

# THE NEW CONCEPTION OF ABSOLUTE TRUTH AND THE END OF ANTHROPOCENTRISM

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**Abstract:** The ascendance of relativism has defined the politics, social relations, values, science, and other aspects of modern civilization and its practice. While some effects of relativism are salutary (relativism, for example, has promoted greater tolerance), others are not. This article argues that the ascendance of relativism has led to the demise and ultimate rejection of the concept of absolute truth. As the article explains, absolute truth is a very important operational concept that integrates, regulates, and conserves all spheres of human practice. It enhances human capacity to create new and increasingly more powerful levels of mental organization that are the source of radical innovations: new ideas, theories, and approaches. The article explains that the functional role of absolute truth is essential for sustaining human civilization and its evolution. It demonstrates that the functional role of absolute truth is defined by the universal process of creation. The rejection of absolute truth has been an inevitable result of the anthropocentric tradition that has dominated and continues to dominate human civilization. This tradition fails to recognize the central role of the process of creation in human existence. It is exclusionary and is incompatible with objectivity. This tradition poses a threat to the survival of civilization. The article argues that the revival of absolute truth and its role in human practice will ensure the survival and evolution of human civilization. The article offers a new conception of absolute truth. This conception relies on the universal process of creation as its main organizing principle. Due to its inclusive nature, the process of creation is objective, universal, and invariable under transformation. Since the new conception is based on the process of creation, it also possesses its properties; it is objective, universal, and invariable. It is not transient as the past conceptions of absolute truth. Finally, the article discusses the ways in which the new conception of absolute truth will affect human practice.

**Key words:** absolute truth, absolute reality, process of creation, anthropocentrism, conservation, evolution, relativism, modernity,

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## Introduction

Contemporary civilization is in crisis.<sup>1</sup> There are many indications that its major transition is underway. The most vivid evidence of the crisis is the fact that the entire

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<sup>1</sup> Richard Lowenthal, "Civilization's Crumbling Because Humanity Is Still So ... Primitive," *Illumination* (blog), May 22, 2023, <https://medium.com/illumination/civilizations-crumbling-because-humanity-is-still-so-primitive-6945f7b7736a>; MAHB. "The Problem of Emergent Human Nature and Civilization Collapse," <https://mahb.stanford.edu/topic/problem-emergent-human-nature-civilization-collapse/>;

world order is in flux as new emerging powers are demanding a greater voice in shaping the future of humanity. The competition for reshaping the global order is on the rise, as old alliances disintegrate, and new ones emerge. The competition escalates into tensions, conflicts, and wars. The degradation of the environment and climate change is another indication of the ongoing crisis, as floods, massive fires, epidemics, and other calamities engulf the world. The sluggish economic growth leaves contemporary civilization painfully short of resources needed to address the current problems. Many countries, including major developed countries, are in a state of internal turmoil that undermines their political and social stability. The number of challenges is rapidly growing, which makes the overall situation increasingly unmanageable.

Many people today believe that our civilization in its current state is simply unsustainable. They argue that the survival of humanity requires a major transformation on a global scale. The reshaping should recognize the new realities and respond to changes that have occurred in recent decades. The pleas for change stimulate the search for a new course of the evolution. The momentum for change is gathering strength with many proposals that outline a path toward resolving the crisis are under way.<sup>2</sup>

This dramatic period of transformational change is not a unique phenomenon in the history of humankind. There have been similar periods prior to the current one. Many aspects of the current period bear resemblance to those that took place in the past. There are, however, also important differences. Some new challenges test our civilization today.

One difference is particularly important and significant. All transition periods in the past had an overarching vision that guided the process of transformation. These visions usually originated in the womb of the society and culture that preceded the period of transition. They played an important role as they conveyed a sense of direction and offered confidence and hope at the time of chaos and destruction; they assuaged fears of the unknown and facilitated the transition to a new stage.<sup>3</sup>

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Nafeez M Ahmed, "The Collapse of Civilisation is an Unprecedented Opportunity," *Age of Transformation*, August 29, 2023, <https://ageoftransformation.org/the-collapse-of-civilisation-is-an-unprecedented-opportunity/>; Wolfram Elsner, "Collapse. Institutional Decline and Breakdown, Its Endogeneity and Its Asymmetry Vis-à-Vis Emergence: A Theoretical Frame," *Journal of Economic Issues* 55, no. 1 (2021), pp. 79–102; Stephen Davies, "Covid-19 and the Collapse of Complex Societies," *Reason*, vol. 52, no. 3 (July 2020), pp. 12–13; Joseph Tainter, "The Collapse of Complex Societies," *International Journal on World Peace* 31, no. 1 (March 2014), pp. 107–14.

<sup>2</sup> David Marquand, *The End of the West: The Once and Future Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011); Paul R. Ehrlich and Anne H. Ehrlich, "Can a Collapse of Global Civilization Be Avoided?" *Proceedings of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences*, vol. 280, no. 1754 (March 7, 2013): 20122845, <https://doi.org/10.1098/rspb.2012.2845>; Jonah Goldberg, *Suicide of the West: How the Rebirth of Tribalism, Populism, Nationalism, and Identity Politics Is Destroying American Democracy* (New York: Crown Forum, 2018), <https://jonahgoldberg.com/suicide-of-the-west/>.

<sup>3</sup> Peter Brown, *Through the Eye of a Needle: Wealth, the Fall of Rome, and the Making of Christianity in the West, 350–550 AD* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012);

The current period is very different in this respect. There is no vision that guides the process of transition today; nothing that inspires hope and confidence in the future. Obviously, this situation makes the current experience very traumatic, as many people experience fear and confusion. They see growing chaos and destruction with no end in sight. They feel vulnerable and unprotected; moreover, they see no redemption in their suffering.

The only positive result is that the turmoil motivates a search for solutions. There is no lack of proposals that outline the way to remedy the desperate situation created by the current crisis. Although they are all very different, there is one common theme in all these proposals: they see the source of the current predicament in the lack of global unity and cooperation.

The search for solutions has revived the interest in the subject of absolute truth. Absolute truth has played a very important role in the history of civilization. It defined values and norms that guided human practice. It shaped political institutions and organization of society. Absolute truth attracted much attention and generated intense intellectual exchanges in the past.<sup>4</sup>

Those times are now a distant memory preserved only in history books. For reasons that will be discussed in this article, the intellectual tradition that dominates our civilization has rejected the notion of absolute truth. It denied its validity as an operational concept for guiding human practice. The subject of absolute truth is today on the periphery of the contemporary intellectual discourse.

Relativism that dominates contemporary civilization is totally incompatible with the concept of absolute truth. It does not recognize even the slightest possibility for the existence of absolute truth.<sup>5</sup> The concept of absolute truth has given way to the notion of the best possible opinion. *Psychology Today*, a popular website, writes: "If the best opinion is all that we can have or hope for, then best opinion is as good as truth, and the truth is a redundant concept."<sup>6</sup>

The rejection is absolute. It has been in effect for so long that few people today question its legitimacy. It has become a self-evident truth and, as such, no longer requires any proof. Ironically, the denial of absolute truth has acquired the status of absolute truth. Such attitude toward absolute truth is still largely in place, if for no other reason than

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Anthony Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991).

<sup>4</sup> Jeremy Wyatt and Michael P. Lynch, "From One to Many: Recent Work on Truth," *American Philosophical Quarterly*, vol. 53, no. 4 (2016), pp. 323–40.

<sup>5</sup> Steve Stewart-Williams, *Darwin, God, and the Meaning of Life: How Evolutionary Theory Undermines Everything You Thought You Knew* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

<sup>6</sup> Neel Burton, "What Is Truth? An overview of the philosophy of truth," *Psychology today*, June 25, 2024, <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/hidden-and-see/201808/what-is-truth>.

intellectual inertia. However, the trials and tribulations of the current transition period are reviving the interest in the subject of absolute truth. As the evidence of this revival, discussions of absolute truth appear in a growing number of books, articles, and websites.<sup>7</sup> What is even more interesting is that calls for the revival do not appeal to the past. Indeed, many of these calls are motivated by religion.<sup>8</sup> However, the interest in the subject of absolute truth also comes from secular thinkers and scientists. Robert Sheldon, for example, observes that although scientific community shies away from the notion of absolute truth, its efforts to define a single unified theory (string or M-theory) appear as attempts to discover absolute truth, even if they describe these attempts as mere theoretical models.<sup>9</sup> Psychologists and psychoanalysts also bring much attention to the subject of absolute truth.<sup>10</sup>

Many contributors to these discussions argue that the revival of absolute truth will help to resolve the current conundrum faced by contemporary civilization. However, while they consider a revival to be desirable, they do not go far beyond emphasizing its potential salutary effects; they do not offer any specific approach that may lead to the formulation of

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<sup>7</sup> Susan Howatch, *Absolute Truths* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1995), <https://www.bookstellyouwhy.com/pages/books/26264/susan-howatch/absolute-truths-1st-edition-1st-printing>; Jaiswal, Sandeep, *The Truth of All Truths: The Ultimate Truth Explained*, 2024, <https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.19853.45281>; J. D. Richardson, Jr., *Absolute Truth: Truth for All Humanity* (Tate Publishing, 2011); Thuan Nguyen and Pauline Nguyen, *The Ultimate Truth* (Kindle edition, 2023).

<sup>8</sup> Ella Charko, "Absolute Truth: What It Is and Why It Matters," *The Rebelution*, June 2, 2023. <https://www.therebelution.com/blog/2023/06/absolute-truth-what-it-is-and-why-it-matters/>; Rachel Shockey, "Why Should Anyone Believe in Objective, Absolute Truth?" *Women in Apologetics*, April 25, 2022, <https://womeninapologetics.com/why-should-anyone-believe-in-objective-absolute-truth/>; R. Scott Smith, *Truth and the New Kind of Christian: The Emerging Effects of Postmodernism in the Church* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2005); J. P. Moreland, *Love Your God with All Your Mind: The Role of Reason in the Life of the Soul* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2012); Edward Stoukton, *Absolute Truth: The Struggle for Meaning in Today's Catholic Church* (TV Books, 2000).

<sup>9</sup> Robert Sheldon, "What is absolute truth?" TechTarget, September 2022, <https://www.techtarget.com/whatis/definition/absolute-truth>.

<sup>10</sup> Shlomit Yadlin-Gadot, "The Desire for Truth, Its Crisis and Mental Life," *Contemporary Psychoanalytic Studies*, vol. 22 (April 1, 2016), pp. 14–38; Alan Frosch, ed., *Absolute truth and unbearable psychic pain: Psychoanalytic perspectives on concrete experience* (London: Karnac Books, 2012); Ömer Faruk Şimşek, Aylin Ecem Ceylandağ, Gizem Şimşek Akcan, "The Need for Absolute Truth and Self-Rumination as Basic Suppressors in the Relationship Between Private Self-Consciousness and Mental Health," *Journal of General Psychology*, vol. 140, no. 4, pp. 294-310; Shlomit Yadlin-Gadot, *Truth Matters: Theory and Practice in Psychoanalysis* (Rodopi: Brill, 2016).

a conception that would make absolute truth credible and intellectually acceptable in current cultural environment.<sup>11</sup>

This article will discuss issues related to the revival of its role as an operational concept in guiding human practice. As has already been mentioned, absolute truth is not a new concept. It has been used in the past. The past conceptions of absolute truth did not live up to expectations. These conceptions turned out to be transient. Their transiency has become an argument against the applicability of the concept: absolute truth was not absolute. The failures to formulate a bona fide conception of absolute truth is one important reason why the idea of absolute truth was allowed to lapse and fall out of use. Therefore, only the creation of such conception makes the revival of absolute truth possible.

The focus of this article is a possibility of the revival of the role of absolute truth as operational concept in human practice. Since the concept of absolute truth has not been in active use for a long time, the revival cannot be a simple return to the past. The new conception of absolute truth will require a new and solid foundation.

The article will look close into the functional role of absolute truth as an operational concept. Absolute truth is a mental construct. It is a product of the human mind. Therefore, there is a level of mental organization that has given rise to this concept. The function of this level defines the function of absolute truth. The article will investigate the origin and function of this level of organization, which will help to understand the functional role of absolute truth.

The revival of absolute truth will require a new conception of absolute truth. According to a common definition, truth is about correspondence between mental constructs and reality.<sup>12</sup> In the past, the concept of absolute truth relied on the conception of absolute reality as its source. The revival of absolute truth will also require a new conception of absolute reality--one that would have credibility and respectability in contemporary intellectual discourses. In exploring a possibility of the revival of absolute truth, this article will outline a perspective that can establish a credible and convincing new conception of absolute reality. Only the formulation of such conception can serve as the basis for the revival of absolute truth as an operational concept.

The motivation for this study is not a conservative one. It is not a about reviving the past and bringing back outdated concepts, ideas, and notions. On the contrary, the intention is to produce a viable conception that can guide modern practice. The study hopes to bring more attention to the subject that has important practical consequences. The objective also is not merely to offer a theoretical vision but also to outline the effective new practice that embodies this vision. The article will outline the ways in which the adoption of the new conception transforms social practice.

## **The Evolution of Absolute Truth in Western Civilization**

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<sup>11</sup> Alan S. Rome, "In Defence of Absolute Truth," *Quillette*, June 30, 2021, <https://quillette.com/2021/06/30/in-defence-of-absolute-truth/>.

<sup>12</sup> Charko, "Absolute Truth: What It Is and Why It Matters."

As has already been mentioned, absolute truth is not a new concept. It has been used in the past. The fact that there have been several different versions of absolute truth has undermined the validity of the concept. This fact has led to a conclusion that appears to be self-evident and common sense: absolute truth is subjective and arbitrary and is not at all absolute since there can be several different versions of this truth. This conclusion has eventually led to the complete rejection of absolute truth as an operational concept in human practice.

The career of the concept of absolute truth shows that it has experienced dramatic changes and re-interpretations as civilization evolved. Moreover, the concept of absolute truth has been used in many world cultures. A detailed examination of all mutations of absolute truth in different cultural contexts is beyond the scope of the current article. A cursory overview of the evolution of absolute truth in one cultural context will be quite sufficient for the purposes of this article. Western civilization has used this concept in the past and is certainly a legitimate case for examining the evolutionary dynamics of the concept of absolute truth.

There is a canonical view that Classical Antiquity, or the civilization of Ancient Greece and Rome, is the first important stage of Western civilization. Students of European history have very good reasons to regard Ancient Greece and Rome as the cradle of European culture. The remarkable achievements of Classical Antiquity are the building blocks of Western civilization. The list of these achievements is very extensive. It includes norms, values, political institutions, ideas, art and literature, science and technology, belief system, and much, much else. All of them have become part of Western heritage.

The civilization of Ancient Greece and Rome was by no means uniform. It was very diverse; it incorporated many different perspectives and forms that originated in the territories that were under control of Greeks and Romans or with which they had contacts. Yet despite its diversity, Classical Antiquity shared a common foundation that sustained its unity and coherence. One important component of this foundation was a common belief system and a shared view of reality that gave rise to the conception of absolute truth used in Greece and the Roman Empire.

Ancient Greeks and Romans recognized nature as the absolute reality. Nature was god. It was the ultimate creator of everything that existed and the main source of agency. Nature was sacred; it was an object of veneration. Ancients built temples dedicated to nature and its powers, and deities that represented these powers. They made ritual sacrifices to appease the forces of nature and to seek their help. They deified features of landscape, trees, forests, and used them as sites for sanctuaries, shrines, and other places of worship where they could divine the future and hear prophecies. Nature was the absolute reality. It was the source of absolute truth that played a very important role in ancient culture; it defined and sustained norms, values, institutions, social relations, and many other aspects of life of ancient Greeks and Romans. Nature was the ultimate source of inspiration for their great works of art, literature, and architecture.

However, the conception of nature as the source of absolute truth did not remain unchanged in ancient culture. As the civilization of antiquity evolved, so did its conception of absolute truth. By appropriating nature, the ancients placed the objects and powers of nature into the frame of cause-effect relationship. This development eroded the sacred status of nature and its powers. It gradually turned them onto objects of manipulation and

control. As such, natural objects and powers gradually lost their sacred character, as eventually did nature as a whole. The notion of nature as the source of agency gradually gave way to a new idea that the domain of agency transcended nature's boundaries. This evolution paved the way for the new Christian outlook and the Civilization of the European Middle Ages.<sup>13</sup>

At the heart of this civilization was a new conception of absolute reality. At the heart of this new conception was the belief in the existence of transcendental God. The Christian God was the eternal and omnipotent Creator of all that existed; God was and the sole source of agency. The new conception of absolute reality gave rise to its own version of absolute truth. In this version, absolute truth had the same properties as the reality that gave rise to it. Like Christian God, this absolute truth was objective, eternal, and intransient. As in the time of Antiquity, the Christian version of absolute truth defined and sustained rules, values, norms, institutions, and other aspects of life during the Middle Ages.

Despite the claims made by European Christians that their absolute truth was objective, universal, and invariable, their conception of absolute truth did not remain unchanged. It evolved over time. Just like Ancient Greeks and Romans whose efforts to relate their absolute truth to the temporal realm had led to its transformation, Medieval Europeans also tried to relate the truth of Christianity to their daily life and practices. This development gave rise to mounting number of new interpretations of Christianity with their own conceptions of absolute truth. It also produced tensions and religious rivalries among different religious movements and denominations. These developments showed that the absolute truth of Christianity was not immune to forces of evolution.

As a result of this evolution, interpretations gradually became central to the practice of Christianity in Europe. The importance of interpretations played a critical role in recognizing the role of the interpreter. This recognition eventually led to ascendance of a new vision. Human agency became the main organizing principle of the new vision. This development marked the onset of a new stage in the evolution of European civilization. The recognition of humans as the source of agency was at the heart of the new development. The recognition challenged traditional Christian beliefs, values, and norms. Humanism and the Enlightenment that followed ushered in a new perspective on absolute reality and truth. The European civilization entered a new stage in its evolution called Modernity; and human agency was the main organizing principle of the new perspective. "Man is the measure of all things"—a dictum coined by Heraclites way back in Antiquity—became the fundamental tenet that defined Modernity.<sup>14</sup> The new perspective recognized that the domain of human action was the only reality that was relevant to human existence; human agency became the main organizing principle of modern practice. According to the

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<sup>13</sup> Peter Brown, *Through the Eye of a Needle: Wealth, the Fall of Rome, and the Making of Christianity in the West, 350–550 AD* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012); Anthony Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991).

<sup>14</sup> James Crosswhite, "Toward Truth," *Philosophy & Rhetoric*, vol. 51, no. 4 (2018), pp. 368–91, p. 372, <https://doi.org/10.5325/philrhett.51.4.0368>.

new perspective, human agents possessed the power to determine and shape conditions and circumstances of their lives; it viewed human reason as the ultimate source of empowerment, knowledge, and truth. The perspective had a profound effect on Western culture. It transformed values, norms, institutions, and social practices of Europeans and ushered in a new era of Modernity.

The new perspective on reality has not completely rejected the notion a reality beyond the domain of human action. However, since Kant, this reality has been regarded as inaccessible to human reason. It belonged to the domain of “things-in-themselves” that are unobservable and unknowable.<sup>15</sup> According to this approach, Since the reality of things-in-themselves, in this perspective, is irrelevant to the domain of human action, it can be and, for all practical reasons, should be ignored. All thinkers in the Enlightenment tradition have eventually subscribed to this view. Karl Marx who was one of the most influential thinkers of the modern period recognized “species being” as the ultimate reality relevant to the human domain. He derived “species being” from the fact of production that, in his view, defined the human domain. Marx has extensively expostulated on the consequences that followed from the emergence of production but has not fully clarified its source. He accepted production and “species being” as a given, as a fact of life, leaving the issue of the origin of “species being,” or the social nature of humans, unaddressed and unexamined.<sup>16</sup>

The recognition of human agency as the central factor of human existence has had a profound liberating effect on European civilization and the rest of the world. It has led to dramatic changes in social practice, transformed political systems and social organization, enhanced economic progress, produced dramatic advances in science and technology, and has had many other important effects. It has changed beyond recognition the face of Europe and led to the unprecedented rise in its global importance. Europeans still live in the shadow of this epochal transformation.

The recognition of human agency has been a double-edged sword. The new perspective on reality as one that is constantly shaped and reshaped by human actions has led to the conclusion that truth derived from this constantly changing reality is also subject to change. Modernity has eventually concluded that truth is a product of competition between human agents and the distribution of power in society.<sup>17</sup> As the outcome of competition, truth is subject to change and cannot possibly be absolute. One important consequence of this development has been the proliferation of multiple truths, none of which could claim the status of being absolute or universal.<sup>18</sup> In his book *Darwin, God, and*

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<sup>15</sup> See Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003).

<sup>16</sup> Karl Marx, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844* (New York: International Publishers, 1984).

<sup>17</sup> See Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: the birth of a prison*. London, Penguin, 1991); Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: The Will to Knowledge*, London: Penguin, 1998); also, Susan Howatch, *Absolute Truths*.

<sup>18</sup> Jeremy Wyatt and Michael P. Lynch, “From One to Many: Recent Work on Truth,” *American Philosophical Quarterly*, vol, 53, no. 4 (2016), pp. 323–40.

*the Meaning of Life*, the evolutionary psychologist Steve Stewart-Williams offers a typical argument that many others have against absolute truth. In his view, there are no universal truths even in the moral sphere.<sup>19</sup>

The proliferation of multiple truths has eventually led to the recognition that the concept of absolute truth has no merit and, for all practical reason, must be dropped.<sup>20</sup> Thus, the logic of the new perspective on reality has led to the denial of the existence of absolute truth and the complete abrogation of the concept.<sup>21</sup> In his book *The Ultimate Hidden Truth of the World . . .*, David Graebner writes: "The ultimate hidden truth of the world is that it is something that we make, and could just as easily make differently."<sup>22</sup> Keith Ferreira similarly contends that the only certainty is that reality is uncertain, and the ultimate truth is the law of uncertainty.<sup>23</sup> The denial of the existence and operational value of absolute truth has led to the rise of relativism, pluralism, and historicism. Yet, crusaders against absolute truth have failed. Relativism and uncertainty became the new version of absolute reality that serves as the foundation for a new conception of absolute truth.

Many contemporary intellectuals claim that we now live in the so-called "post-truth" condition. They lament this fact because, in their view, it ruins our standards of truth and knowledge.<sup>24</sup> What they fail to acknowledge, however, is that this condition is an inevitable result of pluralism, relativism, and historicism that they have ardently advocated.<sup>25</sup> The

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<sup>19</sup> Steve Stewart-Williams, *Darwin, God, and the Meaning of Life: How Evolutionary Theory Undermines Everything You Thought You Knew* (Cambridge University Press: New York, 2010).

<sup>20</sup> See, for example, Jeanine Diller, "God and Other Ultimates," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, edited by Edward N. Zalta (Stanford: Stanford University, 2021, <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2021/entries/god-ultimates/>).

<sup>21</sup> Richard Routley, "Necessary limits to knowledge: unknowable truths," *Synthese*, vol. 173, no. 1, Knowability and Beyond (March 2010), pp. 107-122. On the diversity of ultimate truth and reality, see Jeanine Diller, "God and Other Ultimates," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, edited by Edward N. Zalta (Stanford: Stanford University, 2021, <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2021/entries/god-ultimates/>).

<sup>22</sup> David Graebner, *The Ultimate Hidden Truth of the World . . .* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2024).

<sup>23</sup> Keith N. Ferreira, *The Ultimate Truth* (iUniverse, 2005)

<sup>24</sup> James Crosswhite, "Toward Truth," *Philosophy & Rhetoric*, vol. 51, no. 4 (2018), pp. 368-91, <https://doi.org/10.5325/philrhet.51.4.0368>; Jennifer Kavanagh and Michael D. Rich, "Truth Decay An Initial Exploration of the Diminishing Role of Facts and Analysis in American Public Life," *Rand*, January 16, 2018, [https://www.rand.org/pubs/research\\_reports/RR2314.html](https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR2314.html).

<sup>25</sup> John J. Stuhr, "Truth, Truths, and Pluralism," *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy*, vol. 34, no. 4 (2020), pp. 526-44, <https://doi.org/10.5325/jspecphil.34.4.0526>.

process of becoming post-truth is intensified and accelerated by the advent of social media and other forms of individual control over stories, information, theories, arguments and debates to which we expose ourselves.<sup>26</sup>

The above overview shows that the conception of absolute truth has profoundly changed in the course of the concept's career. As Western civilization has evolved, so has its fundamental conception of reality; and each new conception of reality has given rise to a new formulation of absolute truth that has become the foundation for a new stage of civilization and its practices. The recognition of human agency has been the final stage in this evolution. This recognition has led to the adoption of a relativistic approach toward knowledge and truth and the eventual denial of any validity of the concept of absolute truth.

Absolute truth must be objective, universal, and invariable. None of the conceptions of absolute truth, including the relativistic one, has met these standards. They were relevant and valid only under specific conditions of a particular stage of civilization and its culture, and not in some absolute sense. The failure to formulate a conception of absolute truth that would be objective, universal, and invariable has undermined the very notion of truth and has ultimately led to the current post-truth era.

To summarize, the concept of absolute truth has experienced dramatic changes in the course of the evolution of Modern European civilization. These changes have led to the abandonment of the very notion of absolute truth. The subsequent intellectual trends--relativism, poststructuralism, and postmodernism--have ushered in the "post-truth" era. The advent of social media and other forms of control of the information flow accelerated the rise of post-truth.<sup>27</sup> The claim that absolute truth undermines freedom of thought and promotes rivalries and conflicts proves to be false.<sup>28</sup> The abandonment of absolute truth has not reduced restrictions on human freedom, rivalries, and conflicts.

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<sup>26</sup> James Crosswhite, "Toward Truth," *Philosophy & Rhetoric*, vol. 51, no. 4 (2018), pp. 368–91, p. 369, <https://doi.org/10.5325/philrhet.51.4.0368>; David D. Franks and Carol Keller, "Thoughts on the Postmodern Rejection of Truth," *Michigan Sociological Review*, no. 10 (1996), pp. 32–50.

<sup>27</sup> Crosswhite, James. "Toward Truth." *Philosophy & Rhetoric* 51, no. 4 (2018): 368–91, p. 369, <https://doi.org/10.5325/philrhet.51.4.0368>, Franks, David D., and Carol Keller. "Thoughts on the Postmodern Rejection of Truth." *Michigan Sociological Review*, no. 10 (1996): 32–50.

<sup>28</sup> David Graebner, *The Ultimate Hidden Truth of the World . . .*; Stuhr, John J. "Truth, Truths, and Pluralism." *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy* 34, no. 4 (2020), pp. 526–44, <https://doi.org/10.5325/jspecphil.34.4.0526>; John J. Stuhr, "Truth, Truths, and Pluralism," *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy*, vol. 34, no. 4 (2020), pp. 526–44, <https://doi.org/10.5325/jspecphil.34.4.0526>; Jennifer Kavanagh and Michael D. Rich. "Truth Decay An Initial Exploration of the Diminishing Role of Facts and Analysis in American Public Life," *Rand*, January 16, 2018, [https://www.rand.org/pubs/research\\_reports/RR2314.html](https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR2314.html).

Despite criticisms of the idea of absolute truth and the denial of its validity, the concept of absolute truth has nevertheless survived. It is even experiencing a modest revival.<sup>29</sup> There are voices that defend the operational value of absolute truth and even advocate bringing the concept back into use. These voices cannot be ignored and deserve attention. They are not accidental; they come for a reason. The dire state of contemporary civilization has inspired these calls. In her article “Does Truth Really Matter?” Jessica Wahman offers the following reflection:

To believe there is such a thing as the truth is to believe in something that resists political manipulation, revisionist history, and, at least in general, human rapaciousness, cowardice, pettiness, and greed. Furthermore, it implies a reality where everyone’s story is told, and where everything has a place in eternity. And when living people care enough to hear and share these truths as they waft in on wind and water, there is the possibility for us to make the truth matter to ourselves, each other, and future generations.<sup>30</sup>

The voices that bring attention to the subject of absolute truth come from different quarters. They do not call for a return to the past. Many of them come from secular thinkers, scientists, and professionals.<sup>31</sup> Even voices motivated by religious convictions rely on modern secular knowledge and even science. Proponents of the revival argue that absolute truth has an important and viable

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<sup>29</sup> Gerald L. Schroeder, *The Hidden Face of God: How Science Reveals the Ultimate Truth* (The Free Press, 2001).

<sup>30</sup> Jessica Wahman, “Does Truth Really Matter? Notes on a Crisis of Faith,” *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy*, vol. 34, no. 4 (2020), pp. 491–507, p. 504, <https://doi.org/10.5325/jspecphil.34.4.0491>.

<sup>31</sup> Gerald L. Schroeder, *The Hidden Face of God: How Science Reveals the Ultimate Truth* (The Free Press, 2001); Andrew J. Schoenfeld, “Spine surgical research: searching for absolute truth in the era of “big data,”” *The Spine Journal*, vol. 15, no. 5 (May 2015), [https://www.thespinejournalonline.com/article/S1529-9430\(15\)00011-X/abstract](https://www.thespinejournalonline.com/article/S1529-9430(15)00011-X/abstract); Corrinna Kruse, “Producing Absolute Truth: CSI Science as Wishful Thinking,” *American Anthropologist*, vol. 112, no. 1 (March 2010), pp. 79-91, <https://anthrosource.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/j.1548-1433.2009.01198.x>; Shlomit Yadlin-Gadot, “The Desire for Truth, Its Crisis and Mental Life.” *Contemporary Psychoanalytic Studies* 22 (April 1, 2016): 14–38; Alan Frosch, ed., *Absolute truth and unbearable psychic pain: Psychoanalytic perspectives on concrete experience* (London: Karnac Books, 2012); Ömer Faruk Şimşek, Aylin Ecem Ceylandağ, Gizem Şimşek Akcan, “The Need for Absolute Truth and Self-Rumination as Basic Suppressors in the Relationship Between Private Self-Consciousness and Mental Health,” *Journal of General Psychology*, vol. 140, no. 4, pp. 294-310; Shlomit Yadlin-Gadot Brill, 2016 *Truth Matters: Theory and Practice in Psychoanalysis* (Rodopi: Brill, 2016).

function in human civilization by providing a standard for evaluating knowledge, affirming our moral and aesthetic values, and others.<sup>32</sup>

There is no evidence to support claims that absolute truth imposes limitations on freedom and leads to increased competition, tensions, and conflicts. As the current state of civilization shows, tensions and conflicts are on the rise despite the continued rejection of absolute truth. The proponents of absolute truth contend that the demise of absolute truth has undermined the cohesion of Western civilization. It has contributed to the erosion and decline of liberal order. Many critics of the contemporary Western civilization, both on the left and on the right, decry the loss of the capacity of Western civilization to provide global leadership.<sup>33</sup>

The solution that the advocates offer is to bring absolute truth back as an operational concept that would regulate human practice. In their view, the revival will play an important role in addressing the current problems. In his article “In Defense of Absolute Truth” Alan S. Rome insists that absolute truth can unify human civilization, preserve its integrity and ensure its survival.<sup>34</sup> In view of the current chaos and instability, the idea of bringing back the concept of absolute truth becomes increasingly attractive.

There is a widespread recognition that human civilization is undergoing a period of dramatic transition. Humanity appears to be moving into some new stage in its evolution. However, the transition lacks guidance. There is no vision for future. As has been explained in this section, such guiding visions have always been present in the past transition periods. They offered new conceptions of absolute truth that steered the process of change. As one stage of civilization was declining, there was always a beacon that pointed the way to the future. There is no comparable vision available today, nothing that points the way. Our civilization appears to be in a free fall. The lack of any direction and guidance contributes to the prevailing sense of confusion, malaise, and fear. There seems to be no hope that would inspire optimism. Contemporary civilization experiences a profound existential crisis.

Arguments in support of the revival of “absolute truth” are cogent. Yet, they have so far failed to bring forth an effective conception of absolute truth. To regain its role, absolute truth must be objective, universal, and invariable. The new conception can be effective in remedying the current situation only if it rests on a solid foundation. Yet the arguments in support of absolute truth have so far failed to provide such foundation.

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<sup>32</sup> Jessica Wahman, “Does Truth Really Matter? Notes on a Crisis of Faith,” *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy*, vol. 34, no. 4 (2020), pp. 491–507, <https://doi.org/10.5325/jspecphil.34.4.0491>; Alan S. Rome, “In Defence of Absolute Truth.” *Quillette*, June 30, 2021, <https://quillette.com/2021/06/30/in-defence-of-absolute-truth/>.

<sup>33</sup> Arif Lalani, “New global alliances leave the West behind,” Chatham House, May 1, 2024, <https://www.chathamhouse.org/publications/the-world-today/2024-02/new-global-alliances-leave-west-behind>; Jonah Goldberg, *Suicide of the West: How the Rebirth of Tribalism, Populism, Nationalism, and Identity Politics Is Destroying American Democracy* (New York: Crown Forum, 2018), <https://jonahgoldberg.com/suicide-of-the-west/>.

<sup>34</sup> Alan S. Rome, “In Defense of Absolute Truth.”

## The Functional Role of Absolute Truth and the Process of Creation

The preceding section shows that absolute truth was persistently used in the past as an operational concept that regulated human practice. This fact indicates that the use of absolute truth is not fortuitous and that there must be an important reason for its existence. What is the source that brought to life the concept of absolute truth? What is its role?

Robert Sheldon provides the following definition of absolute truth: absolute truth is “whatever is always valid, regardless of parameters or context.” He further explains that the “*absolute* in the term connotes one or more of a quality of truth that cannot be exceeded; complete truth; unvarying and permanent truth.”<sup>35</sup> All past conceptions of absolute have proven to be transient. The truth they described was not objective, universal, and invariable. That is why they have failed. The revival of absolute truth requires a new approach—one that can produce conception of absolute truth that will not be transient—that is, it will be objective, universal, and invariable under transformations.

Absolute truth is a mental construct. It originates in the human mind. This fact indicates that the function of absolute truth has something to do with operations performed by the human mind. Therefore, there must be a level of mental organization that gives rise to the concept of absolute truth.

As has been indicated, absolute truth also relates to the main spheres of human practice: cognitive, moral, and aesthetic. This observation leads to a conclusion that the level of organization that gives rise to and sustains the concept of absolute truth offers more possibilities than each sphere of human practice or the sum total of all their possibilities. In other words, this level of organization is more powerful than the one that sustains human practice. The fact that this level of organization incorporates all possibilities offered by the main spheres of human practice indicates that the emergence of this level of organization is a result of the integration of these spheres.

Integration is more than a mere inclusion. Integration involves equilibration that combines, rather than merely adds up properties. Equilibration creates new combinations and new possibilities that have not existed prior to equilibration; and new possibilities offer access to new resources. Thus, equilibration conserves possibilities.<sup>36</sup>

The equilibration of possibilities offered by the main spheres of human practice also creates a new level of organization—one that gives rise to the concept of absolute truth. This level of organization is more powerful than the one from which it has emerged. Since this level has more power than all the spheres of human practice, it can regulate their

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<sup>35</sup> Sheldon, “What is Absolute Truth?”; “Absolute Truth,” *Wikipedia*, [https://simple.wikipedia.org/wiki/Absolute\\_truth](https://simple.wikipedia.org/wiki/Absolute_truth)

<sup>36</sup> Shkliarevsky, Gennady. “Conservation, Creation, and Evolution: Revising the Darwinian Project Revising the Darwinian Project.” *Journal of Evolutionary Science* 1, no. 2 (September 25, 2019): 1–30. <https://doi.org/10.14302/issn.2689-4602.jes-19-2990>; Shkliarevsky, Gennady. “Revising the Cosmic Story.” *arXiv:2012.12749 [Physics]*, December 23, 2020. <http://arxiv.org/abs/2012.12749>.

operations--which explains the fact that absolute truth is relevant to all these spheres—and thus conserves them. Thus, conservation is at the heart of the process that creates the level of organization that gives rise to the concept of absolute truth.

Conservation is a universal function. It operates on the scale of the entire universe. It originates in the nature of the universe.<sup>37</sup> The main property of our universe is its uniqueness: it is all there is. There is nothing outside it; in fact, there is no outside to the universe. Since there is nothing outside the universe, nothing can come into it, and nothing can disappear from it because there is nowhere to disappear. Consequently, everything must be conserved. Conservation originates in the uniqueness of our universe and is essential to its existence.

Conservation requires resources. In the universe of finitudes resources are finite. Thus, conservation requires access to new resources; and these resources can only be obtained within, not outside, the universe. They must be created. In other words, conservation requires creation. Equilibration of available possibilities creates new combinations and gives rise to the emergence of new and increasingly more powerful levels of organization that offer access to new possibilities, or resources. Conservation requires creation, and creation leads to evolution. For what is the evolution if not a cascade of new and increasingly more powerful levels of organization nested in each other *matryoshka* style?

Thus conservation, creation, and evolution are closely related. They constitute a complete cycle of the process that sustains the universe and all that exists in it—the process of creation. This process gives rise to new and increasingly more powerful levels of organization. The creation of such levels of organization requires inclusion and integration of all available differences as equal and autonomous entities. Such integration combines differences and their properties (possibilities) that have not been combined before. The new combinations create new and increasingly more powerful levels of organization that have not existed prior to their emergence. These new levels give rise to new properties and new possibilities; it also provides access to new resources. The process of creation operates on universal inclusion, which is intrinsic to this process.

This process is objective. One important criterion of objectivity is the capacity to observe reality from all possible perspectives and all possible points of view. The process of creation is the source of all that existed, currently exist, or will exist in the future. Therefore, it is universally inclusive. To be universally inclusive is one important criterion of objectivity.

Another important condition of objectivity is the capacity for critical observation. Objective representation must include an objective observation of the process that makes observation possible. In other words, objectivity requires observing the process of creation that makes observation possible. All current theories of knowledge have not solved this problem of self-referentiality. Observing always requires a point from which to conduct

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<sup>37</sup> Shkliarevsky, Gennady. "Conservation, Creation, and Evolution: Revising the Darwinian Project Revising the Darwinian Project." *Journal of Evolutionary Science* 1, no. 2 (September 25, 2019): 1–30. <https://doi.org/10.14302/issn.2689-4602.jes-19-2990>;

Shkliarevsky, Gennady. "Revising the Cosmic Story." *arXiv:2012.12749 [Physics]*, December 23, 2020. <http://arxiv.org/abs/2012.12749>.

observation. The process of creation makes observing the object possible. However, as has been pointed out, objectivity also requires that one should be able to observe the process of observing. To offer a full view of the object, the point of observation should be located outside the object. Observing the process of creation that makes observation possible poses a problem. To observe the process, one needs a point from which one can observe it. However, acquiring such point immerses the observer in the process of creation. The fact of immersion creates the paradox of “infinite regress.” As Niklas Luhmann has pointed out, every point of observation can and will be succeeded by another one, no less susceptible to self-referentiality than its predecessor.<sup>38</sup> The resolution of this paradox requires for the observer to be both inside and outside the process of creation at the same time.

The process of creation provides a resolution of this paradox. This process works on the balance between equilibration and the production of disequilibrium, or balance between equilibrium and disequilibrium. Equilibration creates new and more powerful levels of organization in a system. The emergence of a more powerful level of organization creates a disequilibrium. Thus, as equilibrium grows, so does disequilibrium, and the two are always in balance. The balance between equilibrium and disequilibrium plays an important role in the process of creation. It makes the process possible. This balance regulates the process. Regulation is a reflective function. As a reflective function, the balance that regulates the process makes possible to observe/reflect on the entire process while being fully immersed in the process. Using the balance as the point of observation resolves the paradox and fulfills an important condition of objectivity. The conclusion that follows from the above discussion is that the process of creation is objective, and any perspective or conception in which the process of creation is its main organizing principle will also be objective.

The process of creation is universally inclusive. All its constituent parts—conservation, creation, and evolution—are universal. This process originates in the nature of the universe and operates on the scale of the entire universe. Consequently, the process of creation is universal and any perspective or conception in which the main organizing principle is the process of creation will inevitably also be universal.

Finally, the process of creation represents a closed cycle that goes through infinite iterations. The cycle includes conservation, creation, and evolution. Its initial stage is the inclusion and equilibration of all available differences. Such equilibration creates new combinations and gives rise to a new level of organization that is more powerful than the one from which it has emerged. The adaptation of differences to the new level of organization leads to the evolution of the entire system.<sup>39</sup> These stages of the process of creation are invariable no matter where the process takes place. They do not depend on

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<sup>38</sup> Gennady Shkliarevsky, “The Paradox of Observing, Autopoiesis, and the Future of Social Sciences,” *Systems Research and Behavioral Science* 24(3), pp. 323 – 32; Niklas Luhmann, *Social Systems* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1995), p. 479.

<sup>39</sup> Gennady Shkliarevsky, “Understanding the Process of Creation: A New Approach,” *Management: Journal of Sustainable Business and Management Solutions in Emerging Economies*, vol. 22, no. 3 (October 31, 2017), pp. 1–13, <https://doi.org/10.7595/management.fon.2017.0021>.

circumstances or conditions in which creation occurs. It is the same for particles, atoms, galaxies, stars, life, humans, society and civilization. The cycle of the process of creation is invariable under all conditions. Thus, the process of creation is objective, universal, and invariable. These properties characterize absolute reality. Consequently, the process of creation is the absolute reality; and the concept of absolute truth to which it gives rise will have the same properties.

Absolute truth is a mental construct that emerges in the human mind. The human mind is a product of the evolution propelled by the process of creation. As a product of the process of creation, the mind embodies this process and inherits its properties. Just like the process of creation, it can also create new and increasingly more powerful levels of organization. Since operations performed by the human mind are symbolic, the mind's capacity to create new levels of organization has no physical limits. It can create an infinite number of new and increasingly more powerful levels of organization.<sup>40</sup>

The pioneering work of Swiss psychologist and philosopher Jean Piaget on the origin of human intellect demonstrates the role of the process of creation in the rise of the human intellect. In his seminal work *The Origins of Intelligence in Children* Piaget shows how conservation of sensory-motor operations (hearing, seeing, etc.) and their equilibration creates a new level of organization that gives rise to mental images. This new level of organization makes symbolic operations possible. Sensory-motor operations are different from and incommensurate with each other. Combinations of these differences create a new and more powerful level of organization that conserves their differences as particular cases in a more general frame. The adaptation of the sensory-motor operations to this new level of organization enriches them and creates their symbolic equivalents (for example, mental images that have visual and audio characteristics at the same time).<sup>41</sup> Piaget's study convincingly shows that equilibration of sensory-motor operations leads to the creation of a new level of organization that is more powerful than the one from which it has emerged. The process creates a radical novelty with new properties that have not been observed prior to this novelty's emergence. This radical novelty opens the path to symbolic operations.

Since absolute truth is a mental construct, there is a level of mental organization that gives rise to this concept. This level of organization is ultimately a product of the process of creation. The function of this level of organization is vital. Just like the process of creation, this level of organization is also involved in conservation and creation. It conserves and integrates the main spheres of human practice: the sphere of knowledge production, the sphere of moral practice, and the sphere of aesthetic practices and values. This level of organization also makes possible the creation of an unlimited number of new and increasingly more powerful levels of organization that offer new possibilities and resources. The function of this level of organization is indispensable. It makes the evolution of culture and civilization possible.

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<sup>40</sup> Gennady Shkliarevsky, "The Mind's Eye: De-Mystifying Consciousness," *SSRN*, May 10, 2022, <https://ssrn.com/abstract=4105608> or <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.4105608>

<sup>41</sup> Jean Piaget, *The Origins of Intelligence in Children* (Madison, Conn.: International Universities Press, Inc., 1998).

The conclusion that follows from the above discussion is that the level of mental organization that gives rise to the concept of absolute truth performs a vital functional role. It conserves, integrates, and regulates the main spheres of human practice. It also makes symbolic operations possible and opens the path toward creating an infinite number of new and increasingly more powerful levels of organization, which provides access to new resources that are indispensable for the survival and evolution of human civilization. This vital function is essential and must be preserved.

Since the level of mental organization that gives rise to absolute truth performs a vital function, this function is relevant to the concept of absolute truth. The emergence of the concept is no accident. It is not frivolous, unnecessary, and disposable. The functional role of absolute truth, just like the functional role of the level of organization that gives rise to it, is also indispensable in sustaining human civilization and its evolution. It is irreplaceable and must be preserved.<sup>42</sup>

The concept of absolute truth has been used in the past. None of the past versions of this concept have been preserved; they have all proved to be transient and disposable. The preceding discussion demonstrates that the concept of absolute truth performs a vital function and, therefore, must be preserved. At the same time, however, it also shows that we have so far failed to preserve this concept. Rejecting absolute truth is not really an option since without it we cannot regulate the main spheres of human practice. In his defense of absolute truth, Alan Rome points out that

... without some notion of absolute truth, Alan Rome points out, we are unable to take authentic moral actions, to truly imagine and act towards a better world. One cannot consistently abhor injustices—whether slavery, genocide, or social inequality—unless one believes them to be absolutely, and not just relatively, wrong. If we are to believe in certain fundamental human rights, applicable to all people everywhere, we have to believe that they are absolutely true. They would not be human rights otherwise. They would apply only to those individuals who believed in them. In the same way, for all social reform we recognise that some aspects of society are unjust and need to change and that therefore there is some ideal standard of value that transcends actual practices.<sup>43</sup>

The solution is not in denying absolute truth, but in constructing a conception of absolute truth that would rest on a solid foundation that is objective, universal, and invariable.

As the product of the process of creation, the conception of absolute truth that uses the process of creation as its main organizing principle inherits the properties of this process. It is objective, universal, and invariable, or absolute. These are precisely the properties cited in the most common definitions of absolute truth. Robert Shelton defines

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<sup>42</sup> Alan S. Rome, "In Defense of Absolute Truth"

<sup>43</sup> Alan S. Rome, "In Defence of Absolute Truth," Quillette, June 30, 2021, <https://quillette.com/2021/06/30/in-defence-of-absolute-truth/>.

absolute truth as “whatever is always valid, regardless of parameters or context. The *absolute* in the term connotes one or more of: a quality of truth that cannot be exceeded; complete truth; unvarying and permanent truth.”<sup>44</sup> An entry in Wikipedia describes absolute truth as “a statement that is true at all times and in all places. It is something that is always true no matter what the circumstances.”<sup>45</sup>

As has already been explained, the source of the concept of absolute truth is ultimately the process of creation. The concept of absolute truth originates in the human mind and is closely related to the operation of the mind. The adoption of the conception of absolute truth based on the process of creation as its organizing principle represents a conscious appropriation of the power of the process, or the appropriation of this power by consciousness. The appropriation empowers the human mind. It enables consciousness to create an infinite number of new and increasingly more powerful levels of symbolic organization and operations. It offers access to infinite resources, which makes the survival and evolution of civilization possible.

To summarize, the discussion in this section outlines a new perspective on the origin and function of absolute truth. This perspective is very different from the ones that were used in the past. Those perspectives relied on human constructs as their main organizing principles. In other words, those perspectives were human-centered. As human-centered, those perspectives were exclusionary, subjective, and limited. As a result, the conceptions of absolute truth that emerged from those perspectives were transient.

The discussion in this section demonstrates that absolute truth performs vital functions. These functions have led to the rise of the concept of absolute truth. The emergence is not fortuitous. We cannot reject absolute truth. The rejection will make regulation of human practice ineffective. By dismissing the concept, we also limit our capacity to create new and increasingly more powerful levels of organization. The abrogation of absolute truth disrupts the evolution of human civilization and poses a serious threat to its survival. Rather than discard absolute truth as useless and even harmful, we must preserve it. We must bring absolute truth back into our practice. We should put it on the foundation that uses the process of creation as its vital organizing principle. In contrast to the conceptions of absolute truth that have been used in the past, the new conception rests on the process of creation as its foundation. As a result, the new conception is objective, universal, invariable, and absolute in the full sense of this word.

As this section demonstrates, the level of mental organization that gives rise to the concept of absolute truth is a product of the integration of the main spheres of human practice. Conservation is at the heart of this integration. It leads to the equilibration of properties (or possibilities) embodied in human practice. The equilibration produces combinations that offer more possibilities, thus giving rise to a new and more powerful level of organization. The power of the new level of organization transcends the power of each sphere and the sum total of their powers. The new level can effectively regulate the main spheres of human practice. Also, the power of the new level of organization opens

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<sup>44</sup> Robert Sheldon, “What is absolute truth?”

<sup>45</sup> “Absolute Truth,” *Simple English Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia*, October 10, 2024. [https://simple.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Absolute\\_truth&oldid=9818907](https://simple.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Absolute_truth&oldid=9818907).

prospects for creating an infinite number of new and increasingly more powerful levels of organization.

Since the level of mental organization that gives rise to absolute truth relies on the process of creation, the new conception must recognize its ultimate source--the process of creation--as its main organizing principle. As a result of embracing the process of creation, the new conception acquires its properties of being objective, universal, and invariable. It will be able to perform effectively and efficiently its vital functions of conserving and regulating the main spheres of human practice.

By relying on the process of creation, the new conception makes possible the appropriation of infinite power of the process by the human mind and consciousness. The appropriation will enormously enhance human capacity to create; it will make our civilization infinitely more productive and achieve exponential growth.<sup>46</sup> Such growth will ensure the infinite supply of resources (ideas, theories, approaches, etc.). The empowered mind will be able to solve any current or future problems that our civilization will encounter.

### **The New Conception of Absolute Truth and the Transcendence of Anthropocentrism:**

The current transition period is in many ways similar to the transition periods that have taken place in the past. Yet, as has already been pointed out, there is also one very significant difference. All previous transitions had a guiding vision that shaped the course of change. These visions had emerged before the transition began. In fact, their emergence marked the beginning of the transition. The new vision presented an alternative to the order and practice that had dominated the civilization before the transition started. It offered a different view of reality and its own distinct forms of human practice. Tensions and conflicts between the old order and the new vision propelled the transition to the new stage of civilization. The new Christian way of life emerged in the womb of Ancient Civilization that had preceded it. The evolution of Christian civilization of the European Middle Ages paved the way for the emergence of modern civilization with its own distinct features and practices.

The current transition period is very different from those in the past. There is no vision of the future that guides the process of change today. In fact, those who are trying to shape human civilization today rely on revived traditions to guide their policies. The emphasis on tradition is characteristic for contemporary China, Russia, and even the United States under Trump.<sup>47</sup> Due to the lack of new vision, contemporary civilization appears to be in free fall, which explains confusion, fear, and despair that are on the rise in

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<sup>46</sup> Shkliarevsky, Gennady, Infinite Growth: A Curse or a Blessing? (March 2, 2022). Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=4048232> or <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.4048232>

<sup>47</sup> Gennady Shkliarevsky, "The Post-hegemonic World Order: the Case for Perpetual Peace," SSRN, August 22, 2024, <https://ssrn.com/abstract=4934136> or <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.4934136>.

contemporary society. Many people today describe the state of the world as chaotic and unpredictable.

Since there is no new vision, there is obviously no new “absolute truth,” not even on the horizon. As has been argued in the preceding section, the functional role of absolute truth includes conservation, integration, and regulation of human practice. The trend that dominates contemporary culture rejects the very notion of absolute truth. It argues that absolute truth is useless and even harmful since it limits human freedom, creates social divisions, and contributes to tensions, conflicts, and instability. In the current intellectual climate, even mentioning absolute truth is viewed as an act of apostasy--a challenge to accepted norms and common sense. Those who take the concept seriously become targets of derision and ridicule. Critics often label them as reactionaries and fanatics.

The fact that absolute truth is no longer used as an operational concept in regulating human practice weakens this function and makes it ineffective. Ineffective regulation gives rise to inconsistencies, contradictions, and paradoxes that create tensions and conflicts in society and contribute to its current malaise.

The absence of a guiding vision in the current period of transition begs for an explanation. Why is this the case? Why has our civilization failed to produce a new vision? How important is this fact?

One observation is in order. The guiding visions in the previous transition periods used human constructs as their organizing principle. In other words, these visions were human-centered, or anthropocentric. It is no accident. The anthropocentric tradition has dominated human civilization from the emergence of humanity. It remains dominant to this day. All previous stages of European civilization--Ancient, Christian, and Modern--bear distinct marks of the influence of the anthropocentric tradition. This tradition produced the guiding visions in all previous transition periods. The fact that it has failed to produce such vision in this transition period is very significant and certainly is no accident. The failure indicates that the anthropocentric tradition may have exhausted its creative potential and can no longer guide our civilization.

Anthropocentrism is an approach toward reality. The characteristic feature of this approach is that it views reality through the prism of constructs created by humans. Such prism can only produce human-centered, or anthropocentric, perspectives. It excludes all perspectives that are not human-centered.

The exclusionary nature of anthropocentrism makes this approach problematic. It cannot produce objective views of reality, since objectivity require inclusion of all perspectives and all possibilities. The conceptions of reality that emerge within the anthropocentric tradition are intrinsically subjective, limited, and arbitrary. This fact has been and continues to be the source of numerous problems that have plagued and continue to plague our civilization.

The emergence of the anthropocentric tradition was a result of the failure to grasp the importance of the process of creation. As has been explained, this process plays an important role by sustaining the universe and all that is in it. This process also plays an important role in human relationship with reality; it makes observing and interpreting reality possible. Yet from the time of its emergence, human civilization did not and still does not grasp this vital role. Early humans certainly did not recognize the fact that the reality they observed and interpreted was defined by their mental construct that made observing and interpreting possible. They had no idea that the process of creation was

involved in the emergence of these constructs. Reality appeared to them as given. The reality they observed and the way they interpreted it were human-centered.<sup>48</sup> Their views of reality were exclusionary, subjective, and limited, and so were the representations based on such views.

Objectivity requires viewing reality from all possible perspectives, not just human-centered. Hence, views of reality that originate in the anthropocentric tradition are intrinsically subjective, limited, and arbitrary. The fact that relativism has eventually become dominant in the anthropocentric tradition is no accident. Relativism is the inevitable outcome of the exclusionary nature of anthropocentrism, and so is the rejection of the notion of absolute truth. The anthropocentric tradition simply cannot generate a bona fide objective conception of absolute truth that would not be transient. The conclusion that absolute truth is not and cannot be a viable operational concept has been an inevitable result of this failure.

The discarding of the concept of absolute truth has disrupted the function that conserves and regulates human practice. The disruption has made the regulation of human practice ineffective. Ineffective regulation has given rise to inconsistencies, contradictions, and paradoxes that create tensions and conflicts in society. Also, the function that conserves and regulates human practice, or sensory-motor operations, generates the level of organization that opens the path toward symbolic operations that make possible to regulate all functions of the human mind and to create an infinite number of new and increasingly more powerful levels of organization.

The disruption of this function has an adverse effect on the human capacity to create. Such disruption impedes the evolution of civilization and poses a threat to human survival. The exclusionary approach of the anthropocentric tradition disempowers the human mind. It prevents humans from establishing control over the process of creation and its enormous power.

The new approach outlined in this article is not anthropocentric. It uses the process of creation that is not a human creation as its main organizing principle. By embracing this process, the new approach enhances the human capacity to create. It empowers the human mind and consciousness. By appropriating the process of creation, the human mind gains access to the awesome power of this process. It becomes capable of creating an infinite number of new and increasingly more powerful levels of organization—a condition that is essential for the survival and evolution of human civilization.

The current transition period offers a unique and important opportunity for transcending the anthropocentric tradition. This opportunity makes the current transition period more important than any transition period in the past. All transformations that took place in the past occurred within the anthropocentric tradition. As a result, they all brought some of the same problems. The adoption of the new conception of absolute truth is a very important step in transcending the anthropocentric tradition and its limitations. The transcendence will enhance the human capacity to create. It will boost economic production and will make possible its exponential growth, which will provide a steady

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<sup>48</sup> Gennady Shkliarevsky, "The Evolution of Civilization as a Process of Creation," SSRN, January 28, 2020), <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3526961> or <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3526961>.

access to new resources that are crucial for solving current problems or problems our civilization will face in the future.

The new conception of absolute truth recognizes the central role of the process of creation. It ushers in a new approach that views reality through the prism defined by the process of creation. This process is not a human construct and, consequently, the new approach is not human-centered. The new conception will shape a new practice that will be decidedly not anthropocentric. This fundamental change will end the domination of the anthropocentric tradition.

The consequences of this development will be epochal. The new approach and the new practice will be the two most important consequences of this change. In contrast to the current practice, the new practice will not be exclusionary, subjective, and arbitrary. One of the most important features of the new practice will be its emphasis on universal inclusion and equality. This emphasis will have a profound effect on politics, political institutions, and social relations. The new practice will transform the way we produce, including production and evaluation of knowledge, and the way we manage our economy. It will shape our moral and aesthetic values and practices.<sup>49</sup> Last but not least, the new practice will change our relationship with nature; it will end the degradation of nature and will preserve human habitat.<sup>50</sup>

The end of the domination of the anthropocentric tradition is not the end of human civilization. On the contrary, the transcendence of this tradition will open new vistas and new possibilities for the evolution of human civilization. It will unleash the power of the process of creation, which will ensure that human civilization will never be in peril.

To summarize, this section shows the many shortcomings, limitations, and flaws of the anthropocentric tradition that are due to its exclusionary nature. The views of reality that originate within this tradition are subjective and arbitrary. The exclusionary approach of this tradition makes impossible to solve the problem of difference.<sup>51</sup> This failure leads to conflicts, wars, and the destruction of the environment. The anthropocentric tradition cannot solve the problem of growth and eliminate inefficiency in our economy.<sup>52</sup> It creates

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<sup>49</sup> Gennady Shkliarevsky, *The Civilization at a Crossroads: Constructing the Paradigm Shift* (Raleigh, NC: Glasstree Publishing, 2017).

<sup>50</sup> Gennady Shkliarevsky, "Living a Non-Anthropocentric Future<" (September 29, 2021), SSRN, September 29, 2021, <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3933108> or <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3933108>.

<sup>51</sup> On the importance of differences, see Gennady Shkliarevsky, "Resolving the Crisis: From Turmoil to New Practice," (May 9, 2024). SSRN, May 9, 2024, particularly chap. 5, <https://ssrn.com/abstract=4822677> or <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.4822677>.

<sup>52</sup> Gennady Shkliarevsky, "Made in America: The Debt Crisis USA," SSRN, February 25, 2023, <https://ssrn.com/abstract=4370741> or <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.4370741>; Gennady Shkliarevsky, "Infinite Growth: A Curse or a Blessing?" SSRN, March 2, 2022, <https://ssrn.com/abstract=4048232> or <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.4048232>

conditions conducive to social and political instability. The failure of the anthropocentric tradition to offer a new vision for the future is the most convincing proof of its bankruptcy.

All the above points lead to one conclusion: to survive, evolve and prosper, our civilization must transcend the anthropocentric tradition. It must adopt a new approach toward reality that would overcome the shortcomings and flaws of anthropocentrism. This approach must be objective and universal. Only such approach can produce objective views of reality, and only objective views of reality can provide solutions to the current and future problems.

The anthropocentric tradition has a long history. This tradition has shaped the evolution of human civilization over millennia. It permeates many aspects of our life. This tradition represents only one way of approaching reality. As this article argues, there is an alternative way. It is inclusive and, consequently, more powerful than the anthropocentric approach. The new approach does not dismiss the achievements of the anthropocentric tradition; it transcends this tradition, not destroys it.

Human civilization is at a point when it can no longer continue following the tradition that has defined it for millennia. If our civilization does not change its current course, it will face a real possibility of extinction. The threat to human existence demands action. We can no longer keep marking time and ignore reality, hoping that problems will somehow go away. We must transcend the tradition that has outlived itself. It is time to put human civilization on a firm foundation that has its roots in the objective and universal process that sustains the universe and has made our civilization possible.

### **The New Conception of Absolute Truth and the New Practice**

As has been pointed out in the preceding section, the new conception of absolute truth is very different from all previous conceptions. Since the concept of absolute truth regulates human practice, the adoption of the new conception will significantly affect all spheres of human practice. The transcendence of anthropocentrism is not merely a change in theoretical stance. It will be effective only if it finds its way into human practice.

Since the new conception uses the process of creation as its main organizing principle, the properties of the process of creation are the characteristic features of the new practice. In contrast to the current practice that focuses primarily on understanding nature/reality and acquiring control over it, the focus of the new practice will primarily be on the creation of new and increasingly more powerful levels of organization. The creation of new levels of organization is much more effective way in generating new knowledge than the current approach in which the persistence of old and weaker levels of organization impedes the production of new knowledge. In his well-known book *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, Thomas Kuhn explains that since “normal science” will often suppress novelties that undermine its foundation, the generation of people who follow old ways must die out to clear the way for innovation.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Thomas Samuel Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012).

The process of creation originates in conservation. Therefore, conservation will play the central role in the new practice, just as it does in the process of creation. To reiterate again, conservation requires creation of new and increasingly more powerful levels of organization, which leads to evolution. New levels of organization give rise to new forms—ideas, perspectives, approaches, products, etc. Knowledge and control over nature are not the main goals of the new practice. They are merely by-products of the cycle of conservation and creation. The process of creation is primarily about sustaining itself. The need to sustain itself is intrinsic, not extrinsic to the process. The cause that drives this process is internal. By creating new and increasingly more powerful levels of organization, the process of creation conserves itself. The focus on creating new levels of organization will make the production of knowledge much more effective and efficient since this approach does not allow a weaker level of organization to dominate and prevent the rise of new knowledge. Therefore, the main goals of the new practice are to stimulate the process of creation and make its operation efficient.

There is another way in which the new practice will be different from the current one. As has been explained, conservation is central to the new practice. It is conservation that leads to creation. The anthropocentric tradition has divorced conservation from creation. This tradition accepts the notion that destruction of old forms is essential for creating room for new ones.<sup>54</sup> It has even coined a term “creative destruction” that captures this belief. As Nietzsche writes in his *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*: “Always doth he destroy who hath to be a creator.”<sup>55</sup> Since anthropocentrism accepts an inherent and fundamental contradiction between the old and the new, the term “creative destruction” has gained wide popularity in Western culture and was embraced by such prominent intellectuals as Karl Marx, Werner Sombart, and particularly Joseph Schumpeter.

Conservation is fundamental to the new practice. According to the new practice, there is no creation without conservation. This practice does not embrace the notion that destruction is necessary; the new practice has no room for destruction. Conservation and creation are closely related and complementary in the new practice. When differences combine, they enrich each other. They acquire new properties and access new resources, which conserves differences, not destroys them. In contrast to the current practice, the new practice brings together conservation and creation and makes them co-dependent.

As has been explained earlier, the process of creation works on universal inclusion. It combines all differences and integrates them and their properties as equal contributors

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<sup>54</sup> See Butusov, Mikhail. “Human Civilization: Destroying as We Create?” Biological evolution on the planet and human civilization,” *RIAC*, May 30, 2022, Accessed February 3, 2025. <https://russiancouncil.ru/en/analytics-and-comments/analytics/human-civilization-destroying-as-we-create/>. Michael Hoag, “Civilization’s Fatal Flaw, the Root Cause of Our Problems - (And How to Address It).” *Transformative Adventures*, October 27, 2015.,<https://transformativeadventures.org/2015/10/27/civilizations-fatal-flaw-the-root-cause-of-our-problems-and-how-toaddress-it/>.

<sup>55</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra: A Book for Everyone and No One* (New York: Penguin, 1961).

to the rise of new combinations that are more powerful than each of its constitutive parts or their sum total. The resulting combinations represent a more powerful level of organization that offers more possibilities and access to new resources.

Since the new practice uses the process of creation as its main organizing principle, universal inclusion and equality will be essential features of this practice. Rather than suppress differences as is common in the current practice, the new practice will integrate and conserve differences. The new practice is incompatible with exclusion and inequality. It will end elite rule and domination of hierarchies.

One consequence of universal inclusion and equality will be a new attitude toward differences. The current practice does not know how to use differences as a resource; it does not see the importance of this resource. As a result, interactions among differences create clashes, not lead to integration and creation. Contemporary civilization sees differences as a threat to order and stability and tries to shun and suppress them. The failure to embrace the process of creation makes difficult, if not impossible, to use differences constructively and productively as the most valuable resource.

By contrast, the new practice views differences as a source of new possibilities that offer access to new resources. In fact, in this view differences are the most important resource available to us. Differences play a critical role in creating new levels of organization. Rather than shun and suppress differences, as is common in the current practice, the new practice offers a positive approach toward differences. This approach seeks to conserve differences and use them as a resource in creating new levels of organization. The new practice is incompatible with the zero-sum approach in which the gain for one side is the loss for the other; the new practice is about creating win-win situations in which all sides benefit from combining their differences.

As has been explained earlier, the balance between hierarchical and non-hierarchical interactions plays an important role in the process of creation. In the new practice based on this process, the two types of interactions are not in conflict with each other, as is the case in the current practice. Both are equally important and mutually complementary; and both contribute to creating new levels of organization. Non-hierarchical interactions among equals are the source of creation. They create new and more powerful levels of organization. Hierarchical interactions perform a different but also extremely important function. They conserve and optimize newly created levels of organization. The relationship between the two types of interactions is what makes the process of creation work. Neither type should dominate over the other. They should always be in balance and work in harmony. The balance is important. A violation of this balance disrupts the process of creation. Maintaining this balance is an important aspect of the new practice, and it requires understanding of the way that the process of creation works. Such understanding is essential for the new practice.

The recognition of the need for a balance between hierarchical and non-hierarchical interactions redefines the role of leadership and leaders in the new practice. In the current practice the primary function of leaders is to secure and maintain hierarchical subordination and control. That is the main reason why hierarchies play a dominant role in our civilization. The function of leaders in the new practice is very different. The new practice and its organizing principle reshape the role of leaders.

Hierarchies are products of non-hierarchical interactions that create new and more powerful levels of organization. The emergence of such levels of organization gives rise to hierarchies and leaders. This fact points to mutual dependency of leaders and networks. New and more powerful levels of organization perform a global function within a system. They regulate interactions that are taking place at local levels of organization. Therefore, the main function of those who operate at the global level--i.e., leaders--is to regulate creative non-hierarchical interactions and to maintain their efficiency at a high level.

Global levels of organization offer more possibilities than local levels; they are more powerful than the latter. Since leaders operate at global levels, they have access to both the global and the local level of organization. By contrast, agents who operate at the local level do not have access to the global level and its possibilities. Due to their position at the global level, leaders can observe and regulate local interactions. As a result, they can facilitate and guide the emergence of new levels of organization.

The rise of more powerful levels of organization creates disequilibrium within a system. Conservation and evolution of the system requires equilibration of global and local level of organization. Such equilibration involves accommodation: agents who operate at the local level must adapt to the more powerful global level. Due to power differential, the spontaneous adaptation of those at the local level to the global level is a slow, incremental, and arduous process that requires much time and energy. Since leaders have access to both levels of organization, they can facilitate this adaptation, make it more efficient and less time-consuming.

Effective communication is key in maintaining system's stability; particularly, effective communication between levels of organization of unequal power. The establishment of effective communication involves equilibration. The equilibration of two levels of organization of unequal power requires a common frame in which both levels represent simply two particular cases. A common frame provides the language in which both levels can communicate with each other. The creation of such language requires expressing operations at the global level of organization in terms of operations that are taking place at the local level of organization. Only leaders have access to both levels; and only they can express more powerful operations in terms of less powerful ones. Leaders can use local operations to encode operations at the global level. This method is called reflective coding. Kurt Gödel, the famous Austrian mathematician and logician, used reflective coding in his famous proof of consistency and completeness. Gödel found the way to express mathematical formulas in terms of arithmetical numbers, creating what has become known as Gödel numbers.<sup>56</sup> This procedure effectively equilibrates a more powerful level of organization (mathematical formulas) with less powerful ones (numbers), thus creating a new and more powerful frame that includes both the less powerful and the more powerful level as particular cases—that is, cases that are true under specific assumptions or conditions.

Reflective coding is the path that offers those who operate at the local level to have access to the global level, which is essential for adaptation and equilibration of the two levels. Equilibration of the two levels enriches the operations at the local level. The

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<sup>56</sup> Ernest Nagel and James R. Newman, *Gödel's Proof* (New York: New York University Press, 1958).

equilibration of the enriched operations creates a new level of organization that is more powerful than the one from which it has emerged. As a result, the entire system evolves; it acquires more possibilities, becomes more stable, and gains access to new resources. Leaders can facilitate the equilibration of the two levels, thus play the key role in conserving the system and making its evolution efficient.

There is also another important balance that plays an essential role in the process of creation. It is the balance between equilibration and the production of disequilibrium, or equilibrium and disequilibrium. The dynamics of the process relies on this balance. The emergence of the new and more powerful level of organization perturbs the system since it creates a disequilibrium. The subsequent equilibration of the new global level and the one from which it has emerged leads to differentiations of the global level. The equilibration of these differentiations creates a new and more powerful level of organization. As equilibrium grows, so does disequilibrium. The balance between the two is constant; it is what makes the system dynamic. Maintaining this balance is a very important aspect of the new practice. The role of leaders in maintaining this balance is extremely important.

This discussion of specific aspects of the new practice is certainly not exhaustive. It covers only the already known features of the process of creation. As the application of the new practice advances, other important aspects will certainly come to light. Making the process of creation central to our civilization is in its initial stages; it is still very much a work-in-progress. As this work evolves, our understanding of the process of creation will expand; and the acquired knowledge will certainly find its way into practical applications.

A brief conclusion summarizes the points made in the preceding discussion:

1. The current practice is about the acquisition of knowledge and control over nature. The new practice is primarily about creating new and increasingly more powerful levels of organization that give rise to new and more powerful forms: new ideas, theories, approaches, and products. The new practice is, first and foremost, about conserving the process of creation and attaining greater efficiency in using it
2. The current practice has its roots in the anthropocentric tradition. This tradition is exclusionary. As a result, it produces knowledge that is subjective, limited, and arbitrary. By contrast, the new practice is based on the process of creation. This process is not a human product; on the contrary, it has led to the rise of the human mind and civilization. Since the new practice uses the process of creation as its main organizing principle, it transcends the anthropocentric tradition that has become an impediment to the progress of our civilization.
3. Since the process of creation does not originate in the anthropocentric tradition, the conception of absolute truth that uses this process as its organizing principle is decidedly not anthropocentric. The new practice that relies on this conception will also be non-anthropocentric. Due to its inclusive nature, the new practice will produce objective views and representation of reality.
4. The current practice produces knowledge that is exclusionary, subjective, and arbitrary. Such knowledge cannot ensure the survival and evolution of our civilization. By contrast, knowledge produced by the new approach based on the

principles of universal inclusion and equality offers a view of reality that is comprehensive and objective. Knowledge produced by the new practice will serve to sustain our civilization and contribute to its progress.

5. The process of creation works on inclusion. The principles of universal inclusion and equality are central to the new practice that requires the inclusion of all possible perspectives and views. Such inclusive practice is the main condition of objectivity. The new practice makes possible to eliminate exclusion and inequality that create tensions, conflicts, and wars and thus pose a threat to the survival of our civilization. The elimination of exclusion and inequality will end elite rule that dominates our civilization. By preventing tensions and conflicts, it also makes possible to secure peace and stability that are essential for the continued evolution of human civilization.

## Conclusion

The subject of this article is controversial. The intellectual tradition that dominates our civilization has long ago rejected the validity of the concept absolute truth; it criticizes this concept as meaningless and one that has no place in a serious intellectual discourse. The denial has been in effect for so long that few question the rationality of this decision and dare to bring up this subject in serious discussions. The abrogation of absolute truth is accepted today as self-evident and requiring no proof.

Indeed, there were times when absolute truth played an important role in human civilization. Discussions of absolute truth attracted much attention and generated intense intellectual exchanges. Those times are now a distant memory preserved mostly in history books. Today, the subject of absolute truth resides on the periphery of modern discourse and hardly stirs a whisper.

The demise of absolute truth was not a result of a bullet-proof case against it. The deniers of absolute truth have not provided an incontrovertible rational justification and empirical evidence to prove the impossibility of the existence of absolute truth. Alan Rome makes a valid point when he writes:

Indeed, how can one demonstrate that there is no absolute truth? Only through a rational demonstration which presupposes that there are absolute standards of logic and argument that transcend that particular context. Reason would have to destroy itself. To make any claims about anything at all we have to assume that the basic rules of logic are universally consistent.<sup>57</sup>

The demise of absolute truth has largely been a result of the failure of the dominant intellectual tradition to provide a bona fide conception of absolute truth that would be objective, universal, and invariable under transformations. The conceptions produced in the past have failed to live up to expectations that they have inspired. All of them proved to

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<sup>57</sup> Rome, "In Defence of Absolute Truth."

be transient. As a result of these failures, the concept has finally fallen out of use, which eventually led to its dismissal and to the ascendance of relativism. For all practical purposes, the career of the concept until recently appeared to be over.

Considering the history of absolute truth, recent calls for its revival come as a surprise.

What is even more surprising is that these calls do not appeal to the past. They do not advocate a return to traditional views. On the contrary, voices in support of absolute truth originate in modern thinking and are motivated by contemporary challenges, and particularly by the failing state of modern civilization. They are inspired by concerns and fears that result from increasing chaos and instability. They come from religious and secular thinkers and from scientists.

Moved by the turmoil that currently rages in the world a growing number of people conclude that dominant ideas and approaches no longer work, and that ending this crisis requires new theories and new approaches. They also recognize that that our civilization needs common principles that can bring the global community together. Calls for the revival of absolute truth as an operational concept of human practice are also part of this new development.

The article argues that the rejection of absolute truth was a result of the fundamental flaw in the anthropocentric tradition that has dominated our civilization since its inception and to this day. Anthropocentrism, as defined in this article, represents an approach that views reality through the prism of human-centered constructs. Today this tradition is under siege. There is a growing concern that this tradition is responsible for serious problems faced by our civilization. The degradation of the environment and climate change are perhaps the most visible of these problems and pose to most direct threat to the survival of human habitat.<sup>58</sup> There is also an additional reason why the anthropocentric tradition is currently in retreat. It has failed to produce a vision that would guide our civilization in the current global crisis. Its failure prompts a search for alternatives.

The article demonstrates that the anthropocentric tradition is exclusionary. It uses only perspectives that view reality through the prism of human-centered constructs and excludes all those that are not human-centered. Due to its exclusionary nature, the anthropocentric tradition is subjective and arbitrary. Its exclusionary approach cannot offer an objective view of reality. Since absolute truth must be, by definition, objective, universal, and invariable, the anthropocentric tradition is in principle incapable of generating a bona fide conception of absolute truth; hence the failures of this tradition to produce such conception.

As a result of the many flaws of the anthropocentric tradition that increasingly come to light, this tradition is currently under intense criticism and revision. One of the issues in

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<sup>58</sup> Paul R. Ehrlich, "Human Natures, Nature Conservation, and Environmental Ethics," *BioScience*, vol. 52, no. 1 (January 1, 2002), p. 31, [https://doi.org/10.1641/0006-3568\(2002\)052\[0031:HNNCAE\]2.0.CO;2](https://doi.org/10.1641/0006-3568(2002)052[0031:HNNCAE]2.0.CO;2); Paul R. Ehrlich and Anne H. Ehrlich, "Can a Collapse of Global Civilization Be Avoided?" *Proceedings of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences*, vol. 280, no. 1754 (March 7, 2013): 20122845, <https://doi.org/10.1098/rspb.2012.2845>.

this revision is the denial of the validity of absolute truth. Calls for the revival of absolute truth come from very different quarters, both religious and secular. They indicate that many feel there is an urgent need for a new conception of absolute truth. These calls are not about a return to the past. They are about putting absolute truth on a new and modern foundation.

Truth is about correspondence between our mental constructs and reality.<sup>59</sup> Correspondence between absolute truth and absolute reality is important for the revival of absolute truth. Due to its exclusionary nature, the anthropocentric approach relies on relativism. It regards absolute reality as impossible. Absolute reality must be universally inclusive. Therefore, a conception of absolute reality must include all conceptions of reality produced by human civilization. The sheer number of such conceptions is enormous. They are also very different and even incommensurate with each other. Yet despite their differences and incommensurability, all these conceptions have one common feature. They are all creations of the human mind. They would be impossible without the process that has been involved in their creation—the process of creation. This process includes all conceptions of reality: those that existed, those that exist, and those that will exist. It is universally inclusive.

Also, this process is not a human creation. On the contrary, this process has created the human mind and consciousness. It had been in existence long before the emergence of humans and civilization. As this article demonstrates, the process of creation is objective, universal, and invariable under transformations. These characteristics make the process of creation the absolute reality. The recognition of the process of creation as absolute reality also passes the test of rational justification and empirical verification.<sup>60</sup>

The process of creation is central to the evolution and operation of the human mind. Mental constructs are product of this process. Absolute truth is no exception. Therefore, there can be no doubt about the correspondence between the concept that is produced by the process of creation and this process.

The new conception of absolute truth embraces the process of creation and recognizes it as its main organizing principle. Since the source of the new conception is the process that is objective, universal, and invariable, the conception of absolute truth has the same properties as the process that has produced it. The new conception of absolute truth, just like the process of creation is absolute in the full sense of the word.

As a mental construct, absolute truth is a product of the human mind. It is, therefore, closely related to the way that the mind operates. By adopting the new conception of absolute truth based on the process of creation, the human mind and consciousness appropriate the enormous power of the process of creation. The new conception puts this power at the disposal of human intelligence. The appropriation empowers the human mind and acquires the capacity to create an infinite number of new and increasingly more powerful levels of organization that will give rise to new and more

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<sup>59</sup> Ella Charko, “Absolute Truth: What It Is and Why It Matters.” *The Rebelution*, June 2, 2023. <https://www.therebelution.com/blog/2023/06/absolute-truth-what-it-is-and-why-it-matters/>.

<sup>60</sup> Gennady Shkliarevsky, *The Civilization at a Crossroads*.

powerful ideas, approaches, theories, and products. There are no problems in this universe that can withstand and resist this power.

This article has argued that the adoption of the new conception of absolute truth brings many benefits. By far the most significant one is the possibility to transcend the anthropocentric tradition that has become an impediment to the progress of our civilization. This tradition has outlived itself. The transcendence of this tradition by no means leads to the end of human civilization. It does not destroy the achievements of the anthropocentric tradition. On the contrary, the transcendence conserves them and use them in creating new and increasingly more powerful levels of organization. The transcendence removes the obstacles that prevented humanity from using the enormous power of the process of creation. The removal of these obstructions provides access to the enormous power of the process of creation, which opens infinite horizons for humanity and ensures the survival and continued evolution of human civilization.

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