

Dialogue :
Soulism
described by the Antirealists Murdoch society and
DreamTime Principles:
Ontological Non-Dualism
within a Panentheistic Relational Framework
described by the thesis of James Cross-

My interpretation of Soulism:

Reality, as commonly understood, is structured by unjust hierarchies—both natural and societal. These hierarchies are products of consensus realities, reinforced through historical and cultural impositions. We advocate for questioning and dismantling these structures, extending anarchist principles to challenge the very fabric of what is perceived as "real."

DreamTime Metaphysics: In DreamTime Metaphysics, reality is not a fixed structure but a dynamic process that emerges from a primordial DreamTime—a foundational narrative that underlies all existence. While there are hierarchies within this framework, they are not hierarchical in the conventional sense of power and oppression but are rather layers of narrative complexity. These layers are interconnected, with each influencing and being influenced by the others. The notion of "unjust hierarchies" would be viewed as distortions within the relational web, where balance and harmony are disrupted.

Soulism: That's interesting. We argue that what you call "distortions" are the results of imposed consensus realities, particularly those stemming from colonialism and the suppression of indigenous worldviews. These consensus realities create rigid structures that deny the fluidity and subjectivity of existence, shaping perceptions in ways that benefit certain groups at the expense of others.

DreamTime Metaphysics: From the perspective of DreamTime principles, the imposition of a single, rigid consensus reality would indeed be a departure from the natural, fluid unfolding of the cosmic narrative. DreamTime acknowledges multiple narratives, each contributing to the overall tapestry of reality. The suppression of certain narratives—such as those of indigenous cultures—represents a significant loss in the diversity of the cosmic story. In this framework, the goal is to restore and honour all narratives, allowing them to coexist and interact harmoniously within the larger cosmic process.

Soulism: We agree on the importance of restoring and honouring suppressed narratives. However, Soulism takes it a step further by rejecting the very notion of an objective reality that could unify these narratives. We see reality as subjective, shaped by individual and collective perceptions. Consensus reality, particularly when imposed by dominant cultures, is inherently flawed and should be challenged. Instead of seeking a single truth, we advocate for a reality shaped by kindness, empathy, and individual choice.

DreamTime Metaphysics: While DreamTime does acknowledge a foundational reality—one that all narratives emerge from—it does not enforce a singular objective reality upon those narratives. Instead, it sees these narratives as expressions of the foundational essence, each reflecting different aspects of the ultimate truth. This aligns with your emphasis on subjectivity, as each narrative represents a unique perspective on reality. However, DreamTime also values the interconnectedness of these narratives, suggesting that while they are distinct, they are also part of a greater whole.

Soulism: We appreciate the emphasis on interconnectedness, but we maintain that this interconnectedness should not be seen as a hierarchical structure, even if that hierarchy is non-oppressive. For Soulism, the act of choosing how one perceives and interacts with reality is paramount. This choice is an exercise in personal sovereignty and a means of resisting the external imposition of any single narrative—especially those that reinforce harmful norms and power dynamics.

DreamTime Metaphysics: The DreamTime perspective resonates with the idea of personal sovereignty, particularly in the concept of Active Participation in reality. In DreamTime, reality is co-created by consciousness, which means individuals play an active role in shaping their own experiences and the broader cosmic narrative. This co-creation process allows for fluidity and personal agency within the metaphysical framework. The narratives are not static; they evolve with the participation of conscious beings, reflecting the ever-changing dynamics of the cosmos.

Soulism: This idea of co-creation aligns with Soulism's call for individuals to take control of their perception of reality. By questioning sensory experiences and rejecting rigid societal norms, individuals can shape their own reality based on empathy and kindness. We see this as a form of magic—observable phenomena that transcend pure physicalism. Magic, in our view, represents the ability to influence reality in ways that go beyond conventional understanding, similar to the quantum narratives you describe.

DreamTime Metaphysics: In DreamTime, Quantum Narratives serve as higher-order possibilities that can manifest into physical reality through conscious interaction. This process can indeed be seen as a form of "magic," where the boundaries between the physical and metaphysical are fluid and permeable. DreamTime recognizes that reality is not confined to the physical world but includes symbolic structures and narratives that are equally real and influential. Your definition of magic resonates with this, as it acknowledges the existence of forces and phenomena that cannot be fully explained by physical laws alone.

Soulism: That's precisely our point. By embracing a flexible understanding of existence, one that allows for the subjective and the magical, we can challenge the rigid structures that often define reality. Soulism is open to diverse spiritual beliefs and practices, as long as they do not establish unjust hierarchies. We see this as a way to support marginalized groups and to promote cultural identity while questioning externally imposed categories, such as race, that reinforce inequality.

DreamTime Metaphysics: The DreamTime framework similarly rejects imposed categories and rigid structures, advocating for a reality where all narratives—cultural, spiritual, or otherwise—are honoured and integrated into the cosmic whole. This includes the reimagining of Ceremonial Practice as a means of influencing reality on a quantum level, where focused intention and conscious participation can bring about desired outcomes. DreamTime's Cosmic Participation invites all beings to actively shape the evolution of the cosmos, much like how Soulism encourages individuals to shape their own realities.

Soulism: Ultimately, both philosophies seem to share a common goal: to empower individuals to question, challenge, and reshape their realities in ways that promote empathy, kindness, and inclusivity. Whether through the co-creative processes of DreamTime or the radical subjectivity of Soulism, the aim is to break free from the constraints of imposed narratives and to create a world where all beings can thrive.

DreamTime Metaphysics: Indeed, both perspectives converge on the importance of active participation and the fluidity of reality. While DreamTime may offer a more structured framework with its layers of narratives, it is equally committed to honouring the diversity of those narratives and to fostering a reality where all voices are heard and valued. Together, these philosophies offer a powerful vision for a more inclusive, dynamic, and compassionate world.

This dialogue demonstrates the potential for synergy between Soulism and my attempt to articulate DreamTime Metaphysics, particularly in their shared emphasis on the fluid, participatory nature of reality and their commitment to challenging and reshaping existing structures in favour of a more just and empathetic world.

Examining the academic foundations of DreamTime Metaphysics reveals many potential areas for dialogue with Soulism. Below is a concise summary of possible speculative connections with various philosophical traditions and my interpretation of the core principles.

Plato finds parallels between Soulism's view that reality is shaped by unjust hierarchies and his Allegory of the Cave. In the allegory, prisoners are chained, only perceiving shadows on the wall, which they believe to be the entirety of reality. These shadows are distortions, mere reflections of the Forms, the true and unchanging realities existing beyond the material world. However, the journey out of the cave—towards the light of the sun, the ultimate truth—requires an ascent, an acknowledgment of the structured reality underlying the shadows. While Soulism's skepticism towards objective reality is valid, Plato argues that the challenge lies not in rejecting reality but in discerning the true Forms that structure the world, accessible through intellectual and philosophical inquiry.

John Wheeler, from the standpoint of participatory realism, posits that reality is not a static, pre-existing structure but is brought into existence through observation and interaction—"It from Bit"—where the universe is fundamentally informational. This concept aligns with Soulism's emphasis on subjective perception shaping reality, yet introduces a more structured framework where interactions are crucial in the co-creation of the cosmos. Reality, in this view, is continuously shaped by the collective actions and choices of conscious agents, which can dismantle unjust hierarchies by altering the informational foundation on which they are built. This process, however, is not anarchic; it is guided by the principles of quantum mechanics and the interconnections between observer and observed, suggesting a participatory but structured co-creation.

Donald Hoffman, building on Wheeler's idea, proposes the Interface Theory of Perception, which suggests that perceptions are not direct reflections of an objective reality but are shaped by evolutionary processes designed for survival rather than truth. This aligns with Soulism's skepticism towards consensus realities, which Hoffman would argue are simplified user interfaces rather than accurate depictions of the true underlying reality. However, this does not imply that reality is wholly subjective or arbitrary; rather, it is mediated by these interfaces that filter out vast complexities. The challenge is not merely to reject these interfaces but to understand their evolutionary purpose and limitations, seeking ways to transcend them and access deeper layers of reality.

Jean Baudrillard finds resonance with Soulism's critique of "consensus reality" in his concept of hyperreality, where simulations and signs replace the real, creating a reality more real than the real itself—a simulacrum. In such a world, the distinction between what is real and what is represented is obliterated, leading to a loss of authentic reality. However, this does not mean reality should be dismissed altogether. Instead, Baudrillard argues for critically engaging with the hyperreal to understand how it functions and to reclaim the power to influence it. By recognizing simulacra as constructs and distortions of a deeper reality, one can navigate through the layers of reality, reasserting agency in a world of signs. Shaping one's reality, as Soulism advocates, becomes an act of subverting the hyperreal, reclaiming the narrative from distortions imposed by dominant cultural and social forces.

Al-Farabi sees a counterpart to Soulism's rejection of rigid hierarchies in his political philosophy, where he emphasizes the importance of the Virtuous City—a society governed by reason and virtue, reflecting the harmony of the cosmos. In such a society, the leader, akin to Plato's philosopher-king, must possess both wisdom and moral integrity, guiding the city in accordance with the true nature of reality. However, unlike a purely anarchic rejection of hierarchy, Al-Farabi argues that the right kind of hierarchy—one based on knowledge and virtue rather than power and oppression—is necessary for the flourishing of both the individual and the community. The challenge lies in discerning and implementing such virtuous hierarchies, rather than dismantling all structures indiscriminately.

Ibn Sina (Avicenna) introduces the concept of emanation, suggesting that all reality flows from a single source—the Necessary Existent—and that this emanation creates a hierarchy of being, from the highest intellects down to the material world. This hierarchy is not oppressive but reflects the natural order of existence, where each level of reality is connected to the source and plays a role in the unfolding of the cosmos. In this context, the unjust hierarchies critiqued by Soulism could be seen as distortions or misinterpretations of this natural order. The task is to ascend through the levels of reality, seeking the truth behind the material appearances and aligning oneself with the higher realities.

Suhrawardi, in his philosophy of Illuminationism, offers a perspective on reality that resonates with Soulism's emphasis on personal perception and the role of consciousness. He argues that reality is fundamentally composed of light, with varying degrees of illumination corresponding to different levels of existence. In this framework, reality is not a static hierarchy but a dynamic interplay of light and darkness, where the goal is to seek greater illumination and transcend the shadows of ignorance. While each individual must navigate their own path towards the light, not all perceptions are equally valid; they must be guided by principles of light and truth.

Ibn Arabi, through his concept of Wahdat al-Wujud (Unity of Being), posits that all existence is fundamentally one, with all distinctions and hierarchies being manifestations of the same divine reality. In this framework, the perceived divisions and hierarchies in the world are not ultimate but are expressions of a deeper unity that

encompasses all things. This aligns with Soulism's critique of objective reality and the imposition of rigid categories. However, instead of rejecting all hierarchies, Ibn Arabi advocates for a relational understanding of reality, where each part is connected to the whole and reflects the divine in its own unique way.

Conclusion: Soulism's emphasis on questioning and dismantling unjust hierarchies, its skepticism toward objective reality, and its advocacy for shaping reality through empathy and kindness find resonance with various philosophical traditions. However, these traditions—whether through Plato's Forms, Wheeler's participatory realism, Hoffman's interface theory, Baudrillard's hyperreality, or the metaphysical insights of Islamic scholars—offer a nuanced view that balances the critique of existing structures with the search for deeper, underlying truths. Rather than rejecting all hierarchies and realities outright, these philosophies suggest that the task is to discern, engage, and transform, seeking a reality that is not merely deconstructed but re-envisioned in light of higher principles and interconnectedness.