

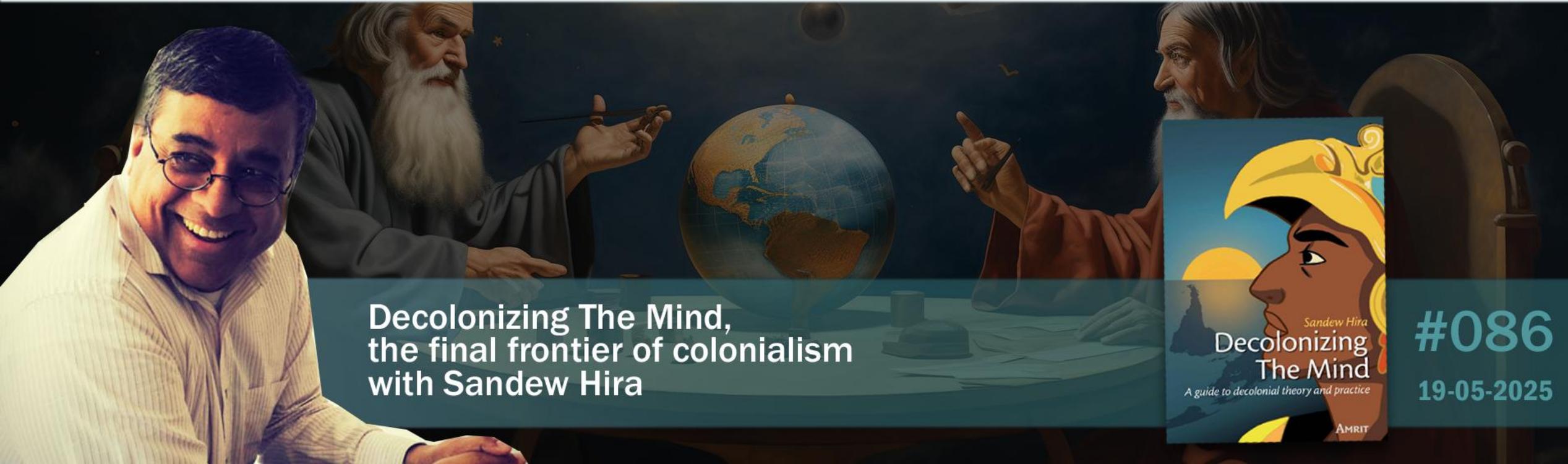
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Philisophy

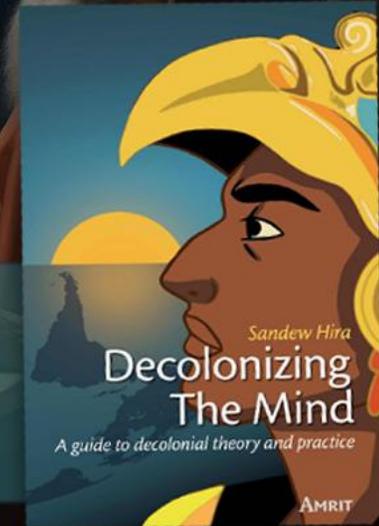
How to understand the core of Western philisophy and alternatives from the global south



Sources of knowledge



Decolonizing The Mind,
the final frontier of colonialism
with Sandew Hira



#086

19-05-2025

Topics

1. US corruption
2. Philosophy

Corruption of Trump's family - 1

Sons Eric and Donald Jr. had already traveled the Middle East extensively in recent weeks. They were drumming up business for The Trump Organization, which they are running in their father's stead while he's in the White House.

Eric Trump announced plans for an 80-story Trump Tower in Dubai, the UAE's largest city. He also attended a recent cryptocurrency conference there with Zach Witkoff, a founder of the Trump family crypto company, World Liberty Financial, and son of Trump's do-everything envoy to the Mideast, Steve Witkoff.

Corruption of Trump's family - 2

The Trump family's business interests in the region include a new deal to build a luxury golf resort in Qatar, partnering with Qatari Diar, a real estate company backed by that country's sovereign wealth fund. The family is also leasing its brand to two new real estate projects in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia's capital, in partnership with Dar Global, a London-based luxury real estate developer and subsidiary of private Saudi real estate firm Al Arkan.

The Trump Organization has similarly partnered with Dar Global on a Trump Tower set to be built in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, and an upcoming Trump International Hotel and luxury golf development in neighboring Oman.

Corruption of Trump's family - 3

The president announced in January a \$20 billion investment for US data centers promised by DAMAC Properties, an Emirati company led by billionaire Dubai developer Hussain Sajwani. Trump bills that as benefiting the country's technological and economic standing rather than his family business. But Sajwani was a close business partner of Trump and his family long before the 2016 election.

What is knowledge?

I define knowledge in general as *“the collection of insights and understanding about the natural and social world as expressed in concepts that describe and explain certain aspects of the social or natural world.”*

A concept is an idea that describes and explains certain aspects of the social and natural world. Knowledge is contained in concepts. The concept is the basic unit of knowledge.

Knowledge is about true and false and also about right and wrong. Ethics is part of knowledge.

How is knowledge produced?

1. Observation
2. Reasoning
3. Common sense
4. Innate knowledge
5. Social interaction
6. Revelation
7. Imagination/creativity

Who produces knowledge

Eurocentricism: only scientists

DTM:

- Everybody: innate knowledge
- Scientists
- Spiritual leaders
- Activists

The scientific method of Eurocentrism

Anol Bhattacharjee - *Social Science Research: Principles, Methods, and Practices*



*The purpose of science is to create **scientific knowledge**. Scientific knowledge refers to a generalized body of laws and theories to explain a phenomenon or behaviour of interest that are acquired using the scientific method.*

***Laws** are observed patterns of phenomena or behaviours, while theories are systematic explanations of the underlying phenomenon or behaviour.*

***Scientific method** refers to a standardized set of **techniques for building scientific knowledge**, such as how to make valid observations, how to interpret results, and how to generalize those results.*

The scientific method of Eurocentrism - 1

Scientific inquiry may take one of two possible forms: inductive or deductive.

*In **inductive** research, the goal of a researcher is to infer theoretical concepts and patterns from observed data.*

*In **deductive** research, the goal of the researcher is to test concepts and patterns known from theory using new empirical data.*

*Hence, inductive research is also called **theory-building** research, and deductive research is **theory-testing** research”.*

The scientific method of Eurocentrism - 2

The scientific method must satisfy four characteristics:

Reliability: *Others should be able to independently replicate or repeat a scientific study and obtain similar, if not identical, results.*

Precision: *Theoretical concepts, which are often hard to measure, must be defined with such precision that others can use those definitions to measure those concepts and test that theory.*

Falsifiability: *A theory must be stated in a way that it can be disproven. Theories that cannot be tested or falsified are not scientific theories and any such knowledge is not scientific knowledge. A theory that is specified in imprecise terms or whose concepts are not accurately measurable cannot be tested, and is therefore not scientific.*

Parsimony: *When there are multiple explanations of a phenomenon, scientists must always accept the simplest or logically most economical explanation. This concept is called parsimony or “Occam’s razor.” Parsimony prevents scientists from pursuing overly complex or outlandish theories with endless number of concepts and relationships that may explain a little bit of everything but nothing in particular.”*

The scientific method of Eurocentrism - 3

The research cycle

*“In the **observation phase**, we observe a natural or social phenomenon, event, or behaviour that interests us. In the **rationalization phase**, we try to make sense of the observed phenomenon, event, or behaviour by logically connecting the different pieces of the puzzle that we observe, which in some cases, may lead to the construction of a theory. Finally, in the **validation phase**, we test our theories using a scientific method through a process of data collection and analysis, and in doing so, possibly modify or extend our initial theory.”*

The scientific method of Eurocentrism - 4

There is no different approach for knowledge about nature and knowledge about human beings

“Science can be grouped into two broad categories: natural science and social science. Natural science is the science of naturally occurring objects or phenomena, such as light, objects, matter, earth, celestial bodies, or the human body. Natural sciences can be further classified into physical sciences, earth sciences, life sciences, and others. Physical sciences consist of disciplines such as physics (the science of physical objects), chemistry (the science of matter), and astronomy (the science of celestial objects). Earth sciences consist of disciplines such as geology (the science of the earth). Life sciences include disciplines such as biology (the science of human bodies) and botany (the science of plants). In contrast, social science is the science of people or collections of people, such as groups, firms, societies, or economies, and their individual or collective behaviours. Social sciences can be classified into disciplines such as psychology (the science of human behaviours), sociology (the science of social groups), and economics (the science of firms, markets, and economies).”

The scientific method of Eurocentrism - 5

How to deal with bias:

“Theories may have implicit cultural assumptions (e.g., whether they apply to individualistic or collective cultures), temporal assumptions (e.g., whether they apply to early stages or later stages of human behaviour), and spatial assumptions (e.g., whether they apply to certain localities but not to others). If a theory is to be properly used or tested, all of its implicit assumptions that form the boundaries of that theory must be properly understood. Unfortunately, theorists rarely state their implicit assumptions clearly, which leads to frequent misapplications of theories to problem situations in research.”

Common Sense as a source of knowledge

Common sense: cumulative knowledge of a community that has been passed on through generations to members of the community and is regarded as basic truth.

Some European philosophers acknowledge this as a valid source of knowledge: Thomas Reid Scotland (1710–1796), G.E. Moore (1873–1958)

Others don't: René Descartes (1596–1650), David Hume (1711–1776), Immanuel Kant (1724–1804)

The critique of Common Sense as a source of knowledge

René Descartes: senses can deceive you. Sometimes you can not distinguish an illusion, a dream, from reality. There is it not a valid source of knowledge.

David Hume: common sense beliefs (e.g., causation, induction) are psychologically ingrained habits, not rationally justified truths. Common sense assumes the future will resemble the past (e.g., "The sun will rise tomorrow"), but this cannot be logically proven. It is a habit of mind, not a law of nature

Immanuel Kant: "All our knowledge begins with the senses, proceeds then to the understanding, and ends with reason. There is nothing higher than reason." Common sense can not explain phenomenon's like reason can.

Indian view of Common Sense

The Nyāya school (founded by Akṣapāda Gautama (2nd century BCE) emphasizes logical reasoning (*anumāna*) and perception (*pratyakṣa*) as valid sources of knowledge (*pramāṇa*). Common sense aligns with *vyavahāra* (everyday practical knowledge) but must be scrutinized through logic.

Critique of Blind Trust: Nyāya warns against uncritical reliance on "common sense," as it may be clouded by error (*bhrānti*) or bias. For example, mistaking a rope for a snake in dim light shows perceptual fallibility.

Role in Ethics: Common sense guides social duties (*dharma*) but must align with scriptural authority (*śabda*) and reasoned ethics.

Chinese view of Common Sense

Common sense is rooted in education, tradition, and adherence to social roles. Confucius (551–479 BCE) (Analects) stresses that the junzi (gentleman) internalizes li and ren to navigate life with propriety. Mencius (371–289 BC) argues that moral common sense is innate (e.g., the "four sprouts" of virtue), while Xunzi views it as cultivated through rituals to counteract inherent selfishness.

Li: Ritual propriety and social norms guide behavior, functioning as a cultivated form of common sense. Knowing how to act in familial and societal roles (e.g., filial piety, xiao) reflects shared ethical understanding.

Ren: Benevolence and empathy inform moral judgment, blending innate sensibility with learned virtue.

African view of Common Sense

Akan Philosophy (Ghana): the Akan concept of "adwene" (practical wisdom), which blends reason with culturally embedded norms.

Example: The proverb "Se wo were fi na wosan kofa a, yenkyiri" ("If you forget, you will be reminded when you reach for the broken pot") underscores learning from collective experience.

"If your only tool is a hammer, you will see every problem as a nail."
—Gambian proverb

Like Descartes: I think therefore I am. Not a proverb, but philosophy.
Proverbs are concepts of philosophy but with common sense.

DTM use of common sense

- ❑ We acknowledge the weak side: senses can deceive us.
- ❑ We acknowledge the strong side: we can mistake a rope for a snake, but we will not mistake a rope from an elephant
- ❑ We apply common sense not as a universal general rule, but use the strength on a case by case basis
- ❑ We use common sense as a method of critique to deconstruct expert stupidity and destroy authority of Eurocentric knowledge

Social science - 1

A white historian of slavery, Ulrich Bonnell Phillips (1877-1934), was regarded for a long time by colonial historians as the ultimate authority on US slavery because of his meticulous study of plantation records from which he constructed a narrative that was essentially racist. He writes for example: *“The question remains, and may long remain, whether the manner in which the negroes were brought into touch with civilization resulted in the greater blessing or the greater curse. That manner was determined in part at least by the nature of the typical negroes themselves. Impulsive and inconstant, sociable and amorous, voluble, dilatory, and negligent, but robust, amiable, obedient and contented, they have been the world’s premium slaves.”*

Social science - 2

He came strong attack because of his racism. In an effort to conceal his racism, one of his followers, M. Dillen, makes up a story that is complex and confusing: *“Phillips lost in repute less because of mistaken perceptions and faulty scholarship (charity might have forgiven him his lapses in these respects, as others in his field have been forgiven theirs) than because he does not say what a later era wants and needs to hear. He was not egalitarian - he was an aristocrat, and he was a historian of aristocracy. He believed in hierarchy of people and of principles. He valued a moral code in which responsibility, duty, sacrifice, and sublimation predominate. In short, he admired to much in principle and behavior that is now recessive.”* A DTM response is to apply common sense and simplify this narrative: Bonnell studied hard to say a lot of nonsense.

Mathematics – 1: Ramanujan series

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w-l6XTVZXww>

Expert stupidity versus common sense

1. If you refer to a quote in a physics book that tells you the outcome, you have not told me how physics is using it
2. 1 dollar + 2 dollar + 3 dollar does not make you immensely rich. No you end up in debt. How is that possible? Am I crazy or are you stupid?
3. Common sense: where is the stupidity: infinity is not a number you can calculate with as if it is a number.

Next time

Other sources of knowledge

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