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Premature Humanity: The Modern Human Paradigm, or the Psychology of the Alienated Human - An approach in light of media and communication –

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Abstract:

This research study attempts to emphasize that Western civilization, with its manifestations at all levels, imposes itself as a complete and comprehensive model of progress and development. This has shaped the model of contemporary man, who lives within the framework of the transformation in thought and behavior brought about by the modern model. This transformation occurred after humanity rejected the sacred, stripping the world of its magical aura, and subsequently adopting scientific knowledge as a replacement for mythical and superstitious thinking. Therefore, it is accurate to say that modernity is a condition that reflects modern societies, which differ radically from classical societies. Indeed, for some, modernity represents the ultimate model of human progress on various levels, such as politics, science, social organization, and even behavior. The human being. In light of these transformations, media and communication emerge as spaces that contribute to shaping contemporary man, through advertising, media discourse, and digital media that intervene in shaping desires, representations, and behavioral patterns. Therefore, the modern human being has become a man in crisis, and his crisis manifests itself in a qualitative crisis within the very foundations of modernity itself—a crisis embodied in the modernist vision of humanity and the world. Thus, the modern human being is always a product of Western civilization and its aberrant modernist manifestations. This is why we have proposed critical models of modernity and the modern human being from within the modernist system itself. These models include the Übermensch (the powerful human being); the one-dimensional human being (the materialist human being); the superhuman, or the super-consumer; and the fluid human being, the human being of liquidity and uncertainty**.**

This study takes this angle as an entry point to understanding the role that the media can play in reproducing some aspects of alienation. Advertising is not limited to promoting goods, but also contributes to creating desires and consolidating the consumerist pattern, while digital media contribute to intensifying speed, immediacy, and virtuality, in line with the fluidity of relationships and the transformations of contemporary man.

Keywords: Western modernity, premature humanism, alienation, contemporary man, consumerism.

Introduction

It is well known that contemporary human beings now live—whether to a greater or lesser extent—within the framework shaped by the paradigm of modernity, which has transformed both thought and behavior through the rejection of the sacred and the disenchantment of the world. Consequently, scientific knowledge has become the alternative to mythical and superstitious modes of thinking. In this sense, modernity may be understood as a condition that characterizes modern societies, fundamentally distinguishing them from classical societies. Indeed, for many scholars, modernity represents the ultimate model of human progress across various domains, including politics, science, social organization, and even human behavior, culminating in the emergence of the paradigm of artificial intelligence.

For this reason, some regard modernity as the highest achievement of Western civilization. Nevertheless, modernity failed to fulfill the promises it proclaimed or the aspirations it inspired. Instead, many of its slogans have turned into their very opposites. This, in particular, has led numerous thinkers to subject modernity to critical evaluation. Modernity has been described as "liquid," in the sense that it generates profound crises affecting both society and the life

of contemporary individuals. It has reduced human beings to obsessive consumers and victims of systems of regulation, control, and surveillance. Many philosophers have diagnosed the crisis into which modernity has fallen by examining human existence within the framework of instrumental reason. They have questioned the transformations that have affected everyday life, as well as the social sphere as a system that shapes and regulates individual existence.

In the midst of these transformations, media and communication stand out as one of the most important spaces in which the transformations that have affected contemporary man are embodied. Media are no longer just neutral channels for transmitting information, but have become, in the contexts of consumer and digital society, an actor in producing images and representations and directing desires and patterns of behavior. Hence, the relationship between media and the model of modern man acquires special importance, especially since advertising, media messages and digital media have become involved to varying degrees in creating patterns of consumption, shaping taste and rebuilding social relations, which opens the way for a new reading of human alienation in light of the sciences of media and communication.

Accordingly, the Enlightenment in the modern era represents a worldview grounded in reason, which had long been constrained by the authority of Aristotle and the teachings of the Church. This worldview began to take shape during the seventeenth century through the works of rationalist philosophers, who laid the foundations of the Enlightenment and established the intellectual horizons of Western modernity with its various emancipatory ideals. Above all, the Enlightenment was an intellectual movement founded upon reason, nature, truth, morality, freedom, and progress. It constituted the basis of a civilization built upon rationality, social relations, and material forces, and embodied the essence of the Western cultural and civilizational project, which sought to liberate humanity from its passive condition, to disenchant the world, and to dismantle myths through rationality and empiricism—the intellectual legacies of René Descartes and John Locke. The Enlightenment also promoted the principles of autonomy and the purposiveness of human action.

Perhaps the first defining characteristic of Enlightenment philosophy lies in its insistence that individuals should prefer what they freely choose and determine for themselves rather than what is imposed upon them by external authorities, and that they should reject submission to commandments enforced independently of their own will. Within this context, we must also dare to question the transformations that have taken place within modernity itself. What constitutes the contemporary crisis and the everyday disruptions produced by modernity? What is meant by modernity? What are its consequences for both individuals and society? To answer these questions, this study employs the historical method to trace the evolution of terminology and conceptual meanings, the analytical method to examine the subject through critical inquiry and logical argumentation, as well as other research methods required by the nature of the study.

1. Modernity: The Archaeology and Origins of the Concept

It is widely acknowledged that the Western paradigm of modernity, as a worldview (Worldview / Vision du Monde), represents not only a transformation in human thought but also in human behavior following the rejection of the sacred and the adoption of scientific knowledge as the principal instrument of reasoning. From this perspective, the idea of modernity is founded upon the conviction that human beings are the sole source of legislation and authority. Consequently, an increasingly close relationship has developed between the individual, everyday life, and society as a whole within what is commonly referred to as the "modern worldview."

Modernity is generally approached as the triumph of reason. Reason alone establishes the relationship between human action and the order of the world. Upon reason are founded freedom, personal happiness, and the fulfillment of human needs. (Touraine, 1998, p. 19) There is little doubt that contemporary individuals now experience the realities and transformations of modernity to such an extent that it profoundly shapes their patterns of thought, behavior, and social relations. However, before examining the achievements and consequences of modernity for individuals and contemporary society, it is first necessary to investigate modernity as a concept and to trace its historical formation, thereby facilitating a critical and analytical examination of the subject.

1.1. Modernity: Conceptual Contexts

In discussing modernity, it is essential to distinguish between modernity and modernization. The term moderne originates from the Latin modernus, referring to what is new, current, or contemporary, whether as a temporal circumstance or an opinion. It derives from the combination of modo, meaning "just now" or "recently," and hodiernus, meaning "of today." Philosophically, Le moderne was used to describe Christian thinkers (moderni) in contrast to the ancient pagan thinkers of Greek and Roman antiquity. (Al-Naqari, 2018, p. 190) Conversely, the concept of modernisme refers to "the style that characterizes the present age through its latest developments and innovations." (Al-Naqari, 2018, p. 191)

Accordingly, a distinction must be drawn between the notions of the modern and modernity. The former generally denotes the distinction between the Christian era and the earlier age of paganism and superstition. Modernity, by contrast, constitutes a comprehensive vision and a mode of life that characterizes human existence in its most advanced forms across different fields. In contemporary intellectual discourse, modernity occupies a central position, as it broadly describes the condition of Western societies since the Renaissance. It encompasses economic rationalization, political democracy, and rationality as a mode of thinking in opposition to the mythical and ecclesiastical forms of thought that prevailed during the Middle Ages and earlier periods.

Some scholars define modernity by associating it with rationalization, arguing that modernity, both as a reality and as a concept, is intrinsically linked to rationalization. Abandoning one necessarily implies rejecting the other. Indeed, many scholars prefer to reduce modernity to rationalism/rationalization (Rationalisme/Rationalism). (Touraine, 1998, p. 30)

In contrast, the thinker Abdelwahab El-Messiri argues that defining modernity merely as the use of reason and technology in dealing with reality overlooks its comprehensive and ultimate epistemological dimension. According to El-Messiri, a more accurate definition of modernity requires restoring this epistemological dimension, revealing that modernity is not simply the use of reason; rather, it is the use of reason, science, and technology detached from a humanistic and ethical framework. Hence, El-Messiri defines modernity more precisely as "the use of reason, science, and technology in separation from reality." (El-Messiri, 2009, pp. 190–191)

Accordingly, it becomes evident that establishing a comprehensive and universally accepted definition of modernity is an extremely difficult task. More importantly, modernity has fallen into what Taha Abderrahmane calls the "inflation of the concept." This exaggeration has transformed modernity into a strange entity endowed with the freedom to act upon living beings and objects as though it possessed divine power. In reality, such a characterization is itself unmodern. Therefore, Taha Abderrahmane proposes distinguishing between the reality of modernity and the spirit of modernity. (Abderrahmane, 2007, p. 20) The former refers to the Western manifestations and applications of modernity, representing only one among several possible forms, whereas the latter denotes the underlying essence upon which Western civilization was constructed. Accordingly, modernity may be defined as:

"The rise of any nation, regardless of its identity, to fulfill the obligations imposed by a particular stage of human history in such a way that it becomes uniquely identified with that historical period and assumes responsibility for advancing it toward its ultimate goal: the perfection of humanity." (Abderrahmane, 2007, p. 20)

1.2. The Historical Moment of the Emergence of Modernity

It is important to recognize that modernity is not merely an event experienced by contemporary societies. Rather, it is the outcome of a long series of historical developments and cumulative transformations that reshaped societies and produced a human being who identifies himself as both contemporary and modern. Consequently, it is erroneous to discuss modernity in isolation from the historical circumstances surrounding its emergence and development.

Modernity is generally understood to refer simultaneously to reason, as a mode of thought grounded in rational knowledge; critical practice and inquiry, characterized by examination and justification; freedom, understood as maturity without tutelage and independence without subordination; and progress, conceived as a continuous process of growth and prosperity. (Al-Kour, 2013, p. 28) These are the characteristics commonly emphasized by advocates of modernity, who associate it with rationality, liberation, and progress. (Al-Kour, 2013, p. 29)

Given the close relationship between modernity and rationality, it becomes necessary to investigate the origins of Western rationalism. Its foundations are commonly traced back to the French philosopher René Descartes (1596–1650), who established a sharp dualism between the subject (Le Sujet) and the object (L'Objet). On the one hand stands the knowing subject, represented by the human being; on the other stands the object of study, represented by nature. This epistemological distinction marked a profound departure, both formally and substantively, from the mythological and theological modes of thought that had previously prevailed. (Boumnir, 2010, p. 23)

Within this framework, rationality manifests itself through its persistent attempt to dominate nature by disenchanting the world, stripping the universe of its sacred character, and relying instead on rational knowledge. The foundations of this project appeared clearly in Descartes' philosophy, where rationality was embodied in the conscious human subject confronting the external world—a world destined to be explored, mastered, and controlled. Thus, Descartes begins with the Cogito (Le Cogito), encapsulated in the famous proposition: "I think, therefore I am." This statement affirms the subject as the fundamental source of knowledge. (Boumnir, 2010, p. 23) Such knowledge, according to Descartes, should be employed consistently in every domain to which it is applicable. More significantly, it enables human beings to become "masters and possessors of nature." (Descartes, 1991, p. 82)

The early formation of modernity is clearly manifested in the establishment of a form of rationality fundamentally grounded in the idea of mastery and control. This was achieved through the formulation of the laws governing nature, their reduction to measurable principles, and their subsequent utilization in the service of humankind, thereby facilitating the transition from scientific and intellectual stagnation to progress. The notion of controlling nature through rationality, as one of the defining constants of Western modernity, is also evident in the thought of Francis Bacon. Indeed, the Cartesian philosophy was not the sole intellectual force shaping the concept of humanity's dominion over nature. Despite the philosophical differences between Bacon and René Descartes regarding both philosophical orientation and the foundations of knowledge, they shared the conviction that humanity must seek to understand nature through the discovery of its laws. Such knowledge should then be directed toward achieving mastery over nature and exercising control over it, with the ultimate objective of advancing human welfare. (Boumnir, 2010, p. 25)

Accordingly, Bacon's philosophy may be regarded as an explicit call for the domination of nature, particularly through his advocacy of the experimental method and his insistence on approaching nature with the aim of regulating and controlling it. Yet this aspiration for control did not remain confined to the natural world; it eventually extended to human beings themselves. Consequently, modernity witnessed a transition from controlling nature through its understanding and codification to controlling human beings through the regulation of their behaviour and the restriction of their freedom. (Boumnir, 2010, p. 19)

Moreover, the historical emergence of modernity is generally associated with the Enlightenment, whose optimistic vision marked the period commonly referred to as the Age of Reason. There is broad agreement that Enlightenment philosophy was founded upon a set of fundamental principles, namely rationality, progress, and freedom. During the eighteenth century, this triad played a decisive role in shaping Europe's cultural and civilizational project, while proclaiming the liberation of humanity from its condition of intellectual and social dependency. In general, the optimism

of the Enlightenment sought to disenchant the world by dispelling myths (Todorov, 2007, pp. 09-10) and replacing them with rational and scientific knowledge. Consequently, the Enlightenment is typically characterized by its commitment to rationalism and empiricism. At the same time, it inherited significant intellectual legacies from both Descartes and John Locke, embracing the principles of individual autonomy and the human capacity to determine the ends of our actions independently of external authority or tutelage. (Todorov, 2007, p. 10)

Perhaps the foremost defining characteristic of Enlightenment philosophy lies in its insistence that individuals should value what they freely choose and determine for themselves rather than what is imposed upon them by external authority. It rejects submission to any form of tutelage imposed upon human beings against their own will. (Kant, 2005, p. 85) It is in this context that the celebrated motto of the Enlightenment was articulated by the German philosopher Immanuel Kant in his essay What Is Enlightenment?:

"Enlightenment is humanity's emergence from its self-incurred immaturity. Immaturity is the inability to use one's own understanding without the guidance of another. This immaturity is self-incurred when its cause lies not in a lack of understanding but in a lack of determination and courage to use one's understanding without another's direction. Sapere aude!—Dare to know! Have the courage to use your own reason! That is the motto of the Enlightenment."

Through this, it can indeed be argued that the Enlightenment, and consequently modernity, represents the complete freedom of thought, questioning, criticism, and skepticism, without the sanctification of any doctrine or institution. Hence, the Enlightenment is often described as having produced "a world without illusions." Modernity, therefore, presents itself as both a philosophical issue and an intellectual paradigm that has occupied the attention of thinkers and philosophers alike. Among the most common definitions of modernity is that it signifies the advancement of reason, progress, and emancipation. It has also been understood as the application of science and technology and the exercise of mastery over nature, the self, and society. Alternatively, modernity may be viewed as a break with tradition in pursuit of renewal, or even as a rupture with religion. More often than not, however, modernity is summarized in the concept of "rationalization." (Kant, 2005, p. 23)

The sociologist Alain Touraine (1925–2023) argues that modernity has become so closely associated with rationality that abandoning one necessarily implies rejecting the other. According to Touraine, what distinguishes Western thought at the moment of modernity is its determination to move beyond the process of rationalization toward the establishment of a rational society, in which reason governs human judgment and directs all aspects of human activity. (Touraine, 1998, p. 30) Nevertheless, modernity remains an extremely complex concept due to the difficulty of formulating a precise definition that can eliminate the ambiguities surrounding it. It is commonly understood either as rationalization or as a disengagement from tradition. This conceptual diversity has rendered modernity a flexible and broad notion that resists comprehensive definition.

2. The Mutilated Human Being as the Model of Modern Humanity

There is little doubt that Western civilization, through its manifestations across all spheres of life, presents itself as a complete and integrated model of progress and development. As a result, it has shaped the model of the contemporary individual, who now lives—whether to a greater or lesser extent—within the transformations brought about by modernity in both thought and behavior. These transformations emerged through the rejection of the sacred, the disenchantment of the world, and the adoption of scientific knowledge as a substitute for mythical and superstitious modes of thinking. In this sense, modernity may rightly be understood as the defining condition of modern societies, fundamentally distinct from that of classical societies. Indeed, for many scholars, modernity represents the ultimate model of human progress across various domains, including politics, science, social organization, and even human behavior itself.

Accordingly, some regard modernity as the highest achievement of Western civilization. Yet modernity ultimately failed to fulfill the promises and aspirations upon which it was founded. Instead, many of its ideals evolved into their very opposites. It is precisely this outcome that led numerous philosophers and intellectuals to subject modernity to criticism, evaluation, and deconstruction by examining the model of the modern human being as the ultimate embodiment and final expression of Western modernity. From this perspective, modernity itself has become a source of crisis for both society and contemporary human life. It has reduced the individual to a compulsive consumer and a victim of rigid systems of organization, regulation, and surveillance governing everyday life. Moreover, it has generated profound repercussions within the social sphere, understood as the system that structures and regulates the lives of individuals.

René Guénon devoted considerable attention to Western civilization and its institutions, seeking to expose the illusions in which it—and modern Western humanity—has become immersed. According to him, modern Western man is trapped within the confines of a destructive rationalism and an aberrant materialism. Guénon reached this conclusion through a comparison with Eastern civilizations, which, in his view, still preserve and adhere to a form of spiritual and metaphysical wisdom. He therefore argued that every type of human society possesses its own civilization, although civilizations differ greatly in their orientations and degrees of development. Modern Western civilization, however, exhibits characteristics that render it an exceptional and abnormal case. Westerners regard their civilization as superior to all others in every domain. Consequently, it is impossible for human beings to direct their activity equally toward all possible directions at the same time, particularly because certain forms of development are inherently incompatible with one another. (Descartes, 1991, p. 48)

From this perspective, Western civilization, in all its manifestations, represents a human model embodied in the figure of modern man. Since modernity constitutes the face of Western civilization, modern man becomes a clear reflection and explicit manifestation of the fundamental principles upon which Western modernity—or Western civilization in its broader sense—is built. There is no doubt that human beings are active agents in civilization and

represent its human dimension, while simultaneously being the primary subjects affected by its consequences and implications.

2.1. In Greek Civilization

It is undeniable that Greek civilization possesses a rich cultural heritage that embodies the Greek vision of the world. This vision shaped human thought and the pattern of intellectual transformation during the Greek era, which was distinguished by remarkable diversity and by interpreting the world according to original archetypal principles. This tendency remained evident throughout Greek culture, particularly in the Homeric tradition, although it did not assume a distinctly philosophical form until the Socratic period during the second half of the fifth and fourth centuries BCE. It was further developed in Plato's dialogues, which presented humanity's understanding of the universe as an organized expression of a series of eternal and transcendent first principles, universal ideas and forms, sacred ancient traditions, and authentic cosmic archetypes. The individual of the Greek age thus relied upon these broad cosmological foundations of the Greek worldview, which conceived the universe as an ordered reality governed by enduring and immutable essences embedded within tangible existence, thereby bestowing upon it both form and meaning. These original archetypal principles were represented through geometry, mathematical forms, and numerical calculation. They also encompassed cosmic opposites such as darkness and light, love and hatred, male and female, unity and plurality. Before the emergence of philosophy, these principles existed in the pre-philosophical Greek mind in the form of mythological images such as Eros, Chaos, Heaven and Earth, and other myths that shaped the Greek understanding of the universe. (Tarnas, n.d, p. 25)

The triad of nature, God, and humanity constituted the central concern of the philosopher during the Greek era. Observing nature, the philosopher regarded it as a mystery whose secrets gradually unfolded over time. Looking toward the heavens, God appeared as a hidden and transcendent mystery beyond human comprehension. Humanity therefore remained the philosopher's primary concern, leading him to proclaim that the universe is, at the very least, humanity's own domain. Consequently, the question of the human being became the focal point of philosophical inquiry: What is the human being? (Ibrahim, n.d, p. 05) Greek philosophy sought to answer this question by maintaining that humanity's essential task in life is contemplation and the investigation of how all things ultimately return to a single origin and a fundamental principle. Philosophy, therefore, aims to attain knowledge of this first principle, and human beings are called upon to contemplate the principle from which all things derive their existence. (Murad, 2020, p. 23) Accordingly, the function of the human being is to seek an explanation of the order of the cosmos and to answer the major existential questions that continually occupy the human mind through rational reflection upon things and the ultimate causes of their existence. In this precise sense, the mission of the human being within the context of Greek civilization is clearly manifested.

This highlights the distinctive characteristic of the human species and its unique capacity to exercise dominion over and comprehend the world and the universe. History demonstrates that human beings are the only creatures qualified, among all living beings, to govern the affairs of the world and establish civilizations. Humanity alone bears the primary responsibility for managing the world, directing its course, and bringing about change. (Al-Dhawadi, 2006, p. 30)

This implies that the ancient Greek conception of the human being occupied a unique position in history, characterized by a profound inclination toward philosophy and an insatiable spirit of inquiry. Such a disposition motivated individuals to undertake comprehensive philosophical investigations aimed at seeking objective truth. This intellectual pursuit was shaped by the plurality of perspectives that structured Greek civilization, where human beings found themselves navigating between mythological explanations, natural interpretations, and ethical visions. The natural perspective was embodied in reason, or the illuminating Logos, as the foundation of knowledge; the mythological perspective was reflected in narratives concerning the creation of the cosmos; while the ethical perspective centered on the ideals of goodness and virtue. (Russ, n.d, p. 22)

Based on the foregoing, it can be argued that human beings in Greek culture were engaged in continuous efforts to understand the world, explain the order of the cosmos, identify its first principles, and uncover the fundamental nature of things. It may also be maintained that the individual of this historical period was the product of the multiple prevailing perspectives within Greek culture. These included the dominance of mythological and religious worldviews, which sought to fill the existential void through spiritual sources; the emergence of rational and natural explanations embodied in the discourse of Logos and logical interpretations of reality; and the ethical vision, whose conception of virtue was most clearly articulated in Plato's dialogues on goodness and moral excellence.

2.2. In the Modern and Contemporary West

Modern thought revealed its own worldview and its conception of the human being following the decline of ecclesiastical authority and the rise of reason and critical inquiry. Human beings gradually liberated themselves from the authority of the Church and became prepared to employ reason as a means of mastering nature. It may therefore be asserted that the individual of the modern world was the product of the Renaissance and the Industrial Revolution in Europe. Human beings emerged as open-minded and emancipated from the constraints that had previously restricted them. Furthermore, modern thought was fundamentally concerned with liberating humanity from the various forms of domination that had confined it. Likewise, contemporary philosophy devoted considerable attention to the question of the human being and the paradigm of values, particularly in the aftermath of the Enlightenment, the expansion of critical thinking, and the proliferation of methodological approaches. Consequently, the contemporary individual became increasingly bold in formulating new methodologies and establishing diverse philosophical schools.

Accordingly, it can be affirmed that both the modern and the contemporary West possess a distinctive worldview that reflects a specific model of humanity embodying the behavior and practices of Western civilization. In this sense, the

modern individual is the outcome of the manifestations of Western civilization and its modernist contexts. Among the principal human models produced by the modern Western worldview are Nietzsche's Übermensch (the Superman), or the human being of power; Gilles Lipovetsky's notion of the hypermodern individual, alternatively described as the consumerist individual; Herbert Marcuse's characterization of modern humanity as the one-dimensional man, whose existence is reduced to the material dimension; and Zygmunt Bauman's portrayal of modern humanity as the liquid individual, defined by fluidity, fragility, and uncertainty. These human paradigms are therefore the products of Western civilization's particular vision of the world.

2.3. The Overman (Übermensch): The Model of the Human Being of Power

Within the context of modern philosophy, Nietzsche presents the model of the human being of power, or what he calls the Will to Power. It is a fundamental existential condition that manifests itself whenever human beings seek resistance and confrontation. The Will to Power is, in Nietzsche's view, a natural phenomenon, or more precisely, a natural constituent of every organic phenomenon. Consequently, human beings cannot escape it because they are in constant need of "will." Every victory and every feeling of pleasure presupposes the existence of an obstacle that has been overcome. (Nietzsche, 2011, p. 244)

This belief in the will can be traced back to ancient traditions, where it was equivalent to the belief in effective magical forces. From the earliest encounters with natural events, human beings assumed that a will lay behind every occurrence and exerted an influence upon it. According to Nietzsche, this conception of will is one of the oldest myths that has survived throughout history, extending into the modern era and penetrating even the greatest minds. (Montebello, 2010, p. 47) moreover, Nietzsche regards the Will to Power as a universal cosmic phenomenon. In this sense, it constitutes the essence most intimately connected with existence itself. It represents a journey at the level of human existence. (Montebello, 2010, p. 65) Existence is nothing but life, and life itself is will—or, more accurately, the Will to Power. Accordingly, the feeling of willing is merely the result of the feeling of existing. The Will to Power reveals itself wherever life exists. (Badawi, 1975, p. 216)

It can therefore be argued that the philosophy of the will represents a comprehensive way of understanding the world. It is an existential condition inherent in the human self that emerges after every experience encountered by the individual. Besides being a universal phenomenon—which makes the Will to Power a worldview and an answer to the fundamental questions of existence—it is also an inseparable aspect of both life and existence. The will cannot manifest itself independently of existence; wherever life is found, the Will to Power is likewise present. the Will to Power is also the measure of all values in life. Indeed, Nietzsche maintains that nothing possesses value apart from the degree of power it embodies. It represents the greatest amount of power that an individual can attain and appropriate. All aspects of life and every manifestation of existence ultimately express the Will to Power, which serves as the true driving force within the individual and the essential principle underlying society. (Badawi, 1975, p. 226)

Since power alone constitutes the foundation of morality and values in Nietzsche's philosophy, humanity must strive to cultivate the strength of individuals. The ultimate aim of humanity should therefore be the emergence of the Overman (Übermensch)—an exceptional individual who rises above the masses through courage and rigorous education rather than through natural selection. Consequently, the formation of the Overman should depend on education and conscious cultivation instead of the randomness of natural selection. Nature, Nietzsche argues, tends to favor ordinary individuals and the majority rather than the exceptional few. By contrast, education, training, and the deliberate selection of means of reproduction are capable of shaping the model of the Overman, endowed with the Will to Power. (Durant, 2014, p. 324)

Accordingly, the model of the Superman (Übermensch) in the Western context constitutes a clear manifestation of the philosophy of the Will to Power, which Nietzsche regarded as the foundation of values, morality, and life itself. In this sense, the image of the Superman represents the ideal toward which humanity aspires when it relies on education rather than on the principles of natural selection advocated by evolutionary theory. A strong and transformative education is therefore capable of shaping the model of the Superman and giving rise to a superior human being who transcends others through the strength of his will and power.

2.4. The One-Dimensional Man: The Model of the Consumer Individual

There is little doubt that the expansion of the modern worldview has produced the archetype of modern man. This individual has come to bear the consequences of Western civilization and the foundations of a crisis-ridden modernity. In this context, Herbert Marcuse (1898–1979), following the intellectual tradition of the Frankfurt School, sought to diagnose the condition of modern humanity in a manner that reflects the qualitative crisis of modernity. He described this condition through the concept of the One-Dimensional Man, a notion developed from the broader critical orientation of the Frankfurt School, which undertook a fundamental critique of the values underpinning Western civilization, including those of modernity itself.

According to Marcuse, modern society is fundamentally a one-dimensional society, characterized by the intensification of biological human needs and dominated by prevailing institutions and vested interests. Within this framework, human needs are reduced to necessities defined according to the requirements of an oppressive social order that shapes and satisfies individual needs in accordance with the existing status quo. In this sense, Marcuse's One-Dimensional Man is a simplified and reduced individual, or what Abdelwahab El-Messiri referred to as the "non-complex human being." This human model is the product of modern society—a society governed by instrumental reason, technological rationality, and a materialistic orientation. Its guiding principles are scientific, industrial, and material

progress, together with the pursuit of prosperity and consumption. Such a society is dominated by vast bureaucratic institutions and capitalist corporations that control the processes of production and distribution. (El-Messiri, 2009, p. 37)

Consequently, the One-Dimensional Man becomes an individual whose existence is governed by material desires that distort the authentic nature of contemporary humanity. He is transformed into a functional being whose primary concerns revolve around producing goods and consuming them. His intellectual and existential horizons do not extend beyond the marketplace, commodities, and products. He is a one-dimensional consumer—an economic and physical being confined within the realm of nature without transcending it, deprived of critical reason under the dominance of destructive rationality and technological materialism. (El-Messiri, 2009, pp. 38-39) This is precisely the dimension that René Guénon critically examined in his assessment of Western civilization.

Accordingly, the One-Dimensional Man is a human being trapped in crisis, immersed in consumerism and hedonism, as described by Gilles Lipovetsky. This crisis is rooted in the modern worldview and its principal foundations—rationalism, materialism, and individualism. The modern individual has thus become essentially a consumer, entirely detached from spirituality, whose primary interests are consumption and the pursuit of fashion. The dominance of instrumental reason in the modern age has ultimately reduced human beings to mere instruments serving economic corporations and unrestrained capitalism.

The One-Dimensional Man is therefore the immediate outcome of a one-dimensional consumer society, whose priorities are increasingly shaped by advertising, mass media, and the promotion of goods and commodities. Such an individual is detached from religion, morality, and faith. This obsessive consumerism can also be attributed to the arbitrary distribution of individual tastes and subjective preferences, together with the penetration of both the family and the school through various cultural channels such as interior design, art, music, and fashion. (Rosenblatt, 2011, pp. 47–48) All of these institutions have become subject to different forms of domination and repression generated by instrumental reason, whose foundations were laid by modernity from the Renaissance through the optimism of the Enlightenment. As a result, freedom has been transformed into a mechanism of greater control and domination; reason has become an instrument of surveillance; and progress has been reduced to a means of producing commodities, marketing goods, and standardizing human consciousness.

2.5. The consumerist model of modern Western man cannot be understood in isolation

from the role that the media and advertising system has come to play in producing and directing desires. If the one-dimensional human being has become governed by the logic of consumption, the market, and commodities, then advertising represents one of the symbolic mechanisms that makes this logic present in daily life. It does this by transforming commodities from mere material needs into signs bearing social, cultural, and symbolic meanings. Thus, advertising discourse is not limited to introducing the product, but also contributes to constructing a stereotypical image of happiness, success, beauty, and social status, making consumption a method of self-expression.

In this context, Jean Baudrillard argues that advertising has transcended its direct economic function to become one of the most important forms of mass communication within consumer society. This is because it not only promotes the commodity but also links it to a system of signs and meanings that make the consumer part of a broader symbolic world.5. Media, advertising, and the making of consumerism in Western modernity (Baudrillard, 1970, p. 192) thus, advertising becomes an intermediary between the individual and the market, contributing to the reproduction of the consumerist model described by Marcuse. Desires gradually transform into seemingly natural and necessary needs, while the individual becomes increasingly tied to the system of the market, fashion, and image. based on this, it can be argued that the consumerist individual is not only produced within economic institutions but is also reproduced within the surrounding media landscape. Here, image, word, and advertising intersect with lifestyles, values, and aspirations, thereby giving alienation a media and cultural dimension, in addition to its economic and social dimensions.

2.6. Media and the shaping of consciousness and representations: From conveying the message to creating the alienated human being:

The influence of media extends far beyond the promotion of goods and services. It reaches into the symbolic realm where human perceptions of self, others, and the world are shaped. Media outlets contribute to the production of images and representations that define what is desirable, successful, or socially acceptable. Thus, communication becomes a space where the construction of meaning intersects with the shaping of behavior.

From this perspective, alienation should not be understood solely as a direct consequence of economic dominance, but also as a result of symbolic dominance embodied in the images, discourses, and models that recur within the media landscape. Herein lies the significance of Marshall McLuhan's thesis; he asserts that the media itself produces social and personal effects that transcend the content of its message, because each medium imposes a new pattern of speed, relationships, and interaction within social life. (Mcluhann, 1994, p. 7)

Therefore, modern man not only receives media messages, but lives within an integrated media environment that participates in shaping his perception of reality. This makes the media part of the cultural structure that should be considered when studying alienated man in modernity, because control may move from direct coercion to influencing consciousness, desires, and choices.

2.7. Digital media and the fluid human being: speed, virtuality, and the fluidity of relationships

While traditional media contributed to shaping consumption patterns and social representations, the digital transformation has intensified this process, making it more complex. Individuals now live within a constantly flowing communication space, characterized by speed, immediacy, and continuous renewal. The relationship with media is no

longer passive reception but rather interaction, participation, production, and republication. This has placed modern humans within a network of ever-changing communication relationships.

This transformation clearly aligns with Zygmunt Bauman's concept of "liquid modernity." Relationships that were once based on a degree of stability have become more susceptible to change and disruption. Digital communication enables the construction of rapid and ephemeral virtual relationships. Consequently, the digital environment can be viewed as one of the spaces where the characteristics of fluid humanity are embodied: speed, immediacy, instability, and the constant reshaping of relationships. (Bauman, Liquid Modernity, 2016, pp. 13-24)

This does not mean that digital technology is the sole cause of social fluidity, but rather that it has become a crucial medium through which the transformations described by Bauman are embodied. Digital media accelerate the exchange of information, images, and symbols, compelling individuals to constantly keep up with developments. This makes the present more intense and less stable, placing humanity in a perpetual state of interaction with change. therefore, the transition from consumerist to fluid human being does not represent a complete break, but rather reveals an evolution in the mechanisms of alienation. Humans move from consuming goods and images to consuming digital content, experiences, relationships, and moments, making communicative fluidity one of the defining characteristics of contemporary humanity.

2.8. Liquid Man: The Human Model of Liquid Modernity

Although modernity has, to a considerable extent, liberated human beings from the chains of superstition and theological authority, shifting reason from submission and obedience toward critical thinking and emancipation, this does not negate the emergence of a profound crisis within modernity itself. This crisis affects its very foundations, namely rationality, freedom, and progress. Such an internal disruption has prompted numerous philosophers from different intellectual traditions, as well as sociologists, to reassess the values of modernity. Among them is the Polish sociologist Zygmunt Bauman (1925–2017), who critically examined modernity and its consequences for contemporary society and humanity, characterizing it as "liquid modernity" and criticizing the model of the "liquid human being."

Bauman introduces the concept of liquid modernity as a description—or perhaps an indictment—of the deteriorated condition into which Western modernity has evolved in its lived reality. He seeks to move beyond the notion of solid modernity, which was fundamentally based on the denial of the metaphysical and the domination of the world and nature in pursuit of material certainty, toward a model of liquid modernity, grounded in the logic of consumerism and the deterioration of human relationships. In general, Bauman's thought revolves around the condition of humanity and the changing image of the human being throughout the successive phases of modernity. (Bauman, 2016, p. 12) What renders modernity so profoundly shocking in its transition from solidity to liquidity is its transformation of the fundamental conditions of human existence. Although solidity and liquidity are dialectically interconnected states, as François Lyotard (1924–1998) expressed when he argued that one cannot truly belong to modernity without also belonging to postmodernity, the essence of solid modernity lies in control and domination, whereas the mission of liquid modernity is to secure liberation from the future itself It seeks to dispel the fear of stable and enduring structures. This pervasive fear—later examined by Bauman in an independent work is confronted by individuals through psychological responses such as immersion in the present moment, the pursuit of pleasure, and consumerist behavior.

Consequently, the Enlightenment, which constitutes the very essence of modernity, reveals itself through outcomes marked by decline and aspirations that ultimately reverse into their opposites. It imposes a distinctive model of the contemporary individual: one who lives within a liquid modern world. Liquid modernity thus represents Bauman's early diagnosis of the characteristics of the modern paradigm, a social model that has not merely emerged but has come to dominate contemporary human existence. (Bauman, Liquid Fear, 2017, pp. 12-13) Daily life has increasingly been reduced to consumption, expanding exchanges, the accelerated circulation of capital and consumer goods, and the proliferation of mechanisms of social control. The centers of modernity have appropriated social systems and extended their domination over the world. (Touraine, 1998, pp. 129-130) While modernity originally sought to free humanity from magical and mythical conceptions of reality, it has paradoxically transformed into a nightmare that continues to haunt human beings. Individuals now find themselves trapped within a conception of freedom that constantly strives to produce the "ideal producer," while the market-driven culture seeks to shape the "ideal consumer." Each emphasizes a different dimension of freedom. The liquidity that characterizes our present crisis aims at dismantling established systems and spreading what Bauman calls a "state of uncertainty," a condition combining ignorance, helplessness, fear, and the gradual erosion of stability.

Furthermore, the values that Western civilization embraced with optimism during the era of modernity soon gave way to entirely different values. As Bauman observes, "the great values with which modernity began have been replaced by the values of instant gratification and individual happiness; products are transformed into waste, while objects and relationships fluctuate between consumption, abandonment, and death." This implies that the foundational values of modernity—freedom, rationality, and progress—have, in the age of liquidity, become crisis-ridden values whose ultimate objective is immediate happiness. Fear therefore becomes the dominant preoccupation of individuals living under liquid modernity: fear of failing to keep pace with rapid change, and fear of missing the fleeting moment that can be experienced within a fluid modern society—a society devoid of stability, where circumstances change with extraordinary speed. Thus, the liquidity of life emerges as one of the principal manifestations of the liquidity of society, a mode of existence characterized by continuous and accelerated transformation. Life appears as an endless sequence of new beginnings, incapable of ceasing its constant movement. Instead, it is engaged in perpetual and immediate self-renewal, continuously

stripping itself of the characteristics it had previously assumed. (Bauman, Liquid Fear, 2017, pp. 12-23)by shedding, on a daily basis, the characteristics that it had previously acquired.

What distinguishes liquid life is what Zygmunt Bauman calls "creative destruction." This form of destruction targets a wide range of structures, including the human being, who lives within a society dominated by transient and momentary values devoid of enduring concerns. It is a life centered on immediate experiences, pleasure, instability, the loss of equilibrium, and the rapid dissemination and renewal of existence through constant mobility. Liquid life is therefore nothing more than a consumerist life, founded upon the continuous process of consumption, whereby the entire world is transformed into an object of consumption. Consumption and consumers become the two central poles around which the consumer society revolves. Thus, "liquid life confers an instrumental value upon the world—and indeed upon everything within it—rather than treating it as an integral part of the self." In other words, instrumental value becomes the defining characteristic of both human existence and liquid life.

Accordingly, modern liquid society represents a clear departure from the classical ideal of the "virtuous society." Liquid life is no longer guided by the logic of social reform; rather, it gradually compels society to abandon virtually all values except those associated with security and surveillance, whose primary function is the protection of individuals. Moreover, it drives society into a pervasive state of fear, including the emergence of new environmental anxieties resulting from the misuse of natural resources and the predominance of individual selfishness, which constitutes one of the most prominent manifestations of liquid life.

This selfishness is reflected in an exclusive focus on the self and a disregard for the conditions of collective social existence. Within liquid life, the individual's highest aspiration becomes the pursuit of happiness, which appears as the explicit goal and supreme motivation of personal existence. (Bauman, Liquid Fear, 2017, pp. 23-34) Yet this individual life, which encapsulates contemporary human beings within the framework of liquid modernity, is marked by profound transformations manifested in increasing forms of social control and the proliferation of surveillance mechanisms. Education itself is reduced to the mere integration of social categories into groups, serving ultimately to subordinate education to personal interests in order to maximize social control. (Touraine, 1998, p. 180)

Therefore, the excessive individualism that characterizes human beings in liquid society, together with the pervasive state of fear and uncertainty that dominates the features of liquid life, leads to the decline and inversion of the values that once contributed to building society and shaping humanity. These values are replaced by others confined to the self, the immediate present, and the expansion of various forms of social and institutional surveillance and control.

According to Bauman, Michel Foucault's (1984) insightful analyses of surveillance in modern society present it as a new principle applicable to all institutions, where individuals are subjected to continuous observation and control through prisons, workhouses, hospitals, factories, and even mental asylums. Consequently, individualism becomes a product of social transformation concealed beneath the appearance of personal emancipation, while society gradually loses its capacity to organize and shape human action. Indeed, the rise of individualism signals the weakening, fragmentation, and eventual disintegration of the dense network of social bonds that once structured and regulated the life of modern human beings.

As a result, human beings become victims of the "astonishing speed" at which the world now moves. They find themselves increasingly incapable of exercising control over the ever-expanding transformations that characterize liquid life. Hence, the very idea of progress becomes, within this context, nothing more than a naïve optimism aspiring to secure permanent and universal happiness. Instead, progress is transformed into a persistent fear of falling behind and failing to keep pace with continuous change. (Bauman, Liquid Fear, 2017, pp. 29-99)

Accordingly, both progress and freedom, the ideals long celebrated by the Enlightenment and embraced by modernity, have, in the age of liquidity, been transformed into a profound source of misery permeating contemporary societies. This transformation further reinforces the logic of domination, particularly with the emergence of what is termed rationality, which has evolved through instrumentalism, imposing new forms of control over contemporary individuals in advanced industrial societies. (Boumnir, 2010, p. 99)

Moreover, liquid life has transcended all geographical and cultural boundaries under the banner of globalization, giving rise to what Karl Popper (1902–1994) described as the Open Society (La société ouverte). (Popper, 1998) As a result, societies have become materially and intellectually open. According to Bauman, however, Popper's vision ultimately acknowledges not the completion of society but rather its inherent incompleteness, depicting a society incapable of determining its own destiny or attaining certainty. The failure of this openness stems from the adverse consequences of negative globalization, characterized by commercial selectivity, the unrestricted mobility of capital, informational surveillance, violence, the spread of crime, dependency, and the emergence of forces that individuals can neither fully comprehend nor effectively control. (Bauman, Liquid Fear, 2017, pp. 30-31)

Thus, life in the age of liquidity is marked by perpetual change and continuous becoming, evolving at a pace impossible to catch. Human beings are swept along by this current, constantly striving to grasp the latest developments of liquid existence. Within this condition, individuals are reduced to the status of mere consumers. Consequently, consumption becomes, in the words of Abdelwahab El-Messiri, a one-dimensional paradigm—a worldview adopted by all peoples, founded upon the logic of commodities, the market, and the supremacy of materialism. (El-Messiri, 2009, p. 22)

Conclusion:

It is known that man, as the active being in building civilizations and advancing societies in their endeavor to form a vision of the world, this vision attempts to embody a humanistic model resulting from the pattern of perception of the

world. In this sense, the model of modern man appears as a man in crisis. And since every humanistic model is necessarily the product of a certain vision of the world, the model of man of Western civilization has become the product of the modernistic vision, which some call the "model of modern man" as a behavioral image of the modernistic vision of the world. We have chosen modernistic humanistic models from within modernity itself, and the matter concerns Nietzsche's Übermensch, or the model of the powerful man; and the one-dimensional man, or the model of the consumerist man. The fluid human being, or Zygmunt Bauman's model of the liquid human, is a human image that reflects a qualitative crisis in the Western modernity model. This crisis has negatively impacted contemporary man, who has been transformed into a consumer driven by consumer goods companies, fashion culture, and marketing methods through screen psychology and packaged consciousness. This shaping of man is no longer limited to market mechanisms and direct marketing; rather, media and advertising have contributed to shaping and directing desires, and to linking goods, images, and consumer patterns to values. Representations that reproduce the consumerist human being within the media landscape necessitate expressing the imminent danger threatening humanity in this era, a situation that compels us to urgently re-examine the values and products of modernity.

Therefore, it can be concluded after this analysis that modernity has deviated from its course to such an extent that it has become the antithesis of all that it promised and hoped for, with progress reverting to a frenzied consumerism imposed on contemporary humanity through the dictates of the market and commodities. Freedom has been transformed into more forms of social and institutional control and surveillance of individuals. Media and communication have become spaces where images and representations of contemporary humanity are formed, making alienation not limited to the economic and social structures alone, but extending to the symbolic and communicative spheres that shape consciousness and influence behavior and choices.

Perhaps the deplorable state to which modernity has descended has prompted many philosophers and sociologists to attack it with criticism and evaluation. Liquid modernity is nothing but a description and diagnosis of the transformation that modernity has undergone, moving from an era of rigidity to a model of fluidity. The latter has produced, or rather imposed, a different life from what modernity carried in terms of values and optimisms of the Enlightenment era, as life has turned into continuous and fluid consumption, through following markets, goods, and increasing fashion demands. All of this has produced a one-dimensional human being, a materialistic human being who seeks only to satisfy his desires. Moreover, this transformation inherent in modernity also targeted the human self and social bonds, insofar as they are the primary legislator for establishing relationships. These relationships, due to the paradigm of fluidity, have been transformed into mere transient virtual relationships based on change and becoming, breaking down real and solid relationships. The digital transformation has contributed to intensifying this fluidity, as it has provided humans with a constantly flowing communicative space based on speed, immediacy, and virtuality. Relationships, messages, and images have become in a continuous movement that reshapes the individual's presence and relationship. With the other and with the world, and in the midst of this virtual connection, the utmost concern of man is pleasure, the present moment, and sexual gratification.

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