

Toward Truth Paradigms: Transformation, Epistemological Depth, and the Ordered Process of Discernment amidst the Post-Truth Condition

Rob Blom

Director, wiseOak Akadēmeía, Canada

ABSTRACT. Alfred Whitehead described the European historical enterprise as a series of footnotes to Plato. Today, educational philosophy is laden with transformative learning and post-truth rhetoric—neither bearing resemblance or refinement to the Platonic notions of metamórhōsis and reminiscence respectively. A fundamental paradox in contemporary educational philosophy persists in the celebration of transformation alongside the rejection of transcendence, creating contradictions that enable post-truth discourse to flourish within flattened ontologies amidst shallow epistemological landscapes. Building upon earlier critiques of post-truth as etymologically crooked, the accretive term epistemological depth is proposed as a constructive alternative—a distinct paradigm (injunction) of truth acquisition through progressive discernment wherein knowing emerges through an ordered process of envelopment rather than quantifiable accumulation or arbitrary (social) construction. Unlike approaches treating modes of knowing as constructed domains or arbitrary logoi to endlessly compare—Crosswhite’s post-truth condition—epistemological depth demonstrates how higher orders of discernment subsume rather than contrast prior understandings. By reconceptualising discernment as an envelopmental practice rather than a discriminatory one, I attempt to recover the Platonic dimension of truth as apprehended through contemplation, preserve the Taylorian emphasis on truth as articulated through meaningful expression, and embrace the Varelian understanding of truth as embodied through lived experience. The integrative framework honours spiritual dimensions of knowing while offering a path beyond post-truth discourse—not through returning to dogmatic certainty, but through progressing toward increasingly comprehensive frameworks that preserve rather than erase insights gained at each stage of extensional discernment within a non-Aristotelian system of logic.

ABSTRACT. Alfred North Whitehead charakterisierte das gesamte europäische Geistesunternehmen als eine Serie von Fußnoten zu Platon. Die gegenwärtige Bildungstheorie hingegen ist durchdrungen von Begrifflichkeiten des transformativen Lernens und einer postfaktischen Rhetorik – beides Konzepte, die weder der platonischen Vorstellung von metamórhōsis (Verwandlung) noch der Idee der Anamnesis (Erinnerung als Wiedererinnerung des Seins) gerecht werden oder daraus hervorgegangen sind. Ein fundamentales Paradox prägt somit die zeitgenössische Bildungstheorie: Sie feiert Transformation, während sie Transzendenz verleugnet – ein Widerspruch, der postfaktische Diskurse begünstigt und gedeihen lässt, indem er sie in einer ontologisch abgeflachten und epistemologisch verarmten Landschaft verankert. In Fortführung früherer Kritiken des Postfaktischen als etymologisch verquere Formation wird hier der akkumulierende Begriff epistemologische Tiefe als konstruktives Gegenmodell vorgeschlagen – ein eigenständiges Paradigma (bzw. eine erkenntnistheoretische Direktive), das Wahrheitsgewinnung nicht als quantifizierbare Anhäufung oder arbiträre soziale Konstruktion begreift, sondern als fortschreitenden Prozess der Einhüllung durch gestufte Unterscheidung. Wissen entsteht hierbei nicht durch bloße Addition von Informationen, sondern durch ein geordnetes, strukturierendes Einwachsen in Bedeutungszusammenhänge – ein Prozess, in dem höhere Ordnungen des Verstehens frühere

Erkenntnisstufen nicht negieren, sondern integrierend übersteigen. Im Gegensatz zu erkenntnistheoretischen Modellen, die Modi des Wissens als kontingente, sozial konstruierte Diskursräume oder als austauschbare logoi behandeln – wie etwa in Crosswhites Beschreibung des postfaktischen Zustands – zeigt der Begriff der epistemologischen Tiefe auf, wie sich Unterscheidung nicht im Kontrastieren erschöpft, sondern in der Fähigkeit, frühere Erkenntnisschichten in umfassendere Ordnungen einzuhüllen. Indem ich den Begriff der Unterscheidung von einem ausschließenden hin zu einem einhüllenden Verständnis verschiebe, wird der Versuch unternommen, die platonische Dimension von Wahrheit als kontemplative Erfahrung zurückzugewinnen, die taylorianische Perspektive von Wahrheit als existenziell ausgedrückter Bedeutung zu bewahren und die varelianische Auffassung von Wahrheit als verkörperte, gelebte Wirklichkeit zu integrieren. Dieser integrative Rahmen ehrt die spirituellen Dimensionen des Erkennens und eröffnet einen Weg jenseits des postfaktischen Diskurses – nicht durch eine Rückkehr zu dogmatischer Gewissheit, sondern durch ein Fortschreiten hin zu zunehmend umgreifenden Erkenntnisssystemen, die Einsichten jeder Stufe extensionaler Unterscheidung bewahren und aufheben – innerhalb eines nicht-aristotelischen logischen Gefüges.

A Sense of Truth and the Complexity of a Situation

Alfred Whitehead (1978) described the European historical enterprise as a series of footnotes to Plato. Today, educational philosophy is laden with transformative learning and post-truth rhetoric—neither bearing resemblance or refinement to the Platonic notions of *metamorphōsis* and *reminiscence* respectively. A fundamental paradox in contemporary educational philosophy persists in the celebration of transformation alongside the rejection of transcendence, creating contradictions that enable post-truth discourse to flourish within flattened ontologies amidst shallow epistemological landscapes. Building upon earlier critiques of post-truth as etymologically crooked,¹ the accretive term *epistemological depth* is proposed as a constructive alternative—a distinct paradigm (*injunctio*) of truth acquisition through progressive discernment wherein knowing emerges through an ordered process of envelopment rather than quantifiable accumulation or arbitrary (social) construction. Unlike approaches treating modes of knowing as constructed domains or arbitrary logoi to endlessly compare—Crosswhite’s (2018) post-truth condition—epistemological depth demonstrates how higher orders of discernment subsume rather than contrast prior understandings. By reconceptualising discernment as an envelopmental practice rather than a discriminatory one, I attempt to recover the Platonic dimension of truth as apprehended through contemplation, preserve the Taylorian (2001) emphasis on truth as articulated through meaningful expression, and embrace the Varelian understanding of truth as embodied through lived experience (Varela et al., 2016). The integrative framework honours spiritual dimensions of knowing while offering a path beyond post-truth discourse—not through returning to dogmatic certainty, but through progressing toward increasingly comprehensive frameworks that preserve rather than erase insights gained at each stage of extensional discernment within a non-Aristotelian system of logic.

My aim is to elucidate *a* truth paradigm—not *the* truth paradigm—in contestation with post-truth rhetoric whose ways of thinking and articulation against truth permeate a particularised worldview or outlook in educational discourse. The title draws inspiration from James Crosswhite’s (2018) *Toward Truth*, where he articulated a Protagorean perspective encapsulating a ‘willingness to accept conflicting conceptual schemes and competing logics, even contradictory “truths,” while still attempting to develop a productive political discourse’ (p. 371). According to Crosswhite, such a rhetorical view—rhetoric now in its virtuous sense of *ῥητορικὸς* (*rhētorikós*)—is befitting ‘perfectly to our time’ (p. 371) amidst a post-truth condition. Crosswhite categorised post-truth into (1) its cultural manifestation—where facts lose their power to inform public discourse—and (2) its *post*-Modern philosophical orientation that dissolves ontological permanence in favour of a Protagorean epistemology (*i.e.*, perpetual flux). I have previously addressed the former, cultural manifestation of post-truth,² examining how the phenomenon operates within contemporary discourse.

1. *cf.* the companion paper *The Crooked Structure of the Post-Truth non Sequitur*.

2. In the companion paper, we conducted a metaphysical analysis of post-truth as a cultural phenomenon, examining its etymological origins, conceptual inconsistencies, and the philosophical implications of its widespread acceptance in educational discourse (including the resemblance to the Steinerian „dead thinking“). The analysis revealed how post-truth inverts traditional epistemological hierarchies while simultaneously, and paradoxically, denying the validity of hierarchical structures altogether.

The previous analysis demonstrated how post-truth functions as both a crooked conceptual structure and a logical *non sequitur*—essentially serving as a counter-truth against Modernity. The paradox lies in the simultaneous inversion on the abstract ordering of knowledge—*i.e.*, where unsubstantiated opinion (sentimentalism) is *elevated* above reasoned judgment (rationalism) ... despite operating within a supposedly *non-hierarchical*, post-Modern, shallow epistemological landscape (see middle three columns of Figure 2). I also demonstrated how post-truth constitutes a limited *condition* or *point-of-view* (*Weltansicht*) rather than a comprehensive *world-view* (*Weltanschauung*) that contemporary educational discourse—with rare exceptions (Crosswhite, 2018; Nally, 2021; Clark, 2019)—uncritically assumes. Crosswhite (2018) lamented that ‘there is, in any case, no new theory of truth on offer that addresses our post-truth condition. If anything, we are producing ever new and more sophisticated theories of post-truth’ (p. 380). Thus, building upon the ontological diminution (*i.e.*, from worldview to point-of-view), I now wish to answer the call of Crosswhite and establish *epistemological depth* as a constructive alternative “toward truth paradigms;” epistemological depth contrasts the implications of post-truth’s philosophical incoherence *vis-à-vis* an epistemological *shallowness*. Definitionally, by “truth paradigm³,” I mean a structured framework through which truth can be apprehended, articulated, and embodied—an epistemological injunction (*re*: Kuhnian “paradigm”) within educational philosophy. And by “epistemological depth,” the current paradigm to be disclosed, I mean *a* truth paradigm whose structure of *extensional* practices of discernment hierarchically *envelops* truth. What follows is my attempt to unpack these dense definitions as a whole—in particular as they relate to transformation—so these two definitions deserve to be kept in mind throughout the manuscript.

Unpacking Definitions

Epistemological depth functions both as a truth paradigm—a mature, embodied understanding of the human being’s envelopmental relation to truth and environment—and as the structure through which truth paradigms themselves can be situated and discerned; the former is the emergent knowing, the latter is the theoretical terrain that makes expertise intelligible. The notion of fractal geometry informed and inspired my understanding of epistemological depth as disclosed by Mandelbrot (1982) through the computational visualisation of iterative complex sequences. Fractals, like epistemological depth, operates both as a truth paradigm—though rarely perceived in our shared reality until named—and foregrounds mathematical complexity through *structural* iteration; iterative sequences occur when outputs becomes the inputs of the next iteration⁴—thus, epistemological depth, like fractals, proceeds *envelopmentally* rather than *additively* (*i.e.*, not *more* information to accrue quantitatively, but an onto-historical process toward qualitative transformation whereby prior knowledge becomes a subset of higher understanding); however, unlike fractal self-similarity, each successive order of discernment that apprehends epistemological depth discloses a qualitatively deeper structural relationship rather than repeating the prior pattern at a different scale. That such an envelopmental structure has remained unnamed within educational philosophy is itself symptomatic of the very condition epistemological depth addresses—a post-truth condition arising from a flattened worldview where competing logoi have no *asymmetrical* relation. Epistemological depth, through iterative and envelopmental logic, is precisely what restores that asymmetrical relation—progressively maturing the human being from Aristotelian, binary designation toward non-Aristotelian (\tilde{A}), extensional, multi-ordinal orientation(s) that harmonises the nervous system and the entire psychophysiological complex (Korzybski, 1958).

3. Dominant theories of truth—*correspondence* (truth as agreement between proposition and fact), *coherence* (truth as internal consistency of a belief system), and *pragmatist* (truth as what works in practice)—each describe what truth is at a given epistemological level; see Glanzberg (2023) for an overview. A truth paradigm operates at a meta-level relative to these first-order theories: the concern is not with what truth is but with the ordered, envelopmental structure through which truth comes to be apprehended, articulated, and embodied across levels of knowing. Tellingly, the modern correspondence theory is itself a flattened residue of a primordial correspondence between human and cosmic order (Guénon, 2004b)—what was once a living, vertical, analogical relationship has been reduced to a horizontal propositional matching, precisely the epistemological shallowness that truth paradigms move to recover (and thus transmutes the interpretation of “correspondence” from modern \rightarrow perennial). Relatedly, Steiner’s (1995) epistemology envelops rather than simply opposes these accounts, for thinking in Steiner’s account is ‘neither subjective nor objective; it goes beyond both these concepts’ (p. 53)—dissolving the subject-object dualism in line with ecological and complexity theories today (Davis, 2004).

4. In the case of the Mandelbrot fractals, $z \mapsto z^2 + c$ where $z, c \in \mathbb{C}$.

Notably, both Alfred Korzybski and Rudolf Steiner independently identify the nervous system as the site where ordinary cognition arrests its own maturation—Korzybski structurally and semantically, Steiner spiritually and ontologically. For Korzybski (1958), such arrest manifests in degrees—from the ordinary semantic disturbances of daily life through to the delusions, illusions, and hallucinations of clinical psychiatry—all involving ‘the semantic [mis]identification *or confusions of the orders of abstractions*, the evaluation of lower orders of abstraction as higher, or higher as lower’ (p. 423)—the consequence of Aristotelian, two-valued orientation applied to our nervous system; for Steiner (1990), the same structural ceiling is diagnosed from the spiritual perspective: the nerve substance, cosmically alive in its origins, undergoes an earthly arrest upon descent into physical existence, tending toward cold, atomistic abstraction—the consequence of Ahrimanic influence within the earthly nerve substance—severed from the cosmic source that would enliven it toward higher knowing. Both thinkers identify the same human type in whom the Aristotelian-Ahrimanic arrest had become a settled orientation: for Korzybski (1958), pure intensionality—orientation by verbal definition alone, severed from living fact—is ‘possible, and often found in hospitals for the mentally ill, and in some chairs of philosophy’ (p. xlv); for Steiner (1990), the philosopher enveloped in Ahrimanic arrest is named outright as a homunculus—a thinker in whom everything tends ‘into homunculism, into spiritual emptiness’ (p. 45), producing logically correct concepts that remain false to living reality. Both thinkers correspondingly invoke living image-making as the path beyond arrest: for Korzybski (1958), through training in visualisation⁵ within a non-Aristotelian (*re*: extensional and organism-as-a-whole) orientation, restoring in well-balanced persons the harmonious working of all higher and lower centres (*e.g.*, nervous, affective, intellectual) on their proper levels; for Steiner (1990), through the cultivation of imaginative thinking—a pictorial, living mode of cognition that warms⁶ what had remained cold nerve-bound abstraction, finding its way from the nervous system toward the blood, and thus from the merely logically thought-out toward ‘the true to reality’ (p. 45). That two thinkers from the quantum sciences and esoteric sciences converge on the nervous system as the shared site of arrest, on the modern philosopher as its representative type, and on the cultivation of living image-making as the shared direction of remedy—whether \ddot{A} or Christic—intimates that epistemological depth names something real: the arc beyond that arrest, along which truth paradigms may be situated, discerned, and traversed.⁷

Discernment is often confined to theological studies. However, as an envelopmental meta-practice⁸ within \ddot{A} , the transmutation is from two-valued to three-valued (or n-valued) orientation; discernment is the meta-practice through which epistemological depth is progressively traversed rather than constructed—each act of extensional discernment absorbing prior understanding into a more comprehensive order. Truth paradigms, in turn, are the injunctions—whether cultural or individual—as ordered frameworks through which such traversal becomes educationally intelligible and communicable. A simple example is the injunction of General Relativity (GR) to remediate the issue with Newtonian Mechanic’s (NM) account of the mercurial orbit. GR does not replace NM, GR *envelops* NM—meaning the framework of NM emerges when the conditions of GR are limited to the domain of validity of NM. Education as a whole follows both the developmental *and* envelopmental processes—the former translative, the latter transformative.

The “depth” part of “epistemological depth” is discerned from *span* (Wilber, 2009). Whereas span would insist on material connotations (*e.g.*, in educational literature the Earth is “more-than-human” (Davis, 2004) since Earth is bigger than humans), *depth* is toward the immaterial and envelopmental (*e.g.*, Man as a spiritual Being is “more-than-Earth” as we envelop Earth as the mineral kingdom within us). These two views—“more-than-human” and “more-than-Earth”—are asymmetrical and incommensurable. Envelopment

5. Korzybski (1958) developed his *Structural Differential* (p. 427) as a pedagogical tool for precisely this work—training the visualisation through which misidentifications are dissolved and the centres brought into harmonious relation.

6. In the esoteric sciences, the gradual cultivation of imbuing warmth into our cool and rational thinking process develops a rose-pink light within our heart centre (Dr Robert J. Gilbert, personal communication, 2010).

7. Steiner (1990) opens by insisting that ‘the generalisation that all matter is a manifestation of the spiritual really says nothing at all; at most it is an easy philosophy for lazy people. All those who seriously strive for knowledge have to study how the world’s specific material phenomena manifest the spiritual’ (p. 32). Truth paradigms respond precisely to that demand.

8. A meta-practice is a spiritual response to the mechanistic way educational research practices have unfolded within the last century (Neufeld, 2009). The operationalisation of two meta-practices are (1) n-valued extensional discernment and (2) the ancient wisdom craft of mindfulness.

is ubiquitous, from our mind controlling our body to a math teacher teaching as an embodiment of a mathematician (rather than just mathematical concepts). Finally, extensionality contrasts to intensionality (with an “s”) as the latter mistakes its verbal map for the territory whilst remaining genuinely convinced of its truth (*re*: the post-truth condition); extensionality orients *evaluation* toward the relational structure of the territory that in Steiner’s terms is “true to reality” and in Korzybski’s (1958) terms is “structural knowledge.”

The Post-Truth Condition

Admittedly, these are not easy concepts nor are they necessarily empirically solvable—hence my articulation against post-truth (as a worldview) and toward truth paradigms is within the *spirit* of educational philosophy. Yet attempting to wrestle with these inter-related concepts and definitions nonetheless poses immediate problems for *any* philosopher of education, for the necessity of going deep into the complexity of a situation⁹ is demanded by the complexity of the idea (*i.e.*, the paradigm or injunction). For our conversation (myself and reader) on transformation (and against post-truth), we have “epistemology,” “depth,” “structure,” “extensional,” “discernment,” “hierarchy,” “envelopment,” all *implicitly* regarding a “paradigm” of “truth.” Logistically, we are dealing with complex *non-linear* situation(s) of truth constrained within linear prose—and to unpack an intuition *explicitly* about epistemological depth (my thesis) within the further constraints of a manuscript can be quite limiting indeed. By “constraints” I mean word limits and the simplification of arguments within a narrow field of interpretation in academia despite the very nature of complexity which demands multiple ideas that *converge*¹⁰ onto a thesis; for me, simplicity (*re*: shallowness) is the fuel for post-truth discourse for the sake of popularisation, and against our basic conceptions of *meaning* and *sense* (of truth).

Following Mario Di Paolantonio (2023), the *education* in educational philosophy is ‘the place *par excellence* in which the transgenerational sensibility—the significance of inheriting and “passing-on” the world—can be most readily felt’ (p. 3). Moreover, educational *philosophy* offers the

possibility of rendering the “transitory” into something durable and enduring [re: invariant] in the world is a fundamental aspect of education’s role in shaping our temporal sensibilities, all the while upholding the prospect of our active involvement in and enrichment of the “meaningfulness” of human coexistence. (p. 3)

What is durable and enduring is not substance, but *structure* (Korzybski, 1958). However, on top of “passing-on” (*e.g.*, tradition, culture, *et alia*), Di Paolantonio was looking for “something more” to pass on whilst preserving our inherited past against presentism and ‘the senselessness of the futurability of the future [that] depresses thinking and sickens the soul’ (p. 49). Di Paolantonio was gravely concerned with the *crisis* of the future amidst interconnected crises of truth, legitimacy, sense, listening, *et alia*, that education ought to provide resolution toward—in particular pathways toward meaning, sense, and hope and away from apathy (*apathēs*), senselessness, and hopelessness. Now, is the post-truth “era”—an era that supposedly marks the end of an era of truth, one that lends to an *infocracy* where no-thing is arrestable, stable, temporal—worthy of “something more?” Do we allow education to “pass-on” its instability (*re*: crookedness)? Not if we wish to *retrieve* truth within the complex and evolving *sense* of the (Platonic) Good.

To begin, I assume that the “crisis” of truth is very real¹¹—and very *felt*. The etymology¹² is important here because the reciprocal relationship between language and ontological structures points toward a

9. The Gesamtausgabe for Steiner alone contains over 350 volumes to unpack karma, reincarnation, spirituality, human wisdom, *et alia*.

10. Such “multiple ideas” is considered, strangely, as *sprawl* by reviewers ... even though “sprawl” implies a *divergence*—notwithstanding avoiding the struggle a reader must go through to connect-the-dots within the interpretative framework of the author.

11. Which to Malpas (1992) was synonymous/engulfed with the “crisis of Europe” and “crisis of Modernity.”

12. For Heidegger (1982), etymology posed ‘a playful thinking that is more compelling than the rigor of science’ (p. 29) which corresponds to an *attitude* found more authentically in metaphysical rather than strictly philosophical inquiry; metaphysicians treat word origins as revelatory of essential meanings rather than contextual or historical curiosities—viewing language as symbolising deeper structures of reality that simultaneously envelop the linguistic expressions through which we articulate them. Cf. Barfield (1928) on etymology as recovery of a participatory relation between word and world; and Steiner (GA 282) on the sound-gesture of language as spiritual participation rather than signification.

conception where words participate in the disclosure of truths beyond representation—a perspective crucial for exploring epistemological depth (and *structure* as a whole). For instance, the etymological nature of crisis, *krínō* (κρίνω) means to “separate” and “decide;” and if we are

to restore to the word its full meaning and original value—[crisis is] to some extent synonymous with the words ‘judgement’ and ‘discrimination’. The phase that can properly be termed ‘critical’ in any order of things is the one immediately preceding a resolution, be this favorable or unfavorable. (Guénon, 2004a, p. 3)

Crisis as *krínō* also reflects the Chinese 危機 meaning *wēi* (“danger”) and *jī* (“chance/opportunity”). The traditional form of *jī* (機) is considerably richer than its simplified counterpart (机), preserving the connection to weaving.¹³ Most relevant here is that *krínō* is cognate to Latin *cernō* which comes to mean “separation” and “dis-*cern*-ment;” the modern English word discernment functions as the discriminative (cognitive) faculty that distinguishes and separates, forming an essential component of the educational doctrine of *understanding*. Having shown the structure of post-truth as etymologically crooked,¹⁴ I now wish to convey how *discerning* is a transcendent experience which I unpack through the theory of envelopment—a perspective entirely absent from contemporary educational discourse (including post-truth discourse) at the expense of its complement (*re*: “development”) ubiquitous in educational philosophy and theory.

My last point here is that many educational theorists who engage with educational philosophy appear comfortable operating within a purported post-truth era or worldview—misrepresenting the seminal 1992 literature from Steve Tesich and Jeff Malpas. I say “misrepresented” ironically as post-truth is defined as a misrepresentation (Nally, 2021) in the socio-cultural sphere alongside a general abandonment of truth in the post-Modern philosophical sphere. Yet neither theorist—Tesich (1992) nor Malpas (1992)—*abandoned* truth as each aimed to *retrieve* (an updated notion of) truth within post-Modernity from the debris of Modernity. I use “appear comfortable” deliberately as, following Cornel Hamm¹⁵ (2005), these theorists¹⁶ rarely examine the underlying semantic, philosophical, and existential foundations of the term or the ontological situation a post-truth era presupposes—a true philosophical *lacūna* or gap in the literature. Personally, I find such a daunting task of unravelling post-truth in the philosophy of education worthy of our times. Moreover, following Guénon (2004a)—who predates the term “post-truth”—there ‘is no reason to submit passively to the disorder and obscurity [of post-truth¹⁷] that seem to be triumphing at the moment’ (p. 6). Just as ‘disorder itself must in the end find its place among the elements of universal order’ (2004b, p. 1), so too must post-truth find itself subsumed within the tradition of truth. If error, therefore, ‘is to be reduced to a *partial* and *distorted* aspect of some truth [e.g., the *crookedness* of post-truth], it is necessary to place oneself *above the level of the contingencies of the domain* to which that disorder and those errors as such belong [emphases added]’ (p. 3). In other words, from a *higher* set of principles which we find, in the West, within perennial and Anthroposophical discourse.

Although Crosswhite (2018) characterised post-truth as an evolved consciousness of *flux* or *physis*—a meta-awareness of “constant change” that builds upon Protagorean sophistry—my perspective focuses on

13. The weaving dimension of 機—preserving the connection between mechanical precision, structural complexity, and the moment of critical juncture—anticipates the primordial loom symbolism developed in the third unpublished paper of the Author’s dissertation. Like discernment, a Heideggerian mindfulness (*Besinnung*) or Eastern mindfulness is also a meta-practice against machination (*Machenschaft*); the warp/weft structure of the loom becomes the governing symbol for the vertical and horizontal dimensions of truth.

14. *cf.* the companion paper.

15. According to Hamm (2005), the educational philosopher asks: ‘(1) What do you mean? (Or, what does it—the word, concept—mean?) (2) How do you know? (Or, what, in general constitute the grounds or kinds of grounds for claiming to know something?) (3) What is presupposed? (Or, what assumptions or presuppositions are you now making or must you make for the proposition you are now asserting?)’ (p. 5).

16. I see no intellectual purpose in specifying names; moreover, the generality of the unexamined position is ubiquitous in educational literature. However, for scholarly purposes, see Parker (2020), Peters and Besley (2019), Peters, McLaren, and Jandrić (2022), Oleksiyenko and Jackson (2021), Ambrosio (2022), and Kester (2019), among others, who posit or operate within an assumed post-truth era or worldview without interrogating the foundations of the term; a more comprehensive situating of these positions is conducted in the companion paper published in this issue.

17. Technically of the “crisis of Modernity” which Malpas (1992) equated to a “crisis of truth” (which I am sure Guénon would essentially agree). Today, our inheritance of the crisis of Modernity has left us with the crook of post-Modernity (i.e., post-truth); hence my insertion is warranted.

how modern thought—as Guénon (2004b) detailed—remains unaware of its imprisonment within the *level* of contingency, severed from transcendent principles that would give contingent phenomena intelligible meaning. Guénon (2004a) had already diagnosed the post-truth condition or “confusion” almost a *century* ago as regards the notion of stability:

there is an exact correspondence between a world where everything seems to be in a state of mere ‘becoming’, leaving no place for the changeless and the permanent, and the state of mind of men [sic] who find all reality in this ‘becoming’, thus implicitly denying true knowledge as well as the object of that knowledge, namely transcendent and universal principles. (p. 39)

Here I enter into the *spirit* of educational metaphysics (literally *meta-physis* or beyond time/space/Nature), which I like to symbolise as a *thalweg*¹⁸—the deepest, densest, thereby slowest, current of a river—indifferent to the popularity of ideas. While critiquing post-truth, though rare, is within the realms of philosophy, *contextualising* its existence is even more urgent (and profound), to counteract its apparent traction within the disorder of our times. Evidently, to *un-fold/en-fold* my position, I follow the advice of Paul Standish (2010) who concluded that a good philosophical composer will hold the reader in suspense for much of the document and show their full hand only at the end to announce their conclusion(s) more convincingly.

My *focus* here will be on the paradox in contemporary educational philosophy that manifests in the celebration of transformation alongside the rejection of transcendence—which eventually relates back to discernment. The resulting contradiction enables post-truth discourse to flourish within flattened epistemological/philosophical landscapes. I propose epistemological depth as a distinct paradigm of truth acquisition through progressive envelopment—wherein knowing apprehends “truth” asymmetrically (from “whole” to “partial” to “higher”); an asymmetric approach, where discernment subsumes rather than contrasts prior understanding, overcomes Crosswhite’s post-truth condition where symmetric, flattened, and arbitrary *logoi* are endlessly compared. By reconceptualising discernment as an envelopmental practice rather than a discriminatory one (*i.e.*, from $A \rightarrow \bar{A}$), epistemological depth recovers the Platonic dimension of truth as *apprehended* through contemplation (Heidegger, 1967), preserves the Taylorian emphasis on truth as *articulated* through meaningful expression (Taylor, 2001, 2003), and embraces the Varelian understanding of truth as *embodied* or enacted through lived experience (Varela et al, 2016)—thus offering an integrative framework to educational philosophy¹⁹ that honours spiritual or intuitive dimensions of knowing. To unpack these holonic, systemic, and interrelated concepts, I explore the paradox and *contextualise* the existence of post-truth through three questions:

1. Can the concept of transcendence be revisited in educational theory in light of new details?
2. Does transformation—ubiquitous in educational literature—differ fundamentally to transcendence? Put succinctly: can you have transformation *without* transcendence (or hierarchy)?
3. How does discernment relate to truth, hierarchy, expertise, and measure (*homo mensura*)?

These three questions—the first being the densest—frame my inquiry into epistemological depth as a constructive response to the philosophical *lacuna* that has enabled post-truth discourse to flourish. Underlying all three questions is a shift in logical orientation that the paper presupposes throughout—from Aristotelian to non-Aristotelian (\bar{A}). For Korzybski (1958), the Aristotelian system is characterised by two-valued, intensional, either-or orientations: the Aristotelian system deals in kind rather than degree, in binary designation rather than structural relationship, and in verbal definition rather than the living complexity of fact. Such a system, adequate at the gross level of daily life, becomes epistemologically insufficient wherever truth, transformation, and discernment admit of degree, order, and envelopmental structure rather than binary demarcation. A non-Aristotelian (\bar{A}) system, by contrast, is infinite-valued, extensional, and process-oriented—orienting evaluation toward the relational structure of the territory rather than the verbal map through which the territory is represented (Korzybski, 1958); epistemological depth, as a truth paradigm, is

18. See also Karrow and Harvey (2024) who had a parallel inspiration for environmental education (EE).

19. Even though I have studied Anthroposophy for two decades, my aim here is not to present an anthroposophical perspective, rather, to present a potential bridge from educational philosophy to the human wisdom Steiner attempted to bring out in our world soul (*Weltseele*).

precisely such an \bar{A} orientation: the ordered, envelopmental process through which discernment progressively traverses from two-valued designation toward the multi-ordinal complexity that living truth demands. And by following the many aforementioned mentors/theorists, including Ilya Prigogine (1997), what I am attempting to articulate is not certainty, but simply a slice of certainty within a greater uncertain worldview.

Truth-as-Transcendence in Light of New Details

The first question—whether transcendence can be revisited in educational theory—requires examining the inherited philosophical understanding of *truth-as-transcendence* through which epistemological depth, as a truth paradigm, must be situated. Our inherited notion of truth-as-transcendence comes through a rich philosophical heritage: initially shrouded in mystery as regards its (1) metaphysical connection with the Platonic “Real;” then through its relationship with the (2) Cartesian *pseudo*-metaphysical²⁰ “problem of the external world;” and finally toward (3) phenomenology and the eventual problematisation of transcendence—alongside the notion of a “two world theory”—in modern philosophical scholarship (Heidegger, 1967; Malpas, 1992). For instance, Heidegger (1967) was perhaps the first to recognise the Cartesian problem of *Aussenwelt* (“external world”) as a phantom problem.²¹ The “problem of the external world” for Heidegger was a phantom question precisely because the “problem” was informed by a deficient conceptual understanding of “being” and “world.” For there to be Being, there must equally be a world, hence Being-in-the-world. Similarly, the *Heideggerian* Malpas (1992) argued that the notion of ‘transcendence exclusivity’ (p. 297) as regards truth (*i.e.*, “truth-as-transcendence”) was ‘mistaken’ (p. 297); ‘*truth as a relation which takes our speaking beyond the human into a unique reality exterior to us was a notion that had to be relinquished*’ (p. 297). Despite Malpas introducing the concept of post-truth back in 1992—merely as a playful alliteration—Malpas was dedicated to *retrieving* an updated notion of truth—that “something more” to continue the truth tradition—and pointed precisely to Martin Heidegger as the one *ordained* to retrieve truth from various crises (truth, Modernity, and Europe). Malpas did offer his own solution(s)—that truth would be found within *immanence* or a *ground*, arising through dialogue, and situated within an assumed unity (*re*: unicity) that proposes ‘the possibility of reconstituting meaning [insofar as] it lies ultimately in the unity of truth itself’ (p. 298). With respect to *linguaging*, the idea of *truth* ($\alpha\lambda\eta\theta\epsilon\iota\alpha$) in Greek, *alétheia* was to Heidegger disclosure or unconcealment, and to Malpas, *alétheia* ‘is neither a matter of transcendent speaking nor a product of human manufacture. In this sense the “event” of truth is something over which we can exercise no control and which will always remain opaque’ (p. 301). Moreover, notions of truth, grounded in the event which discerns “sameness and difference” (*re*: *distinction*) in the engagement, is equally *indeterminate*. When I read Malpas, I am transported *not* into an illegitimate worldview or era of post-truth, but a legitimate worldview of deep ecological distinctions and discernment as regards truth (see Figures 2 and 3); the humanness of languaging, understanding, and reflection correspond to an interconnected and ecological worldview dedicated to a preservation of truth-as-retrieval. Without being prescriptive, Malpas offered contours of a theory of truth: one ‘which recognises differentiation and contingency, and yet still allows the possibility of engagement and dialogue’ (p. 303). In other words, a *truth paradigm*.

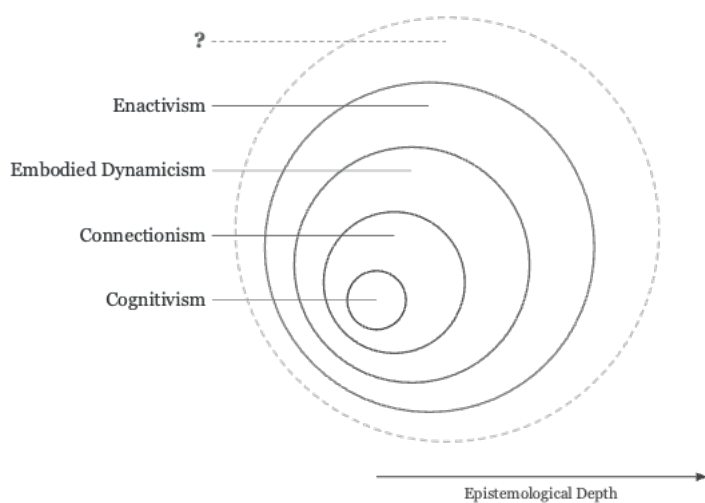
As an aside, the parallel with the Santiago Theory of Cognition is striking and merits attention. Republished in the same year, Maturana and Varela (1992) theorised, on the basis of biology, that unities are brought forth by any implicit or explicit *distinctions* of cognition—strictly through our co-participation of the encounter. Such encounters are not only the basis of our acts in language that bring forth *a* world—as opposed to *the* world—but also ‘in the final analysis, the groundwork of all ethics as a reflection on the legitimacy of the presence of others’ (p. 247). These seemingly disparate lineages of 1992—one rooted in the biological basis of knowledge and the other from an educational philosophy of knowledge—are analogous, for what is ‘transcendence exclusivity’ to Malpas is *commensurate* to ‘environmentally determined’ (to the perturbed agent) to Maturana and Varela; each problematised a demarcated *Other*, beyond our *existing*, and

20. Often confused as metaphysics as modern philosophers tend to conflate *metaphysical realism*—modern Cartesian science accompanied by modern philosophy—with *traditional metaphysics*—perennial philosophy (*sophia perennis*) as regards pure spirituality or true intellectuality. To my way of understanding, Anthroposophy is based upon the latter and updated for our times.

21. *cf.* Heidegger (1967) *Being and Time* (SZ §43, 224–252).

playing the role of our *Fates*. These demarcations of organism-environment and truth-transcendence—which already in 1933 Korzybski (1958) ascribed to an Aristotelian worldview—have led (scientific) philosophers to study and distinguish *structure* (or pattern/organisation) from *substance* (Capra, 1996). Such structural or organisational implications have shifted (*re: implicated*) educational theories of social constructivism and social constructionism as operating within inadequate assumptions—‘a disembodied observer or of a dis-worlded mind’ (Varela et al., 2016, p. 4) or ignoring ‘the messier and more demanding realms of morality, ethics, identity, and being-ontology’ (Davis, 1996, p. 234) in educational theory and philosophy. For instance, the co-participatory understanding within the Santiago Theory resonates with Malpas’ critique of social constructivism through his emphasis on underlying structure as regards *place*. The structural nature of place, for Malpas (2018), is prior to, and constitutive of, both subjectivity and objectivity—‘it is only within such a place that subjectivity—or, more generally, the structure in which subject and object both appear—is possible’ (p. 35). Malpas rejects social constructivist accounts precisely because they miss the fundamental structural relationship: ‘the social does not exist prior to place... and so the social cannot be that out of which, or solely by means of which, place is “constructed”’ (p. 35). The structural priority in Malpas’ thinking aligns with enactive cognition’s refusal to grant primacy to either organism or environment (Varela et al., 2016). Similarly, to Korzybski (1958), the *non-Aristotelian* (Á) perspective ‘establishes structure as the only possible content of knowledge’ (p. 9) that penetrates all aspects of existence, from the empirical world, to language, to our very nervous system—a true psychophysiological system of logic which abandons the *is* of identity²² and the law of *excluded third* for the purpose of a science of sanity.

Figure 1
Envelopmental Symbolism

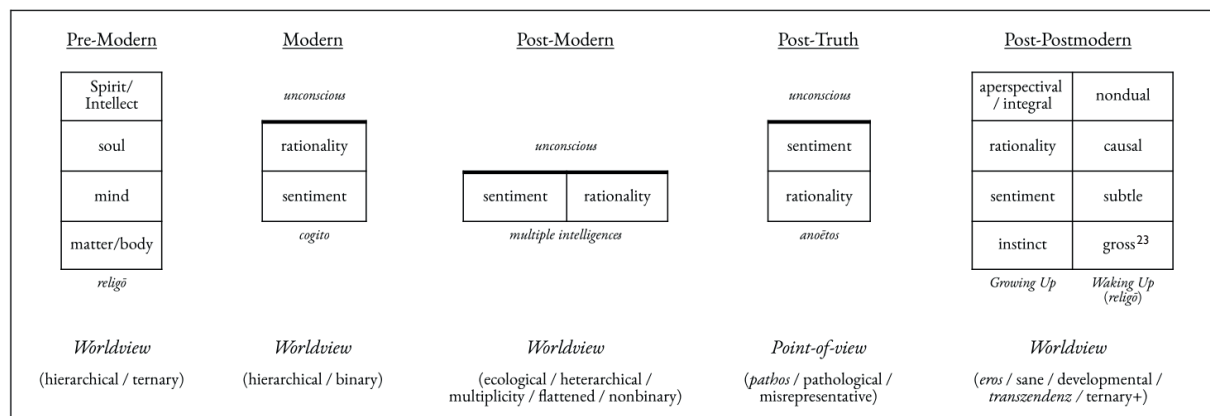


Note. New theories as injunctions (*re: “paradigms”*) are envelopmental through acts of discernment and higher unicities that harmonise competing logoi. The envelopmental structure can be applied ubiquitously from mathematics teaching to Steiner’s (1994, G9) “development” or cultivation (*Ausarbeitung*) of Man through Earth incarnations.

22. *cf. Science and Sanity* (Korzybski, 1958). I take for granted the premise that non-Aristotelian systems abandons the *is* of identity toward the intentional and conscious use of the multiordinality of natural language. I do not have the space to unpack the premise more fully here, however, for educational purposes, consider when we embrace the “*is*” of identity the tendency is to speak *sub specie aeternitatis* (Latin for “in the aspect of eternity”) and is often unconscious and lacks contextual specificity (*re: decontextualised*), hence, under greater scrutiny, false to facts. Conversely, by abandoning the law of identity, we embrace intentionality in language, meaning, semantics, and participate in the structure of both language and our own nervous system. Here I embrace multiordinality as that “something more” to pass on, which is what makes discernment as a transcendent experience even possible—and for the teacher in their vocation to query the student: what do you *mean*?

The educational theory of *enaction* is apropos from Varela et al. (2016). In short, the enactive approach represents a significant advancement in epistemological frameworks, completing an evolutionary progression that Thompson (2007) traced from cognitivism through connectionism and embodied dynamism to enaction. Where cognitivism treated mind as computational symbol processing and connectionism as emergent patterns in neural networks, embodied dynamism began to situate cognition in body-world interactions. Enaction transcends/envelops all these predecessors via an *injunction*—hence truth *paradigm*—by recognising cognition as fundamentally participatory—*neither* representing a pre-given external reality (cognitivism) *nor* emerging from neural architecture (connectionism), nor simply residing in body-environment dynamics (embodied dynamism), but actively bringing forth a world through structural coupling. The enactive understanding of cognition as world-constituting through participation—to use Heideggerian language, Being-in-*a*-world—aligns with my notion of epistemological depth; both approaches recognise knowing as an ordered process of increasing discernment that becomes progressively more encompassing while remaining open to further evolution and context-dependent application.

Figure 2
Conceptualising Perspectives of World-views and Point-of-view



Note. Columns three (Post-Modern) and four (Post-Truth) remain wedded to a notion of soul (ψυχή) of the Cartesian *cogito*—though not wedded to its dualism. Modern philosophy is stuck between these two columns. The bold line represents a conceptual limit—beyond which exists the unconscious or what Steiner (1990, GA 16/17) would call *thresholds*.²⁴ These conceptual limits result in deficient conceptual spaces whose remedy was the life work of Martin Heidegger and Alfred Korzybski. The concept of Intellect can be subdivided in many ways depending on doctrinal or integral teaching(s). The loss of *true intellectuality* (Plato’s Intellect) which is synonymous with *pure spirituality* ‘has made possible two errors [in modern times] which, although seemingly opposed, are in reality correlative and complementary: rationalism and sentimentalism’ (Guénon, 1995, p. 1). When hierarchy collapsed to a network of intelligences, and Spirit became confused with soul, and later soul with mind, and when spirituality came to be denied or wholly ignored, ‘as has been the case since Descartes, the logical end was positivism and agnosticism’ (p. 1) which found its climax in Modernity. Finally, the *religō* of Pre-Modern is iteratively updated as the *Waking Up* in Post-Postmodern. The reason Post-Truth is a *point-of-view* rather than a world-view is that the inversion of orders cannot be conceptually extracted from subsets of post-Postmodernity whereas the Modern world-view *can*, as can the Post-Modern world given that it is simply a flatland ontology, with intuition being beside rationality (if I had the extra space) but simply absorbed in the concept of multiple intelligences.

The problem of *substance*—as distinct from an internal, autonomous, and dynamically changing *pattern* or *structure* whose ‘ontogenic transformation of a unity ceases only with its dis-integration’ (Maturana &

23. I could also use Steiner’s fourfold nature of physical, etheric, astral, and Ego here.

24. I allude to doctrinal teachings on the unconscious as higher than our conscious experience toward the *supra*-conscious, such as deep sleep or as Steiner states, the miniature death we experience each night when the Ego and astral undergo a *exosomatosis*, and *not* (1) the collective unconscious of Jung which would be conceptually situated *below* conscious experience, and thus attributable to the sub-conscious; or (2) the medical term unconscious from the physical sciences which would indicate a coma.


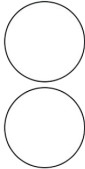
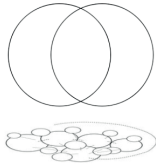
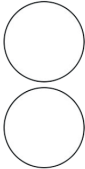

Varela, 1992, p. 74)—lies in the continuum of existence (*i.e.*, there exists no true vacuum). Whether we find problematical “Being and world” or “mind and body” or “organism and environment” or even “truth and transcendence” ... the structural concept of the substantive problem is the same: two demarcated circles (see “Modern” in Figure 3). However, truth-*as*-transcendence presents a subtle paradox within philosophical discourse. While Heidegger maintained healthy skepticism toward the cultural and philosophical baggage the term “transcendence” had accumulated in modern philosophy—particularly the implications of a “two-world theory”—Heidegger never abandoned the concept of truth-*as-transzendenz* in his work.²⁵ According to Moran (2014), Heidegger’s intellectual struggle centred on retaining transcendence despite new philosophical developments of phenomenology and existentialism, leading Heidegger to concepts like “finite transcendence” (*endliche Transzendenz*), “projection” (*Entwurf*), and “thrownness” (*Geworfenheit*) to articulate our relationship to Reality in light of new details. Meanwhile, Malpas explicitly rejected truth-*as*-transcendence while simultaneously looking to Heidegger for philosophical salvation in retrieving an updated notion of truth. Such an apparent contradiction raises essential questions: how can Malpas reject what Heidegger affirms, yet still look to Heidegger as the solution? What higher perspective might resolve these seemingly incompatible positions (*re*: competing logoi)?

The philosophical tension between Malpas and Heidegger—often unnoticed—illuminates the limitations of classical logic when addressing nuanced philosophical concepts. In classical Boolean logic, with adherence to the law of excluded third, “truth-*as*-transcendence” must be either true or false—classical Aristotelian logic permits no middle ground. As an aside, intuitionistic logic, formalised through Heyting algebra, suspends the rigid binary by allowing propositions to exist in states that are neither proven true nor proven false (Hamkins, 2020). Intuitionistic logic permits philosophers to withhold judgment until sufficient conceptual construction or verification occurs, recognising propositions like “truth-*as*-transcendence” may not yet be well-formed enough to assign definitive truth values. The process of construction in intuitionistic logic—distinct from social constructivism’s relativistic implications—involves the precise articulation and building of philosophical concepts until their verification conditions become clear. Through discernment, construction emerges, revealing that what appears contradictory in classical logic may simply represent undiscerned complexity awaiting proper articulation and disclosure.

The resolution to the paradox becomes elegantly apparent through discernment and envelopment: what Malpas rejected is not identical to what Heidegger affirmed ... despite sharing the same label. When extracting the hidden semantics of each position, we find that Malpas contested “truth-*{exclusivity}*-*as*-*{infinite}*-transcendence”—a conception of truth as utterly external and unreachable—while Heidegger affirmed “truth-*{implicitly}*-*as*-*{finite}*-transcendence—truth as disclosure within human finitude. Both shorten to “truth-*as*-transcendence” in conventional discourse whose difference remains concealed without proper discernment. Such discernment reveals a hierarchical, incommensurate, and envelopmental relationship between logical frameworks: as philosophical discernment becomes more precise, classical logic becomes increasingly applicable, though Boolean logic remains a *subset* of the more comprehensive Heyting logic that warrant epistemological conditions. Again, the intuitionistic approach acknowledges that philosophical concepts like “truth-*as*-transcendence” cannot be meaningfully assigned truth values until their verification conditions are adequately constructed. Where classical logic demands immediate designation as either true or false, intuitionistic logic creates space for the developing understanding that characterises genuine philosophical inquiry. The distinction parallels the deeper epistemological insight that knowledge emerges not through binary judgments but through progressive discernment that reveals increasingly nuanced structures of understanding. The commonality between Malpas and Heidegger, then, becomes clear: both thinkers recognised that the Greek concept of *alétheia* had been historically captured—or misinterpreted—within a two-valued Aristotelian logic system that imposed a “two-world theory” upon truth.

25. Even in Heidegger’s latter writings after Heidegger’s famous turn (*Kehre*) away from the limits of modern philosophy.

Figure 3
Conceptions of the Human Condition as regards Transcendence throughout the Eras.²⁶

Aristotelian World-Views (A)		\bar{A}	A	\bar{A}
Pre-Modern	Modern	Post-Modern	Post-Truth	Post-Postmodern
				
<i>Metaphysical</i> The dot (<i>spirit</i>) is larger than the circumference (<i>matter</i>) through inverted geometrical symbolism	<i>pseudo-Metaphysical</i> The problem of the external world	<i>Ecological</i> Horizon(t)al; the hard problem of consciousness; the web-of-life; the death of metaphysics	<i>Inverted Modern</i> An <i>illegitimate</i> caricature and counter-truth of Modernity	<i>Envelopmental/Transformative</i> Epistemological depth as a process of discernment; truth paradigms; the <i>re</i> -birth of metaphysics

Note. The key to de-mystifying truth-as-transcendence lies in disclosing its semantic complexity. The Pre-Modern metaphysical worldview depicts spirit (dot) as larger than matter (circumference), suggesting transcendence as inherent within immanence. The pseudo-Metaphysical worldview creates the artificial “problem of the external world” through binary separation, while the Post-Modern ecological view attempts holism and nested systems but leaves us with the “hard problem of consciousness” and an ontological flatland. Heidegger, unsurprisingly, even played with a notion of transcendence that was temporal and ‘horizonal’ (Moran, 2014, p. 499) (see “Post-Modern” in Figure 2). The Post-Truth column represents an illegitimate inversion of Modern hierarchies, a caricature that merely flips binaries without transcending them. In contrast, the Post-Postmodern envelopmental approach shows a series of concentric circles—visually representing how higher orders of understanding subsume and contextualise rather than erase prior understandings. The envelopmental structure resolves both the Modern problem of external reality and the Post-Modern struggle with consciousness by recognising that each “level” of understanding is structurally contained within more comprehensive levels. Through the structured process of discernment, truth emerges not as externally transcendent nor as merely immanent, but through an ordered relationship of envelopment that preserves distinctions while revealing their partialities and interconnections. Finally, the envelopmental model, based upon *depth*, is not the same as the ecological model of nested systems which is based upon *span*; hence epistemological *depth*.

The purpose of discernment, envelopment, and structure has profound implications for truth paradigms given our human finitude. When I examine the current philosophical landscape, I encounter three concerning patterns: first, as Korzybski (1958) detailed, the persistent gravitation toward the *is* of identity remains demonstrably false to empirical facts—language and reality simply do not operate through rigid identification and absolutes.²⁷ Second, and connected to the first, the constraints of boolean (Aristotelian) logic systematically arrest both cognitive development and emotional maturation by forcing complex phenomena into simplistic binary categories—perpetuating post-truth discourse. As Korzybski detailed from a semantic, psychophysiological, ontological, and structural point of view the post-truth condition (*also*) almost a century prior:

the stronger the structural ‘belief’ in the ‘truth’ of the representation, or, in other words, the more we identify the higher order abstractions [e.g., rational] with the lower [e.g., sentimental], which, in fact, are different, the more dangerous becomes the ‘emotional’ tension in the form of unjustified *evaluation*, which, ultimately, must involve *delusional* [misrepresentational] factors, no matter how slight, and result in semantic disturbances. (p. 198)

26. Alfred Korzybski (1958) in advancing *General Semantics* as regards non-Aristotelian systems, is *apropos*: (i) like Heidegger, Korzybski was a European scientific philosopher amidst the same crises that befell Europe; (ii) both men, in dealing with these crises (of war), attempted to re-define what it meant to be an educated person through re-defining what it meant to be human; (iii) Korzybski aimed to approach education through new structural “ways of thinking” whereas Heidegger was concerned with how a “matter of thinking” can be re-evaluated as regards the philosophy or question of Being (*Seinsphilosophie / Seinsfrage*).

27. Although one’s ontology certainly could be stuck or arrested within absolutist language which is generally the healthy starting point of uncovering the truth of the situation through mediated conversation.

Third, and perhaps most concerning, Western philosophical discourse has progressively abandoned the concept of transcendence (and metaphysics, see Figure 4)—a trend that extends well beyond Malpas. The wholesale rejection has created a philosophical environment wherein contemporary discourse struggles to establish the orienting principles²⁸ needed to effectively challenge post-truth rhetoric. Without acknowledging transcendent dimensions of understanding (*e.g.*, my reconceptualisation of discernment as a meta-practice in \tilde{A}), philosophers of education operate within an epistemological framework that limits their capacity to articulate alternatives to (1) post-truth—the lament of Crosswhite (2018)—and (2) expertise—the lament of Clark (2019); hence the call for *non*-post-truths by Clark. The separation of philosophy from metaphysics—or rationality from spiritual knowing—has fostered an intellectual landscape where transcendence appears incoherent and/or irrelevant, rather than essential to grappling with the finitude of the human condition (*e.g.*, through mindfulness, contemplation, or Steiner’s Imagination, Inspiration, and Intuition). By reorienting discernment from a discriminatory “A” practice to an envelopmental “ \tilde{A} ” one—where higher orders of understanding subsume rather than erase prior perspectives—philosophers (and teachers) can create space for retrieving truth-as-transcendence within contemporary (and classroom) discourse without sacrificing intellectual rigour. The envelopmental approach to discernment acknowledges that many philosophical concepts exist in states requiring further construction and verification—not because these concepts lack meaning, but because these concepts represent the leading edge of human understanding still being articulated through the ongoing process of discernment and contemplation. One such leading edge is *transformation* where the process of becoming itself requires an intuitionistic logic that can hold both what is and what is not yet in proper discernment of terminology.

Retrieving the Sacrosanct Nature of Transformation in Educational Philosophy and Theory

The second question—whether authentic transformation is possible without transcendence or hierarchy—is addressed through both etymological and philosophical roots. Transformation has both ecclesiastical roots (*trānsfōrmātiō*) and metaphysical roots (*μεταμόρφωσις*, *metamórhōsis*). While scientism presumes mind manifest as a *metamórhōsis*—or *epi*-phenomenon—of matter (an ontologically insufficient reduction), scientific investigation recognises transformation across social-humanistic and rational-empirical domains—symbolising *metamórhōsis* as the butterfly hatching from the cocoon or the frog morphing beyond the larval (tadpole) stage. Traditional sciences²⁹ comprehend transformation as “passage beyond form”—transcendence of physical limitations (Guénon, 2004a). *Metamórhōsis* conceptually parallels *μετεμψύχωσις* (*metempsychōsis*; transmigration of soul). The etymological distinction between *μορφή* (*morphē*, “form” from PIE *mer-/mor-* “to gleam, shine”) and *ψυχή* (*psychē*, “soul³⁰” from PIE *bhes-/bheu-* “to breathe, blow” denoting vital principle and conscious awareness) reflects the ontological hierarchy distinguishing visible form from invisible essence-Being—a fundamental dimension of ontological depth. Pythagorean and Platonic traditions prioritised *metempsychōsis* over corporeal *metamórhōsis*, establishing metaphysical precedence that structured ancient educational praxis³¹ (Coomaraswamy, 1987). Both concepts maintain identity

28. Current literature in educational philosophy is connecting our relationship to post-truth with Hannah Arendt and her notion of making *dóxa* (δόξα) transparent to oneself and others. However, the *contextualisation* of post-truth as the abandonment of principles/transcendence is absent. Yet even this lack of context has its truth within a greater context (*i.e.*, a flatland); also, the very notion of attributing nuance to post-truth to Arendt is transcendently “in the air” so to speak (*i.e.*, popular)—a scope of disclosure beyond the manuscript that I mention only in passing.

29. Some examples are sacred science, *sophia perennis*, perennial philosophy, metaphysics, and so on, with Anthroposophy as a modern derivative.

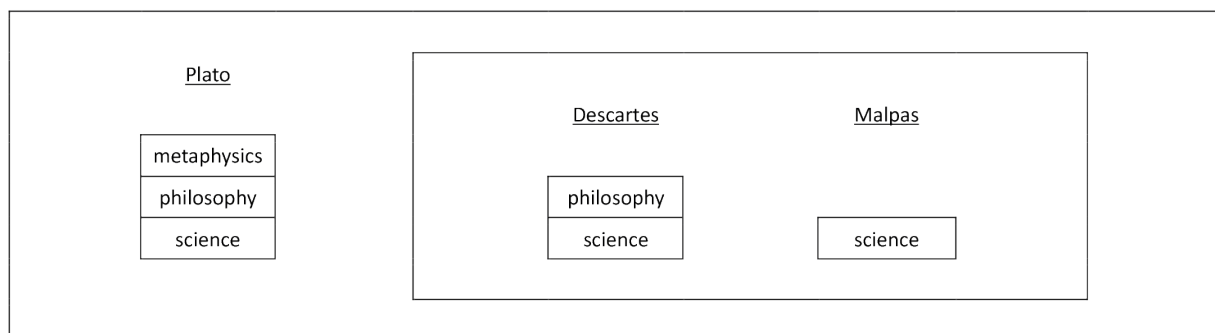
30. Conceptually the astral form of the fourfold Human Being.

31. It is prudent to understand what I mean by “praxis” here. From a critical pedagogical angle, *praxis* generally lends to transformation or emancipation. However, from a deep ecological perspective, Chet Bowers (2010) argued that ‘the universal [uniform] goal of educating each generation to emancipate themselves from the influences of previous generations’ (p. 4) provides a ‘legitimacy to a totalizing way of thinking that represents all customs (traditions) as oppressive and the source of injustice’ (p. 5). When progress equates to change, ‘the assumption ... leads to viewing the intergenerational knowledge and networks of mutual aid as a necessary part of becoming modern’ (p. 5). From the perspective of Di Paolantonio (2023), the anti-critical view of Bowers *eco-justice* is justified, as education ceases to “pass on” for the sole aim of “something more.” So much for the modern discernment, the traditional discernment acknowledges that, to Aristotle, *prāxis* (πράξις) was the *lowest* order of human activity, with production or *poiesis* (ποίησις) as the middle order, and contemplation or *theoria* (θεωρία) as the highest order of human activity.

through transformation: metamórphōsis preserves essence despite formal alteration; metempsychōsis preserves soul-identity across varied embodiments. Mystery traditions³² operationalised these principles pedagogically, employing ritual death-rebirth symbolism to facilitate ontological transformation. The etymology suggests traditional education's central concern was with alchemical metamórphōsis rather than informational acquisition—a transformative dimension of ontological depth largely abandoned in contemporary educational paradigms privileging information over formation. As an aside, from a strictly educational philosophical perspective, and within an infocracy, the crisis of the future is very much linked to the crisis of self-formation (Di Paolantonio, 2023).

Figure 4

Fractal Discernment into the Flattening of the World



Note. According to Guénon (2004a), it was ‘in the nineteenth century that men [*sic*] began to glory in their ignorance—for to proclaim oneself an agnostic means nothing else—and claimed to deny to others any knowledge to which they had no access themselves; and this marked yet one more stage in the intellectual [metaphysical] decline of the West’ (p. 45). The result of the collapse of metaphysics is really the collapse of the Universal to the Individual, then further still to the extension of the Individual (general) or even further down to the particular or “collective” which is the realm of empiricism (2004b); to Heidegger (1967), a flattening of *Dasein* to the zoological (ζῷον). The acquisition of knowledge, ‘by means of these successive degradations, [reduces] all things to the level of sensory knowledge [αἰσθησις], which many indeed regard as the only kind of knowledge possible’ (2004e, p. 26). Interestingly, sense-perception (*aísthēsis*) for Plato was the shadows in the Cave Allegory. The smaller rectangle, as self-similar to the larger rectangle, is the inferred interpretative frame of Malpas.

In order to discern transformation, we must grasp the contextual tension between metaphysics and modern philosophy. According to Guénon (1991), in its primordial form, *philosophy* is branch of metaphysics—etymologically and literally “the love of wisdom” and thus not wisdom itself (see “Pre-Modern” in Figures 2 and 3; “Plato” in Figure 4). Today, metaphysics is either understood as metaphysical realism from a scientific point of view, or a contemplative branch of philosophy³³ (Figure 4, “Descartes”). When Heidegger(ians) criticise metaphysics, they tend to criticise an undiscerned *Cartesian* form of metaphysics. It was Descartes, after all, that ‘limited intelligence to reason [and] granted to what he thought might be called “metaphysics” the mere function of serving as a basis for physics ... the final limit of human knowledge’ (Guénon, 2004a, pp. 11-12). The flattening of intelligence to reason—or metaphysics to philosophy—strains the notion of truth to anti-transcendental or anti-hierarchical positions. Ironically, the context we find Malpas (1992) in is his lament of positioning truth, unresolved, in the ‘*reduction of the philosophical to the scientific* [emphasis mine]’ (p. 294) (see Figure 4).

Arguably, the last two decades have shown two overarching trends in educational literature: (i) the rise of “transformation;” and (ii) the critique, decline, and dismantling of “hierarchy.” These two educational trends are ubiquitous and display a negative correlation amongst theorists/institutions promoting transformation in sharp *increase*, and support for hierarchy in sharp *decrease*. Put another way, there is a *positive* correlation

32. The Eleusinian mysteries exemplified these approaches through experiential education enacting cosmological dramas.

33. Hence why many interpreters of Rudolf Steiner take his sacred science of Anthroposophia (“human wisdom”) as merely philosophical. The same can be said of Daoism of the East.

in educational literature between transformation and *an-archy*—literal “negation of hierarchy” or “absence of principle.” And without guiding principles, and within a flattened ontology and worldview, the concept of post-truth arises much like the phantom problem noticed by Heidegger. Yet, when we consider literature from the hard sciences, there is neither interest in dismantling hierarchy, nor dwindling of its definitional and conceptual rigour. One would comment that mathematicians and hard scientists, including ecologists, are quite comfortable with the term. As Wilber (2009) noted,

it is ironic, to say the least, that the social champions of the web of life deny hierarchy in any form while the sciences of the web of life insist upon it. And it is doubly ironic that the former often point to the latter for support (e.g., “The new physics supports the equalitarian [heterarchical] web of life”). (p. 31)

Thus, to Wilber, the idea of *wholeness* is synonymous with *hierarchy* insofar as you cannot have wholeness without there being an organisational *structure* of its parts; a web is not a strand, and without a higher *principle* of organisation, the mutual network of strands will never become *integrated* into a web. However, hierarchy as a “higher principle” seems distant to an implication of “transgression,” “imbalanced power dynamics,” “alienation of students or subordinates,” and so on, in critical theory discourse. The issue is a lack of discernment. Here Wilber discerned between what is *self-adaptation* (heterarchical growth; going beyond), and *self-transcendence* (hierarchical growth; also a going beyond) used in scientific nomenclature—in particular the hard sciences. The problem in the social-humanistic sciences is that if semantically “going beyond” = “transformative learning” we have an ambiguous (re: undiscerned) statement.

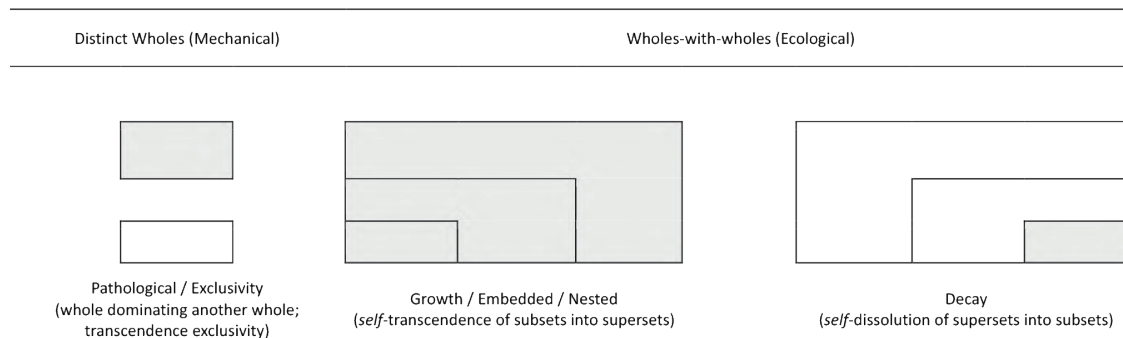
For instance, to Plato and the traditional notion of transformative learning, metamórfhōsis was internal and alchemical—found through the process of *philosophía* (φιλοσοφία; “lover of wisdom”) so that the *philósophos* (φιλόσοφος; “philosopher”) could become a *sophós* (σοφός; sage or skilled). The source of wisdom was beyond the rational and discursive mind; the path was laid out in the *Republic* through the symbolism of the Cave and the Golden Ratio of the Divided Line. Such an exiting (through transformation) of the tenebrous pole was a transformative learning akin to a “remembering.” As Coomaraswamy (1987) noted, ‘what we call “learning” is really a “remembering” and that our “knowledge” is by participation in the Omniscience of an immanent spiritual principle’ (p. 49). In remembering, the concept of Eastern mindfulness (*sati*) is foundational for ‘the beginning of virtually all paths of contemplation, the aim of which is the remembering that one’s true nature is Buddha-nature’ (Wilber, 2009, p. 339). Thus, “sati” resembles Platonic reminiscence or *anámnēsis* (ἀνάμνησις)—not a total *sum* of learning (*i.e.*, modern education)—in particular the accumulation of lessons, data, or information), but ‘on the contrary, an “awakening” of the latent possibilities that the being carries in itself’ (Guénon, 2004b, p. 59). All these metaphysical ideas are captured in what Wilber (2017) called Waking Up whose ontological stages have been largely structured millennia ago: *e.g.*, {matter, body, mind, soul, Spirit} of the Platonic-Plotinus lineage (Figure 2) or {physical, etheric, astral, Ego} of Anthroposophical lineage, and comprise what I have understood as *ontological depth*.

From the socio-educative point of view, transformative learning ‘is learning that transforms problematic frames of reference—sets of fixed assumptions and expectations (habits of mind, meaning perspectives, mindsets—to make them more inclusive, discriminating, open, reflective, and emotionally able to change’ (Mezirow, 2003, p. 58). Mezirow (correctly in my view) makes these changes of frames asymmetrical, noting that ‘such frames of reference are better than others because they are more likely to generate beliefs and opinions that will prove more true or justified to *guide action* [emphasis mine]’ (p. 58-9). These asymmetrical referential frames are ordered or measured as *better* through discernment and comprise what I have understood as the complement of ontological depth (re: epistemological depth) with its correlate of Growing Up. However, with discernment in mind, the notion of transformative learning largely remains ambiguous/undiscerned with respect to a *change* in *self-adaptation* or a *change* in *self-transcendence* (see Table 1). Again, according to Wilber (2009), the majority of “transformations” or transformative learning (around 90%) result in self-adaptation, *not* self-transcendence; the error is simply due to

self-adaptation and self-transcendence [being used] interchangeably, because both embody a type of “going beyond.” But apart from that similarity, the two are different in degree and in kind. In self-adaptation or communion, one finds oneself to be part of a larger whole; in self-transformation one becomes a new whole, which has its own new forms of agency (relative autonomy) and communion. (p. 50)

The socio-educative sphere will likely reject scientific nomenclature on political and rhetorical grounds. Marketing materials for higher educational institutions (HEIs) proudly declare they “transform their students”—a far more enticing promise than the more accurate *adapt their students*, though the latter is true to reality +/- 90 per cent of cases.

Figure 5
Conceptualising Perspectives of Finite Transcendence



Note. I appreciate hierarchy as *embeddedness* or *holarchy* deriving from what Arthuer Koestler termed a *holon*. The perceptual and perspectival shift starts from seeing a summation of distinct wholes—whether horizontal as a community or vertical as a pathology—to recognising wholes-*within*-wholes—whether as nested systems ecologically, or with hidden depths disclosed as in spiritually. The transcendence of worldviews (Weltanschauung) is also subject to organisations of hierarchical growth (e.g., ego → eco → national → global → galactic; though these are based upon *span* rather than *depth*). The transference of the Mechanical to the Ecological perspective within our consciousness implies a greater *degree* of epistemological *depth*—even if that depth is based upon span. The same is true for the sets of undiscerned and discerned—the latter indicating greater epistemological depth—often (but not always) with corresponding ontological depth.

Essentially, the problematisation of hierarchy (ἱεραρχία)—stemming from “holy rule” or a literal “sacred arch”—has its correlation with the problematisation of transcendence. As I noted prior, there are two notions of transcendence which obscure the discernment: transcendence can mean the problematic transcendence *exclusivity*—generally implied or inferred—as in the case of Malpas (1992), or transcendence *inclusivity*—generally not discerned. In the case of hierarchy, we have the discernment of *pathological* hierarchy—as is generally implied or inferred in educational discourse—where *growth* hierarchy is non-discerned, and *heterarchy*—the communal complement of hierarchy (the many strands of the web but never the web itself)—is preferred over undiscerned hierarchy.³⁴ To makes these onto-semantic structure(s) clear as truth paradigms, please consider the following iterative discernment(s):

without discernment: {hierarchy = bad; heterarchy = good} → {heterarchy = transformation}

with discernment: {hierarchy} → {growth, pathological} → {hierarchical growth = self-transcendence}

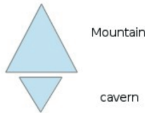
{heterarchy} → {growth, pathological} → {heterarchical growth = self-adaptation}

When we conceptualise hierarchy as distinct wholes, reject transcendence, and problematise rationality as the tendency in modern philosophy today, we are left with sentimentalism to play the dual role of both affectivity and intuition. Post-truth discourse emerges from a superiority of sentimentalism over rationality (Figure 3, “Post-Truth”). Once *self-transcendence* is abandoned (or overlooked), so too is the path toward freedom (and fullness), as each are achieved through higher organisation, through envelopment. For

34. As Wilber (2009) noted, the real consequence from a lack of discernment comes when *pathological* heterarchical “solutions” attempts to forego productive or progressive injunctions of growth hierarchies, simply because “hierarchy is bad” and “heterarchy is good.” There exists undeniable pathological hierarchies—which may be considered as extreme forms of agency at the cost of communion (i.e., *hyper-agency*)—and undeniable, albeit undiscerned, pathological heterarchies—which may be considered as extreme forms of communion at the cost of agency (i.e., *hyper-communal*). Some examples include (a) overbearing care (as pathological feminine) to displace deserving and uplifting merit (the healthy masculine); and (b) how *uniformity* as “egalitarian fairness” is confused for our inward *unity* through an attachment to our spiritual principle.

instance, in Steiner’s (1995) esoteric doctrine, freedom emerges not through the dismantling of hierarchies but through their conscious, holarchical ascent—transforming dead thinking³⁵ into living thought through the progressive stages of Imagination, Inspiration, and ultimately Intuition. Steiner’s “developmental” stages—from *spirit self* (manas) through *life spirit* (Buddhi) to *spirit man* (Atman)—demonstrate that freedom *en-folds* through hierarchical evolution, not horizontal liberation. In other words, Steiner’s metamorphosis of consciousness reveals freedom not as liberation from structure—as critical pedagogy theorists often advocate through increased individual agency—but as the capacity to freely navigate holarchical realities through spiritual activity. The abandonment of hierarchy ironically forecloses the very possibility of authenticity, which Steiner recognised as inseparable from the evolutionary spiritual impulse toward higher degrees of Love and Freedom.³⁶

Table 1
Discernment into the Many Facets of Transformation

	Hard Sciences	Soft Sciences (incl. Education)	Platonism or pre-Cartesian metaphysics ³⁷
Horizontal Heterarchical	<i>Self</i> -adaptation (e.g., bio-hacking, differentiation)	Transformation (e.g., 90% of educational theories)	Immanence Outer-Worldly Evolutionary
Vertical Hierarchical	<i>Self</i> -transcendence (e.g., body- <i>in</i> -mind, integration)	Transformation (e.g., 10% of educational theories)	Metamórphōsis / Metanoia Inner-Celestial Involutionary
Journey/Path <i>for</i> Spirituality	Growing Up (e.g., epistemological depth, <i>structure</i> -stages)	Waking Up (e.g., ontological depth, <i>state</i> -stages)	
(Syncretic) Symbol <i>of</i> Education	<i>Officially none</i> (to date)		Platonic Cave of Shadows (e.g., <i>scala naturae</i> , <i>Divided Line</i>)

Note. For instance, the metaphor of the sacred arch can be understood either as distinct entities “layered” or “stacked” beyond us (ladder/pre-ecological worldview) or as an embedded growth potential within us or around us (holonic/ecological worldview). In a Wilberian (2017) lens, the irony is the entire “woke” movement has nothing to do with Waking Up at all, and is entirely a Growing Up phenomenon (from rational-perspectivism to pluralism).

In summary, my second question asked if transformation differs from transcendence (and hierarchy) and if these two concepts were viable in educational theory. I argued transformation and transcendence are

35. In the companion paper, we related Steiner’s dead thinking to post-truth as yet another fore-running contextualisation a century prior. In this manuscript, I relate post-truth in a Korzybskiiian lens as an arrested development within a collapsed (or inversed) order of abstraction(s).

36. The Christic significance of these two qualities relate to our angelic function as the tenth order which represents a “something more” added to the first order being the Seraphim as angels of pure undifferentiated Love (personal communication, Dr. Robert J. Gilbert, 2012).

37. The concept of metaphysics itself could undergo a similar table as the Cartesian notion of metaphysics as a *basis* for physics—the same metaphysics Heidegger (1967) calls into question—is far removed from *sophia perennis* (‘perennial/primordial wisdom’) as doctrine.

structurally inseparable within holonic frameworks of understanding. Educational discourse that embraces transformation while rejecting hierarchical ordering unwittingly undermines the very possibility of genuine metamórhōsis, predominantly reducing transformative potential to lateral adaptation. Distinguishing between self-adaptation (heterarchical growth) and self-transcendence (hierarchical growth) reveals how contemporary educational theory often operates with an unexamined contradiction at its core—celebrating transformation while dismantling the structural conditions necessary for authentic transformation to occur. The abandonment of hierarchy ironically forecloses the possibility of the authentic freedom sought by critical pedagogy, which Steiner (1995) recognised as inseparable from the evolutionary spiritual impulse toward higher degrees of Love and Freedom. In *contrast* to hierarchical abandonment, and *complementing* ontological depth, epistemological depth constitutes a truth paradigm that preserves both structure and dynamism, hierarchy and complexity, within educational contexts where post-truth rhetoric otherwise thrives in flattened onto-epistemic landscapes. The subsequent section examines how discernment operates according to principles of envelopment alongside subsequent development—a distinction crucial for understanding epistemological depth as an ordered process through which truth paradigms can be progressively apprehended, articulated, and embodied.

The Extensionality of Discernment as Envelopment

In seeking an answer to the final question, discernment must be applied to what constitutes epistemological depth from a historical enterprise. Discernment functions etymologically as both secular cognitive faculty and theological virtue—a dual nature often disconnected in contemporary discourse that ought to be connected vertically—from *secular* to *sacred*. The word *discern* connects to education through *intelligence* (from *intellegēns*, literally “discerning”)—from *intellegō* (“understand”) combining *inter* (“between”) and *legō* (“choosing/reading”).³⁸ To discern (*discernō*) conventionally means to *cut* something into two—a process reflecting intensional logic through subject-predicate demarcation. Con-*tem*-plation similarly derives from *tem* (“to cut”) the sacred from profane through signifying meditation beyond *ratio* (i.e., reason’s discursiveness) before becoming horizontally redefined *as ratio* (e.g., “contemplating the future;” see “Ecological” in Figures 2/3). Both notions of discernment are trapped within intensional and Aristotelian systems of logic.

Truth paradigms emerge through *extensional* discernment—logical structures connecting concepts according to actual relationships rather than verbal, often implicit, associations. Korzybski (1958) identified that transitioning beyond Aristotelian systems requires shifting from intensional to extensional *orientation*, and from ‘subject-predicate to relational evaluations’ (p. lviii), noting our nervous systems have been ‘canalized in inadequate, intensional, often delusional, aristotelian orientations’ (p. l) for over two millennia. Far from a worldview or era, the post-truth condition has a *crooked* structure and inverts epistemological priorities by privileging definitions and verbal associations (intensional logic) while operating through arrested structures that elevate sentiment above rationality—what Korzybski would identify as semantic disturbances in the psycho-neural process-as-a-*whole*. Extensional discernment thus aligns with truth-as-a-*holon*, mediated by *injunction*—hence truth *paradigm*—and (1) apprehended through contemplation, (2) articulated through meaningful expression, and (3) embodied through lived experience—the *threefold* structure through which knowing *en*-folds into meaningful (ethical) *action*.³⁹

The notion of *en*-velopment proposed here complements *de*-velopment in educational philosophy. From Latin *educere* (“leads forward”) and Old French *desveloper* (“unwrap”), education conventionally emphasises uncovering perspectives (Neufeld, 2012). Educational theory lacks⁴⁰ the covering aspect essential to truth-acquisition. Envisaging discernment-*as*-velopment—much like truth-*as*-transcendence—articulates *gradual* truth acquisition within conceptual specificity, showing how higher understanding contextualises rather than replaces prior (limited) understanding—i.e., *partial* truths that form from onto-epistemic

38. Retrieved from Wiktionary, <https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/intelligent>, November 30, 2024.

39. The root of action is *karma*, a topic of insight to Steiner whose life purpose was to elucidate both karma and reincarnation in Christian doctrine.

40. When I search “education” AND “development” I get 4 million results in Web of Science databases. A similar search for “education” AND “envelopment” provides 4 thousand results. If I filter with NOT “data envelopment analysis” AND “philosophy” the result quickly drops to around four book or book reviews and zero articles within educational philosophy!

structures. Envelopment's asymmetry contrasts with development's linearity; where development accounts for differentiation and contingency through horizontal accumulation, envelopment creates the structural conditions for engagement and dialogue through vertical integration—mirroring Malpasian (1992) contours for retrieving truth within educational philosophy.

An example is apropos; consider a mathematician's understanding of infinity exemplifying epistemological depth: a novice (n_1) comprehends infinity as “a very big number.” At level n_2 , the student recognises different sizes of infinity (countable versus uncountable sets). At n_3 , the mathematician discerns how infinity operates within specific mathematical structures. At n_4 , understanding integrates transfinite recursion and metamathematical frameworks. At n_5 , the mathematician recognises infinity as fundamentally metaphysical, distinguishing between mathematical applications (infinitesimal or indefinite) and metaphysical reality (Guénon, 1991).⁴¹ For an easier example: consider the role of multiplication in mathematics education. Starting from addition and subtraction alone, multiplication (and division) envelops a larger set of operations. Then to differentiate between the variable x , multiplication turns into a dot. Later the dot becomes a scalar product in contradistinction to a vector product, and so on. Each level envelops previous levels—demonstrating epistemological depth's fundamental structure toward expertise. Expertise, therefore, emerges as function $f(w,t,n)$, where worldview (w) influences conceptual possibilities, topic (t) specifies domain-relevance, while epistemological depth (n) determines discernment achieved. The function provides an understanding of how truth paradigms and expertise operate through specific contexts and levels of discernment. Expertise itself represents a form of transcendence—as the capacity to discern patterns and relationships invisible to the novice, thereby accessing “higher” perspectives that envelop “lower” perspectives.

Korzybski (1958) observed that definitions ultimately rest on undefined terms, producing ‘affective disturbances’ (p. 25) when individuals are pressed beyond defined terms—indicating a lack of boundary between articulated knowledge and experiential understanding within a psychophysiological science of sanity. Perhaps the most philosophically compelling concept of *truth* today (in the non-Aristotelian perspective) remains *undefined* where “truth paradigms” operates as an extensional definition. Epistemological depth offers what Crosswhite sought—a *measure* through which competing *logoi* may be evaluated without dissolving into relativism. The homo mensura principle reconceived through discernment-as-envelopment and \tilde{A} systems are that humans measure truth not through arbitrary opinion—but through ordered processes that progressively disclose deeper structural and ontological relationships. Of course, such a “measure⁴²” must imply that we have, within us, the holarchical or hierarchical spiritual faculties of knowing that are latent, such as Steiner's (1995) Imagination, Inspiration, and Intuition, and Guénon's (2004b) intellectual intuition.

A Brief Summary

The philosophical space opened through epistemological depth points toward a reclaiming of truth-as-transcendence within educational philosophy. By re-conceiving discernment as an envelopmental practice rather than a discriminatory one, the possibility emerges for retrieving a truth paradigm that honours both vertical understanding and the complexity revealed by post-Modern thought. Such a paradigm offers educational philosophy a path through post-truth discourse—a discourse reflecting Steiner's dead thinking and Korzybski's semantic disturbances—not through returning to dogmatic certainty, but through progressing toward increasingly comprehensive frameworks of understanding that *preserve* (from whole → *part* of an enveloped whole) rather than erase the insights gained at each stage of discernment. The integral nature of epistemological depth suggests possibilities for reconciling apparently contradictory perspectives (*re*: competing *logoi*) within educational philosophy, enabling a return to the sacrosanct nature of *trans*-formation and Di Paolantonio's (2023) *self*-formation through the ordered process of discernment.

41. The actual pathway of epistemological depth is varied and individual-specific, though structurally ordered through discernment.

42. We are all a *measure* (*metiri, mātra*) against Spirit, a primordial relationship (*materia*), according to Coomaraswamy (1987), intended to unfold, and enfold, the possibilities of manifestation inherent in *Ātmā* (Spirit).

Truth paradigms, so conceived, are apprehended through contemplation, articulated through meaningful expression, and embodied through lived experience—a tripartite (soul-mind-body) structure operationalised within a non-Aristotelian (\tilde{A}) orientation that restores epistemological depth amidst the post-truth condition. Epistemological depth as a truth paradigm responds to Crosswhite's (2018) call for theories of truth beyond post-truth discourse, while facilitating what Clark (2019) recognised as the urgent recovery of expertise through “*non*-post-truths” so vital to contemporary educational philosophy and theory.

References

- Ambrosio, J. (2022). Problematizing truth-telling in a post-truth world: Foucault, parrhesia, and the psycho-social subject. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 54(12), 2133–2144.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/00131857.2022.2034619>
- Barfield, O. (1928). *Poetic diction: A study in meaning*. Faber & Gwyer.
- Benesch, K. (2020). Is truth to post-truth what modernism is to postmodernism? Heidegger, the humanities, and the demise of common-sense. *European Journal of American Studies*, 15(15-1). <https://doi.org/10.4000/ejas.15619>
- Bowers, C. (2010). Toward an eco-justice pedagogy. *Environmental Education Research*, 8(1), 21–34.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/13504620120109628>
- Capra, F. (1996). *The web of life: A new scientific understanding of living systems*. Anchor.
- Clark, J. (2019). “Post-truth”: political death of the expert. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 50(14), 1350–1351.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/00131857.2018.1461404>
- Coomaraswamy, A. K. (1987). *Metaphysics*. Princeton University Press.
- Crosswhite, J. (2018). Toward truth. *Philosophy & Rhetoric*, 51(4), 368–391.
<https://doi.org/10.5325/philrhet.51.4.0368>
- Davis, B. (1996). *Teaching mathematics: Toward a sound alternative*. Routledge.
- Davis, B. (2004). *Inventions of teaching: A genealogy*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Di Paolantonio, M. (2023). *Education and democracy at the end: the crisis of sense*. Palgrave Macmillan.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-48177-2>
- Glanzberg, M. (2023). Truth. In E. N. Zalta & U. Nodelman (Eds.), *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*.
<https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/truth>
- Guénon, R. (1991). *The great triad* (P. Kingsley, Trans.). Sophia Perennis.
- Guénon, R. (1995). *Fundamental symbols: The universal language of sacred science* (A. Moore, Trans.). Sophia Perennis.
- Guénon, R. (2004a). *The crisis of the modern world* (R. C. Nicholson, A. Osborne, & M. Pallis, Trans.). Sophia Perennis.
- Guénon, R. (2004b). *The reign of quantity and the signs of the times*. (L. Northbourne, Trans.). Sophia Perennis.
- Hamkins, J. D. (2020). *Lectures on the philosophy of mathematics*. The MIT Press.
- Hamm, C. (2005). *Philosophical issues in education: An introduction*. Falmer Press.
<https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203393109>
- Heidegger, M. (1967). *Being and time*. Blackwell.
- Karrow, D. D. & Harvey, S. (2024). The ‘thalweg’ of currents: ‘Naturalist’ environmental education. *The Canadian Journal of Environmental Education*, 26, 32–50.
- Kester, K. (2019). Postmodernism in post-truth times. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 50(14), 1330–1331.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/00131857.2018.1461417>
- Korzybski, A. (1958). *Science and sanity: An introduction to non-aristotelian systems and general semantics* (4th ed.). The Colonial Press.
- Malpas, J. (1992). Retrieving truth: Modernism, post-modernism and the problem of truth. *Soundings: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, 75(2–3), 287–306.
- Malpas, J. (2018). *Place and experience: a philosophical topography*. (2nd ed.). Routledge.
- Mandelbrot, B. B. (1982). *The fractal geometry of nature*. W. H. Freeman.
- Maturana, H., & Varela, F. (1992). *The tree of knowledge: The biological roots of human understanding*. Shambhala.
- Mezirow, J. (2003). Transformative learning as discourse. *Journal of Transformative Education*, 1(1), 58–63.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1541344603252172>

- Moran, D. (2014). What does Heidegger mean by the transcendence of Dasein? *International Journal of Philosophical Studies*, 22(4), 491–514. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09672559.2014.948717>
- Neufeld, J. (2009). *Redefining teacher development*. Routledge.
- Neufeld, J. (2012). The (in)vocation of learning: Heidegger's education in thinking. *Studies in Philosophy and Education*, 31(1), 61–76. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11217-011-9269-0>
- Oleksiyenko, A. V., & Jackson, L. (2021). Freedom of speech, freedom to teach, freedom to learn: The crisis of higher education in the post-truth era. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 53(11), 1057–1062. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00131857.2020.1773800>
- Parker, L. (2020). Literacy in the post-truth era: The significance of affect and the ethical encounter. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 53(6), 613–623. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00131857.2020.1803834>
- Peters, M., & Besley, T. (2019). Citizen science and post-normal science in a post-truth era: Democratising knowledge; socialising responsibility. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 51(13), 1293–1303. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00131857.2019.1577036>
- Peters, M., McLaren, P., & Jandrić, P. (2022). A viral theory of post-truth. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 54(6), 698–706. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00131857.2020.1750090>
- Prigogine, I. (1997). *The end of certainty: Time, chaos, and the new laws of nature*. The Free Press.
- Standish, P. (2010). What is philosophy of education? In R. Bailey (Ed.), *The philosophy of education: An introduction* (pp. 4-20). Continuum.
- Steiner, R. (1959). *Speech and drama* [GA 282]. Anthroposophic Press. (Original lectures 1921–1924)
- Steiner, R. (1990). *Toward imagination* [GA 169]. Anthroposophic Press. (Original lectures June–July 1916)
- Steiner, R. (1994). *Theosophy: An introduction to the supersensible knowledge of the world and the destination of man* [GA 9]. Anthroposophic Press.
- Steiner, R. (1995). *Intuitive thinking as a spiritual path: Philosophy of freedom*. Anthroposophic Press.
- Taylor, C. (2003). *The malaise of modernity*. House of Anansi Press
- Taylor, C. (2001). *Sources of the self: the making of the modern identity* (Ninth printing). Harvard University Press.
- Tesich, S. (1992). The Watergate syndrome: A government of lies. In *The Nation* (New York, N.Y.). Vol. 254, Number 1, pp. 12-14. Nation Company L.P.
- Thompson, E. (2007). *Mind in life: Biology, phenomenology, and the science of mind*. Harvard University Press.
- Varela, F. J., Thompson, E., & Rosch, E. (2016). *The embodied mind : Cognitive science and human experience* (Revised edition.). MIT Press.
- Wallace, B. A. (2006). *The attention revolution: Unlocking the power of the focused mind*. Somerville, MA: Wisdom.
- Whitehead, A. N. (1978). *Process and reality : An essay in cosmology: Gifford lectures delivered in the University of Edinburgh during the session 1927-28* (Corrected ed. / edited by David Ray Griffin, Donald W. Sherburne. 1st pbk. ed.). Free Press
- Wilber, K. (2009). *Sex, ecology, spirituality: The spirit of evolution* (2nd ed.). Shambhala
- Wilber, K. (2017). *The religion of tomorrow: A vision for the future of the great traditions*. Shambhala.