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The Six Literatures Of The Human Constructed Cage

A Functional Theory of Literature and the Construction of Human Reality

Yamin Kogoya

Abstract

This paper proposes a functional theory of transmissible meaning. It distinguishes six recurrent operations through which meaning-bearing formations constitute, reconstruct, represent, explain, institutionalise, and operationalise human reality. I call these operations the Six Literatures: System, Paradigm, Descriptive, Analytical, Applied, and Practical. The term *literature* is used here in an expanded functional sense, not as a synonym for everything that is meaningful. A carrier becomes part of a literary formation only when it participates in a socially transmissible system of meaning whose function extends beyond its immediate physical operation and contributes to the constitution, reconstruction, representation, explanation, organisation, or practical reproduction of a shared reality. On this criterion, a chair that merely conveys status and a single unrepeated gesture do not qualify, whereas a constitution, creation myth, or sacred landscape situated within an inherited cosmology can participate in a literary formation. A single Functional Principle governs all six Literatures: a carrier does not constitute literature by virtue of its material form alone. Its literary status emerges through the meaning relation and function through which meaning is established, challenged, represented, explained, organised, institutionalised, or operationalised. The paper develops a four-term model—carrier → meaning relation → literary function → reality-architecture—replacing an earlier formulation in which the carrier was treated as directly producing literature. It also establishes a rule for classifying carriers whose functions overlap and distinguishes four analytically separate dimensions of the Constructed Cage: Given reality, experienced reality, constructed meaning, and institutional reality. The paper situates this framework in relation to Kuhn, Berger and Luckmann, Cassirer, Goodman, and decolonial epistemology. It then develops Psycho-Cosmocide as a theory of the systematic disruption of reality-constituting functions, specifying necessary conditions and a propagation mechanism while distinguishing the concept from cultural genocide, epistemicide, and ordinary cultural change. The framework is applied to West Papua through ethnographic and documentary materials. The paper concludes with Wonesis, understood as the reconstruction of a suppressed System function, and addresses major objections concerning the scope, necessity, and theoretical use of the term *literature*.

Keywords: philosophy of literature, functional theory of meaning, social ontology, Psycho-Cosmocide, Constructed Cage, System Literature, Cosmobian, Synthobian, decolonial epistemology, West Papua

I. Introduction: The Problem of Defining Literature Beyond Text

Many influential approaches to literature treat textuality, literary form, aesthetic value, or participation in a literary practice as central to the category. Yet the boundaries between text, discourse, performance, orality, materiality, and cultural practice have long been contested within literary theory itself.¹ One question has not been asked as directly: what functions can transmissible meaning-structures perform in the construction and reproduction of human reality? This question does not depend on the medium in which meaning happens to be encoded. This paper argues that six such functions can be distinguished: System, Paradigm, Descriptive, Analytical, Applied, and Practical. It calls them the six literatures. The claim being defended is therefore not “these things are literature.” The claim is that transmissible meaning performs six recurrent kinds of reality-directed work, and that literature is the name this paper gives to a structure performing any one of them. Section II establishes the criterion that makes this naming defensible. Section IV develops the six functions themselves.

In brief, before the full argument: System Literature is a civilisation’s founding myth, monument, or sacred text — the Pyramids of Giza, the Torah, the Quran, the Bhagavad Gita — establishing what a community takes reality itself to be. Paradigm Literature is what breaks a System open, proposing that reality is not what the System says it is — Darwin, Marx, Fanon, the Mabo judgment. Descriptive Literature records and witnesses the resulting world — Herodotus, colonial census records, Papuan oral testimony of massacre and survival. Analytical Literature explains why and how that world works — Aristotle, Weber, Foucault, Said. Applied Literature turns meaning into durable institutions — the Code of Hammurabi, a national constitution, a school curriculum. Practical Literature is direct, usable instruction, carried in skill rather than institution — a farming calendar, the Inca khipu in an administrator’s hands, a manual for building a shelter or mending a net.

Several works cited below belong to the author’s own prior publications within the Psycho-Cosmocide series. Kurumbi Wone is the authorial voice under which the same author develops the wider Psycho-Cosmocide series; the two names denote one author, not a second, independent authority. Those citations establish the genealogy of concepts — Cosmobian, Synthobian, the Given and Constructed Cage, Wonesis — introduced and defended at length elsewhere. Empirical and historical claims made in this paper are tested against independent scholarship, particularly in Sections VIII and IX.

II. The Theoretical Problem: Why Conventional Definitions Are Insufficient

A definition of literature broad enough to include oral cosmology, sacred architecture, and colour systems faces an immediate objection: it may become so broad that everything meaningful counts as literature. If a chair communicates social status, is it literature? If a traffic light carries meaning, is it literature? If a courtroom performs institutional meaning, is the courtroom literature? If a human gesture communicates meaning, is the gesture literature? Unless this objection is answered directly, a critic could reasonably object. The theory, on this reading, has simply renamed culture, discourse, or symbolic systems as literature. It has added nothing distinguishable from those existing categories.

Proposed Criteria for Literary Function

A carrier qualifies as literature under the present theory only when it meets two conditions. First, it must participate in a socially transmissible system of meaning. Second, that system's function must exceed the carrier's immediate physical operation, and must contribute to the constitution, reconstruction, representation, explanation, organisation, or practical reproduction of a shared reality. These criteria are jointly necessary. Taken together, they are sufficient for the ordinary run of cases. They are not offered here as a formal analytic definition immune to every edge case. The carrier is not itself the literature. The meaning relation is not itself the literature. Literature names the socially transmissible meaning-bearing formation constituted through the relation between carrier, interpreters, and function: Carrier → Meaning Relation → Literary Function → Reality-Architecture. No single term in that chain should be substituted for another.

Three consequences follow. First, transmissibility is required. A private, unrepeatable gesture that communicates something to one observer on one occasion does not qualify, because it is not part of a socially transmissible system. A recurring ceremonial gesture does qualify, because it encodes and transmits a shared meaning across a community. Second, the function must exceed immediate physical operation. An ordinary chair used only to be sat on does not qualify, because its meaning-bearing capacity, if it has one at all, is incidental to its function. A throne does qualify: its form is built specifically to encode and transmit authority, independently of whether anyone is presently seated in it. Third, the function must contribute to one of the six operations developed in Section IV: constituting, reconstructing, representing, explaining, organising, or practically reproducing a shared reality. Merely accompanying social life is not enough.

A fourth requirement sharpens the boundary further: reflexive transmissibility. The carrier must not merely transmit a fixed signal. It must participate in a socially maintained structure that can be interpreted, reproduced, modified, or contested as a meaning-bearing reference. This is what separates a constitutional text from an individual physical action or a fixed, non-revisable signal. A constitutional text stays permanently open to reinterpretation, amendment, and contested reading; a fixed signal does not. This is also why a traffic light fails the criterion, even though the colour-coded convention it draws on succeeds. Considered as a bare piece of hardware issuing a fixed instruction, the light itself is not literature. The convention is interpreted, transmitted with variation, and open to institutional revision in a way the individual light is not. The convention, not the light, is the true carrier of Applied Literature here.

Why “Literature” Rather Than Culture, Discourse, or Symbolic System

The term literature is used here neither in the conventional literary-critical sense nor merely metaphorically. It designates the transmissible architecture through which a community constitutes and operationalises meaning. This is a narrower object than three familiar alternatives. Culture is broader: it includes practices, affects, and material life not reducible to any transmissible meaning-architecture. Discourse, in the Foucauldian sense, is also broader: it concerns the rules governing what can be said and known within a given field, not the constitutive, representational, explanatory, organisational, and practical functions distinguished in Section IV. Symbolic system, in the sense developed by Cassirer, is broader again: it treats myth, language, and science as parallel modes of symbolic formation, without asking what institutional and practical work each mode goes on to perform.²

Traditional literary theory privileges medium and form. It takes textuality, aesthetic value, and authorial identity as constitutive of the category. But human societies have historically stored and transmitted reality-constituting meaning through many other media: landscape, law, monument, colour, ritual. Literary theory itself gives no principled reason to restrict the category to one medium among several that perform the same underlying work. These media do not share textuality. They share a socially transmissible meaning-function: each is a structure a community builds, checks, revises, institutionalises, and uses. A functional theory can therefore legitimately identify a broader category than the medium-based one. “Literature” is being reconstructed here as a theoretical category.

A medium-neutral term such as “meaning architecture” would name the structure, but not its historically specific mode of operation. A founding myth, a legal code, and a technical manual are all works that a community authors, transmits across generations with variation and revision, and holds itself accountable to as a shared reference — closer to how a textual tradition is authored, transmitted, and revised than to how an unauthored structural regularity operates, a kinship system or a market. Literature, unlike the more general “meaning architecture,” carries the connotation of authored, transmitted, revisable, text-like structure. That connotation, not textuality itself, is what the theory needs. “Authored” is used here in a broad sense, one that covers the Cosmopolitan cases developed in Section VI, where no single author or discrete text exists. There, authorship is distributed across a lineage of ancestral interpreters, not located in one composing agent — the way an oral epic or a common-law tradition is authored collectively and generationally, not by a single hand.

Literature and the Politics of Definition

Psycho-Cosmocide uses the term literature to identify these six functions, or functional dimensions, of humanity's constructed reality within the Constructed Cage. The term is used deliberately, in an expanded sense. Everything that enters into the human construction of reality carries a message, a meaning, a purpose, a value, an intention, a vision, or a reason. Such formations do several things. They may explain reality. They may create or constitute a particular understanding of reality. They may build and organise reality. They may respond to the questions and demands reality presents. Or they may provide an overall meaning-making map through which reality can be understood, communicated, interpreted, and inhabited.

This is why Psycho-Cosmocide uses literature to name both civilisational Synthobian, human-made symbolic reality, and Cosmopolitan, naturally given and directly experienced reality. The distinction between them does not make one a legitimate form of reality and the other an inferior or primitive one. Both are valid within their own conditions of existence and meaning-making. Both attempt to make sense of the world and establish a relationship between human existence and reality, but through different modes. Civilisational Synthobian reality operates primarily through symbolic creation imposed upon, organised around, and interpreted in relation to the Given Cage. Cosmopolitan reality operates through direct, embodied, relational, and continuing participation in the Given Cage itself.

The purpose of extending the term literature in this way is therefore not to claim that a mountain, a river, a forest, a ritual, a law, a monument, or a written text are identical things. They are not. The argument is that they can participate in different reality-constituting meaning relations. A written text can carry a cosmology. A law can institutionalise a conception of human order. A monument can materialise a historical memory. A ritual can reproduce a relationship between generations and the cosmos. A landscape can carry, through generations of inhabitation, memory, obligation, identity, and knowledge. What matters is not the physical

carrier alone. What matters is the meaning relation through which reality is understood, transmitted, reproduced, and lived.

Psycho-Cosmocide therefore deconstructs and redefines the term literature. Its conventional civilisational usage has been excessively restricted to written words and textual forms of meaning-making. That restriction is not neutral. It reflects a particular civilisational history, in which writing, textuality, authorship, documentation, and symbolic production became privileged as the only recognised forms through which legitimate knowledge and meaning could exist. Within such a restricted definition, Cosmobian reality can easily disappear from the category altogether. A river can be treated merely as geography. A forest can be treated merely as ecological resource. A mountain can be treated merely as physical terrain. Ancestral land can be treated merely as territory. This is not a hypothetical risk: colonial administrations across the world classified inhabited, storied land as *terra nullius*, or as vacant state forest available for settlement, logging, or mineral extraction. Section IX documents a concrete instance of exactly this reclassification in West Papua. The meaning systems through which people have understood, remembered, inhabited, and communicated their relationship with these realities are then rendered invisible. They do not conform to the civilisational definition of literature.

This is precisely the problem Psycho-Cosmocide seeks to expose. The civilisational project did not merely encounter Cosmobian meaning-making systems. It frequently denied, rejected, classified as primitive, displaced, or erased them. It transformed living relations with land, water, forest, ancestors, animals, seasons, fire, sky, and cosmos into objects that could be observed, named, classified, administered, extracted, and governed from outside the relationship itself. The redefinition of literature is therefore part of the decolonial work of Psycho-Cosmocide. It restores to analysis those forms of meaning-making that a civilisation-centred definition of literature has historically excluded. The term is expanded not because everything is literature in an indiscriminate sense. It is expanded because human reality is constituted through far more than written words. It is also carried through bodies, landscapes, memories, practices, institutions, ceremonies, technologies, laws, ecological relationships, architecture, oral transmission, and generations of lived experience.

In this expanded sense, literature becomes a name for the reality-directed work of meaning. It allows Psycho-Cosmocide to examine both the symbolic reality constructed within the Constructed Cage and the direct relational reality encountered within the Given Cage. One constructs and mediates reality through symbolic systems. The other maintains a direct, embodied relationship with the given conditions of existence. Both are ways through which human beings seek to understand, communicate, interpret, reproduce, and live within reality. The question, therefore, is not simply what counts as literature. The deeper question is this: who has been permitted to define what counts as a legitimate carrier of meaning, knowledge, memory, and reality? Psycho-Cosmocide begins by challenging that boundary — a challenge Section VI develops formally through the Cosmobian/Synthobian distinction, and Sections VIII–X extend into the historical mechanism of Psycho-Cosmocide itself.

Position within Existing Theories of Literature

Formalist theories define literature by the intrinsic formal properties of a text: metre, narrative structure, figurative device. By construction, they are silent on non-textual carriers. Aesthetic theories define literature

by the aesthetic experience or value it affords. This excludes a legal code or a census, on grounds irrelevant to the present theory's object. Practice-based theories, developed most fully by Peter Lamarque and Stein Haugom Olsen, treat literature as constituted by a historically specific institutional practice with its own conventions of reading and evaluation.³ Unlike formalism, this position locates literature in a social activity rather than in textual features alone. But by tying the category to a particular literary practice, it excludes by design the myths, codes, and landscapes the present theory takes as its central cases. Robert Stecker's direct treatment of the question "what is literature?" canvasses definitions by genre, by evaluative use, and by institutional status.⁴ He concludes that no single necessary-and-sufficient condition has survived counterexample. This paper takes that conclusion seriously. It is part of the motivation for shifting the question from "what makes something literature" to "what function does a meaning-bearing structure perform" — a question a medium- or practice-based definition is not built to ask. Reader-response theories locate literary meaning in the act of interpretation itself. The present theory partially shares this, through the meaning relation of Section III. But it does not share the further claim, made by some reader-response approaches, that meaning is thereby indeterminate or reader-dependent. That further claim would undermine the institutional durability Section IV's Applied function requires.

Gérard Genette draws a distinction between a work's immanence — its abstract, repeatable structure — and its transcendence: the concrete manifestations, editions, and performances through which that structure is materially realised.⁵ This offers a further, closely relevant antecedent for the carrier/meaning-relation distinction developed in Section III. Genette asks how a single work can exist across multiple physical manifestations without being identical to any one of them. That question is structurally analogous to this paper's question: how can a single function be performed by more than one carrier, or a single carrier perform more than one function? The present theory departs from Genette in one respect. It asks what a work's manifestation does within a reality-architecture, rather than asking after its mode of ontological existence as such.

The closest existing relative is the institutional theory of art associated with Arthur Danto and George Dickie, and, on a different basis, Nelson Goodman's theory of symbols.⁶ Danto claims that an object becomes art through its place within an "artworld" of theory and institutional recognition, not through any intrinsic property. This is structurally the closest antecedent to the Functional Principle developed in Section III. Both theories locate the relevant property in a relation to a surrounding system, rather than in the object itself. The two claims still differ: Danto's is that recognition by the artworld makes something art; the present claim is that a specific function, not recognition as such, makes something literature. Goodman's account of symbol systems as classificatory schemes performing cognitive work supplies a further antecedent. It lets a map, a score, or a sample be treated as continuous with literary and artistic symbols, rather than as a separate category. The present theory departs from all three in two ways. First, it specifies what the relevant institutional or symbolic work consists in: the six functions of Section IV. Danto, Dickie, and Goodman leave the content of "artworld theory" and "symbol system" comparatively open. Second, it extends the analysis to carriers — a sacred landscape, a legal code — that none of these theorists' respective theories were built to include.

III. Literature as Function

The Functional Principle of Literature

Literature should be classified primarily according to the function by which meaning is constituted and transmitted. It should not be classified according to the physical or conventional form of its carrier. A carrier does not constitute literature by virtue of its form. It constitutes literature by virtue of the function through which meaning is established, challenged, represented, explained, organised, or operationalised. Accordingly, the same carrier may perform different literary functions at different times, within different systems, or for different audiences.

A Four-Term Model

An earlier formulation of this theory proposed a three-term relation: carrier produces literature, and literature constitutes a reality-architecture. That formulation is imprecise. A carrier does not automatically produce a literary function. A book sitting unread on a shelf does not thereby perform a literary function. A sacred landscape does not become System Literature simply because it exists. A law becomes Applied Literature only when it is functioning within an institutional meaning system that a community recognises and reproduces. A fourth term is therefore required: the relation that connects a carrier to the community or interpreter who activates it.

CARRIER → MEANING RELATION → LITERARY FUNCTION → REALITY-ARCHITECTURE.

The carrier is the substrate: book, monument, colour, symbol, image, landscape, law, or tool. The meaning relation is the connection between that carrier and an interpreting community: ancestral interpretation of a landscape, legal recognition of a code, ritual performance of a myth. Without that connection, the carrier remains inert with respect to literary function. The literary function is the operation performed once that relation is active: System, Paradigm, Descriptive, Analytical, Applied, or Practical. The reality-architecture is the larger structure of intelligibility, normativity, or institutional order that results. Three examples show the chain at work. A landscape connected to an ancestral interpretation performs a System function; this in turn sustains a cosmological order and a set of social obligations. A law connected to a normative meaning relation performs an Applied function; this in turn sustains an institutional order. A book connected to a conceptual argument performs a Paradigm function; this in turn reorganises what a community takes to be possible.

A meaning relation is not defined merely as whatever connection makes the classification rule come out right in a given case. It must itself be socially transmissible, in the sense of Section II. It must be recognised, reproduced, or contested by a community of interpreters, not asserted by a single interpreter on a single occasion. Legal recognition, ancestral interpretation, and ritual performance differ in mechanism: institutional enactment, generational transmission, and repeated enactment, respectively. But they share this transmissibility criterion. This is what distinguishes a meaning relation from an incidental or idiosyncratic reading. One person deciding a stop sign is ancestral does not constitute a meaning relation. A community recognising, transmitting, and acting on that reading does.

IV. The Six Functions

Table 1. *The Six Functions*

Function	Question	Operation Performed	Movement	Primary Epistemic Operation
System	What is reality?	Establishes foundational reality, cosmology, identity, authority, order	Constructs	Constitution
Paradigm	Could reality be otherwise?	Challenges, overturns, or radically reorganises an existing paradigm	Reconstructs	Disruption
Descriptive	What is there?	Records, depicts, names, maps, classifies, describes	Represents	Representation
Analytical	Why/how does it work?	Examines relationships, causes, structures, mechanisms, contradictions	Explains	Explanation
Applied	How should it be organised?	Converts knowledge into institutions, laws, policies, procedures, governance	Organises	Institutionalisation
Practical	What can be done?	Enables an actor to do something directly, immediately, useably	Operates	Execution

Subsection headings below and Table 2 label carriers directly with a function ("Sacred landscape — System") as shorthand for "the carrier through which that function is constituted." Section VI and Objection 3 state the strict formulation this shorthand compresses.

The Classification Rule

Because the same carrier frequently admits of more than one function, a classification rule is needed. A constitution can be read as System (a foundational political order), Descriptive (a record of institutions), Applied (the legal instrument establishing them), and potentially Paradigm (if it redefines sovereignty). Without a rule, the taxonomy would simply have to shrug at its own overlap. Functional classification is determined by the dominant operation a carrier performs within a specified meaning relation and context. Secondary functions may be simultaneously present, but they remain subordinate to the dominant one. Take a national constitution read by an ordinary citizen as the document that tells officials what they may and may not do: in that meaning relation, it is performing Applied function. This holds whatever System-founding or Paradigm-shifting significance the same document also carries in a different relation — for a constitutional historian tracing its founding moment, say, or for a court reinterpreting it in a way that redefines sovereignty itself. Function, on this rule, is not a fixed, permanent category. It is an answer to a question: what is a given carrier doing, for whom, in a specified context? The same carrier can receive different correct answers to that question without the taxonomy becoming incoherent.

The rule can be tested against a set of boundary cases. Three questions apply to each: What meaning relation is operative? What transformation does the carrier actually perform within that relation? What institutional or cognitive consequence follows from that transformation? The dominant function is whichever function best answers all three questions for the relation specified. Other functions the same carrier can perform, in a different relation, are listed as secondary.

Table 2. Classification of Selected Carriers

Carrier	Meaning Relation	Dominant Function	Secondary Function(s)
Constitution	Citizen/legal	Applied	System, Descriptive
Creation narrative	Cosmological	System	Descriptive
Darwin, Origin of Species	Scientific/cultural	Paradigm	Analytical
Ethnographic census	Colonial administration	Descriptive	Applied
Fire-management knowledge	Ecological practice	Analytical	Practical
Khipu	Administrative/embodied	Practical	Descriptive
Sacred landscape	Ancestral relation	System	Practical
Morning Star flag	Political/national	Paradigm (vs. coloniser)	System (for the movement it founds; see Section IX)

SYSTEM

System Literature is a civilisation's founding myth, story, monument, book, or symbol. It is the thing that establishes a whole worldview. It gives a community its basic sense of who it is, what is sacred, and how reality is ordered. It does not sit alongside a culture's other productions. It supplies the coordinates everything else in that world works within. This is what separates System function from culture in general.

Every major civilisation has had one. The Sumerian, Akkadian, Egyptian, Babylonian, Assyrian, Persian, Greek, Roman, Inca, Aztec, and Maya worlds each built their own System into monuments, epics, and sacred texts: the pyramids and temples of Egypt, the ziggurats of Mesopotamia, the temple complexes of the Aztec and Maya. Most of these systems have since collapsed under a Paradigm shift; only fragments survive as language, ruins, symbol, and colour. The worship of Zeus, Jupiter, Odin, and the Egyptian pantheon did not simply fade from memory. It was displaced, over centuries, by the spread of Christianity from the first century CE and Islam from the seventh, each proposing that the old gods were false and installing a new, exclusive System of divine authority in their place. Where a System still stands today, it takes forms such as the Hebrew Bible and the Torah, the Quran, the Bhagavad Gita and the wider Vedic corpus, the Talmud, the Epic of Gilgamesh, Homer's epics for the Greek world, the Great Wall of China, and the Hindu temple as both building and cosmology. In the Cosmobian world — Indigenous, land-based cosmologies including the Papuan — the System is not a book at all but the land itself: the sacred mountain,

the ancestral river, the night sky read as law. In the Synthobian world, by contrast, the System takes physical or textual form: a temple, a pyramid, a written scripture.

PARADIGM

Paradigm Literature is what breaks a System open. It does not describe the world the old System built. It says that world is no longer adequate, or was wrong, and proposes a new way of seeing reality altogether. It is the flood that sweeps away the old ground, not a comment made from the riverbank.

Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* (1859) broke open the biblical account of creation and humanity's place in nature.⁷ Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels's *Communist Manifesto* broke open the old order of property and class. Frantz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* and W. E. B. Du Bois's *The Souls of Black Folk* broke open the colonial and racial order, insisting that the System's account of who counts as a full human subject was false. Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* broke open the colonial model of education itself. The Mabo judgment of 1992 broke open the legal fiction of terra nullius in Australian law. The term draws on Thomas Kuhn's idea of a scientific paradigm, but is not limited to science.⁸ It applies wherever a community's whole way of interpreting reality is overturned, not merely added to. Not every influential or widely read book performs this function. Only a work that changes what counts as a possible interpretation of reality does — not merely one that adds information within rules that remain intact. Within the Kurumbi Wone series, *Psycho-Cosmocide* itself is offered in this sense: not a commentary on the existing order, but an attempt to change what counts as a possible account of reality.

Paradigm ruptures are not confined to single books. The Italian Renaissance, beginning in fourteenth-century Florence under the patronage of families such as the Medici, broke open the medieval Christian System's monopoly on legitimate knowledge. It did so by reviving classical Greek and Roman learning and relocating authority in human reason and observation. The Industrial Revolution, beginning in eighteenth-century Britain with mechanised textile production and the steam engine, was not merely a change in technology. It broke open an agrarian System of land-based social order, driving a mass movement of population from villages to factory cities and remaking work, family, and time itself around the wage and the clock. The same dynamic appears wherever a civilisational religion first enters a Cosmobian world: Christianity's arrival among Pacific and Melanesian societies, or Islam's arrival across the Indonesian archipelago from the thirteenth century onward, broke open an existing cosmology in exactly the way Darwin broke open Genesis. Once established, each such religion became a System in its own right — supplying the very cosmology a still later Paradigm would eventually have to break open again. Within Western philosophy, two further instances illustrate the same pattern. René Descartes's declaration “je pense, donc je suis,” in the *Discourse on the Method* (1637) — later rendered in Latin as *cogito ergo sum* in the *Principles of Philosophy* (1644) — broke open scholastic Aristotelian authority as the foundation of knowledge, relocating certainty in the individual thinking subject rather than in inherited doctrine. Friedrich Nietzsche's declaration that “God is dead,” in *The Gay Science* (1882), broke open the System of Christian metaphysical authority that had organised European moral and cosmological thought for over a millennium. In each case the same downstream pattern recurs: a Paradigm succeeds, and what was once a rupture hardens, in time, into a new System awaiting its own future rupture.

DESCRIPTIVE

Descriptive Literature is what records and witnesses a world once a System or Paradigm has shaped it: what happened, what was lost, what survived. It keeps the record. It does not, on its own, explain why. It does not change the river's course.

Herodotus's Histories recorded the Greek–Persian wars. Primo Levi's *If This Is a Man* testified to the Holocaust. Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's *Gulag Archipelago* witnessed the Soviet prison system. The Rosetta Stone, the trilingual decree of 196 BC, performs the same function for modern historians reconstructing Ptolemaic Egypt.⁹ Ancient tradition credits the sixth-century BC Athenian ruler Peisistratus with commissioning the first written edition of Homer's orally transmitted epics, fixing centuries of oral performance into a documentary text that later scholars could consult, copy, and dispute — a concrete instance of the shift from oral to written record on which Descriptive function has so often depended since. Colonial-era ethnographies and census records described — and, in describing, began to classify and administer — Indigenous populations across the world, including in West Papua. Papuan oral testimonies of massacres, displacement, and exile perform the same function: they preserve the evidence a later generation needs to reconstruct what was done. Description is rarely neutral. Once a population has been named and classified, that classification tends to become the category a government or institution goes on to administer. This is why the same record can also perform Applied function at once. Section IX documents a concrete instance of this mechanism in the West Papuan case.

ANALYTICAL

Analytical Literature goes beyond the record and asks why and how. It looks at the world Descriptive Literature has recorded. It searches for the structure, the cause, and the mechanism underneath it.

Aristotle's works on logic and causation, Immanuel Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, Max Weber's sociology of power and authority, Michel Foucault's *Discipline and Punish*, and Edward Said's *Orientalism* all perform this work within the Western tradition. Each analyses how power, knowledge, and colonial classification actually operate, rather than simply recording that they exist. The tradition is not only Western. The Nyaya school's theory of *pramāṇa*, founded on Gautama's *Nyaya Sūtras*, supplied an influential epistemological framework for subsequent Indian philosophical debate.¹⁰ The Mohist Canons of Warring States China recorded experimentally grounded findings in optics and mechanics.¹¹ Ibn al-Haytham's *Book of Optics* (1011–1021) laid the foundations of physical optics through an explicitly experimental method.¹² Peer-reviewed fieldwork on Aboriginal fire management in central Arnhem Land documents a further, non-textual instance: a causal, predictive model of the relationship between fire frequency, vegetation structure, and faunal habitat, encoded in customary burning regimes.¹³ In the Papuan context, this is the work of researchers and human-rights analysts who study the actual mechanics of colonisation and dispossession, turning eyewitness testimony into systemic explanation.

APPLIED

Applied Literature is where all of the above gets put to work running an actual society: law, government, bureaucracy, school curricula, and institutional practice.

The Code of Hammurabi, held at the Musée du Louvre and erected during Hammurabi's reign in Babylon (circa 1792–1750 BC), turned Babylonian cosmology into enforceable law.¹⁴ Cleisthenes's reforms in Athens in 508–507 BC turned an idea about civic equality among free male citizens into a working institution of sortition, rotation of office, and public vote — often credited, though not without scholarly dispute over priority with Solon's earlier reforms, as the first recorded invention of a working democratic assembly. The Constitution of the United States turned a political philosophy into a working system of government. The Rule of St Benedict turned a religious ideal into the daily operating procedure of a monastery. National school curricula turn a society's approved knowledge into what its children are taught. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted 10 December 1948, becomes Applied Literature as its principles are made operative through subsequent treaties, constitutional developments, courts, and administrative practice.¹⁵ The founding of the United Nations in San Francisco in 1945, in direct response to two world wars, turned the principle of collective security into a permanent institutional architecture of charters, councils, and treaties. Once an idea becomes law, curriculum, or administrative procedure, it goes on organising people's lives even after the belief that first justified it has faded. This is why disrupting a System does not automatically disrupt the institutions already built on it — a point Section VII develops further.

PRACTICAL

Practical Literature is the most direct kind: the actual instructions a person needs to survive and act, day to day. It has no interest in theory. It only needs to work.

A farming calendar or almanac telling a community when to plant and harvest is Practical Literature. So is the Inca khipu, not as a census record but as the working technology an administrator actually carried and used in the field,¹⁶ and the Marshall Islands stick chart, used by a navigator to read ocean swells without a compass, sextant, or chronometer.¹⁷ So is a manual for building a shelter, mending a net, treating an illness, or performing a ritual correctly. Practical knowledge is carried in skill and habit rather than in institutions. This is why it often survives the destruction of a System's laws and schools, and can become the first thing a people rebuilds from — a point Section VII returns to as the Functional Residue Principle.

V. The Ontology of the Constructed Cage

That ontology rests on one distinction: what is given prior to human meaning-making, and what a human community constructs from it. The *Constructed Cage*, developed at length elsewhere in this series, names the world human beings build in answer to the *Given Cage* — the unchosen biological condition of birth, growth, suffering, reproduction, and death.¹⁸ Four levels can be distinguished. The Given Cage as previously developed corresponds to the first two of these levels together: Given reality and its Experienced dimension, prior to any Constructed meaning layered upon it.

1. Given reality: what exists independently of human symbolic construction. A mountain, a river, a biological organism.
2. Experienced reality: reality as encountered by embodied beings, prior to and beneath any explicit conceptual articulation of it.

3. Constructed meaning: the symbolic and conceptual structures — System, Paradigm, Descriptive, and Analytical function — through which experienced reality becomes intelligible and nameable.
4. Institutional reality: the laws, borders, identities, currencies, bureaucracies, and classifications — Applied and Practical function — produced from constructed meaning and materially durable independently of any individual's belief in it.

The first two levels together constitute what this series elsewhere calls the First Cage: the Given, prior to and independent of any Constructed layer.¹⁸ Birth, hunger, ageing, illness, suffering, ecological dependence, embodiment, mortality, and death belong to no civilisation, no religion, and no system of meaning. They precede every literary function this paper describes and outlast every one of them. No System narrative abolishes hunger. No Applied institution abolishes death. A population may interpret, name, ritualise, or theorise its hunger and its mortality in an unlimited number of ways, but the interpretation never becomes the condition it interprets.

This is why the Given Cage cannot itself perform a literary function, on the criteria of Section II. A mountain, a body, a season of hunger is not transmissible in the relevant sense: it is not authored, reproduced, or contested by a community of interpreters, because it does not depend on interpretation to exist at all. What communities transmit, reproduce, and contest is always already the Constructed relation to it — the ancestral interpretation of the mountain, the ritual response to hunger, the theology of death — never the Given itself. Section VI's claim that a mountain is the carrier of System Literature rather than System Literature in itself is a special case of a more general asymmetry: the Given supplies the material that every literary function works on, but it performs no function itself.

The two cages are asymmetrical in a further respect. The Constructed Cage's decisive property, developed below, is that its own constructedness tends to disappear from view. The Given Cage's decisive property is the reverse: it cannot be made to disappear, however completely a System narrative organises a population's relationship to it. Hunger, illness, and death remain legible beneath even the most totalising Constructed order. This is why Practical function — the function with the least institutional support and the most direct relation to the Given — is so often the last to be disrupted and the first from which reconstruction becomes possible, as Section VII's Functional Residue Principle describes.

The third and fourth levels together constitute what this series elsewhere calls the Second Cage: the Constructed considered as a whole, standing over against the Given, or First Cage, rather than replacing it.¹⁸ The relation between the two is one of reorganisation, not substitution. Hunger is not abolished by the construction of an economy; it is reorganised as scarcity, entitlement, and exchange. Birth is not abolished by citizenship; it is reorganised as legal status, inheritance, and belonging. Death is not abolished by theology; it is reorganised as judgement, continuation, or return. The Given persists beneath every Constructed layer built upon it. What changes is the register in which a population lives it.

This reorganising activity is exactly what Sections III and IV develop under the name of literary function. System, Paradigm, Descriptive, Analytical, Applied, and Practical literature are not incidental products that happen to occur within the Constructed Cage. They are its constituent operations: the recurring ways in which a population builds, revises, records, explains, institutionalises, and enacts the second order it inhabits. A creation myth performing System function, a legal code performing Applied function, and a farming calendar performing Practical function are, on this account, three instances of one underlying

activity — the ongoing construction of a world in answer to a Given that no population chose and none can undo.

The Constructed Cage's decisive property is that its own constructedness tends to disappear from view. Sustained and reinforced across enough of the six functions at once, a meaning system comes to be experienced not as one historically specific answer to the Given among others, but as the Given itself — as simply how things are. This is why System function occupies the position it does within the architecture of Section IV. It is the level at which a population's basic sense of reality is set, and therefore the level whose capture yields the deepest form of disruption, developed in Section VIII as Psycho-Cosmocide. A disruption confined to Descriptive, Analytical, Applied, or Practical function changes what a population knows, argues, is governed by, or can do. A disruption that reaches System function changes what a population takes reality to be.

The Constructed Cage operates across all four levels simultaneously. This is why the theory can seem to move between constructed meaning and constructed reality without warning. It does not imply that human beings construct the physical world. It means that they construct the systems of significance, normativity, identity, and institutional order through which the physical world becomes a humanly inhabited world.

VI. Cosmobian and Synthobian Literature

The four levels just distinguished operate identically whichever kind of founding literature a population has. What differs is whether that literature is Cosmobian or Synthobian — a distinction already invoked informally above, and now made precise. Cosmobian and Synthobian name two different meaning relations between a founding literature and its carrier. They are not two different kinds of people.¹⁹ Synthobian Literature is meaning materially constructed into a discrete human-made carrier: a text, a monument, a symbol standing apart from the landscape that produced it. Cosmobian Literature is meaning relationally constituted through human inhabitation, memory, interpretation, and transmission of the given landscape, without a discrete human-made carrier standing apart from it. Cosmobian is not a synonym for Indigenous. Many Indigenous societies also produce Synthobian artefacts. The term names a specific relationship between founding meaning and its carrier, not an ethnic or civilisational category.

It is not correct to say that a mountain is literature. The mountain does not constitute a socially transmissible meaning relation by itself. The mountain functions as the carrier or site through which Cosmobian System Literature is constituted. The meaning relation — ancestral interpretation, inherited ceremonial practice, transmitted genealogy — is the human-constituted element. The landscape supplies the given material that relation works on, in the same way a Synthobian text supplies given language for a scribe to work with. The sacred site and the ancestral presence (O'gur) of Papuan Cosmobian cosmology are, on this formulation, the carrier and site through which a System function is constituted. They are not System Literature in themselves.

VII. The Dynamics of the Six Functions

The six functions form an interconnected architecture rather than a fixed chronological sequence. Practice can generate description: an Indigenous navigation practice can produce geographical knowledge before

any System claims it. Description can generate paradigm: an observation can overturn an existing worldview that predates it. Applied institutions can generate new descriptive categories: a census can create classifications that subsequently reshape analysis. Despite this non-linearity, the six functions can still be summarised in one phrase each: constructs, reconstructs, represents, explains, organises, operates. It is not a claim about the order in which any community is required to produce them.

The Institutional Persistence Principle

Once a meaning system has been institutionalised through Applied function, its institutional effects may persist after the epistemic or normative system that originally justified them has lost legitimacy or social acceptance. An Applied function, once built, continues to run: courts still sit, curricula are still taught, borders are still enforced. This holds independently of whether the founding System that once justified those institutions is still believed. This account of institutional inertia is distinct from ordinary claims about tradition or path dependency. The institution is not merely persisting out of habit. It is continuing to perform the Applied function it was built to perform, on behalf of a System that may no longer be operative anywhere else in the architecture.

The Functional Residue Principle

Where a System has been suppressed and an external Applied function substituted for it, embodied Practical function may nonetheless persist. Its reproduction depends on the transmission of a skill between individuals, not on the continued existence of the institutions that previously organised it. The Roman destruction of the Second Temple in Jerusalem in 70 CE offers a concrete historical instance. The razing of the Temple by Titus's legions destroyed the priestly System and its sacrificial Applied institutions at a single stroke. Yet the practical, day-to-day disciplines of prayer, Torah study, and household observance survived in dispersed communities, and became the foundation from which rabbinic Judaism was subsequently reconstructed. Practical function requires no institution. It answers to a skill transmitted directly between individuals rather than to an argument. This is why it is frequently the last function to be disrupted, and the first from which reconstruction becomes possible:

*SYSTEM SUPPRESSED → APPLIED FUNCTION REPLACED → PRACTICAL FUNCTION SURVIVES →
PARADIGM RECONSTRUCTION BECOMES POSSIBLE.*

Section IX documents this pattern in the West Papuan case, and Section X develops its final step under the name Wonesis.

VIII. Psycho-Cosmocide

Psycho-Cosmocide occurs when an organised power systematically disrupts a population's reality-constituting System. It then reproduces an alternative order, through the displacement, suppression, or institutional marginalisation of the wider meaning architecture through which that population recognises, transmits, and inhabits its world. The concept therefore concerns neither cultural change in general, nor knowledge destruction in isolation. It concerns the sustained disruption of the functional architecture through which a people continues to constitute its own reality. This keeps the term from collapsing into a description of any cultural disruption whatsoever.

Necessary Conditions

“Power” refers to any organised agent capable of sustained, coordinated action over the population in question: a state, a colonial administration, a religious institution, a market actor with comparable coordinating capacity, an educational system, or a combination of these acting in concert. An individual act of prejudice, or a single unaffiliated actor, does not meet this threshold. “Systematic” names a pattern of convergence, not a count. It requires duration across more than one generation, or a comparable extended period. It requires coordination across more than one institutional domain — education and law together, say, or administration and religion together, rather than one domain acting alone. It requires repetition, rather than a single episode. And it requires reproduction through a demonstrable policy or doctrinal basis, rather than incidental or uncoordinated harm. What distinguishes Psycho-Cosmocide from ordinary policy churn is convergence: these forms of disruption reinforce one another into a durable pattern of domination, sustained across time and reproduced through coordinated institutions. The Spanish Crown’s and Catholic Church’s centuries-long campaign of forced conversion, *extirpación de idolatrías*, and mission settlement across the Americas from the sixteenth century onward illustrates all of these conditions at once: a colonial-ecclesiastical power, sustained across generations, coordinated through law, religion, and education, imposing Catholic doctrine and Spanish administrative categories in place of Indigenous cosmologies, with consequences for identity and social reproduction that persist today. The following conditions are jointly necessary.

1. a population possesses a historically transmitted, reality-constituting meaning architecture, in the sense of Sections III–V;
2. a power, in the sense specified above, directly targets the architecture’s foundational (System) function specifically — through prohibition, forced replacement, desecration, or suppression of its transmission — rather than merely producing an incidental side-effect on it;
3. this direct targeting is systematic, in the sense specified above, rather than an isolated episode, and its downstream effects propagate into the other five functions in the pattern described later in this section;
4. alternative meanings or institutions are imposed or structurally privileged in its place;
5. the disruption affects identity, belonging, agency, or social reproduction at the population level, not only at the level of individual belief; and
6. the resulting institutionalisation (condition 4) itself persists and continues to be reproduced through Applied function, as described in Section VII, rather than lapsing once the initial act of imposition ends.

The functional architecture itself — the six functions and their capacity to act on one another in either direction — is non-linear, exactly as Section VII argues. System, Description, and Practice do not stand in any fixed order of dependence. Under conditions of systematic domination, disruption moves through the architecture in a recurrent, typical pattern, set out below. This is a typical propagation pathway under domination, not a causal sequence the functional architecture guarantees:

*EXISTING SYSTEM → DISRUPTION OF SYSTEM FUNCTION → DESCRIPTIVE DISPLACEMENT
(RECLASSIFICATION) → ANALYTICAL DISPLACEMENT (EXTERNAL EXPLANATORY FRAME) →
INSTITUTIONALISATION (APPLIED SUBSTITUTION) → PRACTICAL SUBSTITUTION → ALTERED
IDENTITY, BELONGING, AND AGENCY → PSYCHO-COSMOCIDE.*

Each arrow names a transformation already established in Section IV. Reclassification is the name → classification → category → administration mechanism from the Descriptive section, applied to an externally imposed System. Institutionalisation is the process by which a meaning system becomes materially durable, from the Applied section. The resulting condition is not the sum of six independent injuries. It is a typical pattern of propagating disruption, because the six functions are interdependent rather than modular. A given historical case of Psycho-Cosmocide need not traverse every arrow in this order to satisfy the necessary conditions above. The pathway states what domination typically does to the architecture, not what it must do to count.

Distinguishing Psycho-Cosmocide from Adjacent Concepts

A disruption to a meaning architecture is not a single event. It admits of degree, and the terminology should track that degree rather than treat every disruption as equivalent. Disruption, marginalisation, suppression, displacement, and destruction name different positions on a continuum. Psycho-Cosmocide, on the criteria above, applies at the more severe end of that continuum: specifically, where System function itself, not merely a downstream function, is the target, and where the disruption is sustained through institutionalisation rather than confined to an isolated episode.

This distinguishes Psycho-Cosmocide from several adjacent concepts, without claiming to replace them. Raphael Lemkin's original concept of genocide included cultural and social destruction alongside physical killing — a dimension later sociological work has argued was wrongly narrowed in international law.²⁰ Cultural genocide, in this sociological sense, names the destruction of a culture's capacity for social reproduction generally. Epistemicide, as developed by Boaventura de Sousa Santos, names the destruction of a knowledge system specifically, as one dimension of colonial violence.²¹ Psycho-Cosmocide, as used in this paper, names something more specific than either. It is not the destruction of a culture in general. It is not the destruction of a knowledge system in general. It is the systematic disruption of one specific reality-constituting function — System function, in the vocabulary of Section IV — through which a population's entire six-function architecture is organised. From there, the disruption propagates through Descriptive, Analytical, Applied, and Practical function as a structural consequence, not as a separate set of injuries.

A Note on "Colonial"

In this paper, colonial refers specifically to one thing: the imposition and institutional reproduction of an externally imposed political, epistemic, and administrative order over an existing population and its meaning systems. This is distinct from four related terms, though it can co-occur with any of them. Settler colonialism adds the replacement of a population through permanent settlement. Internal colonialism is structural subordination without a foreign metropole. Occupation is temporary or contested territorial control. State incorporation is formal absorption into an existing state, without the specific institutional imposition described above.

Relation to Existing Philosophical Traditions

The theory developed in this paper is adjacent to, and draws on, several existing traditions, without being reducible to any one of them. Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann's account of the social construction of reality established that institutions are objectivated and internalised through processes of habitualisation and legitimation.²² The present theory adds a functional differentiation within that broader process: System,

Paradigm, Descriptive, Analytical, Applied, Practical. It also extends the analysis to non-institutional carriers, such as landscape and colour. Ernst Cassirer's philosophy of symbolic forms treats myth, language, and science as parallel modes through which the human mind constructs experience.²³ The present theory differs by asking what institutional and practical work each symbolic production goes on to perform, rather than classifying symbolic forms by mode of construction alone. Michel Foucault's account of discourse and power examines the historical conditions determining what can be said, known, and done within a field.²⁴ System, Descriptive, and Applied function, in the present theory, name three specific operations within what Foucault would treat as a single discursive formation. This costs generality, but it buys the ability to distinguish operations Foucault's framework does not itself separate. Thomas Kuhn's theory of paradigm shift is generalised beyond scientific communities. Frantz Fanon and W. E. B. Du Bois supply, respectively, the colonial and racial register in which Paradigm function is shown to operate outside the natural sciences. The theory's decolonial commitments are closest to Santos's epistemicide, and to the broader decolonial critique of coloniality. From this tradition, it borrows the diagnosis that colonial power operates on knowledge, not only on bodies or territory. It adds a more granular, six-function account of exactly how that operation proceeds: by controlling description, then categories, then analysis, then institutions, then practice, in order to transform the lived reality of a population.

IX. West Papua as a Case Study

The framework is applied here to a single case in order to show the six functions operating together rather than as isolated categories. West Papua is examined as an instance in which a Cosmopolitan System has been the object of direct disruption, an external Applied order has been substituted for it, and a Practical residue survives beneath both — tracing, function by function, the propagation pathway set out in Section VIII.

System Function

The concept of O'gur — the ancestral presence in Papuan Cosmopolitan cosmology — and the sacred landscape it names constitute the carrier and site of a Cosmopolitan System function, in the sense specified in Section VI. Independent ethnographic scholarship on Papuan highland societies documents a comparable cosmological and social organisation, centred on land, ancestry, ceremony, and exchange. Karl Heider's ethnography of the Grand Valley Dani, Peter Matthiessen's field account of highland ritual and warfare, and Denise O'Brien and Anton Ploeg's study of acculturation movements among the Western Dani together establish that land, ancestry, and ceremony function as constitutive, not merely descriptive, elements of highland Papuan social organisation. Heider's ethnography documents the recurring pig-feast (wam) cycle among Dani-speaking groups as the mechanism through which alliance, ancestral obligation, and territorial order are periodically renewed and publicly reaffirmed — a concrete instance of a ceremonial practice performing constitutive rather than merely commemorative work.²⁵

Paradigm Function

Papuan intellectual and resistance traditions have generated Paradigm function by proposing that the Indonesian state's account of Papuan identity and history is false. Scholarship on Papuan nationalism documents Papuan writers and political movements constructing a counter-history and counter-identity against both Dutch and Indonesian nationalist frameworks.²⁶ The Morning Star flag (Bintang Kejora), raised alongside the Dutch flag on 1 December 1961 to mark the New Guinea Council's inauguration of an

independent West Papuan nationhood, is a concrete instance. Relative to the Dutch colonial and, subsequently, Indonesian state systems it contests, the flag performs Paradigm function: it proposes that Papuan political reality is other than either coloniser's System asserts. Relative to the Papuan nationalist movement it has since founded, the same flag performs System function — illustrating the classification rule of Section IV directly.

Descriptive Function

Colonial and state description — Dutch and Indonesian ethnography, census, and cartography — has re-described Papuans within categories authored elsewhere. Scholarship on the Indonesian administration of the territory documents this as a deliberate acculturation process, operating through the education system, media, and administrative categorisation.²⁷ This is Descriptive function performing Applied work simultaneously, through the name → classification → category → administration mechanism. The categories are not neutral records. They organise subsequent governance. A recent concrete instance is Indonesia's Laws No. 14, 15, and 16 of 2022, passed by the national parliament on 30 June 2022. These laws established South Papua, Central Papua, and Highland Papua as three new provinces, carved from the existing Papua and West Papua provinces. Policy analysis of the legislation notes that it divides the Central Highlands — the most heavily indigenous-Papuan and least developed interior of the territory — across separate new administrative and electoral units. It merges western highland regencies with coastal areas where the majority of non-Papuan settlers reside. The Indonesian government presented the division as accelerating development and public-service delivery. Timotius Murib, chair of the Papuan People's Assembly (MRP), called on the government to halt the legislative process altogether.²⁸ Two readings of the same act of administrative classification emerge: development instrument, and demographic fragmentation. These are exactly the disagreement the classification mechanism above predicts, since a change in administrative category is simultaneously a change in who is subsequently governed by whom, under what electoral and budgetary boundaries.

Analytical Function

Developmentalist and security-oriented analysis has explained Papuan poverty, conflict, and resistance within frameworks that treat Indonesian sovereignty over the territory as a settled premise, rather than a contested one: underdevelopment as a problem to be solved by more investment, unrest as a problem to be solved by more military presence. A distinct analytical tradition instead asks why the conflict recurs, rather than only recording that it does. Richard Chauvel's account of Papuan nationalism explains the origin of a division neither colonial power created by design and neither has since been able to dissolve, tracing how a specifically Papuan political identity was constructed against, rather than derived from, both Dutch and Indonesian nationalist frameworks. Connor Woodman's analysis reframes the conflict as a structural instance of settler colonialism entangled with Western strategic and resource interests, locating the causal mechanism in land, demography, and geopolitics rather than in ideology or religious difference alone. Both examine the same conflict Descriptive function above records, asking what structures produce it — the defining move of Analytical function, in the sense specified in Section IV.²⁹

Applied Function

Four concrete instances illustrate Applied function specifically. In education, published research documents state-imposed Indonesian-language instruction and curricula built around Indonesian national historical

narratives rather than Papuan ones.³⁰ In administration, the territory's division into provinces and regencies places it within a state-defined provincial and regency grid, superseding a region previously organised through clan and language-group boundaries. Within the Psycho-Cosmocide framework, this reorganisation is a Descriptive-Applied conversion. In law, Indonesian national jurisdiction and legal codes apply to Papuans as a matter of state sovereignty, superseding pre-existing customary dispute-resolution structures. In demography, transmigration policy has altered the population balance of the territory at state initiative; an Indonesian Minister for Transmigration explicitly described the policy in 1985 as a means to integrate all ethnic groups into a single Indonesian identity.³¹ Each instance converts constructed knowledge into an operating institution, independently of whether its founding legitimacy is accepted. This is the specific pattern of institutional inertia formalised in Section VII.

Practical Function

Against this, Practical function has survived: the digging stick, the netbag, the sweet-potato garden cycle, ecological and navigational knowledge, oral technique. It has survived with a persistence that Applied function has not extinguished, because it requires no courtroom or classroom to remain functional. This is the empirical instance of Section VII's schema: System suppressed, Applied function replaced, Practical function surviving, Paradigm reconstruction becoming possible. This is the same sacred landscape that performs System function in Sections VI and IX above, read here under the distinct, Practical meaning relation anticipated as its secondary function in Table 2: the land as garden and resource, rather than as cosmology.

X. Wonesis

Wonesis names the deliberate reconstruction of a suppressed System function rather than its replacement by a foreign one.³² This mechanism can be stated as a sequence, subject to the non-linearity of Section VII:

RECOVERED SYSTEM → PARADIGM RECONSTRUCTION → NEW DESCRIPTIVE CATEGORIES → NEW ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK → NEW INSTITUTIONS → PRACTICAL REPRODUCTION.

Where colonial Applied function substitutes an external administrative and educational infrastructure for an indigenous one, Wonesis proposes the reverse direction of construction. It recovers Wone as an ordering principle already present within Papuan Cosmobian cosmology. It builds a new cycle of Descriptive, Analytical, Applied, and Practical function outward from that recovered foundation, rather than importing one from elsewhere. Wonesis is, in the terms of Section III, the reconstruction of a literary function, not merely of a carrier. Preserving a sacred site as a heritage monument, without restoring the System function it once performed, would not constitute Wonesis on this account.

XI. Objections and Replies

The following six objections anticipate the most significant challenges a philosophical reader is likely to raise against the theory developed in Sections I–X.

Objection 1: “Literature” is too broad.

Section II’s criteria for literary function are transmissibility, function exceeding immediate physical operation, contribution to one of the six operations, and reflexive transmissibility. Together, these exclude ordinary meaningful objects: a chair, a private gesture, a fixed and non-revisable signal. They include the intended cases: a constitution, a creation myth, a sacred landscape read within an inherited cosmology.

Objection 2: this is really a theory of culture, discourse, or symbolic systems, not literature.

Section II distinguishes literature from each of these terms by its object: the specifically transmissible, function-bearing architecture through which reality is constituted, represented, explained, organised, and practically reproduced. The distinction is by object, not merely by degree of generality.

Objection 3: landscapes cannot be literature.

The landscape is the carrier or site; the literature is the socially transmissible meaning-bearing formation constituted through the relation between the carrier, its interpreters, and its function.

Objection 4: the six functions overlap extensively, which undermines the taxonomy.

It does not undermine the taxonomy, because classification is functional rather than ontological. The same carrier instantiating multiple functions is evidence for the Functional Principle. It is not evidence against the distinctness of the functions themselves.

Objection 5: Psycho-Cosmocide duplicates cultural genocide or epistemicide.

Section VIII specifies what Psycho-Cosmocide uniquely identifies: disruption targeting System function specifically, sustained through Applied institutionalisation. This is distinct from the broader scope of cultural genocide, and from the knowledge-system focus of epistemicide. Both remain adjacent, legitimate concepts, not competitors to be dismissed.

Objection 6: the theory is politically normative rather than philosophical.

The descriptive architecture developed in Sections I–VII — what literature is, how the six functions operate, how they interact — does not depend on the diagnostic-conceptual apparatus of Section VIII or on the applied, normatively loaded claims made in Sections IX–X about colonial disruption and reconstruction. The theory of literature stands independently of the political diagnosis.

XII. Conclusion

Human beings do not merely inhabit a physical environment. They inhabit historically accumulated architectures of meaning, through which that environment becomes intelligible, normative, and actionable. The six functions identified in this paper — System, Paradigm, Descriptive, Analytical, Applied, and Practical — are not six kinds of book. They are six operations any carrier of meaning can be made to perform within that architecture. They are distinguished by function rather than form. They interact as an architecture, rather than unfolding as a fixed sequence.

The deepest violence against a people may occur before its physical destruction: when the structures through which that people recognises what is real are interrupted. The Constructed Cage is therefore neither merely metaphorical nor reducible to ideology. It is that architecture, considered as a whole. Psycho-Cosmocide, on the criteria proposed in Section VIII, names what happens when the foundational function of that architecture is systematically and institutionally disrupted. Wonesis names what is required to reconstruct it.

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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.

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