

What Future Does Civilization Hold Facing the Seven Challenges of Modernism and Post-Modernism

ما الذي يحمله المستقبل للحضارة في مواجهة التحديات السبعة للحداثة وما بعد الحداثة

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Abstract (English):

Optimistic Strategy should have the following objectives: to give a larger credit and role for the creative minds who work on formulating cultural suggestions and alternatives to the confrontation by force, tyranny and war, to accredit the persons whose aims are to create a new Charter of Ethics for mankind while trying to save the earth from the disastrous civilization of consumption and desire and the uncontrollable instinct of aggression and worship of money. The new strategy consists of a permanent, deep, and generalized renewal of the culture of dialogue, partnership, and cooperation amongst human beings on this planet.

Keywords: Civilization; Culture; Human beings; Strategy; Ethics.

ملخص باللغة العربية

يجب أن يكون للاستراتيجية المتفائلة الأهداف الآتية: إعطاء ائتمان ودور أكبر للعقول المبدعة التي تعمل على صياغة مقترحات ثقافية وبدائل لمواجهة بالقوة كل أوجه الاستبداد والحرب، ثم الاعتماد على الأشخاص الذين تسعى أهدافهم إلى إنشاء ميثاق جديد للأخلاق البشرية بغية محاولتها إنقاذ الأرض من حضارة الاستهلاك والرغبة الكارثية وغريزة العدوان التي لا يمكن السيطرة عليها وعبادة المال. تتكون الاستراتيجية الجديدة من تجديد دائم وعميق ومعمم لثقافة الحوار والشراكة والتعاون بين البشر على هذا الكوكب.
كلمات مفتاحية: حضارة؛ ثقافة؛ الإنسان؛ استراتيجية؛ الأخلاق.

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***- Introduction**

Displayed in this research are various humble ideas and future expectations regarding the seven crises that are currently being encountered by societies all throughout the world. These ordeals, contemporaneous with modernism and post-modernism, are contrasting or dare one say analogous to the Seven Wonders of the World; the wonders that dazzle the eyes and overwhelm the mind with their mystery. The present seven predicaments parallel the seven catastrophes that community stumbled upon through the last two centuries. The latter were strangely coupled with solutions and secrets and brought about a high pessimism rate. Therefore, one is required to expand the focal field while exploring the recent events, to magnify the scientific insight and perception while trying to diagnose the threat, and to approach these issues with caution in order to predict and calculate future results and scenarios. The dilemmas being debated are mainly embedded in the following areas of concern: Economy, Demography, Environment, Family, Technology, and the problematic issue of Power and Authority. Sensible researchers, studying the seven universal cultural crises on both the regional and the global level, altogether agree that it's a disease deeply-rooted, let alone organic, that requires drastic, radical and thorough studies; answers are not that superficial and apparent. The matter is demanding and underestimated. It entails the development of a certain innovative science or a new name for the diagnosis. It necessitates a desperate try, an attempt to save communities from continual catastrophic ambience on the psychological and environmental level, the levels that reach and affect the mind and the soul. It would be accurate to entitle it "The Science of Communal Medicine" due to the fact that the planetary communal status constitutes and represents a typical syndrome. It's not being said out of

pessimism nor in the ulterior motive of creating new definitions and explanations to "History", "Human Beings", "Meaning" and "God" and the endless expressions, slogans and descriptions that are taking over the minds and dominating the thoughts of Western scientists.

Furthermore, one can't avoid noticing the suggestions and predictions that stem from religious institutions all over the world about the end of days; the apocalypse... The matter is simply explained by the fact that each of the cultural, local and global phases holds a certain period of time highlighted by factors of crises or disintegration. During the latter, numerous defections and "symptoms" appear. They destroy the axiological side (ethics, aesthetics, spirituality and so on...), the economic side, the political side, human affairs, nature and environment. They also affect the management of the Quartet that brings about all the diseases; by the Quartet, I mean Money, Authority, Power and Knowledge...

And the cultural crisis grasps some private qualities according to society or culture... Some general virtues that include the globalization of economy and information and the tendency to impose a unified pattern upon all eastern and western societies; the alarming prototype of materialistic consumption... Al Gore, former vice president of the United States, wrote in his book "Earth in the balance" published in 1993, before the economic crisis took place, that disregarding the amazing development of economy, America is facing ordeals. In his opinion, not only ordeals that are culturally based on marketing and consumption, but they are also on the verge of deterioration and disappearance. Such acts put the American society in danger and threat of abolishment. These thoughts, coming from an authority figure who occupies a prestigious post serving the most advanced country in terms of economy, are not to be neglected. Thus, we are required to inquire thoroughly about this sick phenomenon that attracted everyone's attention. Moreover and unfortunately, it somehow provides

a false hope for the majority of western and eastern cultures and for Anglo-Saxon and francophone societies. The American energy consumption model, which is considered the most expanded and the most seizing of earth and human resources and which formed the “expenditure community”, is itself going through a state of tension, weariness and devastation. These tribulation vibes don’t just affect a short term era since American experts expect them to persist, let alone evolve and worsen unless all creative minds focus on specifying the reason for the calamity and trying to withdraw community from its effects. New alternatives that are harmless and have the capacity that lead people to be explored.

If we were to call upon the logic and blossom of experts that are predicting future scenarios and who are having visions about the consequences of today’s elements, we would point out several possibilities that I will sum up in just four on the geostrategic and the geopolitical levels. They are as follows:

First possibility: persistence of the current cultural process and the maintenance of corruption.

Second possibility: planetary extension of the liberal American style.

Third possibility: the hypothesis of the constant clash between cultures and religions.

Fourth possibility: the potentiality of intensifying, deepening and globalizing communication, cooperation and partnership among cultures and religions on new spiritual and materialistic bases.

In case of the first option is the one that’s most accurate, it will express itself through its components and its effectiveness in terms of knowledge and economy for the post-industrial society (or post-modernism). The frail and unstable situation will linger in numerous countries and communities that are considered culturally “vulnerable”. This possibility would be toughened by the concentration of money, power and technology, innovation and knowledge in the hands of political leaders

aiming for the so-called golden billion. This axis, thanks to power and domination, seeks the burgeoning of its core through developed technology and the maintenance of its acquisitive superiority. In order to keep this authority, the system will trigger more wars on the psychological level and the mind level to the extent of killing or terminating revolutionaries who rise against its policies and rhetoric...

As for the second option mentioned above, if it were precise, it would imply that Pax Americana is the ultimate finest choice for America and the whole world's best interests. However, it's not upright to stick to a reckless policy that was expressed in the philosophy of neo-conservatives in the era of Bush Jr. It is rather wise to abide by a more diplomatic and realistic policy to reduce the tensions on the economic and the political levels. These tensions might intend to configure a new mechanism based on shared responsibility and purpose in order to manage the world... but it would be ruled by America, undoubtedly.

The third option, interlaced with the first and the second one, in particular when it comes to the continuity of fueling all types of conflicts between civilizations and religions. All three have common ground. The latter consists of considering the Islamic Circle, the Russian Orthodox, the Slavic and Chinese Circles as the "enemy" for the West that's becoming American and for whoever hovers around its plot. Within this option, we find the mobilization of efforts being planned by all the ideological and military figures in order to ignite the planet with wars, wars that could eventually lead to an inability to control the disastrous end; for the West and the East alike, for the attacker and defender at the same time...

Fourth possibility is seeking not only to establish a new vision of communication between cultures and religions, based on dialogue, but also to renew the economy and politics, values and spirituality on the basis of a new philosophy of cooperation and partnership among the communities of this planet... This involves setting new

strategies for learning and teaching, for religion, environment and economy in order to have different poles in the world, yet equal opportunities and chances, on the geopolitical level.

All these possibilities currently exist. It's therefore difficult to predict what the odds are on the short and medium term, not until the end of the first half of this century. The future, however, which generates from the past and the present, carries structural changes in thinking and behavioral dynamics of human beings...

This research does not, due to the lack of capacity, allow us to address detailed changes in the demographic area, in the family and the environment concepts and the technological applications. Same thing goes for economic relations and social distinctions between the North and the South, between groups and social strata belonging to the same culture or religion... Neither does it discuss the various philosophies and the different paths and outcomes of the doctrines of conflicts and dialogues, nor the various aspects and components of the light energy and the dark and destructive energy that emanates from religious institutions. Nor does it deal with the constructive forces vs. the destructive spiritual energies. Doing so would require, of course, a combination of all the scientific and spiritual energies and employment of all creative capacities of wisdom, memory and experience of the good people on the planet.

The purpose of this article is to predict some stages of the future that I specifically thought they would make a category of prominent headlines. I confess that I am trying to locate the threats and diagnose the risk, to uncover some points about optimism and pessimism without digging deeply to the root.

1- Demography

Radical changes have transformed the demography of this planet. The current rate of Earth inhabitants has almost reached 6 billion. It's in constant elevation... It

might double by the end of this century. From a logical point of view, demographic growth reflects cultural blossoming. This was witnessed in Europe in the 18th and the 19th centuries. As the French historian Fernan Braudel said: “chaotic human abundance might be beneficial at its beginnings. It becomes harmful when demographic growth evolves at a faster pace than economic growth. That was the case in Europe by the end of the 16th century and so is the case in the majority of slowly developing countries”. (Fernand. B, 2009, 15.)

In the current demographic scene, we notice a strong decrease in population growth in developed countries whereas it's the complete opposite case in poor countries located essentially in Africa and Asia. In some regions like the Northern part of the American continent, in Australia, in the Eastern and the Western parts of Europe and for the white race, the population growth would develop on the expense of the demographic growth. The range of India – China-Japan will maintain its population sufficiency as it's dominated by the yellow race. While we will witness a population increase for the brown race mixed with white and yellow skin color in the Arab region and the Islamic world in general, same as the black race centered in the African continent and in other parts of the world... Thus, future demographic growth and ethnic expansion in the short term, medium term and even the long term will witness a considerable decline of the white race and this produces waves of pessimism regarding its planetary destiny. The ethnic and demographic future will be absolutely in favor of other races; yellow and brown skin interacting with other races; the same goes for the black race... In this context, panic on the European continent and the northern part of America will take place due to the awakening of the disastrous memories charged with racism and racial discrimination and cultural diversity in their countries. This would result in violent reactions by other races and cultures. It's all in the pessimistic scenario brought about by the evolution of this demographic situation.

While in the optimistic scenario, we would witness votes and speeches of the white race and other phenomena urging to disseminate the culture of peace, cooperation and partnership between human beings, regardless of their races and religions, just taking into consideration the fact that we all share and live on the same planet and we're all human beings. The Russian Sergi Capista refers to this and says: "No population growth can be described and evaluated throughout the world unless we consider the whole world and the people interacting in the demographic process as members of the same platoon in the demographic system". (Sergey. C, 2002, 130) It should be noted that the current course of events does not augur that the optimistic side would draw close on the short or the medium term.

2- Family

Since Family is the finest core and the most essential system to population growth, it is linked deeply to the demographic matter. It's not in its best shape at the time being, nor is it in the worst... In each family institution, we find the positive and the negative sides. Disintegration, disorder and tension are almost taking over the ambience of families all over the world. The situation may seem more dramatic in the west rather than the east what with all the divorce cases and conceptions without marriage... Discussing this specific point might take long but I'll just settle for displaying some numbers and examples. Since October 1985, AIDs started forming a crisis and a threat to all human beings. And ever since the phenomenon of "sexual freedom" has been spread in the late sixties, there has been an elevation of the risk of single parents raising their kids on their own. For instance, in Britain, since 1991, 1/4th of the kids have been the outcome of non marital relationships. Furthermore, in some regions of the richest capital in the world, Washington, the rate reached 90%. (2009, 8 & 9) Cases of family disintegration extend to affect the broad communication between

woman and man, among generations, and among other values in society. The tragic situation in the West does not exempt the disintegration status that the East is facing... None of the sciences or the studies promises future optimism; they all lead to the same conclusion: we are approaching the abyss of pessimism. To sum up, the current situation of the family foundation and its future does not set the human mind at ease. Note that the disintegration and the extinction of the family correspond to the disintegration of the extinction of any civilized coherent society.

3- Environment

The situation of the environment that embraces the people and the races isn't at all soothing. The wise human being, the finest biological creature on this planet, is an integral part of the natural and the cosmic surroundings. In the pre-industrial phase, there used to be a sort of harmony and coexistence between man and Mother Nature. With the emanation into the industrial stage, or in the perspective of the first scientific revolution then the second one and now the third, experts are warning against the grievous nightmare we're going through. It can almost be called a crisis. There is pollution all over the globe, dirt and toxic compounds are accumulating in the planet. Since the sixties of the last century and to this date, human beings have become the main source of dirt accumulation in nature. They contributed in the accumulation of 2000 times more dirt than any creature did in millions of years.

The saying launched by the scientific reasoning in the early seventeenth century that humans should control laws of the nature in order to control or dominate the earth has been beneficial on the materialistic level but harmful since it caused many natural catastrophes. Flaw has become prominent and visible to the naked eye between man and animal, man and plant, man and water, man and air, man and energy resources, man and outer space... Many big scientist were alarmed since the beginning of the last century like Fernads, Learo, Conda, Chejezki, de Sharden...

However, the heightened ecological danger turned more dramatic in recent decades, the thing which has necessitated the intervention of international social and scientific bodies like Club de Rome and the international life institute (Institute international de la vie). Although attention to this problem is rising locally and internationally, its peak was reached in 1992 in Rio de Janeiro, when an important international conference was held to study this dilemma. The voices of reason tried to warn that we're in the presence of a deep deterioration of the life organization on our planet. Everyone agrees that unless all nations join together and people and individuals unite, the disaster will not only affect the human body and community, but it will also attain the vital area of the entire planet. However, many of palliative measures and solutions adopted by the governments of East and West have not succeeded so far in rationally and wisely diagnosing the ecological threat. Therefore, we cannot see scientific solutions and radical ones for the ecological dilemma. Unless new alternatives are found as to how to treat the earth properly, the menace of the ecological crisis will remain strapping.

Qualitative shift in human activity on this planet has witnessed two major phases; first phase is the evolution of humankind from biological evolution into social development, the second is the human ability to establish advanced civilization on the physical and cultural level, without that being at the expense of harmony with the surroundings. However, the contradictive evolution between the ecological side in the human personality and the flagrant violation of the law of life through biological evolution, affecting plants and animals, and even the genome, has led us to the verge of crisis. These are risks that require a broader and more active mobilization of the creative resources to achieve optimism and proper interaction between man and nature.

4- Technical Mind and Technology Practice

After the first, second and third scientific revolutions that left deep impacts on societies, and with the new era of post-industrialism, there have been huge alterations in the life cycles. The world is moving at a real fast pace... We look for change as soon as we achieve an accomplishment. Post-modern cultures will be ok with the faster pace whereas poor countries will take very long to get to the same level. Within the sharp distinction among three patterns of the cultural, scientific, economic and informational development, it is expected that the world would witness many social disasters and the escalation of hatred between rich and poor countries. Quoting the famous American futurist Alvin Toffler "the early stages of the post-industrial society will witness massive social tremors and dramatic, chronological developments in the technical and economical game. Political instability and new wars are expected. Foreseen is an enormous threat to human destiny". (Alvin.T;1999, 194)

Since specific western parties control and manipulate the technical and industrial development, the international relations have an air of pessimism about them. Contributions and reasonable attempts will step up to focus on establishing a humanity speech calling for generalized more just and equitable relations among all human beings. This speech would aim to freeing humanity from the risks of robots, technology and machines taking over and ruining relations between man and nature.

Some pessimists predict a large clash between the mentalities and the cultures within the information technology explosion. Despite the fact that technology provided major communication facilities throughout the world, it carries danger more frightening than the nuclear reservoir. Whoever controls this scientific revolution will greedily control the minds and tastes of all human beings. This revolution and its impact on the receivers will be like a tsunami on the planetary level; it will destroy everything that's human about human beings.

A person who turns into a slave serving machines and technology is a man whose life turns to ruins... He or she will lose the warmth of communication. He or she will become cold. Their destiny is hard to foresee.

In brief, the future scenario involving a technology-dominated society will quarrel the human soul that is seeking harmony between the spiritual and the physical sides of humans. This will materialize in an unavoidable conflict.

5- Conflict and War Doctrines

One of the dilemmas that cause illness in human behavior is worshipping power and abiding by the narcissistic philosophy of conflict between a man and his environment. Humanity has witnessed several stages of conflict between Homo sapiens and nature and among human beings. These phases were drowned with wars; more than 10 000 wars on all levels. Then, the strength philosophy came to make everything worse. People wanted to be strongest among their fellow humans and to prove that, they got involved in wars and used biology and Darwin philosophy and enmity of the human nature and that was practiced all over the world. Peace, virtues and humanity became a mere memory in the back of the subconscious mind.

It would be unwise if I were to say that aggressive reaction and violence are not normal qualities of the human beings, because they are ones that he uses on a daily basis. Anger and enmity is always there; when dealing with family issues, when talking to neighbors, and especially in racism... These are well-known facts... Wars and conflicts have distinguished the weak from the strong and allowed the latter to take over and brag about victory.

Several questions remain unanswered: Can we live on this planet in a problem-free world, a world without wars or conflicts, a world where strength does not plainly imply domination? Can we look for a future adorned by principles that

transcend hatred and conflicts and that are based on peace? Can we go back to considering challenge as a fancy Olympic game like it was the case in 776 B.C. where competitors use their minds and strength in order to win and serve God and not in order to rule the world? Actually, ever since civilization was founded, wise men dreamt of peace. However, some say that peace wouldn't be established just by riddance of war and terrorism. As the French intellectual Claude Levi Strauss says: "war will only end when its theory ends, when we use creativity in order to get rid of its causes and terrorism, when it fails to develop... it doesn't end just with actual and periodic failure".(Claude.L.S, 1968,123-125)

War is an integral part of the concept and definition of authority and domination of the strong over the weak which society and human rights and religions are built upon.

War leads both killer and murdered, winner and loser, into hell where the victorious finds himself withdrawn from humanity and into animal instincts and demeaning levels of aggressiveness.

This dream of peace will only come true when people consider a philosophy like Darwin's, encouraging power and authority and domination, the one which unfortunately leaders still base their speeches on, as an extermination of humanity and good virtues. Sadly, such philosophy is still imposed on military parties and armies all throughout the world.

This perspective has been present ever since the Darwin social philosophy which was applied by Spenser, Marcos, Angelus, Lenin, Stalin and long before the idea of "establishing the aggressive self" by Freud... All of these tend to use force in order to defend the identity, the self and the religion...

This ghost hovering the earth will, in no possible way, lead people to safe grounds. The human imagination, obsessive with the concept of power, conflict and

war, is in jeopardy. Everyone is looking to kill the other without working on killing the enmity and the violence within. Great responsibility is born undoubtedly by the strongest in the West, but responsibility also lies on the shoulders of the weakest. Exhibits are Gandhi, Jesus and Buddha, and many verses of the Quran that emphasize that "the murderer and the murdered are both in hell fires"...

Perhaps the exit from wars and conflicts' tunnel would be possible thanks to the unity of all wisemen in the West and East. They will aim to develop the idea of cooperation and partnership and democracy among persons. This notion was named "biological altruism" by the Canadian scientist Jean Relethford. It's also known as "cooperation development".(Relethford, J .H., 1997, 114) I add to it communication, honest and concentrated partnership between cultures and religions.

6- Authority of the Ruler and the Ruled

One of the ordeals we face on a daily basis and that disfigure the human image in our societies is the relation between authority and domination. Authority is crucial to avoid chaos and to keep organization. It's not the case nowadays where authority conveys an absolutely unique message which is domination and power. It's a radical tool to subjugate subordinates to leaders, the weak to the strong, current times to the past. It begins within the walls of the same family to reach the streets and the state institutions and the other sectors of civil society. It's hard to grab and fix because it no longer deals just with the top presidential or parliamentary or governmental, judicial or religious posts, but it is also extended to all types of thinking and behavior in humans.

The deterrent and the dark sides of power lie wherever domination and materialism conquer knowledge.

The strong wants to dominate the weak and the weak wants to dominate anyone who's even weaker in his surroundings. This leads to wars and divorces and breaking of communication. There is no solution to this hell except by trying to dismantle and expose this kind of power wherever and whenever it is present. It's necessary to nurture all kinds of democratic resistance and rationality within each authority. Here, the optimistic scenario highlights the view that we are not against the positive presence of power and authority meaning to maintain order and legitimacy of humanitarian values but we are in opposition to every authority that suffocates freedom and justice, equality and democracy.

7- Humanitarian World or Crisis

The current path of planetary civilization, based on the materialistic consumption model and a variety of wrong strategies and policies about the environment, economy, technology, power and authority, is leading toward a wrong target which is honoring money and power, idolizing temptation and selfishness. Most of the scientists and researchers, teachers, professors, engineers, doctors, artists and others with high educational certificates live in a state of narrow material resources, while poorly educated groups who resort to all types of fraud and theft live in material affluence yet extreme moral and spiritual poverty... All mafias, and all leaders and all the people who damage the earth resources only seek money and they consider it a god that provides them with power and authority and therefore a perfect life. They deny and refuse to accept and acknowledge the new strategy. This new strategy holds a qualitative change in the role of science and education, technology and political strategies for the organization and a renewal of the values of spirituality, in order to communicate in a more illuminating and peaceful way to a heavenly extent. It requires the establishment of a cultural system for the sake of science, education and ethics, religion, beliefs and philosophies. It would make a more

comprehensive and deeper model responding to the needs of the post-industrial, post-liberal society. A spiritual, cultural, revolutionary, economic, humanitarian, communication-based strategy, focused primarily on the humanization of societies and the rationalization of religions, based on equal opportunities and just judgment of the creative abilities and skills of a person. Discoveries in “brain science” promise new ways to deal with the earthly matters that are more peaceful and humanitarian. Since the dawn of civilization and the longing of Homo sapiens for the values of goodness, justice, labor, knowledge, beauty, inner peace and harmony between man and nature and God referred to as the Cosmic Mind in the Buddhist perspective, we believe that we are the followers of religions, the people of the book.

Mankind, as indicated by the academic group that contributed in the making of the book entitled: the Dialogue of Cultures: Meaning, Ideas and Techniques, lives facing “turning points we had never ran across in the entire history: Either the complete and ultimate collapse due to a clash among civilizations or prosperity thanks to the blend of all forces to create more favorable conditions for a fair partnership. Responsibility lies on the shoulders of governments, decision-makers and each and every one of the persons living on this planet”. (Suheil. F & Aleg. K, 2008, 11)

Optimistic Strategy should have the following objectives: to give a larger credit and role for the creative minds who work on formulating cultural suggestions and alternatives to the confrontation by force, tyranny and war, to accredit the persons whose aims are to create a new Charter of Ethics for mankind while trying to save the earth from the disastrous civilization of consumption and desire and the uncontrollable instinct of aggression and worship of money. The new strategy consists of a permanent, deep and generalized renewal of the culture of dialogue, partnership and cooperation amongst human beings on this planet.

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