

**Why the West is not the
Best**

10 Superiority MYTHS

A book by

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I dedicate this book to Mahatma Gandhi. Rest
in peace, my brother.

Acknowledgments

I am grateful to almost all my teachers for showing me throughout the years how **not** to think or study.

I thank my family for being so patient with me.

Foreword

I feel this is a book that was missing.

Since, while still in university, I found the true origin of knowledge through the study of Linguistics and Modern Art, I didn't stop until I expressed those conclusions in writing.

The most recent study I undertook was in the field of exact sciences - physics and maths, and I only dared to apply some common sense and the logical principles of Philosophy, Psychology and Sociology to them, in order to achieve a thought that is as plain as plain can be.

You won't find obvious or simple ideas here.

You will rather find the attempt to simplify complex ideas and to reduce a world of vast knowledge into a few sentences.

At the sight of the western thought based on an extreme rationalization and formal complexity, one has to reformulate the main ideas into the minimum common denominator, facing them directly, thus analyzing what is true and false about

them, so as to draw a conclusion that is obvious to everyone.

This book handles erudite matters in a non-erudite way.

Whether you are a social scientist, a man of the exact sciences or only someone interested in everything concerning society, this book interests you and will surely fascinate and surprise you.

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INTRODUCTION

Ten.

Ten fallacies, ten lies professed as truths, ten.

And I speak of ten, but I could speak of dozens more...

Ten concepts, ten ideas upon which our Civilization of Fear builds other ten, other dozen of little lies, that impart to us fear enough not to ask ourselves about where good ends and evil begins and to keep us productive - after all, the only possible language in this world of little feuds of reason and pseudo-knowledge, feuds that control other little worlds of influence, which always remain unrevealed...

Ten. There are ten little lies separating us from barbarity.

Invention of Writing - a Lie.

Invention of Money – the next Lie

“Invention” of Industrialization – another Lie

And so forward...

I have a university degree in Sociology of Work by the *Instituto Superior das Ciências Sociais e Políticas (Social and Politics' Sciences' Superior Institute – Lisbon)*, i'm a plastic artist with 14 years of experience and i've made more than two thousand paintings and drawings, poet and theorist of society and visual arts, in the field of modern art.

This is a personal insight on modern knowledge, focusing on essential aspects of exact and social sciences.

I have tried to best summarize it in order to present knowledge in its pure form – the **idea**.

I wish you a good reading!

1 – SEMIOLOGY / LINGUISTICS

. The Myth of morpheme/moneme as a
minimal unit of signification within
Language

Approached subjects :

- . The concepts of moneme and morpheme
- . The arbitrary relation between sign and the represented object
- . The primitive man and communication
- . The economicist partiality of the alphabet
- . Pre - language “languages”
 - Egyptians
 - Ancient civilizations and their systems of symbolic signification
- . The idea behind communicative simplification
- . The “invention” of writing and its importance as a unifying system between nature and its chaos

- . The defense of the “Linguistic Castle”:
social scientists “tamed” by the fear of
complexity
- . Stages of the non-chronological
evolution of human communication
- . Graphical evolution of signs – letters

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Os Fenícios (*The Phoenician*) - Donald Harden,
Publisher: Historia Mundi (1968)

Revolução na Linguística (*Revolution in Linguistics*) -
José Manuel Blecua, Publisher: Salvat Editora do
Brasil, Collection: Biblioteca Salvat de Grandes
Temas (1981)

História da Linguagem (*History of Language*) - Júlia
Kristeva, Publisher: Edições 70, Collection: Signos
(1983)

1.1. Some insights from linguistics' specialists

According to André Martinet, the moneme is the minimal unit of signification and words are made up of several monemes.

To Roman Jakobson, speech may be divided into morphemes, which are, therefore, formal minimal units endowed with self meaning.

- Example of a **moneme** (according to *Martinet*)

:

thermostat = thermo + stat

- Example of a **morpheme** (according to *Blecua*)

:

machines = machine (A) + s (B)

To José Manuel Blecua, there is a strictly arbitrary relation between sound and signification, and the practical advantages of acoustic language prevailed; if human communication was

accomplished through visual representations, it should be much more restricted to reality.

According to Emile Benveniste, the main feature of language is its ability to produce a clear system of signification, which benefits the creation of an organized society.

Blecu draws our attention to the fact that the languages of primitive societies are as accurate, complete and symbolic as the most refined systems of signification we might know.

According to Kristeva, although speaking, the primitive man doesn't recognize that action as an idealization or abstraction, but on the contrary, he regards it as a way of participating in the universe that surrounds him.

The "primitive man" not only refuses to separate referent from sign, but he also hesitates to separate signifier from signified - the "acoustic image" has for him the same real weight of "idea", otherwise mistaken for the first. Thus, for many "primitive peoples", the concept of "speaking" means taking an action, it means reality itself.

To Saussure, language is only a particular system of the complex universe of semiotics.

Thus, and according to Roland Barthes, semiology as a general science of signs and systems of signification imbues all human sciences: sociology, anthropology, psychoanalysis, art theory, etc.

1.2. Synopsis:

Modern societies are based on fear.

Fear of knowing, but mainly, fear of asking – asking “authority” is in itself already a threat to the established order.

This happens in the educational system, in the military hierarchy, and this is how scientific fallacies are shaped, supposed to be inexorable certainties, but so feeble that it only takes a human

to ask a child's question (as Einstein did) in order to ruin absolutely everything.

It is not surprising, then, that Linguistics has been sailing along murky waters, result of the whim of a few "visionaries" (Noam Chomsky, for instance) and the inertia of everyone else.

José Manuel Blecua admits that the principle of arbitrariness between signifier and signified is one of the fundamental pillars of contemporary linguistics, and this feature allows all natural languages to ground their formation on a few acoustic elements (usually 20 to 40).

It is maybe due to this "state of affairs" that no one asks himself about which is the minimal unit of signification within Language...

Moneme !, says André Martinet.

Morpheme !, Roman Jakobson shows us.

But ... if moneme and morpheme mean: “part of a word”, we are talking about the same concept...!

Therefore, it is obvious that: minimal unit of signification (i.e., the smallest linguistic particle that can hold a meaning, a signification, an idea) has to be compulsorily equivalent to the formal minimal unit and this unit is only the symbol or the sign or letter or whatever you might call it.

The problem is that recognizing this simple idea would push Language back thousands of years before to the creation of the Chinese system of signs, to the Egyptian visual symbols or to the civilizations of the Sumerian, when the systems of signification were improved from generation to generation, from population to population. And admitting a retrogression in time is a very dangerous idea...

One wants science to be completely new to a completely “modern” society, without interferences from a past as irrational as disturbing...

Thus, the secret remains, only known to some “Keepers of the Temple of Linguistics”, and the peoples go on living without really existing, subordinate to mere conjectural leaders.

Having this in mind, it is more than evident that the economicist partiality of the alphabet, a minimalist partiality, reduces all the most complex thoughts to their formal minimal units, so that the only remains of original geniality are the bitter taste of its’ “obvious” insanity...

And then, this communicative simplification will be excellent to the economic aims of the societies caught up in the trend of Globalization: we understand each other through speaking, but with this simple code that pretends to be Language we remain very elementary beings as well, very understandable, very predictable, mere logical significations before Language – a Code, which the “western sages” swear blind to be the true knowledge...

In this context, the invention of writing is important to discipline the apparent “chaos” of Nature, so incomprehensible to us, so illogical that it frightens even the all the sages of our Civilization of Fear.

And this rule is so simple: the fear instilled in children at schools is going to work as a bomb-watch, since in adulthood the social scientist remains in the Human Sciences and the other scientists remain in the Exact Sciences, each one in his own intellectual retreat, like well behaved lambs of the pre-established social order. The fear of complexity and insanity will take care of the rest...

Knowledge will be the opposite of intuition

(as we wished to prove)

1.3. Stages of the evolution of human communication (non-chronological evolution)

➤ **Stage 1 or initial: Contemporary societies**

- **Bookish culture**, reading and unilinear decoding are necessary;
- Segmental, **partial vision** (highlighted by scientific compartment and the rejection of the concept of interdisciplinary dialogue);
- The **Letters** themselves don't have any signification. If separated from a determinate set **they are not recognized as symbols** (letters are symbols used as signs);
- Basic **representation** on the formal level (**two - dimensional**)
- **Transmission (codes)** prevails, ascribing communication (language) a secondary role.
- **Focus on the economic factor** / quickness / succinct transmission of information through

the rules of an already known code (it doesn't prompt the creation of the code itself);

➤ **Stage 2 or intermediate: Egyptian, Chinese Societies**

- Two - dimensional representation but with some **improvement on the level of textures** (embossment is emphasized) and monumental sculptures created with a very refined aesthetic sense;

- Conjugation of two essential dimensions: the transmission of messages and the pleasure of creating **artistically beautiful** and timeless **messages**;

- **Transmission through graphic signs**, which allows some interpretations and *descends* from signs of other cultures;

- Code that is more open to **new interpretations** and meanings;

- The structure of the “sentences” allows a **wider range of creation** on the part of the “interpreter”;
- Evident influence from the **visual culture**.

➤ **Stage 3 or improved: symbolic society**

- **Three - dimensional, accurate representation of the objects** (they represent themselves and ideas as well), thus breaking down a huge psychological barrier to direct communication;
- Permanent contact with the world of **Language**;
- Culture, in all its extension, embracing all human abilities: sight, touch, smell, hearing, etc.
- It allows a global vision and a greater balance of the individual, who is thus aware of all levels of a **complete communication**, adapting its functions to the characteristics of

its own personality and, only after that, to society;

- **Multiple interpretations** of only one symbol, which doesn't depend on a context in order to acquire a meaning on its own;

As one might see in the table below, there has been a graphical evolution of the "letters", which questions the concept of arbitrariness in the relationship between signifier – signified, referred to by José M. Blecua as the most correct way of approaching the study of Language.

Evolution of the alphabet from the tenth century B.C.
forward.

Língua, escrita, textos

Letra Hebraica	Hebreu	Valor fonético	Ahiram	Elizab. (séc. de Osorkon)	Shititbaal	Mesha	Kara. Ipe bilingüe	Púnico	Neo-Púnico	Grego primitivo	Grego moderno	Romano moderno	Letra Grego
aleph	א	ʾ	ככ	כ	ככ	כ	כ	כ	כ	Α	Α	Α	alpha
beth	ב	b	בב	ב	בב	ב	ב	ב	ב	Β	Β	Β	beta
gimel	ג	g	גג	ג	גג	ג	ג	ג	ג	Γ	Γ	Γ	gamma
daleth	ד	d	דד	ד	דד	ד	ד	ד	ד	Δ	Δ	Δ	delta
he	ה	h	הה			ה	ה	ה	ה	Ε	Ε	Ε	epsilon
waw	ו	w	וו	ו	וו	ו	ו	ו	ו	Ϝ		Ϝ	digamma
zayin	ז	z	זז	ז	זז	ז	ז	ז	ז	Ζ	Ζ	Ζ	zeta
heth	ח	h	חח			ח	ח	ח	ח	Θ	Θ	Θ	eta
teth	ט	t	טט			ט	ט	ט	ט	Ϟ	Ϟ	Ϟ	theta
yodh	י	y	יי	י	יי	י	י	י	י	Ι	Ι	Ι	iota
kaph	כ	k	ככ	כ	ככ	כ	כ	כ	כ	Κ	Κ	Κ	kappa
lamedh	ל	l	לל	ל	לל	ל	ל	ל	ל	Λ	Λ	Λ	lambda
mem	מ	m	ממ	מ	ממ	מ	מ	מ	מ	Μ	Μ	Μ	mu
nun	נ	n	ננ	נ	ננ	נ	נ	נ	נ	Ν	Ν	Ν	nu
samekh	ס	s	סס			ס	ס	ס	ס	Ξ	Ξ		xi
ayin	ע	c	עע	ע	עע	ע	ע	ע	ע	Ο	Ο	Ο	omicron
pe	פ	p	פפ	פ	פפ	פ	פ	פ	פ	Π	Π	Π	pi
tsade	צ	s				צ	צ	צ	צ	Μ			
qoph	ק	q				ק	ק	ק	ק	Φ		Φ	Q
resh	ר	r	רר	ר	רר	ר	ר	ר	ר	Ρ	Ρ	Ρ	rho
shin	ש	sh	שש	ש	שש	ש	ש	ש	ש	Σ	Σ	Σ	sigma
tau	ת	t	תת	ת	תת	ת	ת	ת	ת	Τ	Τ	Τ	tau
Data provável das inscrições				Começo do séc. X c. 915		Final do séc. X c. 850	Séc. VIII a. C.	A partir do séc. V	A partir do séc. III	Séc. VIII a. C.			

Fig. 33 — Evolução do alfabeto a partir do século X a. C. em diante

2 – Quantum Physics / Theory of relativity

. The Myth of the universe's expansion

Approached subjects:

- . Comparison between solar system/atom
- . Fundamental concepts of the exact sciences
- . Reality and dream, exterior and interior
- . Formulae of the Universe
- . The “Holy Grail” of the exact sciences
- . The most important is acknowledging how to think and not how to measure – useful formulae are better than “exact” formulae
- . Betrayal of the “spirit of science”: the atomic bomb
- . The western refusal of everything that is not directly measurable
- . Relative measures are now... absolute!

. Locking up knowledge in order to gain power over the populations, who must remain ignorant

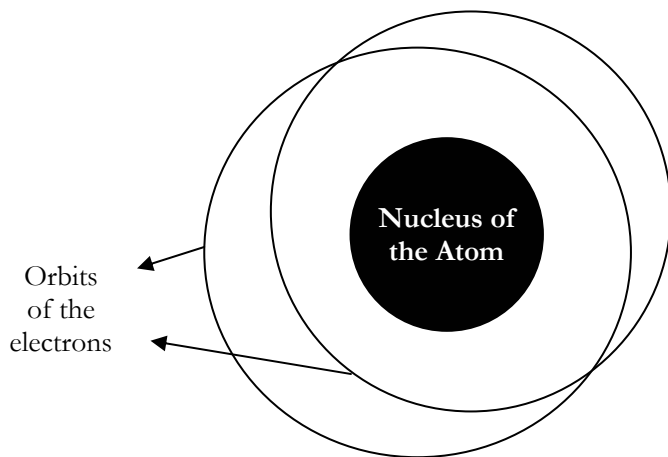
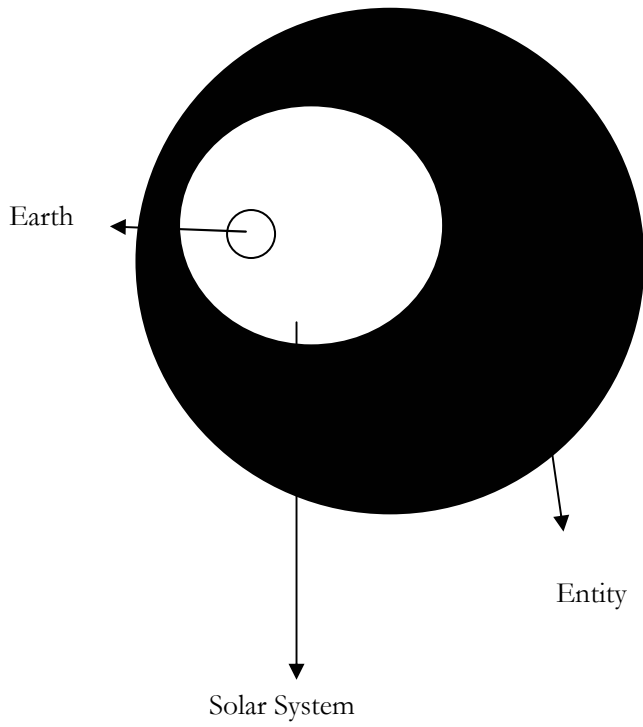
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Einstein - Vida e Obra (*Einstein's Life and Work*) - Peter D. Smith, Publisher: Edições ASA, Collection: ASA Literatura (2005)

. Note: these two books were an inspiration to write this 2nd chapter, even though I didn't quote them directly

2.1. Comparison between Solar System/Atom



2.2. Some ideas

Not only time is different to the entity and to the solar system, but the relative dimensions are also so distant that none of the two is aware of the existence of the other as an organized life form.

Movement doesn't affect mass in a significant way because the universe is measured, not on a macro cosmic scale, as people assume, but on a micro microscopic scale before the entity. Ergo, the universe is macro before man and micro before the entity. Thus, Science should create a discipline to deal with the functional comparison between micro organic structures and the universe.

There is now the scientifically created division between reality (studied by the theory of relativity and the Laws of Physics) and micro reality (studied by Quantum Physics).

We assume that a motionless body has zero charge because it doesn't move, whenever none of

the forces has been applied. But, the mere fact of being visible means that it is in a state of unbalance.

At the microscopic level the forces of inertia are huge, as nuclear energy has proven, and volume cannot be measured from the outside.

The average lifetime of each species depends on mass and their relative position in space.

We might exist outside Time. Absolute time is zero, and it is the only value that can be its own negative value:

$$0 = -0 = +0 ;$$

$$0 = 0$$

There is a lot of energy in black holes because there is no time. There is little energy in the universe because time is abundant (space was kept on the micro microscopic level).

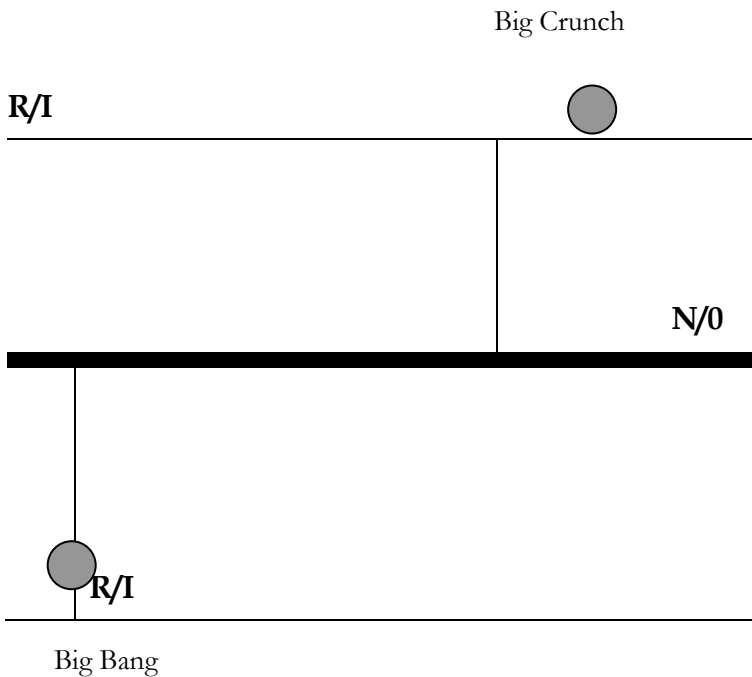
If we establish a parallel:

Reality	Dream
Matter	Antimatter (it is much stronger because it exists in smaller areas)
There is Time	Time is very close to 0
Body	Mind / soul

The orbit of the planets in relation to the stars may be considered like the orbits of the electrons in relation to the nucleus of the atom.

Another parallel:

Universe's Scale	Micro microscopic scale
Atmosphere	Groups of electrons around the nucleus of the atom
Planets and Stars	Atoms / cells of the entire universe
Vacuum	"Blood" of the universe



N / 0 - Nucleus (Value of **Time = Zero**)

R / I - Reality (Value of **Time = Close to the Infinite**)

● - Points of contact between the Nucleus and Reality

To summarize, one may consider these formulae as an approximate way of giving the universe a meaning:

Exterior	Interior (atomic nucleus, for instance)
Energy x Density = Time x Space	Energy x Time = Density x Space

If we apply the above formulae, we observe that:

Interior:

Time (close to 0) x Energy (big) = Density (big) x Space (close to 0)

Exterior:

Energy (small) x Density (low) = Time (high)
x Space (it diminishes a lot)

There is a nucleus (which assumes various forms of expression, whether they are the Unconscious, the Earth magma, the interior of an atom, etc.), where the following relative values are observed:

Time: Close to 0

(it might be achieved in states of deep meditation by Buddhist masters, it means almost absolute absence. Here, the value of inertia is enormous)

Energy: very high, a force in an almost pure state

Space: Almost zero

Density: High

2.3. Synopsis:

It is quite obvious today that there is a parallel between the “exact” sciences’ explanation of the universe and the Christian religious explanation and its’ founding myths with origin in other civilizations and even religions.

All these explanations speak of a beginning (big bang to science, creation of the world to religion) and an end (big crunch to science and the end of the world to religion).

Thus, this parallel makes apparently stable the coherence between the religious perspective and the scientific explanation, which is pretty precious, extremely useful to maintain social cohesion and people’s expectations.

This fact refers to an idea that lies on the basis of all “scientific” knowledge: the idea of the Universe’s space expansion of after that hypothetical big bang.

Stephen Hawking seems to be sure about this situation, which is assumed to enjoy an unbreakable logic...

But, if we make a deep analysis to the own basis of the “exact” sciences, we might have a global and more accurate vision of how fundamentals relate to the theories and how those fundamentals are only ephemeral marks of human emotion before the eternal unknown: the immensity of the Universe.

What is Time? What is Space? What is energy and how is this force measured?

Is it possible for such a small link (human being and planet Earth) to ever obtain the “keys” to this mystery?

It all seems so right in mathematics, in the laws of the physic world and even in quantum physics, that it is quite possible that the fundamental principles are all wrong.

Let us say, therefore, that there is a flaw in the “logic” of the western “system of thought”.

Let us say that every formula is a result of abstract theoretical speculations, with no direct connection with “actual reality”.

Let us say that the measures we thought were absolute (space, energy, etc) are only relative, for they vary in the same proportion only in our visible context, although we assume them as absolute values because we need a predictable science.

Let us say that space has only expanded in those theories because it seems logical to human beings, in their always relative and conjunctural vision.

Let us imagine that the reality we see only seems big to us, humans. When we measure reality through our small scale it seems immensely big, absurd and threatening to us.

Is the atom structurally identical to the solar system?

Could the planets be only electrons, with orbits around a nucleus?

We know what we don't know:

Quantum physics explains the properties of the smallest particles of matter; the laws of the physic world explain reality in relation to our dimension.

The "Holy Grail" of the exact sciences will be the union of these two scientific domains (according to specialists).

But, if those same specialists keep on saying that space has expanded, there will be nothing left to discover... and the mystery will continue, without the occurrence of any relevant progress ...

Pedagogical formulae, especially in Science, are preferable to absolutely exact formulae. And this is so because the transmission of the secrets of the universe to the greatest number of people would be excellent, so that the veil of pathologic silence - i.e., fear - doesn't triumph over the will of the populations in acknowledging the scientific data,

apparently kept by the “specialists”, like an unbreakable secret that one doesn’t wish to reveal...

The “spirit of science” is not, never was and will never be degenerated by the generalized transmission of knowledge to the populations; that scientific spirit was and is betrayed by the political power, as in the completely abusive employment of the atomic bombs in Nagasaki and Hiroshima against the expressed wish of the scientific community of that time...

There is also a refusal of the west, an almost childish refusal to everything that is not directly measurable, i.e., everything that is not easily converted by technology into a weapon...

2.4. Game of the scales

The ant asks me:

- Why are you so big?

And then I say: - Me? Big? I'm quite small, in comparison to my brothers... You, you are the one that is small in comparison to me, I'm not big, ant!

In the same way, if we asked the Universe:

- Why are you so big? Why?

It would answer:

- Me? I'm not big... the fact is that you see me through a scale in which I seem immensely big. But, after all, you are only seeing a little piece of a molecule... I'm not enormous: I'm very small, in comparison to the entity that encloses me!

(as you see, it's just a question of scales... It's the eternal question of knowing the dimension of a body in relation to another dimension, also relative...)

Thought of the day:

A lie doesn't become a truth only because authority tells it

...

- Why?

Answer : Everything is relative...

3 - Sociology/ Anthropology

. The Myth of the “self - sufficient society
with no sense of past”

Approached subjects:

- . Shamanism: the states of altered conscience, the relation with the State and traditional medicines, the origin of religion, insanity
- . The lack of rites of passage (University - freshman rituals- human beings need and renew these rites)
- . Denial of roots in the post-industrial society (the sheer elimination of certain social categories like the Shaman is essential to extend the lie that one has reached the maximal evolution of the human species)
- . The mental structure in society as something anthropologically unchangeable
- . The cleavage with the past of the tribal societies / the fear of the unknown and of what seems strange

- . The public scorn for ancient societies
- . The myth of “moral superiority” before other civilizations: Ethnocentrism
- . The historic mistake: employment of the industrial revolution paradigm to underdeveloped societies
- . The focus on the globalization economicism as something inevitable

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O Xamã (*The Shaman*) - Piers Vitebsky - Publisher: Taschen, Collection: Grandes Tradições Espirituais (1995)

O Paradigma perdido: A natureza humana (*The lost paradigm: human nature*) - Edgar Morin, Publisher: Europa América, Collection: Biblioteca Universitária (1973 - first edition)

3.1. The Shaman

According to Piers Vitebsky, shamanism is an adequate religion to a society of hunters, without class division, but the shamans survive under the most diverse social and political systems. The therapeutic process of the shaman is characterized by states of altered conscience. Nevertheless, and just like the touch of the drum, the dancing, the fasting and the sleep privation, the cause in itself doesn't explain the content and the emotional tone of shamanic states; what the hallucinogens reveal is not a shift from reality but an authentic truth.

The experience of the shaman is never just a personal journey of discovery, but also a service to the community. Being a shaman is indeed the oldest job, performing functions that in an industrial society are performed separately by the physician, the psychotherapist, the soldier, the fortune - teller, the priest and the politician. Every time the contacts between shamanic communities and the State are intimate, the first are most of the times pushed aside

by capital or the dominant culture. As a matter of fact, shamanism was widely persecuted in the communist world, for instance.

At first sight, the actions of the shaman seem incompatible with the view of the world that is generally accepted by the industrial society. The shamanic thought comes into conflict with the “rational” and mechanistic models of cause and effect that run through the main flow of science.

These communities’ vision of purity and total ecological protection would teach the powers of modern societies if they cared to listen to this voice. In a more and more fragmentary, impersonal and rootless society, looking at the shamanic society is to understand the small scale social and human relations as something deeply pedagogical.

The Paleolithic findings of the 20th century opened the way to interpretations that made the shaman the main character in the search for the origins of religion. Barre argues that all our knowledge of the supernatural or divine comes from

shamans and such visionaries. Indeed, and while the prophets and other mystics with direct experience of God usually enjoy a crucial importance in the initial stage of a world religion, in the last stages they become a dangerous challenge to the authority established by the priests of that religion.

The closest parallel to the insanity of the shaman is perhaps the clinically called state of schizophrenia: however, the differences are quite big, both psychologically and socially. At the extreme, it is society that makes the distinction between the shamanic behavior and the schizophrenic or the psychotic. One becomes a hero and the other a hospital patient...

Whichever the way people from outside might judge the mental state of the shaman, shamanic societies see a continuum between this state and the patient's and society's state, which are considered as a whole.

3.2. Synopsis:

In the marketing of modern societies there is a sociological/anthropological mask and that mask has the ability of pretending that “developed” societies, due to having gone through an industrial revolution, are in the right path to justify a subtle idea of moral superiority over underdeveloped societies.

This ignoble idea is supported in an evident way by the disciplines of History and Economics in western Universities and was recently verbalized by Tony Blair, making visible the Anglo- Saxon paradigm, which has been trying to dominate the world systems of thought since many decades ago, if not centuries.

That mask has a name. It’s called rite of passage, and the Civilization that is able to hide it best from the exterior eyes will be the one to win advantage within the idea of superiority already mentioned.

What happens is that “non-developed” societies have obvious rites of passage and a still tribal concept of family, which so much displeases the Anglo - Saxon paradigm.

What is ridiculous in the situation is that the major venue of modern society - the University, i.e., the place where these lies become truths to the students, is exactly the place where those rites of passage into adulthood are more evident and barbarian, being designated as: *freshman rituals*.

One needs, above all, to understand that the lack of these rites leads to their invention and renewal, i.e., the collective mental structure is something anthropologically unchangeable and the most technologically advanced societies are also the ones which pretend to have forgotten former rites of passage.

This cleavage with the past is an obvious sign of the great fear of the unknown intern forces of the human being.

There is, for sure, an innate will, a psychological need of the individual in society in the

presence of rites of passage, whatever the level of economic development of that society might be.

The rushed try to mask these rites goes even further, to a point where it denies the roots of the societies, being the sheer annihilation of certain social categories, like the shaman, essential to extend the lie that one has achieved the maximal evolution of the human species in terms of society.

On the other hand, the public scorn for ancient societies in the mass media, the myth of superiority over other civilizations, the biased employment of the industrial revolution paradigm to all societies, the focus on globalization's economicism as something quite inevitable, all these are marks of the ethnocentrism that corrupts the Western Civilization, a result of the paradigm of the domination by fear, based on the Anglo - Saxon view of the world.

Thus, not only rites of passage and shamanism haven't disappeared, but they are also presented today under subtle and renewed ways, whether in freshman rituals / secret societies' rites,

or genial artists, like Rimbaud / Jim Morrison, among many other examples.

Edgar Morin refers to rites as the most authentic expression of humanity's neurosis.

To this author, Homo sapiens created a new rite, in comparison to the animal rite, and this rite conjugates three domains:

- Social communication, in which each person performs his part according to his social status;
- Individual pathological rites, which each one shall invent to deal with his own crises;
- The third domain adds myth and magic, the fear of the exterior (environment and world) and also the fear of one's self interior

4 – Educational System and Politics

. The Myth of the “neutral society with a totally democratic education”

Approached subjects:

- . The fallacy of “Democracy”: political influences on education
- . Educational structure: Basic education (1st, 2nd and 3rd cycles), secondary education, university¹
- . Obvious influences of politics in higher education and its meaning (attempt to shape the students’ minds at a crucial period of their personalities – adolescence)
- . Educational reforms directed only at basic and secondary education
- . Pedagogical incompetence of university “teachers”
- . Political vision of education
- . Lobbies and higher education

1 According to the Portuguese educational framework

- . Bauhaus as a possible “ideal model” for education
- . The pedagogical method in Bauhaus

References:

Escola, Sociedade - Que relação? (*School, Society - What kind of relationship is there?*) - Luiza Cortesão, Publisher: Edições Afrontamento, Collection: Biblioteca das Ciências do Homem (1988)

A crise e a incógnita da Universidade portuguesa (*The crisis and the incognita of the Portuguese University*) - José Eduardo Moniz, Publisher: Livraria Bertrand, Collection: Realidade e Denúncia (1976)

História das Artes Visuais - Séculos XIX e XX (*History of Visual Arts - 19th and 20th Centuries*) - José Fernandes Pereira, Publisher: Texto Editora (1992)

4.1. Synopsis

The way in which education is structured corresponds to a very basic vision of the individual, which depends on psychological studies wide spread in our society.

If not, let us see:

- Education:

. Basic – 1st cycle (4 years - from 6 to 10 years old)

. Basic – 2nd /3rd cycles (5 years - from 10 to 15 years old)

. Secondary (5 years - from 15 to 20 years old)

. University (5 years - from 20 to 25 years old)

Therefore, every student that for any reason overcome the established age to attend basic education is out of the system, according to the Portuguese Compulsory Education Law: according to this law, every student older than 15 cannot attend the ordinary basic education (daily school), and will have to attend the “Ensino Recorrente” (adult night school).

In the 1st cycle of basic education there is only one teacher (who represents the father/mother role model); in the 2nd/3rd cycles of basic education and in secondary education there are many teachers for many subjects and this model is kept throughout university as well.

The myth of the objective and neutral education comes across the obvious influence of Christian religion in the entire process of western thinking and also the strictness and shallowness of the educational system / scientific thought.

On the other hand, university education is one of the touchstones for keeping society’s balance, and it’s a shame that it has been made hostage of the

political power, which depends on the economic system.

Furthermore, the obvious political influences are the attempt to shape the *modus operandi* of generations of students at a crucial moment of their personalities - adolescence - which results in countless unbalances - depressions, drug addiction, and so on, and so forward...

It is obvious that, when ministers of education reform education, they always leave behind university education, their "sanctuary of power".

Universities shape the society's system of thought according to the relation between the international forces of the moment (presently globalization is the trend), and both the fear of the unknown and the need of the diploma on the students' part will take care of the rest.

Indeed, university "professors" don't have and don't need to have pedagogical qualifications to perform their educational duties: a personal invitation is enough.

Luiza Cortesão, referring to education during Salazar's tenure¹, tells us something that can still be applied today:

- The educational institution has contributed to emphasize the existing distinction among the Portuguese social classes;
- School was used to shape the students' minds, according to what was considered desirable;
- Everything seems to point out the predominantly selective nature, in terms of social class, of the structure, pedagogical recommendations and performance of the educational system;
- We might admit that school, away from being neutral, has been indeed always used as an ideological tool.

¹ António de Oliveira Salazar (1889-1970), Portuguese statesman and dictator. He was Portugal's prime minister from 1932 to 1968. In 1933, he introduced a new constitution, thus establishing a corporative and authoritarian state ("Estado Novo" or "New State").

José Eduardo Moniz, focusing his attention on the period post - April 25¹, claims that University has been used as an actual test tube for political struggles.

Well, once the social and economic structures have remained in the country after the revolution, universities have also kept their intern political tendencies well alive and operating...

4.2. The ideal educational model: Bauhaus

Founded in 1919 by the architect Walter Gropius, Bauhaus was the most famous school in the history of contemporary architecture and design, where some of the key names of that time's architecture and painting engaged in teaching functions.

¹ The “Carnation Revolution” started on April 25 1974 after the rebel song “Grândola Vila Morena” played on the radio. Portugal was able to change its regime from a half century authoritarian dictatorship into a liberal democracy through an almost bloodless military revolution. The population offered the regime soldiers red carnations, in order to convince them not to resist.

Bauhaus was a typical example of a democratic School, based on the principle of cooperation between teachers and students. Conceived as a small, although complete, social organism, it aimed at accomplishing a perfect unity between didactic method and productive system. The real image of Bauhaus was that of an organized artistic community: teachers and students lived at the School for the whole period of study; they interacted even during rest hours. The artistic activity was included and integrated spontaneously into the daily life. A practical teaching, called harmonization, supported on the unitary basis of sound, shape and color, integrated the various physical and psychic attitudes of the individual. The aim was giving the artist a free ability to experience, a conscious way of being in the world, a clear awareness of civilization.

Groupius recovered from the Arts and Crafts and the Deutscher Werkbund the affection for handicraft production, which meant quality versus quantity, the artisan's engagement versus the

machine's indifference, the personalized and creative working relations versus the alienating factory chain.

The political turn in Germany, translated in the triumphs of the Nazi party, rendered impossible the continuity of the Bauhaus.

The School was closed in 1933 and its main teachers (Gropius, Mies Van Der Rohe, Breuer, Moholy Nagy) emigrated to the United States, where they remained faithful to the functionalist aesthetics of the Bauhaus.

5 – Psychology

. The focus on Freud and the denial of Jung: the Myth of objectivity in Psychology

Approached subjects:

- . The individual as a psychologically standardized being
- . The a priori rejection of creative individuality
- . The inconceivability of accepting subjective and disturbing concepts (example: collective unconscious)
- . The human sciences' fear of spirits and a sane spirituality
- . The search for a unifying psychoanalytic science, controlled by a stable system of thought
- . The personalities of Jung and Freud
- . The Secret Committee in support of Freud

References:

Freud estava errado. Porquê? Pecado, Ciência e Psicanálise (*Freud was wrong: Why? Sin, Science and Psychoanalysis*) - Richard Webster, Publisher: Campo das Letras, Collection: Campo das Ciências (2002)

Sistemas e Teorias em Psicologia (*Systems and Theories in Psychology*) - Melvin H. Marx, William A. Hillix, Publisher: Cultrix (1963 - first edition)

5.1. Synopsis

When two such strong Theories as the Freudian and Jungian “face themselves” in the same space of ideas, there is no subterfuge; the observer’s/scientist’s personal features of personality will make him choose one of them.

According to every “specialists”, Freud is the undisputed “giant” of psychology, whereas Jung is the pupil / disciple who became the most famous and influential “rebel”.

Choosing Freud means choosing the safe path of science, while choosing Jung is choosing subjectivity and instinct.

This is, undoubtedly, the question at hands.

Freud corresponds to studying the individual’s mind as a psychologically standardized being, reducible to sexual drive, similar to Piaget’s stages, it is the a priori rejection of creative individuality, it is the hiper - realism of banality, the impossibility of accepting subjective and disturbing concepts and it is, above all, the fear of the spirits

and also of a sane spirituality that might penetrate human sciences.

Fundamentally, it is about searching a unifying psychoanalytic science controlled by a system of thought that is stable - it is, therefore, a system of Fear.

With regard to this question, Kuhn has a very interesting opinion; he highlights the fact that normal science advances through the work developed within the frame of a “paradigm” – laws and theories that we suggest are important parts of science.

These are the 10 reasons why every “honest” scientist should hate and deny Carl Jung:

- 1- He considers the study of the present and the future as important as, or even more important than the study of the past;
- 2- He believed that the psychic energy was as indestructible as, or even more indestructible than physical energy;
- 3- Aversion for scientific methodology;

- 4- Deep study of the artistic productions of many times and cultures;
- 5- Optimism and coherence with the religious point of view;
- 6- He was interested in oriental myths and religions;
- 7- Jung's psychology is a good company to the existentialist;
- 8- Jung abandoned organized science;
- 9- To Jung, the "original" archetypical images didn't arise from perceptions, memory or conscious experience, but seemed to reflect universal fears of human experience and behavior;
- 10- Only when the archetypes come into contact with the conscious mind, will it be able to understand and assimilate them

As you can see, these are ten reasons out of pure fear for the unknown.

Furthermore, the most important concept in Psychology is not one of Freud's, - it belongs to Jung: Collective Unconscious and its archetypes.

Whoever has chosen, voted for Freud and not for Jung. And he was chosen due to the 10 ideas you have just read ... do you doubt it?

I don't...

5.2. Some facts about Freud

According to Richard Webster, Freud's inflexible will to designate Jung his "successor and crown prince" as permanent President of the psychoanalytic movement was connected with Jung's non-Jewish origin, since, at that time, Freud was already feeling an anti-Semitism that would be impossible to overcome, if bridges to the scientific and academic world weren't built.

There is a clear parallel between these two men, which is called: deeply messianic personality.

According to the same author, psychoanalysis' most lasting action was taking a conception of the world that was fundamentally

superstitious and irrational, with an evident origin in the Christian - Jewish tradition, and reintroducing it within modern science language.

Besides, according to Jung himself, Christianity is our world, the way we think comes from the Christian Middle Age; all our science, everything that comes into our minds has inevitably crossed that history.

5.3. The secret committee

One of Freud's most zealous pupils even suggested a Secret Committee, aimed at protecting Freud and his doctrines. In May 1913 the entire Committee met for the first time and, after a discussion on Jung's heretical ideas, the meeting became an informal ritual, to which Freud suggested a golden ring as a secret emblem.

Over the following ten years the Committee members operated as an invisible group, controlling

the evolution of the psychoanalytic movement, exchanging letters between them on a weekly basis, in order to coordinate the activities in Vienna, London, Berlin and Budapest.

According to Thomas Szasz, Freud's leadership was deceitful, because he created a pseudo-democratic and pseudo-scientific environment, but he was careful enough to provide himself with the power to decide over every important matters.

After all, says Webster, the criteria to achieve a psychoanalytic "truth" were completely subjective.

6 - Economics

. The Myth of development through the stealing of natural resources: materialism and consumerism as “Philosophy” of life

Approached subjects:

- . The influence of modern “theories of management” on an increasingly categorisable, expendable and disposable world
- . Refusing green movements as something immoderate and too poetical
- . The pragmatism subjacent to Money: everything is buyable
- . The lack of emotions in the economist speech of “modern” societies’ governments
- . The stealing of natural resources from 3rd world countries
- . Petroleum as the sole path
- . Natural resources consumption on a global scale, by country

References:

A desigualdade do mundo - A Economia do Mundo Contemporâneo (*The inequality of the world – Economics in Contemporary World*) - Pierre- Noel Giraud, Publisher: Terramar, Collection: Actualidades (1998)

O dinheiro louco (*The Insane Money*) - Alain Minc, Publisher: Difel, Collection: Documento e Ensaio (1990 - first edition)

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http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/natres/pdf/com_natres_en.pdf - European Union's

Thematic Strategy on the sustainable use of natural resources - © European Communities, 1995

<http://atlas.aaas.org/index.php?part=2> - Atlas of Population and Environment - American Association for the Advancement of Science website

6.1. Synopsis

Since the beginning of worldwide colonialism and slavery (Portuguese, British and Spanish expansion), the stealing of natural resources from the poorest countries has become a sad procedure within the accelerated “development” plan of the richer countries.

Green movements have been trying to awake public opinions, but the unrestrained life’s pace of the big metropolis (places where, we shouldn’t forget, a strong percentage of a country’s population is concentrated), lead to a situation, in which this highly organized thievery achieves the stature of a measure of sheer mutual survival.

At the sight of this situation, we face money’s pragmatism: everything is buyable and military coercion will do the rest, before the evident corruption inside 3rd World’s intern powers.

On the other hand, modern managing ideas, with a precious help from certain Psychological

theories, turn the world into an endless menu or supermarket, where everything is categorisable, expendable and disposable, including, quite clearly, human resources/workforce within a social context characterized by the economicist speech of professional politicians, with no space left for emotion or intellect.

According to Pierre-Noel Giraud, the world's inequality currently presents itself under the shape of a deep inequality among countries. On his turn, Alain Minc refers to the hypocrisy reigning over developed countries: "socialism towards wages; social democracy towards the capital"...

Even the European Union, in its' thematic strategy on a sustainable use of natural resources, refers that "over the past 50 years, humans have changed ecosystem more rapidly and extensively than in any comparable period of time in human history, mainly to meet rapidly growing demands for food, fresh water, timber, fiber, and fuel"

According to Luís Nuno Quental, among the diversity of motivations to war there is the competition for valuable natural resources, whether abundant or rare. Since the end of the 90's, one has become generally aware of the close relation between the illegal extraction of resources, weapon traffic, violent conflicts, human rights' violation and environmental destruction. If the extraction of resources generates bulky revenues, that benefit only hardly is translated into an improvement in the life quality of local communities. Indeed, the sums involved are used to feed an intricate net of influences, corruption and the wealth of several political leaders and high-rank soldiers.

Two of the modern facts with a greater impact on the future of humanity are:

- The non-investment in the investigation of pure energy derived from Hydrogen (most certainly, the petroleum lords wish to conceal this fundamental technological step, which

would have an immediate huge impact on people's lives);

- The non-ratification of international accords (for example, Kyoto) by the United States of America (agreements to reduce the ozone hole and to decrease the temperature of the Planet Earth). This unbalance has already caused several hurricanes and other disturbing phenomena on the level of worldwide climate.

After all, we must never forget that the American Association for the Advancement of Science' classification of the consumption of natural resources worldwide (Atlas of Population and Environment), by country, refers the United States of America as one of the world's top per capita consumers.

Thus, the myth of development (only economic development) is inevitably connected with the pilferage of other countries' natural resources and it is based on a worn out speech about the

benefits of globalization, which are righteously being questioned today on an international scale by movements towards the protection of local particular features.

We have, thus, reached an impasse.

But impasses are always points at which breaks with the reigning thought might begin to occur.

Let us be able to understand the signs of these new times.

The next table shows the top
consumer countries per capita:

**TOP CONSUMERS,
1998**

Primary energy*

	Metric tons oil equivalent per capita	GNP per capita US\$ 1998
UA Emirates	18.95	17 870
Kuwait	9.17	id
Singapore	8.80	30 170
USA	7.83	29 240
Canada	7.18	19 170
Belgium and Luxembourg	6.21	26 340
Australia	5.56	20 640
Norway	5.48	34 310
Netherlands	5.36	24 780
Iceland	5.07	27 830
Saudi Arabia	4.98	6 910
Sweden	4.89	25 580
Finland	4.71	24 280
France	4.24	24 210
Germany	4.09	26 570

* Commercially traded fuels only

Roundwood*

	Cubic meters per capita	GNP per capita US\$ 1998
Finland	12.08	24 280
Guatemala	12.03	1 640
Sweden	7.43	25 580
Canada	6.41	19 170
Gabon	3.20	4 170
New Zealand	2.90	14 600
Norway	2.50	34 310
Latvia	2.42	2 420
Austria	2.27	26 830
Chile	2.11	4 990
Eq. Guinea	1.88	1 110
USA	1.76	29 240
Estonia	1.74	3 360
Belarus	1.66	2 180
Uruguay	1.62	6 070

* Raw timber only

Passenger cars

	Cars per thousand people	GNP per capita US\$ 1998
Italy	539	20 090
Germany	506	26 570
Australia	488	20 640
USA	483	29 240
Austria	481	26 830
Switzerland	477	39 980
New Zealand	470	14 600
Canada	455	19 170
France	442	24 210
Belgium	435	25 380
Sweden	428	25 580
Slovenia	403	9 780
Norway	402	34 310
Japan	394	32 350
Finland	392	24 280

Source: BP, FAO, World Bank.

7 - Communication Media

. The Myth of a Developed Society =
“free” Communication Media: the mass
media as a tool to control people’s
expectations in modern societies

Approached subjects:

- . Evolution of the several communication media
- . Television and the digital era
- . Mass media as the almost sole way of legitimizing social status
- . The need to seem “objective”
- . The balance between children’s dreams (cartoons) and adult pragmatism (news service): the several levels of reality
- . The role-playing of reality as a substitute for the actual reality
- . Manipulation of public opinion worldwide through the mass media

References:

Os novos cães de guarda (*The New Watch Dogs*) - Serge Halimi, Publisher: Celta Editora (1998)

A tirania da comunicação (*The tyranny of communication*) - Ignacio Ramonet, Publisher: Campo das Letras, Collection: Campo dos Media (1999)

Websites:

http://www.ucm.es/info/especulo/numero12/era_digi.html - **Conferência de Joaquín Aguirre Romero** na Universidade Complutense de Madrid (*Conference by Joaquín Aguirre Romero in Madrid's Complutense University*)

7.1. Evolution of the several communication media in the digital era

According to Joaquín Aguirre Romero, an information society is not, as some people might consider, a more and better informed society; it is rather a society in which a series of elements become information. We are before a new form of alchemy: the bit alchemy: digitalization is the numerical / mathematical grasping of reality, so as to manipulate it.

A speed increase in time is quite visible today and this speed, combined with the fact that humans live longer, makes us feel permanently uncomfortable.

In the field of information, this fast pacing change is translated into two factors: technological revolution and the search for the adjustment between the emerging informative structures and audience rates.

Since the 60's, television has become the predominant communication medium within the

informative system; television forced all the other communication media, from the press to the cinema, to fill in their empty spaces.

And when it seemed that the system has finally found its balance, the digital revolution burst in.

In the traditional informative system, roles were clearly defined and communication was made into a single direction: upside down, from a single sender to thousands/millions of passive receivers. Ergo, the digital “system” is terrifyingly active, horizontal and dynamic; now ideas are in action whereas the rules of the game were previously dictated by the capital of major economic groups.

The reach of the digital revolution is characterized by its uncontrollable, vertiginous growth. Its scope of action is deep on the social and cultural level and thus, many decisions are in the hands of the individuals.

The struggle for the hegemonic control of the communication media is fought between the television and the personal computer.

Television presents us with a global performance whereas the digital world is, on the contrary, a set of diversified references. The computer changes the television's passive receiver into an active producer in a universal field – the cyberspace. Besides, it creates a feeling of belonging, of a community that shares knowledge and emotions, a virtual place for freedom of the individual expression.

7.2. Synopsis

Currently, mass communication media play a unique role in the social legitimating of personalities and ideas.

That role might, as in everything else, be used in a positive or negative way.

The balance between these communication media seems to take place within several levels of the understanding of reality (dream and real, child and adult – cartoons and news service, for instance),

and, nowadays, this role-playing of reality is replacing reality itself.

As skilful mass media manipulators, the United States of America control the news agencies, which renders impossible the broadcasting of any piece of news contrary to their interests during prime time.

On their turn, mass media lobbies (Jewish lobby in the United States, gay lobby, economic lobby, etc) operate in a silent and unpunished way. Hence, many of the images we see have a very strong intern logic as a revealing account of the system of thought that produces them.

There is also an urge to seem objective, even when that objectivity is completely untrue (politicians that become “impartial” commentators and vice-versa).

Therefore, the mass media have become one - directional way of expression, since they are integrated into the logic of the population’s numbness at the sight of gross social injustices.

Newspapers, televisions, radio, and currently the Internet, become therefore means of transmission for political propaganda, i.e., for a partial vision of reality, aiming at inducing a psychological state of well being, so that social revolutions are once and for all withdrawn from people's minds.

Thus, the myth of the immediate comparison: "democratic societies mean free mass media, free opinion", etc - is completely absurd.

Serge Halimi refers to the legend of the reporter's independence, his caution towards the economic power and also the sham democracy we live in.

To conclude, Halimi reveals that for still a long period, the desire for social transformation will keep facing the obstacle of mediocre information and compliant journalists rendering service to the propaganda machine of the market thought.

According to Ignacio Ramonet, the Montesquieu power scale is subverted, since the first power today is exerted by economics, the second by the mass media and currently the political power occupies the third place.

To this author, the truth nowadays is what the communication media claim as such. And the only way of checking whether some information is reliable or not is comparing the versions given by the different media...

8 - Egocentrism / the denial of the matriarchal / patriarchal family

. The Myth of the Anglo-Saxon concept of family as the only capable of building a fair and stable society

Approached subjects:

- . Brief history of the family structure: patriarchal, nuclear and tentacle family
- . The individual as the measure of all things - individualism, Anglo-Saxon concept of family, rejection of the tribal concept
- . The clear division between culture and nature as something inevitable and intrinsic to the human being in society
- . The sound and immediate rejection of the tribal structure of society
- . The promotion of individualism and selfishness as a way towards the social acceptance of the Anglo-Saxon concept of family
- . Denial of the idea of the collective (communism)

. Appealing to consumption through a hiper-aggressive and subliminal advertising

References:

O Paradigma perdido: A natureza humana (*The lost paradigm: human nature*) - Edgar Morin, Publisher: Europa - América, Collection: Biblioteca Universitária (1973 - first edition)

Sociologia da Família (*Sociology of the Family*) - Chiara Saraceno, Publisher: Editorial Estampa, Collection: Imprensa Universitária (1992)

O dinheiro louco (*The Insane Money*) - Alain Minc, Publisher: Difel, Collection: Documento e Ensaio (1990 - first edition)

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Notícias (*AOL Magazine – AOL News Portal*) – Artigo de Maria Rita Kehl: Família do Novo Milénio: desestruturada ou reestruturada ? (*The New millennium family: unstructured or re - structured ?*)

8.1. Brief history of the family structure

According to Maria Rita Kehl, the nuclear family (father, mother and children living under the same roof), as we know it, has only two centuries of existence. This model, which seems the most natural form of family organization, has indeed corresponded to the stage of expansion of the modern bourgeois society. This model of nuclear family, which is considered “normal”-monogamous, patriarchal and endogamic - prevailed from the beginning of the 19th century until half of the 20th century in western societies, but it is indeed responsible for the big laboratory of modern societies’ neurosis.

In the second half of the 20th century, there has been a change and the model of the “hierarchical” family, organized around the patriarchal power, started to give place to a more equalitarian model, benefiting women’s position (due to their entry in the labor market and consequent financial emancipation).

Separations and new relationships throughout the adult's life slowly started to shape a new type of family, which we might call the tentacle family, in which children live together with their mother's or father's new partners and with siblings from their parents' new relationships.

This new family structure has its own forms of pathology, related to the omission of parental generation in relation to their children's education.

8.2. Synopsis

The present social and economic structure in modern developed societies would never have been able to go this far if the basic family concept underlying that structure weren't the Anglo - Saxon, which advocates an early economic independence of the children from their progenitors.

To Chiara Saraceno, the nuclear family as a structure of family sociability existed for several

centuries in various parts of Europe long before industrialization; however, it is undoubtedly true that in every country involved in the process of industrialization, that kind of family sociability has quickly expanded to areas and categories previously characterized by other types of family structure as well.

In the rural areas of Mediterranean Latin societies (Portugal, Spain, Italy), the family concept is different (matriarchal/patriarchal family), thus existing some humanism in social relationships, which hasn't reached the limits of stress and wild capitalism experienced in big cities all over the world.

A social structure of tribal or Muslim basis wouldn't be able, indeed, to sustain a sheer capitalist society.

The concept of individualism taken to the last consequences - i.e., considering the individual's basic needs as the measure of all things on the society's economic level, is an important feature in current consumption societies.

These societies are based on the most negative feelings ascribed to human beings: the already mentioned individualism, selfishness, greed, the eagerness for money, the denial of the collective (represented by the primitive hate towards communism as something that should be diabolized).

According to Alain Minc, family replaces the ancient tribe, which mixed the generations, the phratries and the neighbourhood traditions: the collective was replaced by the individual, who stands alone before a reality that dominates him.

Minc concludes by saying that this individual is the dream of which a market economy might dream...

On the other hand, the appeal to consumption is carried out through a highly aggressive advertising from the perspective of the direct visual and sound presentation of the product and subliminal messages, which bore the consumer and lead him to a state of an extremely useful numbness,

so that this violent marketing might operate in a quietly and freely manner.

One aspect that has been highlighted, in a quite deceitful way, is the division between nature and culture, which would justify a pseudo-theory on the evolution of human societies, in which the consumption society would be the ultimate example of that evolution.

Edgar Morin reveals us that nature and culture are continuously interwoven, and that the search for the “purest” expression of culture would be inglorious, for it is umbilically connected with the concept of man’s irrationality.

9 - The invention of Money

. Myth: everything is buyable – money as the only way of representing reality and giving a meaning to life

Approached subjects:

- . Evolution of the monetary system: from the direct trade to the abstract representation of economic values
- . The idea of the unification of nature through the introduction of the concept of value: Money
- . The abandon of ancient societies' direct trade
- . The simplistic way of giving life a meaning through the individual search of increasingly greater amounts of money
- . Social control through the economic control over people's lives (the career system as a means of individual categorization)
- . The wage structure for university teachers

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<http://www.bcb.gov.br/?ORIGEMOEDA> - Museu de Valores do Banco Central do Brasil - Origem e evolução da moeda (Central Bank of Brazil - Museum of Money - Origin and evolution of money)

<http://www.fenprof.pt/Superior/?xpto=37&cat=125&doc=256&mid=132> - Proposta de Contrato Colectivo de Trabalho do Ensino Superior Particular e Cooperativo (*University's remuneration proposal*)

9.1. **Brief history of Money**

Money is the result of a long evolution.

In the beginning there was just the simple trade of merchandise for merchandise.

This basic form of commerce prevailed in the beginning of civilization and can be found today among peoples with a primitive economy. In direct trade the value equivalence is purely intuitive.

Some goods, due to their usefulness, were more sought than others. After everyone's acceptance they took the function of currency, circulating as an element to be exchanged for other products and being used to assess their value. They were the money-merchandise. Cattle, salt, sugar and fabrics were some of those merchandises.

As time went on, merchandises became inconvenient to commercial transactions, due to their value oscillation, because they were indivisible, easily perishable and didn't allow the accumulation of wealth.

When metal was discovered, it didn't take long until it replaced merchandising as a means of exchange. Due to its advantages, such as the possibility of store, divisibility, easiness of transport and beauty, metal was elected as the main value standard.

Later on, metal acquired a definite shape and a fixed weight, receiving an indicating mark for its value, which facilitated transactions, avoiding weighing and allowing the immediate identification of the quantity of metal being offered to trade. Tools made of metal became much appreciated merchandising.

Hence, in the 7th century B.C., the first coins similar to the current ones appeared. The first metals used to mint coins were gold, silver and copper.

With the introduction of the paper Money, the minting of metallic coins was restricted to smaller denominations, necessary to small change.

During the Middle Age, there was the tradition of keeping one's values with a goldsmith, a person who negotiated gold and silver objects. As a

guarantee, people were given a receipt. As time went on, those receipts started to be used to make payments, moving on from hand to hand and creating paper money.

With the suppression of the conversion of bills and coins into precious metal, money started to dematerialize, acquiring abstract shapes, such as cheques.

Whichever shape Money presents itself, it doesn't worth anything for itself, but for the merchandising and services it is able to pay for.

Money emerged from a basic human need in society, and its evolution was made through a withdrawal from reality and an indirect representation of economic values.

9.2. Synopsis

The invention of Money was a simplistic way of valuing the several realities of daily life, and it

quickly became the only way of giving life a meaning. It was strongly responsible for the creation of the myth that says that everything is buyable and, thus, added to a vision of the world withdrawn from nature, like a kind of order within the chaos of arbitrariness that characterizes life.

Hence, the idea of the unification of the world through the introduction of something artificial that sets a value to it is a dangerous idea, which is responsible for the rupture of the structure of values of primitive human societies and has caused a withdrawal from their biologic origins as well.

Replacing direct trade for the monetary system has led to the creation of such an unreasonable simplification, that it is only comparable to the compartment of the study of language by the single subject: Linguistics.

This simplistic way of understanding the world took us to the next stage, to a level of psychological adjustment of the human being to this system of value(s): man increasingly searches greater amounts of money, since the social rules

related to socio - professional categories compel him to do so...

This social control is made through the economic control over people's lives and the common sense of the most part of the population - something always demagogical - introduces a relation of forces within society's wage structure, which causes a categorization of the individual within the social whole.

One needs to deconstruct fallacious concepts, such as the easy economist speech of the politicians and the globalization of economic entities, by saying the following: - Only because we place systems of value representations between man and nature, it doesn't mean that the *victim* becomes *prey* and the first its' predator, since the ecologic unbalance will also lead us to the destruction of the natural elements that enable human survival on planet Earth.

10 Superiority MYTHS

The proposal of an Association Agreement for Private and Cooperative Higher Education put forward by the National Teachers' Federation (*Federação Nacional de Professores*), as an example of the wage structure of university teachers – social categorization through the wage system:

GROSS REMUNERATION 1999/2000

Teaching Professionals On the basis of Exclusive Commitment

University Teachers

Rank	Salary bracket			
	1	2	3	4
Full Professor	285	300	310	330
Associate Professor (w/ Aggregation)	245	255	265	285
Associate/Assistant Professor (w/ Aggregation)	220	230	250	260
Assistant Professor	195	210	230	245
Assistant and Lecturer	135	140	150	
Trainee Assistant	100	110		

Polytechnic High School Teachers

Rank	Salary bracket			
	1	2	3	4
Coordinating Professor (w/ Aggregation)	245	255	265	285
Coordinating Professor (w/o Aggregation)	220	230	250	250
Adjunct Professor	185	195	210	225
Teaching Assistant (2nd Triennium)	135	140	150	
Teaching Assistant (1st Triennium)	100			

Salary Index	Remuneration
100	278.400\$
110	306.300\$
135	375.900\$
140	389.800\$
145	403.700\$
150	417.600\$
155	431.600\$
185	515.100\$
190	529.000\$
195	542.900\$
205	570.800\$
210	584.700\$
220	612.500\$
225	626.400\$
230	640.400\$
245	682.100\$
250	696.000\$
255	709.900\$
260	723.900\$
265	737.800\$
285	793.500\$
300	835.200\$
310	863.100\$
330	918.700\$

10 - The “international style” in architecture

. Myth: the city as a privileged stage for Democracy -centralized power as modern tyranny

Approached subjects:

- . The current unbalance in global architecture
- . Societal model and community model
- . International style: the functionalism of Bauhaus
- . The Athens Charter - the "City-Machine"
- . The debate between Venturi's and Rossi's models
- . Vertical cities as sources of power through the fear of the populations
- . The city as the center of an almost immaterial power
- . Exerting power through fear: modern American invasions
- . Demonstration of power over the population in the suburbs and the break with the rural horizon line: the lost of connection to the Earth / Nature

. International style as a way of mechanizing “productive” people’s lives and suppressing creativity in architecture (contempt for Gaudí and Hundertwasser, for instance)

References:

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http://www.cdcc.sc.usp.br/ciencia/artigos/art_27/arte.html#arqpos - Henrique Ferraz, A Arquitetura Pós-Moderna: Robert Venturi e Aldo

Rossi – Revista Electrónica de Ciências, Brasil (*Post
Modern Architecture: Robert Venturi and Aldo Rossi -
Sciences Electronic Review, Brazil*)

10.1. Some opinions

Gillo Dorfles tells us that the present situation is very disappointing: modern society finds itself entrapped by many factors: population growth, consumerism, economic and social unbalances, which lead to the appearance of disproportionate advertising buildings all around the world (big exhibitions, sport stadiums, etc.), in contrast to the impoverished residential buildings for the masses and public infra-structures.

According to this author, if we wish a rebirth in architecture (understood as the art of building / inhabiting and not only understood as an advertising outdoor of a company or a political regime), the only way to achieve it is by stimulating the new generations of architects into a new ecological - territorial conscience and creating conditions, so that those generations might work and build spaces that are actually inhabitable.

To Ferdinand Tonnies, the passage from rural civilization into urbanized societies causes the

appearance of a societal model (typical of the modern metropolis, rationality places, economic calculation, dominion of the market in every social relation and the individual's anonymity) and another model, the community model (typical of the country, rural villages, in which there is an umbilical relation between the land and its inhabitants).

Alfredo Mela tells us that, generally speaking, there is a growing tendency towards suburban expansion both in Europe and North America.

10.2. **The international style**

The evolution of the international style started during the Functionalism era, with Bauhaus architecture, Le Corbusier, among others. Although revealing political and social worries, these modernists became known because of the image of a depersonalized coldness of the buildings they created. This image was shown with pride and faith

in technology and industrialization as a means to create a better world, ideas that in rationalist minds would be reduced to universal principles applicable to any place in the planet.

This architectural style grew – further and further from its initial intention – in the United States during the post-war period, due to the presence of several European masters that have escaped Nazism (Gropius, Breuer, Mies, etc.), and due to the socioeconomic conditions of that time.

This architecture is creating a trend in cities: one doesn't care about localization, sun orientation, weather conditions or landscape framings – the international style makes sure that all buildings are banal and alike, both in the interior structure and exterior aspect...

The Athens Charter is a document developed at the CIAM's – International Congress for Modern Architecture – and it was also within the CIAM's that Urbanism was created as an interdisciplinary and systematizing study of the city issue.

It is in the *City-Machine* that late capitalism anchors itself, always approving a system of production and circulation of merchandising, workers and information.

The Athens Charter represents the institutionalized triumph of the *international modern style*.

In contemporary architecture, two main tendencies will dispute the course and positioning of the modern movement: the North American Robert Venturi's model and the Italian Aldo Rossi's model, both introduced in the 60s.

Venturi relies on the city of Las Vegas: the metropolis is considered as a series of images in quick motion and architecture is what supports information. Messages are brief, for the *passenger* always circulates by car and the rhythm of perception is always too quick.

Rossi, on his turn, starts from the ancient Italian cities and replaces the repetitive grid of urban structure for a sinuous entanglement of streets: to him, one needs to free the city's images present in

the collective imaginary and shape them as they were the own heart of urbanization.

These two models were debated in the Venetia Biennial in 1980, and the tendency was towards the ideas of Venturi's model.

Thus, culture became only a profitable merchandising, minorities are allowed to stay in their ghettos, and the center of the cities are soft places hiding their inner conflicts - the city is not designed as a whole, but as a pasting of fragments.

Citizens become mere tax - payers and the state gives more and more room to private neo - liberal initiative in urban areas.

Modern times promote science as something good and harmless. But science isn't neutral, let alone good on its own. Technology could only be neutral if the people that control it were extremely virtuous, but in a highly capitalized world, where the ownership of knowledge is a new form of economic segregation, one should be very careful when endorsing anything in the name of reason.

10.3. Synopsis

Since ancient times, the city is the center of a power that is felt but not seen, an immaterial power and, thus, not the “fertile kingdom” of the mighty democracy.

That power seems to have the right and the duty to smash any demonstration of creative individuality, any attempt of social rebellion.

The city is the supreme psychological barrier, the place where, we are told, “everything happens”, whether that *everything* is good or bad: it is the ultimate expression of daily banality; it is the minimum common denominator, which we call: reality.

Also since ancient times, there is only one way to exert that power: by fear of the employment of force, i.e. , the expectation that, if one doesn't obey the central power, invasion and subsequent destruction is not only likely, but also inevitable.

The current North American dominion does nothing else than perpetuate the memory of the populations concerning the great hordes and invasions that occurred in the past, especially in Europe: Mongols, Napoleon, Hannibal, Alexander Magnum, Hitler, etc.

To the purpose of clearly demonstrating power, the vertical building (higher and higher skyscrapers in the main cities of the United States) was an element that influenced the dominant position of the new world's technology before the "ancient" European world, defined a new balance of forces between the core of power and the city's suburb and also meant the rupture with the horizon line of the rural world, i.e., the lost of connection with the earth/nature.

On the other hand, the frightening dissemination of the "international style" as a tool to mechanize "productive" people's lives and suppressing creativity in architecture (the active scorn for Hundertwasser and Gaudí is significant), came to prove that what one had in mind was

adapting mass construction to the economic and political purposes and not allowing “architects - artists” any creative whim.

CONCLUSION

It is quite useful to hide true knowledge from the others.

The fear of authority consciously instilled in western country's schools *is quite useful*.

“Controlled” Communication Media *are quite useful*.

It is quite useful to have an official therapeutic system that sometimes works as a strainer before the most brilliant minds, so that truth might be “softened”, in order to get people to understand only a small part of reality.

It is quite useful to build a single thought that condemns the really honest scientist as a fool, for walking along paths that one wishes to hide from public opinion.

It is quite useful to say that modern technology would never be able to transform hydrogen into a clean energy source alternative to petroleum...

All this and a lot more *is very useful* to the present western thinking, in order to maintain and eternalize the fake of “moral superiority” of the west in relation to the underdeveloped countries and the Arab world...

We are still living under the tentacle influence of the post 2nd world war Marshall Plan, a genius plan but also diabolic within North American political-economic dominion over the entire world.

That plan organized massive entries of great foreign talents in the United States, who fit like a glove in the land of opportunity and, for a good remuneration, vowed to faithfully serve this plan of global dominion through culture, mass media and economics.

Within the field of arts, painters, sculptors, graphic designers and architects arrived; within science, the scientists disputed the biggest leap of their lives; within sports, tennis players and gymnasts joined the great athletes of African origin already there, who had experienced a painful process of acculturation that included slavery.

All of them in search of the American dream, which, it must be recalled, implies a compliant personal and public attitude, slave of a political power that, in terms of its external operations, is the most aggressive in the history of western civilization countries.

A few time ago, I realized that I'm very pleased and proud to descend from the ideas of Marx, Max Weber and Auguste Comte and from the still recent tradition of the Social Sciences.

A sociologist is to society what a doctor is to a patient: more than acting on the effects in an attempt to minimize the damage, he studies the actual causes of the disease and applies the logical, but also profound thought to the social unbalances he sees and feels, in order to take an active role in the solution of those problems, guiding politicians and transmitting some hope to the populations.

We need an alternative thinking that is able to question everything, in order to absorb the knowledge of ancient civilizations and revolutionize

society with new ideas. We also need a new form of understanding the relation of forces of the political power that is exporting the model of the “true democracies” to dozens of 3rd world countries, based on the perspective of the easy profit and the reigning hypocrisy while, at the same time, it shamelessly enslaves the populations it claims to protect.

I don't wish blood-shedding revolutions for the future - after all, the 25 April revolution in Portugal gave that example of an almost unbelievable civility to the world -, i rather hope that the individualized human being excels himself and is able to think on a level where there is a true mutual respect and pedagogy between every form of civilization.

My aim is most certainly not pointing at solutions to a socioeconomic evolution that might be followed by society; i only wish to make every intellectual aware of the need to approach nature and culture on an equal basis, without the conservative and bourgeois extremism that corrupts

us all nowadays, within this easy consumerism that pretends to be genuine wisdom.

Thinking is a right but also a citizenship duty.
Those who have read these lines shall never forget
it.

