

# Towards a Transmodern Transformation of our Global Society: European Challenges and Opportunities

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## Abstract

*For the first time in its history, Humanity is confronted with the real possibility of a collective suicide, if we do not change radically our economic and political governance. This fact is the powerful motor of the transformation Humanity is going through.*

*As a consequence, the modern patriarchal, industrial and capitalist paradigm in which we currently exist is coming to an end, because it appears incapable of providing us with a solution for our survival. Patriarchal values are also in a deep crisis, because they cannot provide a value frame for our survival.*

*Transmodernity is an entirely new matrix of values. Politics and economics are changing below the surface.*

*In politics the EU is a new transmodern political paradigm since It has created a new concept of non-violence between States. The EU concept of non-violence between States is functioning so well that it has become self-evident. This means that Foreign Policy, Defense and Security policies have to be, and are reinvented by the EU every day. But those new policies are not always understood by the States inside the Union, nor by our US allies.*

*The EU is also innovating in Knowledge Economy ("Lisbon Strategy"). This "knowledge society" represents a 180° shift in which everything changes: trade, measurements, tools of production, management, structures of power, basic concept of growth and progress. It is a post capitalist society.*

*Religions are also returning to the political stage. An important congress organized by the European Commission in 1998, in Brussels concluded that the main clash is NOT BETWEEN religions but rather between conflicting paradigms INSIDE each religion and each culture.*

**Keywords:** transmodernity, knowledge economy, post capitalist society, post patriarchal society, post industrial society, new paradigm

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## **Towards a Transmodern Transformation of Our Societies: An European Contribution**

### **From where am I speaking?**

As a member of the "Forward Studies Unit" of the European Commission for almost 10 years (1990-99), I was in the cockpit of the huge European leading Airbus, with almost no power, but an exceptional view on the world, with opportunities to travel and meet exceptional citizens, religious leaders, political leaders and intellectuals, women and men from around the world. Many were "cultural creatives" (Ray, 2000). These enriching contacts have taught me more than books and so, in this third part of my life, I felt obliged to write, in order to share the information and knowledge I have accumulated.

During those years I slowly concluded that we are in a global transformation which is much more wide, deep and radical than what dominant economists and politicians call "globalization". I saw a huge tsunami of global change developing, strengthening and boiling in our societies ready to explode. That explosive transformation is now happening.

This transformation is a paradigm shift, way beyond postmodernity. It is the quick decline of the capitalist western-dominated industrial and patriarchal society and the beginning of a completely new post capitalist, post industrial, post patriarchal transmodern society. We are already halfway in this new logic of the transmodern paradigm. Few people are aware of it, although they feel it in their subconscious.

I offer this explanation to help citizens worldwide to express explicitly what they already know implicitly.

### **The Four Levels of This Transmodern Transformation**

#### **1. The lowest (subconscious) level is the danger of Humanity killing itself**

If Humanity continues industrial, capitalist, patriarchal growth and development strategies, it is in danger of collective suicide. It was already true when only the West was polluting and externalizing its trash elsewhere. Now that almost three billion more citizens have joined this group, including China India, Brazil, and others... a collective ecological collapse becomes evident. Citizens all over the world are conscious of this. Few people speak about it but it remains in our collective subconscious.

This subconscious level is also where we discover the extremely powerful motor of transformation. Humanity has already decided to survive. I am convinced that there are one billion "cultural creatives" in the world, who are changing values in silence, thinking they are alone. Those new values are respect for Mother Nature, care for communities, for family relations, for internal growth, for other cultures, desire for another economic logic, etc.

The only statistics we have from 1997, indicated around 25% "cultural creatives" in US and Europe<sup>1</sup>. According to my information, there is probably the same proportion in the Muslim world, in Latin America, in China and in India. I guess that there are one billion cultural creatives around the world of whom 66% are women<sup>2</sup>. This would mean that 600 million women are leading the change worldwide.

## **2. End of patriarchal values and presence of a new sacred**

Patriarchal values of "command, control and conquer" are obsolete, because they do not enable an inclusive and sustainable world in which humanity might survive. Those values may have allowed wonderful developments in science and technology (landing on the moon), but they can't protect planet Earth.

So we are searching for a new set of life-enhancing values, which are post patriarchal.

In two generations the very content of the sacred has changed more than in 5000 years. 'Sacred' for my daughter (reconnection with the cosmos) means something completely different than my grandmother's concept of "sacred" (separation from this world in order to reach the divine). My daughter's sacred is probably postpatriarchal.

And the sacred is the foundation of all value systems of a civilization. So if this very foundation is moving so quickly, values are following.

The transformation is there... already living in our children.

## **3. The third level is the end of modernity**

### *1. From modern extreme intolerance to transmodern radical tolerance*

Although modernity thinks it is tolerant and universal, its epistemology, its very definition of the truth is *extremely intolerant*. Modernity has killed almost all other cultures and civilizations. Even further, it has convinced all other cultures that they were "underdeveloped" and thus ontologically inferior. It has, in many cases, destroyed the very history and memory of those cultures. UNESCO has recently published an eight volume history of Africa. Many have reacted saying: Is there an African history? Because African History has been completely deleted by modern western historians. Unhappily this is true for many other cultures. South American historians are rewriting South America's history, which had been created from zero by the invaders.

Transmodernity is based and built on a completely different epistemology. There are no more pyramids. Truth is in the empty center of the common table around which all cultures are sitting on an equal footing. Women and men are also equal. The urgent scope of life is to *care together for our survival*. But the main goal in life for everyone is to reach the center, the "divine light" or the "absence of light". And the more you approach the center, the less you can define what the illumination is. You are only able to experience it. And nobody owns or controls this "empty" truth. It is impossible. Transmodernity thus also means the end of dogmatic religions (see Figure 1). Animals and plants are respected because they are, like us, *part* of the cosmos. Transmodernity has a radically tolerant epistemology. It is already rooted in some citizens (at least 25%). However many people (around 70%!) feel uncomfortable in this strange period of transformation and retreat to premodern or modern intolerances. This causes tensions.

### *2. Modernity has destroyed the soul; Transmodernity invites reenchantment*

Modernity has "disenchanted" (*entzaubert*) the world as Max Weber rightly said. It has convinced western civilization that nothing exists outside of rational reality. It has alienated us all from our bodies, our souls, our intuitions, our feelings and our cre-

ativity. It has also convinced us all that there is nothing after our death. It is the first civilization in world history, which has negated all life after death, and so doing, has inflated western anxiety about death.

Transmodernity potentially invites humans to engage on the way to reenchantment. Reenchantment weaves together all the separate boxes of our lives: intelligence, rationality, feelings, intuitions, bodies, souls, love, sexuality, hope, money, work, politics, etc. It is a way to experience wholeness again in hope and joy. Many people are on that journey, in silence, across all continents, and including within Islam.

Transmodernity is also conscious that there is no "clash of civilizations" (Huntington, 1993). The main conflicts are BETWEEN interpretations (premodern, modern, transmodern) INSIDE each religious group.

In Brussels in 1998 in collaboration with the "World Academy of Art and Sciences", the "Forward Studies Unit" of the European Commission organized a congress on "Civilization and governance"<sup>3</sup>. It was very clear that inside the one billion Muslim group, there could be as many transmoderns as in the West: (200.000.000). But our governments are too modern to see this transformation in progress. Indeed this huge group with its female majority, and which is in conflict with the premodern interpretations of the same Koran, is invisible to modern observers.

*3. Modernity has given to science a divine status; transmodernity wants it to be responsible*

Because scientific method is rational, it provides a direct access to the Truth. Science has thus received a quasi-divine status (Prigogine, 1984 final page) which is now in complete crisis, because citizens are asking science and technology to build a sustainable world, and modern science cannot deliver this. Economists, other "experts" and "technocrats" have functioned in modernity as a new clergy, which is, like all clergies, infallible and above criticism.

Another intellectual motor of the paradigm shift has been the discoveries in quantum Physics beyond Einstein, with Nobel prizewinners like Bohr (1922), Heisenberg (1932), and Prigogine (1979). Their discoveries changed the very definition of scientific method, which was based on reproducible and objective experiments and was leading to the Truth about the natural Laws of Nature. Here we discover that the very action of observing, changes the conditions of the experiment. For Nobel Prize Ilya Prigogine (& Stengers), science becomes a poetic approach (1984 final page) of reality, and the "scientific method" is only valuable for some exceptional cases. This is the end of the "modern" approach of science. Unhappily too few scientists accept this paradigm shift. And economists refuse it bluntly.

Transmodernity provides a completely different concept of science and technology. The modern "divine" status of science no longer has reason to exist. Citizens will no longer accept all of what science offers and sells them. Science and technology, as with all human actions, have to be reoriented towards world citizens' desire for a sustainable and socially inclusive world. They have to respond and become "responsible". They have to recuperate their human status and contribute to the common Good.

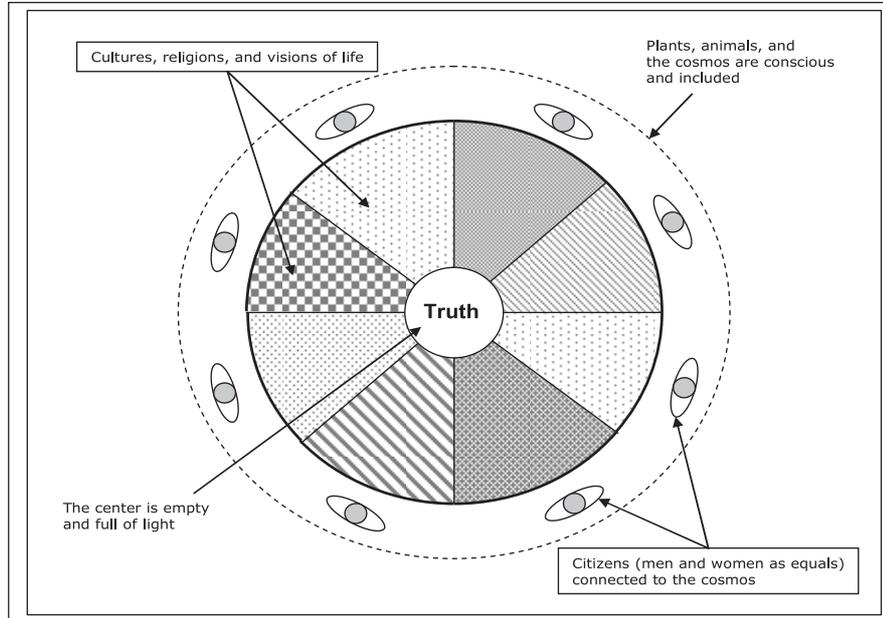


Figure 1. Transmodernity is radically tolerant

*4. Modernity has been the last form of very dominant patriarchal values*

These values of "command control and conquer", are also in deep crisis, because they cannot deliver a credible way out of the crisis of sustainability and a future for our children. However they are imprinted on our bodies, our institutions, our societies and our families.

Transmodernity, as we have seen, is radically post-patriarchal, because women and men sit on an equal footing around the world table. This is the only way forward.

**4. The fourth level TRANSMODERN ECONOMY: End of industrial capitalism and birth of an intangible postcapitalist society**

*Four changes of the tools of production have taken place in 5000 years*

What people feel but do not see clearly, is that we are in the process of changing the tools of production.

- *From matrilinear shepherding to premodern agriculture:* 5000 years ago, we shifted from shepherding to agriculture, and our vision of life changed. The new tool of production was land, seeds, agricultural technology and praying to the Gods for the weather. The Goddess Mother was replaced by God the Father and instead of sacralization of women, sexuality, life and birth, we saw sacralization of Death and mortification and men! Private property was suddenly needed to protect the fields and women became dominated by men (property). This transition was violent.
- *From premodern Agriculture to modern industrial:* 4000 years later, we shifted from agriculture to industry. The new tools of production were the factory,

technology and capital. Everything changed again in our vision of life. We entered into a secular world, where humans were submitted to machine and controlled by mechanistic time. A new money system was created by banks, no longer by Kings and bishops. This transition was also very violent, involving crusades, religious wars and the Inquisition. People in power do not like to hand over power so they create wars.

- *From modern industrial to transmodern knowledge society*: 2000 years after Christ, we are again shifting, as we enter the knowledge society. We are leaving industrial society because this vision of life (paradigm) is not able to imagine and realize a sustainable future for Humanity. We now create value by applying knowledge to create new knowledge. Instead of General Motors, we have Google and IBM. TED (Technology, Entertainment, Design) is where the new jobs will be created. The new tool of production is the human brain collaborating in networks. This means that the new management has to respect humans ("human capital") and become humanist. Alternatively, in a negative scenario, it will manipulate the employees' brains. The machine here has to become "human friendly". Machines are now submitted to Humans. This is a huge change. Transhumanists are an example of people who neither understand nor accept this shift from machine-centered to human centered society. The transition also seems violent as wars are waged by the West.

*The Knowledge society is a post capitalist society*

Everything is changing in this new economy, but nobody tells us anything....

1. *The value creation process is immaterial and post capitalist*: The very core of any economy is the value creation process. The new value creation process no longer adds value to an object (like in industry), but applies knowledge to knowledge in order to create new knowledge (Drucker, 1994). And knowledge is like Love. The more you share, the more you have. This is exactly the opposite of capitalist logic (never share your capital!)
2. *Post capitalist tool of production is human brain in networks*: Every evening the tool of production goes back home. If management is not human centered, the people (the tool of production) go elsewhere with their knowledge and the company fails.
3. *Post capitalist & post industrial management*: Management MUST become human centered, thus humanist. Hence the growing importance of HR (Human relations departments). In the negative scenario, management will manipulate the employee's brains.
4. *Post capitalist economy and society*: Peter Drucker (+ 2005) explains that financial capital and technology are becoming less important than "human capital". According to him, we are already in a "post capitalist society". But nobody says anything and we continue to manage the new within the old industrial system. Hence the crisis.
5. *Post capitalist qualitative Measurements*: How do we measure knowledge? There is too much information and knowledge on the WEB. People look for *quality of knowledge and wisdom*. The stock markets now use qualitative tools

of measurement called "intangible assets" (Sveiby, 1994) in more than 50% of the cases<sup>4</sup>.

6. *Post capitalist exchange system and money*: It is impossible to trade knowledge, because *you keep the knowledge* you are "trading". In the new knowledge society, you can only "share" knowledge. The "free trade" slogan is outdated in this new economy, as it becomes "free sharing of knowledge" ("Open source"). This means that it is possible to shift to a post industrial and post capitalist money system. The crisis of the industrial financial system is obvious.
7. *Post capitalist strategy: from win-lose to win-win*: In the new economy, competitors are collaborating in "communities of practice" (Verna, 2002). The soft approach of a win-win strategy is much more efficient. Women are usually twice more efficient in this new type of Knowledge society Management.
8. *Post capitalist Patenting policy*: It becomes almost impossible to patent knowledge, because knowledge always leaks (Cleveland, 1997). Generic medicines are winning everywhere despite the big fight of the Pharmaceutical companies. Open Source programs are winning more space and importance as China has already chosen Linux and IBM has chosen "Open Source" policies. This induces more Transparency in our societies.
9. *Post capitalist structures in networks*: It is impossible to create knowledge in a pyramidal structure, because information and knowledge do not circulate in a pyramid. Companies have thus to switch to a network structure. The patriarchal "command control and conquer" systems are completely obsolete as it is impossible to control a network.
10. *Post capitalist concept of growth*: This is one of the best pieces of news. What becomes crucial in this new economy is the quality of knowledge and of wise action. Those new important issues are *qualitative*. They give a precious indication that we are changing the cornerstone of the industrial-capitalist concept of growth. From *quantitative growth we are shifting full speed to qualitative growth*. This new growth could be oriented towards a genuine sustainable world economy because only qualitative growth is still possible in our finite world.

*The negative scenario is very active*

Big companies like IBM, SUN, SAP, SIEMENS, are going more or less in the direction of human centered management, Open Source options, and humanistic respect for personnel and the environment. In doing so they accumulate a lot of "intangible assets" in the stock market. Some are more advanced than others (IBM). They are all in this new post capitalist and post industrial vision, without saying it explicitly. On this side we have also one part of the European Commission who is pushing for a human centered and citizen-centered approach of "Converging Technologies"<sup>5</sup>. They represent the positive scenario group.

On the other side you have the "negative scenario group". Companies like MOTOROLA and important power groups like the "US National Science foundation" have a completely different vision. For them we are NOT shifting paradigms. Machines remain more important than humans. Their strategy is "neo-industrial" and transhumanist. Their point of view is:

- Let us build powerful computers (like Big Blue), able to be more intelligent than humans. Let the machine take over and manage more and more our companies and our society. Governance could be silently taken over by computers. Brave new World!
- The second strategy is to manipulate the human brain. Motorola is doing it already with its employees. (Insertion of a micro chip under the skin is foreseen in the contract.)

In this neo-modern paradigm, which I call the negative scenario, ethics is not on the agenda, because science is, by modern definition, reaching Truth through the "scientific" method. So why do we need ethics? They expect sooner or later, a silent take-over of local and global governance by supercomputers. Meanwhile every human brain will be "improved" by the injection of millions of nano-computers into their blood. The most articulate philosophical justification of this (neo-industrial) negative scenario way of thinking is the Transhumanists' Manifesto<sup>6</sup>. This philosophical vision asks for complete freedom to modify the human body with any technology, in order to improve it indefinitely, hoping to reach immortality.

*The European Union has decided to push for this "knowledge society"*

The European Heads of State decided, in 2000, to set up the Lisbon Strategy (2000-2010) aiming at making EU competitive in this *knowledge society* but with respect for the environment and social inclusion. They invented the concept of the "knowledge society". They had the foresight to understand that we are confronted with a change of the tools of production and thus a new society. And now the EU is deciding to continue the same strategy with "Europa 2020".

Unhappily, the visionaries who imagined this innovative strategy, Portuguese Prime minister Gutterrez and Dr. Prof. Maria Joao Rodrigues (Rodrigues, 2003), and knew that this was a new economic paradigm, have not been followed by the EU Governments. This is why this strategy has not been a success. It is a post industrial concept managed with an industrial strategy.

##### **5. The Fifth Level: Transmodern Politics: EU**

Transmodern Politics is there, but we do not see it. It is going in the direction of NON-VIOLENT Networks of States. This is indeed a new political paradigm, because in a global world, war no longer appears an efficient solution. The burden of proof is now on the Warrior, as former UNESCO director Mayor wrote<sup>7</sup>.

The networks of peace are also the end of pyramidal structures. They are introducing a new global political level of non-violent management BETWEEN STATES, in our global world. The European Union is the first successful experiment of non-violence between States. It has worked for 60 years. But our governments present this as a market, or a Super State. While the EU should go in the direction of a network of solidarity and peace our States are pushing it towards a Super State, and a Super Market!! The Market is the means not the end!

Modernity has given us a major political paradigm shift: The "Etat de Droit" which has slowly installed non-violence between citizens inside the national borders. Similarly, transmodernity brings us non-violence Between States.

In this sense the EU is the first transmodern political structure in the world.  
It is an eagle raised by chickens (our EU governments).

*Once consequence of transmodern politics in religions and politics: Conflicts between paradigms instead of religions*

Religions are returning to the political stage. The "Forward Studies Unit" of the European Commission has convened a high level conference on the subject of "Governance and civilizations" in May 1998<sup>8</sup>. One of the main conclusions is that the most difficult conflicts are *not between* religions as Harvard Professor Huntington (1993) stated, they are rather *inside each religion*, between the premoderns, the moderns and the transmoderns. So we involved in a clash of paradigms, instead of civilizations. Another very important conclusion proposed by Prof. Ziauddin Sardar, editor of "Futures" and a specialist in the Islamic world, is that inside the Muslim group, there could be more than 20% of transmoderns, preparing in silence the future of Islam in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. A third important conclusion is that political authorities worldwide will as soon as possible, have to shift to a transmodern vision and to recognize openly the existence of a "spiritual" dimension in every human being.

## Conclusion

Transmodernity is a deep change and we are in the midst of it. This change has five different levels and some deep motors. The actual transformation happens in deep silence. Leading the discussion is partly the scientists, the "Integral thinkers", and partly Business, like IBM, and others. Unhappily, most Universities are not much help in this crucial reflection. This transformation is so important that the whole world map is completely open. Nobody dominates in this new picture, as today the challenge is not to build a new "Silicon Valley", but to get the right vision and to understand the nature of the transformation.

Which government will be the first to understand and respond? The Chinese, United States, Indians, Europeans, Brazilians, Australians? Who will propose new solutions which are really post industrial and post-capitalist? Nobody knows.

Things are really open.

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## Notes

1. The "Club of Budapest" has done a new enquiry on the presence of "cultural creatives" in Europe. Results have been published nationally. I do not know about a publication giving new results for the whole of Europe.
2. We have statistics only for US and EU. And we have interesting indications and analysis from authorized – but- disputable- specialists for Muslim World, and China. We have almost no indication for South America and Australia.
3. See: [http://vision2020.canalblog.com/archives/religions\\_and\\_conflicts/index.html](http://vision2020.canalblog.com/archives/religions_and_conflicts/index.html)
4. Last year, the vice president of the New York Stock exchange said in a public lecture in Louvain-la-Neuve University, Belgium, that 60% of the Stock measurements were in "intangible assets". Stewart Thomas A. *The Wealth of Knowledge* (2002), speaks of 70%.
5. For more info on this subject see my book: [http://vision2020.canalblog.com/archives/my\\_1st\\_book\\_in\\_english\\_the\\_knowledge\\_society/index.html](http://vision2020.canalblog.com/archives/my_1st_book_in_english_the_knowledge_society/index.html)
6. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Transhumanism>
7. Mayor Federico (1995). *The New Page*, Translated from *La nouvelle page*, Editions du Rocher, Unesco, 1994.
8. *Civilizations and Governance*. Congress organized by the Forward Studies Unit and the World Academy of Art and Sciences, in Brussels, May 1998. Text available on my blog in "Religions and conflicts".

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