



The long, long pilgrimage to humanization

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Man confronts “the necessity to find ever new-solutions for the contradictions in his existence, *to find ever-higher forms of unity with nature, his fellowmen and himself.*”

(E. Fromm, *The Sane Society*, New York 1955, p. 25. - Emphasis added)

Introduction

Due to the disastrous present world panorama, we are forced into the awareness that at some point in our evolution as human beings we took a wrong turn and we forgot to look for these „*ever-higher forms of unity with nature...*“ So we are now confronted by a most violent and destructive panorama of Man against Man, the creators of a vast incredible poverty and misery, increasing famines and our self-destructiveness and our unbelievable malignant aggression against our biosphere, which we are destroying at an increasing rate.

How and where did we take a wrong turn? What are we forced to do in order to survive? It is the purpose of this paper to try to give plausible answers. Let us hope that science can give us one or more centuries to make the indispensable corrections.

In presenting this dream, this utopia, one that perhaps is the only way that sooner or later human beings will have to pursue if they are to reach the measure of humaneness that we can achieve. We must understand that we are *not the only sacred form of life on this earth*, though true enough we are human beings aware of good and evil thus we are responsible for the destructive turn our world has taken.

The matrilineal neolithic

James Mellaart¹ and Marja Gimbutas², two great outstanding researchers of the remarkable period that began *circa* eight-seven thousand years BCE, make us take notice that neither in Old Europe³ nor in Anatolia where Çatal Hüyük stood, is there any evidence of interhuman malignant aggression: there are no cracked skulls nor thoracic-penetrating wounds in the numerous skeletons found in both areas.

It is necessary that we make clear, that in that vast period of time (8-7 thousand BCE to 4-3,5 thousand BCE) nothing evinces the existence of a matriarchy (as Bachofen believed⁴), but everything points at women as spiritual, artistic

¹ Mellaart, James (1967): Çatal Hüyük: a neolithic town in Anatolias. McGraw Hill Book Co., N.Y.

² Gimbutas, Marja. (1974): *The Gods and Goddesses of Old Europe 7000-3500. Myths and cultimages*. New and updated edition in paperback. University of California Press. Reprinted in 1996

³ Old Europe takes in the East Mediterranean, the Aegean and Adriatic Seas, including the numerous isles there; the Balkans and it extends as far north as the former Czechoslovakia, southern Poland and western Ukraine.

⁴ Bachofen J. J. (1967): *Myth, Religion and Mother Right*. Bollingen Series LXXXIV. Princeton University Press.



and social guides of their communities, because the uterus was the natural source of life and it was woman who suckled and reared her children, although it is most probable that she was aided by the male members of the community. We have no precise knowledge of the Neolithic family organization, but all archeological evidence implies that women were probably rather free in their sexuality yet respectable and respected. The evidence of the sexual relations of the Bonobo⁵ *pan paniscus* —pygmy chimpanzee— with whom we are genetically close, points to the fact that the female is selective of her sexual partner, and quite frank on her rejection of those considered unfit. We believe that, in all probability there existed steadfast partners, as well as unstable ones. We also know, that in Old Europe the penis was rather admired because of its erectile capacity, as well as for the pleasure it could afford to all concerned (Gimbutas, *op. cit.*), although its role in procreation was still unknown... The immaculate conception myth was born.

There is no intent to idealize these societies yet, perhaps they may well be enhanced, for albeit human with their feelings and passions, all existing evidence points to the fact that *they privileged and treated all of life with great care*. Fromm⁶ states:

„The data that speak in favor of the view that Neolithic society was relatively egalitarian, without hierarchy, exploitation, or marked aggression, are suggestive... The reason for this lies in the spirit of affirmation of life and lack of destructiveness which J. J. Bachofen believed was an essential trait of all matriarchal [matrilineal] societies.” (Emphasis added).

Also during the Neolithic, human creativity is manifest in its artistic expressiveness and they developed a modest economy of at least „two millennia of agricultural stability by the increas-

⁵ Tanner, Nancy Makepeace (1981): *On Becoming Human*. Cambridge University Press. London, NY, Melbourne.

⁶ Fromm, Erich (1974): *The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness*. Holt, Rinehart and Winston. N.Y., Chicago. San Francisco, p 158.

ingly efficient exploitation of the fertile river valleys: wheat, barley, vetch, peas and other legumes were cultivated, and all the domestic animals ... except for the horse... They developed pottery technology and bone and stone-working techniques, as well as metallurgy with copper, lead. We know they traded in obsidian (from the Lipari Islands and from Sardinia), alabaster, marble and Spondylus shell. As we also know that from the sixth millennia they had sailboats whose outline were engraved on vases with a pointed instrument.” (Gimbutas, *op. cit.*, p 18.)

There is also no evidence that to *have* was of any importance, for the ornaments honoring their dead, whose remains they kept close-by, were quite simple: some red powder, a few shells (Mellaart, *op. cit.*) and perhaps also, a few beads of copper and lead. (Gimbutas, *op. cit.*)

The Kurgans and male narcissism

Circa 4600-4200 BCE, the Kurgans⁷ appear on the European scene; Asiatic invaders on horseback (animals that they had evidently learned to breed and tame), armed with weapons of bronze with which to kill. In successive waves they imposed their language and their *patriarchal* Indo-European customs; they are builders of burial mounds where they interred their chieftains with their weapons and armor, their women (wives, concubines, slaves...), ornaments of gold and silver, their horses, and other funerary gifts.

Dr. Lerner⁸ makes clear that: „With the domestication of animals and the development of animal husbandry, the function of the male in the process of procreation became more apparent and was better understood, — and we could add, not only did it become apparent” but it became an obvious fact of life that in the process of procreation, the female and male elements were both indispensable.

This implies that it was the Kurgans „who not only savagely destroyed the early European

⁷ Kurgans. Russian word taken from the Turkish that designates the wild horsemen from the steppes of Asia, constructors of burial mounds.

⁸ Lerner, Gerda (1986): *The Creation of Patriarchy*. The Oxford University Press. N.Y., Oxford, p. 149.



civilization" (Gimbutas, *ibid.*, p. 238) but also they implanted, simultaneously, their patriarchal mores in Old Europe, Anatolia and of course in Central Asia from whence they emerged. As stated, they brought with them weapons of violence and destruction against other human beings and *the male* dominated women and made them *his things, objects of his property*, thus he owned their body and their capacity to give birth and to feed *his* children. There can be no doubt that to *possess, to have* was an issue of great importance for the Kurgans, a tendency that was unknown in the Matrilineal Neolithic as all archeological evidence shows.

We must clarify what we mean by male narcissism: the all *exclusive* care, interest and concern of the men with men. With the term narcissism, Freud designated the physiologic incapacity of the neonate to establish a full relationship with his environment and the significant people in it. Male narcissism thus implies that mankind grew and developed most inadequately, without taking notice of the vital needs of all living creatures in his environment, including his own ecosystem (the earth) which is also alive... *He always believed that all living creatures were there just to serve him.* It is obvious that if we speak of bioethics we are, by definition implying human beings, but human beings *cannot or should not be their exclusive objective. Bioethics includes all living beings.*

Patriarchy was an answer made possible for the male elements of the community, once they became aware of their active participation in the procreation of human life. But why patriarchy? Why the need to make women their *thing*? The answer to these questions probably springs from the male need to be sure that *his* children are *his* and only *his*, and not the offspring of another male; it is quite apparant that the *mother is always easily known*, not so the father until we discovered the unmistakable patterns of DNA. Male narcissism demands that there should be, *at most*, a minimal margin of error as to who the father is. Thus the demand that women should be *virgins* when wed, and that *the evidence of their virginity should be known by the public.* Also, males need to be assured that they are loved and that they are the *only* love of

their spouse; they resent that the mothers frequently seem to prefer her children and devotes less time to him. Women normally dote on their new born children and the husband becomes second in her care and concern, for the neonates have a great need for a mother's love and care. It is quite probable that males were and are jealous of the female uterus and that the new born are not necessarily loved by them.

Only the existence of these two unconscious fears can help us understand (never to justify) the enormous force that motivated men to impose such humiliations and vicious cruelty: the torments to which virgins are submitted to ensure their virginity are quite well known, as well as the care to safeguard their fidelity to their Lords and Masters. Patriarchal male vanity swelled with his dictatorial control over women, control enforced by brute force and a willingness to kill, aside from the fact that *patriarchy gave the male the right to possess many women and even to exert physical violence against them.* Evidently men were corroded by the lack of certainty that the child was theirs, *a certainty* that can only derive from a *committed couple*: because it is their will and their decision to commit themselves to each other.

J. Campbell⁹ suggests another motivation that sounds plausible: „The men were within one jot of being completely superfluous" or so they may have felt, because some of them may have thought of themselves as ... just sources of sexual pleasure. This could arouse a powerful envy at the procreative capacity of women and their privileged place in the matrilineal Neolithic community. And Campbell adds: „Small wonder ... if, in reaction, their revengeful imaginations ran amok and developed secret lodges and societies, the mysteries and terrors of which were directed primarily against women, even the Supreme Being itself being imagined as the Great Mother".

The male control of women within the patriarchate, had to be justified: so a male God was created, one who was not engendered, but who created himself. In the beginning this God

⁹ Campbell, Joseph (1960): *The Masks of God, Volume I: Primitive Mythology.* Secker and Warburg, London, p. 320ff.



refused all possibility of being pictorially represented when he said to Moses: „If the people ask you who gave you these tablets? You will answer. *I Am* sent them”. Despite this precise and categorical answer, *that admitted to no representation*, by virtue of male narcissism the idea arose that „Man [and only the male] is made in the image of God”(!).

From the dawn of patriarchy, we are witnesses to violence of man against man; whereas before, in the circa three to four thousand years of the Neolithic, there is no evidence of this type of intra-species violence. True, life was precarious, difficult because it was subject to climatic uncertainty, and to the fortunes of hunting and fishing; the ever present possibility of accidents that could prove fatal. But there was *no intra-species violence*, the *having* mode (as it prevails today) was of no importance whatsoever, and women held an exalted position as Goddesses, the natural *creators of human life*. The norms that prevailed were the love of life and for all that was alive. Death was probably experienced as a dolorous but natural event and they held their dead in high esteem, whom they honored, kept their bones nearby and always surrounded by a bit of red powder and some shells¹⁰. At that time there was not even a remote chance of overpopulation.

The overpopulation problem

From the dawn of agriculture, cattle raising, and the conquering of new territories in Old Europe, there came a demand for more labor, thus greater demands on the procreative capacities of women no longer free but chattels of men. It must be stated that when the men declared their ownership of women, by this very simple and unseemly fact, they split *homo sapiens* into two very unjust and unequal categories: one, the males allegedly of a superior category; and the other, by exclusive male decision, of an inferior quality, thus justifying their ownership of the women. From the onset of this stupid subdivision, a most severe manmade, fictitious conflict is created between the two sexes, who are by

nature equal and who should be equal partners in this difficult enterprise of living.

The demand for more labor initiates the problem of overpopulation. It must be stated that about 2300 years ago, Aristotle (385-322 BCE) foresaw the severe negative consequences of such an event. He stated:

„A great state is not the same as a state with a large population. *Experience demonstrates with certainty that it is difficult, and maybe even impossible, that a State with a numerous population can have a good legal government*“. And he adds further on: „In order that it be possible to decide in matters of justice and to designate officers according to merit, it is necessary that citizens know the personal characteristics of the candidates, for wheresoever this is not so, of necessity errors will be made in choosing the officers who will judge the lawsuits. *Any decision taken by chance is unfair for the elected and for the person who elects, and this is what prevails in any community with an oversized population*”.¹¹

Some two thousand years later Dr. Eduardo Nicol¹² stated:

„*An increase in population* due to reproduction and longevity, beneficent gains obtained from social action, has become a problem of such magnitude that *it returns us to a species condition, for we are incapable at solving it on a community level*. This survival problem [...] reduces to insignificance all other problems of community life, or converts them into facets of the same basic issue to survive or not to survive. [...] And thus, even in the supposition that the basic problem of subsistence could be solved [...] *the survivor will have sacrificed his condition as an authentic Man*

¹⁰ Mellaart, *op. cit.*

¹¹ Aristotle: *Política*. Libro VII, Capítulo 4. *Obras Completas*. Párrafo 1326b. Tr. Esp. Francisco Samarrah. Aguilar, Buenos Aires. 1973. - Author's translation; emphasis added.

¹² Nicol, Eduardo (1972): *El Porvenir de la Filosofía*. Fondo de Cultura Económica. México, p. 335. - Author's translation.



with the individual profile of a free chooser of his destiny, *to revert to the condition of a mere indistinct, disdainful unit of his species*. Now Man must defend himself from himself, from population increase and from his own technological innovations, *which dehumanize him and denaturalizes nature*". (Emphasis added).

One should take notice of a how curious it is that they who today speak out in „*defense of life*“, such as representatives of Catholicism in México, not only continue to stimulate human procreation and thus the *overpopulation* of our planet, but they also give support to an anthropocentric bio-ethic *whose sole concern is for human beings*. It should therefore not seem strange that they refuse to consider, with all due seriousness, the need to educate all peoples on the issue of birth control, *to find thus, a better equilibrium for every ecosystem*, human ones included.

We understand that this educational process must be insistent and persistent, so that the world population becomes conscious of the dire need to become ever less, possibly around 600 million all told (something like a tenth or a fifteenth percent of our present total). We might even attain the added gift of reaching our goal *of becoming ever more humane, in our equality with all that is alive, including our planet*.

It is most necessary that we transcend the authoritarian, anthropocentric, patriarchal misogyny of the Catholic, Jewish and Islamic religions and of so many others with these same negative traits; the humanistic aspects of all them is very valuable for the process of humanization we are setting forth.

Human beings are endowed with the capacity to study, know and care for the „*fish in the waters, the birds in the skies and all the living creatures on the face of the earth*“. While all plants, animals and microorganisms can take care of their vital equilibrium, necessary for their adequate population density, humans need to learn the urgent requirement of co-existence, to limit their numbers, and to *realize once and for all, that all that lives and their multiple needs are as sacred as our own*.

As was mentioned, the educational process

that must take place is of necessity slow and will require the decided support of the humanist aspects of all religions with their capacity to think productively and creatively, plus their added weight as rational and moral authorities; we also need the aid of dedicated people of goodwill capable at teaching. We must recall something quite important for our purpose that Fromm¹³ stated many years ago:

„Man, in each society, seems to absolutize the way of life and the way of thought produced by his culture and to be willing to die rather than to change, since change, is equated with death“.

Psychoanalysts are aware that the process towards individuation requires a great, disciplined effort and the willingness to confront the *great fear of aloneness and its counterpart, the fear of freedom* that the responsible humanist development demands in order *to be*. In the course of an individual psychoanalysis, the much needed frame of orientation and devotion that was learned in order to survive within our family and social milieu, changes and expands as irrational ways of life and the taboos that fed them are transcended. We must never forget that humans are bio-psycho-social beings capable of a mind of their own when productive, thoughtful, courageous, resourceful humanists, with the joy *to be*, that being that one can *become*.

Patriarchy and violence: war technology and overpopulation

We must point out the fact that „major wars in modern times and most wars between states of antiquity, were *not caused by dammed-up aggression, but by instrumental aggression of the military and political elites*“¹⁴. Earlier Dr. Fromm quoted Wright: „the most primitive men are the

¹³ Fromm, Erich (1961): *May Man Prevail?* Anchor Books, Doubleday & Company, Inc, Garden City, New York, p. 5.

¹⁴ Fromm, Erich (1973): *The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness*. Holt, Rinehart and Winston. New York, p. 215. – Emphasis added,



least warlike" (*ibid.*, p. 156).

True, Europe was first invaded by the Asiatic Kurgans who taught us how to kill, as well as their attraction to violence, to the dead and to death. In the XV and XVI centuries, it is now the Europeans who invaded Asia, Africa and America, discriminated, marginalized and destroyed without compunction the yellow, black and brown peoples and their cultures, in search of colonies as sources of raw materials, gold, silver, gems, cheap labor as well as markets for their manufactured goods.

All this cult to violence was rationalized by the Europeans, as their wish to catechize, and bring their kindness and teachings; but the disguised violence of their feat lead to the eventual brutal, irrational, absurd destruction of millions of European youths as well as those from the colonies, during World War I (1914-1918)¹⁵ It was all so irrational, thoughtless and cruel! In all this madness, the young men went to war joyfully, festively and singing their praises to their respective countries!

And all that violence did not resolve a thing, it only fostered revenge and established the basis for Total War that involved men, women, and children; ... where the slave labor that was used was maltreated and undernourished, because their health and their death was a matter of no importance whatsoever. During the Second World War (1939-1945) technological progress became more devastating and lethal, and the costs of war became so expensive that it severely undermined the economic structures of many nations, including Great Britain which was forced to free her colonies. The USA stood out as the new giant, but Roosevelt was unable to reach his proposed goal of controlling the world between his country and Russia.¹⁶

In this XXI century the manifestations of

violence run rampant with invasions because oil is greatly coveted. There are monstrous abuses of power, countless deaths, inhuman and unjustified tortures beyond the pale of international agreements on war and terrorism. All of this is a serious impediment to the formation of creative, productive, humanizing social and individual character structures.

There are many who wish to believe that the Earth's warming depends on cyclic cosmic processes such as the Sun Spots, and that it therefore has nothing to do with the problem of overpopulation, but this is a primordial cause as Bowen¹⁷ has determined:

„By burning coal and gas and oil in such enormous amounts, we have raised the carbon dioxide levels in the atmosphere far beyond what it has ever been during even the very long period one can study with ice cores.”

There are also those who wish to think that science will find the necessary paths to counteract the most noxious factors involved and save our Earth from the perils that threaten it. Again, with this rationalization they ignore the preponderant negative role that the human factor plays, instead of fostering ways that will help to decrease the destruction of ecosystems and the ever-increasing contamination of land, air and water. We can hope that science will be able to find some way to palliate the origins of the hothouse effect; but of course, there remains the urgent need that we humans become much less numerous with all that this implies: breaking existing taboos, customs, prejudices, and we must not forget the vested interests of construction, automotive business, etc. To reach our goal we must use humane educational methods and not authoritative ones like those applied in China today.

It is quite true that we are the first living beings capable of acquiring, organizing and increasing our fund of knowledge, plus being capable of distinguishing good and evil. Precisely,

¹⁵ Stillman, E., Pfaff, E. (2001): *The Politics of Hysteria*. The sources of XX century conflict. Harper Colophon Books. Harper & Row, Publishers. NY and Evanston.

¹⁶ Skidelsky, Robert (2006): *Hot, Cold and Imperial*. New York Review of Books. Vol LIII, Num. 12. July 13, 2006. pp. 50-55. Dallas Gregor (2006) reviews *The War that Never Ends*. Yale University Press. And Maier, Charles, S. (2006) reviews: *Among Empires: American ascendancy and its predecessors*.

¹⁷ Bowen, Mark (2005): *Thin Ice: Unlocking the secrets of Climate in the Worlds Highest Mountains* in his revision of McKibben, Bill: *End of Nature*. New York Review of Books.



due to these two facts, it is human beings who should be the *Guardians of Life and all that is Alive* on earth; ours should be the sacred duty of taking care of nature, studying it to preserve all ecosystems and the life forms they enfold, and not only to exploit and destroy them as of now. We must also study, by all possible means, the ever fascinating and stimulating universe that surrounds us.

There is no doubt that there have existed and still exist today, women and men, artists and artisans who have endowed us with the marvelous legacy of their beautiful and creative works of art born of their religious beliefs and feelings, that give us such a depth of enjoyment, solace and recreation, while at the same time other human beings have remarkably increased our wealth of knowledge. We also have no doubt at all, that these same religious feelings and beliefs released an unheard amount of cruelties, brutal destructiveness and the sadism of men and women alike. But we must insist what is so frequently ignored: the destructive impact of the innumerable and ever increasing hordes of human beings that threaten the lives of *all* living creatures and the ecosystems that sustain them.

All along there is an unrelenting dehumanizing process, whereby ordinary human beings are turned into things, just another object, whose capacity to love and enjoy life, whose well-being has ceased to be important for the social group, particularly for those for whom to *have* is the utmost value. The social and economic demands on these human beings are that they work, procreate cheap labor, earn money and consume goods.

The dehumanizing process

Quite correctly, in *Man for Himself* Dr. Fromm¹⁸ points to a fact that should be self-evident but is not:

„this criticism is of the utmost significance

and a condition for any improvement of society, the absence of visions projecting a „better” man and a „better” society has had the effect of paralyzing man’s faith in himself and his future (and is at the same time the result of such a paralysis).”

All too true, for every change frightens since it might threaten our very way of living and being. It is disquieting, because it brings forth such questions as: What will the change be like? Will I be able to live and find means of subsistence?

It becomes necessary to confront the social forces that oppose an increasing humanization, that we may achieve individually, our capacity to *be*.

The world and its present population are threatened by devastating forces that dehumanize and reify with incredible rapidity. In *The Triple Revolution*¹⁹ the threat posed by cybernation, a product of the combined forces of the computer with automated self-regulatory machines is very great for it *requires less and less human labor* (*ibid.*, p. 405). This tendency which requires less labor and will pay ever less seems a step in the direction of a necessary decrease of the density of human population; but this diminution is not the true objective of these measures, whose exclusive aim *is to maximize profits*. As machines absorb more of the requirements of production, they also require more natural resources and the displaced human labor (including significantly, highly qualified workers) will depend ever more on government unemployment insurance and other forms of social security that very rapidly diminish in their duration, in their quantity and in their quality. All this greatly undermines the pride and dignity of women and men in need, more so *as they become aware that they may never again be self-sufficient*.

Today a large proportion of the population lives on a minimal income, frequently below the poverty line, in the most abject misery. At the same time there is the possibility that those excluded from the possibility of achieving an ade-

¹⁸ Fromm, Erich (1947): *Man for Himself: An inquiry into the psychology of ethics*. Rinehart and Winston Company, Inc. New York, Toronto, p. 83.

¹⁹ *The Triple Revolution in Socialist Humanism* edited by Dr. Erich Fromm (1965). Doubleday & Co. Inc. Garden City New York. pp. 403-420.



quate livelihood, will be so permanently, both as producers and as consumers -- and will live the demise of their dignity and their pride.

As psychoanalysts immersed in a capitalist world, we tend to forget that *to have* is seen as far more valuable than *to be*; add to this that *to be* is often seen with noticeable contempt, the same as the poor are seen; but even worse the poor are often *invisible and not taken into account*.

Under such dire conditions it becomes rather difficult to speak of *Mental Health* and of a *Productive Orientation* as social goals, when a significant segment of the population of the world does not even have adequate access to food, housing, health, security and a well paid job, issues that continuously become worse. Human beings are becoming superfluous with an industry that increasingly applies the principle of „Thin Engineering“ in the automation of their plants. We must insist that it is false that industrialized societies are intent in their search for ever better jobs; quite the opposite is true, they seek to diminish, drastically, the number of employees, workers and laborers plus paying them ever less, because of their set goal to *maximize gains*. Add to the former a market that insists in selling what is indispensable at prices that are always increasing until they become inaccessible to the masses, or else they offer attractive but unnecessary items. The owners of wealth, with some very honorable exceptions are quite dehumanized and only covet more and more money and the power that goes with it.

The present requires a rebirth of a strong

Radical Humanism and a change, at root level, of all patriarchal authoritarian, misogynist religions so that they preach a *Bioethic dedicated to all of life and all that is alive* as a universal goal. World population must decrease considerably to allow for the optimal growth of all ecosystems. In this educational process we require the assistance of the millenary structures of every religion, *to promote the full equality of women and men as well as the complete freedom of women over their procreative capacity. They and only they may opt or not for maternity as an individual free option*, no longer as an imposition of our present anthropocentric patriarchal culture. It is essential that we maintain our frame of devotion to the miracle of Creation, to that indescribable marvel that always imposes its awe in our soul, that sense of intense fervor, that deep inner tremor of an intense religiosity.

Whoever contemplates our micro and macro-cosmos, with its daily unfolding of Nature: the emergence of plants and flowers, the birth of our fauna, and the immensity of our Universe, cannot help but perceive deep inside an ineluctable religious feeling, a religion without sex nor name. Ours is the religious entrancement in front of Creation.

If we can become ever more humane; women and men become friends, equal partners in the ethical enterprise of life, we will yet manage to become sisters and brothers of animals, plants and of ourselves. Then we can learn to live in an expanding harmony with all of life and the challenge that life always imposes.