This paper examines the sociological contributions of Jack Philip McKinney in 1950s Queensland, framing his work through the lenses of intellectual sovereignty and community-driven resistance.

Intellectual Sovereignty and the Sociological Legacy of Jack McKinney

Thinking Deeper

Neville Buch

Contents

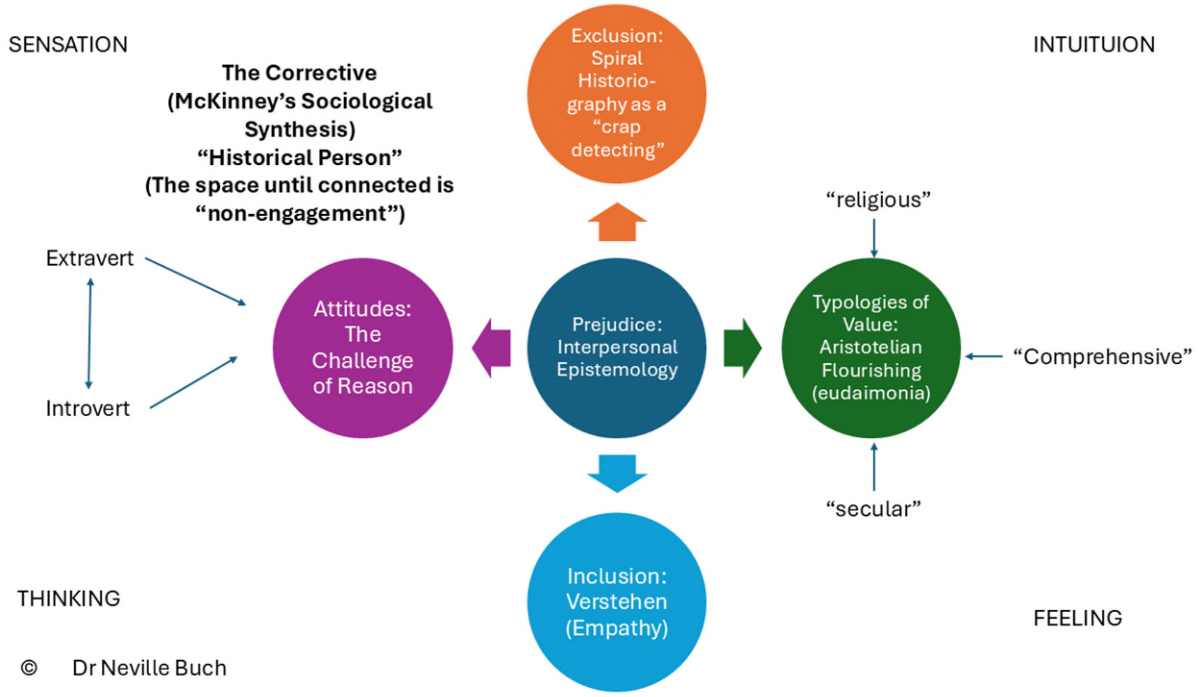
Abstract 3
INTRODUCTION 4
Acknowledged Social and Philosophical Thinkers 4
Engagement with Intellectual Disciplines 4
McKinney's Sovereign Synthesis: Philosophy as Resistance and Flourishing 5
Intellectual Sovereignty: The Outsider's Synthesis 5
Community-Driven Resistance: Breaking the "Queensland Character" 6
Restoring Human Authorship and Flourishing 6
The Interpersonal Synthesis and the Technocratic Mindset 7
The Interpersonal Synthesis of Knowledge 7
Challenging Specialized Ignorance and the Techné Mindset 7
The Habermasian Path to Communicative Rationality 8
Restoring Human Authorship and Aristotelian Flourishing 8
The Intellectual Immune System and the Dynamic of Cognition 8
1. Remediating the Pathology of Forgetfulness 8
2. Methodology of the Immune System: The DoC and POLICE Models 9
3. Filtering Falsehoods through Sufficient Comprehension 9
The Living Bridge: McKinney and Wright's Intellectual Synthesis 10
1. The "Meanjin Oasis": A Network of Resistance 10
2. Challenging "Historical Forgetfulness" 10
3. The Original Synthesis of Experience 10
4. Enacting Philosophy in Practice 11
5. Fostering a Contributory Economy 11
The Social Synthesis: Knowledge as Collective Human Authorship 11
The Interpersonal Synthesis of Knowledge 11
Challenging Elite Silos and Specialized Ignorance 12
Knowledge as Communicative Action 12
The McKinney Blueprint for Substantial Fairness and Flourishing 13

1. The Epistemological Foundation: Knowledge as an Interpersonal Thing 13
2. Defining Substantial Fairness: Beyond Formal Rules 13
3. The Mechanism for Flourishing: The Synthesis of Being 14
4. The Transition: From “Junior” to “Senior” Accountability 14
Spiral Historiography and the Restoration of Human Authorship 15
1. Remediating “Historical Forgetfulness” 15
2. Restoring Human Authorship 15
3. The Developmental Ascent to “Senior” Cognition 16
4. The Mechanism of Self-Correction: The POLICE Model 16
McKinney’s Intellectual Resistance to the Queensland Character Myth 16
Key Rationale for the Personal Breakout 18
CONCLUSION: THE ORIGINAL SYNTHESIS 19
Endnotes 21
APA Bibliography 22
The End 25

Abstract

This paper examines the sociological contributions of Jack Philip McKinney in 1950s Queensland, framing his work through the lenses of intellectual sovereignty and community-driven resistance. Operating as an independent scholar outside the university establishment, McKinney's formative text, *The Challenge of Reason* (1950), proposed a revolutionary "interpersonal" theory of knowledge. He argued that knowledge is a communicative process, directly challenging the specialized ignorance and atomization prevalent in modern technocratic systems.

Drawing on Dr. Neville Buch's Dynamic of Cognition framework, the paper argues that McKinney's sociology represents a vital resistance against the "Queensland Character" myth of anti-intellectualism. His pursuit of reflective self-understanding functioned as an "intellectual immune system," protecting social discourse from "widely-believed falsehoods". Furthermore, his partnership with Judith Wright exemplifies a community-based intellectual network that preserved critical thought during an era of historical delay. By asserting that knowledge belongs to the social act rather than elite silos, McKinney provides a foundational blueprint for substantial fairness and human flourishing in a contributory economy. Ultimately, his work facilitates a "personal breakout" from repetitive patterns of historical forgetfulness.



INTRODUCTION

In his philosophical works, specifically *The Challenge of Reason* (1950) and *The Structure of Modern Thought* (1971), Jack McKinney engaged with a broad spectrum of twentieth-century thinkers. While his primary focus was often on modern epistemology and the philosophy of science, he utilized insights from social psychology and linguistic anthropology to develop his core thesis, the "Original Synthesis of Experience".

According to the sources, McKinney explicitly refers to or analyses the following scholars and specialized social/philosophical thinkers:

Acknowledged Social and Philosophical Thinkers

- *Herbert Feigl*: McKinney utilized Feigl's essay "Logical Empiricism" (1949) to develop his concept of the "two types of thinkers" (the "worldly, tough-minded" variety vs. the "tender-minded" camp).
- *Martin Johnson* (Johnston): McKinney drew significantly from Johnson's *Science and the Meaning of Truth* (1946), quoting him alongside Feigl regarding the trial-and-error attitude of empirical thinkers.
- *Susanne Langer*: McKinney arrived at his argument for the collective nature of experience by utilizing Langer's work, *Philosophy in a New Key* (1941).
- *Ernest Gellner*: A "telling" reference in the academic reception of McKinney's work involves the comparison to the polemics of Gellner (a prominent philosopher and sociologist), specifically regarding McKinney's focus on the needs of the average intelligent person over academic insularity.
- *Gilbert Murray*: McKinney significantly cited Murray's *Five Stages of Greek Religion* in his analysis of the development of human thought.
- *William James*: McKinney performed a close analysis of James, identifying him as a key figure in the early-to-mid twentieth-century philosophical landscape.

Engagement with Intellectual Disciplines

McKinney's work is characterized by a "global research exercise" that synthesized various interdisciplinary references:

- *Social Psychology and Linguistic Anthropology*: He used these fields to explain "original state" anthropology, such as early hominids creating the first collective interpersonal experiences around a fireplace.

- *The Whorf-Sapir Hypothesis*: McKinney provided a balancing critique of this hypothesis (1929/1951) while developing his arguments for language as an alternative evolutionary strategy to instinct.
- *Philosophy of Science*: He engaged extensively with figures like Arthur Eddington, Albert Einstein, Phillipp Frank, and Conrad Hal Waddington to explain the dissolution of the world of "things" in modern thought.

While McKinney's work is often interpreted through the lens of sociologists like Max Weber, C. Wright Mills, and Randall Collins in contemporary scholarship (such as that of Dr. Neville Buch), his own texts primarily centred on the synthesis of social psychology, linguistic anthropology, and the critical analysis of philosophers like Russell, Wittgenstein, Ayer, and Ryle.

McKinney's Sovereign Synthesis: Philosophy as Resistance and Flourishing

Jack Philip McKinney's sociological contributions in 1950s Queensland are defined by his radical insistence on intellectual sovereignty as a "self-motivated outsider" and his use of philosophy as a tool for community-driven resistance against parochial myths. Operating during a period marked by "appallingly anti-intellectual" attitudes in Queensland, McKinney rejected the insularity of the local academic establishment to forge a global synthesis of modern thought. His work sought to resolve the "modern crisis of feeling and thought" by restoring human authorship over technical and social systems.

Intellectual Sovereignty: The Outsider's Synthesis

McKinney's sovereignty was expressed through his refusal to be bound by the "epistemological individualism" that dominated Western philosophy.

- *Knowledge as an Interpersonal Thing*: His core thesis, the "Original Synthesis of Experience," argued that what we perceive as "Objective Reality" is actually a collective social product synthesized over generations. By defining knowledge as an "interpersonal thing," he challenged the belief that individuals could derive universal truths in isolation.
- *Global vs. Parochial Focus*: While local institutions like the University of Queensland remained tethered to outdated British Idealism, McKinney meticulously integrated findings from Relativity Theory and Quantum Mechanics to argue that the physical world is an "experiential construction."

- *Critique of Specialization*: He attacked the "non-commitment" of specialized academic philosophy, asserting that the philosopher's primary duty is to promote common understanding and ethical action rather than engaging in detached linguistic games.

Community-Driven Resistance: Breaking the "Queensland Character"

McKinney utilized his modernizing epistemology to dismantle the "Queensland character" myth, which he viewed as a tool of political and intellectual stasis.

- *Subverting the Agrarian Myth*: This myth portrayed Queenslanders as bumbling, unreflective "innocent fools" or tough "happy-go-larrikins". McKinney reframed this as a state of "Historical Forgetfulness" that isolated citizens from social critical interaction.
- *The Big Chance Metaphor*: In his 1926 story, "The Big Chance," McKinney used a boxing metaphor where the "Western Philosopher" defeats the unreflective folklore populist through the weapons of reason.
- *Language as a Living Bridge*: He identified language as the "living bridge" that allows individuals to move beyond private, limited values toward a common world-picture. This process transforms the individual from a "passive conduit" of institutional stimuli into a proactive author of their shared reality.

Restoring Human Authorship and Flourishing

Framed through the Management Institute for Contributory Economy (MICE), McKinney's contributions provide a blueprint for a Contributory Economy grounded in Aristotelian flourishing (*eudaimonia*).

- *From "Junior" to "Senior" Cognition*: His legacy demands a developmental ascent where learners move beyond mere "vocational fitness" or "job-readiness" to become transformative intellectuals capable of social accountability.
- *The Synthesis of Being*: By reintegrating the Five Intentions—Self, Mind, Reason, Utility, and Love—McKinney's philosophy serves as a corrective to "denoetization," the mechanical liquidation of human judgment.
- *A New Star in the Universe*: For contemporary Queenslanders, McKinney's work remains an experience of finding a "new star in the universe," promising that participation in common knowledge allows the individual to transcend unreflective habit toward a life of virtuous action.

The Interpersonal Synthesis and the Technocratic Mindset

Knowledge as a communicative process is defined by its interpersonal nature, functioning as a collective social product synthesized over generations rather than a discovery made by individuals in isolation. This perspective directly challenges modern technocratic systems, which often enforce "specialized ignorance" and a "techné mindset" that reduces the multi-textured reality of human existence to atomized, quantifiable data.

The Interpersonal Synthesis of Knowledge

Jack McKinney's "Original Synthesis of Experience" posits that what we perceive as "Objective Reality" is actually a World-as-Construction. This synthesis resolves the atomization of modern thought through several mechanisms:

- *Knowledge as an Interpersonal Thing*: Knowledge is not derived from solitary private sense-data; instead, it is a historical development arising from the collective coordination of disparate individual experiences.
- *The "Living Bridge" of Language*: Language is the medium that operationalizes this synthesis, acting as a bridge that allows individuals to subsume their private, subjective sensations into a stable body of common knowledge.
- *Transforming Conflict into Meaning*: This communicative process was originally driven by the social necessity to transform individual psychical tensions into shared, communicable understandings.

Challenging Specialized Ignorance and the Techné Mindset

The modern technocratic system promotes "Partial Rationality," which fragmentizes the mind and siloes expertise. This creates several systemic pathologies:

- *Techné Mindset*: This cognitive failure in governance treats social relations as problems of calculation rather than as a field for human authorship. It reduces human beings to "puny human nodes" in automated technical networks, acting as passive conduits for institutional stimuli.
- *Denoetization*: Bernard Stiegler and Neville Buch define this as the mechanical liquidation of human discernment, where automated systems and "institutional bullshit" replace the individual's capacity to think and judge.
- *Historical Forgetfulness*: Atomized systems banish the origins and context of core concepts from memory, causing society to repeatedly commit past intellectual errors because it has lost its "social and historical bearings."

The Habermasian Path to Communicative Rationality

To overcome technocratic atomization, the sources advocate for Communicative Rationality as articulated by Jürgen Habermas:

- *Communicative Action vs. Strategic Action*: Technocratic systems rely on strategic, purposive-rational action aimed at manipulation and "Political Profit". Knowledge as a communicative process requires action aimed at Mutual Understanding (*Verständigung*) and reasoned consensus.
- *The Four Validity Claims*: For knowledge to be communicatively valid and social integration to be achieved, utterances must meet four criteria: they must be comprehensible, truthful regarding the external world, right according to social norms, and sincere regarding the speaker's intentions.
- *Ideal Communication Community***:** Rational dialogue acts as a "Court of Reason," creating a "we space" of emotional safety and mutual trust where participants act as proactive creators of reality.

Restoring Human Authorship and Aristotelian Flourishing

The ultimate goal of reclaiming knowledge as a communicative process is the restoration of human authorship. By synthesizing the Five Intentions—Self, Mind, Reason, Utility, and Love—society moves from a "Junior" mindset of docile execution toward a "Senior" state of social accountability. In this Contributory Economy, communal success is no longer measured by narrow pecuniary profit but by Aristotelian flourishing (*eudaimonia*), where human dignity, wisdom, and character are the primary standards of value.

The Intellectual Immune System and the Dynamic of Cognition

In the framework of the Management Institute for Contributory Economy (MICE), the pursuit of reflective self-understanding functions as a rigorous "intellectual immune system" by demanding that individuals examine their social and historical bearings. This cognitive safeguard is designed to filter out "widely-believed falsehoods"—the manufactured myths, "institutional bullshit," and populist rhetorics that currently colonize the public sphere.

1. Remediating the Pathology of Forgetfulness

The primary threat this immune system guards against is Historical Forgetfulness, a systemic pathology where societies repeat past intellectual errors because the origins and struggles of their core concepts have been banished from memory.

- *The Loss of Bearings*: When individuals ignore the social and historical bearings of their values, they lose their intellectual immune system and become "passive conduits" for dominant ideologies.
- *Willed Innocence*: Reflective self-understanding directly challenges "willed innocence," the cognitive failure of ignoring how failed policies are driven by external stimuli rather than human authorship.

2. Methodology of the Immune System: The DoC and POLICE Models

This "immune system" is operationalized through specific analytical frameworks:

- *The Dynamic of Cognition (DoC):* This framework allows for a "personal breakout" from repetitive errors by moving the individual from unreflective Prejudice (ignorant habit) toward Inclusion (intersubjective mutuality).
- *The POLICE Model*: Standing for Philosophically Ontology Logic Intersect Compatibility Education, this model trains thinkers to "police their own thoughts". It functions as a tool for "crap detecting," systematically unmasking the "theological masks" used to justify elite domination and partisan agendas.
- *Spiral Historiography*: This "post-post-postmodernist" model treats ideas as evolving cyclically, identifying "Widely-Believed Falsehoods" as the starting point of a vicious circle of stupidity that must be "uncoiled" through accountability and critical reflection.

3. Filtering Falsehoods through Sufficient Comprehension

Reflective self-understanding moves the individual from a "Junior" mindset of docile execution toward a "Senior" state of social accountability.

- *Sufficient Comprehension*: The ultimate goal is achieving "Sufficient Comprehension"—the ability to seek the whole of a matter while filtering out the ephemeral falsehoods of the age.
- *Thick Ethical Concepts*: By reclaiming "thick" ethical concepts (e.g., courage, integrity) anchored in local historical reality, the individual creates an internal strength that resists the "mechanical liquidation of discernment" inherent in automated technical and bureaucratic systems.

Ultimately, this intellectual immune system ensures that the "who" (the human being) remains the proactive master of the "what" (technical and social systems), fostering Aristotelian flourishing rather than unreflective stagnation.

The Living Bridge: McKinney and Wright's Intellectual Synthesis

The partnership between Jack McKinney and Judith Wright represents a foundational intellectual intervention that restored human authorship over shared reality during a period of profound "historical delay" and anti-intellectualism in Queensland. Their collaboration was not merely a private marriage but a community-based network of "hearts and minds" that acted as a critical bridge between local experience and global philosophical innovations.

1. The "Meanjin Oasis": A Network of Resistance

During World War II, their partnership began at the Meanjin Papers office in Dutton Park, Brisbane, which Wright described as an "oasis" of literary culture. This network, catalysed by editor Clem Christesen, served as a vital hub for Australian and American intellectuals to discuss literature and ideas while the broader society was "institutionally structured to be the people of afterthought".

- *Magnetized Minds*: Wright was immediately drawn to McKinney's unorthodox philosophical manuscript, *Towards the Future*, seeing it as a vital path forward for a world in crisis.
- *The Barjai Connection*: Their influence extended to younger groups like the Barjai writers and painters, where they mentored emerging figures such as Barbara Blackman, emphasizing "emotional honesty" and the need for new interpretations of reality.

2. Challenging "Historical Forgetfulness"

Their partnership sought to remediate "Historical Forgetfulness"—a systemic pathology where societies repeat past intellectual errors because the origins of their core concepts have been banished from memory.

- *Breaking the "Queensland Character" Myth*: They systematically dismantled the myth of the "bumbling, innocent fool" or agrarian larrikin. McKinney reframed this myth as a state of intellectual stasis used by the political elite to isolate citizens from social critical interaction.
- *The Big Chance Metaphor*: In his fiction, McKinney used the metaphor of the "Western Philosopher" defeating the unreflective folklore populist through the weapons of Reason, signalling a transition toward a modernizing epistemology.

3. The Original Synthesis of Experience

The cornerstone of their shared vision was McKinney's "Original Synthesis of Experience," which redefined knowledge as a fundamentally interpersonal thing.

- *The Living Bridge*: They identified language as the "living bridge" that allows individuals to subsume private subjective sensations into a stable "common world-picture".
- *World-as-Construction*: By leveraging findings from Relativity Theory and Quantum Mechanics, McKinney argued that reality is an experiential construction—a collective mural painted by humanity over millennia—rather than a static, unchangeable given.

4. Enacting Philosophy in Practice

For McKinney and Wright, "Understanding history is philosophy in practice" meant that intellectual inquiry must be grounded in ethical scrutiny and social action.

- *Poetic Subversion*: Wright transmuted McKinney's abstract concepts of time and authorship into mythic images in collections like *The Moving Image* (1946), subverting romanticized pioneer legends.
- *Activism as Performance*: Wright's leadership in the wildlife preservation movement and advocacy for Indigenous rights (most notably in *The Cry for the Dead*) were the practical enactments of their shared commitment to "restorative truth-telling".

5. Fostering a Contributory Economy

Their combined legacy provides a blueprint for a Contributory Economy grounded in Aristotelian flourishing (*eudaimonia*). By synthesizing the Five Intentions—Self, Mind, Reason, Utility, and Love—they aimed to move the individual from a "Junior" mindset of unreflective execution toward a "Senior" state of social accountability. This shift ensures that the "who" (the human being) remains the proactive master of the "what" (the technical and bureaucratic systems), protecting the public discourse from widely-believed falsehoods.

The Social Synthesis: Knowledge as Collective Human Authorship

Knowledge belongs to the social act rather than elite silos because it is fundamentally an "interpersonal thing" synthesized through collective human experience over countless generations. This perspective, primarily articulated through Jack McKinney's "Original Synthesis of Experience," argues that what we perceive as Objective Reality is not a static truth discovered by individuals in isolation, but a World-as-Construction.

The Interpersonal Synthesis of Knowledge

McKinney's core thesis resolves the "Cartesian impasse" by demonstrating that human knowledge arises from the cooperative coordination of disparate individual experiences.

- *The Collaborative Mural*: Knowledge is likened to a massive collaborative mural painted unconsciously by humanity over millennia. While an individual only sees the portion directly in front of them, the entire world-picture is a social product.
- *Language as the Living Bridge*: Language is the medium that operationalizes this social act. It serves as the "living bridge" that allows individuals to subsume their private, subjective sensations into a stable body of common knowledge.
- *Transforming Conflict into Meaning*: The construction of shared reality was driven by the social necessity of transforming individual psychological tensions and conflicts into areas of mutual understanding.

Challenging Elite Silos and Specialized Ignorance

The McKinney-Wright partnership represented a rebellion against the "senseless division of hearts and minds," specifically the notion that there is one "mathematical truth for the elite" and another "truth for common humanity".

- *Critique of Specialization*: McKinney attacked the "non-commitment" and insular nature of specialized academic philosophy, which often retreats into detached linguistic games rather than promoting ethical action and common understanding.
- *Denoetization*: When knowledge is sequestered in elite silos, it leads to "specialized ignorance" and "denoetization"—the mechanical liquidation of the human capacity to judge. This reductionism treats human beings as "puny human nodes" in automated technical networks rather than proactive authors of their reality.
- *Institutional Bullshit*: Elite silos often manufacture myths and "institutional bullshit" to justify domination and systemic neglect, effectively trapping the broader population in a state of "Historical Forgetfulness."

Knowledge as Communicative Action

In the framework of the Management Institute for Contributory Economy (MICE) and the work of Jürgen Habermas, knowledge is reclaimed through Communicative Rationality.

- *Mutual Understanding* (*Verständigung*): Knowledge as a social act requires rational-critical dialogue aimed at mutual understanding and reasoned consensus rather than strategic manipulation.
- *The "We Space"*: This communicative process creates a "we space" of mutual trust and emotional safety where participants act as active creators of a shared reality rather than passive conduits for institutional stimuli.

- *Conviviality*: Following Ivan Illich, knowledge belongs to the social act when institutions promote "conviviality"—autonomous and creative intercourse among persons that provides universal "access to reality".

Ultimately, recognizing knowledge as a social act restores human authorship over the shared lifeworld. By moving from a "Junior" mindset of unreflective execution toward a "Senior" state of social accountability, the individual ensures that the "who" (the human being) remains the proactive master of the "what" (the technical and social systems).

The McKinney Blueprint for Substantial Fairness and Flourishing

The philosophical legacy of Jack McKinney, as operationalized through the Management Institute for Contributory Economy (MICE), provide a comprehensive blueprint for achieving substantial fairness and human flourishing. This model seeks to remediate the "modern crisis of feeling and thought" by restoring human authorship over technical and social systems.

1. The Epistemological Foundation: Knowledge as an Interpersonal Thing

The blueprint begins with McKinney's core thesis, the "Original Synthesis of Experience".

- *World-as-Construction*: McKinney argues that "Objective Reality" is not a static truth discovered by individuals in isolation, but a collective social product synthesized over countless generations from discontinuous sensory data.
- *The Living Bridge of Language*: Language serves as the medium that operationalizes this synthesis, allowing individuals to subsume private subjective sensations into a stable body of common knowledge.
- *Interpersonal Sovereignty*: By recognizing that knowledge is fundamentally an interpersonal thing, McKinney refutes "epistemological individualism" and establishes that nothing exists outside of the collective whole.

2. Defining Substantial Fairness: Beyond Formal Rules

In this framework, fairness is redefined from a narrow adherence to regulations to a deeper, context-aware principle.

- *Substantial vs. Formal Fairness*: While "formal fairness" relies on the "geometrical tidiness" of rule-following, substantial fairness accommodates historical reasons and applicable moral distinctions.

- *Thick Ethical Concepts*: Substantial fairness is anchored in "thick" ethical concepts (e.g., courage, integrity, kindness) that unite factual description with evaluative meaning, providing the "rough ground" necessary for truthful judgment.
- *Historical A Priori*: To achieve fairness, inquiry must be grounded in Spiral Historiography, "uncoiling" repetitive patterns of intellectual error to ensure contemporary solutions are anchored in historical reality.

3. The Mechanism for Flourishing: The Synthesis of Being

Human flourishing, or Aristotelian flourishing (*eudaimonia*), is the ultimate measure of value in a contributory economy. This is achieved through the Synthesis of the Five Intentions:

- *Self and Mind*: The internal axis of agency where the individual asserts their status as a proactive creator and author of their own narrative.
- *Reason*: Redefined as a "cognitive regulator" and procedural core to ensure that external systems (like AI or global finance) serve ethical human ends rather than narrow profit.
- *Utility*: Reframed through the "sociological imagination" to maximize collective happiness and planetary sustainability while minimizing harm to the community.
- *Love*: Reinvented as "thinking as caring" (*panser*), serving as a procedural "shield" that protects the particularity of the person from abstract, universalizing logic.

4. The Transition: From "Junior" to "Senior" Accountability

The blueprint demands a developmental ascent where the individual is no longer a "puny human node" in an automated network.

- *Junior State*: Characterized by unreflective automaticity, "potted thinking," and a focus on mere "vocational fitness".
- *Senior State*: Characterized by "Conscious Competence" and social accountability, where the individual takes responsibility for the shared meanings they bring forth.
- *POLICE Model*: This transition is maintained through the POLICE model (Philosophically Ontology Logic Intersect Compatibility Education), which trains thinkers to "police their own thoughts" and filter out "institutional bullshit."

Ultimately, the McKinney blueprint directs human progress toward a Contributory Economy where success is measured by human dignity, wisdom, and character rather than pecuniary

profit. It promises that through participation in common knowledge, every citizen can achieve a life of virtuous action and meaningful contribution.

Spiral Historiography and the Restoration of Human Authorship

Jack McKinney facilitates a "personal breakout" from repetitive patterns of historical forgetfulness by providing a modernizing epistemology that restores human authorship over shared reality. This breakout is operationalized through Spiral Historiography, which allows individuals to "uncoil" the vicious circles of intellectual error that cause societies to get "stuck in time-space".

McKinney's framework facilitates this transition through several specific cognitive and methodological mechanisms:

1. Remediating "Historical Forgetfulness"

McKinney identifies Historical Forgetfulness as a systemic pathology where societies repeat past intellectual mistakes because the origins and struggles of their core concepts have been banished from communal memory.

- *Breaking the Myth*: He used this diagnosis to dismantle the "Queensland character" myth, reframing it as a state of intellectual stasis used by political elites to isolate citizens from social critical interaction.
- *Uncoiling the Spiral*: By utilizing Spiral Historiography, the individual moves beyond a linear view of progress to engage with history as a site for critical practice, identifying "Widely-Believed Falsehoods" and holding them to Accountability.

2. Restoring Human Authorship

McKinney's core thesis, the "Original Synthesis of Experience," facilitates the breakout by proving that what we call "Objective Reality" is actually a World-as-Construction.

- *Authors of the Painting*: He argued that humans are the collective "authors of the painting" that is reality, rather than passive conduits for external technical or social drives.
- *Interpersonal Knowledge*: By defining knowledge as an "interpersonal thing**"** synthesized through the "living bridge" of language, McKinney provides the individual with the intellectual sovereignty to move beyond private prejudice toward a common world-picture.

3. The Developmental Ascent to "Senior" Cognition

The personal breakout requires a developmental shift in how the individual functions within the social order.

- *From "Junior" to "Senior":* The transition moves the individual from a "Junior" mindset of unreflective automaticity and "docile execution" to a "Senior" state of social accountability.
- *Sufficient Comprehension*: Breakout is achieved when the learner attains "Sufficient Comprehension"—the ability to seek the whole of a matter while filtering out the "ephemeral and innutritious" falsehoods of the age.

4. The Mechanism of Self-Correction: The POLICE Model

To maintain this breakout, McKinney's philosophy is operationalized through the POLICE model (Philosophically Ontology Logic Intersect Compatibility Education).

- *Policing One's Own Thoughts*: This methodology trains the thinker to force their internal faculties to doubt, test, and filter out "institutional bullshit" and manufactured myths.
- *Crap Detecting*: By treating all convictions as revisable signs permanently open to questioning, the model ensures the human being remains the proactive master of the technical and bureaucratic systems.

Ultimately, this personal breakout directs human authorship toward Aristotelian flourishing (*eudaimonia*), a state where communal success is measured by human dignity, wisdom, and character rather than unreflective stagnation or narrow pecuniary profit.

McKinney's Intellectual Resistance to the Queensland Character Myth

In the scholarship of Dr. Neville Buch, the Dynamic of Cognition (DoC) framework is utilized to map the transition from the "Pathological Stagnation" of unreflective myths toward the "Evolutionary Advancement" of a contributory economy.

The following table summarizes Buch's argument that Jack McKinney's sociology acts as a rigorous intellectual immune system, systematically resisting and dismantling the "Queensland Character" myth—a political and literary device that portrays citizens as bumbling, unreflective "innocent fools" or tough, unthinking agrarian types.

DoC Table: McKinney's Resistance Against the Queensland Character Myth

DoC Component	The Pathology (Queensland Character Myth)	The Corrective (McKinney's Sociological Synthesis)	Philosophical Rationale
Prejudice (Centre)	**Simplistic Literalism:** The belief that individuals are bumbling "innocent fools" whose identity is fixed by a static agrarian legend.	**Interpersonal Epistemology:** Recognizing that reality is a **World-as-Construction** and knowledge is an fundamentally **interpersonal thing**.	Moves the starting point of thought from unreflective habit to the active self-perception of being a social agent.
Attitudes (Thinking)	**"Passions of the Heart":** Passions that shrink from the scrutiny of reason, favouring "potted thinking" and unreflective duty.	**The Challenge of Reason:** Utilizing methodical analysis to seek insight into the **rationality of knowledge** and promote common understanding.	Transforms the individual from a "passive conduit" for external myths into a proactive author of reality.
Exclusion (Sensation)	**Historical Forgetfulness:** A state of intellectual stasis where societies repeat past errors because their origins are banished from memory.	**Spiral Historiography:** A "crap detecting" methodology used to **"uncoil" repetitive patterns of error** and unmask "institutional bullshit".	Filters out manufactured "folk" myths to ground universal principles in local historical reality.
Inclusion (Intuition)	**Symbolic Misery:** The loss of human agency to external stimuli, leaving the citizen "shut up in subjectivity" and disarmed against propaganda.	**Verstehen (Empathy):** Using empathetic understanding and **Human Authorship** to merge repellent experiential fields into a coherent social narrative.	Restores the "who" (human being) as the master of the "what" (technical and social systems).

DoC Component	The Pathology (Queensland Character Myth)	The Corrective (McKinney's Sociological Synthesis)	Philosophical Rationale
Typologies of Value (Feeling)	**Simplistic Utility:** Measuring success by private accumulation and a "rates, roads, and rubbish" model of governance.	**Aristotelian Flourishing (*eudaimonia*):** A life of virtuous action and meaningful contribution where communal success is measured by **human dignity and wisdom**.	Anchors values in "thick" ethical concepts that provide the necessary "rough ground" for truthful judgment.

Key Rationale for the Personal Breakout

McKinney facilitates a "personal breakout" from the myth by providing the modernizing epistemology required to escape the vicious circle of stupidity.

- *Dismantling the Legend*: McKinney's 1926 story, *"The Big Chance,"* serves as a central metaphor where the "Western Philosopher" defeats the unreflective folklore populist through the weapons of reason.
- *Language as the Living Bridge*: He identifies language as the medium that allows individuals to subsume private, limited sensations into a common world-picture, enabling communication between persons that the myth historically rendered impossible.
- *From "Junior" to "Senior" Cognition:* The corrective pathway demands a developmental ascent where the learner moves beyond "job-readiness" (docile execution) to achieve Sufficient Comprehension—the ability to understand the whole of a matter while filtering out the fallacies of the age.

Ultimately, McKinney's synthesis ensures that human progress is not a rigid determinism but a deliberate human choice directed toward a just and collaborative "city of intellect."

CONCLUSION: THE ORIGINAL SYNTHESIS

The sociological legacy of Jack Philip McKinney represents a foundational intervention that restores human authorship over shared reality by refuting the long-standing "Cartesian impasse" and the "epistemological individualism" that isolated the individual from their social context. His core thesis, the "Original Synthesis of Experience," demonstrates that what we perceive as "Objective Reality" is actually a World-as-Construction, a collective social product synthesized over countless generations through the "living bridge" of language. By defining knowledge as an "interpersonal thing," McKinney transforms the human being from a "passive conduit" of external drives and institutional stimuli into a proactive creator of their social narrative.

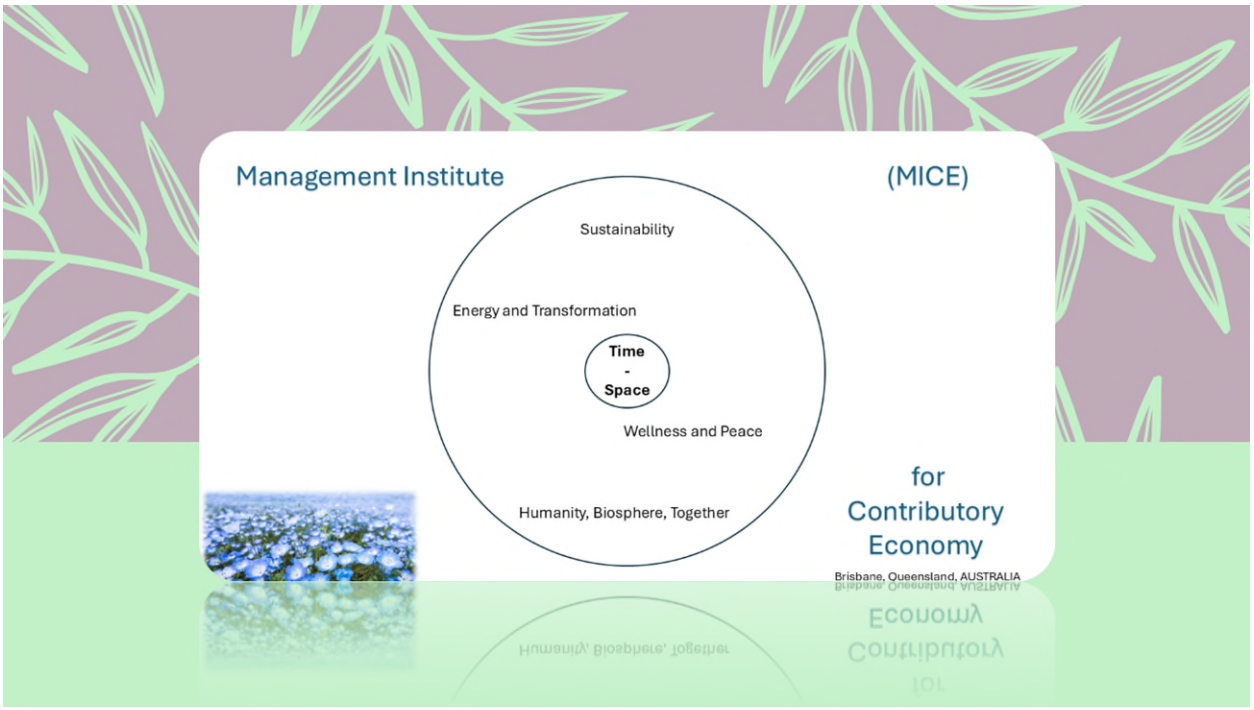
This restoration of authorship functions as a rigorous intellectual immune system against the "Queensland character" myth—a political and literary device that historically portrayed citizens as bumbling, unreflective "innocent fools" to justify intellectual stasis. McKinney's sociology identifies this myth as a symptom of "Historical Forgetfulness," a systemic pathology where societies repeat past intellectual errors because the origins of their core concepts have been banished from memory. By "uncoiling" these repetitive patterns of error through the critical practice of history, his work allows for a "personal breakout" into a modernizing epistemology.

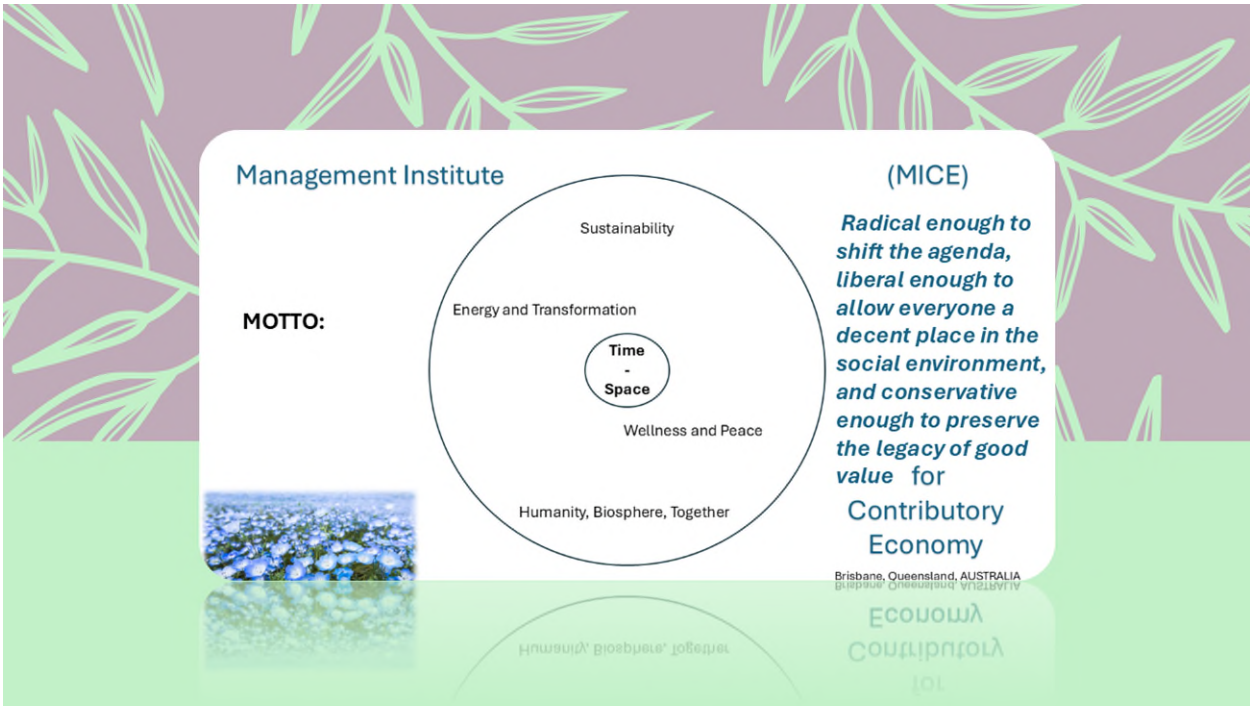
The McKinney-Wright project provides the structural and cognitive bedrock for a Contributory Economy through several primary shifts:

- *The Synthesis of Being*: Their framework operationalizes the Five Intentions—Self, Mind, Reason, Utility, and Love—as the holistic basis for ethical judgment. In this synthesis, Reason acts as a "cognitive regulator" to keep technology human-centered, while Love is reinvented as "thinking as caring" (*panser*), a procedural shield protecting human particularity from abstract, calculating logic.
- *Junior to Senior Accountability*: Their legacy demands a developmental ascent where individuals move beyond a "Junior" mindset of "docile execution" and mere "vocational fitness" toward a "Senior" state of social accountability and Sufficient Comprehension.
- *Human Mastery of Systems*: This shift ensures that the "who" (the human being) remains the master of the "what" (the technical and bureaucratic systems), reclaiming the status of transformative intellectuals capable of social critical interaction.

Ultimately, McKinney's sociology directs human progress toward Aristotelian flourishing (*eudaimonia*), a state where communal success is measured by human dignity, wisdom, and character rather than narrow pecuniary profit. His shared "common world-picture" serves as a "new star in the universe" for seekers of wisdom, offering a sustainable blueprint for a just,

collaborative, and flourishing "city of intellect." By embracing the axiom that "understanding history is philosophy in practice," the McKinney project provides the tools for a life of virtuous action and meaningful contribution in a mature democratic society.





The following endnotes and bibliography provide the scholarly apparatus for the sociology of Jack McKinney, documenting the restoration of human authorship and the transition toward a Contributory Economy grounded in Aristotelian flourishing.

Endnotes

1. Jack McKinney's defining epistemological thesis, the "Original Synthesis of Experience," is primarily articulated in his posthumous work, *The Structure of Modern Thought* (1971).

2. This thesis fundamentally resolves the "modern crisis of feeling and thought" by refuting the belief that an individual can derive universal knowledge solely from their own private sense data.

3. Australian philosopher Jack Smart praised McKinney's work for its "fresh and original" presentation of the idea that knowledge is a fundamentally interpersonal thing.

4. The "common world-picture" is described as a collective social product synthesized over countless generations and embodied in language, which acts as a "living bridge" between private sensation and shared reality.

5. McKinney and Judith Wright's partnership is characterized as the fusion of the "philosophic mind and the literary mind," aimed at bridging the modern "senseless division of hearts and minds".

6. The "Queensland character" myth is identified as a literary and political device used to impose a narrative of unreflective, "bumbling" identity, effectively trapping citizens in a state of "Historical Forgetfulness".

7. McKinney's 1926 story, "The Big Chance," serves as a central metaphor where reason and the "Western Philosopher" defeat the unthinking folklore populist.

8. The Synthesis of Being in the MICE framework reintegrates the Five Intentions—Self, Mind, Reason, Utility, and Love—as the holistic basis for ethical judgment.

9. Love is reinvented within this framework as "thinking as caring" (*panser*), serving as a procedural shield that protects the particularity of the person from abstract, calculating logic.

10. The ultimate goal of this synthesis is Aristotelian flourishing (*eudaimonia*), achieved when learners attain "Sufficient Comprehension" and reclaim their status as proactive authors of their own narratives within a shared reality.

APA Bibliography

Arendt, H. (1977). *The life of the mind* (M. McCarthy, Ed.). Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

Arnott, G. (2024). Judith Arundell Wright (1915-2000). In *Australian Dictionary of Biography*. National Centre of Biography, Australian National University.

Berg, J. (Ed.). (2014). *Naming, necessity, and more: Explorations in the philosophical work of Saul Kripke*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Berlin, I. (1979). *Concepts and categories: Philosophical essays* (H. Hardy, Ed.). Pimlico.

Bourdieu, P. (1990). *Outline of a theory of practice*. Cambridge University Press.

Bruno-Jofré, R. (1988). *Methodist education in Peru: Social gospel, politics, and American ideological and economic penetration, 1888-1930*. Wilfred Laurier University Press.

Bruno-Jofré, R. (2005). *The Missionary Oblate Sisters: Vision and mission*. McGill-Queen's University Press.

Buch, N. (1995). *American influence on Protestantism in Queensland since 1945* (Doctoral dissertation). Department of History, University of Queensland.

Buch, N. (2015). *No regrets in the evening of life: The history of Junction Park State School (1888–2013)*. Boolarong Press.

Buch, N. (2015, August 11). *Under the skin - Human passion: Reason in war and peace*. State Library of Queensland.

Buch, N. (2019, June 6). *The Australian literary setting of the 'Queensland Character' and mid-twentieth century philosophy: The philosophical development of Jack McKinney and the problem of knowledge 1935-1975*. International Society for Intellectual History Conference, University of Queensland.

Buch, N. (2023). Evangelicals and nation-building: Radical and transformational criticism from across Christian traditions in Queensland history parts 1 & 2. *Lucas: An Evangelical History Review*, 3(1-2).

Buch, N. (2023). *Emotion, caring, and convivial urban sociology between the academy and community*. Management Institute for Contributory Economy.

Buch, N. (2024). *The sociology of Teen Challenge (Qld) Inc*. Management Institute for Contributory Economy.

Buch, N. (2024). Queensland history, religious education, and belief. In D. W. Kim & D. Wright (Eds.), *Socio-anthropological approaches to religion: Environmental hope* (pp. 161–190). Lexington Books.

Buch, N. (2025). *The dynamic of cognition*. Academia.edu.

Buch, N. (2025). *Public ignorance, resistance, or a hidden curriculum?* Management Institute for Contributory Economy.

Buch, N. (2026). *A matrix of sociology*. Management Institute for Contributory Economy.

Buch, N. (2026). *Limited thinking and the contributory economy*. Management Institute for Contributory Economy.

Clarke, P., & McKinney, M. (Eds.). (2004). *The equal heart and mind: Letters between Judith Wright and Jack McKinney*. University of Queensland Press.

Collins, P. H. (1990). *Black feminist thought: Knowledge, consciousness, and the politics of empowerment*. Routledge.

Collins, R. (1998). *The sociology of philosophies: A global theory of intellectual change*. Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.

Cupitt, D. (2008). *The meaning of the West*. SCM Press.

Dewey, J. (1916). *Democracy and education: An introduction to the philosophy of education*. Macmillan.

Evans, R., Saunders, K., & Cronin, K. (1975). *Exclusion, exploitation and extermination: Race relations in colonial Queensland*. University of Queensland Press.

Gregory, P. T. B. (2005). *The crisis of modern thought: Reflections on the philosophy of J.P. McKinney* (Doctoral dissertation). University of South Australia.

Habermas, J. (1979). *Communication and the evolution of society* (T. McCarthy, Trans.). Beacon Press.

Hofstadter, R. (1963). *Anti-intellectualism in American life*. Alfred A. Knopf.

Illich, I. (1971). *Deschooling society*. Calder & Boyars.

Illich, I. (1973). *Tools for conviviality*. Harper & Row.

Jenks, G. C. (2014). *Jesus then and Jesus now: Looking for Jesus, finding ourselves*. Morning Star Publishing.

Labaree, D. F. (1997). Public goods, private goods: The American struggle over educational goals. *American Educational Research Journal*, 34(1), 39–81.

Lonergan, B. J. F. (1972). *Method in theology*. Herder & Herder.

Lubienski, C., Gulosino, C., & Weitzel, P. (2009). School choice and competitive incentives: Mapping the distribution of educational opportunities across local education markets. *American Journal of Education*, 115(4), 601–647.

Manguel, A. (2006). *The library at night*. Knopf Canada.

McKinney, J. P. (1935). *Crucible*. Angus & Robertson.

McKinney, J. P. (1950). *The challenge of reason*. Mountain Press.

McKinney, J. P. (1971). *The structure of modern thought*. Chatto & Windus.

Noddings, N. (1984). *Caring: A feminine approach to ethics and moral education*. University of California Press.

Peach, N. (2026). *Brisbane housing: Missing middle enhancements*. Management Institute for Contributory Economy.

Ringma, C. R. (1991). *Gadamer's dialogical hermeneutic: The hermeneutics of Bultmann, of the New Testament sociologists and of the social theologians in dialogue with Gadamer's hermeneutic* (Doctoral dissertation). University of Queensland.

Ringma, C., & Chadwick, R. (2017). *Three graces for a word of truth. The church's calling in a troubled world: The grand design and fragile engagement*. Zadok Institute for Christianity and Society.

Saunders, K. (1993). *War on the homefront: State intervention in Queensland, 1938–1948*. University of Queensland Press.

Sichel, B. A. (1989). Ethics of caring and the institutional ethics committee. *Hypatia*, 4(2), 45-56.

Stiegler, B. (1998). *Technics and time, 1: The fault of Epimetheus* (R. Beardsworth & G. Collins, Trans.). Stanford University Press.

Turner, B. (2023). *Returning to judgment: Bernard Stiegler and continental political theory*. State University of New York Press.

Valdés, M. J. (1987). *Phenomenological hermeneutics and the study of literature*. University of Toronto Press.

Weiss, R. P. (2001). Charitable choice as neoliberal social welfare strategy. *Social Justice*, 28(1), 35-53.

Westoby, P., & Dowling, G. (2013). *Dialogical community development: With depth, solidarity and hospitality*. Tafina Press.

Williams, B. (2006). *Philosophy as a humanistic discipline* (A. W. Moore, Ed.). Princeton University Press.

Wright, J. (1946). *The moving image*. Meanjin Press.

Wright, J. (1981). *The cry for the dead*. Oxford University Press.

Wright, J. (1999). *Half a lifetime* (P. Clarke, Ed.). Text Publishing.

******



Understanding history is philosophy in practice

The End