

# **Evolving Cultural Identities in a Planetary Era**

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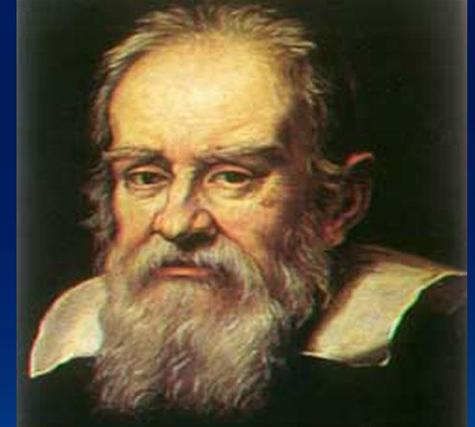
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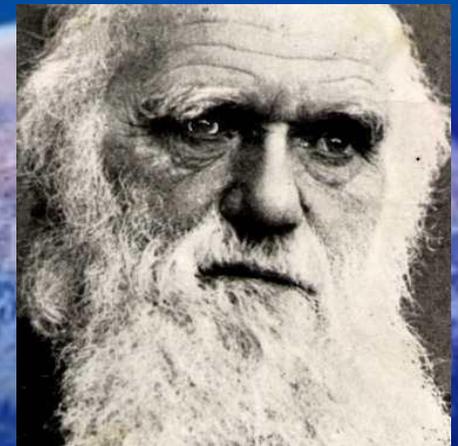


# Myths Busted by Scientific Discoveries

- ❖ The centrality of our planet is *incorrect*



- ❖ The centrality of our species is *incorrect*



# The Next Myth

There is yet another strong “sticky” myth in which the majority of contemporary people still strongly and wrongly believe. This myth encourages the centrality of certain nation-states, cultures, languages, and in short the cherished mental model.

It is *incorrect*



# The Next Myth

- ❖ Rumi, the thirteenth-century mystic poet, in his magnum opus, says, “A colorless person becomes a prisoner of a particular color and then you see that a Moses wages war against a Moses.”
- ❖ He points out the very important issues of arrogance, prejudice, ego, and self interest which often justify that we ignore the unity of being, instead often stress our differences
- ❖ Accept the Unity of Existence, a basic tenet of Sufi metaphysics, which is highlighted in this poem.
- ❖ Our essential pure identity was colorless and united, yet our individual beings, apparently diversified, is trapped inside individual different colors of beings



# From Genes to Memes

- ❖ “Even though the human population is huge and inhabits every corner of the globe, any two people differ from each other only by about one in every thousand letters of the genetic code (0.1 percent). That is five times less than the amount of variation among chimpanzees, although current estimates place the world chimp population at just 125,000, and they live in much more restricted habitats.”
- ❖ Our brains actively categorize people around us as total strangers or significant others like family members, relatives, close friends, or colleagues. Scientists show that our brains often act without our awareness to either enlarge or narrow the boundaries of self. This means that your self is not exclusively you but includes others too, due to complex automatic mechanisms in your brain



# The Idea: Placeless People

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The Idea: Placeless People



# Multiple Mental Models

- ❖ In our *network society* that is growing rapidly day by day it will be a source of disgrace and embarrassment that people who want to explore the new horizons are only connected to a closed circle of old friends and colleagues who are, most likely, residents of the same region.
- ❖ *My suggested rule that can be used as an **indicator or measure** of how global you are:*
- ❖ *“You cannot become a global person unless have a good command of at least four languages and when forty percent of your fellows are non-country men and women.”*



# Placelessness

- ❖ In the wake of a new kind of globalization in the modern era sometimes it may appear rather silly to ask a total stranger a very typical question: “Where are you from?” The point is that some people are “placeless” in a sense that they do not belong to a specific country, culture, language, and etc. Placelessness and not having clear and vivid roots may result in potential gains and pains in the life of an individual to the extent that, a related postmodern notion has become fashionable nowadays: to have “multiple identities” (Giridharadas, 2010). Having multiple identities is a growing problem for those people living in cultures other than their own in different moments of their lives which leads to “a variety of selves that are not integrated by any sense of culture” and thus will highlight “the most important trend of the future: the rise of cultures of schizophrenia, of madness” (Inayatullah, 1993).



# Memetics Degrees of Freedom

- ❖ In **mechanics, degrees of freedom** (DOF) are the set of independent displacements and/or rotations that specify completely the displaced or deformed position and orientation of the body or system. This is a fundamental concept relating to systems of moving bodies in mechanical engineering, aeronautical engineering, robotics, structural engineering, etc.
- ❖ In **memetics, degrees of freedom** indicate if and how you can easily and comfortably accommodate and switch among diverse mental models or systems of memes or languages without stepping into the phase or age of madness!



# A surgery on your consciousness

To walk my talk, I have decided to adopt a new name: Victor Vahidi Motti.

It might not be evident but it has four linguistic origins: English, Arabic, Persian, and Italian. The meaning of Victor must be clear in English. Vahid is from Persian and Arabic which means “being alone, unique, or the one.” And Motti could cover the Italian part of my favorite identity. It is the plural of Motto which means “Maxim.”

I miei genitori mi hanno costretto ad imparare il persiano, la repubblica islamica mi ha costretto ad imparare l'arabo, l'impero britannico mi ha costretto ad imparare l'inglese, ma nessun mi ha mai costretto ad imparare l'italiano -- questa, dunque, è stata la mia scelta libera.



# Global Citizenship

**3**

Encouraging and Promoting Global Citizenship



# The future *silly* questions



# Identification in the future

- ❖ Is your genetic and memetic immune system robust enough to cope with diverse threats and accommodate numerous opportunities?
- ❖ A huge amount of options and a huge amount of uncompressed time to realize them
- ❖ Increased life span means increased chance for self-overcoming and self-transcendence
- ❖ Placeless and Multiple
- ❖ Globalized, Multilingual, Travelling and Immigrating Worldwide Through Open Borders



# *Scenario Planning Exercise*

- ❖ **In 2011, participants in my workshop on Global Placeless Brains at the conference Reconciling Babel—Education for Cosmopolitanism, held at the Villa di Breme Forno campus of the University of Milano-Bicocca in Milan, Italy, took part in a brief scenario planning exercise. They were encouraged to do some “disciplined imagination” about the alternative futures of global citizenship in the year 2040**



# *Scenario Planning Exercise*

- ❖ **Based on the participants' collective foresight three key uncertainties with regard to the long term futures were identified that determine how global citizenship may unfold in the years to come. They are:**
- ❖ **International cross border travel**
- ❖ **Access to renewable sources of energy**
- ❖ **Common language and understanding**



# *Scenario Planning Exercise*

**tab. 1: Three key uncertainties and the plausible scenarios based on their combinations**

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<b>Language</b>	<b>Energy</b>	<b>Travel</b>	<b>Scenario</b>
+	+	+	Placeless Brains Triumph
+	-	-	Planetary Second Life
+	+	-	Multicultural City Islands
-	+	+	Cherished Mental Model
-	+	-	Lagging Global Education
-	-	-	Tribal Towers Tremble



# *Scenario Planning Exercise*

- ❖ **Placeless Brains Triumph** is a world in which artificial brain evolution has provided humans with increased cognitive abilities. Average persons have seven integrated fluid identities and, encouraged by a culture of curiosity and creativity, they easily travel internationally.
- ❖ **Planetary Second Life** tells the story of a cyber future. Travels across the borders are not easy and affordable for all. There is still fear of diseases. But diverse online social networks are widely popular. Some elites have already proposed the establishment of the first virtual nation-state whose citizens are committed to their preferred social network as their main source of identification.



# *Scenario Planning Exercise*

- ❖ **Multicultural City Islands depicts a future in which rich and poor struggle with the social gap. Even though energy is more available, some problems like pandemics and terrorism still prevent easy cross-border travels. Only the global elite enjoy living and working in huge multicultural cities.**
- ❖ **Cherished Mental Model sheds light on a future best described as the world of tourists. Investment in renewable energy has paid off. Transportation infrastructures of high quality make travel affordable for a significant number of people. But most people do not favor access to others' mental models. The desire for sharing and understanding is not significant. International marriages are rare.**



# *Scenario Planning Exercise*

- ❖ **Lagging Global Education** presents a scenario characterized by a very ineffective educational system. Ignorant people still do not recognize the rights of women as equal to those of men. Gender inequality is only one element of the big picture. Politicians have showed little willingness to learn better ways of tackling national and world problems other than violence and war. A culture of intolerance prevails.
- ❖ **Tribal Towers Tremble** is a scenario that describes a return to prehistoric times. The environment and numerous ecosystems are badly damaged. Oil is in severely limited supply. Local TVs and trash media often foment fear of foreigners as people who speak bizarre languages and worship bizarre gods. Nationalism are rife, and people do not tolerate those who adhere to alternative mental models.



# What should be told to teachers who prepare students for the future?

## ❖ Two Important Uncertainties

### ❖ Cooperation & Solidarity

vs.

### ❖ Competition & Conflict

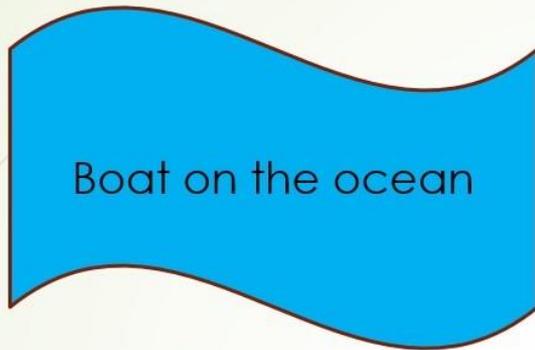
**Limited vs. Holistic**

**Knowledge, skills, qualities, attitudes, competencies**



# What should be told to teachers who prepare students for the future?

Cooperation



Boat on the ocean

great coordination of experts across the globe



Garden of wisdom

*care about the humans' well being and flourishing of the planet*

Holistic

Limited

*a highly tough & scarce market for employment*

*Super smart persons with business skills who defeat all for exponential growth rates*



Business as usual

Competition



Winners take it all

Activate Windows  
Go to Settings to activate Windows.

# What should be told to teachers who prepare students for the future?

**“The world is my country, all mankind are my brethren, and to do good is my religion.”**

**---Thomas Paine**

**from The Rights of Man, 1791**

**READ MORE:**

**Evolving Cultural Identities in a Planetary Era**

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