasonal rhythms are severed from their material ground and begin to dissolve. Without land, the Third Cage becomes unmoored: the metaphysical frameworks for understanding death, birth, consciousness, and transcendence that were grounded in the ancestors' physical presence in the soil are replaced by imported frameworks whose cosmological ground lies elsewhere. Without land, the Fifth Cage — death — loses its relational meaning: the corridor is no longer a passage home to the ancestors who wait in this specific place, but a dispersal into an abstract elsewhere.

What the CPCV has done in West Papua is not simply take land. It has used land-taking as the lever by which it pries open all seven cages simultaneously, inserting itself at every level: colonising the First Cage through dispossession, the Second through language and mission schooling, the Third through theological replacement, the Fourth through extractive industry and digital infrastructure, the Fifth through the management of ancestral memory and funerary cosmology, the Sixth through the imposition of colonial epistemic authority, and the Seventh through the conversion of irreducible Papuan subjectivity into demographic category, security risk, and development recipient.

The Lani cosmological tradition illuminates this process with particular precision through the distinction between *Ap* and *Ap-ap*, and through the concept of Kugi. The *Ap* designates the full, ontologically grounded human being — the person who inhabits the three existential axioms

²⁹ For analyses of demographic transformation and the persistence of Indigenous Lani identity in West Papua, see Jim Elmslie, "The Great Divide: West Papuan Demographics Revisited; Settlers Dominate Coastal Regions but the Highlands Still Overwhelmingly Papuan," *The Asia-Pacific Journal: Japan Focus* 15, no. 2 (2017); and Murni Sianturi, Chia-Ling Chiang, and Adi Sumarsono, "The Preservation of the Identity and Culture of the Indigenous Lanninese People of West Papua, Indonesia, through Education," *Culture and Education* 34, no. 2 (2022): 424–465.

honestly, knowing they are mortal, that their struggles are rooted in embodied need, and that they carry Kugi within them. The *Ap-ap* is the counterfeit version: a hollow, copied, and dislocated person who has lost that grounding and been refashioned in the image of something else. The *Ap-ap* is the product of the CPCV's deepest operation — not merely the production of a colonised consciousness, but the production of a person who no longer recognises themselves as *Ap* at all.

This production of the *Ap-ap* is not evenly distributed; it concentrates with particular intensity in a specific class. Indonesian vernacular names this class with disarming directness: *Tokoh* (elites), and the achievement it marks is captured in the phrase *dia sudah jadi manusia* — “he or she has become human.” Within this logic, to be human is no longer to exist as an authentic Papuan; it is to successfully perform the values, symbols, and aspirations of the colonising system. Positioned at the forefront of the symbolic field, the *Tokoh* class functions as the mediating image between the colonial apparatus and the wider Papuan population: shadow figures cast large across a people's own consciousness, clothed in wealth, overseas education, and the full vocabulary of civilisational religion.³⁰

The mythological record supplies a precise sequence of images for how this class is produced and sustained. In Collodi's *Pinocchio*, the boys of Pleasure Island are not imprisoned by force; they are seduced by unlimited, consequence-free indulgence, and the seduction itself transforms them into donkeys — animals fit for labour, unable to name what has happened to them.³¹ The colonially-formed Papuan elite undergoes the same transformation by the same means: each qualification, appointment, and public endorsement of the state's narrative represents a further, pleasant, institutionally rewarded integration into the colonial symbolic order, until the transformation is complete and can no longer be perceived as transformation at all. In the same story's earlier episode, Geppetto is swallowed by a giant fish and, once inside its belly, adapts to captivity so completely that the belly becomes indistinguishable from home; his son's task is not merely to escape but to awaken the father to the fact that they are inside a beast at all — a task that requires abandoning the very structures built for survival within it. And in Barrie's *Neverland*, kings, captains, and hierarchies appear sovereign to those living within them, while the entire world remains bounded by an authority they did not create and cannot alter: a precise image for the Papuan governors, regents, and institutional representatives whose power is real but

³⁰ For the concept of the *Tokoh* class as “engineered shadow figures on the cave wall,” together with an analysis of the vernacular phrase *dia sudah jadi manusia*, see Yamin Kogoya, *Plato's Cave and the Architecture of Psycho-Cosmocide in West Papua*, Working Paper No. 8, NATAKA Research Institute / Wone Press Psycho-Cosmocide Studies Working Paper Series (2026).

³¹ For the literary episodes of Pleasure Island and the Belly of the Dogfish, which inform the present analysis, see Carlo Collodi, *The Adventures of Pinocchio*, trans. Mary Alice Murray (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1892), chaps. 30–33 and 34–36.

conditional, whose identity becomes bound to the continuation of the very structure that grants their recognition.³²

None of this requires a single dramatic act of capture. It requires only a slow-boiling pattern, in which gradual, kindly, cumulatively lethal habituation removes the capacity for alarm — each stage of advancement within the colonial system a further degree of temperature increase too small, on its own, to trigger the instinct that would prompt escape. Pleasure Island, the belly of the fish, and Neverland converge on a single operation: the cage does not need to remain visible once the captive has been rewarded, incrementally and pleasantly, for building an entire life inside it.

What the CPCV introduces in place of the three Lani axioms is a systematic inversion of each. It replaces *Nit Ap Yi Ti Kambirak* — we are born to die — with the promise of immortality: the colonised subject is told they are a child of God, destined for heaven, exempt from the mortality the first axiom names. It replaces *Nit Ap Yi Mbi-Mbingga* — we struggle for survival, not for paradise — with ideological mission: the colonised subject is taught that their conflicts are spiritual battles, that their labour serves transcendental ends, that the embodied reality the second axiom names is beneath their dignity as a redeemed soul. And it takes the Kugi — which the third axiom names honestly as part of the human condition — and hides it: decorating it with colonial imagery, costuming it in the symbols of virtue and progress, painting over it until the destruction the Kugi represents appears as civilisation, development, or divine will. Under these conditions, accountability for actions in the material world becomes weakened by transcendental assurances of salvation, chosenness, immortality, or civilisational destiny.

The consequence, in the West Papuan context, is what the present framework identifies as the production of the weaponised *Ap-ap*: a colonised person who has been so thoroughly refashioned by the CPCV's imported imagery, words, colours, and symbols that they become the most effective instrument of destruction within their own colonised world — while being elevated by the colonising apparatus as a symbol of progress, civilisation, modernity, morality, or order. The Kugi has not disappeared; it has been decorated, legitimised, and moralised through colonial and civilisational frameworks. The decorated *Ap-ap*, unaccountable for actions on earth because heaven awaits, Kugi hidden beneath the costume of the colonial convert, becomes the agent through which the colonising system perpetuates itself without needing to be visibly present. These are not peripheral figures: they are deeply destructive figures from within the colonised community itself, promoted as symbols of everything the three Lani axioms forbid denying, even as they

³² J. M. Barrie, *Peter and Wendy* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1911). The present reading of Neverland, together with the wider sequence of mythological archetypes applied to the colonially constituted Papuan elite—including the slow-boiling frog—is developed in Yamin Kogoya, *West Papua: Ontological Cages and Colonial Consent: Myth, Power, and the Colonial Structuring of Reality*, Working Paper No. 4, NATAKA Research Institute / Wone Press Psycho-Cosmocide Studies Working Paper Series (2026).

actively dismantle the cosmological, social, and existential foundations of their own people. The cage does not need to be visible when the captive has been persuaded to act as its warden.

The interim substitute offered in place of this total cosmological architecture is what may be described as an “instant noodles” logic of colonial compensation: temporary rewards, short-term satisfactions, and distraction mechanisms that give the appearance of life, meaning, purpose, and progress while all of these are in fact being generated and controlled by the colonising apparatus. Processed food for the First Cage. Imported religion and entertainment media for the Second and Third. Cheap mobile devices for the Fourth. None of these are nothing — they reduce certain immediate pains, and the framework does not romanticise their absence. But none of them address the structural dispossession they are designed, consciously or not, to manage. Papuans are given mobility and connectivity within a world whose terms they did not set and cannot change — free movement within the cage, not access to the key. This is the CPCV’s most accomplished operation: making the cage comfortable enough that the captive mistakes it for freedom, while converting the captive’s own creative energy, cultural expression, and social connection into data and revenue for the apparatus that built the cage. What each of the seven cages looks like when all seven are seized simultaneously — and what the concept of Wonesis must reckon with — is the subject of the final section.

THE ARCHITECTURE OF CAPTIVITY AND ITS MEANING: TOWARD WONESIS

The seven cages — Physical, Symbolic, Metaphysical, Technological, the Corridor of the Dead, Absolute Unknowing, and the Irreducible Other — are proposed here as the heuristic ontological framework within which Psycho-Cosmocide operates. They are not separate prisons. They are overlapping, interpenetrating dimensions of a single condition: the condition of a conscious, mortal organism in a cosmos that provides no final explanation for its own existence.

The CPCV did not build these cages. It discovered them — and learned to use them. The mechanism in each case is structurally similar: identify an existing ontological condition that generates vulnerability or dependency; insert a colonial institution, symbolic system, or technological apparatus at that point; and control the terms on which the organism navigates it.

This distinction between pre-existing condition and colonial exploitation carries an obligation that should be stated plainly. That the cages are pre-political, and precede the CPCV’s operation, does not make their colonial exploitation pre-moral. A condition being universal does not diffuse responsibility for who seizes it, how, and for whose benefit: it is the coloniser’s decision to weaponise a mortal being’s fear of death, or a symbolically enclosed people’s dependency on language, that constitutes the injury — not the antecedent existence of mortality or symbolic order as such. The seven cages supply the terrain the CPCV exploits; they do not supply an alibi for the

exploitation. Locating domination within a pre-existing ontological structure explains its mechanism. It does not excuse its agents.

A species already confined by mortality could be driven further into compliance through the managed fear of death — by monopolising the question of what death means and how it must be faced. A species already enclosed within symbolic systems could be driven deeper into colonisation by replacing its cosmological architecture: destroying indigenous languages, ritual systems, and knowledge transmission, while embedding colonial symbolic orders as the only available framework for making sense of existence. A species already isolated within its own subjectivity could be manipulated through the commodification of connection — replacing genuine relational community with mediated social surfaces controlled by the colonising apparatus. A species already structurally unknowing could be driven toward docility through the pretence of total knowledge: producing epistemic certainty within colonial frameworks while delegitimising alternative traditions of understanding.

To understand the seven cages is not to surrender to them. It is to see, with full clarity, the exact terrain on which the struggle for *Wonesis* must take place. *Wonesis* does not promise liberation from the cages — that promise would simply add another managed image to the symbolic environment this framework has diagnosed. It promises something more difficult and more real: the capacity to inhabit the cages with full consciousness, cosmological grounding, relational honesty, and the refusal to be further exploited by those who would use them as instruments of permanent domination. Understanding the cage structure is not pessimism. It is diagnosis — and rigorous diagnosis remains the first indispensable act of resistance. The framework presented here is exploratory and programmatic rather than exhaustive. Four limitations warrant explicit acknowledgement.

First, the seven-cage structure rests on philosophical argumentation and cosmological grounding rather than comparative empirical survey. Whether other indigenous or philosophical traditions would identify additional structural dimensions remains an open question warranting systematic comparative inquiry. *Second*, the historical illustrations offered here — drawn primarily from the West Papuan context and the Western philosophical canon — require complementary case analyses from other colonised contexts to test the framework's diagnostic purchase across different civilisational configurations. *Third*, the concept of digital cosmological mining requires empirical operationalisation. Research methods capable of measuring the specifically cosmological dimensions of digital displacement — as distinct from its psychological and economic dimensions — remain to be developed. *Fourth*, the relationship between the seven cages and *Wonesis* requires elaboration as a positive programme.

The present paper specifies the terrain; companion papers in this series develop the architecture of cosmological reawakening in its ethical, relational, and practical dimensions — including the question of what forms of social organisation, land relationship, and collective memory practice Wonesis implies at the level of the family, the clan, and the community. These limitations are not weaknesses of the framework as such but markers of the work that a serious research programme in speculative decolonial ontology must undertake.

All life on this planet exists within some form of cage. Every organism, every species, inhabits conditions it did not choose: embodiment, hunger, mortality, ecology, uncertainty, time, and the vast unknown that surrounds every act of existence. No living being escapes these existential limits. Human beings, however, have constructed another order of captivity. Beyond the conditions imposed by existence itself, they have built symbolic, political, technological, and metaphysical cages into which other human beings are born, disciplined, and confined. More tragically still, these cages are rarely recognised as cages. They are celebrated as civilisation, progress, development, enlightenment, freedom, security, or salvation. Entire peoples are taught to participate in their own enclosure while believing they are becoming more fully human. This is the deepest warning of the Psycho-Cosmocide paradigm. The greatest prison is not the one imposed by nature, but the one constructed by consciousness itself. For once a civilisation succeeds in colonising the structures through which human beings perceive reality, remember their past, imagine their future, and understand their place within existence, the cage no longer requires walls. It is carried within the human being. And when captivity comes to feel like freedom, domination like progress, and extinction like civilisation, the most comprehensive form of destruction has already taken place.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Barrie, J. M. *Peter and Wendy*. London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1911.
- Battiste, Marie. *Decolonizing Education: Nourishing the Learning Spirit*. Saskatoon: Purich, 2013.
- Baudrillard, Jean. *Simulacra and Simulation*. Translated by Sheila Faria Glaser. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994.
- Beckett, Samuel. *Waiting for Godot: A Tragicomedy in Two Acts*. New York: Grove, 1954.
- Burridge, Kenelm. *Mambu: A Melanesian Millennium*. London: Methuen, 1960.
- Camus, Albert. *The Myth of Sisyphus and Other Essays*. Translated by Justin O'Brien. New York: Vintage, 1991.
- Chauvel, Richard. *Constructing Papuan Nationalism: History, Ethnicity, and Adaptation*. Washington, DC: East-West Center Washington, 2005.
- Collodi, Carlo. *The Adventures of Pinocchio*. Translated by Mary Alice Murray. London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1892.
- Cone, James H. *A Black Theology of Liberation*. 40th anniversary ed. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2010.
- Cone, James H. *The Cross and the Lynching Tree*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2011.
- Elmslie, Jim. "The Great Divide: West Papuan Demographics Revisited; Settlers Dominate Coastal Regions but the Highlands Still Overwhelmingly Papuan." *The Asia-Pacific Journal: Japan Focus* 15, no. 2 (2017).
- Fanon, Frantz. *Black Skin, White Masks*. Translated by Richard Philcox. New York: Grove, 2008.
- Fanon, Frantz. *The Wretched of the Earth*. Translated by Richard Philcox. New York: Grove, 2004.
- Fox, Michael V. *A Time to Tear Down and a Time to Build Up: A Rereading of Ecclesiastes*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999.
- George, Andrew, trans. *The Epic of Gilgamesh: The Babylonian Epic Poem and Other Texts in Akkadian and Sumerian*. London: Penguin, 1999.
- Han, Byung-Chul. *The Burnout Society*. Translated by Erik Butler. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2015.
- Han, Byung-Chul. *The Transparency Society*. Translated by Erik Butler. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2015.
- Heidegger, Martin. *Being and Time*. Translated by John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson. New York: Harper & Row, 1962.
- Herodotus. *Histories*. Translated by A. D. Godley. 4 vols. Loeb Classical Library. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1920.
- Hughes, David P., Jørgen Boomsma, and Jochen Gershenzon, eds. *Behavioural Manipulation by Parasites*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.
- Ibn Khaldun. *The Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History*. Translated by Franz Rosenthal. 3 vols. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1958.
- International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). *The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species*. 2023. <https://www.iucnredlist.org>.
- Kogoya, Yamin. *Psycho-Cosmocide: The Silent Invasion of Mind, Meaning, and Cosmos*. Kurumbi Wone Working Paper Series, no. 2 (2nd ed.). NATAKA Research Institute / Wone Press, 2026.
- Kogoya, Yamin, and milineXus. *A Foundational Theoretical Framework for the Study of Psycho-Cosmocide*. Kurumbi Wone Working Paper Series, no. 1(B). NATAKA Research Institute / Wone Press, 2026.

- Kogoya, Yamin. *West Papua: Ontological Cages and Colonial Consent: Myth, Power, and the Colonial Structuring of Reality*. Kurumbi Wone Working Paper Series, no. 4. NATAKA Research Institute / Wone Press, 2026.
- Kogoya, Yamin. *Capturing Papuan Cosmological Consciousness: Sacred Geography and Metaphysical Displacement in West Papua*. Kurumbi Wone Working Paper Series, no. 7. NATAKA Research Institute / Wone Press, 2026.
- Kogoya, Yamin. *Plato's Cave and the Architecture of Psycho-Cosmocide in West Papua*. Kurumbi Wone Working Paper Series, no. 8. NATAKA Research Institute / Wone Press, 2026.
- Kogoya, Yamin. *Wonesis: Framework, Belonging, and the Antidote to Psycho-Cosmocide*. Kurumbi Wone Working Paper Series, no. 16. NATAKA Research Institute / Wone Press, 2026.
- Kogoya, Yamin. *Four Worlds, One Dying Earth: The Four Modes of Existence and the War on the Cosmobian World*. Kurumbi Wone Working Paper Series, no. 17. NATAKA Research Institute / Wone Press, 2026.
- Kogoya, Yamin. *Colonial Parasites and Colonised Hosts: The Psycho-Cosmocide of Cosmobian Existence in West Papua*. Kurumbi Wone Working Paper Series, no. 18. NATAKA Research Institute / Wone Press, 2026.
- Kogoya, Yamin. *The Labyrinth of Papuan Extinction: Paradox, Participation, and the Collapse of Recognition*. Kurumbi Wone Working Paper Series, no. 19. NATAKA Research Institute / Wone Press, 2026.
- Kogoya, Yamin. *The Four Gospels of a Civilisational Death Cult in West Papua: Religiosity, Development, Progress, and Success*. Kurumbi Wone Working Paper Series, no. 21. NATAKA Research Institute / Wone Press, 2026.
- Kogoya, Yamin. *We Are All Inmates of Different Cages: Psycho-Cosmocide and Civilisational Captivity*. Kurumbi Wone Working Paper Series, no. 25. NATAKA Research Institute / Wone Press, 2026.
- Kogoya, Yamin. *The Given and the Constructed: Seven Existential Cages of Psycho-Cosmocide Theory*. Kurumbi Wone Working Paper Series, no. 29. NATAKA Research Institute / Wone Press, 2026.
- Lindstrom, Lamont. *Cargo Cult: Strange Stories of Desire from Melanesia and Beyond*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1993.
- Mignolo, Walter. *The Darker Side of Western Modernity: Global Futures, Decolonial Options*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011.
- Mignolo, Walter, and Catherine E. Walsh. *On Decoloniality: Concepts, Analytics, Praxis*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2018.
- Nagel, Thomas. "What Is It Like to Be a Bat?" *Philosophical Review* 83, no. 4 (1974): 435–450.
- Ovid. *Metamorphoses*. Translated by David Raeburn. London: Penguin, 2004.
- Plato. *Republic*. In *The Collected Dialogues of Plato*, edited by Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961.
- Quijano, Aníbal. "Coloniality of Power, Eurocentrism, and Latin America." *Nepantla: Views from the South* 1, no. 3 (2000): 533–580.
- Sanneh, Lamin. *Translating the Message: The Missionary Impact on Culture*. 2nd ed. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2009.
- Santos, Boaventura de Sousa. *Epistemologies of the South: Justice Against Epistemicide*. London: Routledge, 2014.
- Schultheiss, Patrick, Sabine S. Nooten, Runxi Wang, Mark K. L. Wong, Francois Brassard, and Heloise Muller-Landau. "The Abundance, Biomass, and Distribution of Ants on Earth." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 119, no. 40 (2022): e2201550119.

- Sianturi, Murni, Chia-Ling Chiang, and Adi Sumarsono. "The Preservation of the Identity and Culture of the Indigenous Lanninese People of West Papua, Indonesia, through Education." *Culture and Education* 34, no. 2 (2022): 424–465.
- Stiegler, Bernard. *Technics and Time, 1: The Fault of Epimetheus*. Translated by Richard Beardsworth and George Collins. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998.
- Sugirtharajah, R. S., ed. *Voices from the Margin: Interpreting the Bible in the Third World*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2006.
- Survival International. *The Most Endangered Tribes*. <https://www.survivalinternational.org>.
- wa Thiong'o, Ngũgĩ. *Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature*. Oxford: James Currey, 1986.
- Webb-Gannon, Camellia. *Merdeka in West Papua: Music, Media, and Human Rights*. Sydney: Sydney University Press, 2021.
- Worsley, Peter. *The Trumpet Shall Sound: A Study of "Cargo" Cults in Melanesia*. 2nd ed. New York: Schocken Books, 1968.
- Wynter, Sylvia. "Unsettling the Coloniality of Being/Power/Truth/Freedom: Towards the Human, After Man, Its Overrepresentation — An Argument." *CR: The New Centennial Review* 3, no. 3 (2003): 257–337.
- Zuboff, Shoshana. *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism: The Fight for a Human Future at the New Frontier of Power*. New York: PublicAffairs, 2019.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Yamin Kogoya is a Papuan philosopher, writer, and independent researcher from the Central Highlands of New Guinea (West Papua), currently based in Australia.

His work investigates one of the most enduring questions of human existence: how worlds are created, transformed, and destroyed. He is the originator of the *Psycho-Cosmocide* paradigm, an interdisciplinary philosophical framework that examines the destruction of human worlds not only through physical violence, occupation, or ecological devastation, but through the systematic reorganisation of perception, memory, meaning, and reality itself. Within this framework, he argues that words, images, symbols, signs, colours, institutions, and technologies do not merely represent the world—they participate in creating, reorganising, and erasing the conditions through which human beings inhabit it.

Kogoya introduced the concepts of the *Cosmobian World* and the *Synthobian World* to distinguish two fundamentally different modes of human existence. The Cosmobian World refers to forms of life constituted through reciprocal relationships with land, ancestry, kinship, memory, ecology, language, and the cosmos. The Synthobian World refers to synthetic, engineered systems of existence organised through abstraction, institutions, technology, production, and civilisational processes. The relationship between these two worlds forms the central philosophical architecture of his research.

Drawing upon Indigenous cosmologies together with philosophy, anthropology, history, religion, mythology, and civilisation studies, Kogoya develops original conceptual frameworks for interpreting the contemporary human condition. His work re-examines humanity's foundational myths, epics, tragedies, religions, and philosophical traditions as enduring civilisational architectures through which societies organise reality, negotiate meaning, confront mortality, remember the past, imagine the future, and participate in their own survival or extinction. Although grounded in the historical experience of West Papua, his research addresses broader philosophical questions concerning civilisation, consciousness, memory, belonging, power, and the future of human worlds.

He holds a Master of Applied Anthropology and Participatory Development from the Australian National University. His academic background also includes Religious Studies, Indigenous Studies, and Asia-Pacific Studies, and he undertook advanced study in epistemology at the University of Oxford. His research and commentary have appeared in *SBS News*, *RNZ Pacific*, *Asia Pacific Report*, *The Fiji Times*, and *The Jakarta Post*.

Kogoya is the founder of the NATAKA Research Institute, an independent research institute dedicated to the philosophical and historical study of human worlds and the conditions under which societies survive, transform, or become extinct.

Published by Wone Press
An imprint of the NATAKA Research Institute

psychocosmocide.com
info@psychocosmocide.com

© 2026 Yamin Kogoya. All rights reserved.