The World is what we are

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Preamble

From the dawn of his existence, man has always been a creator, not only of monuments, cultures and technologies, but also of social, political and environmental realities. Every civilisation, every society, every community is the product of the human psyche, a complex collection of our thoughts, beliefs, fears and hopes.

This preamble lays the foundations for a quest to understand not only how and why we built the world as it is today, but also how we can contribute to its future evolution. In the pages that follow, we will travel through time, from the earliest beginnings of humanity to modern societies, in search of answers to a fundamental question: are we, as a species, simply the product of our environment, or are we the active architects of our own destiny?

By examining the different periods of human history, we will see how societies have evolved, how they have changed in response to our internal transformations, and how, in many ways, they have been shaped by ourselves as individuals and by our collective aspirations. From the egalitarianism of the first communities to the complexity of modern societies, each chapter will reveal an aspect of this intimate relationship between man and his world.

But more than a simple historical journey, this book is an invitation to reflect. It encourages us to look beyond appearances, to question the foundations on which our societies are built, and to recognise the immense power we all hold - the power to shape our world. Because,

ultimately, if the world is what we are, then by changing ourselves, we have the power to transform the world.

At the heart of our exploration is a core thesis that is both simple and profoundly relevant: the world is a reflection of our inner being. This idea is not new; it has resonated through the ages in philosophies, religions and even modern thought. Yet its true significance for our times is often overlooked, rarely revealed or underestimated.

Our external world, with its social structures, politics, conflicts and triumphs, is like a mirror in which our inner world, our deepest thoughts, emotions, values and beliefs, are reflected. This is not just a poetic metaphor, but a tangible reality. The societies in which we live are not independent, autonomous entities; they are the product of the human mind, shaped by our collective aspirations, fears, prejudices and desires.

Looking at the world from this perspective opens us up to a deeper understanding of human nature and its role in creating our collective reality. We begin to see that wars, inequalities, injustices and crises are not failures of our political or economic systems, but manifestations of our internal conflicts, our spiritual disarray and our unquenchable thirst for meaning and connection.

This perspective also offers a path to change and healing. If we accept that the outer world is a reflection of our inner world, then transforming our environment begins with an inner journey. By healing our own wounds, by resolving

our own conflicts, the outer world will be more just, balanced and at peace.

In the following pages, we seek to understand how we got to where we are today and how, by becoming aware of who we really are, we can create a world that reflects the best of who we are.

Egalitarian societies

The dawn of humanity

Our journey to discover the link between man and the world he builds takes us back to the very origins of humanity, some 2.5 to 2.8 million years ago, at the beginning of the Palaeolithic period. At that time, marked by the appearance of the first representatives of the Homo genus such as Homo habilis, the first humans lived in harmony with nature. They forged a deep and intuitive bond with the environment around them, adapting their way of life to natural cycles and available resources. These low-tech communities were rich in understanding and respect for the natural world. Their existence, punctuated by the needs of hunting and gathering, and later by the use of fire, represented a subtle balance between their needs and the resources of their environment. This period marks the first fundamental stages of human evolution, eventually leading to the emergence of Homo sapiens, our own species, some 300,000 to 200,000 years ago.

Harmonious coexistence

In these egalitarian societies, roles were not dictated by dominance or force, but by a shared understanding of the importance of each individual to the well-being of the group. Hunting, gathering, protecting and educating the young were shared responsibilities, reflecting a social structure based on cooperation and equality. This equality was not an ideology but a practical necessity, arising

naturally from the way in which these societies were integrated into their environment.

Harmony with nature

In the earliest human societies, living in harmony with nature was not just a practice, but a fundamental principle, a central pillar of their existence. People of that time had a deep and intuitive understanding of their environment, recognising that their survival and well-being depended closely on the health and balance of the ecosystem around them.

The first humans were deeply synchronised with the cycles of nature. They followed the rhythms of the seasons, animal migrations, plant growth cycles and climatic variations. This knowledge enabled them to optimise hunting, gathering, fishing and, later, farming, in harmony with natural cycles, without depleting resources.

Adaptation to the environment was a key characteristic of these societies. Their way of life was flexible and could be modified in response to environmental changes. For example, they could move to new territories if resources were scarce, or modify their hunting strategies in response to the migratory habits of animals. This approach ensured the sustainability of their way of life and the conservation of their environment for future generations.

Nature was also a profound source of spirituality for early humans. They often saw the natural elements - trees, rivers, mountains, animals - as sacred or inhabited by spirits. This worldview created a sense of respect and

reverence for nature, and many rituals and beliefs were centred around these natural elements. This spiritual connection strengthened the bond between man and nature, fostering a respectful and balanced coexistence.

The wisdom of egalitarian societies

The wisdom of ancient egalitarian societies manifested itself in their simplicity, not in terms of a lack of sophistication, but as a refined and meaningful way of life. This simplicity was reflected in their relationship with nature and their daily practices. They concentrated on what was essential for survival and well-being, avoiding excess and waste. This minimalist approach enabled them to live more sustainably and less encumbered by superfluous material possessions, emphasising the quality of life rather than the quantity of goods.

These communities lived in harmony with the laws of nature, instinctively understanding the limits and capacities of their environment. They practised a form of resource management based on observing and respecting natural cycles, ensuring that their use of natural resources was sustainable and renewable. For example, they practised crop rotation, responsible hunting and fishing, and used environmentally-friendly construction methods.

The spiritual beliefs and practices of these societies were deeply rooted in a respect for the earth, animals and natural elements. This spirituality was not detached from their daily lives, but was an intrinsic part of them. Rituals, myths and legends were often centred on natural elements,

such as totem animals, forest spirits or water divinities, reflecting an understanding of the interdependence between humans and nature.

Respect for the environment was integrated into the culture and traditions of these peoples. Community decisions, whether related to agriculture, construction or hunting, were taken with an eye to their impact on nature. This ecological awareness was passed down from generation to generation, ensuring the perpetuation of a sustainable way of life.

Lessons to be learned from egalitarian societies

Looking back at the earliest human societies leads us to reflect deeply on the evolution of our relationship with nature and with each other. By examining these ancient societies, we can better understand the foundations of our own existence and how, over time, our interactions with our environment and our social systems have undergone major transformations.

Exploring the egalitarian societies of the past reveals a way of life in close harmony with nature and based on principles of cooperation and sharing. This harmony, as we shall see in the following chapters, was gradually altered by the emergence of agriculture, sedentarisation and the development of complex social structures. It is crucial to understand the fundamental reasons why we have moved away from our original balance with nature. This understanding is essential if we are to solve current problems such as environmental crises, social disparities

and our growing disconnection with the natural environment.[1]

This approach does not aim to idealise the past, but rather to draw valuable lessons from these ancient ways of life. By recognising the beneficial aspects of these societies, such as their respect for nature and their egalitarian social structure, we can seek to integrate these values into the modern context.

Reflection on egalitarian societies encourages us to envisage a future in which some of their fundamental principles can be reintegrated. This means rethinking our relationship with nature, not as a resource to be exploited, but as a vital partner with which we must co-exist. In addition, we need to rethink our social and economic systems to promote greater justice and collaboration, while being fully aware of the reciprocal links and dependencies between people, communities and the environment.

By revisiting ancient societies and understanding their harmonious relationship with nature and their egalitarian structure, we open up new perspectives for tackling contemporary challenges. This historical and cultural reflection is a step towards creating a world where

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[1] Today's movements and organisations, including environmentalists, sustainable communities, NGOs, social justice movements, the integration of indigenous practices, academic research, the development of sustainable technologies, and opinion leaders, are drawing on the values of ancient egalitarian societies to build a more sustainable and balanced future.

humanity can live in balance, respecting both our natural environment and our fundamental social values. It is a call to recognise and embrace the lessons of the past in order to build a more sustainable and fulfilling future.

The dawn of sedentarisation

This chapter explores a crucial turning point in human history: the transition from nomadic life to a sedentary lifestyle. This period marks the beginning of agriculture and the foundation of the first permanent structures. With sedentarisation, human societies gradually moved away from their egalitarian and harmonious state with nature, embarking on a path towards increasing social and cultural complexity.

The emergence of agriculture

The emergence of agriculture[2] marked a decisive turning point in human history, bringing about profound transformations in lifestyle, social organisation and the environment. This revolution, which began around 10,000 BC, saw human communities gradually move from a hunter-gatherer lifestyle to one based on the cultivation of plants and the domestication of animals.

Learning to grow crops such as wheat, barley, and later rice and maize, as well as domesticating animals such as cattle, sheep and goats, radically altered man's relationship with his environment. This ability to control and predict food production enabled communities to stabilise and develop in a single location, marking the beginning of sedentarisation.

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[2] The book "The Origins of Agriculture: An International Perspective", co-edited by C. Wesley Cowan and Patty Jo Watson, brings together the work of various experts on the origins of agriculture in different parts of the world (see appendices "What the experts say").

With agriculture came an abundance of food resources, unknown in the hunter-gatherer lifestyle. This abundance allowed the population to grow and led to significant changes in social structure. Societies began to see an increased division of labour, with individuals specialising in various tasks other than food production, such as handicrafts, trade or the management of community affairs.

Agriculture created food surpluses, which had far-reaching implications. The surpluses supported a non-farming population, including artisans, traders and leaders. They have also allowed food to be stored for times of shortage, increasing the stability and security of communities.

The ability to produce food surpluses laid the foundations for complex societies, with the emergence of urban centres, administrative structures and political hierarchies. Surpluses facilitated trade and contributed to the accumulation of wealth, reinforcing social and economic inequalities within communities.

The first urban societies

The advent of agriculture paved the way for one of the most significant developments in human history: the formation of the first urban societies. This evolution, which began around 7500 BC, marked a radical transformation in the social structure and organisation of humanity.

Agricultural surpluses enabled larger populations to gather and live in one place, leading to the formation of the first cities. Notable examples include Çatalhöyük in modern Anatolia and the cities of the Indus Valley civilisation such as Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro. These cities were characterised by more permanent housing structures, resource management systems, and infrastructure such as roads and drainage systems.

With the growth of cities, the social structure became more complex and hierarchical. Unlike the small, egalitarian communities of hunter-gatherers, urban societies saw the emergence of different social classes, often based on land ownership, wealth and political power. This hierarchisation marked a fundamental change, with the emergence of dominant groups that controlled resources and made decisions affecting the whole community.

In these urban societies, wealth and power began to concentrate in the hands of a few individuals or families. The elites, often composed of large landowners, prosperous merchants and political leaders, had considerable control over the city's resources and economic life. This concentration of wealth created marked economic and social disparities, moving these societies away from the old egalitarian systems.

Daily life in these early cities reflected their growing complexity and hierarchy. While the elite enjoyed great luxury and high status, many city dwellers worked as craftsmen, tradesmen or labourers, often in difficult

conditions. Urban life offered economic opportunities, but also new challenges, particularly in terms of population density, public health and resource management.

Hierarchisation and social division

With the transition of human societies to a sedentary lifestyle and the advent of agriculture, increased social hierarchisation began to take shape. This marked a significant break with the egalitarian structures of hunter-gatherer societies.

One of the most significant changes was the accumulation of wealth and resources. In sedentary societies, ownership of land and the ability to produce surplus food created opportunities to amass material wealth. This led to the formation of distinct social classes based on wealth and economic status.

The concentration of wealth and resources gave rise to distinct power structures. Individuals or families who controlled vast tracts of farmland, or who possessed significant resources, naturally acquired considerable power and influence. This elite, often made up of rulers, priests and prosperous merchants, began to exert significant control over societies.

Leaders and priests played a central role in these hierarchical societies. They were often seen as intermediaries between the gods and men, justifying their status and power. These authority figures established rules

and norms which, in many cases, favoured the interests of the elite to the detriment of the lower classes.[3]

For the majority of the population, this hierarchical structure meant less autonomy and greater dependence on the elites. Peasants, artisans and workers formed the lower classes of society, often subject to taxes, drudgery and other forms of exploitation. Their living conditions contrasted sharply with those of the privileged elite.

This increased social division had profound consequences for societies. It created rigid class systems with limited social mobility. Social, economic and power inequalities took root, establishing patterns that have persisted and evolved over the centuries in many civilisations.

The impact of a sedentary lifestyle

The transition to sedentary, agricultural societies has significantly altered man's relationship with nature. While hunter-gatherer societies generally maintained a respectful and symbiotic relationship with their environment, the advent of agriculture marked a shift towards a more exploitative and domineering approach.

In hunter-gatherer societies, humans often saw themselves as an integral part of nature, adapting their way of life to

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[3] Flannery and Marcus's "The Creation of Inequality" offers a detailed and well-documented perspective on the origins of social and economic hierarchies in human societies (see appendices).

natural rhythms and resources. With agriculture, this perception began to change. Nature became something to be mastered and exploited for human needs. Land was cleared, rivers diverted for irrigation, and ecosystems modified to increase food production.

Intensive farming has led to significant changes in natural landscapes. Forests have been cleared to make way for fields, natural habitats have been destroyed, and biodiversity has often been reduced. This change in the environment has had repercussions on local and global ecosystems, upsetting established ecological balances.

The domestication of animals has also played a role in transforming man's relationship with nature. Animals went from being seen as living beings in a shared ecosystem to resources to be managed and exploited. This evolution affected not only populations of domesticated animals, but also the way in which humans perceived and interacted with all forms of animal life.

Farming and domestication practices have had long-lasting environmental consequences, some of which only manifest themselves centuries later. Soil erosion, salinisation of farmland[4] and loss of soil fertility are just some of the environmental problems that have resulted from intensive farming. These changes have also laid the foundations for contemporary environmental problems

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[4]"Salinisation of agricultural land" refers to the accumulation of soluble salts in the soil to levels that can adversely affect plant growth and soil fertility. This phenomenon generally occurs in areas where irrigation is intensive and poorly managed.

such as deforestation, loss of biodiversity and climate change.

The first forms of conflict

With sedentarisation and the emergence of agricultural societies, tensions and conflicts began to manifest themselves more frequently and more sharply. The concentration of resources and demographic growth were key catalysts for these disputes, marking a significant departure from the peaceful and cooperative practices of hunter-gatherer societies.

One of the main factors of conflict in sedentary societies was the struggle for control of fertile land and water resources[5] . With agriculture as the basis of the economy, possession of arable land became extremely valuable. This led to conflicts between neighbouring communities, internal struggles over land ownership, and even invasions by outside groups seeking to appropriate new territories.

Competition for resources led to the emergence of war as a means of resolving territorial and resource conflicts. Societies began to develop military structures to defend their lands or conquer new ones. This militarisation marked a profound change in social dynamics, where strength and the ability to fight became precious assets.

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[5]Diamond's book, Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies, shows how environmental and geographical factors have influenced the social structures and conflict dynamics of human societies.

Conflicts were not limited to the struggle for physical resources; they were also linked to desires for power and domination. Leaders sought to extend their influence, often at the expense of neighbouring communities. These ambitions led to wars of conquest and the building of empires, where military force was used to subjugate other peoples.

These early forms of conflict marked a departure from the traditions of peace and cooperation that characterised many hunter-gatherer societies. Although these societies also experienced conflict, the scale and frequency of the wars were generally less. Sedentary societies, with their complex structures and concentrated resources, created fertile ground for more widespread and destructive conflicts.

Sedentarisation was therefore a pivotal moment, triggering a series of transformations that have shaped human society as we know it today. This analysis of the transition to sedentarisation reveals how the loss of harmony with nature and the emergence of complex social structures were crucial stages in human evolution, leading to a world marked by inequality, conflict and complexity.

The evolution towards more complex societies

We're going to look at a fundamental aspect of human transition: how the evolution and increasing complexity of human thought have led to the illusion of a separation between man and the world around him.

The growth of the human intellect

With the transition to a sedentary lifestyle and the development of the first civilisations, humanity experienced a significant increase in its intellectual capacities. This period was marked by major advances in a variety of fields, testifying to the considerable growth and complexity of the human intellect.

One of the major advances of this era was the invention of writing. Initially developed for record-keeping and accounting, particularly in civilisations such as Sumer in Mesopotamia, writing revolutionised the ability of humans to store and transmit information. This not only facilitated the management of complex societies, but also paved the way for the accumulation and dissemination of knowledge.

The development of complex accounting and management systems also reflected this intellectual growth. The need to manage resources efficiently, plan harvests and administer rapidly growing societies stimulated the development of advanced mathematical and organisational methods. These systems were essential for maintaining order and stability in sedentary societies.

The emergence of the first forms of governance and state structures is another indicator of this intellectual evolution. Societies began to develop laws, regulations and institutions to manage community affairs, resolve conflicts and organise collective life. These structures reflected a more sophisticated understanding of social, political and economic dynamics.

This intellectual growth also led to a change in the way humans perceived and interacted with their environment. With the increased ability to control and modify the environment to meet their needs, humans began to see themselves as distinct from, and often superior to, nature.

From connection to separation

The transition from egalitarian societies to more complex forms of civilisation has brought about a fundamental change in man's perception of his place in the world. While egalitarian societies maintained a holistic view of the world, rooted in a deep and instinctive connection with nature and the community, the evolution of human thought gradually altered this perception.

In egalitarian societies, people saw the world as a connected, unified whole. Individuals saw themselves as part of a larger whole, in harmony with nature and the other members of their community. This way of life was often reinforced by spiritual beliefs and practices that emphasised the interdependence of all beings and elements in the environment.

With the development of more complex societies, marked by the advent of agriculture, the first forms of governance and the development of hierarchical social systems, the way in which humans perceived themselves began to change. The increasing complexity of thought, notably through writing, intellectual development and urbanisation, led to a growing perception of the individual as a distinct entity, separate from his or her natural environment and from others.

This new way of perceiving ourselves gave rise to what we might call the illusion of separation. Humans began to see themselves as independent and distinct beings, not only from nature but also from each other.

Several authors, such as Steve Taylor, have explored the idea of a kind of 'fall' or tipping point in human consciousness that occurred in ancient history. There was a period in human history (often associated with the end of hunter-gatherer societies and the beginning of sedentary agriculture) when humans began to feel more separated from each other and from nature. This transition is thought to have led to more hierarchical and conflictual societies.

This period marked a loss of the state of consciousness in which humans felt in harmony with the world around them. This led to an increase in selfishness, aggression and insecurity.

On the other hand, there has been a profound change in human psychology and social structures, suggesting that

human societies have moved from an egalitarian and cooperative way of life to a more competitive and hierarchical one.

This perception was reinforced by social structures that emphasised differentiation, individual possession and competition, thus distancing individuals from the notion of unity and interconnection that prevailed in egalitarian societies.

This illusion of separation has had profound consequences for the way humans interact with each other and with their environment. In the pursuit of individual or group interests, human actions have often ignored the impact on the wider community and on nature. This has led to conflict, exploitation of natural resources and a gradual disintegration of the harmony that characterised earlier societies.

The birth of individual identity

In the course of the evolution of human societies towards more complex structures, a fundamental change took place in the way individuals perceived themselves. The emergence of individual identity, a concept extensively studied by the renowned anthropologist and psychologist Erik Erikson, marked a key stage in this transformation, profoundly altering the way humans perceived themselves and their relationship with the world.

Erikson explored identity formation in depth in his work Identity: Youth and Crisis, where he describes how personal identity develops through different stages of life. This new sense of self has led to a heightened sense of individualism, where individuals have begun to focus more on their own aspirations, desires and needs, sometimes at the expense of the community or the natural environment. The importance of self-expression, self-fulfilment and standing out from the crowd has become a central preoccupation.

The birth of individual identity, examined in depth by Erik Erikson, marks a turning point in personal development within societies. Erikson describes how personal identity develops through different stages, influenced by the social and cultural context. This process leads to a strengthening of the sense of individualism, where personal aspirations, desires and needs gain in importance, sometimes to the detriment of collective bonds and harmony with nature.

In Erikson's work, although the emphasis is on individual development, the implications of this process for the social fabric are implicit. The rise of individualism, highlighted in his theories, has influenced social, economic and political structures, leading to societies marked by more pronounced distinctions of class, power and status.

The impact of individualism

The move towards more complex societies, marked by a growing perception of individualism, has profoundly transformed social relations and societal structures. With

the emergence of individual identity, a growing sense of independence has given rise to competitive behaviour, often at the expense of solidarity and collective well-being.

This competitiveness, initially conceived as a quest for personal success, wealth and status, has manifested itself in various spheres of social life. In the business world, for example, the fierce competition between companies for innovation and market dominance is a reflection of this exacerbated individualism. The giants of the technology industry, vying for market share, are a perfect illustration of this competitive spirit.

At the political level, this trend has led to power struggles and increased inequality. Individualism has given rise to a dynamic of "me against others", where personal interests often take precedence over the collective. This situation is particularly palpable in Western democracies, where political polarisation and ideological conflicts reflect this individualistic perspective.

As a result, traditional community ties have often been eroded, giving way to a society where relationships are based more on personal interests than shared values. Solidarity and mutual aid, once the pillars of communities, have given way to a culture of individualism and competition, profoundly influencing the social, economic and political structures of our time.

A break with nature

The evolution of human societies towards more complex and individualised thinking has led to a significant break in the relationship between man and nature. This transformation in perception has had profound consequences for the environment.

Historically, hunter-gatherer societies and certain primitive agricultural societies perceived nature as an essential and integral part of their existence. This understanding of the interdependence between humans, animals, plants and ecosystems was fundamental to their way of life and survival. However, with the advent of modern societies and the emphasis on individualism and development, this perception has changed radically.

A flagrant example of this transformation is the intensive exploitation of forests for agriculture and industry, leading to large-scale deforestation. Entire regions that were once lush and diverse have been transformed into farmland or urban areas, losing their original biodiversity. This exploitation has upset the ecological balance, causing damage that is often irreversible.

At the same time, the industrial revolution marked a turning point in man's relationship with nature. The rise of industrialisation led to massive use of natural resources, fuelling economic growth but exacerbating the ecological crisis. Air and water pollution, the depletion of mineral resources and soil degradation are some of the direct consequences of this change.

This separation has also led to a loss of traditional knowledge linked to the sustainable management of ecosystems. Entire communities that used to live in harmony with their natural environment have seen their way of life and ecological knowledge marginalised or forgotten, in favour of approaches focused on performance and efficiency.

The increasing complexity of human thought and the evolution of societies have not only transformed the way we live, but have also profoundly affected our interaction with nature. This break with the natural world, driven by growth and development objectives, has led to a major environmental crisis, underlining the need to rethink our relationship with nature.

The quest for security

Let's explore a fundamental aspect of the human experience: the incessant quest for security and comfort. This aspiration, deeply rooted in human nature, has significantly shaped the history and structure of our societies.

Its origin

The quest for security is a fundamental aspect of the human condition, rooted in our survival instinct and our response to the uncertainties and dangers of the world. Since the dawn of humanity, this quest has played a crucial role in our evolution and in the way we have structured our societies.

In the early stages of human evolution, the quest for security was primarily focused on satisfying basic needs. Early humans faced an environment full of immediate threats: predators, bad weather, disease and lack of food. Security meant finding reliable shelter, ensuring sufficient food and protecting oneself against physical dangers. Hunter-gatherer communities organised themselves around these imperatives, developing strategies and skills to navigate an often unpredictable and hostile world.

With the development of agricultural societies and the formation of more complex social structures, the notion of security took on new dimensions. Sedentarisation created a need for territorial security, while the accumulation of resources led to the notion of economic security.

Individuals and communities no longer sought protection only against immediate physical threats, but also to guarantee the stability and sustainability of their means of subsistence.

In structured societies, economic security has become a major concern. Land ownership, accumulated wealth and access to resources have become key indicators of security. At the same time, social security emerged as an important aspect. It was reflected in the stability of social relationships, recognition within the community, and the ability to influence collective decisions.

A striking example of the quest for emotional and psychological security can be found in the emergence and evolution of religious and philosophical systems throughout human history. Take, for example, the development of Hinduism in ancient India.

Hinduism, with its diverse practices, rituals and philosophical teachings, has played a crucial role in providing a framework for understanding and navigating the complexities of life and the universe. This religious and philosophical system has offered answers to profound existential questions such as the purpose of life, the nature of suffering and the path to liberation or moksha.

The Vedas, the sacred scriptures of Hinduism, provided a body of knowledge and guidance that helped people connect with the cosmos and find meaning in their existence. Vedic rituals, such as yajnas (ritual sacrifices),

were designed to maintain cosmic order and bring prosperity and security to the community.

The concept of dharma, or duty, in Hinduism also helped to establish a sense of security and order in society. By adhering to their dharma, each individual played their part in maintaining social and cosmic balance, which in turn promised a sense of stability and security.

Thus Hinduism, like other religious and philosophical systems, was a key means by which ancient societies sought to understand their world and find a sense of security in a complex and often unpredictable universe. These systems provided a framework for managing fears and uncertainties, offering emotional and psychological reassurance through belief in a higher order and purpose in life.

Its symbol: Comfort

In today's society, comfort - defined as the possession of material goods, a high standard of living and access to modern conveniences - is often seen as a direct indicator of security. This comfort-security equation has become firmly entrenched in the collective mind, where the accumulation of wealth and material success are seen as means of protection against the uncertainties and hazards of life. The possession of a comfortable home, substantial savings and various types of insurance is often interpreted as a bulwark against risk and instability.

In this context, many people's life goals have been geared towards acquiring wealth and seeking greater comfort. Social and personal success is often measured in terms of material possessions and the level of comfort achieved. This quest for material comfort has become a central priority, influencing lifestyle choices, professional careers and even interpersonal relationships.

This association between material comfort and security has also had a profound impact on the way societies are structured and function. Economic systems, public policies and social norms have evolved to value and facilitate the accumulation of wealth and access to comfort. This has led to increased research into consumption, economic growth and the development of technologies and services aimed at increasing individual comfort.

The quest for material comfort, while symbolising security, often has harmful consequences, both psychologically and environmentally. A striking example of this can be seen in the rise in popularity and intensive use of personal vehicles, particularly SUVs (sport utility vehicles) in many modern societies.

These vehicles, often valued for their space, comfort and perceived enhanced safety, have become symbols of status and personal success. However, this preference for larger, more luxurious vehicles has significant psychological and environmental repercussions.

Psychologically, owning an SUV can create a material dependency, where the comfort and status it represents become an integral part of the individual's identity. This dependence can lead to constant anxiety about maintaining this level of comfort and status, reinforcing the cycle of fear of loss and the need to own more and more.

Environmentally, the increasing use of SUVs is contributing significantly to the increased exploitation of natural resources and pollution. These vehicles, which are often less fuel-efficient than smaller cars, emit more greenhouse gases, contributing to climate change. Furthermore, the increased production and use of SUVs puts additional pressure on natural resources, such as oil, and intensifies environmental problems such as air pollution and soil erosion.

Another significant example of the quest for material comfort with negative repercussions is the massive use of air conditioning in homes and offices. While the comfort provided by air conditioning in hot climates seems indispensable, this growing dependence on cooling technology raises major environmental and psychological issues.

Environmentally, air conditioners consume a considerable amount of energy, often generated by fossil fuels, which contributes to climate change. In addition, air conditioners emit refrigerant gases that can be harmful to the ozone layer and the environment. This increased consumption of energy for cooling also exacerbates the energy crisis and increases pressure on limited natural resources.

Psychologically, dependence on air conditioning creates a cycle where individuals become accustomed to artificially air-conditioned environments, becoming less and less able to tolerate natural temperatures. This can lead to a form of isolation, where people spend more time indoors, disconnected from their natural environment and community. In addition, this dependence can create anxiety in the event of a power cut or inability to access air conditioning, revealing a vulnerability to natural conditions.

These two examples, among many others, show how modern comforts, sought to increase quality of life and the feeling of security, can have unforeseen consequences, exacerbating environmental problems and creating a psychological dependence on artificial living conditions.

Its effects

The relentless quest for security and comfort has led to profound structural changes in modern societies, where accumulation and competition have become predominant.

Property and Wealth as Security

In today's society, property and wealth are often seen as shields against insecurity. In cities like New York and London, for example, property ownership is not only a financial asset, but also a symbol of economic and social security. This quest for property ownership leads to fierce competition, driving up market prices and widening inequalities between owners and tenants.

Competition for Resources

Competition for resources is clearly evident in the workplace, where the rise to positions of power and high status is often marked by intense competition. This dynamic is particularly visible in sectors such as finance or technology, where high salaries and benefits reflect a secure and prestigious status, exacerbating the competition.

Socio-economic inequalities

Inequalities are clearly evident in access to quality education. For example, in many countries, public schools offer significant educational advantages but are often out of reach for low-income families, reinforcing social and economic disparities from an early age.

Accentuated individualism

Exacerbated individualism can be seen in the rise of the 'self-care' culture[6] , where the emphasis is on individual well-being, sometimes to the detriment of community ties. Although beneficial for mental and physical health, this trend can sometimes limit the perception of social and community responsibilities.

Weakening of Community Links

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[6] The self-care culture is a concept that has grown in popularity in recent years, reflecting a growing awareness of the importance of taking care of ourselves, both physically and mentally.

The erosion of community ties is illustrated by the increase in flat living in urban areas, where despite physical proximity, many people feel lonely and isolated. Unlike small communities where interaction and mutual support are commonplace, in large urban estates relations between neighbours are often superficial.

Its influence on the environment

The relentless quest for security has had a considerable influence on the environment, often to the detriment of our planet's ecological balance. This quest for stability and control has led to profound changes in the way humans interact with nature.

The transformation of nature to meet human needs and desires is a striking example of this quest for security. To ensure constant food, shelter and other basic needs, humans have modified entire ecosystems.

The exploitation of natural resources has become common practice, often justified by the need to sustain economic growth and improve quality of life. This exploitation has taken many forms, including mining, intensive fishing and the use of fossil fuels. While contributing to economic and energy security, these activities have also led to significant environmental degradation.

Air, water and soil pollution are another direct consequence of this quest for security. Industrial, agricultural and urban activities aimed at improving

human living standards have often had the side-effect of contaminating the environment. Similarly, deforestation for agriculture, housing and the timber industry has not only reduced biodiversity, but has also contributed to climate change by reducing the Earth's capacity to absorb carbon dioxide.

Its psychological impact

The relentless quest for security, a central theme in the writings of psychologist Abraham Maslow, has profound psychological implications. Maslow, known for his theory of the hierarchy of needs, emphasised how the search for security, particularly material security, can lead to a persistent state of unease and anxiety, affecting our mental and emotional well-being.

According to Maslow, the constant pursuit of security, particularly when it is centred on the material, can lead to permanent malaise. He observed that even after achieving a certain level of security, chronic dissatisfaction often persists, as the feeling of fulfilment remains elusive. This cycle of desire and frustration underlines a never-ending quest for more, without ever achieving true contentment.

Maslow also noted that the accumulation of wealth and material possessions is accompanied by a constant fear of their loss. This fear can lead to a permanent state of anxiety, affecting not only the perception of material possessions, but also social status, relationships and health. This fear can contribute to a feeling of

psychological insecurity, even in the presence of material security.

The pressure to be more secure, socially and economically, is a source of stress and exhaustion. Maslow noted that modern society, with its constantly changing demands and expectations, can push individuals into a state of constant struggle to maintain or improve their situation, leading to chronic stress and burnout.

Maslow pointed out that the association between material comfort and happiness is often an illusion. Although material possessions offer a degree of comfort, they do not guarantee happiness or inner satisfaction. This mistaken belief that happiness comes from possession can lead to a never-ending quest for more, leaving individuals in a state of permanent desire and dissatisfaction, a crucial observation for understanding the psychological dynamics of the quest for security.

Acquiring privileges

In contemporary societies, material security is frequently associated with the accumulation of wealth and the acquisition of privileges. This association has significant implications for social and economic dynamics, creating a gap between different strata of society.

The accumulation of wealth

The search for material security has often turned into a race to accumulate wealth and material goods. For many, owning a home, well-stocked bank accounts and other tangible assets has become synonymous with security. This quest is often accompanied by a desire for social status and recognition, where material possessions are seen as indicators of success and stability.

Individuals and groups who have acquired a certain wealth and status can become excessively preoccupied with protecting and expanding their own interests. This focus can lead to self-centred behaviour, where the defence of personal privilege takes precedence over collective well-being. Efforts to preserve and increase personal wealth can include investment strategies, the pursuit of advantageous tax laws, and even business practices that may neglect social or environmental impact.

This dynamic inevitably creates a gap between those with power and wealth and those without. Economic inequality is growing, with a small fraction of the population holding a disproportionate share of wealth and resources. This

disparity manifests itself not only in terms of income and assets, but also in terms of access to education, healthcare and opportunities. Social tensions can be exacerbated as these inequalities become more visible and the sense of injustice grows among those who feel left behind.

Force to defend privileges

In the context of the quest for security and the defence of privileges, the use of force in various forms has become a tactic commonly employed by those in positions of power.

The force used to defend privilege can take many forms. Politically, it can take the form of influencing legislation, government policies and electoral processes to favour the interests of certain groups or individuals. Economically, it can include aggressive business strategies, practices aimed at maintaining a monopoly in a given sector, or the exertion of financial pressure to eliminate competition and reinforce control over markets.

In some cases, the defence of privilege may even involve the use of military force. This is particularly evident in international contexts, where powerful nations may resort to military intervention to protect their economic or political interests abroad. This manifests itself in wars and armed conflicts motivated, at least in part, by the desire to protect or extend power and wealth.

The use of force to defend privileges often leads to conflict, oppression and violence. At an interpersonal level, this can result in abusive or coercive behaviour in

professional or personal relationships. On a wider scale, it leads to social injustice, repression of marginalised groups, and conflicts that can degenerate into violent confrontation.

This dynamic of defending privilege by force manifests itself at every level, from everyday interactions between individuals to national and international politics. It reveals an aspect of human nature, where the fear of losing power or resources can lead to destructive and selfish actions.

Certain strategic approaches, such as "divide and conquer", have been adopted to defend its interests. One historical example is that of the Indo-Aryans, who invaded the Indian subcontinent and imposed their domination over the local populations. Faced with the challenge of maintaining their power despite their relatively small numbers, these invaders adopted a strategic approach to controlling and subjugating the local populations.

The creation of the caste system is a clear manifestation of this. This rigid system divided society into different hierarchical groups, each with its own roles and responsibilities. Purity laws, which governed interactions between the castes, served to maintain this structure, preventing the groups from merging and forming a unified resistance against the invaders.

By establishing this system, the Indo-Aryans not only preserved their dominant status but also succeeded in imposing their culture, language and religious beliefs. By

segmenting society, they created psychological and social barriers that made it difficult for people to unite.

This strategy of division made it easier for the Indo-Aryans to control resources and manipulate the political and economic balance in their favour.

Creating an order designed to avoid losing its privileges

In addition to the use of force to defend privileges, another mechanism prevalent in human societies is the creation of imagined orders. These structures are based on social norms and shared beliefs which, although not tangible, exert a powerful influence on the structure and dynamics of societies. A striking historical example[7] is the Code of Hammurabi, drawn up around 1776 BC. Its creators established a set of laws based on principles they considered universal and immutable, such as justice, equality and hierarchy.

However, these "universal" principles are, in reality, only constructs of the human mind. They have no objective value, but gain in importance and influence through consensus and collective belief. The classification of individuals into superior and inferior, for example, is a creation of the human imagination, a whim that has solidified over time into social and legal systems.

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[7]See "Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind" by Yuval Noah Harari

This idea extends to modern concepts such as "human rights". Although considered fundamental in many contemporary societies, these rights are also a creation of the human mind. They have no existence outside collective beliefs and agreements. These "imagined orders" work because people believe in them, reassure them and support them, incorporating them into laws, institutions and policies.

These imagined structures often serve to maintain and legitimise existing privileges. By establishing rules and norms that seem universal and indisputable, elites can justify and perpetuate their dominant position in society. Imagined orders create a framework in which privileges are seen not as arbitrary constructs, but as natural and inevitable aspects of society.

Thus, the combination of force and imagined orders is a powerful tool for maintaining structures of power and privilege. This raises fundamental questions about the nature of social systems, the beliefs that underpin them and the means by which inequalities are created and maintained in human societies.

Self-centredness

Egocentrism, as a social and psychological phenomenon, has taken on increasing importance in the context of the modern quest for security. This tendency to focus primarily on oneself and one's personal interests, often to the detriment of others, has become a characteristic feature of contemporary societies.

The emergence of egocentrism

In their quest for security, individuals and groups increasingly tend to prioritise their own needs and desires. This prioritisation manifests itself in various aspects of daily life, from personal decision-making to attitudes towards societal issues. Egocentrism generates a vision of the world in which personal considerations take precedence over collective well-being or the general interest.

In political and economic terms, egocentrism translates into policies and practices that favour individual or group interests over collective well-being. This can include political decisions that focus on personal or group gain, business practices that emphasise profit at the expense of equity or the environment, and a focus on economic growth without sufficient consideration for social or ecological consequences.

In social relationships, egocentrism manifests itself in reduced empathy and solidarity with others. Interactions are often based on what individuals can get from each

other, rather than on a sense of community or sharing. This self-centred perspective can lead to superficial relationships, where genuine connections and mutual support are neglected.

Psychologically, self-centredness can lead to feelings of isolation and a decrease in emotional well-being. Although the search for personal security is a natural instinct, an excessive focus on oneself can lead to a loss of connection with others and with the community, resulting in feelings of loneliness and regression.

The impact of egocentricity

The rise of egocentrism and the struggle for privilege in contemporary societies are having a destabilising effect on social cohesion. These trends lead to the fragmentation of society, weakening the ties that bind individuals and communities together.

Societies are becoming increasingly fragmented as the interests of individuals and groups diverge and sometimes conflict. Economic and social disparities create divisions between different strata of society, with groups fighting to protect their own interests, often to the detriment of others. This dynamic makes it difficult to establish common goals and develop policies that benefit society as a whole.

One of the most notable consequences of egocentricity and competition for privilege is the erosion of solidarity and cooperation. The values of mutual support and working together for the common good are often replaced by

individualistic and competitive attitudes. This loss of solidarity weakens the social fabric and diminishes society's ability to face challenges collectively.

Distrust arises when members of society perceive others as rivals or potential threats to their personal security and privileges. This mistrust fuels competition, not only in the economic sphere, but also in social and community relations. An exacerbated competitive spirit can lead to conflict and a weakening of mutual trust, essential elements of any healthy, functioning society.

This social fragmentation represents a major obstacle to the creation and maintenance of harmonious communities. In a climate where egocentricity and competition for privilege prevail, it is difficult to build relationships based on mutual understanding, respect and support. Societies risk becoming collections of isolated, competing individuals rather than communities united by common goals and values.

In modern societies, the emphasis on self-centredness and the defence of privilege has significantly hampered the ability of individuals and groups to perceive and act for the common good. This trend has profound implications for the way societies approach and manage collective problems.

The dominant preoccupation with personal and group interests often has the effect of relegating issues of collective interest to the background. Crucial issues such as social justice, environmental sustainability and the

general well-being of society are frequently ignored or downplayed. This focus on self-interest hampers the ability of societies to engage in actions that benefit the whole population, rather than specific groups.

In the context of social justice, this loss of collective perspective manifests itself in a lack of attention to inequalities and social imbalances. Problems such as poverty, unequal access to education and healthcare, and discrimination are often neglected or treated as secondary issues. This leads to a reinforcement of structures and systems that perpetuate injustice and inequality.

Environmental sustainability is another area that suffers from this egocentric focus. Environmental concerns are often sidelined in favour of economic development and the accumulation of wealth. This short-term approach threatens the health of our planet and compromises the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Collective well-being, including public health, social stability and quality of life, is often sacrificed on the altar of personal and group interests. Policies and practices that could improve the lives of the majority are often overshadowed by initiatives that serve the interests of a privileged minority.

In the end, by exploring the depths of the quest for security and its mutations into egocentricity and the defence of privilege, we discover the dangers inherent in this quest when it becomes an end in itself. As we are invited to reflect on our values and actions, and to strike a balance between our personal needs and the well-being of the community, a deeper realisation emerges:

the very notion of security, as we usually conceive it, is fundamentally illusory.

According to the philosopher Jiddu Krishnamurti, the incessant quest for security is a source of suffering, because it is based on an illusion. The essence of life is unpredictable and constantly evolving. Rigid adherence to the idea of security traps us in a bubble of false comfort, blinding us to changing realities and new possibilities. Krishnamurti encourages us to embrace uncertainty and find peace in the acceptance of impermanence.

Moreover, this frantic quest for security leads us to create and rely on various systems and institutions such as justice, the police, the nation, insurance or social security, in the hope that they will protect us. However, difficult circumstances, such as wars or crises, often reveal the fragility of these mental and social constructs. These events bring us face to face with the harsh reality that the structures we have built are, in the final analysis, nothing more than edifices of our minds.

Francis Lucille, another enlightened philosopher, reminds us that true security can only be found in the realisation of our true nature, a nature that is non-separate and universal. True security lies in recognising our deep connection with all that is, beyond the limits imposed by our mind.

Our societies, steeped in ritual, ceremony and symbolic paraphernalia (from judges' robes to policemen's uniforms), reinforce the illusion of the solidity and permanence of these systems. However, the realisation of their essentially illusory nature invites us to reconsider our approach to security and protection. By abandoning illusion for authenticity, and replacing fear with love and compassion, we can pave the way for more genuinely secure, balanced and unified societies.

The World is the projection of our fears, tensions, conflicts, prejudices, beliefs...

In this chapter we look at a crucial dimension of the relationship between man and his environment: the way in which global conflict, exploitation and war are actually projections of our inner world. This concept invites us to consider that external troubles mirror the conflicts that reside within us.

The origins of world conflicts

Global conflicts, whether political, economic or cultural, often have deep psychological roots. It is the fears, insecurities and unfulfilled desires of individuals and groups that fuel and shape these confrontations, far beyond the superficial appearances of disputes.

Fears and insecurities play a crucial role in the origins of conflict. The fear of losing power, status, resources or security can drive individuals and groups to adopt defensive or aggressive behaviours. These fears are often rooted in past experiences, collective traumas or perceptions of insecurity, whether real or imagined. They can lead to preventive or reactive actions, triggering or exacerbating conflicts.

Unfulfilled desires, whether for recognition, respect, wealth or power, are also powerful drivers of conflict. When individuals or groups feel devalued, ignored or disenfranchised, this can lead to a desire to compensate for these shortcomings. This dynamic can result in intense

competition, power struggles or even attempts to dominate, fuelling conflict.

Feelings of threat and loss are frequent triggers for conflict. The perception that cultural identity, values or ways of life are under threat can provoke vigorous defensive reactions. Similarly, the perception of losing ground (whether in terms of power, influence or resources) can prompt conflictual action to preserve or recover what is perceived to be at risk.

The desire for expansion, whether territorial, economic or ideological, is another psychological cause of conflict. This desire may be motivated by a quest for security, an aspiration for grandeur or a need for validation. Expansion may be perceived as a means of achieving security, increasing prosperity or spreading ideologies and beliefs.

Exploitation as an expression of power

Exploitation in all its forms (social, economic or environmental) is a tangible expression of the internal dynamics of the individual and society. Far from being a purely external phenomenon, it stems from deep-seated psychological desires for power and control, and is often a reflection of inner insecurity or a quest for validation.

At the heart of many forms of exploitation is a desire for power and control. This desire may be motivated by the need to feel superior, to dominate others, or to secure oneself against perceived threats. In the economic sphere, this may manifest itself in unfair business practices or in

the accumulation of wealth at the expense of others. Socially, it can take the form of the domination of one group over another, often justified by discriminatory ideologies or belief systems.

Exploitation is often a reflection of inner insecurity. Individuals or groups who engage in exploitative practices may seek to compensate for feelings of inadequacy, fear or vulnerability. This insecurity may lead them to exercise power over others as a means of boosting their own self-esteem or social position.

Exploitation can also result from a quest for validation. In a society where status and success are often measured in terms of wealth and power, the exploitation of others or the environment can be seen as a means of achieving these ends. This dynamic is reinforced by structures and systems that value material accumulation and individual success above collective well-being or ethics.

Exploitative systems and structures inevitably create imbalances and inequalities. They privilege some groups at the expense of others, encouraging the concentration of power and resources in the hands of a few, while marginalising and oppressing others. These inequalities can be perpetuated and exacerbated over time, creating deep divisions within societies.

In many global industries, such as textiles and electronics, multinational companies have often been criticised for exploiting labour in developing countries. They take advantage of low labour costs and less stringent

regulations to maximise their profits. This form of exploitation, taken as an example, reflects a power dynamic where companies seek to control and minimise costs, often to the detriment of workers' safety and well-being. It can also reveal economic insecurity, where the pressure to remain competitive in a global market leads to exploitative practices.

Gender inequality and male domination in many societies are also examples of forms of social exploitation. Women are often paid less than men for similar work and are under-represented in positions of power. This exploitation is motivated by a desire to maintain power and control within a patriarchal social structure. It is also linked to the social and cultural validation of dominant masculinity, which translates into the maintenance of privileges and status for men.

War as a projection of internal conflict

War, in its most devastating forms, can be interpreted as the outward manifestation of internal conflicts and tensions played out on an individual and collective scale. This phenomenon reflects how emotions and desires deeply rooted in the human spirit can degenerate into large-scale violent confrontation.

At the heart of many armed conflicts are fears and frustrations that lie deep in the human psyche. These fears may be linked to perceived threats to security, identity or survival. Frustrations may arise from historical injustice, economic deprivation or feelings of marginalisation.

When these fears and frustrations are not addressed constructively, they can crystallise into animosity and hostility, eventually erupting into war.

The desire for domination and revenge are powerful drivers of war. The desire to dominate other groups or nations can arise from a desire for power, control or supremacy. Similarly, the desire for revenge, often rooted in historical grievances or perceived injustices, can fuel cycles of violence and retaliation that continue for generations.

War is often the result of a collective inability to resolve differences peacefully. This inability may stem from a lack of communication, understanding or willingness to compromise. When the channels of dialogue and diplomacy are neglected or fail, tensions can quickly escalate into armed conflict.

At its core, war often reflects a failure to recognise and value our shared humanity. The dehumanisation of the 'other' is a common feature of the rhetoric of war, where the enemy is often perceived as fundamentally different or inferior. This skewed vision obscures the fundamental similarities and common aspirations of peoples, making it easier to justify violence and cruelty.

Note:

Here is a list of countries in armed conflict in 2022:

Myanmar (Civil war), Russia (Invasion, aggressor in the Russo-Ukrainian war), Ukraine (Invasion, defender in the Russo-Ukrainian war), Afghanistan (Civil war and terrorist insurrection), Burkina Faso (Terrorist insurrection), Colombia (Civil war and drug war), Democratic Republic of Congo (Terrorist insurrection), Ethiopia (Civil war), Iraq (Terrorist insurgency and political unrest), Mali (Civil war and terrorist insurgency), Mexico (Drug war), Nigeria (Terrorist insurgency), Somalia (Civil war), South Sudan (Ethnic violence), Sudan (Terrorist insurgency), Syria (Civil war), Yemen (Civil war).

Other countries such as Algeria, Benin, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Libya, Mauritania, Mozambique, Niger, Tanzania, Togo, Tunisia and Uganda were also involved in armed conflicts.

Relationship between the individual and the collective

Inner disorders such as anxiety, insecurity and a lack of self-understanding are not simply isolated phenomena; they have a profound impact on the way societies function and interact with each other.

Let's start with individual **anxiety**. When experienced on a large scale, it can have a significant impact on society. It can influence political, economic and social decisions, often leading to excessive precautionary policies or knee-jerk reactions. In extreme cases, collective anxiety can lead to irrational decisions at national or international level, such as overreactions to perceived threats or strict

security policies. A notable example is the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962: The Cuban Missile Crisis was one of the high points of the Cold War, a period when anxiety and fear of nuclear war were at their height. The discovery of Soviet missiles in Cuba by the United States quickly escalated into a major confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union. The fear of a nuclear attack was palpable for political leaders and ordinary citizens alike. This anxiety influenced rapid and high-risk decision-making, notably the imposition by the United States of a naval blockade around Cuba and the demand for the withdrawal of Soviet missiles. Although the crisis was resolved peacefully, it led to excessive precautionary measures on both sides, such as the nuclear arms race and the implementation of stricter security protocols to avoid accidental war. The Cuban Missile Crisis had a lasting impact on international politics, heightening fears of nuclear war and ultimately leading to efforts at arms control and détente between the superpowers.

Let's continue with the feeling of insecurity. Whether economic, social or psychological, it also plays a key role in the way societies structure themselves and interact. When individuals feel their security is threatened, they may support ideologies or policies that promise stability and protection, sometimes to the detriment of civil liberties or harmonious international relations. This is the case in Europe, where in some countries the rise of populism has been fuelled by a feeling of economic, social and cultural insecurity among certain sections of the population. This insecurity has been exacerbated by the global financial crisis, the challenges of immigration, and

the rapid changes brought about by globalisation. In response to these feelings of insecurity, many citizens have begun to support populist parties and leaders. These often promise to restore national 'greatness', protect jobs from globalisation and immigration, and strengthen national security. Some of these populist policies have led to proposals and measures that challenge civil liberties, such as stricter immigration and refugee laws, and increased surveillance. They also tend to favour a nationalistic and sometimes isolationist approach, which can be detrimental to international relations and European cooperation. The rise of populism in Europe reflects a change in political and social dynamics, where feelings of insecurity play a crucial role. It has significant implications for the future of the European Union, social cohesion and international politics.

A lack of self-understanding at an individual level can also contribute to societal conflict. When people fail to understand their own motivations, fears and desires, they can project these feelings onto others, creating stereotypes, prejudices and misunderstandings. These projections can escalate into interpersonal, social and even international conflicts, where misunderstandings and misperceptions become the basis for disagreements and hostilities. This type of projection is common in the workplace, where individuals may unconsciously reproduce relational dynamics from their family environment. For example, colleagues may be perceived through the prism of siblings, with rivalries and competitions similar to those experienced within the family. Similarly, line managers can be seen as parental figures, with employees projecting

onto them expectations, frustrations or desires for approval that go back to their own experience with their parents. This projection can lead to relationships of dependency, rebellion or excessive validation-seeking. These projections and emotional transfers make the workplace a place where personal neuroses can manifest themselves and intensify. The resulting conflicts, misunderstandings and tensions are often not simply related to work issues, but reflect deeper psychological problems. These dynamics can lead to interpersonal conflict, ineffective communication and a stressful working environment. Employees may struggle to work together constructively, and managers may find it difficult to manage their teams effectively. In the long term, these unresolved dynamics can be detrimental to productivity, employee engagement and overall well-being. They can also lead to problems such as harassment, burnout and high staff turnover. This scenario highlights the importance of self-understanding in a professional context. Greater awareness of underlying family dynamics and their impact on professional relationships can help prevent conflict and create a healthier, more productive working environment.

In this relationship between the individual and the collective, the emotions and personal problems of leaders, for example, can influence their decisions, thus affecting the politics and diplomacy of their countries. It is not uncommon for personal preferences to influence major decisions. A real and somewhat humorous example, albeit serious in its consequences, concerns Napoleon Bonaparte and his choice of wife, which influenced European politics. After divorcing Josephine, Napoleon Bonaparte

had a choice of candidates for a political marriage. One of the options was a Russian princess, but in the end he chose Marie-Louise of Austria. According to some anecdotes, one of the reasons why Napoleon rejected the alliance with Russia was his personal dislike of the mother of Tsar Alexander I of Russia. He found the tsarina mother unbearable and did not want to have any family ties with her. This choice of marriage had major repercussions on European politics. By marrying Marie-Louise, Napoleon sealed an alliance with Austria, one of his traditional adversaries. This had major implications for power dynamics in Europe and influenced the course of subsequent events, notably the Russian campaign.

Geopolitics reflects our mental complexities

Geopolitical conflicts are often fuelled by fundamental fears shared by humanity. Fear of loss (whether of territory, resources, influence or sovereignty) is a frequent trigger for tensions between nations. These fears can lead to defensive policies, arms races or even military confrontation, as each side seeks to protect what it considers essential to its survival or status.

When internal conflicts are projected onto the international stage, they can make negotiations and conflict resolution more difficult. Issues that could be resolved through dialogue and cooperation become entangled with deeper psychological problems, making peaceful and lasting solutions more difficult to achieve.

On the other hand, the desire for security is a powerful driver of geopolitical action. Nations seek to secure their borders, their economies and their citizens against real or perceived threats. This desire can lead to the formation of alliances, military investment and surveillance measures, often justified by the need to maintain national security.

Power struggles and competition for resources, often seen between nations, can be seen as outward manifestations of internal desires and fears. At an individual level, this may involve desires for domination, recognition or security. Collectively, this translates into national policies aimed at increasing influence or securing strategic resources, fuelled by fears of scarcity or vulnerability.

Similarly, **ideological disagreements** on the world stage may reflect internal differences and tensions within societies. These ideological conflicts may be rooted in historical struggles, socio-economic inequalities or unfulfilled cultural aspirations. They often reflect internal divisions and ongoing debates within nations and cultures themselves.

In fact, once you get beyond the surface of the complex analyses of geopolitics often presented by experts, it becomes clear that the interactions between nations, the alliance games and the conflicts are nothing more than a reflection of fundamental, simple and universal fears. John J. Mearsheimer, in his work "The Tragedy of Great Power Politics", highlights how these fears and desires, rooted in human nature, influence the international policies of the great powers. These fears, such as the fear of others, the

prioritisation of one's own interests ("me before others") or anxiety in the face of uncertainty, are basic human emotions that manifest themselves on a global scale.

These fears, inherent in the human condition, influence the way nations interact with each other. Fear of the other, for example, can lead to isolationist policies or protectionist measures. This dynamic can lead to international tensions, with each nation seeing itself as competing or opposing others for its security and interests.

Similarly, the fear of losing resources or status can lead to aggressive or defensive actions on the international stage. These actions, often justified on grounds of national security or economic expansion, reflect a "me before others" mentality, where priority is given to preserving one's own interests to the detriment of international cooperation or the common good.

In short, although geopolitical issues may seem complex, they can often be reduced to simple human fears and desires, as Mearsheimer points out.

Immaturity, the root of conflict

The psychological roots of conflict in international relations also reveal a form of **immaturity**. When nations fail to resolve their disagreements through dialogue and diplomacy, they may turn to demonstrations of force, or even war, in a dynamic tragically reminiscent of interpersonal conflicts where the inability to communicate leads to confrontation. This propensity to favour the use of

force over peaceful resolution is a sign of immaturity, a poignant admission of failure for humanity, which, despite its advances, remains entangled in primitive patterns of behaviour.

This immaturity is also evident in international forums dealing with major issues such as ecology and global balance. All too often, leaders hide behind their national interests, making it impossible to reach a consensus that is so essential. The issues addressed, although complex in their implications, are often based on simple and obvious principles, which ancient egalitarian societies were able to address with silent efficiency and respect for the natural balance.

The immaturity of some leaders, more focused on personal power, re-election or the immediate interests of their nation, betrays a lack of global vision and responsibility towards the world community. This state of affairs underlines the urgent need for a more mature approach to the management of world affairs, in which priority is given not to personal or national ambitions, but to the collective well-being and sustainability of our planet. Such a change requires a profound transformation of mentalities, where understanding, cooperation and empathy would replace egocentricity and competition in the resolution of global conflicts.

There are other forms of immaturity in international relations, such as :

The inability of leaders to plan and act with an eye to the long-term consequences of their decisions. This often manifests itself in short-sighted policies, focused on immediate gains at the expense of sustainability and future well-being.

Decisions based on impulsive emotional reactions, rather than thoughtful analysis and in-depth understanding of the issues. This can lead to unnecessary escalation of tensions and disproportionate responses.

-An inability to put oneself in the shoes of other nations or cultures and understand their perspectives and needs. This narrow-mindedness can hamper negotiations and lead to unnecessary conflict.

-Excessive and narrow nationalism, where national interest takes precedence over global well-being. It limits the ability to see beyond borders and recognise our global interdependence.

-Ignoring or minimising the urgency of the climate and environmental crisis. Refusing to recognise the long-term impacts of present actions on the environment and future generations.

The influence of our collective beliefs and values

To understand how societies reflect their collective inner states through their unique beliefs and values, it is essential to explore the genesis of cultural differences in the collective psyche. This exploration reveals how the

interaction between environment, history, collective experiences and shared interpretations shapes cultural diversity, illustrating the idea that 'the world is what we are'.

Firstly, the environment and geography play a determining role in the development of cultures. Societies in difficult environments tend to value solidarity and cooperation, while those in more benign environments may develop values of individualism.

Furthermore, history and collective experiences such as wars, migrations and intercultural interactions have a profound influence on the collective psyche. These historical events shape the perceptions, beliefs and values passed down through the generations.

Myths, legends and cultural traditions also play a crucial role in instilling and maintaining values and beliefs within communities. These educational stories strengthen collective identity and pass on essential lessons to future generations.

The way in which a community collectively interprets its experiences is fundamental to the formation of its culture. This collective interpretation of challenges, opportunities and changes shapes the values and beliefs that define that culture.

Far from being static, cultures are constantly evolving. They adapt and reinvent themselves in response to internal and external changes, demonstrating a remarkable human

capacity to reinterpret collective experiences in the face of new challenges.

Finally, a comparison between different cultures reveals how collective beliefs and values influence social and economic structures. Western societies, for example, are marked by an emphasis on individualism and materialism, influencing their social and economic structures. In contrast, Eastern cultures emphasise collectivism and the search for harmony. African and indigenous societies focus on community and connection with nature, while Scandinavian societies emphasise equality and social well-being.

This cultural diversity clearly illustrates the crucial role played by collective beliefs and values in shaping social structures and in the varied approaches to harmony and well-being within different societies.

The influence of our prejudices, misunderstandings, stereotypes...

The way we interpret the world is profoundly influenced by our individual and collective beliefs.

These beliefs are not isolated to individuals; they manifest themselves in the geopolitical policies and actions of nations. Political decision-makers, influenced by their own ideologies and by the dominant narratives of their culture, may make decisions that reflect these beliefs, even if they do not necessarily correspond to objective reality.

These decisions influence international relations, cooperation agreements, conflicts and alliances.

Misunderstandings, prejudice and stereotypes play a significant role in geopolitical tensions. Misperceptions or biases about other countries or cultures can lead to policies based on mistrust and fear rather than mutual understanding and respect. These distorted perceptions may be the result of education, the media or history, and they can be difficult to undo even in the face of contradictory evidence.

Here are two examples of how the way we interpret the world is profoundly influenced by our perceptions:

-During the Cold War, the United States and the Soviet Union were guided by diametrically opposed ideologies: capitalism and liberal democracy on the one hand, communism and state control on the other. These ideologies profoundly influenced their respective foreign policies. Each superpower perceived the other as an existential threat to its values and way of life, leading to an arms race and proxy conflicts around the world. In the United States, the narrative of the "free world" against "communist totalitarianism" was strongly integrated into culture and politics, justifying various military and political interventions abroad. For its part, the USSR saw itself as the leader of a global movement against capitalist imperialism.

-In some European countries, refugees and migrants have been perceived through lenses of fear and mistrust, often

fuelled by political and media discourse. These perceptions have led to stricter immigration policies and heated public debates on cultural integration and national security. Media and political narratives on immigration often have a significant impact on how citizens perceive refugees and migrants, influencing their integration and treatment in the host society.

An assessment: failure of natural coexistence

As we begin our critique of modern society, a metaphor comes to mind: that of a vast theatre. In this complex theatre, every element, from rituals to uniforms, from ceremonies to parades, plays its part in an elaborate staging. To a hunter-gatherer observing our society, this show might seem both strange and amusing, a tangle of conventions and roles that seem far removed from the simplicity and authenticity of his own life.

In this global theatre, it is striking how many people are left behind[8] . The image of a family living in complete destitution, a situation almost unthinkable in a hunter-gatherer society based on sharing and interdependence, is a common reality in our modern world. This disparity highlights a fundamental loss: that of the harmony and solidarity that once characterised human societies.

Moreover, this social theatre features individuals playing assigned roles, often far removed from their true identity. Good behaviour, which in egalitarian societies flowed naturally from interconnectedness and empathy, must now be taught and imposed, revealing a profound disconnect between individuals and their essence. In this world,

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[8] Recent statistics from the World Bank highlight that, despite technological and economic progress, poverty remains a persistent problem, particularly in South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa. These regions have seen a significant increase in extreme poverty rates. India, in particular, accounts for a significant proportion of this worldwide increase.

values of the heart are often replaced by rigid societal norms and expectations.

Moreover, this modern theatre is marked by increasing complexity and a loss of connection with nature. Whereas hunter-gatherers lived in harmony with their environment, respecting its rhythms and cycles, modern society has moved away from this symbiosis. Our relationship with nature is often mediated by technology and consumerism, leading to a loss of awareness and respect for the natural environment.

Finally, modern society, with its hierarchies and power structures, contrasts sharply with the egalitarianism and simplicity of hunter-gatherer societies. Respect and cooperation, once the foundations of human interaction, have often been replaced by competition and the quest for status, illustrating a further move away from the principles of community life and mutual support.

So, by examining modern society through the prism of this theatrical metaphor, we can better understand what we have lost along the way since the loss of our original harmony, and reflect on how to reintegrate these essential values into the fabric of our world today.

The legal framework and its impact

In modern society, the legal framework plays a crucial role in structuring and regulating social life. However, analysis of these legal systems often reveals the tensions and imbalances inherent in society itself. Although laws are essential for maintaining order and justice, they can

sometimes reflect and even exacerbate existing inequalities and injustices.

Modern laws often reflect social, economic and political tensions. They may reflect the dominant values, prejudices and interests of the most influential groups in society. In some cases, this can lead to laws that favour certain classes or groups at the expense of others, creating or reinforcing inequalities and discrimination.

An example of an aberration in modern laws can be found in the vagrancy and homelessness laws in many cities around the world. These laws often criminalise street-related behaviour, such as sleeping in public spaces, begging or even sitting on pavements in certain areas. In some countries, there are ordinances banning sleeping in public places, which directly affects homeless people. These laws can lead to arrests and fines for people who often have nowhere else to go, exacerbating their precarious situation. This legislative approach ignores the root causes of homelessness, such as poverty, lack of affordable housing, mental health problems or addictions. Instead of providing help and support, these laws punish the most vulnerable people in society, underlining a failure to address social problems in an empathetic and effective way.

Socio-economic inequalities often manifest themselves in the legal system. Individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds may not have access to the same legal resources as those from more affluent backgrounds, which affects their ability to defend themselves effectively. In

addition, certain laws may be biased in such a way as to disproportionately penalise certain social or ethnic groups.

The rigidity and complexity of the legal system can sometimes stand in the way of harmonious coexistence. Strict laws and complicated procedures can seem out of touch with human realities and needs, focusing more on punishment and deterrence than on rehabilitation and understanding. This approach can perpetuate a cycle of transgression and punishment, without tackling the root causes of offending behaviour.

A more balanced approach to the legal framework would emphasise rehabilitation and understanding rather than simple punishment. This would involve recognising the social, economic and psychological factors that contribute to illegal behaviour and working to resolve them. By adopting measures that promote education, social reintegration and psychological support, the legal system could play a more constructive role in promoting a more just and harmonious society.

The impact of the media

In the context of our critique of modern society, the role and influence of the media merit particular attention, because of their considerable impact on people's perception of the world around them. The modern media, with their extensive reach and ubiquitous presence in everyday life, have the potential to profoundly influence public opinion and individual attitudes.

Firstly, there is a marked tendency in the media to focus on negative news (disasters, crises, scandals), which can give a disproportionately bleak view of the world. This over-exposure to negative news can lead to what is sometimes called "cruel world syndrome"[9] , where people develop an excessively pessimistic perception of society and humanity.

Beyond the tendency to focus on negative news, the modern media are also faced with the growing challenge of disinformation. Disinformation, which involves the deliberate dissemination of false information, has profound consequences for public perception and decision-making. A striking example of the impact of misinformation can be seen in the context of elections. For example, during the 2016 US presidential elections, social media were flooded with false information aimed at influencing public opinion and polarising voters. These disinformation campaigns, often orchestrated with tactical precision, contributed to sowing confusion, exacerbating political divisions and eroding confidence in democratic institutions. Media disinformation is not an isolated phenomenon, but a tactic increasingly used around the world to manipulate public opinion, destabilise societies and influence political outcomes. It poses a major challenge to democracy, as it blurs the line between fact

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[9]Cruel world syndrome is a term coined by George Gerbner to describe a phenomenon whereby violence - linked to media content - makes viewers believe that the world is more dangerous than it really is. Gerbner, a pioneering researcher into the effects of television on society, argues that people who watch television tend to see the world as an intimidating and unforgiving place.

and fiction, making it difficult for citizens to make informed decisions. Faced with this challenge, it is crucial to develop fact-checking strategies and promote media literacy to help people distinguish between reliable and false information. Social media platforms, news agencies and educational institutions have an important role to play in combating misinformation and reinforcing the integrity of information.

What's more, the media often play a role in disempowering individuals. Through the way they present information, they can induce a sense of powerlessness and fatalism. Major global problems are often portrayed as being beyond the reach of individual action, which can lead to apathy and civic disengagement.

The way in which the media tackle complex issues also contributes to a superficial understanding of the issues. The short, sensationalist format of many news programmes does not allow for in-depth or nuanced analysis, depriving the public of a full understanding of the issues.

Finally, the psychological impact of this constant media consumption should not be underestimated. Repeated exposure to stressful images and stories can contribute to anxiety, fear and even depression in some individuals. This media influence can therefore play a significant role in the erosion of mental and social well-being.

Prisons as a symbol of failure

In many modern societies, prison systems have become a symbol of a deeper failure to address fundamental social problems such as poverty, education and mental health. This highlights significant shortcomings in the way society deals with transgression and offending behaviour.

Prisons, in their current state, are often seen as indicators of wider social problems. Rather than being places of rehabilitation, they become 'repositories' for those whom society has failed to integrate or heal. This situation reveals a lack of investment and effort in key areas such as education, mental health and social services, which are essential for preventing crime and promoting social integration.

The current prison model is often criticised for its punitive and dehumanising approach. Instead of tackling the root causes of criminal behaviour and working to rehabilitate individuals, many prison systems focus on punishment and isolation. This approach not only neglects the basic needs of prisoners, but can also exacerbate their problems, making their reintegration into society even more difficult.

Far from solving social problems, prisons as they currently exist can exacerbate them. People leaving the prison system are often left with few resources, support or skills to successfully reintegrate into society. This can lead to a cycle of re-offending, where individuals return to prison because they do not have the tools or support to change their lives.

Faced with these challenges, it becomes imperative to look for alternatives to incarceration. This can include

rehabilitation and reintegration programmes, restorative justice initiatives, and increased support for mental health and education services. By focusing on prevention, rehabilitation and social integration, society can reduce its reliance on prisons as a solution to criminal behaviour.

The superego in modern society

Borrowing the concept of superego from psychoanalysis, we can apply it to modern society to describe the set of norms, expectations and constraints that govern individual behaviour. This societal superego exerts a considerable influence on the way individuals behave and interact within society.

The societal superego[10] is made up of a dense network of cultural norms, social standards and expectations of behaviour and achievement. These norms may vary from

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[10] These norms are maintained and perpetuated by various actors and institutions within society. The media play a crucial role in perpetuating societal norms. Through advertising, films, television programmes and social networks, they convey images and narratives that define and reinforce what is considered desirable or acceptable. Schools and universities also help to maintain these standards. They often inculcate specific values and expectations of academic and professional success, influencing how individuals perceive themselves and others. Government laws, policies and programmes can reinforce societal superego by establishing and supporting legal and moral norms. Cultural norms and traditions, passed down from generation to generation, exert a powerful influence on individual behaviour and expectations.

culture to culture, but what they generally have in common is that they impose strict guidelines on what is considered acceptable or desirable. This can include expectations about education, career, social status, moral behaviour and even physical appearance.

These norms and expectations often impose a constant pressure to conform, which can be a source of stress and anxiety for many people. Fear of failure, social isolation or judgement can lead individuals to adopt behaviours or lifestyles that do not necessarily match their desires or true identity. This pressure can be particularly intense in modern societies, where the media and social networks amplify and reinforce these standards.

Faced with these often unrealistic demands, some individuals may react by rebelling, rejecting the norms imposed by society. Others may experience psychological distress, such as anxiety, depression or feelings of disconnection. Societal superego, by imposing rigid standards and harshly judging those who deviate from them, can hinder the expression of individuality and creativity.

Far from encouraging a natural and balanced coexistence, the superego of modern society creates a climate where conformity and judgement prevail. This dynamic can prevent individuals from developing authentic and meaningful relationships and engaging constructively with their community and environment.

The dissonance between ideals and reality

In many modern societies, there is a striking contrast between the ideals proclaimed and the reality experienced by citizens. Although the principles of freedom, equality and fraternity are often put forward, day-to-day reality reveals profound inconsistencies with these values.

One of the most obvious examples of this dissonance is growing economic inequality. Despite all the talk of equal opportunities and social mobility, the reality often shows a widening gap between rich and poor. These inequalities are exacerbated by economic and tax systems that often favour the better-off, leaving a significant proportion of the population behind.

Discrimination based on gender, sexual orientation, religion or ethnic origin also contradicts the ideals of equality and fraternity. Many citizens face structural barriers that limit their access to equal opportunities, whether in employment, education or justice. This social exclusion is in flagrant contradiction with the principles of a fair and participatory society.

Another aspect of this dissonance is limited access to essential resources such as health, education and housing. While modern society preaches progress and well-being for all, the reality is that many people struggle to access these basic needs. This creates a society where rights and freedoms are not evenly distributed.

This dissonance between ideals and reality creates a feeling of disillusionment and mistrust towards institutions and power structures. Citizens can feel betrayed by a system that promises equality and freedom, but in practice perpetuates inequality and injustice. This mistrust can undermine social cohesion and confidence in democratic institutions.

The ideal of equality under attack

Modern societies are founded on ideals of equality, justice and equal rights for all, principles that have their roots in the philosophies of the Enlightenment and the democratic movements. These ideals aim to create a social and legal framework in which every individual has a fair chance in life, regardless of their origin, race, gender or financial situation.

The ideal of equality is deeply rooted in the philosophies of the Enlightenment, which advocated reason, individualism and the equality of all before the law. These ideas were the driving force behind the democratic movements that have shaped the modern world, leading to the creation of political and legal systems in which the rights of every individual are recognised and protected.

This ideal of equality is enshrined in constitutions, laws and declarations of human rights throughout the world. Laws are designed to ensure that all citizens receive fair treatment and equal protection, regardless of their social status. These legal and political documents serve as the

foundation for governance and legislation, affirming the commitment to equality and justice for all.

In modern societies, despite ideals of equality, justice and equal rights, disparities in access to education, economic opportunities, political representation and justice are glaring. These inequalities are often the result of economic and social systems that favour certain groups to the detriment of others, with systemic structures that reinforce the elite and marginalise the less privileged. Racial, gender, class and other prejudices persist, hindering equitable access to opportunities for many individuals, despite laws and regulations. Groups in positions of power may resist changes that threaten their status, influencing policy and the media to maintain the status quo. The concentration of wealth and economic power in a few hands exacerbates these disparities, limiting the possibility of a more equitable distribution of resources.

To remedy these challenges and move towards the ideal of equality, it is necessary to adopt more equitable policies and practices, to challenge existing power structures and to promote a culture of inclusion and mutual respect. This requires a commitment from all actors in society, from governments to businesses to individuals, to create an environment where equality for all is not only recognised, but actively supported and achieved.

The reality of competition

Although modern societies are founded on ideals of equality and justice, their day-to-day reality is often

characterised by intense and pervasive competition. This competitiveness, extending from the marketplace to educational institutions, the workplace and even social spheres, creates an environment where individual success is highly valued, sometimes at the expense of collective well-being.

The economic market is one of the most visible areas of this competitiveness. Companies fight for market dominance, often at the expense of ethical and sustainable practices. This race for profit maximises economic inequalities and can lead to the exploitation of workers and environmental damage.

In the field of education, competition, often seen as a driving force for progress, is in fact counter-productive in many cases. This competition, based on the idea that intelligence can be measured and compared, is based on a mistaken conception of the nature of intelligence itself. Contrary to widespread belief, intelligence is not limited to the ability to think or to perform in standardised tests. In reality, intelligence is an expression of universal consciousness, a much broader and deeper faculty shared by all human beings. From this perspective, the idea of comparing ourselves to others in terms of intelligence loses all meaning.

The education system, with its emphasis on grading and performance, often misses the opportunity to help students connect with this holistic and creative intelligence. True intelligence is not found in the prowess of artificial intelligence or computers, which operate only in the realm

of the known, but in a deeper capacity for innovation, intuitive understanding and creative problem-solving.

What's more, the pyramid model common in education, where the 'best man wins' principle is valued, is in flagrant contradiction with the supposed principle of equality of opportunity. This competitive approach undermines the spirit of collaboration and group work, which are essential for tackling the complex challenges of our world. Instead, it fosters a culture of rivalry and isolation, where students are conditioned to see their peers as adversaries rather than collaborators.

In short, it is essential to rethink education so that it reflects a deeper understanding of intelligence, as a quality intrinsic to all and connected to universal consciousness. Such an approach would not only overcome the limits of sterile competition, but also encourage a learning environment where cooperation, creativity and personal development are priorities.

Similarly, in the workplace, and particularly in the civil service, the staff appraisal system offers a striking example of the perverse effects of competition. Far from promoting an environment of trust and maturity, this system creates a dynamic where evaluation and comparison take precedence over collaboration and mutual recognition.

In a context where the principle of equality should be predominant, the practice of rating employees by their superiors introduces an implicit and subjective hierarchy. This system can not only generate a climate of stress and suspicion, but also undermine trust and solidarity within

the team. Employees, constantly under pressure to perform to the best of their ability in order to obtain a better mark, can find themselves caught up in constant competition, which is contrary to the spirit of public service.

Such a system is, in effect, an admission of social failure, where priority is given to individual performance measured by often arbitrary criteria, rather than to collective fulfilment and the quality of the service provided. This creates a barrier to natural integration in the workplace, where the emphasis should be on full awareness of the mission assigned, commitment to the community and productive collaboration.

It is crucial to rethink these appraisal mechanisms in order to foster working environments where trust, cooperation and recognition of each individual's skills prevail. By moving away from competitive appraisal systems, it is possible to create a healthier and more balanced working environment, where employees feel valued and motivated by their real contribution to society, rather than by their ranking on an arbitrary scale.

Competition also affects social relationships. In a society where success and achievement are highly valued, relationships can become transactional and based on what individuals can offer or bring to the other. This dynamic can lead to superficial relationships and a lack of genuine support and solidarity.

Exacerbated competitiveness can lead to growing inequalities and social exclusion for those who fail to

'succeed' according to established standards. Those who are unable or unwilling to participate in this competitive race may find themselves marginalised or disadvantaged, reinforcing social divisions and tensions.

The impact of competition on equality

In modern societies, intense competition has a significant impact on the achievement of the ideals of equality. This exacerbated competitiveness has a number of consequences that distance social reality from the principles of equality and justice for all.

Intense economic competition contributes to major inequalities in income and wealth. In a system where financial success is often the result of competition rather than cooperation, resources are concentrated in the hands of a few, leaving a large proportion of the population with little or no means of improving their situation. This concentration of wealth creates a profound economic and social imbalance.

Competition also affects access to education and career opportunities. Individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds are often at a disadvantage in a competitive education system, where resources and opportunities are unevenly distributed. This unequal access to education reinforces socio-economic disparities and limits social mobility.

Institutionalised prejudice, such as discrimination based on race, gender, sexual orientation or socio-economic status, is exacerbated in a competitive environment. Such prejudice can limit access to opportunities for certain groups, reinforcing existing inequalities and preventing equitable participation by all members of society.

The emphasis on competition and individual success can lead to a lack of solidarity and social cohesion. While some individuals thrive in this environment, others are left behind, widening the gap between rich and poor and exacerbating social tensions. This dynamic runs counter to the principles of equality and justice for all, undermining the ideal of a society where everyone has a fair chance to succeed.

The obsession with competition in modern societies, rooted in cultural, economic and psychological factors, is fuelled by various elements of society. Capitalism, as the predominant economic system, encourages competition as a driver of innovation and growth, encouraging companies to compete for markets and innovation. This trend is reinforced by the glorification of individual success, measured in terms of wealth and power, driving individuals to compete in education, careers and social relationships. The media and popular culture, with their stories of individual success and competitive programmes, reinforce this idea. Education systems accentuate competition from an early age, creating inequalities based on the ability to compete. Social and family norms, as well as community expectations, also encourage competition to meet standards of success and status. Psychologically, the desire for individual recognition and distinction fuels

competition, which is seen as a means of self-affirmation. Finally, government policies and institutions reinforce this dynamic by favouring economic competition and neglecting support for initiatives that value equality and solidarity.

The race for success and its consequences

In our modern societies, the relentless quest for success, centred on the accumulation of wealth and social status, generates intense pressure on individuals. This obsession with material success, defined by external criteria of wealth and recognition, leads to high stress and widespread anxiety, often at the cost of burnout and mental health problems.

A striking example of this reality is the growing wave of burnout observed in the professional world, both in France and internationally. Many workers, driven by the pressure of constant performance and the fear of losing their position, find themselves exhausted, both physically and mentally. This epidemic of burnout is alarming evidence of the negative consequences of cut-throat competition in the workplace.

This constant pursuit of success also creates a permanent insecurity, even among those who achieve a certain degree of success, fuelling an endless cycle of status-seeking and status-preserving. This perpetual insecurity erodes stability and contentment in personal and professional life.

At the same time, the dominant model of success encourages excessive consumption and an accumulation of wealth that is ecologically and socially unsustainable. This approach contributes to the depletion of natural resources and the growth of inequalities, reinforcing an individualistic culture to the detriment of collective well-being.

To reverse these negative trends, it is imperative to redefine the values associated with success, with an emphasis on sustainability, balance, mental health and collective well-being. Economic structures and the education system must evolve to promote a fair distribution of wealth, an education based on cooperation and mutual respect, and to value a variety of talents and life paths.

Finally, promoting cooperation and collective well-being means promoting models of success based on collaboration, mutual aid and service to the community, rather than unbridled competitiveness. By focusing on participatory and inclusive growth, we can help to create a fairer, more equitable and more cooperative society.

The possible return to maturity, compassion, unity and simplicity

Imagine a world where maturity, compassion and unity prevail. This vision invites us to imagine a reality different from the one we know, a reality where the noblest human qualities are at the heart of our collective existence.

Towards reconciliation with nature

In an effort to overcome the failures of modern society, it is imperative to rethink our social and legal structures in order to foster true coexistence with nature. This requires a fundamental rethink of our approach to legal, social and environmental systems.

To promote a more harmonious coexistence with nature, our social and legislative systems must evolve. This means developing laws and policies that recognise and respect the limits of nature, encourage sustainability and protect ecosystems. Environmental laws must be strengthened to ensure responsible management of resources and to prevent environmental destruction.

A more understanding and compassionate approach is essential. This means adopting policies that take into account the needs of all citizens, particularly those who are most marginalised, and ensuring that the voices of all stakeholders, including indigenous communities and minority groups, are heard and taken into account in environmental decisions.

Social and environmental justice must be at the heart of our actions. This means tackling the inequalities that exist both in access to natural resources and in the distribution of the harmful effects of climate change and pollution. Policies must aim to reduce the disparity between rich and poor in terms of environmental impact and vulnerability.

Reconciling with nature requires a change in the way we perceive and interact with our environment. Rather than seeing nature as a resource to be exploited, we need to recognise it as a living system with which we share a vital interdependence. This means cultivating an ecological awareness in all aspects of society, from education to politics to economic practices.

In the current context, a number of global initiatives aim to raise environmental awareness and encourage respectful coexistence with nature. Conferences of the Parties (COP), under the aegis of the United Nations, bring together world leaders to make environmental commitments, such as the Paris Agreement. Popular movements such as "Fridays for Future" and "Extinction Rebellion" are mobilising young people in particular for climate action. Green parties are gaining political influence, advocating sustainable policies and the transition to renewable energies. Environmental education is gradually being incorporated into school curricula, raising awareness among the younger generation. Businesses are also moving towards sustainable development, minimising their carbon footprint and investing in green technologies. The rise of renewable energies, such as solar and wind power, signals an energy

transition away from fossil fuels. Finally, community initiatives, including shared gardens and recycling schemes, are helping to raise environmental awareness and reinforce sustainable practices at a local level.

These efforts reflect a growing awareness of the importance of protecting the environment and the need to act responsibly to ensure the health of our planet for future generations. Although challenges remain, these initiatives show that significant steps are being taken towards reconciling with nature and creating a more sustainable future.

Maturity as a foundation

In an idealised world where maturity is valued, it transcends the simple notion of age or experience to become a fundamental characteristic of individual and collective consciousness. This maturity manifests itself through a number of essential aspects that shape the way in which individuals and societies function and interact.

Maturity, in this context, is synonymous with a deep understanding of life and its many dimensions. It encompasses wisdom acquired not only through personal experience, but also through sensitivity to the experiences and perspectives of others. This deeper understanding fosters a more nuanced and empathetic view of the world, enabling individuals to appreciate the complexity of life in all its forms.

Another facet of maturity is the ability to take considered decisions. This involves careful thought, consideration of long-term consequences and a balanced assessment of the various factors involved. Decisions are not taken impulsively, but are the result of conscious deliberation, taking into account the needs and interests of all concerned.

Maturity also translates into responsible behaviour. Mature individuals and communities act in ways that recognise and respect the impact of their actions on others and on the environment. This implies an awareness of the repercussions of our choices and behaviour, not only on our immediate environment, but also on the world as a whole.

At the heart of maturity is an awareness of the interdependence of all life forms. This realisation engenders a profound respect for nature, other human beings and the planet as a whole. It inspires a willingness to live in harmony, to cooperate and to find solutions that benefit the whole, rather than privileging the interests of a minority to the detriment of others.

Maturity as a basis for decisions and actions can also be seen in democratic institutions. A notable example is the Conseil des Sages in the French Parliament. This body, made up of experienced members from different backgrounds, is responsible for advising Parliament on a range of issues. Its role is not to make legislative decisions, but to provide a mature and considered perspective, often based on decades of experience in various fields. Council

members are selected for their wisdom, integrity and ability to consider the long-term consequences of policies and legislation. Their contribution aims to balance the often rapid and short-term-focused decision-making typical of the political process. In this way, the Council of Wise Men acts as a safeguard, ensuring that laws and policies reflect not only the immediate needs but also the long-term well-being of society and its citizens. This example illustrates how maturity can be integrated into contemporary political structures, fostering more balanced and far-sighted decision-making. The Conseil des Sages in the French Parliament is a model of how experience, wisdom and reflection can enrich the democratic process, contributing to more accountable and visionary governance.

Compassion in Action

For a return to compassion to be possible, it must be elevated to the status of a fundamental principle, influencing not only interpersonal interactions, but also societal structures and policies. It extends beyond simple empathy to become a driving force behind concrete actions aimed at improving collective well-being.

Compassion in this context goes beyond simple empathy or concern for the well-being of others. It manifests itself as an active response to the suffering of others, motivating actions that seek not only to understand, but also to alleviate and eliminate that suffering. It is empathy put into action, directed towards tangible, positive results.

In a compassionate society, policies and institutional systems are designed with the well-being of all in mind. This means putting in place health, education and social welfare policies that do not privilege an elite or dominant group, but seek to promote equality of opportunity and support the most vulnerable. Policy decisions are made taking into account their impact on all sections of society, particularly those who are most often marginalised or neglected.

Economic and social systems in a compassionate world are structured to eradicate suffering and promote equity. This means re-examining and reshaping economic structures so that they serve the needs of all, not just those with the most power or wealth. Compassion translates into initiatives to reduce poverty, eliminate inequality and create a more participatory and just society.

Compassion also extends to our relationship with the environment. A compassionate society recognises the interconnection between human health and the health of our planet. Environmental policies and business practices are therefore developed with a deep concern for ecological well-being, promoting sustainability, resource conservation and respect for all living things.

The 'Cities of Refuge' initiative for refugees illustrates how compassion can be translated into concrete action and influence societal structures. Around the world, a number of cities have adopted the 'City of Refuge' concept for refugees and asylum seekers. These cities, ranging from large metropolises to small communities, are committed to

providing a safe haven, resources and support for people fleeing conflict, persecution or disaster. Not only do they provide basic needs such as housing and employment, but they also incorporate education, mental health and social welfare policies aimed at facilitating integration and respect for human dignity. These initiatives are the result of a compassionate policy that places human well-being at the heart of municipal and community decision-making.

This compassionate approach goes beyond mere assistance; it strives to create welcoming communities where diversity and the contribution of each individual are valued. It illustrates how compassion, when integrated into institutional policies and practices, can lead to significant and positive change, not only for the individuals directly concerned, but also for society as a whole.

Unity as a principle of life

Unity, as a fundamental and tangible principle of life, embraces diversity and plurality not as obstacles, but as assets essential to the richness of human life.

Unity, in this vision, recognises and values diversity and plurality as essential strengths. It understands that different cultures, beliefs and ways of life are not divisions to be overcome, but varied expressions of human experience. This approach celebrates differences between peoples and cultures not as separations, but as opportunities for learning, growth and mutual enrichment.

In a world governed by unity, the differences between individuals and groups are celebrated. Diverse cultural

expressions, unique perspectives and individual experiences are seen as valuable contributions to the whole of human life. This celebration of diversity contributes to a sense of mutual respect, appreciation and intercultural understanding.

Decisions, whether taken locally or globally, are influenced by this awareness of unity. This means that political, economic and social decisions are taken with consideration for the whole of humanity and the well-being of the planet. The emphasis is on solutions that benefit everyone, rather than policies that favour one group over another.

Unity also implies a profound responsibility towards the planetary ecosystem. Recognition of our interdependence with nature leads to actions that promote sustainability, the preservation of biodiversity and environmental protection. Policies and practices are geared towards creating a harmonious balance between human development and the health of our planet.

As part of this vision of unity, the "Fridays for Future" and "Extinction Rebellion" initiatives embody the idea of unity through community action. Transition Towns bring together people from all walks of life to create more resilient and sustainable communities. These communities work together to reduce their dependence on fossil fuels, boost the local economy and strengthen social ties. Their approach recognises the diversity of each person's talents and perspectives, while working towards a common goal for the well-being of the whole community and the

environment. It is a concrete example where cultural, economic and social differences are not only accepted but valued as essential elements of collective success.

Simplicity as the path to harmony

Far from suggesting a return to a primitive way of life, simplicity embodies an approach to life that favours clarity, sincerity and authenticity. Simplicity, in this context, is an invitation to free oneself from excess and superfluous complications in order to concentrate on the essential, which is truly enriching for the soul and the spirit.

Simplicity as a principle of life manifests itself in clarity of intention, action and interaction. It invites deep sincerity in our relationships with others and with ourselves, fostering authentic communication and bonds based on truth and transparency. This simplicity allows us to go beyond social masks and artifice to reveal our true nature.

Simplicity also means decluttering our lives. This can mean getting rid of superfluous material possessions, simplifying our lifestyles, or cutting back on activities that don't contribute to our well-being. By getting rid of excesses and complications, we can concentrate on what is essential and what brings us true satisfaction and inner peace.

This concept of simplicity encourages us to re-evaluate what is essential in our lives. It's about distinguishing

between genuine needs and superficial desires, between activities that nourish our being and those that drain it. By focusing on what's essential, we can live more intentionally, in line with our deepest values.

Contrary to popular misconception, simplicity is not synonymous with deprivation, but with richness. By choosing simplicity, we make room for greater inner richness, more meaningful experiences, and a deeper connection with others and the world. Simplicity allows for a more balanced life, where happiness and satisfaction do not depend on external possessions or successes, but on the quality of our experiences and relationships.

Simplicity, although conceptually simple, manifests itself in diverse and profound ways across different cultures, eras and lifestyles. To better understand how this principle can be incorporated into our daily lives and how it has already been effectively adopted by others, let's look at a few concrete examples:

-Minimalism, as a lifestyle, perfectly embodies the principle of simplicity. It focuses on reducing material possessions to concentrate on the most important aspects of life: relationships, experiences and personal growth. Followers of minimalism often report an increase in well-being, a reduction in stress and greater clarity of mind by getting rid of the unnecessary.

-Many communities around the world, such as ecovillages, adopt a simple lifestyle in harmony with nature. These communities focus on values such as sustainability, self-

sufficiency and solidarity, demonstrating how a simplified lifestyle can lead to greater social and environmental harmony.

In ancient times, Stoic philosophers such as Marcus Aurelius and Epictetus advocated a simple way of life, centred on virtue, self-control and acceptance of the nature of things. Their philosophy emphasised that happiness does not lie in riches or luxury, but in a simple life in tune with nature.

-Many spiritual traditions, such as Buddhism, emphasise simplicity as a means of achieving inner peace and deep understanding. Meditation, mindfulness and detachment from material desires are common practices for achieving a state of serenity and harmony.

These examples illustrate how simplicity, far from being a limitation, is actually a path to a richer, more fulfilling life. By deliberately choosing what is essential, we can create an environment and a way of life that fosters inner peace, clarity of mind and genuine satisfaction.

The world is also the projection of our joy, our creativity, our intelligence and our resilience.

While the challenges and negative aspects of humanity are often highlighted[11] , it is essential to recognise that our world is also a projection of our joy, creativity, intelligence and resilience. These positive human qualities have shaped society in equally significant ways:

-Around the world, festivals and cultural celebrations reflect collective joy. These events, whether religious, cultural or social, show how shared joy can unite communities.

-Music, dance and the visual arts are universal expressions of joy. They transcend linguistic and cultural barriers, bringing happiness and connection between peoples.

-Moments of conviviality in parks, cafés and public squares reflect the joy found in everyday interactions.

-Acts of support between neighbours and strangers during difficult times bear witness to the human capacity to find joy even in small gestures.
-From the printing press to the internet, human innovation is a testament to our boundless creativity. Every invention

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[11] This is the case, as we saw earlier, with the media, which have a marked tendency to favour negative news, which can give a disproportionate and gloomy view of the world.

is the result of creative thinking aimed at improving our world.

-Cities around the world, with their unique architecture and public spaces, reflect human creativity in the design of our living environments.

-Scientific and technological advances demonstrate our ability to use intelligence to solve complex problems and improve our quality of life.

-Projects such as the International Space Station and global efforts to combat climate change show how collective intelligence can transcend borders.

Public debates and forums, where citizens and experts exchange ideas and perspectives, demonstrate collective intelligence in decision-making and problem-solving.

-Education systems and research institutions reflect our quest for knowledge and our collective intelligence in understanding the world.

-The way communities respond to natural disasters and crises shows our incredible capacity for resilience and reconstruction.

-Social movements for civil rights, equality and environmental justice demonstrate human resilience in the face of adversity and our determination to bring about positive change.

-Communities that adapt and thrive despite difficult environmental conditions show remarkable resilience in the face of nature's challenges.

The world is a mirror of human complexity, reflecting not only our conflicts, fears and tensions, but also our most luminous aspects. By recognising and celebrating our joys, our creativity, our intelligence and our resilience, we project a world not just as a place of conflict and problems, but also as a space of possibility, innovation and hope.

Is the world anything other than a projection of ourselves?

In this chapter, we explore the notion that the 'world' (understood as all the social, cultural, economic and political systems created by humanity) is a projection of our collective inner states. This idea, while deeply resonant for some, is met with resistance and criticism of various kinds. We will examine these criticisms to better understand the complexity of this assertion.

Within the framework of **scientific materialism**[12] , it is often argued that social and political structures are the direct result of historical developments and material factors. According to this view, social changes and dynamics are mainly influenced by tangible elements such as the economy, technology and natural resources. Proponents of this view emphasise processes such as the industrial revolution, territorial conflicts and technological innovations as the main drivers of social change.

However, counter-arguments from social psychology and history highlight that collective beliefs, values and attitudes play an equally significant role in the formation of social institutions and the evolution of history. These intangible aspects shape the way in which individuals interact with each other, perceive their environment and make collective decisions.

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[12]An emblematic author to represent the point of view of scientific materialism is Jared Diamond (see appendices).

In societies, beliefs and values play a crucial role in influencing laws, cultural norms and economic structures. Concepts such as individualism or collectivism, for example, steer the direction of social and economic policies. History shows us that ideologies, whether political, religious or cultural, have often been the driving force behind social movements and revolutions, shaping new social and political structures despite their immaterial nature. In addition, the interaction between tangible and intangible elements is significant: the Industrial Revolution, for example, although a technological and economic change, was also influenced by the attitudes of the time, particularly towards progress and innovation. Finally, many major social changes, such as the civil rights or gender equality movements, were initiated by ideas and social movements, demonstrating the considerable impact of intangible factors, over and above material factors alone.

Philosophical realism, applied to the social field, postulates that social systems and structures exist objectively and possess their own dynamics, independent of individual perceptions and interpretations. From this perspective, social institutions, cultural norms and even historical movements are seen as having foundations and evolutions that transcend human subjectivity.

However, the contributions of sociology and anthropology provide a crucial counterpoint to this perspective. These disciplines demonstrate that social structures are deeply rooted in human perceptions, interactions and experiences.

Social structures are intimately linked to the dynamics of human interaction and collective beliefs. According to Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, these structures are the result of continuous processes of interaction and negotiation, reflecting shared beliefs and values. Social institutions, far from being static, are shaped and reconfigured through daily interactions, cultural practices and dominant discourses. A nation's educational or legal systems, for example, can be profoundly influenced by prevailing cultural or political ideologies. Cultural anthropology shows us that social norms evolve, changing with collective perceptions over time. Finally, there is a dynamic interdependence between social structures and individuals: while individuals are influenced by these structures, they also play an active role in their creation and evolution, highlighting a perpetual cycle of influence and transformation.

Theories of objective knowledge, when applied to the social domain, argue that understanding of social phenomena can be achieved objectively through empirical methods. This perspective suggests that, like natural phenomena, social aspects can be observed, measured and understood independently of the subjective interpretations and experiences of individuals.

However, the complexity and subjectivity inherent in social phenomena provide a strong argument against this objective view.

Social reality is deeply rooted in subjectivity, formed by the individual experiences, emotions and perspectives that

define social interactions and shape cultural beliefs and moral values. These subjective elements are central to how individuals experience and interpret the social world, influencing the formation of social norms, laws and institutions. Cultural and historical factors play a decisive role in how people perceive and react to social realities, underlining the importance of the diversity of perspectives from one society to another. In the social sciences, objectivity reaches its limits, as understanding human phenomena often requires qualitative methods that incorporate personal accounts and subjective experiences. Social reality is therefore a complex web of interconnected individual and collective experiences, where phenomena such as group identity, social movements and cultural change are intimately linked to the subjective dimension of human experience.

Socio-economic critics, such as Karl Marx, argue that social and economic structures are primarily determined by material factors and relations of production. In this view, economic and material aspects take precedence over the inner projections of individuals, dictating the shape and functioning of societies.

However, even within these socio-economic perspectives, there is a recognition of the important role played by ideologies and cultural superstructures - which are themselves manifestations of the collective mindset - in shaping and sustaining socio-economic systems.

The material and economic structures of a society are intimately linked to the ideas, beliefs and values that

prevail within it. These ideal elements not only co-exist with the material structures, but actively influence them by shaping people's perception and experience of them. Ideologies, whether political, economic or cultural, play an essential role in legitimising and maintaining socio-economic systems, shaping worldviews and guiding people's interactions with their material environment. In addition, cultural superstructures such as art, religion, law and education reflect and shape the collective mindset, contributing to the formation of social consciousness and the definition of dominant norms and values. The relationship between the material base of a society (economy, production) and its superstructure (ideology, culture) is dynamic and bidirectional, each influencing and being influenced by the other. Finally, changes in collective states of mind can drive social and economic revolutions, with new ideas and perspectives challenging and transforming existing structures, demonstrating the significant power of collective consciousness in shaping material realities.

This chapter has highlighted that, although materialist and objective theories offer some relevant explanations of how societies are formed and function, they take little account of how our collective inner states (our beliefs, fears, hopes and aspirations) shape the social world. The previous chapters have shown that the world, in its many social and cultural dimensions, is primarily an extension of our collective inner states, a mirror of who we are as human beings.

Historical and contemporary cases of projections of who we are

Here are some concrete examples of how collective inner states have shaped historical moments and societal developments. Through analyses of social movements, revolutions, cultural trends and political changes, we will see how collective beliefs, emotions and values have influenced the course of history.

The French Revolution: A Mirror of Collective Inner States

The French Revolution, which began in 1789, symbolises a turning point in history, revealing the complexities of human desires for social justice and equality, but also the manipulations and aspirations for power. This period, often idealised for its principles of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity, in reality conceals a more nuanced dynamic.

At root, the flagrant inequalities between the social classes, with a privileged clergy and nobility dominating a predominantly poor population, gave rise to widespread discontent. However, it is crucial to recognise the role of the nobility and other elites, who, in their desire to enrich themselves and increase their influence, exploited these popular sentiments. By tapping into this sensitive fibre of freedom and equality, they were able to steer the revolt to serve their own interests.

Revolutionary principles therefore reflect a complex mix of genuine aspirations for social justice and political

manoeuvring by those seeking to reshape power to their advantage. This duality is reflected in France's post-revolutionary history, where the idealism of revolutionary values coexists with the relentless pursuit of privilege and power.

The Revolution undeniably marked a change in the perception of authority and power, favouring more representative forms of governance. However, the path towards true democracy and equality was hampered by power struggles and self-interest. As such, it is a perfect illustration of how historical movements are a reflection of collective inner states - a mixture of noble aspirations and darker human desires.

May 68 in France: A Revolution of Conscience

May 68 in France is another striking example of the influence of collective inner states on historical events. This student and worker movement became a powerful symbol of resistance against rigid, authoritarian structures, reflecting a collective desire for freedom, expression and social change.

May 68 emerged against a backdrop of cultural and social rigidity. Young people, in particular, felt alienated by conservative norms and were looking for ways to express their desire for freedom and autonomy. Protests began in the universities, criticising the rigid and authoritarian education system. This discontent soon spread to other sectors of society, including the world of work,

symbolising a wider struggle against oppression and for a more democratic society.

The May 68 movement was characterised by a challenge to traditional values. It promoted a more liberal vision of society, challenging existing power structures and promoting ideas of democratic participation and equality.

Although May 68 did not result in immediate political change, its cultural and psychological impact was profound. It marked a significant shift in attitudes and values in France, influencing future generations and contributing to wider social transformations.

The Arab Spring Revolutions

The Arab Spring, which began at the end of 2010, is a striking example of how collective aspirations and states of mind can impact the course of history and transform societies.

The Arab Spring began in Tunisia and quickly spread to other countries in the region. These revolutions were fuelled by a profound desire for change, particularly in response to years of authoritarianism, corruption and economic mismanagement. People aspired to greater freedom, rights and political participation. These movements reflected accumulated frustration at difficult living conditions, high unemployment, particularly among young people, and a lack of fundamental freedoms. Anger and indignation at these injustices were powerful drivers of collective action.

The use of social networks has played a crucial role in mobilising people, enabling the rapid dissemination of ideas and the creation of a transnational collective consciousness. These tools have enabled people to share their experiences and organise themselves more effectively.

The initial success of the Tunisian revolution had a demonstrative effect, inspiring other populations in the region to rise up against their own authoritarian regimes. It shows how an event in one country can have a profound impact and inspire similar changes elsewhere.

Although the Arab Spring was motivated by noble aspirations, the results were complex and diverse. Some countries have seen transitions to more democratic forms of government, while others have descended into civil war or seen the return of authoritarian regimes.

Cultural trend: The rise of feminism

The rise of feminism is an eloquent example of how collective mindsets and perceptions can shape and transform society.

Feminism has played a crucial role in the fight for equal rights for women. From the suffragettes demanding the right to vote to the contemporary movements for equal pay

and against gender-based violence, each wave of feminism has helped to challenge and change discriminatory laws and norms. All these struggles have brought about a significant change in the way society perceives gender roles and equality. By challenging stereotypes and fighting for women's rights, it has helped to shift the collective consciousness towards greater sensitivity to issues of equality and justice. This movement not only influenced legislation, but also changed social attitudes and behaviour. Traditional gender norms have been challenged and redefined, allowing women and men to explore more diverse roles and identities. Modern feminism has enriched the debate on gender equality by highlighting women's diverse experiences and struggles.

Although feminism has made significant progress, it continues to face resistance and debate. Discussions on feminism reflect the ongoing tensions and challenges in achieving gender equality, showing that the transformation of collective consciousness is an ongoing process.

Contemporary Ecological Movements

Contemporary environmental movements are a striking example of how a shift in collective consciousness can lead to concrete actions and policies to protect our environment. These movements illustrate a global awakening to the importance of preserving the environment. Faced with challenges such as climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution, a growing number of people are recognising the urgent need to take action to protect our planet. This awareness has led to significant

political and social action. From international climate agreements, such as the Paris Agreement, to national policies promoting renewable energies and reducing greenhouse gas emissions, governments around the world are under increasing pressure to act.

These environmental movements are often fuelled by large-scale grassroots mobilisation. From climate marches to awareness campaigns, citizens of all ages and from all regions are actively committed to change. They have also stimulated innovation in renewable energies and sustainable technologies. The focus on sustainability has encouraged the development of more environmentally friendly solutions in many sectors. Beyond policies, they have contributed to a change in individual values and behaviours. More and more people are adopting sustainable lifestyles, reducing their carbon footprint and participating in local conservation initiatives.

These movements underline the understanding that our well-being is intimately linked to the health of our planet. They reflect an awareness of our interdependence with nature and the need to live in harmony with our environment.

An ideal world

This ideal world is described in Jérôme Zenastral's book "L'harmonie universelle" (Universal Harmony):

"In a future where the notions of nations and internationals no longer exist, humanity has come together to form a single global community. Cultural, political and economic barriers have been dissolved, giving way to peaceful coexistence between individuals from all over the world. Money, once a source of power and division, has been abolished, giving everyone equal access to goods and services.

Individuals in this society are now free to live wherever they want and to be enriched by the different cultures and traditions that make up the heritage of humanity. Cultural diversity is celebrated and shared, strengthening the bonds between individuals. In this society without governance, nothing is imposed, everything is proposed.

In this unified world, artificial intelligence and robotics have been developed to meet everyone's needs. Robots carry out work and resource management on a global scale, ensuring comfort for all without distinction. Human beings can devote themselves fully to their personal development, their passions and their relationships.

The absence of centralised power has led to widespread confidence in the ability of computers and AI to manage resources fairly. Nobody is interested in privilege any more, because every individual enjoys a high level of

comfort. Cooperation and mutual aid are the pillars of this global community, which does not need governments or organisations to function harmoniously.

In this society, the quest for well-being has become the top priority. Individuals are free to learn, to train, to share their knowledge and to contribute to the common good according to their desires and skills. The notion of work has disappeared, replaced by a voluntary and selfless commitment to community projects and initiatives.

The challenges of this unified community lie in providing universal access to modernity and preserving the balance between different cultures and traditions. Sustainable management of natural resources and protection of the environment are also central concerns, with the aim of ensuring a prosperous and harmonious future for all the planet's inhabitants."

Conclusion

This book has explored in depth the complex relationship between humans and the world they create, highlighting the ways in which our inner world shapes our outer reality. From the development of early human societies to the challenges of modern society, we have examined how human social structures, beliefs and behaviours have evolved and influenced the course of our history:

-We began with a look at the first human societies, where harmony with nature and equality were predominant.
-The transition to sedentarisation marked the beginning of social complexity and the separation of man from nature.
-The human quest for security and comfort has led to social structures based on accumulation and competition.
-Global conflicts and exploitation are reflections of our inner conflicts and imbalances.
-Identification with thought has created an illusion of separation, distancing man from universal consciousness.
-We have imagined a world where maturity, compassion and unity prevail, in contrast to the current reality of competition and inequality.
-A critique of modern society was presented, highlighting the failure of natural coexistence and the dichotomy between aspirations for equality and competitive reality.
The journey towards a more harmonious world begins with a deep understanding of our role in creating and maintaining the structures of our society. Individually, this means working within ourselves to overcome our own conflicts, fears and insecurities. It also means cultivating

qualities such as empathy, compassion and an awareness of our interconnectedness with others and with nature.

Collectively, we need to rethink our social, economic and political systems so that they reflect values of equity, cooperation and sustainability. This requires a commitment to social justice, environmental protection and building caring communities.

Change towards a more harmonious world is both a challenge and an opportunity. It requires an ongoing commitment, a willingness to question established norms and an openness to new ways of thinking and acting. Every action, big or small, helps to shape the world we live in. By choosing compassion over indifference, cooperation over competition, and unity over division, we can all contribute to a more promising and harmonious future.

As for the ideal world proposed by Jérôme Zenastral, a world without governance or nations, his utopian vision invites us to reflect on the possibilities offered by cooperation, alternative education and respect for the environment. By imagining a different future, we can begin to rethink our own actions and contribute to building a more harmonious and balanced world for all.

It is essential to emphasise that to achieve a world without borders or nations, a profound change in consciousness and mentalities is required. The idea of such a world must be accepted and adopted by the majority of individuals, otherwise it could lead to situations where this vision is

imposed, creating power struggles and tensions within communities.

The change of consciousness implies a shift from a competitive and individualistic mentality to a collaborative and supportive one, where the common interest and well-being of all are placed above individual and national interests. This change must be based on education, awareness-raising and the commitment of everyone to work together to create a fairer and more sustainable world.

It is also crucial to recognise that the transition to such a world will not happen overnight, but rather will be the result of a gradual and complex process. Individuals, communities and organisations will have to learn to adapt, innovate and cooperate to overcome the challenges and obstacles that will arise.

Appendices

These appendices have been designed to enrich the reader's understanding and provide practical, real-world perspectives on the theoretical ideas discussed throughout the book. They aim to inspire deeper reflection and encourage active engagement in building a more harmonious and balanced world.

Examples of egalitarian societies

In this section, we present a series of case studies and historical examples that illustrate and expand on the themes discussed in the previous chapters. These examples offer a concrete perspective on how the principles and dynamics discussed manifest themselves in the real world.

Hunting and gathering societies

Take, for example, the San (people) of the Kalahari desert in southern Africa.

The San, also known as the Bushmen, are one of the oldest peoples of southern Africa and represent a remarkable example of an egalitarian hunter-gatherer society. Living mainly in the Kalahari Desert, their way of life and social structure offer a glimpse into historical egalitarian societies.

The San hunt and gather for their livelihood, using extensive ancestral knowledge to identify and harvest

edible plants and hunt game. Their diet is varied and adapted to the arid environment of the Kalahari.

A key feature of their society is the equitable sharing of resources. The products of hunting and gathering are distributed equally within the community, ensuring the survival and well-being of all members.

The social structure of the San is characterised by the absence of a rigid hierarchy. Decisions are taken collectively, and there is no centralised leader or dominant power structure. Conflicts are generally resolved through discussion and consensus.

The San have a deep and respectful relationship with nature. They believe in the interconnection between all living beings and the environment, and this belief is integrated into their lifestyle and spiritual practices.

The San have a rich oral and artistic tradition, particularly through their rock art and stories handed down from generation to generation. These traditions bear witness to their history, their beliefs and their connection with the land.

The San face modern challenges, including the loss of their traditional lands, the impact of modernisation and conflicts with government policies. These challenges threaten their traditional way of life and egalitarian social structures.

Efforts are being made to preserve their way of life, recognising their rights to their ancestral lands and promoting their unique knowledge of the environment. These efforts are crucial to the conservation of their culture and heritage.

Australian Aborigines:

Australia's Aboriginal societies are among the oldest continuous cultures on the planet. Their way of life, beliefs and social systems offer a valuable insight into the egalitarian practices and structures that have persisted for millennia.

Although technologically simple, Aboriginal societies possess a rich social and spiritual complexity. Their concept of property, community and the environment differs significantly from Western models and offers an alternative perspective on what it means to live in an egalitarian society.

The Aborigines' relationship with their environment is deeply integrated into their culture and spirituality, and represents a model of harmonious coexistence with nature.

The history of the Aborigines, particularly in the face of colonisation and modern change, is a testament to their resilience and adaptability, qualities that should be explored in the context of egalitarian societies.

The colonisation of Australia by Europeans, which began at the end of the 18th century, led to disease, conflict,

population displacement and the loss of traditional lands for Aboriginal peoples. These factors led to a significant decline in their population and a major disruption to their traditional way of life.

Despite these challenges, Aboriginal Australians have shown remarkable resilience. They have preserved and continued to practise many aspects of their culture, including their language, art, music and spiritual traditions.

Over the course of the 20th century and right up to the present day, there has been a cultural revival and a movement to claim Aboriginal rights. There have been major struggles for recognition of land rights, social justice and reconciliation.

Legal advances, such as the 1992 legal decision known as "Fridays for Future" and the "Extinction Rebellion" challenging the doctrine of terra nullius, which held that Australia was an "empty" land prior to European colonisation.

Aboriginal communities continue to face challenges, particularly in the areas of health, education and economic equality. There is an ongoing effort to overcome these issues while preserving and revitalising their cultural heritage.

Traditional farming communities

Take, for example, the Iroquois tribes of North America.

The Iroquois tribes, also known as the Iroquois Confederacy, represent a notable historical example of traditional farming communities with an egalitarian social structure. Located in north-eastern North America, these tribes offer a glimpse of agricultural societies organised on principles of equality and cooperation.

The Iroquois Confederacy was known for its democratic and participatory system of governance. Decisions were taken by consensus within councils made up of representatives from each tribe. This system encouraged equality and the active participation of all members.

Iroquois women played a central role in society. They were responsible for the land and agriculture and had significant power in decision-making, including the selection of male chiefs.

The Iroquois economy was mainly based on agriculture, with the cultivation of the "three sisters" (corn, beans and squash). The harvesting and distribution of food resources was organised in such a way as to ensure fairness and provide for the needs of the whole community.

A system of redistribution of goods ensured that no one in the community suffered shortages. This system strengthened social cohesion and mutual aid.

The Iroquois had a deep and respectful relationship with nature, regarding the land as sacred. Their spirituality was intimately linked to the land and the environment.

Oral traditions, ceremonies and the arts played an important role in preserving history, teachings and cultural values.

With the arrival of European settlers and subsequent changes, the Iroquois faced considerable challenges, including loss of land, forced assimilation and changes to their traditional way of life.

Today, the descendants of the Iroquois continue to fight for the preservation of their culture, their lands and their autonomy, maintaining their traditions and asserting their rights.

Island companies

Take, for example, the inhabitants of the Trobriand Islands in the Pacific.

The Trobriand Islands, located in the Admiral Islands archipelago in Papua New Guinea, offer a fascinating example of an egalitarian island society. The Trobrianders, known thanks to Bronisław Malinowski's anthropological studies in the early 20th century, have a unique social and cultural structure.

Trobriand society is organised according to a matrilineal system, where inheritance and descent are traced through

women. This system gives women an important social status and considerable influence in the community.

The Trobriand economy is characterised by a complex system of exchange and giving, known as Kula. This network of exchange is not limited to material goods, but is also a means of strengthening social and political ties between different islands and communities.

The Trobrianders strongly value the principles of cooperation and mutual support. Their farming, fishing and trading practices are based on the principles of sharing and reciprocity.

Rituals and spiritual beliefs play a central role in the daily lives of Trobrianders. These practices strengthen social cohesion and community ties.

Over time, the Trobriand Islands have been exposed to external influences, notably colonialism and, more recently, globalisation. These factors have brought changes to the social and economic structure of the islands.

Despite these changes, Trobrianders continue to strive to preserve their unique culture while adapting to modern realities. Preserving their traditional way of life, while incorporating aspects of modernity, remains a major challenge.

Mountain Communities

Take the Sherpas of the Himalayas, for example.

The Sherpas, an ethnic group native to the Himalayan region, mainly in Nepal, provide an interesting example of a mountain community with egalitarian traits. Known worldwide for their mountaineering expertise, the Sherpas have a rich culture and a distinct social structure that reflects principles of equality and cooperation.

Sherpa is strongly focused on cooperation, which is essential for survival in the harsh environment of the Himalayas. This cooperation can be seen in agricultural activities, animal husbandry and, more recently, in trekking and mountaineering tourism.

Although there are chiefs and respected figures in the community, the Sherpas operate within a relatively egalitarian structure. Important decisions are often taken collectively, and there is a strong sense of equality and solidarity within the group.

The Sherpa's traditional economy is based on farming and livestock rearing. They practise subsistence farming and rear yaks and other animals, which are crucial to their way of life at altitude.

With the rise of tourism in the Himalayas, many Sherpas have turned to mountaineering guiding as a source of income. This activity has brought economic changes, but the Sherpas have been able to adapt their traditions and culture to this new reality.

They are deeply spiritual, with a strong respect for nature and the mountain environment. Their spirituality is influenced by Tibetan Buddhism, which plays a central role in their daily lives and beliefs.

They have a rich cultural tradition, including festivals, music, dance and oral histories that are passed down from generation to generation. These traditions strengthen the sense of identity and cohesion within the community.

The Sherpas face contemporary challenges, including the environmental impact of tourism and climate change in the Himalayas. They are struggling to maintain their traditional way of life while adapting to modern economic and environmental realities.

Egalitarian societies in ancient India

Ancient India, with its rich history and culture, offers a fascinating insight into the egalitarian societies that once flourished in this region. Among the most remarkable examples are the Indus civilisations, in particular the cities of Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa. Dating from around 2500 to 1900 BC, these cities bear witness to advanced social and urban organisation, reflecting principles of fairness and harmony that contrast with conventional ideas about ancient societies.

In the egalitarian societies of ancient India, the social structure differed radically from the complex hierarchies of later civilisations. These communities had a social

organisation in which distinctions based on birth, caste or wealth were minimised or absent.

At the heart of these societies was the valuing of each individual according to his or her contribution to the community. Unlike later systems where social position was often determined by birth or the accumulation of wealth, these ancient societies recognised and respected individuals for their work, their skills and their commitment to the common good. Artisans, farmers, teachers and other members of the community were all considered essential to the collective well-being.

The distribution of resources in these societies also reflected their egalitarian structure. Rather than allowing an elite to monopolise the majority of resources, they practised a form of equitable distribution that ensured that all members of the community had access to the necessary goods. This approach helped to reduce inequalities and ensure a decent standard of living for all.

The farming practices of these societies were based on principles of cooperation and sustainable land management. Instead of large farms owned by a few individuals, the land was often cultivated collectively, encouraging more efficient and respectful use of natural resources. Harvests were shared fairly, reflecting a deep commitment to the values of sharing and solidarity.

The cultural traditions of these societies emphasised the importance of community and collective well-being. Festivities, ceremonies and rituals were opportunities to

strengthen social ties, celebrate community unity and reaffirm the values of equality and cooperation. These events were moments when collective identity was celebrated, reinforcing the sense of belonging and interdependence within the community.

The egalitarian social structure of ancient societies in India illustrates an approach to community life that valued each individual and encouraged the equitable sharing of resources. This social organisation, based on cooperation, mutual respect and solidarity, provides a model that contrasts sharply with the hierarchical and unequal structures that prevailed in many later civilisations.

In the egalitarian societies of ancient India, the relationship between man, nature and the cosmos was perceived as profoundly interconnected and sacred. This vision of the world influenced not only their spiritual beliefs, but also their daily practices and management of the environment.

The spirituality of these communities was linked to the earth and its elements. Rivers, mountains, forests and even animals were often venerated as manifestations or dwellings of deities. This sacred vision of nature encouraged an approach based on respect and reverence for the environment. Natural elements were not simply resources to be exploited, but vital aspects of a living and sacred world.

This spiritual rooting in nature was reflected in sustainable agricultural and ecological practices. The land was

cultivated with care, avoiding techniques that could deplete or degrade it. Techniques such as crop rotation, the use of natural fertilisers and the preservation of biodiversity were commonplace. These practices reflected an understanding of the need to maintain the balance and health of ecosystems.

The management of natural resources was also imbued with this philosophy of respect and conservation. River water was used wisely, avoiding waste and preserving its purity for future generations. Forests were protected and regarded as sanctuaries of biodiversity, essential to the life and well-being of the community.

Understanding and respect for natural cycles, such as the seasons, rain cycles and the movements of the stars, were also central to their lives. These cycles were often integrated into their belief systems and rituals, creating a close link between daily life, natural cycles and the cosmos.

In ancient India, spirituality transcended simple religious rituals to become embodied in a way of life imbued with ethics and moral values. This spiritual dimension was intimately linked to the daily practice of values such as empathy, compassion and non-violence, forming the ethical foundation of the societies of the time.

Empathy and compassion were not just theoretical concepts, but active principles that guided interactions within the community. These values encouraged individuals to put themselves in the place of others, to

understand their needs and suffering, and to act in ways that contributed to the collective well-being. Compassion manifested itself in caring for the most vulnerable members of society, in welcoming and supporting those in need, and in a general approach to life that emphasised mutual aid and solidarity.

Non-violence was a central pillar of social and spiritual life. This approach went beyond the absence of physical violence; it also encompassed non-violence in words, thoughts and actions. This philosophy encouraged respect for all forms of life and the peaceful resolution of conflicts, thereby fostering a more harmonious and less conflictual society.

Rather than focusing on domination, power or competition, spirituality was geared towards self-understanding, personal growth and the development of a higher consciousness. This inner search was often guided by meditative practices, philosophical studies and rituals that helped individuals connect with their inner essence and find a deeper meaning to their existence.

Analysis and lessons from these egalitarian societies

Resilience and adaptability are two fundamental qualities observed in historical and contemporary egalitarian societies. These qualities, demonstrated through diverse cultural and social examples, offer valuable lessons for understanding how communities can thrive despite challenges and change.

Traditional communities such as the San of the Kalahari or the Sherpas of the Himalayas have shown remarkable resilience in the face of environmental change. Their ability to adapt to difficult conditions, while preserving their cultural practices and ways of life, demonstrates a deep understanding of their environment and flexibility in their approach to subsistence.

In the face of colonisation, globalisation and other external influences, many egalitarian communities have been able to adapt while preserving their fundamental values. For example, the Iroquois integrated certain aspects of outside cultures while maintaining their egalitarian social structure and democratic system of governance.

In a changing economic and social context, these communities have demonstrated an ability to adapt while preserving equity and solidarity within their society. The integration of new economic activities, such as tourism for the Sherpa, has been achieved without compromising their values of cooperation and sharing.

These examples also show how cultural resilience is essential to maintaining community identity and cohesion. The transmission of traditions, languages and beliefs across generations is an act of resilience in itself, enabling communities to navigate a constantly changing world while remaining true to their heritage.

Value systems in historical and contemporary egalitarian societies play an essential role in shaping their social and

economic organisation. These value systems, often centred on community, cooperation and respect for nature, offer unique perspectives on alternative and sustainable ways of living.

A common feature observed in many egalitarian societies, such as the Iroquois or the Sherpas, is the value placed on community and cooperation. These societies favour interactions based on mutual aid and sharing rather than competition, contributing to greater social cohesion and a fairer distribution of resources.

Egalitarian value systems emphasise equality and social justice. For example, in matrilineal societies such as the Trobriandese, gender equality is more pronounced, with women playing key roles in society. Such structures contribute to a more equitable distribution of power and resources.

Deep respect for nature is a central value in many egalitarian societies. The San people of the Kalahari, for example, live in harmony with their environment, using sustainable hunting and gathering methods. This respectful relationship with nature ensures the sustainability of their way of life and the preservation of the ecosystem.

Spirituality and cultural traditions play a significant role in strengthening community values. These traditions, often passed on orally, strengthen social ties and transmit important values from one generation to the next.

Sustainable Practices in Egalitarian Societies offer concrete examples of how communities can interact with their environment in a respectful and sustainable way. These practices, observed in various traditional cultures, demonstrate a deep understanding of ecological balance and a respectful approach to the management of natural resources.

Egalitarian societies such as the San or Sherpa show a balanced use of natural resources. Their hunting, gathering, farming and herding methods are designed to minimise the impact on the environment and ensure the long-term sustainability of resources.

These communities possess traditional ecological knowledge accumulated over many generations. This knowledge enables them to understand nature's cycles, weather patterns and biodiversity, which is crucial to the sustainable management of their environment.

Exchange and sharing systems, such as the Trobriand Kula, encourage the fair distribution of resources and strengthen social ties. These systems help to avoid over-consumption and encourage an economy based on reciprocity and mutual respect.

Ritual and spiritual practices in many egalitarian societies reinforce respect for nature and recognition of the interdependence between humans and the environment. These beliefs and practices help to maintain a deep connection with the land and promote environmental conservation.

What do the experts say?

Philosophers, psychologists and sociologists:

Jiddu Krishnamurti: He was known for his teachings on the nature of mind, meditation, self-understanding and the need for radical change in the individual psyche to effect positive change in the world. Here are some key aspects of his teachings:

Krishnamurti asserted that each individual is a reflection of society as a whole. In his view, social and global problems are intrinsically linked to conflicts and disorders in the individual mind.

He maintained that real change can only come about through self-understanding and inner transformation. For Krishnamurti, external changes in political or economic structures are not enough without a fundamental change in human consciousness.

Krishnamurti encouraged deep self-awareness - a careful observation of one's own thoughts, emotions and motivations. This self-understanding, he believed, was essential for breaking out of conditioned thought patterns and reacting in a more creative and less confrontational way.

He was critical of religious and political institutions, arguing that they perpetuate conflicting and divisive patterns of thought. He saw independence from these structures as essential for individual freedom and change.

Krishnamurti emphasised the importance of relationships in understanding ourselves and creating a better world. For him, relationships are the mirror in which we can see ourselves as we are.

Immanuel Kant: In his theory of knowledge, Kant argued that our understanding of the world is shaped by the innate structures of the mind. His famous phrase "We do not see things as they are, we see them as we are" resonates with the idea that our perception shapes our reality.

Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann: These are the authors of "The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge". In this work, they develop the idea that social reality is created by human interactions and shared perceptions. This book is considered fundamental in the field of the sociology of knowledge.

"The Social Construction of Reality" explores how societies develop shared conceptions of reality through processes of interaction and communication. Berger and Luckmann argue that reality is not simply given or natural, but is constructed by individuals within their social context.

At the heart of their theory is the idea that knowledge and perceptions are not simply individual or subjective reflections, but are shaped by social processes and institutional structures. The authors examine how social

norms, values and institutions are created, maintained and modified over time by human activities.

The book focuses on how knowledge is institutionalised in societies, and how this influences people's perceptions and behaviour. The authors argue that social reality is constructed through repeated interactions, where individuals learn and internalise social roles and norms.

Berger and Luckmann also stress the importance of language in the construction of social reality. Language enables individuals to share experiences and ideas, forming a common basis for social understanding and interaction.

In their analysis, they explain how social realities, once established, can seem natural or unquestionable, even though they are the result of specific historical and social processes. By recognising that reality is socially constructed, they open the way to a more flexible and critical understanding of social and cultural structures.

Émile Durkheim: A representative author of the perspective of objective theories of knowledge, particularly in the social context, is Émile Durkheim, an influential French sociologist. His work "The Rules of Sociological Method" is a key reference for understanding this approach.

In "Les Règles de la méthode sociologique", Émile Durkheim sets out the fundamental principles for studying social phenomena in a scientific and objective manner. He

defends the idea that society can and must be studied with the same scientific rigour as the natural sciences.

Durkheim began by defining the social fact as a key element in his study. According to him, social facts are ways of doing, thinking and feeling that are external to the individual and that exert a constraint on him. These social facts must be treated as things, objects of study distinct from preconceived ideas and subjective notions.

For Durkheim, the sociological method is based on the observation and classification of social facts, studying them independently of the observer's personal conceptions. He stressed the importance of separating social facts from individual interpretations in order to achieve an objective understanding of society.

Another crucial aspect of his approach is the analysis of the relationships between different social facts. Durkheim maintains that society is a complex system, in which the different parts interact and contribute to its stability and functioning.

Finally, Durkheim addresses the question of causality in sociology. He sought to identify the causes of social phenomena, focusing on cause-and-effect relationships that could be observed empirically.

Astrologers

World astrology, through meticulous observation of the heavens, offers unique insights into social and global

crises. According to this discipline, each crisis is a reflection of the state of our society, revealing a discordance between our individual identities and the collective organisation. Social organisation, including its dynamics and functioning, is directly shaped by our individual actions. It is the concrete expression of our collective being. The notion of a social entity separate from its individuals is therefore called into question, suggesting that crises emerge not from an abstract social structure, but from the collective interaction of individuals.

Every social crisis is an indicator that the established system no longer adequately meets our collective expectations. The events we experience and produce, whether conflicts, reconciliations, festivities or competitions, are a mirror of our collective psychological state. As a result, a collective change in erroneous behaviour could potentially resolve, partially or totally, these crises.

In world astrology, a parallel is drawn - what Carl Jung calls "synchronicity" - between the celestial configuration at a given moment and the psychic structure of the collective unconscious, including its energy fields. Crises are symbolised by astral configurations, in particular the relationships between the planets in our solar system. By interpreting the planetary positions, the astrologer can draw up a forecast of the crises and propose solutions to resolve them.

In this discipline, each planet embodies a specific force within the collective unconscious or psyche. This force manifests itself differently according to its position in the sky, enabling the mundialist astrologer to decipher the underlying dynamics of world events.

Here is an example of one of the astrological forecasts for the period 2025 to 2029, formulated in a style characteristic of world astrology, which interprets planetary aspects as indicators of global trends:

Astrological forecast for 2025-2029: An Era of Renewal and Innovation

Between 2025 and 2029, a notable astrological configuration will present itself in the form of a trine between Pluto in Aquarius and Uranus in Gemini. This period could be marked by significant trends towards innovation and transformation in many areas of human life.

-Technical innovations and communication: This trine suggests a period of technological advances, particularly in the field of communication. Advances in these areas could revolutionise the way we interact, share information and understand the world.

-Freedom of Expression and New Forces: The focus on Aquarius and Gemini indicates a strong potential for freedom of expression and the emergence of new ideas and social movements. This period could see the emergence of

groups and individuals determined to bring about positive and progressive change.

-Social and Professional Changes: With Pluto in Aquarius and Uranus in Gemini, we could see fundamental changes in the way we work, live and think. These transformations could also affect labour markets, introducing new professions and professional approaches.

-Beginning of a New Era: This astrological configuration could symbolise the beginning of a new era, characterised by innovation, reinvention and a fresh approach to global issues. The changes brought about during this period could have a lasting impact on society.

It is important to note that, while these astrological interpretations offer a framework for considering future trends, they should be taken as symbolic perspectives rather than concrete predictions. World astrology provides a lens through which to view the potentials and challenges of a given period, encouraging reflection on how we can collectively navigate and influence these trends.

Historians, anthropologists, archaeologists:

Historical and anthropological experts have studied the origins of egalitarian societies, with reference to hunter-gatherer communities and traditional agricultural societies. They examine how these societies were structured around the principles of sharing, cooperation and a balanced relationship with their environment.

They highlight the factors that led to the transition from egalitarian societies to more hierarchical and complex structures, as well as the impact of sedentarisation, the development of agriculture, population growth and technological innovations on social dynamics.

They highlight the lessons that modern societies can learn from studying traditional egalitarian societies. The experts stress the importance of understanding the sustainable practices, community value systems and conflict resolution mechanisms that have enabled these societies to maintain balance and cohesion.

They also describe how contact with outside societies and colonisation processes have affected egalitarian societies. These interactions have often led to major disruptions in traditional social structures, with lasting impacts.

Finally, historians and anthropologists show the importance of preserving and studying traditional societies. They highlight the need to preserve cultural knowledge, languages and traditions, while recognising the value of these societies in understanding human diversity and alternative models of socialisation.

"Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies" by Jared Diamond:

An emblematic author to represent the point of view of scientific materialism is Jared Diamond. His most famous book, "Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies", offers an in-depth analysis of how

geographical, environmental and material factors have influenced human history and social structures.

In his book, Jared Diamond explores the reasons why some societies have developed advanced technologies and conquered other societies, while others have remained less developed. Diamond refutes the idea that genetic or intellectual differences are at the root of these inequalities. Instead, he argues that it is environmental and geographical differences that have created unequal conditions for the development of societies throughout history.

He argues that in certain regions of the world, such as Eurasia, geographical and climatic conditions favoured the domestication of plants and animals, leading to agriculture and sedentary societies. These societies were able to develop advanced technologies, complex political systems and powerful armies. On the other hand, in regions such as sub-Saharan Africa or Australia, conditions were less conducive to agriculture, which limited technological and political development.

Diamond also discusses the impact of germs and diseases in the conquest of peoples. He explains how Eurasian societies, having developed immunity to certain diseases due to their proximity to domesticated animals, brought these diseases to other parts of the world, often decimating the indigenous populations.

The book is a fascinating exploration of human history through the prism of geography and the environment,

offering a material explanation for the power dynamics and inequalities we see around the world. Diamond proposes that understanding these factors is essential to addressing contemporary inequalities and forging a more equitable future.

"The Creation of Inequality" by Kent Flannery and Joyce Marcus

In this book, Flannery and Marcus examine how prehistoric human societies evolved from egalitarian structures to hierarchical systems with pronounced inequalities. The book explores the transition to agriculture and sedentarisation, highlighting how these changes favoured the accumulation of wealth and the formation of social classes.

The authors discuss how agriculture enabled the accumulation of food surpluses, which led to the creation of material wealth. This accumulation played a key role in the formation of social hierarchies, in which those who controlled agricultural resources acquired great power and status.

The book also details how the first sedentary societies saw the emergence of distinct social classes, with elites controlling land, resources and political power. These elites often included rulers and priests, who played a central role in justifying and maintaining the hierarchical social order.

By examining various societies around the world, Flannery and Marcus show how rigid class systems developed, resulting in deep and lasting inequalities. The book illustrates how these divisions have influenced the social and cultural structures of human societies throughout history.

"Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind" by Yuval Noah Harari

This book offers a fascinating insight into the history of humanity and the key factors that have contributed to our evolution. It is a profoundly influential book that traces the history of humanity from our earliest ancestors to the present day.

Harari begins by exploring the emergence of Homo sapiens in Africa and how this species spread and survived while other human species became extinct. He examines the unique characteristics of Homo sapiens, such as our ability to cooperate in large numbers and to believe in shared myths.

Harari identifies a 'Cognitive Revolution' that occurred around 70,000 years ago, when changes in human thought led to significant advances in language and cognition, laying the foundations for complex societies and sophisticated cultures.

The book then looks at the transition from hunter-gatherer societies to sedentary agricultural societies. Harari

discusses the profound impact of agriculture on human social structure, the environment and even human health.

Harari explores how humanity has been progressively unified throughout history, first by empire and religion, then by money and finally by ideologies such as nationalism and liberalism.

The book concludes with the scientific revolution that began around 500 years ago, leading to the modern world. Harari discusses the impact of science on human understanding of the world and our ability to shape it.

"The Origins of Agriculture: An International Perspective" C. Wesley Cowan and Patty Jo Watson

This book brings together the work of various experts on the origins of agriculture in different regions of the world. "The Origins of Agriculture: An International Perspective" explores the beginnings of agriculture around the world, examining archaeological, environmental and genetic evidence. The book highlights how, in different regions of the globe, human communities began to domesticate plants and animals, leading to profound changes in their way of life.

The authors discuss the impact of agriculture on social structures and the environment. They explain how the domestication of plants and animals led to sedentary lifestyles, population growth and the formation of the first complex societies with a division of labour, social hierarchies and trade.

This book clearly shows how the emergence of agriculture was a determining factor in the evolution of more complex and diverse human societies.

"1491: New Revelations of the Americas Before Columbus" by Charles C. Mann :

Mann challenges the idea that the Americas were sparsely populated before the arrival of Europeans. He argues that the continent was inhabited by a much larger population than previously thought, with complex and advanced societies.

The book describes advanced civilisations, such as the Inca and Aztec empires, and other lesser-known societies, revealing their sophistication in terms of agriculture, urban planning and governance.

Mann highlights the way in which these civilisations actively modified and managed their environments, contrary to the popular belief that indigenous peoples lived in passive harmony with nature.

It also highlights the devastating impact of European diseases on indigenous populations, which led to a massive decline in their numbers, radically altering the demographic and cultural landscape of the Americas.

Mann argues for a re-evaluation of pre-Columbian history, asserting that the current perception underestimates the complexity and importance of the indigenous cultures of the Americas.

These books offer varied and in-depth perspectives on history and anthropology, ranging from cultural analysis to global historical narratives, providing a rich and nuanced understanding of the past and its impact on the present.

Economists and political scientists :

Economists and political scientists focused on the challenges inherent in modern societies, with particular emphasis on the dichotomy between equality and competition. Some offered insights into how economic policies and political structures influence this dynamic.

The economists address the question of how free market systems can both stimulate innovation and economic growth and increase inequality. They discuss the economic mechanisms that favour the accumulation of wealth by a minority and leave large segments of the population in a precarious situation.

The experts also examine policies that can reduce inequality while maintaining healthy economic growth. They look at strategies such as progressive taxation, investment in education and health, and social protection to create more equal societies.

Political scientists discuss the impact of political structures on the promotion or mitigation of inequalities. They highlight the role of democratic institutions, electoral

systems and public policies in shaping the dynamics of power and equity within societies.

A central theme of the discussions is the tension between competition, often seen as a driving force of the market economy, and cooperation, necessary to ensure social equity and collective well-being. The experts explore how to balance these opposing forces in politics and economics.

The interviews highlight the need for strategies and economic models that promote not only growth but also the equitable distribution of resources. Economists and political scientists suggest multidimensional approaches that take account of social, environmental and economic needs.

Many economists and political scientists have written books that have had a considerable influence in their respective fields. Here is a selection of these works:

"Le Capital au XXIe siècle" by Thomas Piketty

This book is essential for understanding modern economic dynamics, particularly wealth and income inequalities. The book provides an in-depth analysis of the distribution of wealth and the evolution of economic inequality over time. Here are some key points from the book:

-Piketty uses a vast collection of historical data to examine the dynamics of economic inequality since the 18th century. He shows how inequality has evolved in different

countries, with a particular focus on Europe and the United States.

-A central argument of the book is that the rate of return on capital in capitalist societies has historically tended to outpace the rate of economic growth. This dynamic favours the accumulation and concentration of wealth among capital owners, leading to an increase in economic inequality.

-Piketty examines how fiscal and social policies have influenced the distribution of wealth. In particular, he highlights the effects of progressive taxation and redistribution policies introduced after the Second World War, which contributed to a temporary reduction in inequality in several developed countries.

-Piketty warns of a future in which inequality could reach unprecedented levels if policy measures are not taken. He proposes solutions such as a global progressive tax on capital to counter this trend.

This is an important book for anyone interested in understanding contemporary economic dynamics, in particular issues relating to wealth and income inequalities, and their impact on society.

"Why Nations Fail: The Origins of Power, Prosperity, and Poverty" by Daron Acemoglu and James A. Robinson

This book explores the underlying reasons why some nations prosper while others remain mired in poverty. The book draws on a wide range of historical and contemporary examples to support its thesis. Here is a summary of the main points covered:

The authors argue that the key to a nation's success or failure lies in its political and economic institutions. Prosperous nations tend to have institutions that encourage participation and innovation, and offer equitable economic opportunities. Poor countries, on the other hand, are often hampered by "extractive" institutions, which concentrate power and wealth in the hands of a small elite and repress the majority.

Acemoglu and Robinson analyse a variety of historical and geographical contexts, from the Roman Empire to contemporary Africa, colonial empires and the Industrial Revolution, to illustrate how different forms of institutions have shaped the economic trajectories of nations.

The book highlights the crucial role of elites in the formation and maintenance of extractive institutions. These elites favour policies that serve their interests, even if this is detrimental to the general well-being of the nation.

The authors also stress the importance of innovation and technology in economic development. Participatory institutions foster creativity and innovation, while non-participatory institutions tend to stifle these driving forces of economic growth.

They explain how non-participatory institutions create a vicious circle that reinforces the power and wealth of the elite, making it difficult to move towards more participatory institutions.

The authors argue that their theory applies to a wide range of countries and historical situations, providing a comprehensive framework for understanding economic disparities around the world.

"The Affluent Society" by John Kenneth Galbraith

This book examines the dysfunctions of the market economy, particularly in the context of post-war prosperity in the United States.

Galbraith criticises the excessive focus on production as a measure of economic well-being. He argues that in wealthy societies, the relentless pursuit of production growth neglects wider social needs and can lead to inequality and social problems.

The book introduces the idea of an 'affluent society' where the basic material needs of the majority of people are met. Galbraith argues that in such societies, economic issues should focus less on quantitative production and more on redistribution and the satisfaction of non-material needs.

Galbraith raises concerns about the growing dependence on consumer goods and advertising, arguing that this

creates artificial needs that do not necessarily correspond to people's real well-being.

A major theme of the book is the neglect of the public sector. Galbraith argues that the influx of wealth into affluent societies is not properly used to improve public services, such as education and infrastructure, which could significantly increase quality of life.
It also addresses the problems of inequality and the distribution of wealth, stressing that economic growth does not benefit all segments of society equally.

Galbraith calls for a reassessment of economic priorities, suggesting that policies should focus more on quality of life, equity and social well-being, rather than simply on increasing production.

Environmentalists and Social Activists:

Environmentalists and social activists focus on exploring strategies for achieving a more sustainable and just world. They highlight the close link between environmental problems and social justice. They explain how environmental degradation disproportionately affects the most vulnerable communities, exacerbating inequalities and social injustice.

These experts highlight the crucial importance of environmental sustainability for the future of society. They discuss sustainable practices, the conservation of natural resources, and the need to transition to renewable energies

to protect the environment and ensure a viable future for generations to come.

Social activists discuss the importance of civic engagement and activism in promoting social and environmental change. They highlight examples of social movements that have succeeded in initiating significant change, underlining the power of collective action.

The discussions also include strategies for building a more equitable and sustainable society. These strategies include promoting economic equity, improving access to education and healthcare, and implementing policies that support both social justice and environmental sustainability.

They highlight the importance of integrating local and global perspectives in sustainability efforts. Involving local communities in the planning and implementation of environmental initiatives is essential to ensure that these efforts are appropriate, effective and equitable.

A number of environmentalists and social activists have written influential books addressing issues of sustainability, social justice and environmental protection. Here is a selection of these books:

"This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. The Climate" by Naomi Klein :

This book examines the relationship between contemporary capitalism and the climate crisis. It

highlights the challenges and contradictions between the current economic system and the need to respond effectively to climate change. Here is a summary of the main points:

Klein argues that capitalism, as it is currently practised, is fundamentally at odds with the measures needed to effectively combat climate change. She argues that the relentless pursuit of economic growth and profits, at the heart of capitalism, leads to the excessive exploitation of natural resources and the increase in greenhouse gas emissions.

It also examines the role of governments and political institutions, which are often hampered by corporate interests and the fossil fuel industry, leading to inaction or inadequate responses to the climate crisis.

Klein criticises companies and industrialists who, she believes, have not only contributed to the climate crisis through their activities, but have also hindered efforts to remedy it, particularly through lobbying and misinformation.

An important aspect of the book is its focus on potential solutions and the role of social movements. Klein stresses the need for a radical change in the way we approach the economy and the environment, calling for a mass movement to push for more sustainable policies.

It proposes alternatives to current capitalism that would be more respectful of the environment, such as massive

investment in renewable energies, economic planning that is more oriented towards sustainability, and greater involvement of communities in decision-making.

"Braiding Sweetgrass" by Robin Wall Kimmerer :

Kimmerer combines her expertise in botany with the traditional wisdom of indigenous peoples to explore the relationship between humans and the natural world. She advocates a more integrated approach that respects the environment and recognises and values the knowledge and perspectives of indigenous cultures.

The book explores the lessons we can learn from plants and nature. Kimmerer uses specific examples of plants and ecosystems to illustrate key concepts of reciprocity, sustainability and gratitude.

A central theme of the book is the idea of reciprocity with the natural world. Kimmerer argues that humans must learn to give back to the earth, as much as they receive, in order to maintain the balance and health of ecosystems.

The book is peppered with Kimmerer's personal stories, as well as traditional tales, which serve to illustrate broader points about ecology, spirituality and conservation.

Kimmerer criticises contemporary approaches to environmental management, which are often dominated by considerations of profit and exploitation. She argues for a more holistic and respectful vision, based on mutual understanding and respect between man and nature.

The book is also a call to action to protect the environment, adopt sustainable practices and recognise the rights and wisdom of indigenous peoples.

"The End of Nature" by Bill McKibben :

McKibben warns of the effects of climate change, highlighting the profound impact of human activities on the environment. He explains how greenhouse gas emissions, mainly from the burning of fossil fuels, are causing global warming with potentially catastrophic consequences.

One of the central concepts of the book is the idea that nature, as we knew it, has come to an end. McKibben argues that human activities have altered the environment to such an extent that there is no place on Earth unaffected by human impact.

The book explores the various ecological consequences of climate change, including rising sea levels, extreme weather events and the loss of biodiversity. McKibben underlines the urgency of taking action to preserve the planet.

McKibben offers a philosophical reflection on the relationship between humanity and nature. He questions the values and beliefs that have led to the current climate crisis, in particular our dependence on technology and our relentless pursuit of economic growth.

"The End of Nature" is a call to awareness and action. McKibben stresses the need for a radical change in our behaviour and policies to limit future damage and preserve the environment.

"Don't Even Think About It: Why Our Brains Are Wired to Ignore Climate Change" by George Marshall

This book explores the psychological and cultural reasons why people often find it difficult to take meaningful action against climate change. Here is a summary of the main points covered in the book:

Marshall examines the various psychological barriers that prevent people from recognising the seriousness of climate change or taking action to address it. He explains that the challenges posed by climate change are often abstract, distant and do not correspond to the immediate threats that our brains are programmed to recognise and respond to.

The book highlights the importance of communication in how we understand and respond to climate change. Marshall argues that current climate narratives are often ineffective because they fail to take into account how people naturally process information and make emotional connections.

Marshall explores how our personal values and cultural identity influence our perception of climate change. He suggests that climate messages need to be linked to the specific values of different groups if they are to be effective.

The book also examines how social norms and collective beliefs play a role in our response (or lack of response) to climate change. Marshall suggests that changing these norms is essential to creating a broader movement for climate action.

Marshall proposes strategies for improving communication on climate change. He advocates approaches that build personal connections, use effective stories and narratives, and align with audiences' values and identities.

Ultimately, the book is a call to rethink the way we talk about climate change. Marshall argues for a more participatory and emotionally engaging approach to motivating action.

This book is important for understanding why climate change remains a difficult issue for many people to tackle, despite the growing urgency and seriousness of the crisis. It offers crucial insights for those seeking to mobilise effective action against climate change.

Recommended reading

For those who wish to deepen their understanding of the topics covered in the book, here is a list of recommended reading. These books cover a range of subjects, from egalitarian social structures and environmental sustainability to the political and economic dynamics of modern societies.

Pierre Bourdieu: A renowned sociologist, Bourdieu explored the dynamics of power in society, the effect of social structures on individuals, and the concepts of social and cultural capital. His works such as "La Distinction" and "Les Règles de l'Art" may be of particular interest.

Michel Foucault: Philosopher and social theorist, Foucault is known for his studies of power, surveillance and social structure. Works such as "Surveiller et punir" and "Histoire de la sexualité" are particularly relevant for exploring power relations in society.

Edgar Morin: A multidisciplinary thinker, Morin explores the complexity, ethics and challenges of contemporary society. His holistic approach is well represented in his work "La Méthode".

"The Spirit Level: Why More Equal Societies Almost Always Do Better" by Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett: This book analyses how inequalities within societies affect everything from health to crime, and argues that more equal societies benefit everyone.

"The Better Angels of Our Nature: Why Violence Has Declined" by Steven Pinker: Pinker offers an in-depth analysis of the decline in violence around the world and explores the reasons for this positive trend.

"The Age of Sustainable Development" by Jeffrey D. Sachs: Sachs proposes a vision of the future in which sustainable development is at the centre of global economic and social policies.

Organisations and Initiatives :

This section presents various international organisations and initiatives working to promote equity, sustainability and harmony in modern society. These bodies cover a wide range of areas, from environmental protection to the fight against social and economic inequality.

Oxfam International: A confederation of 20 independent organisations working together to fight global poverty and injustice. Oxfam focuses on issues of sustainable development, economic equity and human rights.

Greenpeace: Known for its environmental activism, Greenpeace leads global campaigns to combat climate change, preserve biodiversity and promote renewable energies.

Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF): This organisation provides emergency medical aid in conflict zones, epidemics and natural disasters, acting on the basis of need rather than nationality, religion or politics.

Amnesty International: Dedicated to the protection of human rights, Amnesty International conducts research and takes action to prevent and end grave abuses of the rights to freedom, justice and dignity.

Gates Foundation : Co-founded by Bill and Melinda Gates, this foundation aims to improve the quality of life of people around the world, focusing on health, education and the fight against poverty.

World Wildlife Fund (WWF): An international conservation organisation, WWF works to reduce human impact on the environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature.

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) : IUCN helps find pragmatic solutions to the most pressing environmental and development challenges.

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP): The UNDP works in nearly 170 countries to eradicate poverty and reduce inequality, focusing on sustainable development goals.

ActionAid: An international organisation that fights for social justice and gender equality, and works to eradicate poverty by influencing policy and mobilising communities.

Transparency International: Focused on the fight against corruption, Transparency International works to

ensure a corruption-free world where governments, businesses and civil society are accountable and transparent.

These organisations and initiatives provide concrete examples of international action to promote equity, sustainability and harmony in modern society. Their work covers key areas such as protecting human rights, fighting poverty, conserving the environment and promoting social justice.

The world is
what we are

From the dawn of humanity, with its egalitarian societies living in harmony with nature, to the complexities of our modern world marked by conflict and inequality, this book reveals how human history has mirrored the collective states of mind of its time.

Zenastral guides us through ancient civilisations and bygone eras, revealing the links between our thoughts, our beliefs and the societies we have built. It sheds light on the invisible forces in our psyches that have shaped the structure of our communities, our economies and our politics.

But this book is more than a simple historical analysis; it is a call to reflection and action. Zenastral urges us to recognise our role in creating and maintaining social structures, and to commit ourselves to building a more harmonious future. It advocates inner transformation as the starting point for genuine societal change, emphasising the need to cultivate empathy, compassion and an understanding of our interconnectedness.

"The World Is What We Are is essential reading for anyone seeking to understand the deep roots of our current reality and to contribute to a more balanced and united future.