

# How to think

## Introduction

Western people have been intellectually eviscerated. The attack on their minds, from a variety of sources, has done this damage. As a result, Western society is mostly unable to engage in critical thinking.

The attacks on the mind have included: propaganda by the government, social media, mainstream media, educators, NGOs and a host of mind-change agencies. It involves censorship, de-platforming, shadow-banning and deleting commentary so that alternative views are hidden. It involves policing certain viewpoints so that sanctions are applied to individualistic thought. It involves dumbing-down people from a young age so that their minds are not developed. It involves poor nutrition, medicated products in water and food (such as fluoridation), chemicals sprayed in the atmosphere (e.g. Aluminium oxide or barium); all of which contribute to lowering the IQ. But chiefly it is caused by a total lack of teaching kids properly in schools; they are now taught what to think by Progressive teachers and not how to think for themselves.

As a result of this the nation has become compliant to the point of accepting insane restrictions placed upon them by illegal measures under the Constitution.<sup>1</sup> Social compliance during the Covid crisis by the majority showed the level of stupidity that people would accept without question. Christians also fell victim to this, showing a complete lack of discernment, by willingly closing their churches down on the basis of a fake pandemic. [In real historic plagues, Christians kept churches open to give hope to all and also volunteered to care for the plague victims.]

What is more important than anything in society today is the ability to think clearly and find truth.

I have explained what is truth many times; that it is found in Jesus Christ and the principles he taught. In this paper I want to concentrate on how to think critically.

## How to read

Intellectual development begins with learning and reading books is a great aid in learning. The more solid books you read, the more informed you are and the more able you are to stretch your neurons and exercise your brain. I keep saying, 'Big books make big people'.

### Choice

Firstly you must choose your reading matter wisely; your life is short. Make a sensible plan to read things that will teach you. Although there is some benefit even in reading fictional novels (especially good novels, such as by Dostoyevsky),<sup>2</sup> you will learn more by studying non-fiction works.

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<sup>1</sup> Magna Carta, The Bill of Rights 1689, Common Law.

<sup>2</sup> Fyodor (Mikhailovich) Dostoevsky (aka Dostoyevsky) [1821–81] was a Russian novelist. His novels reveal psychological insight, humour, and concern with the religious, political, and moral problems posed by human suffering. Notable novels: *Crime and Punishment* (1866), *The Idiot* (1868), and *The Brothers Karamazov* (1880).

Through reading you gain knowledge on the world around you. It matters little what subjects you choose as long as you are developing in knowledge. The more wide ranging the subjects you study, the more breadth to your knowledge.

As you begin to apply this knowledge in life you then begin to develop in wisdom, which is the practical application of knowledge. Knowledge on its own is bereft of social value but knowledge applied in wisdom in the world is highly valuable. As you develop in wisdom you will be able to counsel people that come to you with problems and be able to offer real help – because you know stuff.

### **Tenacious study**

Having settled on your reading matter it then requires you to study it intensely. Superficial reading is pointless; you need to absorb what you are reading.

Now different brains can do this in varying ways. Some people can retain subject matter quickly and easily; others need more time and repeated reading. Find your level and apply yourself.

With certain important subjects it will be necessary to underline or highlight various passages that contain important data that you want to file. Some people hate book underlining but it is sometimes vital. Do it in pencil if you want to retain the integrity of the publication.

When you have finished the book, copy the underlined passages on to a filing system. In the past I used to use filing cards, which could then be collated and used in reports on the subject. Today people will use a computer word processor to do this.

Having assembled your data, add your comments and summaries to round off the subject matter and keep the whole thing on file for use later.

For some complex writings it will be necessary to read the work more than once; each time reading more carefully.

Take time to read slowly so that you are taking in what is being read. For important matters, stop and meditate on what you have read so that you can chew over the thoughts in your mind.

### **Get underneath the book**

What are books?

They are the products of human thinking. They are the ideas of certain people that have been transformed from mental synapses into written words to communicate the original thoughts.

When you read a book, you are grappling with the thoughts of a person on a certain subject matter. Try to get back into the mindset of the writer; try to see past the words and get into his frame of mind. What is his point? What is he trying to convey?

### **Develop your vocabulary**

When you read a word that you do not understand, stop reading and write it down. Then look the word up and write that down too. Keep a record of words that you have learned and reprise them. In this way you will increase your vocabulary.

A good vocabulary is vital to critical thinking. You need to be able to express your thoughts and good articulation requires good knowledge of words. This is the field of semantics.<sup>3</sup>

When you record a word to study, also look up a thesaurus so that you can identify synonyms and antonyms. This enables you to increase your vocabulary even further. You ought to know the difference between a synonym,<sup>4</sup> an antonym,<sup>5</sup> a homonym<sup>6</sup> and a homophone.<sup>7</sup>

There are a number of words that are frequently used in critical thinking and in debate. Learn these words. For example: dialectic,<sup>8</sup> didactic,<sup>9</sup> pedantic,<sup>10</sup> solipsistic,<sup>11</sup> eschatological,<sup>12</sup> pantheistic,<sup>13</sup> gnomic,<sup>14</sup> orthogonal,<sup>15</sup> salacious,<sup>16</sup> iteration,<sup>17</sup> and so on. [See later.]

Some words have multiple applications, which should be learned. For example, transcendent, which means: 1) beyond or above the range of normal or merely physical human experience. 2) In theology, (of God) existing apart from and not subject to the limitations of the material universe. Often contrasted with immanent. 3) (In Kantian philosophy) not realisable in experience.

### **Keep a record**

Discipline yourself to read a number of books a year. Keep a record of what you have read and review it. You may wish to change your choices the following year to add more balance to your reading.

Highlight books that you believe are important. Recommend these books to others; buy them as presents for friends.

### **Stretch your reading**

Babies start with eating breast milk and slowly progress from liquidised food to solid food. Solid food is for the mature.

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<sup>3</sup> The branch of linguistics and logic concerned with meaning. The two main areas are logical semantics, concerned with matters such as sense and reference and presupposition and implication, and lexical semantics, concerned with the analysis of word meanings and relations between them.

<sup>4</sup> A word or phrase that means exactly or nearly the same as another word or phrase.

<sup>5</sup> A word opposite in meaning to another.

<sup>6</sup> Each of two or more words having the same spelling and pronunciation but different meanings and origins.

<sup>7</sup> Each of two or more words having the same pronunciation but different meanings, origins, or spelling (e.g. new, knew).

<sup>8</sup> The art of investigating or discussing the truth of opinions.

<sup>9</sup> Intended to teach, particularly in having moral instruction.

<sup>10</sup> To act like a pedant; over-scrupulous, over-exacting, precise.

<sup>11</sup> The view that the self is all that can be known to exist; focus on the self.

<sup>12</sup> Study regarding the end times. The theology concerned with death, judgement, and the final destiny of man.

<sup>13</sup> Identifying God with the universe, or regarding the universe as a manifestation of God.

<sup>14</sup> Something expressed in or of the nature of short, pithy maxims or aphorisms.

<sup>15</sup> At right angles.

<sup>16</sup> Treating sexual matters in an indecent way and typically conveying undue interest in or enjoyment of the subject.

<sup>17</sup> The repetition of a process or utterance.

In reading start where you are able. Don't begin studying with some complex, verbose, lofty tome that is hard to understand; begin where you are comfortable. However, over time try to stretch yourself by reading deeper works. Do not remain at the same safe level.

### Literary criticism

This is the analysis and judgment of the merits and faults of a literary or artistic work.

This includes:

- Textual criticism.
- Rhetorical analysis (examining the use of figures of speech, e.g. metaphors, similes).
- The use of metaphysics.
- Literary translation.

Poetry is especially the subject of literary criticism. This will study stanzas, metre, figures of speech, and style.

### What books?

It used to be true that local areas had access to a good quality library. As a kid I went to one every week. This is no longer the case. Most local libraries have closed down and even the major ones in cities are now of very poor quality, being given over to computers and a few reference works. This means giving thought to purchasing good basic necessary books or getting them in digital form.

It is tempting to give lists of good books; but that would be subjective and too selective. Find your own according to your needs.

For Christians, I have provided lists of good books that are worth reading; these can be found on my website.

However, there are certain reference works that should be by your desk. These include:

- A good English dictionary. The Oxford series is the best. Chambers is a good substitute.
- A good thesaurus. Roget's is the best.
- *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*.
- A few good encyclopaedias. There are many of these and all have some value. Try to get a few for comparison. These go from a single volume such as *Pear's Encyclopaedia* through to *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, which is multi-volume.
- A book on English grammar. Fowler's *Modern English Usage* is the best. Eric Partridge's *Usage and Abusage* (Penguin Reference) is also useful.
- A science desk reference, such as the *New York Public Library Science Desk Reference* or the *Hutchinson Dictionary of Science* or the *Dictionary of Scientific Literacy* (Richard Brennan).
- A book summarising world history. *The Brockhampton Dictionary of World History* is a useful summary. *The Oxford Mini History of Britain*, in five paperback volumes is a good introduction to British history.
- A dictionary of biography.
- The Oxford dictionary of philosophy.
- A dictionary of literature; both the Oxford and Cambridge examples are good.
- CH Waddington's *Tools for Thought*, covers many topics used in research.

For those interested in other subjects then dictionaries of those will be helpful, such as a medical dictionary, a music dictionary and so forth. Oxford publishing provides dictionaries covering many specialist subjects.

Of all these, the Oxford English Dictionary is an absolute must have. This alone covers most subjects concisely.

## **Determine your moral principles**

It is vital that you develop a set of principles that determines your thinking processes. This is to ensure that you do not follow the paths of others; that your thinking is not determined by someone or something else (such as peer pressure).

For example: determine to focus upon absolute truth. Concentrate on what divine knowledge has determined is genuine and unchanging. Decide to ignore any attempt to deviate from absolute truth or to water down divine principles. This may mean facing opposition, ridicule, smear campaigns, censorship, social exclusion and so on; no matter – stick to what is absolute truth.

Determine to be true to yourself and never follow coercion by others – no matter what authority they have. This means never being hypocritical, never pretending, never lying, never deliberately exaggerating. When facing an authority figure, such as a teacher at school, stick to what is true even if it contradicts the teacher. It may be that he is right and you must slowly learn to change. But it also may mean that he is wrong and you need to stand up for what is true.

Steel yourself to focus upon truth at whatever cost may be incurred. This is not easy but it is vital. Everyone around you may follow a different course but it does not mean that they are all right. Christians at schools and universities will find themselves in this situation often, such as when everyone believes in evolution but you do not.

Always work questions out for yourself; prove all things; do your own research; do not accept everything that you are told. If you cannot prove a thing to be true, then do not accept it no matter how much pressure is put upon you.

Be very wary of fashionable trends in thinking.

## **Epistemology**

Epistemology is the theory of knowledge, its methods, validity, and scope; the investigation of what distinguishes justified belief from opinion. Epistemology can be regarded as the investigation of what constitutes that justification.

For the Christian, epistemology is centred upon Christ, who is the truth. God's word is infinitely wise and his truth is absolute. Thus the first principles of truth in the real world are based upon divine revelation. For example: the principles of justice in a true society are based upon the idea of Biblical law and righteous justice.

Knowledge does not come from man but from God. We base our understanding of knowledge upon what the Bible specifically says and also from logical deduction based upon Biblical principles.

In understanding knowledge it is necessary to have some idea about philosophy because human thinking is centred in certain positions. To be a critical thinker, it helps to understand something of these philosophies. We do not need to devote too much attention to what are essentially the theories of men, but certain positions crop up time and again and it helps to know what these are.

## Philosophy

Philosophy used to be called the queen of the sciences but it is generally much less appreciated today. Yet everyone has a philosophy. It is mental framework to interpret life. Philosophers may be more or less right the more they approach God's truth, but a philosophy, no matter how weak, is part of the experience of all.

Philosophy is a mental machinery to interpret and explain life; to deal with a large number of things and explain them. To develop an intellectual explanation and reason for the world around us. At its fundamental root there are two basic aspects to philosophy: natural and moral.

### *Natural philosophy (understanding the world)*

- View 1: the world consists of things (atoms). Any changes we observe are secondary. [The view of Democritus.]<sup>18</sup>
- View 2: the world consists of processes. [The view of Heraclitus.]<sup>19</sup>

The thing view is probably the most common today but this does not really explain living things very well, which are in a constant process (foetus, birth, baby, infant, child, teenager, adult, old person, death). The thing view, applied to living things, leads to Mechanism: the doctrine that all natural phenomena, including life and thought, allow mechanical explanation by physics and chemistry. Man is just a complex machine. Mechanism (and its compatriot evolution) is the opposite of divine truth. Of course, Mechanistic theory cannot explain: the spirit, the soul, emotions, worship, consciousness etc.

The limits of the first view were being stretched in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and gradually the second view began to be suggested; such as by AN Whitehead. Science is based on observations and these include the experience of the observer. Thus phenomena like mind or conscious perception are included in the foundation of knowledge. Atomic theory leaves the mind and God out of objective reality and fails to come up with a comprehensive explanation of the world.

### *Moral philosophy (understanding people and actions)*

- Ethics: moral principles that govern a person's (or society's) behaviour or the conducting of an activity. The branch of knowledge that deals with moral principles.
- Morals: concerned with the principles of right and wrong behaviour and the goodness or badness of human character.
- Values: a person's principles or standards of behaviour; one's judgment of what is important in life.

## VALUES

Basic to moral philosophy is explaining values. Values cannot be understood without reference to God and divine law; nevertheless men have tried.

For centuries the concept of values and ethics were unquestionable but in recent decades, due to the corruption of thought and education, they are now either ignored or even questioned if they exist at all.

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<sup>18</sup> Democritus [c.460–c.370 BC], Greek philosopher. He developed the atomic theory originated by his teacher, Leucippus, which explained natural phenomena in terms of the arrangement and rearrangement of atoms moving in a void.

<sup>19</sup> Heraclitus [c.500 BC], Greek philosopher. He believed that fire is the origin of all things and that permanence is an illusion, everything being in a (harmonious) process of constant change.

When they are discussed the debate generally falls into these lines:

- Values are inside nature.
- Values are outside nature.
- Values are from God.
- God stems from values.

These are then modified by whether one accepts that nature consists of things or processes. Philosophers have proposed multiple combinations of these.

Then there is the difference between thinking and feeling. Some reject intellectual analysis. Intellectual thought can only ever be an exploration of relations between abstract concepts – which are only ever a partial reflection of reality. [E.g. William Blake, William Wordsworth, DH Lawrence, Charles Reich.] Often this leads to an anti-science position (in fact although science involves thinking it is based upon observation and experimentation).

Schools of ethics in Western philosophy can be divided, very roughly, into three sorts.

- Aristotelianism: holds that the virtues (such as justice, charity, and generosity) are dispositions to act in ways that benefit both the person possessing them and that person's society.
- Kantianism: makes the concept of duty central to morality: humans are bound, from a knowledge of their duty as rational beings, to obey the categorical imperative to respect other rational beings.
- Utilitarianism: asserts that the guiding principle of conduct should be the greatest happiness or benefit of the greatest number.

### **Methodologies in philosophy**

#### *A priori reasoning*

Relating to or denoting reasoning or knowledge which proceeds from theoretical deduction rather than from observation or experience.

#### *A posteriori reasoning*

Relating to or denoting reasoning or knowledge which proceeds from observations or experiences to the deduction of probable causes.

#### *Inductive method*

Characterised by the inference of general laws from particular instances.

#### *Deductive reasoning*

Characterised by the inference of particular instances from a general law.

#### *Scepticism*

Denial of the possibility of knowledge, or even rational belief, in some sphere.

#### *Common sense*

Deriving principles from what is generally accepted as true from human experience.

#### *Empiricism*

A doctrine in the theory of knowledge which stresses the primacy of sense-experience over reason in the acquisition and justification of knowledge. It thus stands opposed to rationalism, and limits a priori knowledge.

*Rationalism*

In philosophy, the theory that reason rather than experience is the foundation of certainty in knowledge. A belief that opinions and actions should be based on reason and knowledge rather than on religious belief or emotional response.

**Branches of philosophy***Aesthetics*

The branch of philosophy which deals with questions of beauty and artistic taste.

*Ethics*

The branch of knowledge that deals with moral principles.

*Epistemology*

See above.

*Metaphysics*

The branch of philosophy that deals with the first principles of things, including abstract concepts such as being, knowing, substance, cause, identity, time, and space.

Metaphysics has two main strands: that which holds that what exists lies beyond experience (as argued by Plato), and that which holds that objects of experience constitute the only reality (as argued by Kant, the logical positivists, and Hume). Metaphysics has also concerned itself with a discussion of whether what exists is made of one substance or many, and whether what exists is inevitable or driven by chance.

*Logic*

Reasoning conducted or assessed according to strict principles of validity.

*Natural philosophy*

Natural science, especially physical science.

*Moral philosophy*

The branch of philosophy concerned with ethics.

*Ontology*

The philosophical study of the nature of being.

**Basic philosophical positions**

We can explain philosophy as: the study of the fundamental nature of knowledge, reality, and existence, especially when considered as an academic discipline.

It helps, in critical thinking, to have some idea about basic philosophical theories and arguments. I will summarise these philosophical schools in the briefest, most concise, possible form as I have explained them elsewhere.

*Stoicism*

An ancient Greek school of philosophy which taught that virtue, the highest good, is based on knowledge; the wise live in harmony with the divine Reason (also identified with Fate and Providence) that governs nature, and are indifferent to the vicissitudes of fortune and to pleasure and pain. The word is often used to describe nonchalance about suffering.

Advocate: Zeno [c.335–c.263 BC], Greek philosopher, founder of Stoicism; known as Zeno of Citium.

### *Epicureanism*

An ancient school of philosophy, founded in Athens by Epicurus. The school rejected determinism and advocated a restrained hedonism: mental pleasure was regarded more highly than physical, and the ultimate pleasure was held to be freedom from anxiety and mental pain, especially that arising from needless fear of death and of the gods.

Advocate: Epicurus [341–270 BC] Greek philosopher.

### *Determinism*

The doctrine that all events, including human action, are ultimately determined by causes regarded as external to the will. Some philosophers have taken determinism to imply that individual human beings have no free will and cannot be held morally responsible for their actions.

Advocates: Certain ancient Greek philosophers, Kant (Libertarian determinist), Hume (Compatibilist determinist).

### *Platonism*

Abstract objects are objective, timeless entities, independent of the physical world and of the symbols used to represent them. It is a type of dualism: abstract entities or *universals* are contrasted with their objects or *particulars* in the material world.

Advocate: Plato [c.429–c.347 BC] Greek philosopher, student of Socrates and teacher of Aristotle.

### *Neoplatonism*

Neoplatonism combined ideas from Plato, Aristotle, Pythagoras, and the Stoics with oriental mysticism. Predominant in pagan Europe until the early 6<sup>th</sup> century, it was a major influence on early Christian writers, on later medieval and Renaissance thought, and on Islamic philosophy. It envisages the human soul rising above the imperfect material world through virtue and contemplation towards knowledge of the transcendent One.

Advocate: Plotinus [3<sup>rd</sup> century AD].

### *Aristotelianism*

A system of analysis, including logic, physical science, zoology, psychology, metaphysics, ethics, politics, and rhetoric. An empirical approach to science. In reasoning, Aristotle established the inductive method. In metaphysics, he rejected Platonism.

Advocates: Aristotle [384–322 BC] Greek philosopher and scientist; medieval Scholastics.

### *Thomism*

The theology of Thomas Aquinas or of his followers. This was a syncretism of theology with Aristotelian logic. His own metaphysics, his account of the human mind, and his moral philosophy were a development of Aristotle's, and in his famous arguments for the existence of God ('the Five Ways') he was indebted to Aristotle and to Arabic philosophers.

Advocates: Thomas Aquinas [1225–74] Italian philosopher, theologian, and Dominican friar.

### *Scepticism*

The position that holds that justification of belief, and hence knowledge, is not possible.

Advocates: Pyrrho [c.365–c.270 BC] Greek philosopher, Voltaire (François-Marie Arouet), Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Gotthold Ephraim Lessing.

*Relativism*

Knowledge, truth, and morality exist in relation to culture, society, or historical context, and are not absolute.

*Rationalism*

The theory that reason rather than experience is the foundation of certainty in knowledge.

Advocates: René Descartes [1596–1650] French philosopher, Baruch de (or Benedict de) Spinoza [1632–77] Dutch philosopher of Portuguese Jewish descent, Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz [1646–1716], Blaise Pascal [1623–62].

*Empiricism*

Knowledge is derived from sense-experience. Stimulated by the rise of experimental science

Advocates: John Locke, George Berkeley, David Hume.

*Subjectivism*

Knowledge is merely subjective and that there is no external or objective truth.

*Deism*

Belief in the existence of a supreme being, specifically of a creator who does not intervene in the universe. The term is used chiefly of an intellectual movement of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries which accepted the existence of a creator on the basis of reason, but rejected belief in a supernatural deity who interacts with humankind.

Advocates: the Cambridge Platonists, John Tolland.

*Nominalism*

The doctrine that universals or general ideas are mere names without any corresponding reality. Only particular objects exist, and properties, numbers, and sets are merely features of the way of considering the things that exist. Often contrasted with realism.

Advocate: William of Occam (or Ockham) [c.1290–c.1347] English theologian.

*Realism*

The doctrine that universals or abstract concepts have an objective or absolute existence. The theory that universals have their own reality is sometimes called Platonic realism because it was first outlined by Plato's doctrine of 'forms' or ideas. Often contrasted with nominalism.

*Idealism*

Systems of thought in which the objects of knowledge are held to be in some way dependent on the activity of mind. Often contrasted with realism.

Advocates: Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel [1770–1831], George Berkeley [1685–1753] Irish philosopher, Descartes.

*Positivism*

A philosophical system which holds that every rationally justifiable assertion can be scientifically verified or is capable of logical or mathematical proof, and which therefore rejects metaphysics and theism.

Advocate: Coined by the French philosopher Auguste Comte.

### *Transcendentalism*

A system developed by Immanuel Kant, based on the idea that, in order to understand the nature of reality, one must first examine and analyse the reasoning process which governs the nature of experience.

Advocates: Plato, Immanuel Kant [1724–1804], Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau.

### *Humanism*

A system of thought attaching prime importance to human rather than divine or supernatural matters. Man is regarded the centre of the Universe. Humanist beliefs stress the potential value and goodness of human beings, emphasise common human needs, and seek solely rational ways of solving human problems.

Advocates: Petrarch (born Francesco Petrarca) [1304–74] Italian poet. Guicciardini. Niccolò di Bernardo dei Machiavelli [1469–1527] Italian statesman and political philosopher. Thomas More [1478–1535] English scholar and saint, Lord Chancellor of England. Desiderius Erasmus (born Gerhard Gerhards) [c.1469–1536] Dutch humanist and scholar. John Colet [1466–1519] Renaissance theologian, Karl (Heinrich) Marx [1818–83] German political philosopher.

### *Existentialism*

A philosophical theory which emphasises the existence of the individual person as a free and responsible agent determining their own development through acts of the will.

Advocates Originators: Friedrich Nietzsche [1844–1900], Søren (Aabye) Kierkegaard [1813–55]. Theologians: Rudolf (Karl) Bultmann [1884–1976], Paul (Johannes) Tillich [1886–1965]. Philosophers and novelists: Martin Heidegger [1889–1976], Jean-Paul Sartre [1905–80], Albert Camus [1913–60], and Simone de Beauvoir [1908–86].

### *Reductionism*

The practice of analysing and describing a complex phenomenon, especially a mental, social, or biological phenomenon, in terms of phenomena which are held to represent a simpler or more fundamental level, especially when this is said to provide a sufficient explanation.

### *Modern philosophy*

- Ludwig (Josef Johann) Wittgenstein [1889–1951], British philosopher, born in Austria. Metaphysical speculation is meaningless theories which influenced the development of logical positivism. Words take on different roles according to the different human activities in which they are used, and they do not have definite intrinsic meanings. Some philosophical problems are simply a result of a misunderstanding of the nature of language.
- Bertrand (Arthur William) Russell, 3rd Earl Russell [1872–1970] British philosopher, mathematician, and social reformer. He wrote several books in the empiricist tradition and was a principal proponent of neutral monism (a denial of the duality of matter and mind). His work on mathematical logic was extremely influential.
- G(eorge) E(dward) Moore [1873–1958] British philosopher. He led the revolt against the Hegelianism prevalent at the turn of the century, objecting that it was inapplicable to the familiar world of 'tables and chairs'. In his best-known work, *Principia Ethica* (1903), he argued that good was a simple, indefinable, unanalysable, and a non-natural property.
- Martin Buber [1878–1965], Israeli religious philosopher, born in Austria. In his existentialist work *I and Thou* (1923) he argues that religious experience involves reciprocal relationships with a personal subject, rather than knowledge of some 'thing'.

As you can see, the theories of men blow in the wind. First one philosopher affirms a thing then a later one contradicts this and says the opposite. Aristotle rejected Plato's metaphysics for example. Early church fathers followed the Neoplatonic method but medieval theologians followed the Aristotelian method. Many Renaissance theologians were humanists. Early 20<sup>th</sup> century theologians followed existentialism. Some philosophers centre on what is material and real then others focus upon the ideal and transcendent. Empiricists say that true knowledge can only come from what exists but scepticism says that it doesn't exist at all. All of this is futile.

This is why true knowledge and wisdom only comes from God. True knowledge is absolute and divine.

### Resources

- Colin Brown, *Philosophy and the Christian Faith*, Tyndale Press.
- *New Fontana Dictionary of Modern Thought*.
- *The Oxford dictionary of philosophy*.
- Trevor A Hart, *Dictionary of Historical Theology*, Eerdmans.
- Robert Todd Carroll, *The Skeptic's Dictionary*.
- CH Waddington, *Tools for thought*, Paladin.

## Modern movements that have perverted truth

### Cultural Marxism

A social and philosophical movement initially posited by Communist thinkers such as Gramsci [1891–1937]. After WWI he realised that violent political revolution was not going to happen in the West that was steeped in ethical traditions and religion. He therefore proposed to slowly pervert the culture and strip religion and tradition of their strength to enable a social revolution from within. It further developed in the Frankfurt School before WWII and then was spread abroad, especially in America and France.

The purpose was to subvert Western capitalist democracies (hence the Marxism) by a slow, stealthy occupation of all social institutions (the 'long march through the institutions'). Thus Western culture was polluted by Marxists hidden in places like universities over the last 90 years. One Cultural Marxist said that the plan was '*to make society stink*'; to initiate the breakdown of all social and cultural norms creating social unrest.

It thus opposes common sense, historical truth, religion (especially Christianity), the nature of truth (replaced by situation ethics) and so on. It pushes licentious behaviour, selfishness, no absolute truth, a focus on marginal groups, homosexuality, censorship and so on.

At this point in time, all of Western institutions have been conquered by this ideology, especially the education system. This is why Woke ideas get so much traction.

### Postmodernism

Though denied by some, this movement developed out of Cultural Marxism as a deliberate ploy to hinder critical thinking and corrupt epistemology.

It is difficult to define precisely as it is an amorphous set of beliefs. It is a reaction against the certainty of the previous rational and scientism of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. It began in the arts and architecture, in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, as a reaction against modernism and led to a distrust of ideologies and philosophical certainties or 'grand

narratives' (totalistic explanations). Hence Postmodernism is often represented as a revolt against order, systems, and narratives, Instead it focuses on: eclecticism, parody, irony, and indeterminacy.

In philosophy it led to demystification, de-canonisation, and de-centring. It contains many factions and is hard to pin down due to its wide-ranging views and constant inclusivity. It is now a world view; a paradigm of the age. In cultural terms it is multicultural, post-industrial, sceptical, hi-tech, internationalist, and eclectic. In moral terms it is fetishism, narcissism, eroticism, history without depth and expressionism.

Key is '*the death of grand narrative*', a term coined by Jean-Francois Lyotard. In the post-modern age it is now impossible to believe in the traditional theories of history and society (meta-narratives', 'grand narratives') that resulted from the Enlightenment. These depended on concepts of truth and rationality. Postmodernists have no faith in such.

From a Christian perspective Postmodernism is selfish, individualistic, situation ethics, doubting, anti-God, all-inclusive, anti-tradition, irrational, unethical and tribal.

From the perspective of thinking, Postmodernism is a dangerous fashion that has no absolute truth, no moral certainty and no concern about God (certainly not organised religion). Any truth held by anyone is their truth and this must be respected. This way leads chaos and uncertainty.

This is why society is the way that it is.

### **Deconstruction**

A method of critical analysis of philosophical and literary language, concerned with unravelling the meanings of texts. It was developed by Jacques Derrida around 1967. It proposes that texts do not mean what they seem to say but may say nothing at all, or may say something opposed to what it seems to say, or may say many things. This subverts the conscious intentions of the writer. Thus new texts emerge but these too can be deconstructed; and so it goes on.

As a result texts are claimed to have no meaning. The link between text and meaning is severed. There is no one meaning of a text.

Though a popular elitist trend amongst academics, after the 80s it began to fall out of fashion.

You cannot trust any text therefore the Bible is not trustworthy.

### **Relativism**

The doctrine that knowledge, truth, and morality exist in relation to culture, society, or historical context, and are not absolute.

### **Structuralism**

A method of study in which the phenomenon to be analysed is seen as comprising a system of structures, which are regarded as more important than the isolated elements that make them up. It derives from the linguistic theories of Saussure in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Saussure regarded language as a vast network of structures which he broke it down into minimal components (linguistic units, such as phonemes and words), which could be defined only in relation to other such units.

Saussure's linguistic theories were applied by the anthropologist Lévi-Strauss in his study of myth, kinship, and totemism, which he analysed as though they were language systems. The structures he identified supposedly corresponded to structures inherent in the human mind. He regarded language as an essential common denominator underlying cultural phenomena.

Structuralism came to be applied to other areas, such as sociology and literary criticism.

This system takes divine truth and compartmentalises it into the mere linguistic structures of the human mind. Religion is not a relationship with God through Christ but the natural processes of the human mind. People worship because they are wired to, not because a person recognises the majesty of God.

### **Various modern trends and fashionable ideologies**

- *Wokeness*: pandering to Progressive ideals based on supposedly supporting social justice but which really end up pushing nonsense in the place of common sense. It censors and de-platforms people that don't agree with Woke ideology. Focuses on victimhood.
- *Critical Race Theory*: denying the lack of institutional racism in British institutions while affirming the persecution and victimhood of Black people. Clamouring for action against, or even the death of, White people in positions of authority.<sup>20</sup> Demanding that Britain must be rid of its claimed colonial heritage and 'White privilege'. Blaming modern Britain for historic Black slavery (even though Britain was the first nation to abolish it). Demanding favouritism for Black people (diversity), such as in job applications, instead of meritorious candidates. Black Lives Matter is a fraudulent Marxist activist subset of this.<sup>21</sup> Everything about this ideology is based on lies. Focuses on victimhood.
- *Intersectionalism*: a schismatic movement focusing upon marginalised social groups and attributing honour to those in multiple factions that are claimed to be being persecuted. For example a Black lesbian has more value than a White heterosexual male. It splits society up into, often opposing, factions awarding value to each marginal group. Focuses on victimhood.
- *Transgenderism*: insisting that people, even infants, can choose their sex and transition. This is based on multiple lies. If you have a Y chromosome then you are a male and nothing you do can change that. It is taking biological truth and reversing it.
- *Fourth Wave Feminism*: Feminists that sought for social equality, universal franchise and equal wages had a rational purpose. However, modern Feminism has become misandry – focusing upon hatred of men and a claimed patriarchy.<sup>22</sup>
- *The Free Speech crisis*: Free speech no longer exists in Britain. Excellent podcasters have been deleted from YouTube for not pandering to Wokeness or Left-Wing principles. Individual thinkers are de-platformed, cancelled and lose their jobs – despite being eminent in their profession. This is highlighted by the appalling smear campaign against Prof. Sunetra Gupta<sup>23</sup> for going against the Covid lockdown narrative. This was despite her excellent epidemiological credentials and being proved correct.

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<sup>20</sup> This has happened in America and people have actually been murdered.

<sup>21</sup> The founders openly admit that they are Marxists. Money donated to BLM has been appropriated by the leaders to buy expensive mansions in predominantly White posh areas in America. Other moneys were given to relatives to develop businesses. £6 million went missing.

<sup>22</sup> Despite Britain having had two female Prime Ministers.

<sup>23</sup> One of the authors of the Great Barrington Declaration.

## Conclusion

Notice that all the movements are subversive of absolute truth. They find various ways to suggest that there is no absolute divine truth but only relative truths that are personal.

## Modern movements that have perverted ecclesiastical truth

Having written on this many times I will simply make some concise, brief points.

Each of these movements weaken doctrinal certainty; indeed some make such uncertainty about truth a virtue. The satanic purpose of these schismatic groups is to diminish God's word and authority and to create confusion about truth, often by emphasising a subjective or mystical experience in preference. People stuck in such sects often lose their ability to think for themselves. They are all (except liberalism) anti-intellectual.

- *Liberalism<sup>24</sup> and modernism*: these connected movements were prevalent in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century but linger on. They are anti-supernaturalism, anti-Biblical, rationalistic, evolutionary, humanistic, mechanistic, and sow seeds of doubt about almost everything in God's word<sup>25</sup> – thus they deny truth. Several modern church movements are very liberal.
- *The Emerging Church*: a subset of Charismaticism that is essentially Postmodern. Emphasis on subjective relative truth, community, doctrinal uncertainty and feelings.
- *Charismaticism*: a movement developed in the early 60s to get evangelical churches focused on Pentecostal ideas and practices. It was a Trojan Horse to infiltrate occultism into evangelical churches by stealth. It centres on mysticism, subjectivity, lack of doctrinal teaching, community, leadership authority and feelings-led worship. It is very broad comprising some groups that are closer to evangelicalism through to others that are extreme and radical (e.g. Latter Rain). The essential problem is a syncretism between occult ideas/practices and the Bible. There are now hundreds of denominations with different emphases.
- *Classic Sects*: there are many of these ranging from the earlier Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses, Seventh day Adventists, Shakers etc. through to modern variants.<sup>26</sup> Without analysing these separately, they all put a person's focus on something away from Christ and away from God's word. JW's and Christadelphians do not worship Christ. Mormons trust in the words of men and not God's word. Swedenborgians and Christian Science conflate the occult and eastern mysticism with Christianity. Very often they centre on a certain man<sup>27</sup> or woman<sup>28</sup> rather than God. They all lose focus on truth.
- *Dispensationalism and Messianic Christianity*: The latter arises from the former. The purpose of these was to focus Christians away from God's word and fix their attention on Jews and Israel. This was politically motivated in order to garner support for, first, a Jewish homeland in Palestine and, secondly, support for the State of Israel. Another subset, *Jewish Roots*, seeks to further this focus on Israel by affirming that the foundation of Christianity is Jewish instead of centring on Christ. The results are that clear Biblical statements are denied, such as God's purpose in the church.

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<sup>24</sup> This is religious liberalism, not political liberalism.

<sup>25</sup> For example: Moses did not write the Pentateuch; there was no global flood; Jesus' miracles never happened but are explained by natural processes; the resurrection never happened etc.

<sup>26</sup> E.g. Moonies, Children of God, the Shouters.

<sup>27</sup> NB so called modern apostles and prophets.

<sup>28</sup> E.g. Christian Science centres on Mary Baker Eddy; the Shakers focused on Mother Ann Lee; Adventism centres on a female prophet Ellen G White.

Throughout history, Christianity stimulated people to search into God's truth. Thus it was only after the Reformation that the major sciences began to develop and society prospered in liberty, entrepreneurialism and exploration. True Christianity led to the flowering of godly intellectualism and research.

The perversion of Christianity, as evidenced above, has helped further the dumbing-down of society, the prevalence of stupidity, the denial of true science, and the pervasion of deception.

## Determine absolutes with reference to God's attributes

You must develop a system or code of ethics based upon absolute truth. This will derive from the attributes of God who is the truth. The point of your life is to represent God so that people can see what God is like through you.

For example, an absolute truth is to never lie; lying is wrong. God cannot lie and can only speak truth.

It is not my job to lay out every absolute truth on which you can build your life; it is your job to find this out for yourself – then it will mean something precious. However, I can list a few examples.

Principle	Divine attribute
Always do good; never do evil.	Truly God is good. Ps 73:1
Love your neighbour.	God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him. 1 Jn 4:16
Do not lie.	God, who cannot lie. Titus 1:2
Do not be fickle.	I am the LORD, I do not change. Mal 3:6
Be holy.	Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts. Isa 6:3
Be wise.	The LORD by wisdom founded the earth; by understanding He established the heavens. Prov 3:19
Be merciful.	God shall send forth His mercy and His truth. Ps 57:3
Be righteous.	A God of truth and without injustice; righteous and upright is He. Deut 32:4
Be gracious.	For the LORD God is a sun and shield; the LORD will give grace and glory. Ps 84:11

## The renewing of the mind

Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind [*nous*], that you may prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. Rm 12:2

People quote this verse all the time; but what does it really mean?

The purpose is ‘that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God’. In other words it is about knowledge; knowing what is God’s will; knowing what to do; knowing what is right. It is about revelation of divine knowledge.

How is this achieved? It is not gained by being taught by a man but by a transformation. The human spirit must be transformed by the mind being renewed.

This transformation is controlled by verse 1, ‘I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service’. Being a living sacrifice means presenting up our bodies unto death; taking up the cross. Divine service involves mortification.

What this is talking about is putting off the old nature and putting on the new nature. As we die in practical terms to our Adamic sinful nature we are resurrected in Christ, our new nature.

When a person is converted they die to their old nature and are regenerated or born again into the nature of Christ. They are in Christ and Christ is in them. They are a new creation (2 Cor 5:17). However, the process of sanctification involves continually dying to ourselves (self-denial, taking up the cross, dying to sin) in area after area, and following Christ. This is the process of transformation of becoming more like Christ as we progress. It is also a continual repentance: having the mind changed; abandoning our way of thinking like the world and following Christ.

Progressive sanctification is not about adding some virtue to our character by willpower, but dying to ourselves and trusting in Christ. As we do this the Holy Spirit changes us and brings the things of Christ to us. This includes renovated ways of thinking – being renewed in the mind. We think new things and lose old ideas.

The new nature lives in the human spirit. This is where God dwells in us. The spirit comprises of the conscience, the intuitive faculty and the higher mind (*nous*). This is where revelation occurs. God speaks to our spirit and we understand divine things.

Thus the conscience grows by learning better moral principles; the intuition receives the things of God and the higher mind processes this into logical form for use in the soul where the intellect governing action is.

By the process of the mind being renewed one receives revelation of divine understanding and becomes a wiser more knowledgeable person, thus able to know the will of God in any situation.

The devil, on the other hand, is constantly seeking to deceive Christians into relying on their lower mind (*dianoia*, Eph 2:3) and conforming them to the world. Dull Christians who do not know God’s will are not renewing their mind, not growing the conscience and making it more sensitive to holiness and have no intuition of the divine. In other words, these people have no discernment. They are driven by the soul not the spirit. In other words they are motivated by superficial emotions, a selfish will and the lower mind fixated on worldly things. Their focus is earthly.

Divine knowledge is necessary to understand the divine will. This comes by a process of transformation; the renewing of the mind.

### **Receiving the wisdom of God**

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom. Ps 111:10

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge. Prov 1:7

He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding. Dan 2:21

If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. Jm 1:5

The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy. Jm 3:17

The people who ask God for what they need receive grace (Matt 7:8; Lk 11:10). If you lack wisdom, seek it from God. God will direct you in the path of learning how to gain wisdom. He will direct you to Christ, who is wisdom (1 Cor 1:24, 30).

The people who are not wise are those who proudly trust in their own wisdom, and thus remain fools: 'your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God (1 Cor 2:5).

Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God. These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he who is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is rightly judged by no one. 1 Cor 2:12-15

Wisdom is received from God by the Spirit. The renewed mind is filled with the Spirit of God and receives revelation and wisdom by intuition.

### **Wrong wisdom**

Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct that his works are done in the meekness of wisdom. But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth. This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, demonic. For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy. Jm 3:13-17

Wrong wisdom is thinking in earthly terms; thinking like the world. The world follows the Devil and worldly thinking is essentially satanic. The key sign of earthly wisdom is selfishness. The key sign of godly wisdom is selflessness.

### **A caveat: not mysticism**

Some Charismatics take spiritual intuition into the grounds of mysticism and think that such emotional experiences constitute divine revelation. They do not; they always lead into pride and deception. Just note how many mystics initiated new heresies and aberrant practices in history.<sup>29</sup>

Divine revelation from a renewed mind is not a mystical experience generated by certain disciplines (e.g. fasting, asceticism, prolonged meditation or altered state of consciousness). It is a natural process to the spiritual man. It should be happening every day as we obey God and seek his light.

Mysticism is the emptying of the mind and becoming passive and thus open to deception, especially through emotions which pretend to be illumination of the divine. God gave us a mind in order to use it and renewing the mind involves actively using the higher mind (*nous*) in the spirit. It involves choosing to put off the old nature and choosing to put on the new nature. It involves choosing to listen to God and ignore the world. It includes choosing to focus upon Christ and asking to be filled with the Spirit of God. The mind is active in gaining divine revelation, not passive as in mysticism.

## **Develop an understanding of history**

History is a most important subject to study. One of the key means of dumbing-down students today is that history is very selectively and poorly taught. Modern British kids leave school with a shockingly poor grasp of history. They don't know the origins of Britain, nothing about monarchs, nothing about key wars, nothing about the British Empire, nothing about key thinkers. They don't know what the Dark Ages refers to, what the Renaissance was, what the Reformation was or even the English century civil war [1642–49]. In fact, one lad I spoke to had just been taught about WWII and little else.

Through learning history we develop an understanding of the human condition and how this plays out in communities and nations. The same mistakes keep being made by mankind for the same reasons. Understanding history helps us to see these principles working out in modern life. We can often predict how something will turn out by understanding history. We can understand certain national conflicts by understanding the history behind the nations involved.

I believe that there are historical periods that need to be properly understood in order to be a fully functioning rational person. This includes international and national eras. I won't list all of these here (it would be long) but it would include:

- Ancient empires (Sumer [Nimrod], Old Babylonia [Hammurabi], Akkadian [Sargon], Assyrian [Tiglath-Pileser I], Babylonian [Nebuchadnezzar], Medo-Persian [Cyrus], Greek [Alexander; Macedonian, Hellenistic culture]). If possible also study the Hittites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Guti, the Elamites, the Mari.
- Egyptian civilisation.
- The Greek Empire and its collapse.
- The Roman Empire and its collapse.

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<sup>29</sup> I explain this and give examples in several other papers. For example, Swedenborg, through mysticism, developed doctrines, which blended Christianity with elements of pantheism and theosophy. Steiner, through mysticism, developed Anthroposophy, which combined Christianity with the occult and oriental religions. John of the Cross, Fénelon and Molinos developed Quietism, which led to a renunciation of the mind, will, emotions and the self plus avoiding spiritual exercises in deep passivity – which is more akin to Buddhism than Christianity.

- Classical culture (Hellenistic and Latin).
- The Christian expansion.
- The Celtic expansion (from Cappadocia to Ireland).
- The rise of Catholicism.
- The Teutonic expansion (e.g. Saxons, Angles, Jutes).
- The rise of England.
- The Byzantine Empire.
- The Viking expansion.
- The development of Russia.
- The Norman invasion of England.
- The Islamic conquests and empires.
- The Crusades.
- The Mongolian invasions.
- Latin American empires (Aztecs, Mayas, Toltecs, Incas).
- The Dark Ages.
- The Renaissance. Art, sculpture, writing, inventions, philosophy.
- The Reformation. German, Swiss, Dutch, English reformations. The 30 Years War.
- The Tudors.
- Spanish exploration.
- The Elizabethan Age.
- The Stuarts.
- The Glorious Revolution.
- Development of Russia. Vladimir I, Ivan the Terrible. Peter the Great. Catherine the Great.
- The Enlightenment.
- The Mercantile Empires. Exploration and annexation. Dutch, Portuguese, French, Belgian, British.
- The development of America. (The 13 Colonies; War of Rebellion; the Constitution; Mexican War; War of 1812; Civil War; the civil rights movement etc.)
- The Raj. The Indian Mutiny. Clive of India. The Afghan Wars.
- South African wars (Shaka Zulu's empire, Anglo-Zulu War, Boer Wars [1880–1], [1899–1902]).
- WWI.
- The Bolshevik Revolution.
- WWII.
- The Cold War.

And so on. You really need to have a basic understanding of all these.

You also need to know about the great personalities in history, again too many to list but a few would be:

- |                           |                        |
|---------------------------|------------------------|
| • Augustine of Hippo.     | • Attila.              |
| • Plotinus.               | • Julius Caesar.       |
| • Philo.                  | • Claudius.            |
| • Akhenaton.              | • Augustus.            |
| • Nebuchadnezzar.         | • Athanasius.          |
| • Sargon of Akkad.        | • Basil the Great.     |
| • Hammurabi.              | • Boudicca.            |
| • Rameses II (the Great). | • Columba (Colmcille). |

- Patrick.
- Aidan.
- Chad.
- Muhammad.
- Genghis Khan.
- Timur Lenk (Tamerlane).
- Elizabeth I.
- Charlemagne.
- Charles Martel.
- Erik the Red.
- Leif Ericsson.
- Desiderius Erasmus.
- Martin Luther.
- Henry VIII.
- John Calvin.
- Alfred the Great.
- Edward I.
- Eleanor of Aquitaine.
- Edward III.
- James I.
- Charles I.
- Oliver Cromwell.
- Voltaire.
- Rene Descartes.
- Thomas Aquinas.
- Columbus.
- Vasco da Gama.
- Leonardo da Vinci.
- Titian (Tiziano Vecellio).
- Raphael (Raffaello Sanzio).
- Alighieri Dante.
- William Wordsworth.
- Percy Bysshe Shelley.
- Lord Byron.
- Napoleon Bonaparte.
- Horatio Nelson.
- Lord Wellington.
- William Blake.
- Florence Nightingale.
- General Gordon.
- Geronimo.
- Cochise.
- Red Cloud.
- Chief Joseph (Hinmaton-Yalaktit).
- Michael Faraday.
- Robert Boyle.
- Isaac Newton.
- Galileo Galilei.
- Copernicus.
- Isambard Kingdom Brunel.
- James Watt.
- George Stephenson.
- Jane Austen.
- George Orwell.

Then there are the important writings of history. A few of these would be:

- The Bible.
- The Odyssey (Homer).
- The Iliad (Homer).
- The Aeneid (Virgil).
- The Republic (Plato).
- The Egyptian book of the dead.
- Against Heresies (Irenaeus).
- Ecclesiastical History (Eusebius).
- The Vulgate (Jerome).
- The Histories (Herodotus).
- History of the Peloponnesian War (Thucydides).
- Works of Hippocrates.
- Works of Philo.
- Annals (Tacitus).
- The history of the decline and fall of the Roman Empire (Gibbon).
- The City of God (Augustine).
- Confessions (Augustine).
- The Talmud.
- The Kabbalah.
- The I-Ching.
- The Tao-Te Ching.
- The Upanishads.
- The Bhagavad Gita.
- The writings of Confucius.
- The Ecclesiastical History of the English People (Bede).
- The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle.
- De excidio et conquestu Britanniae (Gildas).
- The Summa Theologica (Aquinas).
- The Magna Carta.
- The Divine Comedy (Dante).
- The 95 Theses (Luther).
- The Bondage of the Will (Luther).
- On the Babylonian captivity of the church (Luther).
- The NT in German (Luther).

- The Institutes of the Christian Religion (Calvin).
- The marrow of theology (Ames).
- The plays and sonnets of Shakespeare.
- The Westminster Confession.
- Pilgrim's Progress (Bunyan).
- Principia Mathematica (Newton).
- Lives of the artists (Vasari).
- The canons of the Synod of Dort.
- The Bill of Rights (1689).

- The Wealth of Nations (Adam Smith).
- On Liberty (John Stuart Mill).
- Discourse on method (Descartes).
- Natural Theology (Paley).
- The origin of species (Darwin).
- The US Constitution.
- The (English) Bill of Rights (1689).
- The Communist Manifesto.
- The Female Eunuch (Greer).

History was determined by certain critical wars and battles. Some of these include:

- The battle of Marathon (490 BC).
- The battle of Thermopylae (480 BC).
- The battle of Salamis (480 BC).
- The Peloponnesian War (431 - 404 BC).
- Punic Wars (264-241, 218-201 BC).
- The Gallic Wars (58-51 BC).
- The Roman invasion of Britain (43).
- The battle of Tours (732).
- Viking invasions (8<sup>th</sup>–11<sup>th</sup> centuries).
- The Norman invasion of Britain (Battle of Hastings, 1066).
- The Crusades (11<sup>th</sup>–14<sup>th</sup> century).
- The battle of Bannockburn (1314).
- Hundred Years War (1337–1453).
- The battle of Crécy (1346).
- The battle of Poitiers (1356).
- The conquest of Constantinople (1453).
- Wars of the Roses (15<sup>th</sup>-century).
- The defeat of the Spanish Armada (1588).
- The Thirty Years War (1618–48).
- The English Civil War (1642-49).
- Anglo-Dutch Wars (17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> century).
- The battle of Blenheim (1704).
- Battle of Culloden (1746).
- Seven Years War (1756–63).
- American War of Independence (or American Revolution, 1776–83).
- Battle of Saratoga (1777).
- The battle of Valmy (1792).
- The Napoleonic Wars (1796–1815).
- Battle of Austerlitz (1805).
- The Peninsula War (1807–14).
- (US) Indian Wars (1811-1924).
- The war of 1812 (1812–15).
- The siege of the Alamo (1836).
- The Crimean War (1853–56).
- The American Civil War (1861–65).
- Zulu War (1879).
- Boer Wars (1880–81, 1899–1902).
- The battle of Sand Creek (1864).
- The Fetterman Massacre (1866).
- The battle of Wounded Knee (1890).
- WWI (1914-18).
- Easter Uprising (Ireland, 1916).
- The Russian Civil War (1918-21).
- WWII (1939-45).
- The Korean War (1950-53).
- The Falklands War (1982).
- The Iraq War (2003-2011).

The greatest generals include:

- Leonidas (died 480 BC).
- Alexander the Great (356–323 BC).
- Hannibal (247–182 BC).
- Julius Caesar (100–44 BC).
- Pompey (106–48 BC).
- Genghis Khan (1162–1227).
- William Wallace (c.1270–1305).
- Edward the Black Prince (1330–76).
- Timur Lenk (Tamerlane, 1336–1405).
- Oliver Cromwell (1599–1658).
- George Washington (1732–99).
- Napoleon Bonaparte (1769–1821).
- Wellington (Arthur Wellesley, 1769–1852).
- Robert E Lee (1807–70).
- Cochise (c.1815–74).

- William Tecumseh Sherman (1820–91).
- Ulysses S Grant (1822–85).
- Geronimo (c.1829–1909).
- Chief Joseph of the Nez Percé (c. 1840–1904).

Critical non-violent events include:

- The Council of Nicea (325).
- The Council of Constantinople (381).
- The Council of Ephesus (431).
- Council of Chalcedon (451).
- Founding of a church and missionary centre on Lindisfarne by Aidan (635).
- The Synod of Whitby (664).
- Columbus discovers the New World (1492).
- Invention of the ploughshare.
- The nailing of the 95 theses to the Wittenberg church door (1517).
- Dissolution of British monasteries (mid 1500s).
- The Field of the Cloth of Gold (1520).
- The Diet of Worms (1521).
- Sir Walter Raleigh brings potatoes and tobacco to Britain (1595).
- The Hampton Court Conference (1604).
- The Authorised Bible, or King James Version, published (1611).
- Elzevir published *textus receptus* NT (1633).
- The Synod of Dort (1618-19).
- Treaties of Westphalia (1648).
- The Westminster Assembly (1643-1653).
- The Enlightenment (mid 17<sup>th</sup> century to 19<sup>th</sup> century).
- John J Pershing (1860-1948).
- George Smith Patton (1885–1945).
- Erwin Rommel (1891–1944).
- Sir Harold Alexander (1891–1969).
- First steam-powered vehicle (1672).
- The Glorious Revolution (1688).
- Founding of the Bank of England (1694).
- Industrial revolution begins (c.1760).
- The US Constitution (1789).
- Invention of the Davy Lamp (1815).
- Railways and trains invented (1830).
- Sir John Franklin and ships lost at sea seeking North-West Passage (1847).
- First Vatican Council (1868).
- Benz invents petrol-driven automobile (1887).
- Aeroplanes invented (1906).
- Sir Robert Scott, and party, dies seeking the South Pole (1912).
- Establishment of the Federal Reserve (1913).
- Treaty of Versailles (1919).
- Discovery of Penicillin (1928).
- Establishment of the UN (1945).
- First manned space flight (1961).
- The Second Vatican Council (1962-1965).
- Establishment of the European Community (1967).
- Collapse of the Soviet Union (1990).
- Establishment of the European Union (1993).

## Weigh your sources

These days ideas flow from a huge number of sources, most of which cannot be tested or checked for veracity. These include: social media posts, YouTube channels, video blogs, written blogs, broadcast media etc. This is in addition to the traditional sources of newspapers, books, journals, magazines, education systems and conversations. Today you cannot even trust photographic images because these can be doctored and manipulated.

Do not believe what you receive at face value; test it and check it. Online posts are often incorrect, exaggerated, or just plain lies and propaganda. Get your information from multiple sources and sift them with reason.

Learn what commentators are trustworthy so that you can generally access good information. There are excellent people online but these are often censored or hidden. Find respected people in various fields that you can go to for expert genuine opinion in their respective areas.

For example, in the Russia-Ukraine conflict the West was bombarded with false information; much of it emanating from the British Secret Services via the BBC. This was to achieve a political end. To get accurate information one had to: a) listen to respected military analysts with a track record of accuracy (such as Scott Ritter). b) Listen to actual citizens on the ground, such as people fleeing Mariupol. Various brave journalists (e.g. Patrick Lancaster) went to the front line to interview such people. c) Listen to good geopolitical analysts that you trust due to their former truthful reporting (e.g. Vanessa Beeley, Patrick Henningsen, Eva Bartlett).

By doing this investigation one learned that the reporting in the West was virtually the opposite of what was actually going on. For example: Russia, outnumbered three to one, took an area the size of England in 100 days. This is a phenomenal military success that went exactly according to plan (for example the Russians never planned to occupy Kiev or Odessa but to hem in troops). The Western media said that Russia was losing, was logistically strained, was running out of weapons, was demoralised, that Putin was sick and mad and making wrong decisions etc. In fact the conflict was supported in Russia and Putin's approval rating went up. Ukraine has already lost bar the shouting. The conflict is being exacerbated by Western military aid and money (which is being stolen).

## **Meditate**

When digesting information, meditate upon the matter for a period of time until you can settle on a position. Don't trust things immediately; stew on them.

Christians should pray through things that are new to them or ideologies that present themselves. Understand that the Devil works by lies and deception so you need to be on your guard. Watch and pray.

## **Biblical advice**

To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, *it is* because *there is* no light in them. Isa 8:20

Your law is truth. Ps 119:142

The entirety of Your word is truth. Ps 119:160

Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits. Matt 7:15-16

Why, even of yourselves, do you not judge what is right? Lk 12:57

These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so. Acts 17:11

Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. Rm 12:2

He who is spiritual judges all things. 1 Cor 2:15

Approve the things that are excellent. Phil 1:10

Test all things; hold fast what is good. 1 Thess 5:21

All Scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work. 2 Tim 3:16-17

Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world. 1 Jn 4:1

## Essential grammar

I will just list and briefly explain the essentials of communicating a point in English.

### **Grammar**

The system and structure of a language; usually taken as consisting of syntax and morphology (including inflections) and sometimes also phonology and semantics.

### **Syntax**

The arrangement of words and phrases to create well-formed sentences in a language.

### **Morphology**

In linguistics: the study of the forms of words, in particular inflected forms.

### **Semantics**

The branch of linguistics and logic concerned with meaning.

### **Phonology**

The system of contrastive relationships among the speech sounds that constitute the fundamental components of a language.

### **Parts of speech**

A category to which a word is assigned in accordance with its syntactic functions. In English the main parts of speech are noun, pronoun, adjective, determiner, verb, adverb, preposition, conjunction, and interjection.

### *Noun*

A word (other than a pronoun) used to identify any of a class of people, places, or things (common noun), or to name a particular one of these (proper noun).

### **GENDER**

Each of the classes (typically masculine, feminine, common, neuter) of nouns and pronouns distinguished by the different inflections which they have and which they require in words syntactically associated with them. Grammatical gender is only very loosely associated with natural distinctions of sex.

Common gender refers to living beings without reference to their sex, such as ‘teacher’. Neuter refers to inanimate objects.

#### CASE

Any of the inflected forms of a noun, adjective, or pronoun that express the semantic relation of the word to other words in the sentence: *the accusative case*. There are three forms of case: nominative, objective and possessive.

#### *Pronoun*

A word that can function as a noun phrase used by itself and that refers either to the participants in the discourse (e.g. *I, you*) or to someone or something mentioned elsewhere in the discourse (e.g. *she, it, this*).

#### *Adjective*

A word naming an attribute of a noun, such as *sweet, red, or technical*.

#### *Determiner*

A modifying word that determines the kind of reference a noun or noun group has, for example *a, the, every*.

#### *Verb*

A word used to describe an action, state, or occurrence, and forming the main part of the predicate of a sentence, such as *hear, become, happen*.

#### *Adverb*

A word or phrase that typically modifies the meaning of an adjective, verb, or other adverb, typically expressing manner, place, time, or degree (e.g. *gently, here, now, very*). Some adverbs, for example sentence adverbs, can also be used to modify whole sentences.

#### *Preposition*

A word governing, and usually preceding, a noun or pronoun and expressing a relation to another word or element in the clause, as in ‘the man *on* the platform’, ‘she arrived *after* dinner’, ‘what did you do it *for*?’.

#### *Conjunction*

A word used to connect clauses or sentences or to co-ordinate words in the same clause (e.g. *and, but, if*).

#### *Interjection*

[An abrupt remark, made especially as an aside or interruption.] An exclamation, especially as a part of speech (e.g. *ah!, dear me!*).

#### **Tense**

A set of forms taken by a verb to indicate the time (and sometimes also the continuance or completeness) of the action in relation to the time of the utterance: *the past tense*.

#### **Number**

A grammatical classification of words that consists typically of singular and plural, and, in Greek and certain other languages, dual.

#### **Person**

A category used in the classification of pronouns, possessive determiners, and verb forms, according to whether they indicate the speaker (first person), the addressee (second person), or a third party (third person).

**Infinitive**

The basic form of a verb, without an inflection binding it to a particular subject or tense (e.g. *see* in *we came to see*, *let him see*).

**Gerund**

A verb form (present participle) which functions as a noun; in English ending in *-ing* (e.g. *asking* in *do you mind my asking you?*).

**Gerundive**

A Latin verb, ending in *-ndus* (declinable) and functioning as an adjective, meaning ‘that should or must be done’. There is no gerundive in English (despite claims otherwise).

**Sentence**

A set of words that is complete in itself, typically containing a subject and predicate, conveying a statement, question, exclamation, or command, and consisting of a main clause and sometimes one or more subordinate clauses.

*Subject*

A noun phrase functioning as one of the main components of a clause, being the element about which the rest of the clause is predicated

*Predicate*

The part of a sentence or clause containing a verb and stating something about the subject (e.g. *went home* in *John went home*).

*Object*

A noun phrase governed by an active transitive verb or by a preposition.

*Clause*

A unit of grammatical organisation next below the sentence in rank and in traditional grammar said to consist of a subject and predicate. See also main clause, subordinate clause.

## MAIN CLAUSE

A clause that can form a complete sentence standing alone, having a subject and a predicate.

## SUBORDINATE CLAUSE

A clause, typically introduced by a conjunction, that forms part of and is dependent on a main clause (e.g. ‘when it rang’ in ‘she answered the phone when it rang’).

*Phrase*

A small group of words standing together as a conceptual unit, typically forming a component of a clause.

*Punctuation*

The marks, such as full stop, comma, and brackets, used in writing to separate sentences and their elements and to clarify meaning.

**Mood**

A category of verb use, typically expressing fact (indicative mood), command (imperative mood), question (interrogative mood), wish (optative mood), or conditionality (subjunctive mood).

**Subjunctive**

Relating to or denoting a mood of verbs expressing what is imagined or wished or possible. Compare with indicative.

**Voice****Active**

Denoting a voice of verbs in which the subject is typically the person or thing performing the action and which can take a direct object (e.g. *she loved him* as opposed to *he was loved*). The opposite of passive.

**Passive**

Denoting or relating to a voice of verbs in which the subject undergoes the action of the verb (e.g. *they were killed* as opposed to *he killed them*). The opposite of active.

**Intransitive**

(Of a verb or a sense or use of a verb) not taking a direct object, e.g. *look* in *look at the sky*. The opposite of transitive.

**Transitive**

(Of a verb or a sense or use of a verb) able to take a direct object (expressed or implied), e.g. *saw* in *he saw the donkey*. The opposite of intransitive.

**Resources for further study**

This is just the bare bones of grammar. There are various rules employed in the usage of these words, which ought to be understood.

- H W Fowler, *Fowler's Modern English Usage*, Guild Publishing.
- Eric Partridge, *Usage and abusage*, Penguin Reference.
- Harry Blamires, *The Cassell guide to common errors in English*.
- James Aitchison, *The Cassell dictionary of English Grammar*.
- Reginald Skelton, *Modern English Punctuation*, Sir Isaac Pitman & Sons.
- George Watson, *The discipline of English*, The MacMillan Press.

## Figures of speech

There are many figures of speech used in English texts to add colour to prose and poetry. The essential basic ones need to be understood for discourse, but understanding all would be helpful. [Note that figures of speech are widely used in the Bible and must be interpreted carefully.] Since there are hundreds of types, I will only select a few important ones.

**The most basic forms****Metaphor**

A figure of speech in which a word or phrase is applied to an object or action to which it is not literally applicable. A thing regarded as representative or symbolic of something else, especially something abstract

**Simile**

A figure of speech involving the comparison of one thing with another thing of a different kind, used to make a description more emphatic or vivid (e.g. *as brave as a lion*).

*Allegory*

A story, poem, or picture which can be interpreted to reveal a hidden meaning, typically a moral or political one. A continued metaphor.

*Parable*

A story intended to teach a specific point or a moral lesson. A continued simile.

*Apologue*

Fable. A fictitious narrative used for illustration.

*Irony*

The expression of thought in a way that conveys its opposite.

*Oxymoron*

A wise saying that seems foolish.

*Idiom*

The particular usage of words or phrases.

*Metonymy*

The substitution of the name of an attribute or adjunct for that of the thing meant, for example *suit* for *business executive*, *crown* for *king*, or *the turf* for *horse racing*.

*Parallelism*

The use of successive verbal constructions in poetry or prose which correspond in grammatical structure, sound, metre, meaning, etc.

*Typology*

A figure of something future, called the antitype.

*Symbol*

A material subject substituted for a moral or spiritual truth.

*Proverb (paroemia)*

A wayside saying of wisdom in common use.

*Alliteration (Homoeopropheron)*

Successive words beginning with the same letters or syllables.

*Homoeoteleuton*

Successive words ending with the same letters or syllables.

*Acrostic*

Repetition of the same or successive letters at the commencement of words or phrases.

*Paronomasia*

The repetition of words similar in sound but not necessarily in sense or origin. A pun, a play on words.

*Hyperbole*

Exaggeration. When more is said than literally meant.

*Epithet*

The naming of a thing by defining it.

*Parenthesis*

Addition by way of explanation.

*Antithesis*

Contrast.

**Less well known forms***Meiosis / litotes*

Ironical understatement in which an affirmative is expressed by the negative of its contrary (e.g. *I shan't be sorry for I shall be glad*). Greek *meiōsis*, from *meioun* means 'lessen',

*Paregmenon*

The repetition of words derived from the same root; similar in sound but different in sense.

*Parechesis*

Foreign paronomasia. The repetition of words similar in sound but different in language.

*Periphrasis*

When a description is used instead of the name.

*Hypotyposis*

Word picture. Visible representation of objects or actions by words.

*Synecdoche*

The exchange of one idea for another associated idea.

*Hendiadys*

Two words used but one thing meant.

*Prosopopoeia*

1) In which an abstract thing is personified. 2) In which an imagined or absent person or thing is represented as speaking.

**Resources**

- EW Bullinger, *Figures of speech used in the Bible*, Baker.
- Oxford Dictionary.

**Practical advice**

When seeking to understand something first try to find the origins of that position. Where did the idea come from? Who first taught this? What sort of character were they, are they trustworthy? What school of thought influenced them; is it trustworthy?

Then see what sort of companions the teachers of this idea have; are they trustworthy? You can often find the compatriots of a writer by looking at the bibliography. Does this book have sound people listed or apostates?

What sort of conferences are connected to this ideology? What organisations are connected to it?

What sort of people are backing this ideology financially? Are they sound?

What is the fruit of this thinking? Does it produce people that go on to do good?

When you have identified a source as untrustworthy, stop using that source. For example, the BBC is a proven false source of news; it is corrupt,<sup>30</sup> it constantly broadcasts lies<sup>31</sup> and follows an agenda. That agenda is set by the government and particularly the British secret services in tandem with other intelligence agencies. It is also partly funded by globalists like Bill Gates. Now many people know this but still watch the BBC news out of habit. This is stupid. Stop watching the BBC and discover how liberated you become.

## Problems to thinking clearly

### **Cognitive dissonance**

Psychology - the state of having inconsistent thoughts, beliefs, or attitudes, especially as relating to behavioural decisions and attitude change.

Modern people suffer from this as a result of the constant stream of contradictory conditioning through the media and social media.

### **Brainwashing**

This was especially noticeable during the Covid crisis when the government (e.g. the 'nudge unit') used military behavioural therapy and NLP<sup>32</sup> to programme people to comply with ineffective measures through fear.

### **Educational conditioning**

This largely results from the prevalence of Socialist Progressives in the teaching system; especially the humanities and arts. These push all sorts of Left-wing agendas on to kids from an early age. They also teach kids what to think instead of how to think so that children grow up with no ability to think critically.

Modern schooling is conditioning rather than learning.

This is demonstrated by an experiment several years ago. A group of supposedly bright kids, who had passed GCSEs and were expected to get A+ grades at A levels, went to a school styled according to schools in the 1950s for a TV programme during their summer holidays. They struggled and rebelled. In the end they sat an 11+ exam (an exam we took aged 10-11 to select our secondary education). The kids largely failed this exam. In other words, supposedly bright modern 15-year old kids were less intelligent than 1950s 10-11-year old kids by a long mile.

### **Peer pressure**

Young people want to belong to peer group; that is normal. Unfortunately, this means that pressure is often put on kids to think as the group thinks, whether wrong or right. The pressure to conform to group-thinking is very strong, but it ruins independent thought.

### **Commitment to an erroneous ideology**

There are many social reasons why a person commits to a certain ideology and gradually this becomes part and parcel of the person's life. If it is a bad ideology it becomes very difficult for this person to escape from it.

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<sup>30</sup> It knew about the evil perpetrated by Jimmy Savile since the 1960s. It tolerated other paedophiles for years.

<sup>31</sup> For example the Ukraine conflict. The BBC constantly spread stories that were the opposite of what was actually happening on the ground. It did the same in Syria. Another example would be the climate change alarmism that is entirely false and has been exposed as such.

<sup>32</sup> Neuro-linguistic programming.

## Fluoridation

Fluoride is a neuro toxin (and an industrial waste product) that reduces the IQ and causes bone damage. Its use in the drinking water system in some parts of the UK has done a huge amount of damage to the intellect of young people.

## Stupidity

Sadly, the level of stupidity being expressed amongst people today is shocking. This is a result of all the above. Stories emerge in the media demonstrating how utterly stupid many people are. The worry is that the numbers are huge.

## Simple principles

Here are some suggestions for fundamental principles to help you develop in critical thinking.

- Prove everything. Check everything for yourself. Do not trust anyone.
- Research everything. Get behind facts and discover all the background.
- Listen to, and read, wise people.
- Write everything down. Never lose your thoughts but preserve them.
- Analyse fashions in thought and philosophy. Discriminate and determine what is good and what is chaff.
- Discuss issues with everyone, including people that disagree with you. Always be kind, but do not water down your opinion for social reasons. Be firm if someone holds to dangerous beliefs.
- If you want to understand a new subject, then write an analytical dissertation on it.
- Be aware of your own bias. Try to be open to all positions and conclude which is correct on merit of argument.
- Understand, and get used to the fact, that most people are stupid. Frank Zappa<sup>33</sup> used to say that stupidity is more ubiquitous than hydrogen.<sup>34</sup>
- Get used to the fact that the more you hold to the truth, the more you will be persecuted. If you want a quiet peaceful life, follow the herd and do not think about anything.
- Do not fear being smeared.
- Be afraid of no one.

## Words used in critical thinking

- **Discrimination:** recognition and understanding of the difference between one thing and another. The ability to discern what is of high quality; good judgment or taste. [The unjust or prejudicial treatment of different categories of people or things, is a separate meaning.]
- **Didactic:** intended to teach, particularly in having moral instruction as an ulterior motive.
- **Dialectical:** investigating or discussing the truth of opinions. Enquiry into metaphysical contradictions and their solutions. [The ancient Greeks used the term dialectic to refer to various methods of reasoning and discussion in order to discover the truth. More

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<sup>33</sup> Highly intelligent rock musician, band leader and orchestral composer. Leader of the innovative Mothers of Invention band.

<sup>34</sup> Hydrogen is by far the commonest element in the universe, although not on the earth, where it occurs chiefly combined with oxygen as water.

recently, Kant applied the term to the criticism of the contradictions which arise from supposing knowledge of objects beyond the limits of experience, e.g. the soul. Hegel applied the term to the process of thought by which apparent contradictions (which he termed thesis and antithesis) are seen to be part of a higher truth (synthesis).]

- Judge: form an opinion or conclusion about something.
- Analytical: relating to or using analysis or logical reasoning.
- Logic: reasoning conducted or assessed according to strict principles of validity. Codification of the principles of proof and inference. The quality of being justifiable by reason.
- Reason: the power of the mind to think, understand, and form judgments by a process of logic.
- Intellect: the faculty of reasoning and understanding objectively, especially with regard to abstract or academic matters. Intellectual: possessing a highly developed intellect.
- Metaphysics: abstract theory or talk with no basis in reality; the branch of philosophy that deals with the first principles of things, including abstract concepts such as being, knowing, substance, cause, identity, time, and space.
- Ontological: the branch of metaphysics dealing with the nature of being.
- Teleological: Philosophy - the explanation of phenomena by the purpose they serve rather than by postulated causes. Theology - the doctrine of design and purpose in the material world.
- Determinism: Philosophy - the doctrine that all events, including human action, are ultimately determined by causes regarded as external to the will. Some philosophers have taken determinism to imply that individual human beings have no free will and cannot be held morally responsible for their actions. (Cf. fatalism: the belief that all events are predetermined and therefore inevitable.)
- Debate: a formal discussion on a particular matter in a public meeting or legislative assembly, in which opposing arguments are put forward and which usually ends with a vote. An argument about a particular subject, especially one in which many people are involved.
- Thesis: a statement or theory that is put forward as a premise to be maintained or proved. [Also, a long essay or dissertation involving personal research, written by a candidate for a university degree.]
- Hypothesis: explanation made on the basis of limited evidence as a starting point for further investigation. Philosophy - a proposition made as a basis for reasoning, without any assumption of its truth.
- Hyperbole: exaggerated statements or claims not meant to be taken literally.
- Pedagogic: of or relating to teaching.
- Philosophy: the study of the nature of knowledge, reality, and existence.
- Perception: 1) the ability to see, hear, or become aware of something through the senses: *the normal limits to human perception*. 2) The state of being or process of becoming aware of something in such a way: *the perception of pain*. 3) A way of regarding, understanding, or interpreting something; a mental impression. 4) Intuitive understanding and insight. 5) Psychology & Zoology: the neurophysiological processes, including memory, by which an organism becomes aware of and interprets external stimuli.
- Deception: the action of deceiving someone. The root Greek word meant: a falling away, falling aside, losing the path.
- Orthodox: (of a person or their views, especially religious or political ones, or other beliefs or practices) conforming to what is generally or traditionally accepted as right or true; established and approved.

- Heterodox: not conforming with accepted or orthodox standards or beliefs. [Generally considered as less serious than heresy.]
- Heresy: belief or opinion contrary to orthodox religious (especially Christian) doctrine.
- Ideology: a system of ideas and ideals, especially one which forms the basis of economic or political theory and policy. The ideas and manner of thinking characteristic of a group, social class, or individual. Visionary speculation, especially of an unrealistic or idealistic nature.
- Anthropology: the study of humankind, in particular: 1) cultural or social anthropology: the comparative study of human societies and cultures and their development. 2) physical anthropology: the science of human zoology, evolution, and ecology.
- The humanities: (a term mostly used in USA) the social sciences and classical subjects (literature, language) in universities. Social science is the scientific study of human society and social relationships.
- Graphic: visual communication. Communication using images, logos, symbols, and typography.
- Graphic novel: a long story told in framed pictures; like a comic book but bigger. Book in comic strip format.
- Anime: Japanese animation movies. Japanese film and television animation, typically having a science-fiction theme and sometimes including violent or explicitly sexual material.
- Manga: Japanese comic books and graphic novels. A Japanese genre of cartoons, comic books, and animated films, typically having a science-fiction or fantasy themes and sometimes including violent or sexually explicit material.
- Novella: a short novel or long short story.
- Macabre: disturbing and horrifying because of involvement with or depiction of death and injury.
- Gothic: of or relating to the Goths. In literature: redolent of the Dark Ages; portentously gloomy or horrifying (e.g. Edgar Allan Poe). In architecture prevalent in western Europe in the 12<sup>th</sup>–16<sup>th</sup> centuries (and revived in the mid 18<sup>th</sup> to early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries): characterised by pointed arches, rib vaults, and flying buttresses, together with large windows and elaborate tracery.
- Pyrrhic victory: a victory where the cost is too great. [Based on the historical character Pyrrhus (king of Epirus), ‘*another such victory and we are lost*’ (on defeating the Romans at Asculum, 279 BC).]
- Cassandra: In Greek mythology, a daughter of Priam, king of Troy, and his wife Hecuba. Apollo gave her the gift of prophecy, but because she rejected his love, he ordained that none of her predictions would be believed. Used of people who correctly predict things that are not accepted.
- The arts: human creativity (especially in University) as opposed to science and technology: history, painting, graphics, literature, architecture.
- Technology: the application of scientific knowledge for practical purposes, especially in industry.
- Stanza: a group of lines forming the basic recurring metrical unit in a poem; a verse.
- Iambic pentameter: Prosody<sup>35</sup> - a line of verse consisting of five metrical feet, or (in Greek and Latin verse) of two halves each of two feet and a long syllable.
- Metre: the rhythm of a piece of poetry, determined by the number and length of feet<sup>36</sup> in a line.

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<sup>35</sup> The patterns of rhythm and sound used in poetry.

<sup>36</sup> A group of syllables constituting a metrical unit. In English poetry it consists of stressed and unstressed syllables, while in ancient classical poetry it consists of long and short syllables.

- Alliteration: the occurrence of the same letter or sound at the beginning of adjacent or closely connected words.
- Soliloquy: an act of speaking one's thoughts aloud when by oneself or regardless of any hearers, especially by a character in a play.
- Solipsistic: The view that the self is all that can be known to exist; focus on the self.
- Synergy (synergism): the interaction or co-operation of two or more organisations, substances, or other agents to produce a combined effect greater than the sum of their separate effects.
- Monergism: acting alone; a single work.
- Moot, a moot point (note, not 'mute'): a debatable issue. Subject to debate, dispute, or uncertainty, and typically not admitting of a final decision. [An assembly held for debate, especially in Anglo-Saxon and medieval times.]
- Utilitarian: designed to be useful or practical rather than attractive.
- Egregious: outstandingly bad; shocking.
- Mendacious: not telling the truth; lying.
- Tendentious: expressing or intending to promote a particular cause or point of view, especially a controversial one.
- Disingenuous: not candid or sincere, typically by pretending that one knows less about something than one really does.
- Salacious: adjective (of writing, pictures, or talk) treating sexual matters in an indecent way and typically conveying undue interest in or enjoyment of the subject.
- Dogmatic: inclined to lay down principles as incontrovertibly true.
- Pedantic: of or like a pedant; a person who is excessively concerned with minor details and rules or with displaying academic learning.
- Discourse: written or spoken communication or debate.
- Pseudepigrapha: spurious or pseudonymous writings, especially Jewish writings ascribed to various biblical patriarchs and prophets but composed within approximately 200 years of the birth of Christ.
- Apocryphal: (of a story or statement) of doubtful authenticity, although widely circulated as being true.
- Phenomena, phenomenon: a fact or situation that is observed to exist or happen, especially one whose cause or explanation is in question: *glaciers are unique and interesting natural phenomena*. Philosophy - the object of a person's perception; what the senses or the mind notice.
- Surreal: having the qualities of surrealism (an art movement); bizarre, dream-like.
- Expressionism: a style of painting, music, or drama in which the artist or writer seeks to express emotional experience rather than impressions of the external world.
- Impressionism: a style or movement in painting originating in France in the 1860s, characterised by a concern with depicting the visual impression of the moment, especially in terms of the shifting effect of light and colour.
- Dada: an early 20<sup>th</sup>-century international movement in art, literature, music, and film, repudiating and mocking artistic and social conventions and emphasising the illogical and absurd.
- Modernism: modern character or quality of thought, expression, or technique. A style or movement in the arts that aims to break with classical and traditional forms. A movement towards modifying traditional beliefs in accordance with modern ideas, especially in the Roman Catholic Church in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.
- Epistemic: of or relating to knowledge or to the degree of its validation.
- Irony: the expression of one's meaning by using language that normally signifies the opposite, typically for humorous or emphatic effect.

- Inflexion, inflection: a change in the form of a word (typically the ending) to express a grammatical function or attribute such as tense, mood, person, number, case, and gender. The modulation of intonation or pitch in the voice.
- Mendicant: given to begging. Of or denoting one of the religious orders who originally relied solely on alms.
- Venal: showing or motivated by susceptibility to bribery.
- Simony: the buying or selling of ecclesiastical privileges, for example pardons or benefices.
- Nepotism: the practice among those with power or influence of favouring relatives or friends, especially by giving them jobs.
- Monetarism: the theory or practice of controlling the supply of money as the chief method of stabilising the economy. [Milton Friedman [b.1912], American economist, was a principal exponent of monetarism.]
- Keynesianism: John Maynard Keynes, English economist who laid the foundations of modern macroeconomics with *The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money* (1936), in which he argued that full employment is determined by effective demand and requires government spending on public works to stimulate this.
- Protectionism: the theory or practice of shielding a country's domestic industries from foreign competition by taxing imports.
- Liquidity: the availability of liquid assets (cash) to a market or company.
- Leveraging: (gearing) the ratio of a company's loan capital (debt) to the value of its ordinary shares (equity).

See earlier, 'Methodologies in philosophy'.

## Conclusion

This is but a taster about learning to think critically. People with more ability than I will be able to give more extensive advice, but this will suffice to start you on the path of thinking properly. Make the most use of the intellect that God gave you. Do not let it be idle.

## General Bibliography

- The Oxford World Encyclopaedia.
- The New Oxford Dictionary. This has been plundered throughout this paper.
- The New Fontana dictionary of modern thought.

Scripture quotations are from The New King James Version  
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