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**TRADITIONAL COSMOLOGIES AND CYBERSPACE.  
TOPOGRAPHY ATTEMPT OF THE IMAGINARY**

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**Abstract:** In traditional societies the idea that invisible things are more important than things that can be seen needed no demonstration. In our world, in which objects proliferate to the point where they begin to be rated ahead of humans, making such a claim automatically places us in an eccentric orbit relative to the current trend. Reflections in recent years around the imaginary and technologies tend to prove the old principle is right. Even in a world choked with objects, primacy belongs to the invisible. But it is no less true that we have succeeded, as a civilization, in creating a new, technologically mediated collective imaginary. This study is an attempt to situate it in relation to earlier experiences of *Mundus imaginalis*.

The internet is our new heaven-hell. The user of this technologically mediated cosmology is therefore heavenly-hellish, his sense of discernment being no longer useful in a universe without center and hierarchies, whose powerful-powerless god is himself, between countless gods. Once the creator of this fantasy world, he's now the creation of his own independent cosmology. What was once a space of escape, is now home. As in a Balzacian novel, the technological man resembles the space he inhabits.

**Key words:** *Mundus imaginalis*, traditional cosmology, cyberspace, imagination, imaginative faculty, imaginary

## 1. Introduction

In our study we will investigate two aspects of the collective imaginary: the cosmologies of the three Abrahamic religions and cyberspace. We are interested both in the possibilities that these paradigms imply and the anthropological implications on the human types that access them. We have chosen to knowingly ignore the intermediate links of the imaginary, however tempting it may be to trace the successive changes that have occurred between the two reference hypostases. A history of the imaginary, intertwined with the history of ideas and mentalities, goes far beyond the scope of our study.

We will rather be interested in touching the nodal points of the morphology of things that cannot be seen (we assume the paradox) and the impact of their resonance on the human who receives their vibration. We will also seek to weigh how much ingenuity and how much engineering in the construction of the imaginary, without giving our opinion on intentions, which are beyond us and always remain in a space of uncertainty. Every new realm discovered is an invitation to travel; every space of the imaginary is a call to ecstasy. But is all disembodied wandering an ecstasy?

Is cyberspace an re-enchantment of the world? If so, in what way, and who are its promoters? Galileo's telescope destroyed the imaginary of traditional cosmologies, the computer manufactured the new imaginary. Could the new technologies have a truly magical impact on contemporary man? But what else does he know about magic, other than what centuries of materialism have led him to believe? We do not claim to have answers to all these questions.

## 2. Individual imagination and collective imaginary

In the introduction to *L'imaginaire médiéval*, Jacques Le Goff stated in 1985 that the imaginary is one of the profound dimensions of history: "Imaginary feeds us and makes us act. It is a collective, social and historical phenomenon. A history without imaginary is a mutilated, disembodied history" - *our translation* (Le Goff 2013, 9). The intuition is all the more unexpected because it comes from what the French historian calls a "pure medievalist," the hyper-specialized and therefore narrow-minded product of a school of historical research that ignores theology, literature, art, that is, everything that does not fall within the precise and limited field of what we call "historical method." Studying the imaginary of a society would mean reaching into the depths of its consciousness and its historical evolution (Le Goff 2013, 10).

However, the concept of *imaginaire*, for which Corin Braga suggests the English translations *imagining* and *imaginary* (Braga 2007, 59), implies an individual exercise and a shared treasury. As an individual function, it

is arbitrary, that is, subject to free will, therefore its object, the collective imaginary, intervenes as a reference, censor and goal. Moses Maimonides, in his *Guide to the Perplexed*, speaks of the imaginative faculty in the context of the state of prophecy, the highest hypostasis of anthropology, towards which we must strive. Thus prophecy is “an overflowing from God, may He be cherished and honored, through the intermediation of the Active Intellect, toward the rational faculty in the first place and thereafter toward the imaginative faculty” (Maimonides 1963, 369). Thus, there is an “imaginative faculty” with which we are born and which must be educated in order to achieve its purpose, which is none other than communication with God (Maimonides 1963, 407).

On the whole, modernity has lost the discipline of this function together with the Christian paradigm. Those who still know how to work with it belong to the past, and those who achieve excellence can be called, appreciatively, medieval. But one wonders whether the distrust of imagination has its sources, in the Christian sphere, in the theological distrust of imagination as a source of confusion and a gateway to temptation. St Maximus the Confessor draws attention to the danger of “he who has made knowledge a delusion” (Maximus the Confessor 2005, 416), which is the annulment of knowledge. Hesychius of Sinai writes about “the passionate fantasy [that] moves with the lure and passionately shapes our thoughts” (Hesychius of Sinai 2005, 76). St Peter of Damascus also notes that the demon hijacks the imagination: “for the enemy moves all his craftiness and all his fancy” (Peter of Damascus 2005, 140) and St Gregory of Sinai goes even further, speaking of a capture of the one who can no longer control his own imagination, becoming controlled by it: “one such as this has become the slave of delusions” (Gregory of Sinai, 194). We sense from the enumeration of these examples that there exists in Eastern Christianity a distrust of the imagination, springing from a profound gravity. After all, is not Adam’s primordial sin the result of the misuse of imagination?

On the other hand, tradition has validated what we can call the collective imaginary, a *res publica*, a legitimate use, within everyone’s reach, meant to be saving. Through what Johan Huizinga calls the “mysticisation of the imagination”, the exercise of symbolism consisting in “the habit of seeing all things in their symbolic relation and in their relation to eternity” (Huizinga 1970, 339), the world becomes more and more Christian, that is, it is filled with allusions to the salvation of the soul. At the same time, as a challenge to the authority and mission of the Church, magic, another science of the imaginary, manipulates phantasms for purposes disapproved of by spiritual authority. Reformation and Counter-Reformation impose equally, though apparently in conflict, a “radical censorship of the imaginary”, as Mircea Eliade writes in the introduction to Ioan Petru Culianu, *Eros and Magic in the Renaissance. 1484*. The plan was to make a *tabula rasa*, which is naive, because the imaginary

field is either cultivated by someone skilled or abandoned to the weeds, but it never remains empty.

### **3. Traditional cosmologies in Abrahamic religions**

What traditional cosmologies have in common is the idea of perfect hierarchical order (Mihăescu 2001, 14). Verticality, balance, symmetry, these are unmistakable signs of divinely inspired order. Each spiritual field uses an instrument that is familiar to it, cosmology playing the role of “practical” application of theological-metaphysical ideas. In the doctrine of the Jewish Kabbalah, the organizing factor is the doctrine of the sephiroth. Plurality of worlds: Olam ha Atsiluth - World of transcendent Emanation, of the sephiroth; Olam ha Beniyah - World of Creation, ideal, full of Schekhinah; Olam ha Yetsirah - World of subtle Formation, of angels, genies, souls; Olam ha Asiyah - World of Fact, sensory, corporeal. (Schaya 2006, 27). Of these, Olam ha Yetsirah consists of seven subtle heavens, and Olam ha Asiyah of seven earths (Schaya 2006, 83). The seven subtle heavens correspond to the lower sephiroth: Hesed (Mercy), Din (Severity), Tiphereth (Beauty), Netsah (Eternity), Hod (Splendor), Yesod (Foundation), and Malkuth (Kingdom). Above them are the heavens of the heavens, corresponding to the three higher sephiroth: Kether (Crown), Hokhmah (Wisdom) and Binah (Intelligence).

The seven created heavens represent as many hierarchically superimposed dwelling places for human souls before or after their passage on earth. Each heaven is ruled by a “Heavenly Man”. Thus, the sixth heaven is ruled by Moses (Schaya 2006, 105). Abraham is in the heaven corresponding to Hesed, Isaac – Din, Jacob – Tiphereth. The seven hells are also manifestations of the seven creative sephiroth, but their nature is tenebrous, they are inverse images of the bright and transparent patterns. Even the underworld contains hierarchies. The names of the hells are: the Pits, the Pit, the Pitch, the Silence of the Grave, the Guilt, the Sheol, the Shadow of Death, the Lower Earth.

Note the perfect symmetry with the anthropological sephiroth: Kether represents the pure and divine essence of man, Hokhmah is his capacity to know God, Binah – the discernment between the real and the unreal, Hesed – the luminous nature aspiring to the divine, Din is the true judgment of things, Tiphereth plays the role of inner and outer beauty, Netsah is the name of spiritual power, Hod is the natural force, Yesod – the activity and Melkuth the receptivity of man. There is even a dedication of the sephiroth to a part of the anatomy. So the same subtle centres that govern the Universe also act on Man, in a perfect harmony of correspondences.

In Islam, the mysterious Sufi group Ikhwan al-Safa’ (Brethren of Purity) in the encyclopedic work *Rasā’il*, recycles Pythagorean and Jabirian sources. Thus they place the earth at the center of the universe with the

moon, sun and planets revolving around it in a sphere. In turn another concentric sphere contains the Fixed Stars, to be included in a larger sphere called Muhit. We must also see here the takeover of what Ptolemy called Stellatum in *Almagest* (Smith 2004, 168). Creation is thus finite, with no space outside it. The universe is not surrounded by emptiness, because the Universe is a world that contains everything, being contained in nothing.

The study of nature in the medieval sciences serves the purpose of spiritual realisation. The cosmos above the Moon, beautiful and perfect, is comparable to the Universal Man (*al-insan al-kamil*), while the sublunar region, subject to change and entropy, is comparable to the particular man (*al-insan al-juz'i*). The idea of the analogy between the microcosm and the macrocosm is universal, not limited to Greek, Islamic or Christian cosmology. We find it even in Chinese and Hindu cosmologies (Nasr 1978, 93). Mircea Eliade sees its roots in ancient Mesopotamian cosmologies (Eliade 1991, 39). According to Ikhwan, each planet corresponds to a prophet and a historical epoch, thus there is a strange correspondence between space, time and sacred history.

Al-Biruni, explorer, mathematician and astronomer, founder of geodesy, believed that every planet in the solar system had its own paradise. The cosmos would be a succession of spheres, like the layers of the onion, whose centre would be the Earth. We are entitled to see Ptolemy's eight spheres here too. He also believed that the whole Universe is contained in the human microcosm, but this should not surprise us, as it is a universal belief. Every part of the body is related to a zodiacal sign: "the head and the face to Aries, the neck and windpipe to Taurus, the arms and hands to Gemini, the chest, breasts, sides, stomach and lungs to Cancer, the heart to Leo, the womb with its contents to Virgo, the back and buttocks to Libra, the genitals to Scorpius, the thighs to Sagittarius, the knees to Capricorn, the shanks to Aquarius, the feet and heels to Pisces" (Nasr 1978, 176).

According to Ibn Sina, who expounded the doctrine of divine emanations, the cause of existence is divine intellection, the prototype of all gnosis and epiphanies. There are nine heavens: the first seven belong to the seven planets of the solar system: the Moon, Mercury, Venus, the Sun, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn; the eighth is the Sky of the Signs of the Zodiac (*falak al-burūj*) and the ninth is the Sky of the Heavens (*falak al-afkāk*) (Nasr 1978, 204). If Ibn Sina separates the Being from all particular beings at the ontological level, he sees the Universe as an effusion of the Being at the cosmological level. The whole manifestation of the Universe is the never-ending knowledge of God by Himself. From his point of view, there is a 'sympathy' between man and the universe. Man contains within himself the nature of the "three kingdoms": mineral, vegetable and animal, and possibly the nature of angels and heavenly Intelligences. Just as the highest principle of the universe is Intellect, above all states of

being, man possesses in microcosm all levels of being and has in Intellect the deepest principle of his being. As the Universe was created by the contemplation of God and His intellect Itself, man becomes integrated into the divine archetype through the act of intellection and contemplation.

Drawing on the Shi'ite doctrines expounded by Sohrawardi in *The Crimson Archangel*, Henry Corbin translates the Persian syntagma “Nâ-kojâ-Âbad” (the realm of non-where) by the Latin *Mundus imaginalis*, noting that in the current use of the French language the term *imaginaire* is equivalent to something unreal, something that remains outside being and existence, in short something utopian (Corbin 1983, 7). It is about a place outside of any localization, a “place” that is not contained in a topos, a passage inward after which one paradoxically finds oneself outside, or, according to Eastern rhetoric “on the convex surface” of the ninth sphere, that is, beyond the limits of the finite universe imagined by Muslims (Corbin 1983, 12). It is the super-sensible universe of the Soul, the home of the Mystical Citadels (Jâbalqâ and Jâbarsâ), as real from an ontological point of view as the world of the senses and the world of the intellect, with its own faculty of perception with a cognitive function: the imaginative power (function). The latter is not to be confused with personal imagination. It is an organ that allows the transmutation of inner spiritual states into visions, “a knowing power, an organ of true knowledge” (Corbin 1983, 24).

In his *Summa theologiae*, St Thomas Aquinas sets out the following problem in Question 68 – On the Work of the Second Day, Article 4: Is there one heaven or many? (Thomas Aquinas 2009, 582). He evokes, to begin with, the divergence of opinion between St. John Chrysostom, who affirmed that there is only one, the current use of the plural being due to the Hebrew language, where the noun is defective of singular, and St. Basil the Great who, together with St. John Damascus, affirms that there are many. However, the sacred text uses the word “heaven” with three meanings. The first is the proper, natural one: ‘a body of high altitude, luminous in act or potential, and incorruptible by nature’. From this point of view there are three heavens: the luminous one, called the ‘empyrean’, the diaphanous one, called the ‘watery’ or ‘crystalline’ sky, and the partly diaphanous and partly luminous one, called the ‘sidereal sky’. The latter is divided into eight spheres, (the sphere of the fixed stars and the seven planetary spheres), which are eight heavens. The second meaning is used for what participates in certain properties of celestial bodies, namely altitude and brightness. It refers to the vast space above us, which contains two elements: air and fire. Here St Thomas Aquinas evokes Raban Maur, who divides this heaven into four: the uppermost region belongs to the “fiery heaven”, the lowest to the “Olympian heaven”, and between them to the “ethereal heaven” and the “aireal heaven”. To these are added three more upper heavens, making a total of seven heavens. The last meaning is metaphorical, ‘heaven’ simply meaning God. Related to this, the three types of prophetic vision are also called “heavens”: the bodily

vision, the imaginative vision and the intellectual vision, the last one being the one reached by the Apostle Paul.

We conclude this brief evocation of traditional cosmological models by recalling the observation that Moses Maimonides makes in *The Guide of the Perplexed* to Aristotle's cosmology: it can be argued, but never demonstrated. It is irrelevant how many heavens there are (Aristotle admits there may be fifty), what really matters is their arrangement in relation to the Centre, from which the directions that make up the hierarchical organisation originate. The resonance that is established between cosmology and metaphysics is the basis of the resemblance between "heaven" and "earth", the basis of the symbolic representation that serves to illustrate spiritual doctrines (Guénon 1957, 24).

#### **4. Cyberspace, the new imaginary**

Cyberspace represents a massive shift in the imaginary regime in our age. It is one of the consequences of what Ioan Petru Culianu calls "the great censorship of the fantastic" (Culianu 1984, 240). Already at the end of the Renaissance, a society dominated by magic is moving towards a scientific society, which is "primarily a change of the imaginary" (Culianu 1984, 24). The ability to operate with one's own fantasies has diminished to the point that "our capacity to dominate our own imaginary processes has been reduced to zero" (Culianu 1984, 24). We are, today more than ever, "slaves of the illusions", as the Philocalia predicted, but in a paradoxical way: because we have become incapable of secreting the imaginary, it is manufactured and made available to us by technology. The result of the bombardment of images to which our civilisation is subjected is the profound mutilation of our capacity to compose mental images. There are so many things around us that our minds have ceased to create them, becoming dependent on what is handed to them ready-made. Images, like the imaginary, have become objects of everyday consumption.

The thesis of our study is that the phenomenon called cyberspace must be read in the key of a new *Mundus Imaginalis*. It is outside the sensible world, but paradoxically accessible visually and aurally, and in the case of certain virtual reality experiences, including tactile. Overwhelmingly sensory, cyberspace remains a non-where realm, because all servers contain nothing but the premises of the new imaginary, hard or soft. It is 'made' by the consumer and despite experimentation remains intact, like a mirror that renders images without its substance being touched in any way. Computers, linked together, assume a metaphysical function related to the meaning of the world, becoming "engines of computer-simulated virtual reality, the metaphysical machine par excellence" (Heim 1991, 29). The proliferation of the adjective 'virtual' is interesting: virtual memory, virtual mail, virtual work groups, virtual universities, virtual libraries. We also have a definition for this virtuality:

“a reality that is not a formal, bona fide reality” (Heim 1991, 29). Probably in other times the same definition would have acceptably described the collective imaginary, whose nature is-not-is.

Virtual reality, virtual space and cyberspace are signifiers of the same signified. Perhaps the first to speak of virtual reality was Antonin Artaud, in reference to the artistic act of theatre: “mysterious identity of essence between alchemy and the theatre” (Davis 2004, 226). From this fundamental metaphor to cyberspace it was only a slide from the lived fiction enacted by theatre to the technologised fiction maintained by computers, computer networks and the internet, the network of networks. Gilbert Durand wrote in 1992: “Once the great religious systems played the role of keepers of symbolic regimes and mythical currents, nowadays, for a cultivated elite, the fiction, and for the masses, the press, the comic strips and the cinema convey the inalienable repertoire of an entire fantasy.” (Durand 1998, 430). In just a few years’ time, cyberspace will make its massive appearance, rendering the previous technologies irrelevant: the written word and the cinema. But the function of the “repertoire of the fantastic” will be preserved, after implantation in the new medium.

We can think of cyberspace as a *Weltanschauung*, because it is much more than an information repository. Vincent Mosco notes “the strange combination of myth, science, magic and logic that made up cyberspace” (Mosco 2004, 24). For him, cyberspace means “the end of history, the end of geography and the end of politics” (Mosco 2004, 26). We can talk about the end of time, space and discourse. He also reviews the metaphors of the new medium: “the Digital Library, the Information Highway, Electronic Commerce, Virtual Community, Digital Ecology, the Narrative Stream” (Mosco 2004, 51-52). These metaphors construct popular visions of technology (Mosco 2004, 50). He speaks of cyberspace as a labyrinth (Mosco 2004, 44), which is just another metaphor to add to the others.

The engineering vision that combines hardware elements (computers connected by modems, fibre optics, satellites, to servers which in turn are connected to other servers, in a dynamic technological chaos) with software elements (machine code, operating systems, interfaces, browsers) has every virtue but explanatory power. In fact, not even the technicians have access to all of this anymore, a sign that for them and for users it has all become mythologised discourse. If we want to find out the contribution of cyberspace to the construction of the postmodern imaginary, it is enough to ask a young person born after the year 2000 how they will cope after the disappearance of the internet. Apart from a disbelieving stupor, we will get no answer - for postmodern man technology has eliminated the alternative of life without it, adorning itself with an attribute of divinity, eternity. Cyberspace has so thoroughly invaded the mentality of our age that it seems to have eliminated all



competition. The Internet is no longer a compartment of the imaginary, it has become the imaginary itself.

Erick Davis states that technology, after having disenchanted the world, “facing the ancestral symbolic networks of old to give way to the crisp, secular game plans of economic development, skeptical inquiry, and material progress” (Davis 2004, 5), re-enchants it, that is, it reinvest old imaginary spaces with new content. The implications of this mutation are so profound that they insinuate themselves into the anthropological structure, parasitizing it: “By creating a new interface between the self, the other, and the world beyond, media technologies become part of the self, the other, and the world beyond” (Davis 2004, 8). In hardware, the interface is a subset that regulates the speed of information transfer between a computer and a network, between a network and the internet. When technology becomes the interface between the human self and the world, given the new relationship, it controls not only the quantity but also the quality of the transfer itself.

## **5. Experience of technologically mediated ecstasy**

Each of the three Abrahamic religions has iconic accounts of ecstasy. The Greeks called it ἐκστάσις - out of the place where it is, exit from self. The Jews use the term מַחֲזֵה (machazeh), meaning vision. Sufis use فناء (fana') with the same meaning. The meaning of “rapture” is common, the subject of this experience accesses another reality, incorporeal and unconditioned by space and time. The Apostle Paul evokes the experience of ecstasy in 2 Corinthians 12:2-4: “I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven. And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.” (King James Bible) Scattered in the collections of ahadeeth (especially the accounts of Bukhārī, Muslim and Ibn Ishaq) are the accounts of the night journey (al-'Isrā') and the raising of the Prophet Muhammad to the seventh heaven (al-Mi'rāj) on the celestial animal Al-Buraq, accompanied by the Archangel Gabriel. To these is added an allusion in Qur'an XVII 1. In each sphere he met a prophet: in the first Adam, in the second John, son of Zechariah, and Issa (Jesus), son of Mary, in the third Yusuf (Joseph), in the fourth Idris (Enoch), in the fifth Harun (Aaron), in the sixth Musah (Moses) and in the last Ibrahim (Abraham). There are strange congruences between this narrative strand and Dante's journey to the three worlds. By far, it is the Mosaic religion that evokes the most raptures: Abraham, Enoch, Isaiah, Levi, Moses. The Tannaites have left us a wealth of accounts of the ecstatic journey to the Throne, and later an entire apocalyptic Jewish literature whose protagonists are abducted by angels to pass

successively through the heavens (Culianu 2004, 201). Gaster's medieval work *The Revelation of Moses* sets out a journey through the seven heavens to the Throne of God.

What do all these experiences of ecstasy have in common? Access to the collective imaginary through a spiritual ascent, followed by its investment with a personal presence. It is like a story that everyone knows very well, but in which some are called or welcomed to live it exemplarily. For someone convinced that the imaginary has a door that can be opened, it is no wonder that the metaphor of the palace dominates from antiquity to the dawn of modernity, for example in the writings of Teresa de Ávila.

Stef Aupers argues in his study *"Where the Zeroes Meet the Ones". Exploring the Affinity Between Magic and Computer Technology* the thesis that the world would be re-enchanted before our eyes by a technology that begins to escape the control and predictability of its promoters. The critical lens through which this opinion is viewed is that provided by anthropologist and ethnographer Bronislaw Malinowski, who argues from his study of the fishing habits of Trobriand Islanders that in the small, predictable waters of the lagoons they use techniques, while in the mysterious waters of the ocean they use magic. From this the researcher concludes that magic would be used in circumstances in which ingenuity and technical knowledge lose their value. Stef Aupers, based on an analysis of the opinions of famous programmers, in turn draws the conclusion that technologies have become "opaque" even for technicians (Aupers 2010, 235), that the world is being re-enchanted despite Max Weber's warning of its "disenchantment", by programmers who are magicians and who write programs in the same way that a spell is created (Aupers 2010, 231), making use of a new technology whose main characteristics are: complexity, unpredictability and unfathomability (Aupers 2010, 232).

It is neither the place nor our intention to enter into polemics with Stef Aupers' thesis. We are simply stating that having the privilege of witnessing magic being performed in a corner of the planet still uncorrupted by the materialism of modernity does not constitute a guarantee of its deep understanding, just as the show of illusionism does not give the audience the ability to understand the protagonist's actions. The idea that magic is a never-ending string of trials interrupted by rare successes only betrays modern people's ignorance of it. One would only have to open the Exit to chapters 7-8, which capture the miracles of Moses and their repetition by the Egyptian magicians (the repeating statement is *"And so did the Egyptian magicians"*) to see that in a civilization where techniques that manipulated phenomena were known and regularly transmitted, they were no more hesitant or ineffective than modern technologies. We rather believe that the intention that mobilizes the creators of the "disembodied space" (Aupers 2010, 219) is that captured by Goethe in the poem *The Sorcerer's Apprentice*: the desire to do that far

exceeds the science of anticipating effects, which Aupers aptly calls “the Frankenstein fear” (Aupers 2010, 232).

Thus, through cyberspace a revival is taking place, as Erik Davis well intuitively, recalling bots, spiders, intelligent agents, even speaks of “digital animism” (Davis 2004, 232). The advance of artificial intelligence can be intuited as pure idolatry. The fantastic complexity that has been reached eludes the possibilities of technicians to anticipate outcomes, hence the illusion that cyberspace has “a spirit of its own”, as Erich Schneider puts it (Aupers 2010, 228). According to Neil Postman, technology is confiscating our most important terminology. It redefines: freedom, truth, intelligence, reality, wisdom, memory, history (Postman 2023, 41). Nothing could be more natural than for “spirit” to be used in the most inappropriate contexts, like the one above. But what are all these categories other than shoots sprouting and growing in the field of the imaginary? To cultivate them, you have to conquer the *Mundus imaginalis* and alter its topography. The polymorphism of cyberspace (world wide web, social networks, virtual reality, etc.) is only at the peripheral level, essentially all these are experiences of ecstasy, disembodiments. This is why Michael Heim says: “The ultimate virtual reality is a philosophical experience, probably an experience of the sublime or awesome” (Heim 1991, 33). For the simple user, the most visible result of new technologies is the disembodied ecstasy of navigating the new imaginary, a technologically mediated ‘magic’ for which neither knowledge nor faith is required.

At this point, we wonder to what extent postmodern man has acquired any resemblance to the imaginary constructed by computers. The idea of the neutrality of technology, which is implicit in the collective mind, should be abandoned in favour of a more complex approach, that of the adaptation of man to technology. We need to stop referring to new technologies as knives or axes, tools that can be used with discernment, and adopt the paradigm of Technopolis (totalitarian technocracy), which escapes people’s control precisely because it begins to control them (Postman 2023, 44). Centerless, therefore peripheral and hopelessly chaotic, of a dynamism aimed at irrational frenzy, devoid of any possibility of ordering, protean, hopelessly horizontal, aimlessly proliferating - is this the description of cyberspace or of man who has become its prisoner? We are contemporaries of a new analogy, that between man and the product of his activity. Technologically mediated ecstasy is no longer an ascent, but an electrified form of wandering. Hunted by boredom, postmodern man throws himself into the net like a hunted prey, to meet there his own vacuum. It’s the new “realm of non-where” build by him, which now shapes the creator-user in his own image.

## 6. Conclusion

In this study we set out to compare the traditional cosmologies of Judaism, Christianity and Islam with the imaginary of cyberspace. By default, we probed the impact that the unseen has on humans who know the path of imaginary worlds. We failed to topograph cyberspace overwhelmed by what we set out to do: it is not possible to map chaos. The semiotician Alfred Korzybski said somewhere that “The map is not the territory”, we believe that in the case of cyberspace this distinction is impossible to make.

New technologies do not instrumentalize the imaginary in the same way as ancient and medieval cosmology. The imaginative function that would be necessary for accessing the imaginary is in the case of cyberspace invalidated by technological mediation, any possibility of knowledge through it being nullified. It is no longer necessary to educate the imagination, but a computer and an internet connection to access a democratic and banalized ecstasy. The transformation of knowledge into information comes with an anthropological amputation of an unprecedented magnitude, the silencing of which makes it impossible for most people to access the religious and technologically mediated imaginary.

Are we witnessing a new “world re-enchantment”? In a certain, entirely new and unexpected sense, yes, with the observation that the magicians of the past knew better both the forces they put to work and the results they achieved. We are merely reiterating beyond the limits of satire the paradigm of the willing and disenchanted sorcerer’s apprentice. Are the technopagans renewing the link with a glorious antiquity? No more than the Renaissance once putatively did. Experience should have taught us that the mere desire to return to an ideal moment in the past has only one consequence: separation from what we now have, concretely and savingly, at hand.

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