

Information Technology Creates Allophobia How to Eliminate It?

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INTRODUCTION

Technology as a panacea (old Greek word for a remedy for every illness) has imposed its role recently by the extension of electronics and by its spread under the appellation "informatics". To insist that electronic communication mediated by computers leads to social isolation and estrangement or alienation of its users, is a common locus, a concept of broadly admitted evidence. However, what has not been underlined in a satisfactory way, is the role played by the commercialized fashion in the formation of this deep socio-cultural alienation of the electronic technology users. Artists and cultural scientists have been persistent in criticizing capitalism as the main responsible for the advertisement effects on the consumers' consciences and especially its latest offspring (mass media) for its role as a pseudo-needs creator in the wider audiences. In the present period (last decade of the outgoing millennium) two currents have been manifesting and greatly distended by mass media: Aesthetization of commercialized products and the so called "globalization" of economy. These two trends connected the first with the second are also indirectly connected by subway mechanisms with the recent technological triumphs and need an analytical examination.

WORLD COMMERCE AND ITS AESTHETIZATION

The once upon a time western aesthetical model as inherited from the Renaissance artistic values has been altering a lot during the last decades of the technocratic expansion adapted to the new needs mainly influenced by the dominant economical model of western capitalism or the triumph of liberal investment of capital aiming to the exaggeration of profits and its re-investment in new sectors. The so called "commerce of air" proved to be the most prosperous invention of capitalism since it needed no transport expenses of goods or materials. Cultural industries prospered extremely after the WW2 in the western World aiming to the sales of the

copyrights of books, films, music records and CDs computer software and video films and TV programs. Of all these, books have the most of the "physical weight" of ordinary products and the general trend is to substitute them by digital information coming from the WWW. Internet tends thus to be transformed into the greater Library that World knew from the time of Alexandria. However, the transformation of the afflux of information (which quality is not guaranteed) into real and useful knowledge is the core point of this revolution.

Aesthetisation has been for centuries the formal aspect of all knowledge propagated by various means. Crowds and audiences did not search for inner or profound meanings in the aesthetic forms which were presented and were understood under simplified means. Certainly the classical Art (or Beaux Arts) was difficult for the greater public and its impact was more important to the bourgeois class that could "consume" it. The twentieth century will pass in the World History as the century of massive phenomena and fashions propagated mainly by mass media. The role of the Art in the era of the massive culture degraded and acquired the slogan style while it was used as an aesthetic weapon in the advertisement of commercial products. By these means the marriage of aesthetic forms (as moved and altering by fashions) and the commercial profit was possible. Arts such as cinema, theater, music and conjectural arts degraded to pure advertisement or amusement forms taking as pretext their artistic background.

Style that was an artistic alibi for the best description of non stereotyped meanings, became recently the stereotyped servant of the commercial interests aiming to the maximalization of profits. Art cannot liberate the masses but not even the small avant-garde communities and cannot educate the souls of humans. It can only produce diversions of meanings and social oblivion of crucial problems. It can create pseudo-needs and to present them as important to the collective conscience (if a term as that might exist). What the media named "public opinion" is exactly the opinion of some pressure groups that influence through the commu-

nication channels the masses to prefer this and reject the other. It is less a collective conscience and more a collective illusion while the interests of the pressure groups are well hidden as aiming mainly to the reproduction of commercial profits. What was called in the West lifestyle has nothing to do with personal style of expression of the ordinary layman, but more with the style or way (*modus* in Latin) dictated by invisible interests.

Finance became greatly virtual in the last decades because the mechanism of stock markets are in reality based on the expectations and hopes than on the true potentialities of companies to produce and to compete. Industrial giants mark important losses in their stocks while small unknown firms play well the pretentious game of "new technology" and multiplied virtually their values. Of course in a decided moment these values are decreasing but some have had the time to profit by the mechanism of overtaking (selling in high prices and rebuying in lower prices). Money became a sign without referant (except if we consider that it refers only to itself). Managerial capitalism has been easily transformed to a "casino capitalism" (Brown, 1995) where some financial entrepreneurs who produce nothing in reality know how to raise and descend the values and gain profits from these legal transactions. If the first form of capitalism was scheduled to satisfy consumers' needs, the second form was possible by strategies of seduction and the creation of artificial psychological desires.

Speculators now scan a global stock market the way T.V. spectators scan global channels, never stopping long enough to make a commitment to what they view. These speculators form a whole new class of value finders and image manipulators, their close attention to symbolic capital, fashion and the quality of life and a disinterest in party politics. Thus a conversion between aestheticized economy and commodification of aesthetics is realized. In the contrary of the austere socialism orientated to an objectivist Enlightenment rationalism (ultimately anti-aesthetic), capitalism was inventing even its self destructions every decade (oil crises, local wars). Thus a new market has started to be established since the early seventies having nothing in common with the classical form of offer/demand. Creating consumers' desires proved to be a new terrain for advertisers, even the creation of collective dreams could bring profits to these "creators" of artifices. With the

increasing importance of information, classical manufacturing and corresponding services became unimportant. In post modern capitalism services became hyper-real because their "physical part of production" dropped to almost nothing, like the value of the paper on which a legal brief is printed.⁸

For theorists such as Baudrillard the concept of simulation is crucial for the understanding of the symbolic exchange value of merchandises.^{3,4} The Simulacrum in its turn is the phenomenon that hides the fact that there is no longer any reality. Simulacra can exist at one of three levels or orders the distinction of which are made on the basis of three historical epochs of western civilization. The first order simulacra dated from the Renaissance period are based on counterfeit and is rather a copying process than simulating an object. Simulation was not abundant and its sign had clarity of meaning attached. Each sign was distinct from other signs and represented a particular position in hierarchy and each sign's exchange value was known by the popular mind. In the industrial revolution period the traditional signifiers were swept away according to Baudrillard and the need for counterfeit was not important since capital and labor were now the signs that people possessed. The massive production of traditional signs and their sales to the popular classes was a production of multiple copies of the original objects. Only the rich capitalist class could afford for the original treasures imported from the corners of the colonial empires starting from original masterpieces of ancient Art and going to valuable stones and diamonds from India, Africa and the Americas. This era can be named modernity because the law of symbolic exchange value meant that to own a piano was to be seen as an indication of decency and afforded prestige but to own a relic from the renaissance was seen as a pointless anachronism. Our era marked by the electronic (and its by-product informatics) technological revolution, can be named post-modernity and is dominated by simulacra of the third order or the most powerful of all simulacra. Simulation now is controlled by the code. Like alchemists, third order simulacra turn lead to gold using exactly the power of the code that is subject to the law of symbolic exchange value. This very code determines how we interpret an answer or question and by the use of this code we generate meaning(s) from a model(s). Finally our overall reality (hyper-reality) is "constructed" by the law of symbolic exchange of

value. This law may take new forms in our era as influenced by technological innovations applied in our every day life. T.V. is the chief architect of our actual hyper-reality (constructing virtual wars such as the Gulf War of 1991)⁶ but internet tends to overpass its potentialities from the moment that it enters to the average western household (150 million users in US at the end of the 20th century). The Net space is an absurd non tangible, non limited and not defined space having its own ethereal dimension but has the only reality of its own. Our post modern hyper-reality has much in common with this undefined space described as internet. Our world exists in what we objectively assume according to the discourse that surrounds the object(s) we are interpreting. Baudrillard already since 1983 had predicted that "reality itself, entirely impregnated by an aesthetic which is inseparable from its own structure, has been confused with its own image".⁴

THE FUTURE OF THE GLOBAL CAPITALISM OR THE PSYCHOLOGISATION OF WORLD ECONOMY

If Marx could not imagine in the early eighties of the 19th century, the increasing effective demand through economic growth, Tawney, Schumpeter and other economists predicted the capitalism's survival by the making of the individual the center of his own universe²² or by indicating the importance of its value system.²¹ centered on the "utilitarian lesson" as first advocated by John Bentham and John Stuart Mill. Today's post modern capitalism is characterized by rapidly moving capital flows, fewer collective contracts, reduced power of both trade unions and central governments and easy shifting of manufacturing activities to new regions¹¹. Blitz capital is tuned to quick short term profits rather than continuity with moderate long term profitability. In this type of capitalism anything goes anywhere anytime and anyhow. It is moving towards a 24 hours per day economy in which unemployment is no longer a major managerial concern as 50 years ago, while employability is being substituted for job security.

As Albert argues¹ we can find different types of capitalism in different parts of the world as expressions of different stages of economical development. However, this does not reflect proportionally the accurate "cultural weight" of all different cultural systems in a World of enor-

mous cultural diversity. Rich cultures are judged under western criteria, those that produce plethora of new cultural forms propagated by technological massive means as models to other "poorer" cultures that have no other choice than adopt these models during the time that the rich cultures judge as necessary before they shift them again to new forms and so on. These cultural forms (usually lacking of significative meanings except that of the commercial profits concerning their invisible creators only) can be named modes or fashions but they usually turn to become life-styles for entire parts of populations who adopt them for certain periods of time. These ways of cultural expression as created by financial interests cannot include the slightest moral values that was the crucial point of older cultural forms in the west and elsewhere. May be the only meaningful referant to those older cultural forms was their ethical values propagated by these means to broad masses of populations and highly encouraged by institutions such as religion, family and education. These institutions had often an autonomous dynamic power non depending on the state and thus communities could rely on the values propagated as described above and "construct" their own local or broader traditions. Today, these cultural processes become more and more difficult even in the most remote parts of the planet mainly due to the rapid penetration of western cultural models using as means their technological supremacy under the alibi of pluralist and tolerant democracy. Today US gain more money by exporting these cultural models all over the world under the uncontested argument that "whatever is American must be good" than by exporting material goods. We can name thus this sort of world trade virtual in its essence just before passing into the examination of the statistical data concerning the world money transactions and their relation with the REAL exchanged goods.

Globalization implies the manifestation of forces shaping the lives if people at a global rather than a territorially linked level. After some authors it can be conceived as a process transforming the world into one single place.²⁰ Of all its different aspects (mainly economic) we will focus on its cultural, ecological and ideological aspects. It can be proved that the mechanisms of economic globalization are the same concerning these cultural and ecological aspects leaving the ideological one as a open theoretical unsolved riddle. It is well described that at

the present day, 70% of the world trade is conducted by transnational corporations. (Human Development Report 1994). If the wealth in France to take an example increased from 9 billion FF in 1850 to 115 FF in 1912 (a rise of 1200% in 62 years during the "classical" era of capitalism, the corresponding increase of foreign exchange trading in the US needed only 14 years (from 1983 to 1997) to mark a rise of 2000% (from 60 billion \$ to 1200 billion \$).!! This was achieved because the trade in financial terms is now primarily in derivatives (options, swaps, futures) a business in which fortunes may be accumulated overnight. The analogy between the total financial turn-over to the world trade in real values is one to fifty !!!!!

In a world in which 1,2 trillion \$ circulates daily, only 2% approximately are real values (24 billion \$) representing the world real needs. Then what is the necessity of the rest 98% virtual capital that enables some traders and bankers to become richer by selling and buying "air" and much more others to become poorer? What is the need of this massive redistribution of capital resulting to the growing of the already existing gap between rich and poor?

The interpretation of this massive hysteria expanding from North America and Western Europe to Asia and to Eastern Europe even to the more prosperous part of the Islamic World, must be researched in the cultural consumerism. The preceding transformation of millions of non suspicious tele-spectators of the "World News" to potential consumers through psychological mechanisms of massive persuasion (advertisement) enabled traders in the beginning of the nineties to apply their next step of virtual capital transactions by the casino type stock markets. This was much helped by the collapse of the socialist empires and the psychological effect that this historical event had on the West and the developing world. The decrease of the role of the protector/punishing father/state "liberated" abruptly millions of small inventors who behaved as homeless children in the search of their identity. Small banks interests (under the pretext of low inflation) transformed millions of investors to gamblers in a global casino the rules of which were never explained analytically and the transparency of which was much lower than the famous traditional; and respectful to their clients casinos such as Monte Carlo!

The coming electronic technology of information propagation facilitated traders and stock market transactions greatly but the most impor-

tant fact characterizing the last decade of the last century was other: the "virtualization of the massive conscience" or at least of everyone who was able to hold a bank account. All these popular masses felt in a special moment the need to administrate their small or bigger capitals the same as gamblers who feel the same sentiment when pointing in lottery or in a special horse in the races. This collective phenomenon must be analyzed and interpreted better by the use of terms of social psychology rather than of classical economy.¹⁶

The ecological parameter of the phenomenon described above concerns mainly the effects on the global climate and the ozon layer.¹⁹ 1. But the psychological aspect is here dominant too. Security has become a main domain of human concern in the "developed world". Assurance companies developed more than the brute income per capita. Investments on this sector never were greater. Social security focused on health in the classical era and till the eighties this was a major task of the so called "welfare states". However, these noble tasks of social policy knew a significative retreat in the profit of private assurance companies that persuade citizens to enroll in a second assurance for a better medical care and future pension. Security in its broader sense is a psychological feeling connected with the fear for the unknown future and it encompasses safety. It promises minimalization of possible risks. Environment tends to play in the last decade a major role as a source of massive risks. Local disasters as floods and earthquakes are extended to global disasters such as nuclear radiation (Chernobyl) and climate disturbance (El Nino). Financially sovereign states are taking -or not taking-the most serious decisions on these global effects because these very states are the only that can afford from their budgets money to this aim. The undeveloped South is supposed to mitigate the effects of the environmental threats (provoked mainly by the North) in the North by supplying energy raw materials by serving as deposit of the nuclear trash etc. Under this scope it is the redistribution of risks and not of wealth and resources the phenomenon that characterizes and dominates the international agenda in the last decade of the noted exaltation of ecological threats and inevitable disasters. However, the conception of the average citizen of the North to these threats is false (see the National Geographic mentality) and are limited to the simple information level at the end of the news-real programs just

before or after the athletic information. The conscience that the climate change as provoked by human intervention or that the ozone layer as provoked by CO₂ emissions, has not been yet manifested as a public concern.¹⁹ 2. Individual security is more important in the short term period and activist ecologists are viewed as exotic or picturesque fellows acting "against the system" the same as anarchists in older times. The recent threat of mad-cows disease in western Europe proves that there is no mercy for the "developed" countries when genetic mutated nutriment is given to animals. Post modern risks are not only destined to the underdeveloped world due to microbes and low hygienic precaution. Mortal illnesses can also be manifested in countries where the public opinion was not mobilized as needed when the disaster was still a threat because of collective hypnosis or exaggerated trust to technological supremacies. Once more technology is proved not to be the panacea or golden pill for every disease or crisis.

ON QUALITIES, LIMITS AND RHYTHMS AND THE ILLUSION OF FREEDOM

"Small is beautiful" was the eloquent title of the Sumacher's book in the early seventies, but this slogan cannot have adepts in massive consumerism states such as the western ones. Of course a cycle of disciples of Sumacher's teachings was founded in London under the name Resurgence, editing a journal under this name, but the founder was an Indian and the "disciples" are extraordinary western ideologists having their centrifuge aspects. The perception of frugality as a means of well-being and the analogue quality of life that it presupposes, is very hard to be followed by the average citizen in a World of mediatised massive slogans and vain fashions. Why is never enough, is a naive question for economists who will explain to the layman that more productivity will create more income and also new posts of work for the unemployed. But sincere economists know that in the long term this will be reversed as a boomerang and the positive effects will turn to negative. And yet they don't reveal the fraud. Post modern economists mostly dealing with the new casino economy of virtual transactions out of any possible demand and offer logic (e.g. applied on a certain market as in the classical era of economy) forget even the "father of capitalism" John Keynes who was wondering if an ex-

ceedingly successful economy would not at some point reach a state of saturation. He argued that the imperative of productivity might lose significance under conditions of affluence, as abundance makes it less and less important to allocate means optimally. Today's western societies use technological innovations such as electronics to increase the symbolic power of goods and services but they forget that they are far from real utility. Average consumers are treated as small children while they listen what goods "say" but never know what they really do. The illusive world of impressions alienates the consumers playing games with the forms in a tricky and non-sense way. At the end no one is trying to find any meaning or sense in what "goods" say. Consumers are borrowing new pseudo-identities from the goods they acquire (see what happens with the mobile telephones explosion) and they are willing to pay all their economies (even to borrow to that aim) to change their gadgets with the last fashionable model. In other words these fashionable goods oblige their consumers -through their never proved symbolic power- to sign their allegiance to a particular life-style. Since many products cannot be perfected and developed any further (cars that cannot be safer or faster, television sets that cannot be clearer) consumers are buying more accessories as complements of these products. When commodities become cultural symbols there is no end to economic expansion and to the pseudo-needs creation.

However, from the most remote times, non material or psychological well-being or satisfaction was not based on products themselves but rather on the time acquired to develop a personal creation or a participation to a collective action. Attention to create new things or techniques presupposes time and this time is missing in late post-modernity. An over-abundance of options can diminish full satisfaction. Over information can exterminate the necessary judgment and evaluation and the desired transformation of information to useful knowledge. Information for information seems to be the new game played in internet having no other meaning than the increase of sales. Consumers who lost their rhythms of thinking and selecting goods after their criteria, priorities and needs, are blind pions in a chess where invisible manipulators decide before them "for them". The lost measure produces a loss of the art of living. Frugality could be the only key to the desired quality of life. In an age of exploding options

(mostly requiring no criteria because unnecessary) the ability to refuse offers and to formulate one's own non material values becomes the only ingredient in creating a richer life. Freedom cannot be real in a pressure of time or when invisible creators manipulate or administrate our time under the pretext that they choose for us because of their specializations. One needs no to be specialist to be free, in the contrary slaves from ancient times were encouraged to be specialists for the benefit of their masters (better distribution of labor). Socrates as presented by Plato was anxious about the specialization of laborers as a result of distribution of work. The consequences of such a deed could be a dehumanization and by that Socrates meant a degradation of a "correct quality of life". After 2400 years these philosophical thoughts are modern as never. The consumer is now in the service of the producer instead of the opposite. Humans are defined by the objects they use and become real objects themselves while these products become the subjects of our spectacular life. Freedom has no sense as a supreme individual value if its subject do not undertake the responsibilities of his/her actions. Liberation of youth does not mean the right to do whatever but rather the concern of undertaking the responsibility to be free.

THE NEGATIVE ASPECTS OF NOSTALGIA AND THE ETERNAL RISK OF ALIENATION

Nostalgia is the desire of something that we don't know. By this aphorism St. Exupery, the author of the "little Prince" defined the "pain for return" after its strict sense first presented in Odyssey. For other authors what can be defined as nostalgic means to have an attitude to the world as if this world is alien.²³ To nostalgize the past is not a dynamic aim for the future. Nostalgia is usually commercialized under the fashionable form of "retro". Some authors have argued that fascist states were based in a retro style propaganda to strengthen their power.⁵ For these authors the so called "bygone object" which is the catalyst of nostalgia, has one function only -that of a signifier- and is purely mythological in its reference to the past. Even having no more any practical importance, it exists solely in order to signify. What this bygone object encapsulates is not real time, but the signs of cultural indices of time.

Today's nationalist and ethnic trends focus

on a supposed "glorious past" as an alibi for the nation's adventurous historical evolution and possible geo-politic importance in the future. To succeed to this aim, the theory of racial purity and homogeneity of a dominant population group must be rediscovered and exaggerated. The glorious deeds of the past have to be rediscovered otherwise national history will be a battlefield of conflicts among various ethnical groups (as is happens in reality). In the contrary, the "national history" has been rewritten based on heroism and epical achievements of particular persons elected as "leaders of the people" and "fighters of freedom". The nostalgia of "national roots" of the dominant ethnic group and the oblivion of all minorities or mixed populations has no scientific but purely ideological and political reasons. Culture has to play its role to this aim, since the dominant culture of the dominant ethnic group is selected as the only vehicle of important cultural messages defining the make up of the "national identity". To speak today about national purity in a modern state is pure scientific nonsense.

However, the schoolbooks of history are written under differentiated criteria serving particular ideological and political aims. Concepts such as: "national identity" are in now-days more ambiguous than ever. This concept that has an obscure future, had to be disappeared long ago in the western states where the individualism has for many generations overshadowed collective movements. For the same reasons that socialist trends could not be successfully applied in post industrial states, nationalist trends had not to be respected by governments and citizens. However, these trends survive as "ideologies" usually supported by governments and the reason is obvious: Financial interests that can be better served in a context of a national state. But the praxis has demonstrated that the 70% of the world trade is served by multinational corporations that pay no national taxes but create labor posts in their host countries. This ambiguous policy of the national (democratic) governments (conservative or socialist) to encourage from the one hand the role of the multinational capitals and to speak from the other hand on the "national ideals, roots and future perspectives" is highly hypocritical and falsifier of the social history of humanity. May be the world history of the second half of the last century has to be rewritten from the beginning focusing not only on the end of the official colonialism and the birth of the financial neocolonialism, but

also on the double policy practiced by the "dominant national states of the West."

In the same period and especially during the last decade following the collapse of the socialism, we witness the "birth" of new national identities in countries that were politically and culturally dominated at least for three generations. This phenomenon is natural but the drama of these relatively small states is that they "import" now the western culture as the culture of the succeeded and the powerful and by these means they lose more elements of their tradition than they were losing during the socialist era. The confusion of the average citizen to define himself relatively to a national identity was always a cultural problem, but it takes recently the dimensions of a generalised social problem since the facility of communications and transports brings humans of different races and cultures closer and from the other hand the gap between the privileged and the non privileged from the new distribution of global wealth is increasing. National identity alienation today takes the meaning not of the impossibility of self definition in relation of a dominant ethnical group in the country of residence, but mainly of the impossibility of definition of the role that this individual may play in the World's adventurous future. If to define somebody as a "permanent member" of a certain ethnical or national stock, is illusive because this individual may influence more dramatically the rest of the world than his nation with his "global actions" (or.. virtual transactions), the quest of attributing a national identity to everybody seems to be a childish game useful only for national holidays and parades dedicated to the remembrance of excellent deeds of glorious ancestors during the past centuries. If the role of history is to keep these "particular national traditions" and to reproduce them in the school books for educational use, then history is not a science but a poor servant of the contradictory governmental interests. The simulation effect is manifested here once more in all its glory since the "constructed" collective sentiment projected to the citizens is nationalist/traditionalist in the same time that hypermodernity encouraged by sophisticated technology is searching to assure new clients as potential consumers in all over the world. If commercial advertising has no more frontiers in its effort to find new clients, then why these clients have to respect national traditions in the global village? This schizophrenia of means and of goals is the principal responsible for the generalized social

alienation of masses in our post-modern societies.

The nostalgic type (and hypocritical) trends of discovery of the "last paradise" or of the "last primitive tribe" living in the undiscovered forest or cave is a successful trick of touristical promotion that can bring new tourists in the most remote corners of the planet. Escaping from their boredom these high customers will photograph a reality (that in many cases is pre-constructed) and will participate in the boy scout game of discovery of the "hidden treasure" taking themselves as "Indiana Jones" and risking their well-being up to the limits of their security (signed before their leaving) for the sake of the so called "adventure in the search of originality" (that is programmed and organized by the touristical agencies to the smaller detail). Here the game of simulation of reality takes the dimensions of a real show, where the actors and the spectators are the same persons (they look their videos taking themselves as actors). Post capitalism is proved to gain money not only selling illusions and dreams but also simulated experiences in packages. Ecologists will classify this prosperous business as "mild industry" since it has not chimneys polluting the natural environment. No one will refer to the "psychological pollution" or identity alienation that these massive visits in predefined destinations can create to the host populations who have to adapt all their traditions and life-styles to the touristical needs. Underdeveloped societies playing the roles of "primitives" or "head hunters" or of maniac shamans dancing on the burning coals in other words representing a non historical (but orally transmitted) past of their existence, will lose the contact with speeding reality the same as theatrical actors who trying to be perfect Hamlets in the every day stage representation, after some months of experience confuse the remaining of their real life with their theatrical characters. Over repeated representation is proved not to be a very good achievement for the psychological health. Personality has its own limits for identity games. To find a measure for that presupposes a highly ethical criterium but the esthetisation of our everydayness is proved to act in competition with ethical criteria development. Over exaggeration of the formal aesthetics exterminates meaningful ethics. A persistence to the forms as conceived by sensory perception leaves no room for the intellectual functions of the human mind. To keep the intellect of masses into hibernation might be proved the

most successful commercial achievement of the 21st century.

POSTMODERN RISKS AND PHOBIAS

Post modern citizens live in a global village of increased risks⁷ and tend to forget them as fooled by the promises of eternal security to all risks, by contracts of assurance companies intervening to all social activities. The major human fear that is the fear of death is assured and calmed by the promises of good health care after the collapse of the well-fare states provided that the clients pay regularly their insurance premiums. What premiums will assure us from global risks such as illnesses occurring from genetically modified foods and from nuclear radiation? Securing the common citizen for his possible accidents (due mainly to his or others human faults) does not secure anybody against global disaster that can be proved to be produced by "organized interests human actions". If the commercial interests of some "invisible minorities" are passing from the highway of destruction of natural resources with all fatal results on the human populations, the control of their actions had to be the first (if not the only) task of national governors and politicians in an international cooperation. The same as Interpol searches for criminals passing national frontiers and seeking asyla for their crimes, the same had to be organized in regard of the harmful commercial operations. However, actuality proves that governments of developed states neglect not accidentally this task and the governments of poorer countries collaborate with merchants who are most of the time illegal gaining profit from all these illegal activities. Drugs commerce that has taken endemic dimensions, tobacco and alcohol promotion as innocent substances for consumers and genetically mutated foods as propagated by huge international companies, are all phenomena of recent times and are taking bigger dimensions every year. The so called "public opinion" seems to watch in passive ways actual trends and is awoken every time that ambitious journalists are "discovering" new thruths or scandals related to these tragedies, but from the moment that the crucial cases are getting to the Justice road, they are forgotten (because never well understood and clarified).

Dutch public opinion -to take a recent example- was never persuaded about (and never rebelled against) the legalization of soft drugs policy of the national government, a decision

taken in the eighties in the margin of the Common Europe legislations, to face the crucial problem of the illegal transport of drugs in Holland. If the legalization of soft drugs transformed the half of the national population into "soft-addicts" and how this new reality is better than the old one, remains a "qualitative" question waiting for its final answer. For the time being hundreds of Dutch sociologists are collecting quantitative data related to users, ill people and deaths because of drugs, but what is lacking is the total evaluation of this social phenomenon and its interpretation with transparent rational criteria aiming to the public well fare. Reports commanded by the Council of Europe have been neglected¹⁰ and the average Dutch citizen is more confused as never on this post modern social drama.

Bravery was a presupposition of freedom for Ancient Greeks (and one of the five important virtues after Plato).¹³ Only men able to carry the responsibilities of freedom (defending the polis-states against the enemies) had the right to be citizens or free individuals. To be dependent or subordinate to other individuals reminded the miserable condition of slaves. Women were not considered able to support their personal freedom, under the criteria that they were not able to defend themselves in a possible war. Non combatants were judged as no free. Today, this conception can be judged as racist and patriarchal, but the evaluation of any social fact or phenomenon is better to be done under the scope of all socio-cultural and financial parameters of the societies under consideration.

The utopia of affluence has undercut the utopia of liberation. Most of our contemporary electronic technology aims to the pursuit of a progress described by terms of rapidity. The ability to save time has always been the landmark of productivity. But the drama is that all time saved because of technological innovations is constantly transformed into increasing activities such as greater travels to most distant places. The more one earns time, the more one is disposing or sacrificing his time in new activities that absorb all the saved time plus some more, so that the vicious cycle never stops. Men sacrificed their freedom in the altar of affluence of commodities. The notion of "free-time" as dedicated to relaxation and amusement is a highly contested term under today's conditions.

If in older times brave men had priority on their right to be free, today almost every prior-

ity has been commercialized and can be acquired by money. Recently some "smart businessmen" secure to their clients the "right of possession of natural or human goods". That means that some clients pay now for their future right to use in particularity oxygen and clean air for respiration when this physical good will be rare in the near future. Others buy their right to be in priority in the future list of customers in the wait of human organs for possible transplants in their deficient organisms (most of them resulting from embryonic tissues created in the laboratory).

Some even speak for now for the possibility of cloning themselves.

The role of the foreigner has been crucial into defining the cohesion of a indigenous ethnic group. Outcomers were always considered as alien (possible porters of misery and mischance to the local community, hence the scapegoat syndrome). However, the history of culture proves the important role of the outcomers to the development of national literature, arts, science etc. These outcomers played very often the role of the expiatory victims but nevertheless their overall role in the formation of human cultural capital has been too important to be neglected even by native historians.

Some of these issues can be analyzed further. First, the internationalist, cosmopolitan, or perhaps even European identity can only be defined by way of opposition. They are localists, parochial, blinkered or xenophobic, borne or borniert: we are cosmopolitan etc., at the cutting edge of the internationalisation or Europeasation of our disciplines and of their institutional embodiment in our universities. But this universality can produce an intolerance of those who have not universalised themselves sufficiently, and this is an important root of one form at least of reflexive stereotyping. We irritatedly complain that the British or the Germans have dragged their feet or dug their heels in on some issue or other; they have been - well, German, or British, or French. In some cases, as when, for example, the inscrutability of southern European accounting practices intersects with a southern European sensitivity about honour, the result can be explosive (This situation can of course occur in reverse; sometimes it is the northerners who play fast and loose with common funds - thus inviting an additional charge of puritan hypocrisy.)

In such contexts, the blame is of course placed on the others. We would never have thought of

using such reductionist categories, even half-seriously, if they had not previously othered themselves, in such an inappropriate and irritating manner. The model is sufficiently familiar not to need elaboration here; see, in particular, Zygmunt Bauman's resurrection of the Polish-Jewish literary historian Artur Sandauer's term 'allosemitism' - the idea of the Jew as other - as indicating the common ground of both antisemitic and philosemitic thought (Bauman, 'Allosemitism: Premodern, Modern, Postmodern', in Brian Cheyette and Laura Marcus (Eds), *Modernity, Culture and 'the Jew' (forthcoming)*). It is interesting to note that the research literature on intercultural communication has rightly focussed on attitudes to one's own culture as well as to the alien one(s): xenophilia is as much a theoretical option, if less often encountered in practice, than xenophobia.

ON KNOWLEDGE AND COMMUNICATION

Allophobia is the fear for the unknown other who is not an outcomer but just an other.

This allophobia is strengthened by the technological expansion of information not because individuals pass more and more time in social isolation in front of electronic screens, this explanation is primary and has been pronounced from the first period of the televisual phenomenon in modern societies. The new phobia for the other is much more complicated and results from a combination of more factors. First, through the increasing aesthetization of modern life as analyzed above, the quality criterium is decreasing because it needs a necessary credit of time. Spacial dimensions can be quantified but temporal dimension needs to be qualified in the depth of its (temporal) limits. In other words only who can be patient in the long-term can win and conquer a victory where the pressed one loses. Post-modern life as an application of all electronic innovations is characterized by the acceleration of biorhythms and the theoretical estimation of the "fast" the same as of the "big".^{17,24} If the big is an "ugly" aesthetic category due to its spacial dimensions, the fast has temporal references since to become faster it decreases the time needed to arrive to its aim. But the decrease of time needed to understand and to comprehend is related to the decrease of the quality. Very rarely fast deeds, decisions or general actions are characterized by quality. In

the contrary time pressure is a new slavery having as enemy the time and the clock merciless indices. But contemporary culture tends also to falsify the age reality by simulating artificial young age especially for middle aged women and men. To be presented in the social arena as eternally young and beautiful seems to be the eternal faustian illusion that gets encouragement by the technological artifacts. The important is no how one feels (healthy or not healthy) but how one is supposed to give a positive impressions (even if constructed) about him/her self in the public sphere. This phenomenon exaggerated by the spectacular media became a life-style in the developed countries and is not accidental since superficial aesthetic forms are considered as more important than essential meaningful knowledge.

Life becomes a theater of representations and freedom becomes the spectrum of itself since all need to feel free but nobody really is. Knowledge becomes a fragmentary game and *epopteia* (the knowledge of the whole) is never achieved. Of course information is presented as fragmentary knowledge analyzing all details but no one is attempting the necessary major synthesis. The gap between the sum of information and the demanded final knowledge as a natural and rational result, is increasing. Information for the information degrades to a fruitless game that confuses its receivers because its use cannot be practiced.

When one has many choices for non important selections, then one can imagine that this is a freedom's expression. However, freedom is the definition of responsibilities undertaken for exceptional deeds. The only responsibility that a consumer has is to pay the seller(s). But this is a lower achievement that even a child can commit if provisioned by the necessary means (money). The fundamental need of the human that is the knowledge of the self is never fulfilled. Alienated humans feel stranger and alien to themselves. These individuals cannot but feel even more strangers for the others.. This is the correct but also difficult acceptance. The most easy one is to inverse and theorize the others as strangers and this process is practically the most popular.¹⁴

Under these terms, all information propagated by the media seem to be pretexts for a better awareness but in reality they are providers of confusion and alienation. Communication among computers users could be a good solution for free and non expensive exchange

of ideas but in practice this aim is almost never realized. Plato was classifying all knowledge and science deprived of virtue as a trickery. Virtual realities and acquaintances take the illusory character of real but they are not because one can trick and falsify his/her identity and disappear in the non material space of the Net.¹⁵ For computer addicts, this game with identities becomes almost a syndrome and no one can be sincere and constant to a supreme idea or Cause, all take the dimension of a free game of no purpose just for fun that helps to kill time but not loneliness. Fun takes the form of diversity of self but not of amusement (soul's entertainment). A divided self who seeks to collect his/her fragments cannot estimate the other because (s)he knows about him even less than about him/herself. Hence, the terror for the real unknown becomes even greater through the falsifier and illusive familiarity with its virtual expression. Reality is sharper and more demanding than virtuality and it supports no games of identity and presentation of another self. Risks of the every day post-modernity cannot be extended to the major risk of a real acquaintance with the other.¹⁶ The more one is submerged in the virtual game, the more the reality of the other becomes an impossible and non interesting goal. If interest in Greek once meant the different, in Latin vocabulary interest meant the situation to place oneself in the middle and this conception is closer to the actual sense of getting profit in the middle of a virtual monetary transaction than to buy and sell a material product in a physical contact with the unknown and risky stranger (who may be the potential customer in a traditional oriental bazaar).

In the crucial question: for what reason all this communication is encouraged? the response cannot be as naive and simplification as: just for fun. Imagination is not helped to the direction of new artistic creations, human relations are not getting richer and the fear for the unknown other is greater than ever before. Quality of communication is not the best and the anxiousness to be somewhere before the other becomes an absurd irrationality. If to send a message consists a priority as a practical process, who can interpret the meaning of this message? Neither its sender nor its receptor. If billions of exchanged messages are meaningless then the only meaningful reality remains (as Mac Luhan had predicted half a century ago for the emerging mass media) this very circulation of (empty) messages. Millions of individu-

als (mostly young and hopeful) who inaugurate their personal web-sites not for commercial interests but just to project themselves in the electronic medium of the Net in the quest of their identity fixation through the comments (instead of the eyes) of the others, are quickly disappointed because nobody really cares about them. To put your personal photos and to describe your hobbies on the Net, does not interests really anybody. (except some friends who play the role of visitors by simple curiosity). Furthermore, it may increase racial and class discriminations because national stereotypes are well accepted in the Net and people are not so open in new ideas while discussing (see what happens in the chat-rooms) preferring old clichés. The use of English as the only possible "lingua franca" for international communication and possibility of understanding is not as innocent as it seems to be, because it creates privileged clubs of good speakers and their opposites who cannot compete in this technical capability. Speakers of small native languages all writing in Latin alphabet, have no chances than to be read by their natives and this is not facilitating cosmopolitan mentality in the realm of electronic facilities. It is needed an important cultural and scientific background for someone to achieve a satisfactory communication if he/she belongs to the non native English speaking "netizens." Also financially and technically speaking the possibilities of access into the Net are not the same in all countries of this planet and this is another problem of chances for the "big communication". If freedom for expression is a matter of possibility of paying for an electronic luxury, then communication in the Net is not as free as it seems to be.

If racism is not considered by postmodern democracies as "politically correct" no one can prevent net-citizens of the present and the future, to be more and more xenophobic and unsocial persons. Aesthetization of life brings rather a fetichization of materiality and triumph of superficial forms in depense of inner meanings. The adventures of knowledge that need to be encouraged by official education, seem to be neglected and technical education is gaining space against academic and humanitarian studies. Human kind seems to be tired into abstract quest for the being and pretends to be busy for technical occupations as if the future God-savior will appear from a machine (as the Deus ex machina of the Ancient Greeks).

The role of human sciences and Arts is very

difficult in societies respecting mainly technical proficiency. Anthropology that has been a par excellence and by definition human science in the quest of lost forms and meanings of originality, seems to lose completely its target in a electronic world of pretexts serving for hidden aims and interests. Ethical values take the appearance of non demanded anachronisms merited to be taught only in the lesson of history of past ideas. And yet, the uncontestable social need beyond any doubt is not the triumph of mechanic sophistication on the human mind, but the approach of people interested to new forms and lifestyles of togetherness that had no preceding in the past years.

THE ETHICS OF COSMOPOLITANISM AND OF OTHER CLASSICAL VALUES (AS A PROPOSAL)

Ethics derive their origins from the Greek word *ethos* meaning habits and the actors representing these habits or creating habits for spectators were called *ethopoioi* in the theater. The sense of the word evolved to what we understand today as morals.

For ethical philosophers such as Plato, ethics had to be typical non practical in his theory of ideas. The difference is that the first accept an absolute sense of goodness while in practical ethics the criterium of goodness is analogous to the socio-cultural context and the values considered as positive. Some isolated good acts are evaluated as good and some as overall good behaviors but this evaluation is dependant to the culture of every different social system. For Plato an objective quality must characterize the good the same as the beautiful and this reminds the classical models that never loose their values even after twenty five centuries of social changes.¹³ The diachronic value of some concepts does not deny also the difference between these concepts. To take as an example the contradiction between ethics and aesthetics is as to evaluate after many centuries the impossibility of the second to save the world. In the classical five values system of Plato not one of the two virtues described as above is considered as sufficient or integrated if not accompanied by the three others, that are bravery, intellectual justice (analogical or equilibrated knowledge) and *sophrosyne* or the golden rule of measure that fits analogies and knows when to stop. Aesthetical or formal beauty is connected with the healthy and original, not artificial beauty

and is the direct complement of the ethics that is the meaningful will for goodness.

If modes and fashions are subordinated to temporal changes, eternal and diachronic values are the demanded. The criterium must be their validity in actual times. If these old values are better than what we have invented in the meanwhile, if they help us to resolve our actual problems, then these creative values must be kept for our present and future use. What world needs to proceed in the third millennium is a new knowledge of reality, an abandon of all simulative, falsifying, artificial virtualities, in order to proceed in a new quality of relations among different (and for this reason interesting) humans. The knowledge and comprehension of the other person is a priority and nationalist or ethnic trends do not help to this aim. These "different others" need more their problems to be solved than the absurd rhetoric about equality of nations and attribution of human rights. Technology of the most developed countries of this planet could make the best weapon to this aim instead of serving strict commercial interests and profit makers or speculators in the world's virtual markets. Technology and especially its post modern branch electronics, has nothing to do with social classes and relations. It is no more the outcomes of original social processes but rather the outcome of some speculators' decisions. Electronics and its offspring that are informatics and internet related "new economy", are very far from the dream of Tavistock Institute of Human Relations when describing as socio-technical systems as the ideal marriage between social needs of employees and the technical requirements of production that had to be met simultaneously. Today's production technology is gaining daily supreme technical efficiency in absolute independence of workers' (and consumers' too) social needs. It is as a new class of parasitic almost virtual mediators and profit-makers is born having in view how to form pseudo needs and to take advantage from them selling fashionable and useless gadgets having as their best weapons symbolic and not real values of these gadgets.

Contemporary nation-states have failed into following these processes and the trend to the globalization is transcribed as an absolute scorn for the individuality or the difference of the other (whoever that other might be) in comparison with the maximalization of rapid profits. Education seems not able to teach to the youth the classical ethical values leading to friendship,

solidarity, justice, freedom through bravery and risk undertaking, honesty, originality and above all the golden rule or *METRON* (measure of harmonic equilibrium). In the contrary superficial ideals about temporal and phenomenal well-being and simulated youth and beauty are the only concerns of education in the company of spectacular advertisement. Professional orientation of youth as served by education system is sending the most brilliant youth to technocratic and economo-technic professions having as goals rapid financial success and social accession. Nothing is important if not sold and the *agora* or place of meeting of human desires and passions is transformed to an impersonal electronic market. Sentiments are not evaluated any more and rational intellect is cultivated only aiming to new specializations and innovations for commercial use. Culture has become also a arena of profit making as related to the free time activities of millions of consumers who cannot decide by themselves what "cultural products" to consume and are waiting the appropriate advertisement...The socratic motto "know thyself" seems so hard to be realized since no one can even suspect his/her real desires. How to know the other if one cannot approach in a sufficient way him/herself?

What can terms such as cosmopolitanism mean in the third millennium? We witnessed a trend to "liberate" the markets under the pretext of free commerce with no limits to every possible destination and this is called globalization. What can resist to this commercialization that uses creation of pseudo-needs to consumers for its benefit? Can cosmopolitanism as ancient collective experience of communal life of populations having different origins but common future dreams, give an alternative satisfactory answer to all inconveniences that thrill human conscience in the third millennium?

We propose cosmopolitanism as a unique means of knowledge of the Otherness through travels and personal contacts.¹⁴ Ethical and not aesthetical prerequisites are important to this aim. Moral values creating life-styles or behavioral and attitudinal codes through tradition are important to be studied with respect to the "difference" they englobe in se. And yet the very term of cosmopolitanism is not found in dictionaries of social sciences or anthropology but of political science. That proves that the term has undergone a false interpretation in the evolution of western theoretical thought and it was taken to explain standard historical periods of

the past. But now, it is coming again under question not because of some fashion but rather because of the impassable of the nation-state administration in post modern reality. The collapse of real socialism and the conflicts resulted by multiple competitive nationalisms lead optimistic minds to this alternative. Our objection with political scientists calling cosmopolitanism as "politics of difference"¹⁸ is mainly that this term must not be used directly for political issues but rather for cultural ones that compose its essence and its "raison d'être".

Cosmopolitanism comes again to the fore after twenty centuries (since the hellenistic years) and is not utopic since its locus (*topos*) is the whole World (*Cosmos*) under the presupposition that an individual must know how to distribute first the wealth in his/her home (economy) and also how to bring all the benefits of the *iso-nomy* (equal distribution) and human equality in his/her conscience (*eco-politan*). After achieving these two important deeds, a human can be a real "citizen of the world" (cosmopolitan) in a way that many cosmopolitans could create the so desired *COSMONOMY* (instead of economy), in other words the new world's wealth distribution under new criteria of equality of races, respect to the whatever different and interest for the otherness. By these means allophobia will be exterminated and a better concern for natural goods will be established on this planet. Generalized optimism will replace personal ambitions. Small communities will use technology innovations for a better understanding and fruitful profitless collaboration. Democracy can be renamed *Cosmocracy*. The World can be saved only by the moral beauty of its habitants.

The fear of the "other" (*allophobia*) will thus turn to the expression of a new interest for the "different" aiming rather to its comprehension and communication than to exploitation. Interest in Greek is still named *EN-DIAFERON* (the One that differs). What else could be more "interesting" than that?

Motivation for this alternative learning can be given to the youth only if tutors are convinced that the dominant western model of development neglecting human values and aiming only to the quantitative wealth, is false and dangerous. Only when the Power of dominance of the stronger will cease to develop and give its place to the Will of giving, conflicts will end to peace and mechanic stimulated life will end to wisdom and global planetary knowledge. Now this teaching can be established and institutionalized in the western educational systems

? Literate paradigms are not enough if tutors are not in the measure of interpreting the motivation and the cultural meanings of the hero. How can a sensitive European tutor approach conceive and teach a literary text as Tagore's novel "The Home and the World"? How the nationalist movement *Bande Mataram* can be viewed after a century in the developed West? How the basic hero's character can be interpreted to ignorant students in a way that all his emotional and moral supremacy could create a positive model? How post-modern students can learn to think that they are above all citizens of this World and then, British, French, German, Greek and how can they learn a great deal more than is frequently the case about the rest of the world they live and of which they are the common inheritors with all other students living in it? This style and method of teaching requires a moral stand from both parts: tutors and students. Furthermore it requires abilities of social scientists from the part of the teacher. It is a truth that through this model of education, by the approach of the others, we learn more about ourselves. Socrates would sign this method with joy. In the long term this education cannot but succeed as in the Tagore's novel the hero is justified even after his death through the narration of the whole story by his widowed Bimala. The same as the cosmopolitan university founded by Tagore himself in Santiniketan named *Vishvabharati* (all the world) was threatened from militant forces of fanatic Hindu-fundamentalist nationalists but never stopped its action, cosmopolitan education will triumph in the end because it is the only hope for a tired humanity that lost half a century in front of electronic screens following virtual transactions, vain advertisements and pointless discussions in dull chat rooms among humans WHO KNEW FROM THE BEGINNING THAT THEY WOULD NEVER MEET IN REALITY..

CONCLUSIONS

1. Aesthetization of our lives brought illusions and total alienation of aims and desires. Blind cult of forms in expense of every possible meaning leads to indifferent immorality (passivity or apathy), neglect and scorn to the other and in many cases *allophobia*. Quantification of life because of a non demanded extreme acceleration of daily rhythms leads to an anxiousness against time (and finally death) and to the

extermination of the sense of quality in our lives. Small details and fragmentary qualities of material objects cannot re-establish a missing overall qualitative moral supremacy.

2. Technology alone cannot create alternatives for existential demands in the human beings. It can however falsify reality and transform literally humans into robots by the use of simulating symbols and by an apathic and indifferent educational system that seems to cooperate as its obedient servant. Human communication is vain if only virtual and since virtuality is a major technological achievement of the last decade in the communications domain, this will be also its condemnation. Information has no sense if it cannot be transformed to knowledge even in the long term.

3. Abolition of the ethical part of human communication and conscience is crucial because knowledge when disconnected from virtue turns to forgery and to intrigue. Risks are liberating their entrepreneurs only if they undertake also the "weights" of their responsibilities but in this case the result will be real liberation. Security against any risk as proposed by assurance companies in the West is illusory from the moment that the whole globe has entered in a new period of global risks and contested security. In the contrary, nostalgia of the past is negative because not creative. Return to past social and historical conditions is practically impossible, hence nostalgia is an utopia of temporal dimension. However, good remembrances from the past that can serve as bases for further progress are not to blame. Good literature has been based on this sort of memories of authors. Moral beauty is better than physical beauty because more resistant to time. Meanings have been always closer to reality but being more difficult to be conceived were replaced by the easy going forms.

4. Classical values that resist to the time's destruction can be used in any period and any new condition because they will always "have something to say" to new human problems as created by social and historical changes. Human sciences have to learn much from classical values while trying to apply them to our actuality. Maybe the overall methodology of humanities has to modify its orientation and to turn towards the research of the actual problems and needs of the "non privileged" different cultures not in order to "save" them as a threatened species but in order to understand them better and to offer us new ways of their approach. If the amelioration of human communication is in

intensive demand for the next millennium, may be the technological approach in use today is no the better way of approach for it enlarges the gap among its users and the "different but interesting and incomprehensible others". If the developed West will never recover from its lethargic apathy and illusionary quest for vain forms, it will never succeed to conceive the essential meanings of the "others."

KEYWORDS Anesthetization, Postmodern Capitalism, Nostalgia, Risk, Alienation, Otherness, Cosmopolitanism, Ethics.

ABSTRACT Technology has proved itself not to be the panacea for all human needs and passions. Recent information technology extends the horizons of the real to the imaginal. However, this extension is realised by the means of non creation of material products but of information. Simulation of these information for the benefits of interested groups or companies as well as fragmentation of any possible rational meaning create a chaos in the heads of people informed. We live in an acceleration of global risks for the benefit of invisible minoritarian groups of interests. The public role of the state cannot compete private interests and alienation of targets, goals and aims is the final possibility for crowds, professional groups and educated individuals entered in the game of post-modernization, consumption of every possible innovation and fashionable life-style. Financial inequality resulting to unequal chances starting from the very early education and going up to the professional orientation of youth, creates differences in the "globalisation effect" for all. A cosmopolitan model such as was developed in various historical cases in older times and various cultural settings, is proposed as the only alternative of escape from the massive misery of typified and stereotyped social behaviours and related attitudes. This model presupposes the knowledge and conscience of the so called *c & R* (measure) and its resulting ethics. Also to the promotion of "another" non specialised but humanitarian education aiming not to the maximalisation of "useful" knowledge but rather to the alternative teaching and learning of "thinking how and why to think."

NOTES

1. In Hesiod's "Works and Days" the importance of *Ecos* as the household (under its form of a primary agricultural and economic unit) is underlined. In metropolitan Greece already since the 8th century B.C. The notion of *Cosmos* (*Ecos*' opposite meaning the ordered World or the Cosmic space in modern transcription) comes some centuries later by Diogenes the Cynic (living at the time of Alexander the Great in the 4th century B.C.) as well as by the Stoics during the Hellenistic era when the expansion of Hellenism in the Asiatic and African spheres feeble the role of the Polis (City) of the classical 5th century B.C. While *Ecos* gave through the Western culture birth to the multivariety notion of Economy (the regulation of the household in its strict sense) the notion of Cosmopolitanism was already formed by the Greeks of the hellenistic era to face their cultural needs when living with no national frontiers. In diaspora. Greeks never lived in ghettos as Jewish in their analogous diaspora, in the contrary Greek communities facilitated rapid amalgamation with indigenous national groups while Greek language served as the cultural vehicle of communication of different populations, becoming thus

a mean of Christianity's propagation in spite of Roman domination in the mediterranean world. Greek was the "lingua franca" of that era and survived through Byzance. These two notions are not antithetical at conceptual level and their synthesis is proved by the creation of the term Oecoumenic Earth (the inhabited World), acquiring the meaning of the Cosmos. We see by these terms that the notions of household and ordered World are converging in the Greek political conception. The very term politics is an anachronism already in the hellenistic years because the classical tradition of the city-state was declining and the flexible Seleukides and Ptolemean states were giving to the cosmopolitan trend. Starting from economy strictu sensu, Greeks passed in politics as defined by Aristoteles and expanded to cosmopolitanism or cosmo-politics if we can imagine what that could mean in the first centuries of our era.

2. The recent rise of the terms ecology and ecosystems due its beginning from the natural sciences in which chains of plant and animal species had to be studied as cooperative or conflicting. However, ecology took a political weight and became synonymous to a social science studying the impact of the planet natural changes on the human species and also its inverse (the influences that man exercises in the broader natural environment). Alterations of gaseous composition, pollution of air, waters and soil, land degradation and desertation, nuclear radiation and climate changes are some of the most shocking threats that humanity faced in the last decade as illustrative examples of these influences that technological achievement produced in the Nature. The social impact of these influences are crucial to dramatic. The quality of life of the privileged prosperous minorities (mainly in the West) at the expense of the so called underprivileged "third world" is not granted any more since the natural resources are not inexhaustible and this "quality" under question cannot be sustained ad infinitum as naive colonizers thought in the time of Colonialism. Technology and especially its modern electronic form, was the response of the privileged, or "developed" part of the World to this threat. Future will prove that this solution proposed as panacea is the same naive as the older colonizers' conception that natural resources are inexhaustible.

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