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# **Four Worlds, One Dying Earth**

*The Four Modes of Existence and the War on the Cosmopolitan World*

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## Abstract

This paper introduces and elaborates the foundational analytical framework of the psycho-cosmocide paradigm: the identification of four broad modes of existence that provide a framework for examining human life across past, present, and speculatively future contexts. These modes are: (I) Civilisational existence, organised through cities, states, institutions, and administered power; (II) cosmobian existence, organised through living relationships with land, ecology, kinship, ancestral memory, and cosmological understanding; (III) Lost and Pre-historical Worlds, whose languages and cosmological systems have largely vanished beyond recovery; and (IV) Transcendent and Metaphysical existence, encompassing dimensions of reality that exceed direct empirical verification. The paper argues that contemporary civilisation has constructed a hierarchy of value in which the symbolic products of Civilisational existence are accorded greater protection, reverence, and moral urgency than the living ecological and cosmobian systems that sustain human existence. This inversion of value—identified by the paradigm as a form of civilisational psychopathology—is not merely an aesthetic or philosophical concern but an urgent practical crisis: the systematic destruction of cosmobian worlds entails the permanent loss of ecological knowledge systems, ontological frameworks, and ways of inhabiting the earth that are not easily recoverable once destroyed. The paper concludes by introducing wonesis as an antidotal framework within the psycho-cosmocide paradigm, calling for a species-wide reorientation from a civilisation-centred to a cosmobian-centred cosmology.

**Keywords:** psycho-cosmocide, wonesis, cosmobian, decolonial theory, ontology, ecological knowledge, civilisational critique, Indigenous philosophy, cosmological anomie, epistemicide.

## Introduction

### Every Intellectual Tradition Requires a Map

Every intellectual tradition requires a map—not a map that reduces reality to what is immediately visible, but one that acknowledges the frontiers of existence, the landscapes of destruction, and the worlds that have vanished beneath the weight of history. The psycho-cosmocide paradigm proposes such a map. It identifies four fundamental modes of existence through which human life has emerged, organised itself, transformed, and continues to unfold. Together, these modes constitute a framework for understanding the major domains through which human existence has been understood across time, space, and consciousness. To examine these modes is not merely an exercise in conceptual classification. It is an ethical, historical, and political confrontation with the realities of loss. It compels us to ask what forms of existence have already disappeared, which are now under terminal threat, and what dimensions of human life continue to be erased in the name of civilisation, development, and progress. It demands, above all, that we ask why: if humanity possesses the knowledge, the evidence, and the moral language required to recognise destruction as it unfolds, why does that destruction continue? And what does this reveal about the forces that shape the trajectory of human existence itself? These questions are not new. They have been posed, in different domains, by decolonial theorists, Indigenous philosophers, political ecologists, and critical anthropologists whose work the psycho-cosmocide paradigm draws upon and extends.<sup>1</sup> What is new is the systematic framework through which these questions are here organised—a framework that insists on taking seriously the full ontological diversity of human existence and the full ethical weight of its destruction. The psycho-cosmocide paradigm does not claim to describe everything that exists. What distinguishes it from other critical frameworks is its willingness to analyse, within a single framework, the documented and the forgotten, the living and the vanished, the empirically observable and the ontologically asserted.

A note on the nature of this inquiry: This paper operates simultaneously as a philosophical argument and as a paradigm statement. These are not identical modes of writing, and the paper does not attempt to conceal their coexistence. Paradigm-founding documents in the decolonial and critical tradition—from Fanon’s *The Wretched of the Earth* to Wynter’s essays on the overrepresentation of Man—have characteristically employed a rhetoric of urgency proportionate to the scale of the crisis they name. The framework advanced here is intended to stand or fall on the strength of its analytical claims, regardless of the rhetorical form through which those claims are presented. Where the paper employs heightened language, it reflects a deliberate choice to match the gravity of what is being described, not a failure of philosophical precision. The structural arguments are available to scholarly scrutiny on their own terms throughout.

The contribution of this paper is fivefold. First, it introduces the psycho-cosmocide paradigm as a new analytical framework for understanding the interconnected destruction of ecological, cultural, ontological, and cosmological worlds. Second, it proposes a four-mode map of existence through

which human life may be examined across civilisational, cosmobian, pre-historical, and metaphysical domains. Third, it develops the concept of a civilisational hierarchy of value to explain the systematic privileging of symbolic representations of human achievement over the living systems that sustain them. Fourth, it identifies a psycho-cosmocidal mechanism through which civilisational symbolic systems shape perception and normalise destruction. Finally, it introduces wonesis as a normative and philosophical framework for reorienting human societies toward a life-centred cosmology.

## Mapping the Domains of Existence

### Four Modes of Being

The psycho-cosmocide paradigm proposes that existence is organised across four broad modes of being. These are not rigid categories or evolutionary stages but analytical territories—domains through which different forms of life, consciousness, and social organisation may be examined. Both the Civilisational and cosmobian categories are ideal-types in the Weberian sense rather than empirically pure social formations: real societies contain elements of both modes in varying configurations, and the framework is an analytical instrument rather than a description of sealed, mutually exclusive worlds. Two modes remain directly accessible to contemporary human observation; two exist at the edges or beyond the limits of what can currently be known.<sup>2</sup>

The rationale for exactly four modes, rather than three or seven, is not intuitive but structural. The framework is generated by the intersection of two analytically distinct axes. The first axis concerns *epistemic accessibility*: whether a mode of existence remains directly observable and documentable in the present (Modes I and II) or exists beyond the recoverable reach of contemporary knowledge (Modes III and IV). The second axis concerns *structural orientation*: whether a mode is organised around the *transformation* of the world (Modes I and IV share a structural orientation toward transcendence or projection beyond immediate ecological embeddedness) or around *participation within* the world (Modes II and III, which share the structural feature of existence embedded within living ecological and cosmological systems). The intersection of these two axes produces exactly four non-redundant categories: observable-transformative (Mode I: Civilisational), observable-participatory (Mode II: cosmobian), lost-participatory (Mode III: Pre-historical), and inaccessible-transcendent (Mode IV: Metaphysical). No other combination yields a distinct mode; no existing mode can be further divided without collapsing back into the same axes. A further clarification is necessary regarding Modes III and IV. These modes differ fundamentally in content. What unites them is not what they are, but the fact that neither remains fully available to direct contemporary observation. Mode III is inaccessible because it has disappeared beyond recovery, surviving only through fragmentary material traces. Mode IV is inaccessible because it lies beyond the limits of empirical verification.

The framework therefore groups them together not on the basis of substance, but on the basis of their shared epistemic condition.

The framework resists the teleological assumptions embedded in most Western social theory, which tends to arrange human societies along a developmental timeline from primitive to advanced, from traditional to modern, from pre-rational to rational.<sup>3</sup> Against this, the psycho-cosmocide paradigm insists that the four modes exist simultaneously, entangled, in conflict, and in complex relation to one another. No mode is more evolved than another. Each represents a structurally distinct response to the challenge of sustaining human existence—with correspondingly distinct vulnerabilities, strengths, and claims to ontological legitimacy.

### *Mode I: Civilisational Existence*

Civilisational existence is the most extensively documented and theorised mode in the Western scholarly tradition. It encompasses existence organised through cities, states, institutions, writing systems, economies, militaries, and administered power. Much of what is conventionally called recorded history unfolds within this domain: empires rising and collapsing, expanding and consuming, legislating, and archiving.<sup>4</sup>

The defining characteristic of the civilisational existence is its relationship to transformation: it takes nature—forests, rivers, mountains, animals, soil—and converts it into something else. Timber becomes architecture. Rivers become irrigation. Mountains become mines. Animals become livestock. Through this conversion, the civilisational existence builds a layered world of institutions, symbols, laws, technologies, and cultural forms. It is, in this sense, a vast ship constructed from the materials of nature and launched into history under human direction.

The civilisational existence generates its own symbolic systems of legitimation, preservation, and commemoration. Its monuments, archives, museums, legal codes, philosophical traditions, and religious institutions form an elaborate apparatus for the encoding and transmission of collective memory.<sup>5</sup> When a Roman aqueduct falls into disrepair, international agencies mobilise to restore it. When a Renaissance painting is stolen, governments deploy diplomatic resources to recover it. When a Gothic cathedral catches fire, donations arrive within hours from around the world. These responses are not irrational. They reflect genuine values about memory, creativity, and cultural continuity.

What the psycho-cosmocide paradigm subjects to critical examination is not the value of these responses in themselves, but the radical asymmetry between the urgency they embody and the relative indifference with which the same societies respond to the destruction of living cosmopolitan worlds. This asymmetry is not accidental. It is produced by the same symbolic systems through which civilisational existence reproduces itself. The mechanisms of heritage law, cultural policy, educational curriculum, and media production all participate in the construction of a hierarchy of value in which the stone achievements of past civilisations are accorded greater moral urgency than the living knowledge systems of existing cosmopolitan societies.

## *Mode II: Cosmopolitan Existence*

### Why a New Concept Is Necessary

Before proceeding, it is necessary to justify the introduction of a new concept rather than deploying any of the established terms that might appear to do equivalent work. The term *Indigenous* is a legal and political category defined relationally against a colonial state—it identifies who came first and who was dispossessed, but says nothing about the ontological character of the mode of existence in question. Many peoples who fall outside its legal definition nonetheless inhabit a mode of being that is structurally cosmopolitan; many who hold legal Indigenous status have been substantially integrated into civilisational modes of existence. The term *relational* captures a dimension of what is meant but is too philosophically generic—all social life is relational in some sense, and the term fails to specify what it is that cosmopolitan existence is in relation *with*: a living cosmological order encompassing land, ecology, ancestry, and the non-human. The term *ecological* reduces the mode to its environmental dimension while omitting the cosmological, ancestral, and epistemological dimensions that are equally constitutive. The term *pluriversal*, following Escobar, names the political project of recognising multiple worlds but does not identify the specific mode of being that is here under analysis. The term *land-based* captures territorial embeddedness but omits the cosmological and spiritual dimensions through which territory is constituted as a living relationship rather than merely a physical location.

The term cosmopolitan is coined to name what none of these terms individually capture: a mode of existence constituted by the inseparability of cosmology (an understanding of reality that extends across the human, non-human, ancestral, and spiritual) and bios (living, embodied existence within a specific ecological place). The neologism is not a rhetorical gesture. It names a structurally distinct mode of being that the existing vocabulary consistently misrepresents—either by reducing it to a political status (Indigenous), a philosophical method (relational), an environmental practice (ecological), or a territorial characteristic (land-based). The cosmopolitan is what emerges when all these dimensions are understood as constitutively unified rather than analytically separable. To lose the term is to lose the conceptual precision necessary to understand what is destroyed when a cosmopolitan world is destroyed.

The concept of the cosmopolitan denotes existence embedded within living relationships with land, ecology, kinship, ancestral memory, and cosmological understanding.<sup>6</sup> Unlike the civilisational existence, which is organised around the *transformation* of the world, the cosmopolitan existence is organised around *participation within* the world. It does not stand apart from nature and manage it; it remains embedded within living relationships—with land, with the seasons, with ancestral memory, with the non-human communities of a particular place.

Where civilisational societies concentrate their complexity in institutions—governments, schools, legal systems, hospitals, militaries, universities—cosmopolitan societies distribute their complexity through relationships: ecosystems, kinship networks, ceremonial systems, sacred geographies, and cosmological knowledge accumulated across generations.<sup>7</sup>

This is not a romantic assertion about the simplicity or purity of Indigenous life. It is a precise structural description of how epistemic and social complexity is distributed. The Amazonian shaman who can identify four hundred medicinal plants and their interactions is not a primitive practitioner of folk medicine; she is a sophisticated pharmacologist whose knowledge base is embedded in a ceremonial and ecological system of extraordinary complexity. The Anishinaabe elder whose understanding of wild rice cultivation encompasses multi-generational ecological observation is not a pre-scientific farmer; she is an ecological scientist whose methodology is inseparable from her cosmological framework.

A thought experiment proposed within the psycho-cosmocide paradigm makes this structural equivalence concrete. Imagine the full ecosystem of civilisational existence in a city such as New York, London, Singapore, or Tokyo: not merely the skyscrapers and subway lines, but the electrical grids and data cables, the supply chains and financial networks, the hospital systems and educational institutions, the legal frameworks and bureaucratic machineries, the cultural archives and democratic processes. Now imagine that an external force declares all of it primitive, irrational, dangerous, and unnecessary. Imagine it begins systematically dismantling the power grid, closing the hospitals, demolishing the schools, collapsing the supply chains, erasing the legal records, flooding the archives—insisting, moreover, that such destruction represents progress, even liberation. You would call it catastrophe. You would call it violence. You would call it civilisational destruction. This is, the paradigm argues, precisely what has happened to many cosmopolitan societies for millennia and continues to occur in the present.

Forests function as repositories of ecological knowledge; rivers as sources of material sustenance and social continuity; and sacred sites as centres of governance, education, memory, and healing. Within a cosmopolitan existence, however, these elements cannot be fully separated from the wider landscape, for the landscape itself is understood as a living cosmological field inhabited by interrelated humans, non-human beings, ancestors, spirits, and other entities whose relationships constitute the fabric of reality.

When extractive industries enter a cosmopolitan territory and clear the forest for timber, or flood the valley for a dam, or dig open the mountain for minerals, they are not simply altering a landscape. They are demolishing an institutional system as complex, as interconnected, and as essential to human life as anything that exists in London or Singapore. The difference is that the world watches the destruction of a hospital with outrage. It watches the destruction of a forest with profit reports.<sup>8</sup>

The ontological foundations of this difference have been theorised from multiple directions. Philosophers of the pluriverse, following Arturo Escobar, argue that cosmopolitan worlds are not merely different cultures within a single world but genuinely different worlds—different relationships to reality, to causality, to personhood, and to the boundaries between the human and the non-human.<sup>9</sup> Eduardo Viveiros de Castro's perspectivism demonstrates that Amazonian peoples do not merely have different beliefs about the same world; they inhabit fundamentally

different ontological territories in which agency, personhood, and ecological relationships are configured in incommensurable ways.<sup>10</sup> Marisol de la Cadena's ethnographic work among Andean communities—whose mountains are persons not metaphors for persons, but actual persons with whom political negotiations must be conducted—exemplifies this ontological difference in its most challenging form.<sup>11</sup>

Cosmobian existence is, in this sense, not merely a social form under threat. It is an ontological world under threat: a world in which reality is configured differently, in which the boundaries of community extend beyond the human, in which land is not property but relationship, in which time is not linear but ceremonial, and in which knowledge is not archived but performed, embodied, and ecologically embedded.<sup>12</sup> The destruction of such a world is not merely the loss of a culture. It is the permanent foreclosure of an entire way of relating to reality.

### *Mode III: Lost and Pre-Historical Worlds*

The third mode encompasses worlds that existed before the current civilisational and cosmobian orders, or alongside them in ways that remain poorly understood. Their languages, cosmologies, and forms of consciousness have largely vanished. What remains is fragmented: megalithic structures, anomalous ruins, symbols without explanations.

Stonehenge. Göbekli Tepe. The Carnac alignments. Sacsayhuamán. The Nazca lines. The underwater ruins of Yonaguni. These structures speak to us through their silence—enormous and mute. Whatever civilisational or cosmobian forms their builders inhabited, those forms have been erased beyond the possibility of recovery. The materials survive. The meaning does not. The language that would have explained the stones is gone. The people who carried that knowledge are gone. What remains is material testimony without a voice.<sup>13</sup>

Recent revisionist scholarship has made extraordinary advances in complicating the received narrative of human prehistory. David Graeber and David Wengrow's monumental synthesis of archaeological and anthropological evidence demonstrates that the standard civilisational narrative—according to which human societies moved unilinearly from small-scale foraging bands to large-scale agricultural states—is empirically untenable.<sup>14</sup> Human societies across the Pleistocene and Holocene were far more experimental, diverse, and self-consciously variable than the civilisational meta-narrative allows. Complex societies existed without states. Egalitarian social orders maintained themselves alongside hierarchical ones. Forms of seasonal variation between modes of organisation were consciously practised.

The implications for the psycho-cosmocide paradigm are significant. The lost worlds of pre-history are not simply earlier, simpler versions of current civilisation. They are evidence that the range of viable human social forms is vastly wider than the civilisational imagination allows—and that the progressive narrowing of this range through conquest, colonisation, and epistemicide constitutes an incalculable impoverishment of human possibility.<sup>15</sup>

The permanent foreclosure of a world is not merely tragic. It is a warning: a demonstration, in material form, of what happens when a mode of existence is erased beyond recovery.

#### *Mode IV: Transcendent and Metaphysical Existence*

The fourth mode is perhaps the most complicated analytical territory—and the most politically charged. It encompasses two structurally related but conceptually distinct phenomena, and clarifying their relationship is essential to understanding what makes them a unified analytical category.

The first component consists of *transcendent ontological claims*: the realities that religions, spiritual traditions, esoteric movements, and speculative frameworks have proposed as lying beyond the material world—heavens, underworlds, spirit realms, divine orders, alternate dimensions, simulated universes, and extra-terrestrial civilisations. These propositions share the defining feature of Mode IV: they are ontologically asserted but empirically inaccessible within the terms of contemporary scientific verification. The psycho-cosmocide paradigm does not adjudicate between them. It recognises them as a genuine and irreducible dimension of human existence across all cultures and historical periods.

The second component consists of what the paradigm terms *civilisational transcendence projects*: the organised material efforts through which a civilisational existence pursues an existence beyond the constraints of earthly finitude. Religious empires building sacred architecture to instantiate divine order on earth; utopian ideological movements seeking to transform the human condition through political revolution; technological programmes aimed at transcending biological limitation or extending human habitation beyond the planet—these are not merely beliefs but material projects, consuming land, labour, and ecological wealth in their pursuit of something that exceeds the present world. What unites these two components within a single mode is not their content but their shared structural feature: both are oriented *beyond* the given conditions of earthly existence, and both are resourced from the living body of the cosmopolitan world. What the paradigm insists upon is a more troubling observation about this shared structure.

Every project aimed at building a better world—whether religious, scientific, ideological, or utopian—unfolds from this earth and is resourced from its living body. Every dream of heaven, every scientific expedition to distant planets, every utopian political project, every technological scheme for human salvation, is resourced from the living body of the cosmopolitan world.<sup>16</sup> The forests are cleared to build the temples. The rivers are dammed to power the laboratories. The mountains are hollowed to extract the metals that build the rockets. The sacred territories of cosmopolitan peoples become the sacrifice that funds someone else's vision of transcendence.

It is worth noting, moreover, that the spiritual and cosmological traditions of many cosmopolitan societies themselves contain rich accounts of a transcendent and metaphysical reality. Indigenous cosmologies include sophisticated accounts of spiritual agency, ancestral relationship, cosmological order, and post-mortem existence that are as philosophically complex as any

tradition within Mode IV. The difference is that these cosmobian metaphysical traditions are inseparable from their ecological and territorial grounding: the spirit world of an Andean community is not accessible outside the mountain from which it emanates; the ancestral realm of an Amazonian people is not reachable without the forest that mediates the relationship.<sup>17</sup> To destroy the forest or the mountain is therefore not merely to destroy a natural landscape; it is to sever the community's access to its own transcendent world. This is among the most devastating and least recognised dimensions of psycho-cosmocide: the destruction of cosmobian ecology simultaneously destroys cosmobian metaphysics.

## **Civilisation and Cosmobian**

### **A Hierarchy of Value and Its Consequences**

One of the central arguments of the psycho-cosmocide paradigm is that the extraordinary value, respect, protection, and reverence accorded to objects such as the golden funerary mask of the Egyptian Pharaoh Tutankhamun illuminate a broader tendency within civilisational systems of value. The mask is not merely an artefact of craftsmanship. It is a civilisational symbol encoded with historical memory, cultural meaning, political authority, technological achievement, and the continuity of a particular human order. Its preservation is treated as a matter of global importance because it represents a recognised achievement of civilisation—an achievement legible within the symbolic systems through which civilisational value is assessed and communicated.<sup>18</sup>

In contrast, the same civilisational framework has consistently assigned far less value to living ecosystems that sustain life itself. Some of the most ecologically significant regions on Earth—West Papua, the Amazon basin, the Congo Basin, the Coral Triangle, the boreal forests of northern Canada—have been repeatedly redefined and classified by the civilisational project as wilderness, frontier, resource zones, or peripheral territories, rather than as repositories of living knowledge and planetary significance.<sup>19</sup> As a consequence, these cosmobian ecosystems have been subjected to extraction, degradation, and destruction at rates and scales that would constitute civilisational catastrophe if applied to build environments, yet which are routinely framed as the regrettable but necessary costs of development.

The paradox at the heart of this value hierarchy is stark. Modern civilised societies devote immense resources to protecting the symbolic products of civilisation while simultaneously permitting the destruction of the ecological foundations upon which civilisation itself depends. Millions of people travel to admire the monuments, artefacts, and historical achievements of ancient civilisations; while the living ecological systems that make human existence possible receive far less recognition, protection, or reverence. From the perspective of the psycho-cosmocide paradigm, this inversion reveals a profound civilisational disorder: the preservation of symbolic

*representations* of life is prioritised over the preservation of the living systems that sustain life itself.<sup>20</sup>

The following ten paired comparisons illustrate this contrast across different historical periods, geographies, and civilisational contexts. Together, they constitute a systematic demonstration of what the psycho-cosmocide paradigm terms the civilisational hierarchy of value: the structural tendency of modern civilisation to elevate its own symbolic representations above the living foundations upon which those representations depend.

A note on methodology: these ten cases were not selected because they are the most extreme instances of the pattern, nor because they uniquely support it. They were chosen according to three criteria. First, geographical and civilisational range: the cases span five continents, multiple historical periods, and religious, political, commercial, scientific, and cultural domains of civilisational investment, to guard against the objection that the pattern is regional or culturally specific. Second, variety of symbolic form: the cases include ancient monuments, medieval religious architecture, financial infrastructure, space exploration programmes, and museum collections, demonstrating that the hierarchy of value is reproduced across every register of civilisational symbolic production and not confined to any single institutional domain. Third, documentability: each case is independently verifiable through existing historical, ecological, and anthropological scholarship. The ten presented here are illustrative rather than exhaustive. The same structural asymmetry is documentable across hundreds of additional cases not included in this paper — from the preservation of the Acropolis alongside the degradation of Greek coastal ecosystems, to the protection of colonial-era archives alongside the ongoing dispossession of the communities whose histories those archives record.

The ten cases presented here are therefore illustrative rather than exhaustive. The argument does not depend upon any single example but upon a recurrent pattern observable across multiple civilisational, ecological, and historical contexts.

The purpose of the following comparisons is not to establish moral equivalence between the paired cases, nor to suggest that the preservation of civilisational heritage and living ecosystems are mutually exclusive goals. Rather, the comparisons illuminate how different forms of value are distributed, protected, and institutionalised within civilisational systems.

### ***1. The Pyramids of Giza and the Nile Ecology***

The pyramids of Giza are among the most protected and celebrated monuments on Earth. They attract millions of visitors annually and function as potent symbols of the achievements of ancient Egyptian civilisation. Yet the ecological systems of the Nile basin that sustained Egyptian society for three thousand years receive far less symbolic reverence. The annual flooding of the Nile—the hydrological event upon which Egyptian civilisation was entirely dependent for its agricultural fertility—has been radically altered by the construction of the Aswan High Dam, an intervention

that permanently transformed the river's ecological character in the name of modernisation and development.<sup>21</sup> From the perspective of psycho-cosmocide, civilisation preserves the stone memory of its achievements while actively transforming the living ecological processes that made those achievements possible.

## ***2. The Golden Mask of Tutankhamun and the Forests of West Papua***

The funerary mask of Tutankhamun is regarded as a priceless treasure of humanity. It is carefully preserved under controlled atmospheric conditions, protected by international heritage conventions, and surrounded by elaborate security infrastructure. By contrast, the rainforests of West Papua, which contain some of the richest biodiversity on Earth—including numerous plant species with pharmacological properties still unknown to Western science—are subject to ongoing deforestation driven by the palm oil, timber, and mining industries.<sup>22</sup> Indigenous Papuan peoples who have maintained sophisticated ecological knowledge systems across millennia are routinely dispossessed of their territories in the name of development.

## ***3. The Roman Colosseum and Mediterranean Ecological Degradation***

The Colosseum stands as one of the most visited heritage sites in the world, receiving ongoing investment for structural preservation and tourist infrastructure. Meanwhile, many Mediterranean ecosystems that once sustained human communities—the forests of the Maghreb, the wetlands of the Levant, the grasslands of Anatolia—face ongoing degradation from urbanisation, industrialisation, agricultural intensification, and resource exploitation.<sup>23</sup> It is a historical irony of some significance that the Colosseum's gladiatorial spectacles consumed enormous quantities of wild animals drawn from across the Roman Empire, contributing to the regional extinction of several large mammal species. The monument is celebrated as civilisation's legacy; the ecological costs of its construction and use remain largely invisible within heritage discourse.

## ***4. The Great Wall of China and the Grasslands of Inner Asia***

The Great Wall of China is recognised as one of humanity's greatest engineering achievements and a UNESCO World Heritage Site of global significance. Yet the vast grassland ecosystems of Inner Asia—the Mongolian steppe, the Tibetan plateau, the Central Asian pasturelands—which supported for millennia the complex nomadic civilisations that the Wall was constructed to exclude, are increasingly understood primarily as economic resources: for livestock production, mineral extraction, and wind energy generation.<sup>24</sup> The nomadic cosmopolitan societies that developed sophisticated ecological management systems for these landscapes over thousands of years are treated within the civilisational developmental frameworks as obstacles to modernisation. The psycho-cosmocide paradigm highlights how civilisation monumentalises its defensive structures while overlooking the ecological intelligence of the societies its defences were designed to contain.

### ***5. European Cathedrals and Old-Growth Forests***

The great cathedrals of Europe receive immense investment for restoration and preservation. The fire at Notre-Dame de Paris in April 2019 generated within forty-eight hours over a billion euros in pledged donations from private individuals and corporations.<sup>25</sup> At the same time, ancient forests that once covered much of Europe have been reduced to a fraction of their former extent—ancient forest ecosystems in Western Europe now constitute less than three percent of the continent's land area. Within the psycho-cosmocide diagnosis, civilisation mourns damage to sacred buildings with a collective emotional response of striking intensity while treating the disappearance of ancient living ecosystems as an unremarkable consequence of agricultural and industrial development. The scale of restoration investment mobilised for a single building within forty-eight hours dwarfs the annual budgets of most old-growth forest conservation programmes globally.

### ***6. Angkor Wat and Southeast Asian Rainforests***

Angkor Wat is celebrated as a masterpiece of human civilisation and attracts significant heritage tourism. Yet many Southeast Asian rainforests that regulate regional climate, support extraordinary biodiversity, and sustain the land-based livelihoods of hundreds of millions of people continue to face logging, conversion to plantation agriculture, and displacement of Indigenous communities.<sup>26</sup> The stone temple becomes sacred heritage; the living forest becomes an economic commodity. Indigenous communities whose ecological knowledge systems are embedded in these forests—the Dayak of Borneo, the Orang Asli of the Malay peninsula, the hill peoples of mainland Southeast Asia—frequently receive less legal protection than the archaeological ruins of the civilisations that once occupied the same territories.

### ***7. Machu Picchu and the Amazon Basin***

Machu Picchu is revered as an icon of human ingenuity and historical achievement. Nearby, the Amazon Rainforest—the largest tropical forest on Earth and the most biodiverse ecosystem in the world—faces ongoing pressures from cattle ranching, soy agriculture, illegal mining, and infrastructure development.<sup>27</sup> The psycho-cosmocide paradigm argues that civilisation often values the ruins of ancestral achievement more than the living systems that continue to sustain planetary life. In the Amazonian case, this argument carries particular weight: the forest itself contains evidence of sophisticated pre-Columbian land management—the anthropogenic dark earths known as *terra preta*—suggesting that the sharp distinction between the Inca monument and the surrounding forest ecology is itself a civilisational construction.

### ***8. Global Financial Centres and River Systems***

Global financial centres—Wall Street in New York, the City of London, the financial district of Tokyo—are protected by the full apparatus of state power, international law, and military force as the engines of the global economy. Meanwhile, river systems across the world are dammed, polluted, diverted, or depleted in service of economic growth. The Colorado River in North

America, the Mekong in Southeast Asia, the Yangtze in China, the Murray-Darling in Australia, the Ganges in South Asia: all face various combinations of over-extraction, pollution, and hydrological alteration that threaten the ecological communities they sustain and the human societies that depend upon them.<sup>28</sup> Indigenous peoples whose relationships with these rivers constitute the core of their cosmopolitan existence—and whose ecological knowledge of river systems accumulated over millennia represents an irreplaceable scientific resource—are frequently displaced to make way for infrastructure projects that transform rivers into economic assets.

### ***9. National Museums and Indigenous Homelands***

Many national museums proudly preserve artefacts from ancient cultures and extinct civilisations, devoting substantial resources to their conservation, display, and scholarly analysis. The British Museum, the Smithsonian, the Musée du quai Branly, the National Museums of World Culture: these institutions collect and preserve material evidence of human diversity across time. Yet Indigenous peoples frequently struggle to protect their living homelands from extraction, dispossession, or ecological destruction—often while watching the artefacts of their ancestors preserved in foreign institutions.<sup>29</sup> The psycho-cosmocide paradigm identifies a contradiction of striking precision: civilisation safeguards the memory of cultures while simultaneously undermining the living conditions necessary for cultural continuity. The museum preserves the pot while the potter's land is mined. The ethnographic archive records the language while the forest in which the language lives is cleared.

### ***10. Space Exploration Infrastructure and Planetary Ecosystems***

Projects such as NASA's Artemis programme, SpaceX's Starship infrastructure, and the various national and commercial space programmes currently under development represent the most technologically ambitious expressions of civilisational aspiration. They embody a vision of human destiny oriented toward the transcendent: the extension of human presence beyond Earth. At the same time, critical ecosystems—coral reefs, tropical forests, wetlands, arctic sea ice, biodiversity hotspots—continue to decline at accelerating rates, with the IPBES global assessment confirming that approximately one million species face extinction within decades.<sup>30</sup> From the psycho-cosmocide perspective, civilisation invests enormous resources in extending its reach beyond Earth while failing to adequately protect the living systems that make life on Earth possible. The irony is compounded by the recognition that the minerals required to build space exploration infrastructure—lithium, cobalt, rare earth elements—are extracted from the very cosmopolitan territories that the paradigm identifies as under existential threat.

The psycho-cosmocide paradigm interprets this contrast as evidence of a broader hierarchy of value in which symbolic representations of human achievement often receive more concentrated legal, financial, and cultural protection than the living systems upon which human existence depends.

## The Structural Logic of the Hierarchy

Across all ten of the foregoing examples, the psycho-cosmocide argument is not that monuments, museums, temples, cities, or technological achievements lack value. In this paper, symbolic representations of human achievement refer to monuments, artefacts, archives, institutions, technologies, and other material or symbolic embodiments through which civilisation remembers, celebrates, and reproduces itself. The argument is rather that civilisation has constructed—through its legal systems, educational institutions, cultural industries, and political processes—a hierarchy of value in which these symbolic representations are systematically granted greater significance than the living cosmopolitan systems that sustain all human achievements in the first place.

The mechanisms through which this hierarchy is reproduced are multiple and mutually reinforcing. International heritage law, organised around the UNESCO World Heritage Convention, establishes a regime for the protection of 'outstanding universal value' that effectively privileges built monuments over living ecological and cultural systems.<sup>31</sup> The global educational curriculum teaches students to recognise the Colosseum as a heritage site of the highest significance while frequently neglecting to teach them the ecological and cultural significance of the living landscapes that surround it. Cultural industries—tourism, film, media, publishing—reproduce and amplify civilisational symbols while rendering cosmopolitan worlds invisible or exotic.

From the perspective of psycho-cosmocide, this is not simply an economic process but a civilisational psychopathology. The cosmopolitan world is repeatedly characterised as primitive, backward, undeveloped, inefficient, or belonging to an earlier stage of history. Such classifications provide moral and intellectual justification for extraction, exploitation, displacement, and ecological transformation in the name of progress, development, modernisation, or growth.<sup>32</sup> The paradox identified by the framework is that civilisation frequently presents itself as having transcended extraction and domination while remaining structurally dependent upon them. Beneath its narratives of advancement, prosperity, innovation, and enlightenment, the civilisational system depends upon the continuous appropriation of land, labour, energy, minerals, forests, waters, and ecological wealth from the living world.

## We Are in Plato's Cave

### The Psycho-Cosmocidal Mechanism

In the seventh book of the *Republic*, Plato describes a group of prisoners chained since birth inside a cave, facing the wall. Behind them, a fire burns and between the fire and the prisoners, objects are moved—and the prisoners see only shadows on the wall. Having known no other reality, they take the shadows for their reality.

They do not know what they cannot see. When one prisoner is freed and led into the sunlight, the reality he encounters is so overwhelming that he is initially blinded. And when he returns to report what he has seen, his fellow prisoners do not believe him; they find the shadows they know more credible than the sunlit world he describes.<sup>33</sup>

The psycho-cosmocide paradigm proposes that large segments of contemporary humanity have been placed within a version of this cave. This is a claim about the structural reach of civilisational symbolic production—about the systems through which reality is represented and value assigned—not a claim that every individual within those systems is equally captured by them or incapable of critical awareness.

The shadows on the wall are the products of civilisational symbolic production: screens and newspapers, schools and films, legal systems and social media feeds, economic metrics and cultural awards. We have come to mistake this constructed symbolic world for the world itself. We look at the wall and see commodities, growth metrics, GDP figures, carbon credits, conservation targets, development indices, heritage rankings. We have been turned to face the wall, and we do not look at what is behind us: the systematic destruction of the cosmopolitan world in real time.

Across the world, forests continue to be cleared, ecosystems fragmented, and linguistic traditions pushed toward extinction.<sup>34</sup> Each year, additional Indigenous territories are opened to extraction, while the ecological foundations upon which many cosmopolitan societies depend become increasingly degraded and less capable of sustaining the complex relationships that have developed over generations.

The IPBES global assessment confirmed that the Earth is in the midst of its sixth mass extinction event, with human activity identified as the primary driver.<sup>35</sup> The UNESCO Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger documents the ongoing collapse of linguistic diversity at a rate unprecedented in human history.

The 'psycho-' prefix in psycho-cosmocide is not a casual epithet. It is a precise diagnosis. David Abram's phenomenological analysis of how alphabetic literacy progressively detaches human perception from ecological embeddedness provides one dimension of this diagnosis.<sup>36</sup> Nicholas Mirzoeff's analysis of visibility—the complex of images, narratives, and classificatory systems through which colonial power naturalises itself—provides another.<sup>37</sup> Frantz Fanon's account of the psychic and cultural violence of colonialism, through which colonised peoples are made to see themselves through the eyes of the coloniser, constitutes a direct antecedent: both Fanon and the psycho-cosmocide paradigm insist that the destruction of worlds is accomplished, above all, through the restructuring of consciousness.<sup>38</sup>

The perpetrators of civilisational destruction are not, in the main, individually evil people. They are people whose perception of reality has been so thoroughly restructured by civilisational

symbolic systems that they genuinely cannot perceive what they are destroying. The forest does not register as an archive of ecological knowledge. The river does not register as a legal and social order. The sacred mountain does not register as a site of education, memory, and governance. These things register only as resources—as inputs into the productive machinery of a civilisational world that has redefined reality in its own image.<sup>39</sup>

In this sense, psycho-cosmocide is not only the destruction of worlds but the production of forms of perception through which that destruction becomes normal, necessary, or invisible: not the destruction of peoples through direct violence alone, but the restructuring of human consciousness so that the destruction of worlds is experienced as progress—and so that the destroyers experience themselves as benefactors.

Achille Mbembe's concept of necropolitics—the political management of who is permitted to live and who is left to die—extends this analysis into the domain of political economy.<sup>40</sup> Cosmopolitan societies are not merely misrecognised within the civilisational symbolic system; they are actively positioned within a political economy that manages their survival as a secondary concern, adjustable to the requirements of extractive accumulation. When a dam project displaces a cosmopolitan community, the calculation is not made on the basis of the community's needs or rights alone; it is made on the basis of the economic value of the hydroelectric power against which the community's displacement is weighed. The community loses because the symbolic system within which that calculation is made does not register the full value—ecological, epistemological, cosmological, ontological—of what it destroys.<sup>41</sup>

## **Toward a Broader Human Cosmology**

### **Wonesis and the Paradigm Shift**

The central argument of the psycho-cosmocide paradigm is not that civilisation should be abandoned, nor that humanity should cease valuing its monuments, cities, technologies, institutions, sciences, philosophies, or cultural achievements. What it argues is rather more demanding than any of these positions. It argues that the destruction of cosmopolitan worlds is not a side effect of progress. It is constitutive of how this version of civilisation functions. It is not an accident. It is a structure.<sup>42</sup> And structures, as the decolonial tradition has consistently maintained, can be named, studied, contested, and changed.

The twenty-first century presents humanity with an unprecedented challenge. Climate instability, biodiversity collapse, ecological degradation, cultural homogenisation, and the disappearance of Indigenous knowledge systems are no longer isolated local problems. They are symptoms of a deeper crisis in how humanity understands its place within the world. The question is no longer

whether civilisation can continue expanding. The question is whether civilisation can learn to recognise and preserve the cosmobian foundations that sustain its existence—and whether it can do so before those foundations are too severely damaged to sustain the complex systems they support.

Wonesis is the antidotal framework proposed within the psycho-cosmocide paradigm to respond to this crisis. The term draws upon Lani ontological vocabulary—the concept of Wone, which denotes a living relational wholeness inseparable from ecological embeddedness—and proposes a framework through which civilisational consciousness can be reoriented toward the cosmobian foundations it has systematically obscured.<sup>43</sup> Wonesis does not propose a return to a pre-civilisational past. It proposes a forward movement toward a more complete and honest account of what exists, what has value, and what deserves protection.

The paradigm shift proposed by wonesis is a shift from a civilisation-centred cosmology to a life-centred cosmology. Robin Wall Kimmerer's concept of the grammar of animacy—the grammatical recognition of living agency in plants, animals, rivers, and land—points toward the kind of perceptual and linguistic shift that such a reorientation would require at the most fundamental level.<sup>44</sup> Ailton Krenak's insistence that the separation of humanity from the earth is the root cause of planetary ecological collapse articulates the same reorientation in the register of Indigenous Amazonian philosophy.<sup>45</sup> Timothy Morton's concept of dark ecology—an ecological thinking that refuses consoling pastoral narratives and confronts the strange, uncanny entanglement of human existence with non-human life—provides a philosophical vocabulary for pursuing this reorientation without nostalgia.<sup>46</sup> Donna Haraway's concept of making kin across species boundaries suggests that the reorientation wonesis seeks is not merely a recuperation of past ways of knowing but a creative project for the future.<sup>47</sup>

A broader human cosmology would not regard forests merely as timber reserves, rivers merely as economic assets, mountains merely as mineral deposits, or Indigenous societies merely as remnants of a disappearing past. It would recognise them as living repositories of ecological intelligence, memory, adaptation, and relationship accumulated across generations. Such a worldview would understand that the destruction of a cosmobian society is not merely the loss of a culture but the loss of an entire mode of knowing, inhabiting, and interpreting reality.

Within the psycho-cosmocide framework, wonesis also insists on a corollary that is structurally essential: the survival and flourishing of cosmobian worlds is not only an ethical obligation owed to the peoples who inhabit them, but a precondition of civilisational survival itself. The ecological knowledge systems embedded in cosmobian societies represent millennia of accumulated practical intelligence about how to sustain living systems under diverse conditions of climate, terrain, and ecological variability. To destroy these knowledge systems in the name of development is not merely to commit an ethical wrong. It is to destroy, permanently, the most extensive and

empirically grounded archive of ecological adaptation available to the human species at the precise moment when that archive is most urgently needed.

The survival of countless cosmopolitan societies and ecosystems is not merely an environmental concern, an Indigenous concern, or a regional concern. It is a human concern of the most fundamental kind.

The fate of civilisation and the fate of the living Earth are inseparably connected—not only because civilisation depends materially upon ecological foundations, but because the full complexity of human understanding depends upon the diversity of human ways of knowing.

To destroy the cosmopolitan world is not only to foreclose particular futures for particular peoples. It is to narrow, for the entire species, the range of possible answers to the most fundamental questions: What does it mean to be alive on this earth? How should we relate to the living world that sustains us? What do we owe to those who will inherit what we leave behind?<sup>48</sup>

Every single life on this planet eventually returns to the earth. That is the one certainty upon which all cosmologies, in their different registers, agree. The question is what we do with the time in between—and whose worlds do we choose to destroy along the way.

## **Critical Objections and Responses**

No paradigm-level argument of this scope can avoid provoking serious objections. The following engages with four that the framework is most likely to encounter, and that deserve substantive rather than dismissive responses.

### ***Objection 1: Civilisation Has Also Produced Medicine, Human Rights, and Scientific Knowledge***

This is accurate, and the psycho-cosmocide paradigm does not contest it. The framework does not argue that civilisational existence has produced nothing of value—that position would be absurd and is explicitly rejected in the *wonesis* framework. What the paradigm questions is not the existence of civilisational achievements but the *hierarchy of value* through which those achievements are prioritised above the living systems that make them possible. Modern medicine is genuinely valuable; a world in which the ecological knowledge systems that produced much of pharmacology's foundational material base are permanently destroyed is a world with less capacity to develop future medicines, not more. The objection conflates the value of civilisational achievements with the validity of a hierarchy that systematically forecloses what lies outside it. These are separate questions, and the paradigm addresses the second rather than the first.

### ***Objection 2: Many Indigenous Societies Transformed Their Environments As Well***

Also accurate, and the paper addresses this directly through the Graeber-Wengrow evidence in Mode III. The Amazonian *terra preta* soils are precisely the evidence that cosmobian peoples modified their landscapes—sometimes substantially. The analytical distinction the framework draws is not between societies that touch nature and those that do not, but between a structural orientation toward *participation within* a living system (where modification occurs within cosmological limits that maintain the system’s regenerative capacity) and a structural orientation toward *transformation of* the world (where modification is limited only by technological capacity and economic incentive). The relevant measure is not the absolute degree of environmental impact but the relationship to systemic limits: whether the cosmological framework within which modification occurs generates internal constraints on its own destructiveness.

### ***Objection 3: The Civilisation/Cosmobian Distinction Is Itself a Civilisational Construction***

This is the most philosophically serious objection and deserves the most careful response. It is correct that the categories “civilisational” and “cosmobian” are analytical constructions developed within a scholarly framework that itself operates through the conventions of academic writing—a civilisational medium. The reflexive challenge is real: can a framework developed in English, published in academic prose, and distributed through university channels accurately describe a mode of existence that is constituted by its difference from precisely those media? The paradigm does not claim immunity from this challenge. What it argues instead is that the risk of analytical distortion through the use of civilisational categories is less damaging than the alternative: the absence of any framework capable of naming the structure that is destroying cosmobian worlds. The categories are provisional tools for a political and philosophical diagnosis, not claims about the essential nature of the peoples they describe. Real societies contain elements of both modes in varying configurations; the framework is analytical rather than absolute. The purpose is not to freeze cosmobian societies into an imagined purity but to name what is being destroyed and make the destruction visible within the symbolic systems that are currently rendering it invisible.

### ***Objection 4: The Framework Is Not Falsifiable***

The falsifiability objection derives from an important tradition within the philosophy of science associated with Karl Popper. However, the psycho-cosmocide paradigm operates primarily as a comparative, historical, and structural framework rather than as a narrowly predictive scientific theory. The relevant question is therefore not whether it generates laboratory-style predictions but whether it accurately identifies recurring patterns that can be evaluated through empirical and comparative analysis.

The claim that civilisation has constructed a systematic hierarchy of value that privileges its symbolic products over living cosmobian systems is not a hypothesis about a single mechanism—it is a structural diagnosis of a pattern that the ten paired comparisons in Section III are designed

to demonstrate empirically. That demonstration is falsifiable in a meaningful sense: a counterargument would need to show either that the pattern is not global (that the asymmetry is localised or exceptional), that the asymmetry is not produced by the symbolic systems of civilisation but by some other mechanism, or that the destruction of cosmopolitan worlds does not in fact proceed at the rates and through the mechanisms the paradigm identifies. None of these counterarguments is foreclosed by the framework; all of them could, in principle, be made through empirical and comparative analysis. The paradigm does not claim the unfalsifiability of revelation; it claims the provisional analytical validity of a structural diagnosis subject to empirical challenge.

### ***Objection 5: The Framework Romanticises Cosmopolitan Societies***

The framework does not claim that cosmopolitan societies are morally pure, ecologically perfect, or free from conflict, hierarchy, violence, or environmental modification. Such a claim would merely reproduce another form of idealisation. The distinction between civilisational and cosmopolitan existence is analytical rather than moral. The argument is not that one mode is flawless and the other corrupt. It is that the contemporary civilisational hierarchy of value systematically privileges certain forms of existence while rendering others vulnerable to destruction. Recognising the value of cosmopolitan worlds therefore does not require romanticising them; it requires taking seriously the consequences of their disappearance.

## **Conclusion**

### **The Urgency of the Cosmopolitan Question**

This paper has argued that the psycho-cosmocide paradigm offers a systematic and philosophically grounded framework for understanding the full spectrum of human existence across four modes of being, and for diagnosing the civilisational hierarchy of value that systematically privileges symbolic representations of life over the living systems that sustain it. The four-mode framework is not merely descriptive. It is diagnostic and prescriptive: it names a structure, traces its mechanisms, and proposes an antidote.

The ten paired comparisons presented in Section III are intended not as exhaustive documentation but as illustrative probes—demonstrations that the pattern identified by the psycho-cosmocide paradigm is not localised or exceptional but global and structural. The asymmetry between civilisational reverence for its own symbolic products and civilisational indifference to cosmopolitan living systems is not the result of individual failures of attention or moral imagination. It is produced and reproduced by the inherited symbolic systems of civilisation itself: its heritage laws, its educational curricula, its media industries, its economic metrics, and its philosophical traditions.

The wonesis framework does not offer a simple solution to this structural problem. No simple solution exists. What it offers instead is a reorientation: a shift in the fundamental premises from which civilisational values are derived, from a worldview centred on the products of human civilisational activity to a worldview centred on the living systems that make all human activity possible. This reorientation, if pursued with genuine seriousness, would require transformations in law, in education, in political economy, in cultural practice, and in the most fundamental premises of how civilisation understands its place within the living world.

These transformations are not presented as utopian aspirations but as practical responses to converging ecological, climatic, and cultural crises. From the perspective of the psycho-cosmocide paradigm, these crises are not wholly separate phenomena requiring unrelated solutions. They are interconnected manifestations of a deeper structural disorder: the progressive erosion of the cosmopolitan foundations upon which all human societies ultimately depend.

The question that remains is whether the human species possesses the perceptual courage to turn, at last, and face what is happening behind it.

## Notes

1. The decolonial tradition from which the psycho-cosmocide paradigm most directly draws includes: Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Constance Farrington (New York: Grove Press, 1963); Walter D. Mignolo, *Local Histories/Global Designs: Coloniality, Subaltern Knowledges, and Border Thinking* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000); Boaventura de Sousa Santos, *Epistemologies of the South: Justice Against Epistemicide* (Boulder: Paradigm Publishers, 2014); and 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. The Indigenous philosophical and political tradition engaged here includes: Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, *As We Have Always Done: Indigenous Freedom through Radical Resurgence* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2017); Glen Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014); and Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang, 'Decolonization Is Not a Metaphor,' *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society* 1, no. 1 (2012): 1–40.
2. This analytical structure—distinguishing observable from partially or wholly inaccessible modes of existence—adapts, at a higher level of abstraction, the methodological caution advocated across different disciplinary contexts by Paul Ricoeur in his account of the limits of historical knowledge. See Paul Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, trans. Kathleen Blamey and David Pellauer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004).
3. For a foundational critique of teleological and unilinear assumptions in Western social theory, see Enrique Dussel, 'Eurocentrism and Modernity,' in *The Postmodernism Debate in Latin America*, ed. John Beverley, José Oviedo, and Michael Aronna (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995), 65–76. For a more recent and empirically grounded argument against unilinear narratives of social evolution, see David Graeber and David Wengrow, *The Dawn of Everything: A New History of Humanity* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2021).

4. The concept of Civilisational existence as here defined draws implicitly on a wide comparative historical tradition. For a useful synthetic overview of civilisational complexity and institutional development, see Jason W. Moore, *Capitalism in the Web of Life: Ecology and the Accumulation of Capital* (London: Verso, 2015), which traces the ecological preconditions and consequences of the modern world-system.
5. On the relationship between civilisational symbolic production, collective memory, and the politics of commemoration, see Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*. On the institutional apparatus of cultural heritage, see UNESCO, 'Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage' (1972), which remains the primary international legal instrument governing the identification, protection, and transmission of cultural and natural heritage.
6. The term 'cosmobian' is an original coinage of the psycho-cosmocide paradigm, introduced to name a mode of existence that existing vocabulary inadequately captures. Terms such as 'Indigenous,' 'traditional,' 'ecological,' or 'land-based' each capture aspects of this mode but none adequately describes the full ontological character of existence organised through living cosmological relationships with land, ecology, kinship, and ancestral memory. The term draws upon the Lani concept of Wone—a living relational wholeness—to designate the fundamental character of a cosmobian being.
7. The structural distinction between institutional and relational distribution of social complexity is elaborated in rich ethnographic terms across numerous disciplines. For the Amazonian context, see Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, *Cannibal Metaphysics: For a Post-Structural Anthropology*, trans. Peter Skafish (Minneapolis: Univocal, 2014). For the Anishinaabe context, see Robin Wall Kimmerer, *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teachings of Plants* (Minneapolis: Milkweed Editions, 2013). For a comparative analysis of knowledge systems and ecological complexity, see Vandana Shiva, *Monocultures of the Mind: Perspectives on Biodiversity and Biotechnology* (London: Zed Books, 1993).
8. The analysis of how extractive industries function as instruments of cosmobian world-destruction is developed extensively in Andreas Malm, *Fossil Capital: The Rise of Steam Power and the Roots of Global Warming* (London: Verso, 2016), and in Moore, *Capitalism in the Web of Life*. For specific documentation regarding West Papua, see Survival International, 'The Most Endangered Tribes,' 2023, <https://www.survivalinternational.org>.
9. Arturo Escobar, *Pluriversal Politics: The Real and the Possible* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2020). The concept of the pluriverse—a world in which many worlds fit—was first articulated in the Zapatista political tradition and has been elaborated philosophically by Escobar, Mignolo, and others within the modernity/coloniality research programme. See also Mignolo, *Local Histories/Global Designs*
10. Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, *Cannibal Metaphysics*, esp. Part II. Perspectivism, as developed by Viveiros de Castro, holds that in Amazonian thought the world is inhabited by different types of subjects or persons, human and non-human, all of whom apprehend reality from their own particular point of view. The radical implication is that there is no single, universal world; there are only different perspectives on multiple worlds.
11. Marisol de la Cadena, *Earth Beings: Ecologies of Practice across Andean Worlds* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2015). De la Cadena's ethnographic account of Andean political ontology demonstrates that the Quechua concept of *tirakuna*—earth beings—is not a metaphor or a cultural representation of mountains but an ontological assertion about the nature of political persons and the composition of the political world.
12. The characterisation of cosmobian knowledge as performed, embodied, and ecologically embedded rather than archived and institutionally preserved connects the psycho-cosmocide paradigm to a broader tradition of phenomenological and post-colonial thought. See David Abram, *The Spell of the Sensuous: Perception and Language in a More-than-Human World* (New York: Vintage, 1997); and Simpson, *As We Have Always Done*.
13. The epistemological significance of megalithic evidence—structures that testify to the existence of worlds whose meanings have been irretrievably lost—has received sustained attention from archaeologists and

philosophers of history alike. On the limits of historical knowledge regarding such evidence, see Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, Part I. On Göbekli Tepe and the revision of standard narratives about the relationship between settled agriculture and monumental architecture, see Graeber and Wengrow, *The Dawn of Everything*, chs. 3–4.

14. Graeber and Wengrow, *The Dawn of Everything*. The book's central argument is that the standard narrative of human social evolution—from foraging bands through agricultural villages to states and civilisations—does not accurately represent the archaeological and anthropological evidence. Human societies were experimentally diverse, and many of the social forms classified as 'simple' or 'primitive' within the standard narrative were in fact sophisticated, self-conscious, and variable arrangements.
15. The concept of epistemicide—the killing of knowledge—is central to Santos, *Epistemologies of the South*. Santos argues that the expansion of Western modernity has been accompanied by a systematic destruction of alternative knowledge systems, which he characterises as a form of cognitive injustice. The psycho-cosmocide paradigm extends this argument by situating epistemicide within the broader frame of cosmopolitan world-destruction.
16. On the ecological costs of civilisational transcendence projects—including religious institutions, scientific infrastructure, and space exploration—see Moore, *Capitalism in the Web of Life*, which demonstrates how the expansion of Western civilisation has consistently required the appropriation of 'cheap nature' as a precondition for its own reproduction and growth.
17. The inseparability of cosmopolitan metaphysical traditions from their ecological and territorial grounding is a theme explored in depth by De la Cadena, *Earth Beings*, and by Ailton Krenak, *Ideas to Postpone the End of the World*, trans. Anthony Doyle (Toronto: Anansi International, 2020). Krenak's account of Amazonian cosmology insists that the river, the forest, and the mountain are not merely physical features of a landscape but persons and relations whose destruction entails the destruction of the relational world in which cosmopolitan communities exist.
18. On the symbolic and political economy of cultural heritage and Egyptian antiquities, see Lynn Meskell, *A Future in Ruins: UNESCO, World Heritage, and the Dream of Peace* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018); and UNESCO World Heritage Centre, "Memphis and its Necropolis – the Pyramid Fields from Giza to Dahshur," World Heritage List, <https://whc.unesco.org>. The specific case of the Tutankhamun mask—and the broader politics of Egyptian antiquity as civilisational symbol—is discussed implicitly within the larger literature on heritage and colonial epistemology reviewed in Mignolo, *Local Histories/Global Designs*
19. On the classification of ecologically significant regions as resource zones or development frontiers, see Shiva, *Monocultures of the Mind*; Moore, *Capitalism in the Web of Life*; and Malm, *Fossil Capital*. On West Papua specifically, see Survival International, 'The Most Endangered Tribes,' 2023.
20. This analysis of civilisational pathology—the systematic prioritisation of representations of life over living systems themselves—constitutes one of the defining diagnostic claims of the psycho-cosmocide paradigm. It is developed at greatest length in the paradigm's foundational paper and extends themes introduced in the decolonial literature on coloniality of power and knowledge. See Mignolo, *Local Histories/Global Designs*; Wynter, 'Unsettling the Coloniality of Being.'
21. On the ecological transformation of the Nile basin following construction of the Aswan High Dam, see John Waterbury, *The Egypt of Nasser and Sadat: The Political Economy of Two Regimes* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983); and Robert O. Collins, *The Nile* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002). On the preservation of Abu Simbel during dam construction, see UNESCO World Heritage Centre, "Nubian Monuments from Abu Simbel to Philae," World Heritage List. *Capitalism in the Web of Life*. The dam's completion in 1970 permanently altered the annual flood cycle, with significant consequences for downstream

- agriculture, fisheries, and the Nile Delta ecosystem. On the parallel protection of the Giza pyramids and Abu Simbel, see UNESCO, 'Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage' (1972).
22. On deforestation in West Papua and Indigenous dispossession, see Survival International, "The Most Endangered Tribes," <https://www.survivalinternational.org>. On biodiversity significance, see International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species, <https://www.iucnredlist.org>. see IUCN, 'The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species,' 2023, <https://www.iucnredlist.org>.
  23. On Mediterranean ecological degradation, see Malm, *Fossil Capital*. On the role of Roman spectacles in the regional extinction of large mammals, including North African lions, Barbary elephants, and other megafauna, see the historical ecological literature summarised in Moore, *Capitalism in the Web of Life*, ch. 2.
  24. On the ecological significance of Inner Asian grasslands and the treatment of nomadic cosmopolitan societies within developmental frameworks, see Shiva, *Monocultures of the Mind*. On the World Heritage status of the Great Wall, see UNESCO World Heritage Centre, "The Great Wall," World Heritage List, <https://whc.unesco.org>. , 'Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage' (1972). The parallel treatment of nomadic and pastoralist societies as obstacles to modernisation is documented across the comparative literature on development and displacement.
  25. The Notre-Dame fire of April 2019 and the subsequent restoration fundraising effort are documented in UNESCO, "Notre-Dame Cathedral in Paris"; and in reporting by *Le Monde*, April 2019. And the extraordinary speed with which donations were pledged—exceeding one billion euros within forty-eight hours—were extensively documented in international media. On the broader politics of European cathedral heritage, see UNESCO, 'Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage' (1972). On the reduction of ancient forest cover in Europe, see the data compiled by the European Environment Agency and summarised in conservation literature.
  26. On deforestation in Southeast Asia and the displacement of Indigenous communities including the Dayak of Borneo and the Orang Asli of the Malay peninsula, see Survival International, 'The Most Endangered Tribes,' 2023. On the World Heritage status of Angkor, see UNESCO World Heritage Centre, "Angkor," World Heritage List, <https://whc.unesco.org> Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage' (1972).
  27. On Amazonian deforestation and its drivers—cattle ranching, soy agriculture, illegal mining, and infrastructure development—see Malm, *Fossil Capital*; Moore, *Capitalism in the Web of Life*; and IPBES, *Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services* (Bonn: IPBES, 2019). On Amazonian dark earths (*terra preta*) as evidence of sophisticated pre-Columbian land management, see Graeber and Wengrow, *The Dawn of Everything*, ch. 8.
  28. On the global crisis of river systems—including the Colorado, Mekong, Yangtze, Murray-Darling, and Ganges—see IPBES, *Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services* (2019). On the displacement of Indigenous peoples by hydroelectric and infrastructure projects, see Survival International, 'The Most Endangered Tribes,' 2023; and Moore, *Capitalism in the Web of Life*
  29. On the politics of museum collections, repatriation claims, and the relationship between institutional preservation and living cultural continuity, see Mignolo, *Local Histories/Global Designs*; and Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks*. The contradiction between institutional preservation of cultural artefacts and the simultaneous dispossession of living Indigenous communities is a central theme across the literature on colonial heritage.
  30. IPBES, *Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services* (Bonn: IPBES, 2019). The assessment concluded that approximately one million plant and animal species face extinction within decades as

a result of human activity, representing an unprecedented acceleration of species loss since the mass extinction events of geological deep time. On the mineral requirements of space exploration infrastructure, see the relevant sections of Malm, *Fossil Capital*

31. UNESCO World Heritage Centre, *Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage* (Paris: UNESCO, 1972), <https://whc.unesco.org/en/conventiontext/>. The Convention defines 'outstanding universal value' in terms that, in practice, privilege built monuments and defined cultural landscapes over the dynamic, relational, and ecologically embedded character of living cosmopolitan worlds. On the institutional politics of heritage designation, see Mignolo, *Local Histories/Global Designs*
32. The characterisation of cosmopolitan societies as primitive, backward, or pre-modern is traced to its philosophical and institutional roots in Dussel, 'Eurocentrism and Modernity'; Mignolo, *Local Histories/Global Designs*; and Wynter, 'Unsettling the Coloniality of Being.' The disciplinary effects of such characterisations—in development policy, in educational curricula, and in media representation—are analysed in Shiva, *Monocultures of the Mind*
33. Plato, *Republic*, trans. G.M.A. Grube, revised by C.D.C. Reeve (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1992), Book VII, 514a–521b. The allegory of the cave is deployed here not as a technical contribution to Platonic scholarship but as a phenomenological and political image: a figure for the condition in which civilisational symbolic systems so thoroughly mediate human perception of reality that the underlying material conditions of existence—including the destruction of cosmopolitan worlds—become effectively invisible.
34. On language extinction and the collapse of linguistic diversity, see UNESCO, *Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger* (Paris: UNESCO, 2010), <https://www.unesco.org/en/languages-atlas>. The Atlas documents that approximately half of the world's approximately seven thousand languages are currently endangered, with the pace of language death accelerating under conditions of economic integration, forced assimilation, and displacement. Language extinction within the psycho-cosmocide paradigm is understood not merely as a cultural loss but as a dimension of cosmopolitan world-destruction, since cosmopolitan languages carry within their grammatical and lexical structures the ecological and cosmological knowledge of the worlds in which they developed.
35. IPBES, *Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services* (2019). See also International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), *The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species* (Gland, Switzerland: IUCN, 2023), <https://www.iucnredlist.org>.
36. Abram, *The Spell of the Sensuous*, chs. 4–5. Abram argues that alphabetic literacy, by abstracting the written word from the animate landscape in which oral language is embedded, progressively detaches civilisational consciousness from ecological embeddedness and relocates the locus of meaning from the living world to the text.
37. Nicholas Mirzoeff, *The Right to Look: A Counterhistory of Visuality* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011). Mirzoeff's concept of visuality—a complex of images, classifications, and aesthetic norms through which colonial power organises what can and cannot be seen, what counts and does not count as significant—provides an important framework for understanding the civilisational invisibility of cosmopolitan world-destruction.
38. Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, esp. chs. 1 and 5. Fanon's analysis of the colonial restructuring of consciousness—the production of colonised subjectivity through internalised colonial norms of value, beauty, intelligence, and humanity—constitutes one of the most important antecedents to the psycho-cosmocide diagnosis of civilisational perception.
39. The concept of 'the destruction of worlds experienced as progress' connects the psycho-cosmocide paradigm to a long tradition of critique of the ideology of development. See Escobar, *Pluriversal Politics*; Dussel, 'Eurocentrism and Modernity'; and Shiva, *Monocultures of the Mind*

40. Achille Mbembe, *Necropolitics*, trans. Steve Corcoran (Durham: Duke University Press, 2019). Mbembe's concept of necropolitics extends Foucault's analysis of biopolitics into the colonial and postcolonial domain, arguing that sovereign power is constituted above all through the management of death—the determination of who is let live and who is left to die.
41. The argument that the civilisational symbolic system systematically fails to register the full value of cosmobian worlds connects the psycho-cosmocide paradigm to Boaventura de Sousa Santos's concept of the 'sociology of absences': the analysis of how dominant knowledge systems produce non-existence—actively render invisible—what falls outside their categories of recognition. See Santos, *Epistemologies of the South*, Part I.
42. The insistence that civilisational world-destruction is structural rather than incidental is a defining commitment of the psycho-cosmocide paradigm and connects it to the modernity/coloniality research programme. See Mignolo, *Local Histories/Global Designs*; and Wynter, 'Unsettling the Coloniality of Being.'
43. Yamin Kogoya, *Wonesis: Framework, Belonging, and the Antidote to Psycho-Cosmocide* (NATAKA Research Institute, Kurumbi Wone Working Paper Series, 2026). The concept of Wone—as a living relational wholeness inseparable from ecological embeddedness—belongs to the Lani ontological tradition of the Central Highlands of West Papua and is here mobilised, with full acknowledgment of its origin, as a philosophical concept within the psycho-cosmocide paradigm.
44. Kimmerer, *Braiding Sweetgrass*, esp. chs. 3 and 22. Kimmerer's concept of the 'grammar of animacy' refers to the grammatical structures of the Potawatomi language that treat plants, animals, and natural features as living subjects—'who' rather than 'what'—and proposes that the recovery of such grammatical recognition represents a fundamental transformation in the human relationship to the living world.
45. Krenak, *Ideas to Postpone the End of the World*. Krenak's central argument is that the separation of humanity from the earth—what he calls 'the divorce from nature'—is the foundational error of modern civilisation and the root cause of the ecological catastrophe now unfolding. His account of Amazonian cosmology, in which the river and the forest are persons with whom the Krenak people are in continuous relationship, exemplifies the cosmobian mode of existence described in this paper.
46. Timothy Morton, *Dark Ecology: For a Logic of Future Coexistence* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016). Morton's dark ecology refuses the consoling aesthetic of pastoral environmentalism and insists on confronting the uncanny strangeness of ecological entanglement—the fact that humans are always already embedded in ecological systems that exceed and precede them.
47. Donna Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016). Haraway's concept of 'making kin' proposes a reorientation of human aspiration from reproduction and growth toward the cultivation of relationships across species boundaries—a project that resonates with the wonesis framework's insistence on life-centred rather than civilisation-centred cosmology.
48. These three questions—What does it mean to be alive on this earth? How should we relate to the living world that sustains us? What do we owe to those who will inherit what we leave behind?—are proposed as the foundational questions of a broader human cosmology within the wonesis framework. They are questions that the psycho-cosmocide paradigm holds must be answered not from within the symbolic systems of civilisational existence alone, but in genuine dialogue with the ontological worlds of cosmobian existence—as long as those worlds remain available to speak.

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## **NATAKA Research Institute**

The NATAKA Research Institute is an independent civilisational research initiative dedicated to the study of Indigenous cosmologies, memory systems, existential survival, extinction trajectories, ecological destruction, and the psycho-cosmological mechanisms through which colonial systems reorganise reality, consciousness, and human existence.

### **About the Author**

Yamin Kogoya is a Papuan philosopher, writer, and independent researcher from the central highlands of Western New Guinea, now based in Australia. His work explores the philosophical, cosmological, anthropological, and psycho-political dimensions of colonisation, with particular focus on Indigenous memory systems, ecological destruction, civilisational violence, and decolonial thought. He is the creator of the theory of psycho-cosmocide, a conceptual framework describing the systematic destruction of Indigenous cosmologies, sacred systems, and ecological relationships under modern colonial structures. Kogoya holds qualifications in Religious Studies, Indigenous Studies, Community Development, Asia-Pacific Studies, and Anthropology, including a Master of Applied Anthropology and Participatory Development from Australian National University, with further studies in Theory of Knowledge at University of Oxford. His writings and commentaries have appeared in SBS News, RNZ Pacific, Fiji Times, The Jakarta Post, and other regional and international publications. He is the author of *Papuan Tragedy* and other works published through Wone Press under the auspices of the NATAKA Research Institute.

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