

I. A world in transition

1. Globalisation of issues

• We come (at this period in history) from a time of classification, division, separation. The very existence of Nation-States as a sign of modern times was an affirmation of boundaries, of self-contained units, capable to determine their own political + administrative organization and gradually encompassing economic self-sufficiency. The domination exercised by a few over many had led also to the assertiveness of cultures in the efforts to establish a basis for equality.

In such a context, values could almost stand by themselves. They seemed an integral part of the reality defined by its boundaries.

Today's world has moved radically away from a boundary-shaped map. Nothing is anymore self-contained. Boundaries are thin barriers which, within a given territory, lose any sense of meaning and of being operational.

• Culture, each culture, is doomed to a resistance to the prevailing world-culture in information, music, taste. At the same time, we see a painful, if not bloody, effort for each culture to affirm its own identity, to be respected in its originality. How to relate the two modes? Which values are there in the world-culture and in the specific culture of a group so that the circulation between the two may be possible? Through which values are they communicating? Which values reinforce the two poles?



Like wise, economic + social issues are not any more contained within the boundaries of every country. The world economy is not the sum total of individualized operations but a new reality existing at the international level - credit, currency and trade are not defined at national level but managed in a much broader scale by different operators. Even social issues which take always a visible, proximate physiognomy, are determined, to a great extent, in the international connectedness. Such is, ^{for example,} the result of the delocalization of enterprises, generating employment and unemployment in a totally dysfunctional manner - unemployment may happen where exactly a corporation has its headquarters and, therefore, where plus-value returns and profit is made, while generation of jobs is happening where no profit is re-distributed or taxed. ^{These} the decisions to be made ^{would} have to encompass disjointed units and to be formulated at different levels.

This creates a feeling of "all is possible" while, in fact, we are reaching a stage when many things have ceased to be possible.



The relationship with the other... As Rollo May says: "The future lies with the man or woman who can live as an individual, conscious within the solidarity of the human race. He then uses the tension between individuality + solidarity as the source of his ethical creativity". The tendency towards individualism, after an intense period of several decades concerning with the "project of society", with "alternatives", may eliminate one of the terms of this human equation. Today's teachers (most) have been nurtured in a period when commitment to collective good was taken for granted. It would be easy to suppose that such generation would have turned towards individualism: personal desire + pleasure as the only criteria; one's own career as the only goal in society; indifference to global social issues. It would then be dangerous to pass on such an attitude.

Obviously it is the individual purpose which gives warmth + direction to the society. Likewise the individual person acquires full meaning in the interplay with the society of which she is a part - may it be local or global.



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The globalisation of issues (and the consequent displacement of decision-making) asks for a new constellation of values. Most of all, the need for context of specific ideas + events. If everything is part of a broad system, the main elements of the system, both rationally + operationally, have to be made visible. The context of a specific issue has to be broadened so as to include the threads which are linking the issue to the wider context. No issue remains close in itself.

Adding to this broadening of the issue, comes the fact that changes in the global context are likely to happen often. They will have a bearing on the specific issue at its stake. Therefore, besides a new space-dimension for the issue, ^{there} it will also be affected by the time-dimension which expands or contracts parts of the system at different moments.

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Two sets of elements are at work in the shaping of values. There are, first of all, the primordial myths which convey the stories, the fundamental beliefs, which permeate the implicitly, all the most elementary choices and decisions. They provide the ultimate criterium for what is "good" or "bad". Secondly, values are also emerging ~~as~~ the social construct of any institutional group of human beings.

The myths are providers of meaning while the social constructs determine directions. Myths precede the individual while social constructs are immanent to human life in a ^{given} social context. An "ideal" society would combine myth and social constructs. Função: Cuidar o Futuro There as the result of the continuous interplay ^{between} (of both) myth + social construct - sometimes in harmonious blending, at other moments in unforgettable tragedy.

In our Western society, the myth expressed in the story of Antigone encounters the social construct of the political organization of Theban society. Though replaced in this century by the story of her father, Antigone's story ~~is~~ remains the same against ^{which} all values can be elaborated. The Greek society defines the fundamentals of political organization: obedience to the law is seen as the basic ingredient of any judgement on individual's behaviour. Hence Creon



strength in affirming that if he doesn't defend such a law, there would be no meaning in his task as a King. But Antigone comes to the fore of events by taking another stance: she has to obey, first of all, to the unwritten laws of respect for the individual - her brother whose treason leaves him without ~~burying~~ ^{burial}. She stands ~~then for the cohesion among human beings, for the ties of brotherhood, for the unspoken laws of care + responsibility.~~

A presence to one's own world, history + daily events brings continuously into play these two threads. In the first - shaped in the very simple gesture of giving burial to her own brother - is at ~~stake~~ ^{stake} the most subversive ~~set~~ ^{system} of values, those who appeal to the symbolic reality of life.

In Antigone's decision is at ~~stake~~ the respect for all human beings (even those who have become outcasts out of their own will), the ties of brotherhood (even the one tainted by the double crime of Oedipus + Jocasta), the cohesion among human beings in spite of all the boundaries that separate them (even the fact that only Antigone + Ismения took care of their blind father while ~~Polynices +~~ ^{her brothers went away} ~~Polynices +~~ vanished from such duties).

• Deprived from the symbolic reality, values lose their autonomy + become easily the prey of norms + social conventions. These are often the outcome of the reductionist approach to the primordial myths. Instead of being



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Everytime anew the human person has to place herself/himself in the chain of solidarity with others, in this time + space we call the world.



In this time + space ... two aspects appear as demanding. In this time: the Kairos, the opportunity of the present, the "acceptable time" become a dominant concept. The science of composition of probabilities reinforces such a notion - every moment is not ^{only} unique but also the opportunity for bifurcation, the juncture where choices can be made and new paths followed. But "time is also the fabrics of our eternity" and, in this sense, its meaning is so strong that it is "almost paralyzing". To Fundação Cuidar o Futuro obtain a result in a given time - those every day requests are part of a much more intense ^{web} fabrics of the instants of time.

In this acute sense of the Kairos - not the time that slips by but time that ticks is the movement of the quartz watch - takes birth the responsibility for now + the future. It is the sense of the irreversible present that demands the legacy of the past + makes imperative the contribution to the future.

The new conditions ^{of the world} + awareness of them enter into the respons. for the future. In our time we have a new knowledge of the

cumulative effect of acts + decisions. The world is not an abstract, idealized scenario of the drama of human history. In the last decades, a new actor entered the scene of our common history. Nature became part of history, asserted its existence, expressed its rebellion to the domination exercised over her. Being in the world is then also a responsibility for nature, for the preservation of its future. The many facets of such a responsibility are only too obvious in the day-to-day display of natural or man-made disasters and in the clumsy attempts to bring a remedy to them.

Being part of the Kairos is entering an integrated contemporaneity, appropriating into oneself the elements of contemporary thought, knowledge, human + social organisation. There is no stockage of knowledge or any value marked ingredients which may be passed on + dealt with forever. Where are the teachers capable of dealing with the subjects they have to deal with teach in a contemporary way?

Their understanding, their formulation, the conditions of their practical application, the problems they are supposed to solve... whatever we have to teach, we have to teach it in the context of today's culture + events. Only such a knowledge can be passed on and help to form an integrated contemporaneity.

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