

The Missing Links in Western Heritage

الحلقات المفقودة في التراث الغربي

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Received: 31/07/2024

Accepted: 30/10/2024

Published: 10/11/2024

Abstract:

This research aims to unveil the true nature of Western heritage and to explore its most prominent dimensions and foundations by examining both its overt and covert aspects. The focus will be on the latter, as it is here that numerous opportunities and isolated links in the history of ideas and civilizations, including those between the West and the East, are uncovered. These links greatly contribute to the service of humanity as a whole and to Western civilization in particular.

Through this research paper, the researcher will also attempt to reveal the reasons behind the concealment of certain aspects of Western heritage, primarily rooted in the ideas and doctrines of centrism and superiority that the West has embraced since its inception. These have been accompanied by values of selfishness, hatred, and racism, which have become hallmarks of the Western civilizational model. A critical analytical approach will be employed, as it is the most suitable method for this type of study.

This study has led to the identification of a set of key findings, most importantly the need to adopt an alternative civilizational model that rejects all forms of reductionism, racism, and exploitation. Such a model would promote integration and synthesis among civilizations, emphasizing the importance of civilizational dialogue and coexistence as foundational pillars.

Keywords: West, superiority, East, civilizational dialogue, coexistence.

ملخص :

يهدف هذا البحث إلى الكشف عن حقيقة التراث الغربي، واستكشاف أبرز الأبعاد والأسس التي قام عليها، من خلال تناول الجوانب الظاهرة والخفية له. سيتم التركيز بشكل خاص على الجوانب الخفية، حيث سيتم الكشف عن العديد من الفرص والحلقات المعزولة في تاريخ الأفكار والحضارات، بما في ذلك الروابط بين الغرب والشرق، والتي ساهمت بشكل كبير في خدمة الإنسانية ككل، والحضارة الغربية على وجه الخصوص.

كما سنحاول من خلال هذه الورقة البحثية إظهار الأسباب التي تقف وراء إخفاء بعض جوانب التراث الغربي، والتي ترجع أساساً إلى أفكار وأطروحات التمركز والتفوق التي آمن بها الغرب منذ نشأته. وقد رافق ذلك قيم الأنانية والحق والعدالة والعنصرية، التي أصبحت سمات بارزة للنموذج الحضاري الغربي. سيتم اعتماد المنهج التحليلي النقدي، كونه الطريقة الأنسب لهذا النوع من الدراسة. وقد توصلت هذه الدراسة إلى مجموعة من النتائج الرئيسية، أهمها ضرورة تبني نموذج حضاري بديل ينبذ جميع أشكال الاختزال والعنصرية والاستغلال. سيكون هذا النموذج داعماً للتكامل والتركييب بين الحضارات، مع التأكيد على أهمية الحوار الحضاري والتعايش كمرتكزات أساسية.

كلمات مفتاحية: الغرب، التفوق، الشرق، الحوار الحضاري، التعايش.

Introduction:

Western civilization today exerts a major influence, not only in Western societies like Europe and America, but also in all human societies. Its effects are visible in all aspects of social, cultural, political and economic life. This situation stems from the unreserved veneration and admiration of this civilization in all its aspects. We often hear calls to adopt all the achievements it has produced, regardless of their results or value, especially in terms of material and technical progress. The West has indeed reached unparalleled levels of technical development.

This admiring look at the West itself is manifested in the perception of a distinct white race or eternal empire. However, this image is mainly a facade for the public. The deeper and often silent aspects of this model are numerous. Western progress is tainted with lies and deceit in many ways. This heritage is based on three traditions: historical or intellectual, religious, and ethnic. These traditions converge to glorify the West at the expense of earlier civilizations and nations, reinforcing the idea of superiority that has always accompanied the Western model. This served as a means of domination and control over other non-Western peoples and societies.

This trajectory taken by the West does not date from yesterday, but goes back thousands of years. It began with the myth of the Greek miracle, used as a pretext to appropriate the intellectual and philosophical heritage of Eastern civilizations. It also includes the myth of the supreme and elected people, as well as other narratives that the West has built under the banners of modernization and urbanization. All these narratives served as justification for destroying and weakening other cultures.

Undoubtedly, the tendentious and inhumane claims associated with Western religious, intellectual and political heritage have not been accepted uncritically. Indeed, great Western philosophers like Feuerbach, Nietzsche, Roger Garaudy, and Edgar Morin have themselves rejected these ideas. These critics also touched on another aspect often seen as bleak in Western heritage: the revelation of missing links in the history of human civilization. This includes the contributions of Islamic, Chinese, Indian, African and Persian heritages, which have significantly enriched humanity on various levels, such as moral, intellectual, political, religious and aesthetic.

To delve deeper into this topic, we can explore the following questions:

- What have been the most significant contributions of Eastern heritage to the benefit of humanity?
- How has the West integrated the virtues of these rich cultures?
- And what alternative could allow civilizational integration between peoples?

1. Introduction to the Idea of Western Superiority:

The study of the history of peoples and civilizations, or the sociology of civilization, reveals a major difficulty in defining the term “West”. This concept has evolved over time, influenced by various historical events and political and ideological contexts. For instance, in the early modern period, “West” primarily referred to Europe, specifically Western Europe. However, during the colonial and post-colonial eras, it expanded to include regions across three continents: America, parts of Asia, and Europe.

The current era is marked by significant changes in international policies. After World War II, the concept of the West evolved. According to Franco-Bulgarian philosopher and historian Tzvetan Todorov (1939-2017), the West is “the entity composed of Western Europe and North America, especially the United States, whose origins are linked to European heritage. The founders of the United States were directly inspired by the Enlightenment, and their political and cultural identity includes many aspects of the European Union ”(Todorov, 2009,p.189) This definition highlights the common interests and perspectives of Western nations on the international stage. Thus, the term “West” geographically encompasses Western Europe and the United States.

However, some, such as Dr. Hassan Hanafi, consider that the West also has a political dimension. He defines it as a concept opposed to the East, both politically and intellectually, especially among those who defend racist theories (Hanafi, 1990, p.13.14.). The word “West” is often used ideologically to assert supposed superiority over other peoples, including Eastern peoples.

Western civilization sees itself as a central civilization that values the Western ego and marginalizes others. This historical egoism has led to the glorification of one's own spiritual and material creations at the expense of other civilizations. One of the most striking examples of this glorification is that of its heritage. Western heritage is often presented as independent of human history, rejecting the idea of a common humanity or universality. It ignores the contributions of other peoples and civilizations, bringing all human creativity back to itself. This is why European authors speak of "our philosophy, our civilization, our music, our art, our literature, our history, and even our religion..." (Hanafi H., 1990, p.13). It therefore appears that these authors consider themselves to belong to a distinct and superior civilization. It is crucial for those studying the history of civilizations and sciences to keep this in mind to prevent the reader from becoming a victim of these ideological myths promoted by the West.

In light of the above, it can be said that the idea of superiority, which underpins the Western heritage, recognizes only the uniqueness of the history of the West. This history, shaped by specific internal factors, has led to a rich and diverse civilization. From this perspective, the West does not believe that other societies or civilizations have contributed to its greatness. On the contrary, he considers that these factors and reasons, adopted by Westerners, are essential for other societies to achieve the same level of progress. This implies, according to them, getting rid of their cultural peculiarities, considered responsible for their delay and obstacles to their development (Ibrahim, 2010, p. 39). This vision of superiority has given the West the legitimacy to intervene and control the affairs of other societies and peoples, under pretexts like conquest, modernization, urbanization, development, etc. Behind these terms, the West has committed some of the worst atrocities in human history through brutal colonizations, especially in Africa and Asia. These actions caused the death of millions of people, destroyed the cultural and moral fabrics of colonized peoples, imposed a Western cultural and social model, and weakened their spiritual and religious values through missionary campaigns. As a result, these peoples found themselves in a psychological crisis, feeling alienated and non-existent due to the crimes perpetrated by American and European colonialism.

This idea of superiority is not new; it has long been rooted in Western thought, dating back to ancient Greece. Historians claim that the philosophers

Plato and his disciple Aristotle believed in Greek superiority over other peoples. This same idea continued into modern and contemporary times, with Western philosophers such as Montesquieu, Hegel, Ernest Renan, Frederick Copleston, and Bertrand Russell. These thinkers defended the superiority of the Western model over other civilizational models. They devoted their works and ideas to promoting an arrogant attitude, exploiting the education systems and global media they controlled to reinforce the idea of centralization and Western superiority.

2. Dimensions of the Trend towards Superiority in Western Heritage:

The trend towards superiority and centralization that has marked the Western civilizational model has developed over its history. This model has often been perceived as the singular source of all manifestations of civilization and urbanization, from which other sciences and knowledge are drawn. According to most historians of civilization and philosophers of history, this trend rests on three main dimensions, each playing a crucial role in promoting the idea of superiority in Western heritage: the historical, religious, and ethnic dimensions. Scholars like Spengler (1926) emphasize the cyclical nature of civilizations, underscoring the historical trajectory of the West. Toynbee (1934) highlights the role of religion, particularly Christianity, as a defining feature of Western identity. Furthermore, Huntington (1996) explores the ethnic and cultural aspects that have shaped Western self-perception. Together, these dimensions have been central in establishing and reinforcing the notion of Western superiority throughout history.

2.1. Historical Dimension:

The West was built on the idea of a deep historical attachment to the Greeks, considering them the essential reference for all Western philosophies and sciences. Historical facts, however, show that Greek civilization appeared later than others, such as those of Egypt and Babylon. Despite this, the 6th century BC is often seen as the beginning of the Greek renaissance and prosperity. This creates a significant time lag, of several thousand years, with the civilizations of the ancient East. This discrepancy did not prevent the West from glorifying and claiming the Greek heritage.

Many Western writers, thinkers, and philosophers have viewed Greek civilization as exceptional and glorious. Figures such as Nietzsche (1872), Hegel (1820), and Jaeger (1945) admire Greek achievements in culture, politics, and intellectual thought. Nietzsche celebrated the Greeks' profound influence on Western culture, particularly in *The Birth of Tragedy*. Hegel regarded Greek civilization as a pinnacle of ethical life, praising its contribution to Western political thought in *Philosophy of Right*. Jaeger, in his seminal work *Paideia: The Ideals of Greek Culture*, extolled the Greeks for their educational and cultural achievements. These accomplishments are often perceived as being based on solid scientific foundations, free from myths, with the Greeks offering logical explanations for natural and social phenomena. As a result, Greek civilization is frequently described as a "Greek miracle", a distinct cultural heritage within Western civilization.

The majority of theorists of the Western civilizational model, including Spengler (1926) and Toynbee (1934), agree on the superiority of the West over other peoples. This belief has marked every phase of the Western model's development, whether in antiquity, the modern era, or contemporary times. Greek heritage, in particular, is unanimously recognized as superior. To understand the origins of this idea of superiority, one must turn to the Greek philosopher Plato (427/347 BC), whose works laid the intellectual foundation for much of Western philosophy and thought.

Plato was among the first to promote this notion. He regarded the Greek race as superior to others and as the only legitimate one to establish and control the state. He said: "Isn't it also accurate to say that the Greek peoples are united by kinship and original unity, and differ from the barbarians by sex and blood? That's good. If the Greeks fight the barbarians, or the Greek barbarians, then it is said that between the two camps there is a war, and that they are by nature enemies, and that this enmity deserves the name of war... But isn't the state we want to build a Greek state? This is essential. Wouldn't its citizens be benevolent and civilized? Of course..." (Plato, 2004, p351). Plato firmly believed in the original unity of the Greek nation, which he regarded as the basis of civilization.

According to him, urbanization depended on Greek origin, and those who were excluded from it were perceived as savage and barbaric. His disciple Aristotle pursued this idea in his work *Politics*. Aristotle expressed a manifest intolerance towards other peoples, calling them degenerates likely to be enslaved

by the Greeks. This belief has endured throughout the evolution of Western civilization, including contemporary times.

Greek civilization is often seen as the source that nurtured the feelings of the West, reinforcing their sense of superiority and distinction from other peoples and civilizations. The Greeks were the first to develop science, philosophy and literature, thus contributing significantly to the evolution of the human mind. Bertrand Russell (1871-1970) asserted that "Philosophy and science, as we know them, are two Greek inventions. He described the emergence of Greek civilization, with its prodigious intellectual activity, as one of the most remarkable events in history. In just two centuries, the Greek genius has produced many masterpieces in art, literature and philosophy, which have become references for Western civilization (Russell, 1983, p.21). According to Russell, the theorization of Western superiority began with Greece and became a point of reference in the history of Western thought.

Moreover, the West regards Greek civilization as a miracle of the human spirit, beyond comparison. This idea is widely shared by Western thinkers, philosophers, writers and scientists. However, it also marked a separation between the Western world and other nations and societies, which were marginalized. This marginalization has often led to biased research on the history of science and civilizations.

2.2. Religious Dimension:

The tendency towards Western superiority, based on pure racism, was not an isolated phenomenon. It was based on several dimensions, one of which was the religious dimension, often associated with Christianity. Christian heritage has played a crucial role in the formation of complex Western culture, which views Christianity as a superior religion. This perception was supported by many Western philosophers, including Hegel (1770-1831), who was instrumental in building modern Western consciousness. Hegel saw Christianity as the absolute religion, and regarded Eastern religions as religions of fear, where the divine is perceived as transcending human existence. According to him, these religions are still linked to nature, which prevents them from understanding the true meaning of the soul, which only Christianity, according to him, can reveal (Ibrahim, 2010, p.125).

Hegel thus promoted the idea that Christianity was the pure or absolute religion, an opinion shared by many Western philosophers. He believed that Christianity represented the inevitable culmination of religious development. Hegel said, "Modern Catholic philosophers... Those who said that an ancient religion, also primitive according to external history - this first religion, pure religion, is Catholic, so that an ancient religion of this kind, the first historically, has issued everything that we find in other religions, as well as in other philosophies. Modern research on the high seas is partly moving in this direction. This goal is sought" (Hegel, 1986, p.226). Thus, Hegel and his followers supported the idea of Christian superiority over other religions, making Christianity the universal and absolute religion. This vision reveals the religious and racist dimension of the Western model, characterized by a tendency towards selfishness and racism.

The Hegelian position on religion is considered one of the most controversial and debatable positions, inside and outside Western civilization, in the modern period and the times that followed, as it revealed an abhorrent intolerance towards the Christian faith in which the general meaning of religion was reduced, to the detriment of other religions and beliefs that were horribly excluded. Dr. Hassan Hanafi attributed the reason for this exclusion and arrest, which confined Eastern religions to nature, the ignorance of Hegel and his peers of the truth of Eastern religions and peoples on the one hand, and the obvious bias of Western historians in their history of human civilization towards the Western model on the other. If we try to delve deeper into the Eastern religions, we will find that most of them have gone beyond these natural interpretations and paid great attention to the spiritual and value dimension that governs human life within this existence. If we consider the idea of the absolute, it is certain that the Islamic religion is the witness of the development and integration of other religions and laws because it came to them as a seal, and this is proven by the history of religions and civilizations.

2.3. Ethnic Dimension:

Research on the origins of the idea of Western superiority leads us to explore several dimensions that feed this notion, in particular the ethnic dimension. The latter has profoundly marked the Western civilizational model, as well as the historical and religious dimensions. According to this theory, the West considers itself a superior race, distinguishing itself from other races.

Indeed, some defenders of this model even consider other peoples as supporters or servants of the Western race. This vision was widely revealed through colonialism, which accompanied the rise of the Western model. This has led to a contemptuous and subordinate perception of other races by the Western mindset.

Writer and thinker Samir Amin describes this ethnic dimension of the Western model as a form of primary racism. He argues that this racism led Europeans to believe in their own racial superiority, leading them to see themselves as free and rational, while they saw Orientals as naturally enslaved and unable to reason correctly. Amin quotes the French orientalist Ernest Renan (1823/1892), who claimed that Indo-European languages were perfect, unlike Semitic languages which he considered horrible (Amin, 1989, p.94). Renan, known for his aversion to the Orientals, fiercely defended the theory of the racial superiority of the West. He used linguistic studies to demonstrate the superiority of the Aryan race, to which Europeans belong, over the Semitic races of the Eastern peoples. His methods and tools aimed to prove this superiority, thus revealing his bias in favor of the European race.

The French philosopher and political writer Montesquieu (1689/1755) also contributed to the promotion of racial superiority in the early Renaissance, notably in his famous work "L'esprit des lois". Montesquieu adapts the laws of the different peoples according to the perspective of superiority that he attributes to the West. It places the peoples of the North, including the populations of Europe and America, above other regions of the world. This is illustrated by his quote: "In the northern regions, people have few faults, many virtues, and a lot of sincerity and freedom. By approaching the countries of the South, you distance yourself from morality... In temperate countries, people fluctuate in their conditions, vices and virtues; the region does not have sufficient quality to prove itself." (Montesquieu. ., 2018, p.410) Montesquieu thus depicts the peoples of the North as civilized, virtuous and endowed with good morals, in opposition to the peoples of Africa and Asia, whom he considers inferior in spirit and morality. This perspective reflects the racism and notion of superiority that Montesquieu shared with other intellectuals of his time.

It is therefore clear that the idea of Western superiority is complex. It is historically linked to Greek thought, religiously to Christianity, and ethnically to

the populations of Europe and America. The promotion of this trend was aimed at strengthening Western centralization and superiority while marginalizing the cultures of other peoples. These efforts illustrate the worst aspects of deviation and falsification committed by the West in the history of human thought.

3. The Illusion of Alleged Western Supremacy:

After examining the components of the Western civilizational model, it appears that this model has obtained many advantages due to its firm belief in superiority and transcendence. These benefits have included moral and material aspects. One of the most important is the promotion of Western culture and values, which have become benchmarks for non-Western societies. Material luxury has also greatly improved the standard of living of Westerners, creating a citizen who believes only in the concepts of superiority, centralization and exclusion. However, reality and history reveal a profound falsity surrounding this thesis of superiority, which lies behind the major achievements of the Western model. This falsehood is brought to light by many impartial people, both inside and outside Western civilization.

The French philosopher Roger Garaudy (1913/2012) is one of the most famous in the West to have had the courage to denounce this artificial superiority. He devoted the majority of his writings to criticizing the Western civilizational model because of its negative effects on human lives and its total lack of human and moral values. Thus, Garaudy preferred to call this model “the white evil” that has been hiding behind the suffering of peoples for a long time. He clarified, “As we live in this last quarter of the twentieth century, a deep crisis in Western culture and in the (Faussian) growth it suggests, and this (Faussian) model was born from the so-called Western Renaissance, which was not only a cultural phenomenon, but also the birth of capitalism and the colonialism that accompanied it.” (Garaudy, 1999, p.34) In this sense, all crises perpetrated by Western man against humanity, such as colonial movements, genocide, oppression of non-Western peoples' identities and cultures, have been justified by growth and modernity. This shows that this alleged superiority is actually a long-term illusion.

The French sociologist and anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss (1908/2009) also criticized Western culture in his book *Race and History*. According to him, the West considers itself the richest culture and generally

perceives other cultures as inferior, calling them barbarians, savages or villains. Strauss rejected these ideas and claimed that all human societies had reached a similar level of progress and development. He said: "Behind all human societies, there is a past that is almost the same degree of greatness... For tens, even hundreds of thousands of years, there are also people who have loved, hated, suffered, invented and fought. In fact, there is no existence for child peoples, all peoples are adults, even those who have not written the history of their childhood and their infatuation" (Lévi-Strauss, p.23). Thus, Strauss denies the claims of the Western model and acknowledges that non-Western cultures have contributed significantly to the progress made by Western civilization. He warns against Western-backed visions of exclusion.

The philosopher Tzvetan Todorov shares a position similar to that of Strauss in his critique of Western superiority. He sees this notion as an obstacle to the hopes and dreams of humanity, citing the tragedies of the twentieth century resulting from this model of crisis. Todorov expressed this situation by saying: "The twentieth century in particular, which witnessed the massacres of two world wars and the establishment of totalitarian regimes in Europe and abroad, in addition to the destruction and killing of technical inventions. I say that this century seemed to completely undermine all the hopes expressed in the past, which prompted many to stop belonging to the Enlightenment, and the ideas contained in words such as humanity, liberation, progress, work and free will, have lost all consideration" (Todorov T, 2007, p. 20). Thus, the tendency to superiority on which Western culture is based and the slogans that support it, while seemingly appealing, are actually meaningless. They were established to serve the interests of the West and are manipulated according to the requirements of ideological and colonial documents.

Earlier critics reveal that the Western civilizational model, since ancient times, is based on myths and legends. These include the systematic disregard and exclusion of the contributions of autonomous nations and civilizations. This model has often hidden the true contributions of these civilizations to the progress of science, knowledge and philosophies. It also facilitated exploitation and abuse through colonization, the looting of wealth, the erasure of identities, the distortion of cultures and the destruction of religions. This situation reveals that the idea of Western superiority is closer to illusion than reality.

4. The Superiority of Eastern Civilizations over the West:

After becoming aware of the realities of the Western civilizational model and the myths hidden by this heritage, it is crucial to unveil the most obscure aspects of the history of this heritage. In particular, it is important to highlight the missing and isolated episodes of human history, often neglected by the Western imagination. These aspects include the essential roles of ancient Eastern civilizations such as the Egyptian, Babylonian, Persian, Indian, Chinese, and Islamic civilizations. These civilizations have contributed to progress and prosperity in various areas. Research in the history of ideas and civilizations has highlighted the major contributions of these civilizations to the development of human thought.

Garoudi's work represents a significant step in the history of Western philosophy. He examined in detail the major contributions ignored in Western history, showing their importance to Western sciences and philosophies. Garoudi dismantled the Western model by returning to its origins, notably Greece, often considered the cradle of reason and logic. He refuted the idea of an "authenticity of Greek thought" by revealing the eastern origins of the early Greek philosophers. He claimed that Greek philosophy was born in Asia, as his statement points out: "This is the origin of our culture, which was the first to flourish in Greek philosophy, which was born in Asia Minor with Thales Malti, Anximander, Anxamine, Xavon and Heraclet, philosophers who preceded Socrates and bore all the Asian character." (Garaudy, 1999, p.19.) Since Thales is considered the first historian-philosopher, this indicates that philosophy emerged in Asia, not Greece, by analogy of its Asian origins, as did other natural philosophers.

Garoudi not only proved the Oriental origins of the early Greek philosophers, but he also highlighted that the greatest achievements of Greek civilization in philosophy, arts and literature come from ancient Oriental civilizations, especially those of Babylon and Egypt. He said: "There is another source of our civilization whose roots go back to Phoenicia, Crete and Egypt. Greek philosophers and historians greatly admired Egypt. Plato's dualistic views owe him a lot. Plato dreamed of a politically stable state...Egypt was his model. Egypt inspired Greek civilization. And if we compare the art of Greece...In Egyptian art, we noticed that Greek sculpture examined a lot of Egyptian sculpture. We find such similarity in philosophy and politics "(Garaudy, 1999,

p.19.) This passage shows that Plato, one of the greatest Greek philosophers, was strongly influenced by Egyptian thought. Many historical evidences indicate that Plato frequently visited Egypt, where he was influenced by Egyptian philosophies on ethics, religion, politics, psychology and mathematics.

Thus, the wealth and prosperity of Greek civilization in fields such as philosophy, logic, literature, astronomy and engineering are closely linked to the contributions of ancient Eastern civilizations. Greece's efforts are essentially an extension of Eastern achievements, including those of the Babylonians and Egyptians. Some historical sources report that an Egyptian priest reportedly told the Greek philosopher Solon, "You Greeks are children to us," pointing out that Egyptian civilization served as a model for Greek civilization. Most Greek philosophers, writers and scientists, such as Thales, Pythagoras and Plato, learned from Egyptian priests, making Egyptian civilization one of the most important contributions to Western history.

If we consider Greek civilization and its relationship with ancient Eastern civilizations, some Greeks recognized the influence of the Orientals. As early as the 5th century BC, the Greek historian Herodotus expressed his admiration for Egyptian civilization and recognized its superiority in various fields. He noted that the Greeks owed the Egyptians knowledge such as the notion of immortality of the soul and the geometry used in the redistribution of land after the Flood (Matar, 1998, p.26.). The Egyptian civilization therefore greatly contributed to the Greek civilization, which is the main model of Western heritage. This same credit can be given to the Babylonian civilization, one of the oldest and brightest. Greek astronomers benefited from Babylonian calculations to predict eclipses and used this knowledge as early as the 6th century BC. They also discovered important results on the sphericity of the Earth and its rotation around the Sun through Babylonian research (Matar, 1998, p.24). In addition to these contributions, the Babylonians influenced religion, philosophy and other fields in Greece. Thus, the Babylonian civilization is also one of the most significant lost opportunities of Western heritage, and it is essential to recognize its great importance to the West and humanity in general.

The missing links in Western heritage are not limited to the Egyptian and Babylonian civilizations. Other episodes are worth exploring because of their impact on Western civilization. The French anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss has widely praised the civilizations of India, China and Islam for their active role

in the progress of human and Western civilization. He stressed that "India has been able, better than any other civilization, to achieve a philosophical-religious system, and China has been able to achieve a kind of life, capable of reducing the psychological consequences of demographic imbalance. Thirteen centuries ago, Islam formulated the theory of solidarity of all forms of human life, technical, economic, social and spiritual, which the West only recently discovered... » (Lévi-Strauss, p.35).

Examining the history of these civilizations, we find that they have produced important scientific, spiritual and philosophical achievements that have benefited Western civilization at different times. Indian civilization, for example, has marked an exceptional cultural distinction, especially in literature, art, poetry and sculpture. Meanwhile, Chinese scholars showed leadership in many scientific and technical fields, long before the West, as evidenced by the discovery of the compass, the invention of printing and their contributions to sport, which led to mathematical rules still in force today. Chinese wisdom, represented by figures like Confucius, is also notable.

As for Islamic civilization, it is considered one of the most remarkable in history because of its contributions to science, literature, philosophy, medicine and other fields. The Islamic religion has played a crucial role in establishing universal values such as justice, tolerance and equality.

In this sense, Islamic civilization can be seen as an unrecognized episode in Western heritage, despite its important contributions. Sigrid Honke, a German Orientalist, explores this paradox in her book *The Sun of the Arabs Shines on the West*. In the chapter entitled "The Gifts of the Arabs to the West", she points out that Muslim civilization has greatly contributed to the European renaissance, while receiving insufficient recognition. She notes: "Everyone recognized the Arabs for their thanks in communicating the works of ancient philosophers and scientists and their effects to the modern world, and with this partial praise that neglects the great role played by the Arabs in the establishment of Western science and culture, Western historians have still today shaken off their duty to this great work." (Honke, 1993, p.399).

The efforts of Muslims and Arabs have been essential for the preservation of the works of Greek philosophers, such as Socrates, Plato and Aristotle, through their translation work. Important figures in this field include the

philosopher Abu al-Walid Ibn Rushd al-Andalusi (1126/1198 AD), who introduced Aristotle's philosophy to Europe. The contribution of Muslims is not limited to translation; Islamic civilization has also been a beacon of science. Hunke states, "True scientific research based on observation and experimentation only began with the Arabs. Only then did reliable and diligent research begin, ranging from molecules to faculties, and the inferential approach became the sound scientific method for researchers. Scientific facts have emerged as a result of strenuous efforts in measurement and observation...These are the words that the West knew eight centuries later. On this scientific basis, Arabs in the natural sciences have come a long way, which has then indirectly affected Western thinkers and scientists such as Roger Bacon, Magnus, Vitelio, Leonardo da Vinci and Galileo"(Honke, 1993, p.401).

Thus, the contributions of Arabs and Muslims go far beyond the mere preservation of Greek culture. At a time when Europe was plunged into darkness, Islamic civilization illuminated the world through its advances in medicine, pharmacy, philosophy, chemistry, plant science and optics, with iconic figures such as Al-Farabi, Ibn Sina, Ibn Al-Haytham, Al-Biruni and Al-Razi. Their work has greatly served humanity and deserves wider recognition. It is crucial for scholars and those interested in the history of civilizations to reveal the important contributions of Islamic civilization. It is also essential that supporters of the Western model recognize the richness of this civilization and open opportunities for dialogue and cooperation between cultures, because scientific and cultural progress cannot be achieved in spaces marked by falsification, hatred and racism.

5. Dialogue as a Mechanism to Overcome the Problem of Excellence:

It is possible to affirm that Western civilization is in crisis, having been directly responsible for various tragedies and human suffering throughout history. Today, this civilization is at the origin of the crises and divisions that humanity is experiencing. This is mainly due to the racist foundations on which the Western model was built, valuing the Western ego while marginalizing others. This approach has led to a rejection and criticism of Western civilization by non-Western societies.

To remedy this situation, far-reaching reform is needed. We must consider a civilizational alternative with a universal human and moral orientation. The

West should recognize and appreciate the contributions of other peoples and civilizations, promote rapprochement between different peoples, and strengthen bridges of communication and dialogue. It must also be open to benefit from the experiences of other civilizations. According to French philosopher Edgar Morin: "Cultures must learn from each other. Arrogant Western cultures, which have established themselves as a teaching culture, must also become an educated culture" (Morin, 2002, p.96) Morin, like other Western philosophers, deeply believes that every non-Western civilization has advantages and virtues that could help the West avoid the dangers and tragedies it encounters. This requires active dialogue at all levels.

In this context, Roger Garaudy defends the philosophy of dialogue. For him, this dialogue is crucial to explore all the human dimensions developed in other civilizations. He believes that only such a dialogue can achieve a cosmic project aligned with the future prospects of humanity, guaranteeing coexistence without political, ethnic or historical conflicts. Garaudy dedicated much of his work to this project, as evidenced by his books such as "Dialogue of Civilizations" and "Call to the Living". He states: "It is only with this dialogue between civilizations that a cosmic project can be born that is consistent with the invention of the future, so that everyone invents everyone's future. Current experiences in Asia, Africa and Latin America... It allows us to draw from today the first lines of this cosmic project in the 21st century" (Garaudy, 1999, p.10) Garaudy calls on the West to learn from the unique experiences of these societies and benefit from their governance. Only authentic dialogue will allow cultures and ideas from all continents to contribute to the flourishing of humanity.

The dialogue that Garaudy advocates is an effective dialogue that contrasts with conflicting theories like those of Samuel Huntington on the clash of civilizations or Francis Fukuyama on the end of history. Garaudy wants a transparent dialogue that overcomes the forms of exclusion and arrogance of Western models. He insists on the need to activate the values of tolerance, convergence and cross-fertilization to build a common future. He evokes the historical encounters between civilizations, such as those of Egypt, Babylon, India and China, which have fostered fruitful dialogues and strengthened ties of understanding. Garaudy says, "There have been various encounters between civilizations in history. His hope will allow us to define the best conditions for

the possibility of a new meeting, the means to facilitate it and the expected human enrichment” (Garaudy, 1999, p.155).

Garoudi, by calling for dialogue among civilizations, first targets the Western model. It does so because this model is the main beneficiary of the benefits and virtues of non-Western civilizations. At the same time, the West is rapidly moving towards collapse and destruction, due to its increasing centrality and degrading behaviours that affect the value of man and history. However, Garoudi does not limit his appeal to this criticism. It directs it towards a universal perspective, encompassing all societies and civilizations. Its goal is to ensure a common future for humanity, where differences, wars and conflicts will disappear, and where the values of love, security and peace will prevail.

As he expressed in his speech: “There is absolutely no possibility of an exchange that allows a dialogue among civilizations. However, dialogue assumes that each party is convinced that there is something to learn from the other party. The West's conversation with itself continued long enough, and it tried to guide all civilizations from its own perspective... The dialogue of civilizations is only real if I consider the other person and the other culture as a part of myself that ages my being and reveals to me what I lack.” (Garaudy, 1986, p.60) This statement emphasizes that Garoudi's vision on dialogue is based on high moral principles. It encourages the values of solidarity, humility and mutual respect, while rejecting intolerance and obligation. Thus, all the peoples of the world must participate in this real dialogue. Regardless of their differences in color and race, the goal remains to serve humanity.

From the above, it can be argued that the dominant view that values the superiority and arrogance of the Western civilizational model has contributed significantly to its crisis and suffering. This suffering was not confined to the model that spawned it, but spread across societies and affected all of humanity. As a result, the tragedy became deeper and more widespread. Our entire planet is now under threat, and humanity is rapidly heading for the precipice due to the spread of many harmful values and habits, such as domination, selfishness, exploitation and destruction. These phenomena lead to feelings of non-existence, alienation and oppression. This situation requires the Western model to re-evaluate its foundations, which rest on fragile and insufficient foundations. It needs to give up its centrality and become more humble and open. This

openness would make it possible to change one's vision of others, promoting dialogue, communication and coexistence.

Conclusion:

In light of previous discussions, it is clear that Western heritage, in its intellectual, religious, ethnic and historical dimensions, rests on fundamental principles that privilege superiority over recognition and coexistence. These principles have been reinforced by the theorists of Western civilization through various theses and philosophies, thus fostering fanaticism, selfishness and arrogance. By positioning itself as the center of the universe, this model has marginalized other civilizations and peoples, considering them inferior and submissive. According to this perspective, the West is the cradle of civilization, science, and philosophy, and all other peoples should be indebted to it.

This view led to the denial of the contributions of ancient Eastern civilizations and later Islamic civilization. By ignoring these important contributions, Western heritage has perpetuated myths of superiority, transcendence and elevation. This exclusive perception of Western history has prompted the West to commit serious injustices towards non-Western peoples by imposing its cultural model and neglecting the intellectual and spiritual richness of other cultures. This attitude has not only distorted historical facts but also prompted some critical thinkers to denounce the injustices committed by Western civilization and to recognize the significant contribution of non-Western civilizations in various fields such as philosophy, religion, medicine, astronomy, mathematics, arts, and literature.

Non-Western societies have not been the only ones to suffer from the adverse effects of the Western civilizational model. Western societies themselves have been impacted, in particular by the internal destruction of their social cohesion. This situation led to an outbidding of material values, generating an individual in crisis, suffering from feelings of alienation, non-existence and psychological disorders. To overcome this crisis, a return to Eastern cultures and the integration of their spiritual and intellectual values could offer true meaning to human existence.

To achieve this, the West must acknowledge its historical mistakes and renew its commitment to humanity, in accordance with the principles of

objectivity and transparency dictated by the scientific and intellectual spirit. This requires intellectual humility and openness to other societies and civilizations. By supporting the mechanisms of communication and dialogue between all areas, the West could thus evolve towards a civilization based on civic integration, coexistence, tolerance and solidarity, while rejecting forms of extremism and selfishness.

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