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ZERO

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To John Wheeler, genial American Physician who was responsible for the creation of the expression *black holes*, it is from bit – the phenomenon occurs while information and the frontier of a frontier is nothing more than zero!

To use John Wheeler's own words, the *boundary of a boundary is zero*.

That is to say, everything is, in last instance, a sensorial question. Also things that at a first sight are non-sensorial ones – mathematic and abstract – are sensorial *tunings* in terms of deduction, induction or inference.

So, the cosmic order – Heraclito's *logos* – is nothing more than the mirror of our own senses.

An idea to what the brilliant philosopher Giambattista Vico was alert, centuries ago.

And, possibly as a solution for this cognitive enigma, it is interesting to remember that the Sanskrit word *vac* – our etymological root for *voice* – simultaneously means *voice* and *deity*, unveiling a curious and lucid revelation about the idea of God.

Changing the *sensorial palette*, everything is changed.

Mirror of mirror in the language of language – skin of the planet’s skin.

This is, certainly – for our cosmos of complexity and non-hierarchy – the very first image of cyberspace.

The image of labyrinth showing the seductive Ariadne’s web and the Minotaur in Theseus’ heuristic procedure, projects a principle of chance and precision, error and excellence, that is nothing more than navigation while strategy.

Identical sacred procedure is found in Osiris: temples with walls literally covered by information. Religion-temples, or deity-temples, for those the initiation was not exactly information *per se*, but yes sacred paths to be discovered *on* then, through their informational fields.

This would be the Egyptian gods’ secret.

A similar principle can be found in the construction of Indian temples, where each sacred building is the image of the human body as the physical representation of the cosmos.

Information-temples, destined to the ecstasy of discovery – something equivalent to the *Satori* in Zen.

Wouldn't be, in sensorial terms, exactly this strategy the essential condition of the human being living inside forests, directly exposed to Nature's design?

Path and information.

Error and excellence.

Only with the dragon's teeth seemed by Cadmo – in the translation of the eye by the ear originally made by Phoenician with the invention of the phonetic alphabet – the Greek Paideia begins.

Inside the cyberspace what works is *super information* inside a labyrinth of infinite possible paths: the end of the idea of frontier, of boundaries, of history, of army, of church and family in their traditional senses.

Fingers extending themselves without limits, eyes crossing apparent solid walls, tastes of flavours transported by supersonic velocities.

Eyes, ears, skins, smells and tastes launched inside a different biological scale. In the information of information, the contemporary body-temple is the *skin* of the new human being.

The cyberspace projected in all directions by the new sensorial prosthesis generates a new human *body* in continuous mutation.

By this way, classical conceptions of corporeal boundaries, as well as the classic meaning of free will, lost sense.

Everything became a question of symbiotic scale.

But, also because *phenomenon* is nothing more than *information* – it from bit – in the mirror of the mirror of what we call culture, cyberspace starts to be the concrete fact and the daily reference for a considerable part of human population.

It is not necessary to remind that in the next four years around 20% of the planetary inhabitants will be connected by Internet!

The spectrum of this logic of labyrinth projects itself in everything, from the industrial design to architecture, from graphical arts, education or economy to telecommunication systems.

The unconscious, considered individual or collective, as a *metamathematical* complex, became the *mask* – the *per sonare* – of a logic where an almost *medieval* human type emerges: the *functional* or *secondary illiterate*.

For the *functional illiterate* culture has no value – *culture* considered here in its Indo European etymological meaning that was *to surround a prey* – but only *information*, and, in the technological fashion, the *hyper-information*.

So, the planetary cosmos, post-alphabet and massive, unveils itself as a *game of zero sum*, atomised and free of intention – without history, principles or ethics.

The *Other*, established by the magnificent figure of René Berger's *teleanthropos*, shows himself *archaic* – in the Greek sense of *arkhós* - *non-linear, self-assembled, self-organized and chaotic*.

For him, the important thing is the ethics on all human condition, in its global sense, filtered by a special logic of coordination and synthesis.

For the functional illiterate – submerge in information without order – what emerges is another ethics, exuberantly disintegrated by the combination and absence of synthesis of innumerable *ethos*.

For them – *teleanthropos* and *functional illiterate* – Law, as well as the figure of the Nation State, becoming volatile, simply disappear – both established by the Roman Logic of the property and land.

Departments and closed classifications also disappear. Everything became, like this text, a self-reference to different *windows* or *links*.

How to avoid having in mind the *Mahabharata* in the terrible moment when Arjuna is placed in the desert, in the middle of his family, divided in two offensive parts, ready to destroy themselves? A few moments before that, Ghandari, the blind king, with his covered eyes, affirmed that when one prefers his own sons to the other's, the war is close.

In the entire planet there are something like eighty nine thousand movie theatres. Almost three hundred million people see movie pictures every month.

There are, approximately, seven hundred and ninety million television sets spread out by homes all over the world. This means that at least 35% of the planet is connected to television!

Nowadays, however, around 50% of the world population has no access to any kind of commercial energy. They are like three billion people living in primitive conditions, as if they were not arrived to the Middle Age yet!

Planetary population is increased at an order of a country like Portugal or Hungary every week, a Mexico every year and a China every ten years!

In Zaire – country with about forty million inhabitants – there is a television set for each thousand people! In Bangladesh – with almost one hundred and twenty million people – every copy of a newspaper is disputed by sets of around one hundred and thirty people!

In the logic of complexity a final conclusion makes no sense. All conclusions became, *a priori*, relative and provisory.

Before, war had its own stages and sceneries, in general with unquestionable conclusive defeats or victories.

But now!

An intestinal and quiet war, without principle, middle and end – as if it was among members of a same family!

Distributed in television, in streets of the cities, in magazines, in computer screens, in movie, radios or books – the war mutates itself as an urban, nanotechnological and subtle phenomenon; no longer institutional, but of public dominium.

For this new war, disaster will no longer be any magic bomb – apocalyptical and teleological artefact – but some nano error in the informational chain.

The previous logic, that is to say, the previous *sensorial palette*, gives place to a new order, a new cosmos.

For such new sensorial structure there is no longer apocalypses or *conventional* war.

That is, however the *old* war remains as a possible event, it was definitively dislocated out of the logical standard. Any new conventional war would, inevitably, disintegrated into guerrilla.

The new standard for a martial confront became, thus, to be the continuous exercise of the search for identity in urban instances – cities that voraciously extend themselves on the countryside through nets of nets of nets of communication.

And, perhaps, as an answer to a question brilliantly formulated by Yves Coppens – would the humanity be able to survive without a moral strengthening? – Another question: wouldn't be moral or ethical strengthening, be directly related to the question of *identity*?

In other words, violence would be nothing more than the search for an identity pattern.

But, the identity pattern par excellence, formalised by post-Gutemberg literary society, was the specialised job!

Only in the United States, in the last years, more than two million of jobs have been eliminated every year.

In the undeveloped countries, more than 75% of the work force is characterized by repetitive tasks, easy changeable by machines.

Until now, only around 5% of the enterprises, all over the world, started a transition to an informatics and automation culture – a transition that certainly will know a strong impulse in only few years, if not months.

From 1979 to 1992, the world industrial productivity increased around 35%, but the level of employment decreased around 15%.

Some economists, like Jeremy Rifkin, announce a new society with the end of work.

In the four first years of 1990's, the level of world industrial production increased in something like 100%, but the level of commercialisation of its products knew an increase of around 400%.

The lost of social function, established by the specialised job, leads to violence. Because of this, there are violent and non-violent poor countries, as well as rich countries, violent or pacific.

Other scenery is that of virtual corporations. With them, practically all people could work at their own homes. Great corporations would be condemned and in their place countless and ephemeral digital associations would appear.

Self-sustained nets of nets.

Both are possible sceneries.

The idea of a non-limited progress was product of a first 17th century *press* society. An idea following which *progress* would be a standard, uniform, predictable and planned target.

To the post-frontier era, the post-progress question emerges – for which a great part of what is called *evolution* no longer is exclusively placed in the future, but also in the re-discovery of past.

To the *cyber humanity* past became so important as the future is, designating, in this way, a fascinating symmetrical picture.

But in this turbulent and creative reality, another essential condition appears – produced by *overcommunication* allied to *overpopulation*: it is the idea of freedom, with all limitations the term implies.

In Europe, with a vertiginous velocity, electronic automatic tollgates became popular. It is an instrument that permits not only a great mobility and velocity but also the storage of all information on circulation of a vast number of users, monitoring the behaviour of millions of people.

At the end of the 1980s it was developed the active magnetic card that permits the immediate localisation of the user inside a building – a device that fascinates the official departments of human control.

Thus, at the first years of the 1990s the Global Positioning System was developed and destined to establish a communication network between and with satellites in way to inform the exact position of a vehicle in a city or in a road. By the other side of the question, the Global Positioning System also permits to control and to identify the position of its users.

Probably the most impressive fact is the result of some inquiries showing that great part of population like this kind of control, considering it not a limitation to their privacy but yes a legitimate defence of their own security!

An old Zen proverb says that if the ideas of a person are confused, he or she will became the slave of their exterior conditions. It is a good opportunity to reflect on this sage proverb in the context of super-information labyrinth social strategy.

Certainly, the rule of schools and universities should be deeply transformed in the next years – changing information methods by methods privileging human *formation*, and thus constituting a new *Paideia*.

Simultaneously, for a new idea of culture a new idea of crime emerges.

Following the Talmud, *what disappear from the one's sight is prohibited to him*. That is to say, what is no longer inside the private dominium of a person is no longer his or her property – what, for the Jewish-Christian culture means *inside or outside his or her sight*.

It seems to be exactly what happens with Marcel Proust when, in his amazing literary work *In Search of Lost Time*, he shows us that what we know simply is not ours.

Isn't exactly this the nature of cyberspace?

Everything we know is not ours.

New crimes, new freedom, new ideas and new turbulences, in an organism that no longer knows the frontier of intention in decision process.

In the path of metamorphosis, a vigorous Lao Tzu's thought emerges: «to know is to do not know: that is the excellence. To do not know is to know: that is the error».

Error and excellence, mixed.

The new frontier.

Frontier of frontiers.

Zero.