

Still in the 1960s it was estimated that each person in the United States was submitted to a bombardment of about one thousand and five hundred advertisements every day! Investments in advertisement, not only in the United States, were multiplied many times in the second half of the 20th century and it is estimated that such number of the 1960s *bombardment* per person would be augmented to more than two thousand and five hundred advertisements of products and services everyday!

In the 1950s, in the United States, Milton Berle’s celebrated television programs, every Thursday evening, reached 80% of the audience share. There were commercials in the program’s intervals and the authorities noted that water pressure in the supply system in diverse cities was remarkably reduced in those moments – people took advantage of breaks to go to the bathroom as to avoid publicity.

Then, commercial messages were direct, well-defined and departmentalized – the opposite of what happened fifty years later, when the advertising universe would become ephemeral, volatile, low-accuracy, large spectrum and essentially subliminal.

A person who is bombarded by about two thousand and five hundred advertisements of products and services every day, as it started happening in most major cities from the beginning of the twenty first century, doesn't see an ad but constitutes an imaginary of information clouds.

Soon the pop-ups and a huge invasion of spam appeared. According to *Nielsen's TV Ratings*, pop-ups grew, only the first to second quarter of 2002 from 3.9 billion to 5 billion inserts.

In 2003, several polls showed that more than 40% of emails were spam.

In 2004, around 75% of the population in the United States was connected to Internet,

using the network for about three hours per day, in average. Since then, that number did not stopped to increase. Many of those people were relatively poor – even if a comparison with heavy poverty plots spread out on the world would not be possible.

In the 1980s, every year, around sixty thousand new books were published in the United States. That number jumped to more than one hundred and sixty thousand books in 2003. But, levels of functional illiteracy were alarming.

It is estimated that around 25% of the world population in the beginning of the third millennium was *totally* illiterate, not only in *functional* terms.

The *American Management Association*, in a survey dated of 2001, indicated that around 64% of the immigrants who arrived in the United States had few or no reading capacity. The *National Adult Literacy Survey* indicated, then, that about 60% to 75% of the American people were *functional*

illiterate.

In 2007, according to *Unesco*, there still were around one billion totally illiterate people, representing 26% of the world population.

Since Mesopotamia, more than eight thousand years ago, education methods have been coined by the principle of concentration. However, in the last years of the 20th century, several countries started adopting educational strategies turned to dispersion. Those strategies determined, for example, that students should no longer be subject to tests with the objective to authorize the passage to another school period. The proof of capacity passed to be automatic without need of any test.

In 2007, parents of thousands students in Brazil protested, by the most varied ways and in the most diverse places, because their children, already teenagers, were no able to read, to write or even to solve the simplest arithmetical

operations.

John Stuart Mill reminded that «the value of a State is the value of its individuals».

In a world in fast mutation, new educational systems are not immediately discovered.

In the first years of the 21st century all people between sixteen and nineteen years old in Norway had and regularly used cellular phones, sending an average of nine text messages everyday.

Between 1981 and 1985, all over the world, about six million computers were sold. Between 2001 and 2006 that number jumped to almost one billion unities!

In 1997, only in the United States, about three hundred and fifty thousand DVD players were sold, and around five hundred thousand players were exported. Five years later, more than seventeen million DVD players were sold only

fate gave place to the *right* to the luxurious, to the superfluous, to the quality labels».

Around 1.1 billion people practically had no access to potable water; and almost half of the world population, around 2.6 billion people, had no access to basic sanitary treatment, according to the *2006 United Nations Human Development Report*.

Then, almost one trillion dollars were annually spent in weapons all over the world – and only six billion were dedicated to basic education programs in the countries in development. This means to say that the expenses in weapons were almost two hundred times higher than those dedicated to education.

Disseminated power, in high distribution and low concentration, generates a subtle and generalized numbing.

Terror – in its most diverse manifestations

– is equally disseminated in discontinuous space-time logic. It is what happens in the unpredictable streets of the most violent cities of the world, or practically anywhere with terrorist groups.

Post urban violence has no alibis – it does not need motivators. It simply is there, in a context where identity is almost eliminated.

In the streets of the larger Brazilian cities, some years ago, it was inaugurated a new kind of crime – the assault generated by chance. The criminal does not know exactly what will happen or even who will be the victim, everything is surprise – eliminating, in this way, all vestiges and, thus, becoming practically immune to the process of police investigation.

So, threat becomes a continuous spectrum event. *Tyranny* penetrates the system as a whole, without person or personage, freely distributed. With the spectrum of continuous threat, there equally is a continuous numbing.

of very *short life*, simultaneously. A paradox that practically eliminates the old concept of *life cycle*. It is enough to experiment a computer failure to live this paradoxical phenomenon.

Fame became more and more generously distributed – and there are each time more famous people in the world, in the most diverse scales.

In the past, figures like Dante Allighieri, Luis de Camões or William Shakespeare were famous in small circles of connoisseurs, and when fame reached an enlarged scale it rarely surpassed the frontiers of their countries. Even Johann Sebastian Bach needed to be recalled by Brahms to become more popular and widely known.

In a society of entertainment where billions of people participate, thousands *Goethes*, *Schopenhauers* or *Leonardos* would need a process of intense concentration for a consequent expansion, or they would simply disappear in the whole.

Air Transport Association established the *Montreal Convention on the Unification of Certain Rules for International Carriage by Air*, eliminating the old *Warsaw Convention* as well as all previous protocols and related treaties. The *Montreal Convention* practically eliminated all rights of the passengers related to the transportation of their luggage. That Convention determines for each pound of lost luggage a right for indemnity that is insufficient even to buy one shirt or a good sock! With it, the right of claim is practically annulled.

Before, the bureaucratic systems selected claims to be attended according to the level of urgency and need they presented – when the claim was long, personalized and hand written, its *degree of insistence* automatically led to a quick response. When the claim was short and non-personalized, it generally was left to oblivion. That was the general criterion used by claim departments in big companies.

But, with new electronic media, what is the

sense of urgency and need? More than this, in a society leaded by the spirit of continuous *low cost* consumption, claim is no longer possible.

In 2008, in New York, I called a car company to put me in the airport, as I always did along more than twenty years. It is a very common habit in the city. Twenty minutes delayed, a driver was at our door. I noticed how, along the years, the services of that company were deteriorated. In that afternoon a driver dressing big colorful pieces of fabric, with long beard, practically not speaking English, surprised me. He had left the car in another block. He took several minutes to appear again. When finally parked the car, he almost crashed with a policewoman who came in a small vehicle. Then, he started an incomprehensible discussion. The police gave up and disappeared. I should not be more delayed, if not I would lose the flight. When we went out, already about two blocks from my home, he informed me that his car had no fuel. He started screaming at every corner, looking for someone who could tell him about the location of

a gas station in the neighborhood. It was extremely hot. Summer. I noticed that both the windows and the air conditioning did not work. Some minutes later the car simply stopped, at the other side of the city. It was broken. The driver turned to me and said that I should go out. I would be left there, under the sun, with my luggage. I called the company and they sent another car – but I already had lost the flight. I asked the driver what he thought about his job. He dryly answered me saying that he was not caring about anything. I tried to know, later, what would happen, if I would have right to indemnity. It was almost impossible to speak to anyone at that company. There was no right to indemnity – the only thing I could do was to enter with a legal action against the company, what made no sense, considering the value of the service and the high costs of lawyers, as well as in lost time, of legal procedures – which were extremely bureaucratic. I asked how they could hire someone like that driver. I knew that they had hundreds of drivers and that it was not possible for the company to know all them. Everything was

automatic. Anyone who attended to initial basic requirements could become, automatically, driver in that company. Quality control worked through claims, which no longer existed. I asked if they were not disturbed to lose a client. «Lose a client? It makes no difference. We have thousands of clients everyday» – was the answer.

The new reality substituted indemnity and technical assistance by silence or by pure and simple exchange of the product – because it is *low cost*.

One thing is to claim about a high price product with defect. Another one is to claim about a product with defect sold in millions of unities which price is almost zero. When that happens, in the majority of cases, even the right to claim left to exist.

In the same way, the gigantic quantity of low cost products also turn impossible, because of its scale, the old concept of technical assistance.

Because of this, the old idea of products that last practically an entire life simply ended. Nothing works rigorously well. Everything started working well in terms of large numbers, in statistical terms.

With a society of continuous consumers, any act of legitimate defense of individual rights passed to be considered a reactionary action contrary to the intensely massive low power universe. Thus, associated to the numbness generated by continuous consumption, public protests practically disappeared – they started to happen, in general, only when the appeal indicated a similar content, in some way, to that of the low cost culture. It was a phenomenon well manipulated by old pacifist and left oriented groups.

That is, large protests emerge when the mobilization passed to happen *from cellular to cellular phone or from computer to computer*, with a low defined, general and superficial appeal. There

are a great number of definitions and approaches, even contradictory, for the phenomenon known as *globalization* – even so, great part of the few large protests occurred in the first years of the 21st century had the low defined concept of *globalization* as their flag par excellence.

When the subject of the protest is not something oriented to a low cost universe and to general participation – and when mobilization doesn't happen from person to person through a virtual network – it simply doesn't work. The appeal to an idea or stable set of ideas became non-sense to many people in a low power society.

Protests against meetings of the richest countries of the world, like what happened in Genoa with the *G8 Meeting* in 2001, or in international forums like that of Porto Alegre can happen. But, protests against the Iraq war were relatively few and isolated – a war that in few years killed more than one million people, whose original motivation was proved to be false and whose development,

not a natural relation between strong impulses and a weak consciousness. The natural relation is in the opposite sense».