

Western urban postmodernism and Yuhupdeh indigenous shamanism: A comparative evaluation

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Thesis accepted in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree
Doctor of Philosophy in Missiology at the North-West University

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Graduation: May 2022

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DEDICATION AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I dedicate this PhD to my dear wife Elisângela, a life and ministry companion for over two decades, including the last fifteen years of living with the Yuhupdeh in the interior of the Brazilian Amazon, as well as my precious children Maria Elisa and Micael, both from Amazonas, priceless gifts from God to our family.

My deep gratitude to Prof. Dr. Timóteo Carriker, my advisor in this feat, always accessible and available, patient and insightful in every respect.

To Prof. Dr. Hermanus Taute, who went above and beyond his commitment as co-advisor, even reviewing the grammatically limited English version of this research.

To my Yuhupdeh friends, who gave me the privilege to enter their world, study their language and culture, walk with them through the forest trails and understand another perspective on life. Among them, special gratitude to Dëh-Yãam [Márcio Araújo], whom I met when he was a teenager and who became my personal friend, later my son and brother in the faith when he surrendered to Christ, and now my ministry colleague as a presbyter of the church who, by the of grace of God, was birthed among his people.

To the colleagues of the WEC Amazônia missionary team who, over the years became a true family, fellow travellers and friends for life. Among them, special gratitude to Marcelo Carvalho, missionary among the Hupd'äh, with whom all the subjects addressed here were discussed over the years of working together. The exchange of information and ethnological comparisons about the Yuhupdeh and Hupd'äh was crucial to a holistic understanding of the topic.

To my friend and missiologist Dr. Ronaldo Lidório, who was my team leader and consultant in the initial studies of the Yuhupdeh worldview, in particular encouraging me to expand my mind so as to understand the then-strange ideas of an impersonal force, totemism and magic.

To my friend Dr. Marcos Azevedo, a specialist in postmodernism and now a missionary in France, who first considered that these similarities in worldview values were promising for more advanced academic research.

To North-West University that accepted my research project and awarded me the scholarship without which it would not be possible.

To the partner churches and brothers who over the years have supported our family in prayer and finances, in addition to always welcoming us pastorally with friendship and encouragement, enabling us to be fully dedicated to the service of the Lord.

To the mission agencies WEC International and APMT – the Presbyterian Agency for Transcultural Missions – for all the institutional support and service opportunities.

To the many friends who supported me in different ways throughout this research, especially with translations and revisions in English.

Above all, to the infinite-personal God, self-revealed in the Scriptures as the Creator of all things, the ultimate reality of the universe, through whom and for whom all things subsist. There is no greater privilege than serving this God.

Soli Deo Gloria

ABSTRACT

This research analytically compares the urban Western postmodern worldview with the indigenous shamanic worldview of the Yuhupdeh people of the Amazon Rainforest, with special focus on similarities in values. Ten worldview values are analysed, showing how they manifest in different ways in each society, but are, in essence, identical.

The Yuhupdeh have been isolated in the rainforest until recently, neither experiencing nor being influenced by the historical events and movements that, it is understood, constituted the postmodern worldview. The hypothesis of this research is that the axiological similarities of such disjointed worldviews are not mere coincidences, but rather the result of the understanding developed about the fundamental reality of the universe and the consequent allocation of humanity in relation to the cosmos.

For this, a specific model of analytical comparison was developed, with a theological-missiological orientation, in light of Calvin and Kuyper's assumptions about the fundamental relationships of life, God–Man–World, in ten thematic axes including binary scales of values. It proposes to make a new contribution to the theological understanding of postmodernism as well as to missiological reflection and missionary practice.

Key terms

1. Postmodernism; 2. shamanism; 3. Yuhupdeh people; 4. Interculturality; 5. missiology.

RESUMO

Esta pesquisa é uma comparação analítica da cosmovisão pós-moderna ocidental urbana com a cosmovisão xamânica indígena do povo Yuhupdeh, da Floresta Amazônica, com foco nas suas similaridades de valores. São analisados dez valores cosmovisionais, mostrando como apenas se manifestam de formas diferentes em cada sociedade, mas são, em essência, idênticos.

Os Yuhupdeh estiveram isolados até recentemente na floresta, não experimentando nem sendo influenciados pelos fatos e movimentos históricos que, segundo se entende, constituíram a cosmovisão pós-moderna. A hipótese dessa pesquisa é que as similaridades axiológicas de tais cosmovisões desconexas não são coincidências, mas, sim, resultantes da compreensão desenvolvida sobre a realidade fundamental do universo e a consequente alocação do homem em relação ao cosmos.

Para isso foi elaborado um modelo próprio de comparação analítica, de orientação teológico-missiológica, à luz dos pressupostos de Calvino e Kuyper acerca das relações fundamentais da vida, Deus–Homem–Mundo, em dez eixos temáticos com escalas binárias de valores. Propõe-se gerar novas contribuições à compreensão teológica do pós-modernismo, bem como, à reflexão missiológica e prática missionária.

Palavras Chaves

1. Pós-Modernismo; 2. Xamanismo; 3. Povo Yuhupdeh; 4. Interculturalidade; 5. Missiologia.

ABSTRACTO

Esta investigación es una comparación analítica de la cosmovisión urbana occidental posmoderna con la cosmovisión chamánica indígena del pueblo Yuhupdeh de la selva amazónica, centrándose en las similitudes de los valores. Se analizan diez valores cosmovisionales, mostrando como solamente se manifiestan de diferentes formas en cada sociedad, sin embargo, en la esencia, son idénticos.

Los Yuhupdeh han estado aislados hasta hace poco tiempo en la selva, sin experimentar ni ser influenciados por los acontecimientos, ni los movimientos históricos, lo que lleva a entender que constituyeron la cosmovisión posmoderna. La hipótesis de esta investigación es que las similitudes axiológicas de tales cosmovisiones inconexas, no son coincidencias, sino el resultado de la comprensión desarrollada sobre la realidad fundamental del universo y la consecuente asignación del hombre en relación con el cosmos.

Para ello, se desarrolló un modelo específico de comparación analítica, con una orientación teológico-misiológico, a luz de los presupuestos de Calvino y Kuyper, sobre las relaciones fundamentales de la vida, Dios–Hombre–Mundo, en diez ejes temáticos con escalas binarias de valores. Propone generar nuevos aportes a la comprensión teológica del posmodernismo, así como a la reflexión misiológica y la práctica misionera.

Términos Clave

1. Posmodernismo; 2. Chamanismo; 3. Pueblo Yuhupdeh; 4. Interculturalidad; 5. Misiología.

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CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION, PROBLEM STATEMENT AND ANALYTICAL MODEL

1.1. Introduction

The postmodern society is marked strongly by anthropic-centralism, individualism, utilitarianism, functionalism, relativism, pluralism, horizontalism, hedonism, immediacy and focus on the present, values that are in conflict with the Gospel, and for this reason constitute a great challenge to present missionary practice.

In secular literature about postmodernism, these characteristics are accepted as the results of a series of movements and historical events, such as the Renaissance, the Enlightenment, Rationalism, Scientism and Secularism, the Industrial Revolution, the Second World War, the phenomena of urbanisation, technological advances and mass media. In reformed theological literature, despite its agreements with the historical development of postmodern ideas, it is understood that such ideas or characteristics are the result of a break with Christian theism, resulting in an exacerbated naturalistic humanism.

Discussion around these two different understandings of postmodernism has taken place in the fields of theology and philosophy. The present project intends to contribute to the discussion by adding data from the reformed missionary ethnology that originate from the Yuhupdeh indigenous people of the Brazilian Amazon Forest.

This people embodies a tribal society. Until recently, they had been isolated in the Amazon rainforest and had not experienced any of Western historical antecedents. However, their traditional cultural values are extremely similar to those of postmodernism at its core.

This study carefully examines these parallels in order to show the causes of the Yuhupdeh values; contribute to the reformed theological understanding of postmodernism; and raise new questions for missiology and missionary practice.

The choice of the Yuhupdeh for this purpose was due to the fact that this researcher had served as a missionary among them for fifteen years. The comparison is limited to them since including other people-groups would make the research too broad.

1.2. Context and statement of the problem

1.2.1. Context

The postmodern worldview presents various challenges for the church in mission and has been analysed from different perspectives. As a rule, when more traditional cultures are contrasted with this, discontinuity with historical-cultural predecessors surfaces as one of the characteristics of this kind of comparison (Lyotard, 2013:xvi).

On the other hand, Amerindian tribal cultures have for decades challenged missiology with their exotic shamanism that has been the object of study especially in the area of anthropology, in contrast to ism, with its ethnic-historic continuity.

Over a decade of work and research among the Yuhupdeh indigenous people in the northwest of the Amazon Rainforest has revealed striking similarities between the cultural values of Yuhupdeh shamanism and postmodernism. A comparative analysis of these values, using the intercultural missiological perspective, will bring intellectual news to the theological understanding of postmodernism and open up new questions for missiological reflection.

1.2.2. Statement of the problem

Postmodern society is centred on man, having substituted the theocentric God-man relationship by the anthropocentric relationship of man-nature (Veith, 1999:65; Aquino, 1989:78). Consequently, it is strongly individualistic (Bosch, 2002: 423; Lipovetsky, 2004:55-56; 2007:104) and, for this reason, also utilitarian (Bauman, 2008:109; Veith, 1999:27) in all its relationships, whether environmental, social or mystical. Utilitarian societies are generally also functional (Azevedo, 2015a:59). Postmodernism, too, conforms to this rule.

Relativism (Schaeffer, 2003:154; Sire, 2009:276; Giddens, 2002:10) is one of postmodernism's principal evidences as well as pluralism (Newbigin, 2016:29-30) and subjectivism (Azevedo, 2015b:126; Lipovetsky, 2004:56). Alain Touraine (1994:275) points to the characteristic of "horisontalisation" or "equalisation" as a protest against hierarchy, a characteristic known in anthropology as egalitarianism (Hiebert, 2016:32,75). And Luis Carlos Fridman (2000:165) highlights self-realisation known in theology and philosophy as hedonism (Clark, 2013:160).

For Harvey (1989:240), postmodern society suffers from a loss of reference to the past and perspectives to the future, becoming centred on the present. Therefore, it becomes consumerist and immediatist. Basically, all scholars emphasise the imagery culture, often referred to as narcissism (Azevedo, 2015b:96).

In summary, postmodern society is anthropocentric, individualistic, utilitarian, functional, relativist, pluralistic, horisontalised, hedonistic, focused on the present, consumeristic, immediate, image-focused and narcissistic.

Although a general consensus on these characteristics exists, there are strong divergences in understandings about their causes even among thinkers in secular literature. Jean-François Lyotard (2013:viii,125) and Jean Baudrillard (1991:60) see it as a historical condition of society that marks its discontinuity with modernity and its meta-narratives.

Jürgen Habermas (2017:5) describes postmodernism as a rupture with the ideas of Enlightenment or, in other words, the resurgence of anti-Enlightenment ideas which were still existent. However, Frederic Jameson (1985:17; 2007:27) and David Harvey (1989:163-166) relate postmodernism to a stage after capitalism, or “late capitalism,” also called “the third way,” which arose after the Second World War.

In Reformed theology, Schaeffer (2003), Sire (2009), Colson and Pearcey (2000), Naugle (2017) and Goheen and Bartholomew (2016) point out that the values that govern postmodernism already existed during the Greco-Roman period, developed during the Middle Ages and were strengthened by Renaissance humanism. They were fought by protestant reformers, but the economic prosperity generated by the Reformation ended up collaborating with such values. Later, postmodern values were amplified by the rationalism of the Enlightenment and spread rapidly with the rise of modern science. They were widely disseminated by art, music, literature and cinema and, in this way, shaped contemporary society.

However, different from secular thinkers, Reformed theologians believe that postmodernism is not only the result of historical processes and facts but, rather, embodies a Western break with Christian Theism and the belief in an infinite personal God, which occurred more ostensibly from the 17th century onwards (Schaeffer, 2003:112-113; Sire, 2009:14,298-299; Colson & Pearcey, 2000:39; Naugle, 2017:229; Goheen & Bartholomew, 2016:117).

Amerindian shamanism and, in particular, the shamanism of the Indigenous in Brazil, has been studied over the last 70 years using many different approaches. While Herbert Baldus (1964:319-320) describes it as journeys through the cosmos, possession and ecstasy, Claude Lévi-Strauss (1975:194) points to its magical nature, using the terms of James Frazer (1978:32-46), Émile Durkheim (1989:74-79), Marcel Mauss (2003:55-61), Bronislaw Malinowski (1988:32-33,90-93) and Adamson Hoebel and Everett Frost (1995:367-368). Eduardo Viveiros de Castro (2002) and Phillippe Descola (1998) developed the theory of Amerindian perspective as a shamanistic worldview, while Peter Rivière (2001:132-138) distanced himself from the accepted consensus of indigenous societies that are supposedly socially collective, pointing out that at least in the Guianas and Amazonian Northwest, there was strong trace of individualism in these societies. Howard Reid (1979:96,97), like Jorge Pozzobon (1983:240), has pointed strong evidences of fluidity in the fulfilment (or disregard) of social rules.

In the view of this researcher, the Yuhupdeh culture is strongly anthropocentric, centred on the present, functionalist, and characterised by immediatism and egalitarianism (Silva & Silva 2007:5; 2009:5-6; 2012:66-77; Silva, 2008:79-80; 2009:157,241; 2010:3-6; 2011:27-29; 2014:73,84). Considering that magic is evidence of utilitarianism and perspectivism implies relativism, the general characteristics of the Yuhupdeh show strong resemblances to postmodernism. The similarities between the Yuhupdeh culture and postmodernism will prove to highlight elements of humanity that are crucial for missiological consideration. The intention of this research is to prove that these similarities are not coincidental but have two common elements, as will be expounded in the central theoretical argument.

In other words, the worldview of Yuhupdeh society is characterised by anthropocentrism, individualism, utilitarianism, functionalism, relativism, pluralism, horizontalism (or egalitarianism), hedonism, immediatism and a focus on the present. Of the eclectic characteristics found in postmodernism, only consumerism, narcissism and the imagery language are not found in Yuhupdeh society.

Here, however, a crucial question is posed for the secular interpretation of postmodernity as the result of a series of historical-ideological movements and major historical-political events, such as the Industrial Revolution, the Second World War, the phenomenon of urbanisation, rapid technological advancement and the advent of mass media (Anderson, 1999:100-108; Lyotard, 2013:3; Giddens, 1991:10-11,46-47; Bauman, 2001:8-9; Lipovetsky, 2004:25,52,53; Grenz, 2008:93,97; Azevedo, 2015b:97). How can the Yuhupdeh, a tribal society long isolated

in the interior of a tropical rainforest without exposure to these historical changes, present a sociocultural profile so similar to post modernism in its worldview?

This gives rise to the following question: ***What are the reasons for the similarities between Western postmodernism and Yuhupdeh shamanism?***

This problem generates further questions:

- ***Which values of postmodernism are similar to Yuhupdeh shamanism?***
- ***How do such similarities manifest themselves in Yuhupdeh society?***
- ***What are the possible reasons for the similarities between such worldviews and their contributions to the reformed theological study of postmodernism?***
- ***What implications do these contributions have for missiology and missionary practice in these two worldviews?***

1.3. Preliminary bibliographical study

Postmodernism has been studied from differing points of view. Philosophers prefer to analyse the theoretical aspects of postmodernism, as in the cases for example of Jean Baudrillard (1981, 1991), Fredric Jameson (2003, 2007), Jean-François Lyotard (1987, 2013), Jacques Derrida (1975), David Harvey (1989) and Gilles Lipovetsky (1989, 2004, 2007).

Anthropologists and sociologists tend to evaluate the cultural and social developments of postmodern notions, including Anthony Giddens (1991, 2002), Zygmunt Bauman (1999, 2000, 2001), Stuart Hall (2004) and Fritjof Capra (2006).

Theologians, whether Protestant or Catholic, have attempted to understand the implications of postmodernism for the Christian faith, including Paulo Siepierski (1992), Stanley Grenz (2008), Daniel Salinas and Samuel Escobar (1999), Andrés Queiruga (2003) and José Trasferetti (2003). In particular, Reformed theologians have done the same, including Francis Schaeffer (2003), James Sire (2009, 2012), Gene Veith Jr (1994, 1999), Nancy Pearcey (2006), Charles Colson (2000), Colin Brown (1989), Brian Walsh and Richard Middleton (2010), Lesslie Newbigin (2016), Michael Goheen and Craig Bartholomew (2016) and Marcos Azevedo (2015a, 2015b).

Little research on this subject has been accomplished in the area of missiology: there is a lacuna in extant discussions around comparative analysis of postmodernism with tribal culture. The present study will bring new perspectives to missiology, especially in the area of intercultural studies as related to Reformed theology.

1.4. Purpose and the objectives

1.4.1. Purpose

The main purpose of this study is to develop a comparative analysis of urban Western postmodernism in relation to the tribal shamanism of the Yuhupdeh people, focusing on their similarities, and contrast them with the biblical worldview seeking the possible factors causing these and then to discuss their theological, missiological and missionary implications.

1.4.2. Objectives

The objectives of this project are as follows:

- Describe postmodern values that are similar to Yuhupdeh shamanism.
- Describe how such similarities are manifested in Yuhupdeh society.
- Analyse the probable reasons for the similarities between postmodernism and shamanism and their possible contributions to the reformed studies of postmodernity.
- Contrast such values with the biblical worldview, reflecting on the implications of this understanding for theological, missiology and missionary practice in these worldviews.

1.5. The central theoretical argument

The central theoretical argument of this study is that the similarities between Western postmodernism and Yuhupdeh shamanism are not coincidences, but are the results of two common traits: the personalisation of the notion of God and the consequent centralisation of man in the universe. In the Yuhupdeh society these common traits are ancient concepts, whereas in the West they are processes that have intensified in the last centuries.

1.6. Clarification of concepts

Postmodernism: in spite of the accusation by some that it embodies an “anti-worldview” (Veith Jr., 1994:43), postmodernism, in this case, refers to a dominant worldview of the present

times especially in the large Western or Westernised urban centres, characterised mainly by the negation of the human capacity to know the essence of reality in its different perspectives, conceptualising everything as relative, for instance according to James Sire (2009:294,298-299).

Shamanism: Shamanism is found not only the religious system centred on the figure of the shaman, but in the mystical worldview predominant among the Amerindians, which is either spiritualist or centred on the relationship with spiritual beings according to Hebert Baldus (1964:319-320), or magic, that is, centred on the manipulation of impersonal forces according to Claude Lévi-Strauss (1975:194).

Worldview: The term “worldview” carries a bewilderment of definitions. In this work, James Sire’s revised definition will be adopted, as follows:

worldview is a commitment, a fundamental orientation of the heart, that can be expressed as a story or in a set of presuppositions (assumptions which may be true, partially true or entirely false) that we hold (consciously or subconsciously, consistently or inconsistently) about the basic constitution of reality, and that provides the foundation on which we live and move, and have our being (Sire, 2012:179).

Relativity: Philosophical theory which is present in many different segments of contemporary society holds it to be impossible to arrive at a true comprehension of reality, if it exists, where only subjective perspectives can be obtained of it (Schaeffer, 2003:154).

Reformed: Theological systems has been developing since the work of John Calvin in the 16th century which teaches the covenant as the primary structure of biblical revelation and where hermeneutics is a key to the interpretation of the scriptures. In the words of R. C. Sproul (2009:85), it is the theological system “centered on God, based solely on the Word of God, promised by faith alone, dedicated to Jesus Christ and structured by three covenants.”

1.7. Ethical considerations

The risk level as regards to the ethical implications is deemed to be “low” In the present piece. However, this study will comply with all ethical requirements of the Department of Education of North-West University (NWU) in regards to its literary study. The sources of information

about the Yuhupdeh will be academic publications and technical documents already available, while that culture will be treated respectfully, while avoiding the mentioning the names of people or local communities.

1.8. Methodology

This comparative study will be made according to the Reformed tradition, with a missiological approach, starting from the presupposition of the Holy Scripture as a revelation of God to man, therefore it is the universal truth, above cultures and philosophies. The following methods will be used to reply to the questions raised:

In order to describe the most important characteristics of the postmodern worldview for this comparison, a literary study will be made of postmodernism, drawing from work done by Perry Anderson (1999), Jean-François Lyotard (2013), Jürgen Habermas (1990, 2017), Fredric Jameson (1985, 2007), David Harvey (1993) and Jacques Derrida (1975), including the themes of “high modernity” and “slow modernity” of Anthony Giddens (1991, 2002), “liquid modernity” of Zygmunt Bauman (1999, 2000, 2001) and “hypermodernity” of Gilles Lipovetsky (2004, 2007), while focusing on Reformed authors such as Schaeffer (2003), Sire (2009, 2012), Goheen and Bartholomew (2016), Pearcey (2006) and Walsh and Middleton (2010).

In order to describe the most important characteristics of the Yuhupdeh in terms of the present this study, a review of the literature will be made around the topics of shamanism, indigenous cultures and the Yuhupdeh people, beginning with Durkheim (1989), Mauss (2003), Frazer (1978) and Malinowski (1988) on totemism and magic and subsequently Baldus (1964, 1965) and Lévi-Strauss (1975) on indigenous shamanism and Lolli (2010) and Junio Felipe (2018) on the people in question. However, the focus for this study will be on the ethnographic data of reformed researchers and missionaries Silva and Silva (2007, 2009, 2012) and Silva (2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2014).

The contrasting of such worldviews with the Holy Scriptures will be made directly with the biblical text, in the light of Reformed exegetical commentators, and to evaluate the missiological implications of this comparative evaluation, principal reformed theologians who have studied the postmodern phenomena will be drawn upon, such as Francis Schaeffer (2003), James Sire (2009, 2012), Nancy Pearcey (2006), Gene Veith Jr (1999), Brian Walsh and Richard Middleton (2010), Colin Brown (1989), Marcos Azevedo (2015a, 2015b) and missiologists such as Lesslie Newbigin (2016), Michael Goheen and Craig Bartholomew

(2016), Paul Hiebert (2016) and Wilbert Shenk (1995, 1996). It is expected that new materials and understandings will be added to the discussion in view of the results generated here, writing into various lacunae within extant literature, also beyond that which has been theorised.

The comparison between the Western worldview and the Yuhupdeh will be made according to a specific analysis model as presented below.

1.8.1. A comparative model of worldviews

This research proposes to comparatively analyse urban Western postmodernism with the indigenous shamanism of the Yuhupdeh people. That is, two distant worldviews without any historical connection are analysed by focussing on their similarities and not on their differences. This task calls for the elaboration of a model that encompasses and guides the research.

However, before presenting the model, a brief explanation of the important concepts of cosmovision and scale of values is provided.

1.8.1.1. Worldview

Worldview studies gained momentum from the second half of the 19th century onwards among reformed thinkers following the theological trajectory of John Calvin (1509–1564). This led to the theoretical framework now known as neo-Calvinism.

Calvin (2006:41) begins his *Institutes* by noting that "almost the entire sum of our knowledge, which in fact should be judged as true and solid knowledge, consists of two parts: the knowledge of God and the knowledge of ourselves". In his treatise on Calvinism, analysing Calvin's work as a whole, the much-discussed Dutch theologian and statesman Abraham Kuyper (1837–1920) proposes that every "system of thought" is the result of an understanding of the "three fundamental relationships of all human life: namely, (1) our relationship with *God*, (2) our relationship with *man*, and (3) our relationship with the *world*" (Kuyper, 2014:28).

David Naugle (2017:32-34), in a masterpiece of historical research on the concept of cosmovision, points its origin to Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) around the use of the German term *Weltanschauung*. It came to be used in German theology, however, without receiving special attention. The Scottish reformed theologian and apologist James Orr (1844–1913) was the first to use this term to describe the whole of Christianity as a system. Kuyper (2014:19)

made this concept famous by referring to it as a “system of life” or a “perception of life and world”.

The concept of the “worldview” became central to the Dutch neo-Calvinism and was expanded by Orr's main followers such as the North-American theologians and philosophers Gordon Clark (1902–1986) and Carl Henry (1913–2003) as well as Kuyper and the theologian and Dutch philosopher Herman Dooyeweerd (1926–1965) and, finally, the North-American evangelist and apologist Francis Schaeffer (1912–1984).

Schaeffer made an immeasurable contribution not only to the study of the concept but also to its application to counselling and evangelisation, arguing that Christianity is the only worldview capable of truly responding to the crises and questions of human beings in all places and at all times (Schaeffer, 2010:166).

All people have their assumptions, and they will live as coherently as possible with those assumptions, even more than they themselves can realize. By *assumptions* we mean the basic structure of how a person views life, their basic worldview, the filter through which they view the world. Assumptions are based on what the person considers to be the truth about what exists [...] Their assumptions also provide the basis for their values and, consequently, the basis for their decisions (Schaeffer, 2003:11).

Schaeffer's influence was extensive on contemporary worldview thinkers such as Ronald Nash, Brian Walsh, Richard Middleton, Nancy Pearcey, David Naugle and James Sire. Married to a missionary daughter, born in China, and having acted as a cross-cultural missionary sent by the then Bible Presbyterian Church from the United States to Switzerland, his reflections on worldview, elaborated and tested in an intercultural environment, offer a peculiar and vital contribution to Missiology.

Despite the extensive and productive studies centred on worldview in the reformed theological milieu, these came to Missiology through another path, namely from cultural anthropology. The much-discussed Polish ethnologist Bronisław Malinowski (1884–1942) even quotes the term *Weltanschauung* in one of the best-known works: “What really interests me in the study of the native is his vision of things, his *Weltanschauung*, the breath of life and the reality that he breathes and by which he lives” (Malinowski, 1984:374). However, not many anthropologists paid attention to worldview studies.

Two exceptions are Robert Redfield (1941, 1952, 1953), who researched and led research on worldview in light of anthropology at the University of Chicago as informed by a strong evolutionary perspective (Redfield, 1953:110) and Michael Kearney (1975, 1984), who lectured on worldview from a Marxist perspective, relating it to ideology (Kearney, 1984:9).

One of the first to introduce the idea of a worldview into Missiology was missiologist David Hesselgrave and he did so by quoting Redfield and Kearney exactly, conceptualising worldview as “the way we see ourselves in relation to everything else. Conversely, it is the way we see all things in relation to us” (Hesselgrave, 1995:219-220).

Lloyd Kwast, missionary in Africa and later professor of Missiology in the United States, was also one of the main diffusers of the concept of worldview in Missiology, presenting it as the nucleus of culture conceived as a system with four “layers.” The first would be behaviours or “what is done;” the second the values or “what is good or better;” the third beliefs or “what is true;” the fourth, a core aspect, centres on “what is real” (Kwast, 1987:438-440).

Finally, Paul Hiebert, also building on Redfield and Kearney, defines “a worldview, from an anthropological perspective, as the fundamental assumptions and cognitive, affective and evaluative structures that a group adopts in relation to the nature of reality and that it uses to organize its life” (Hiebert, 2016:30-31).

1.8.1.2. Main definitions

Returning to the field of reformed and apologetic theology, the American theologian and philosopher Ronald Nash defines a worldview as “a conceptual scheme by which, consciously or unconsciously, we apply or adapt everything we believe in, and interpret and judge reality” or, “in simpler terms, a worldview is a set of beliefs about the most important issues in life” (Nash, 2012:25).

Reformed worldview professors Brian Walsh and Richard Middleton avoid defining the term but claim that “worldviews are perceptual structures. They are ways to see.” And, also, “the central element that connects the parts of the puzzle, making it a coherent whole” (Walsh & Middleton, 2010:16,18).

Likewise, Nancy Pearcey eschews definitions, noting, however, that a worldview is “a set of beliefs about how reality works and how they should live,” noting also that “a worldview is not something abstract and academic, but intensely personal. Our worldview is how we answer

the important questions in life that we all have to confront: What are we here for? What is the ultimate truth? Is there anything worth living for?" (Pearcey, 2017:26,57).

In turn, James Sire is concerned with defining and applying the concept. After more than three decades of reflecting on and writing about the subject, and, influenced by Naugle's extensive study, the reformed theologian and apologist developed a revised definition of worldview, which will be adopted in this work:

Worldview is a commitment, a fundamental orientation of the heart, which can be expressed as a story or a set of assumptions (assumptions that may be true, partially true or totally false) that we hold (consciously or subconsciously, consistently or inconsistently) about the constitution. basic reality, and which provides the foundation on which we live, move and exist (Sire, 2012:179).

As can be seen in the light of such conceptualisations, cosmovision goes far beyond the etymological meaning of "worldview" (Hesselgrave) and even the anthropological meaning of "presuppositions and structures" (Hiebert), being linked instead to the "commitments of the heart" (Sire) or "beliefs" (Nash, Pearcey), and therefore, ends up being grounded less in cognition and more in the fundamental beliefs through which reality is interpreted.

1.8.1.3. Main analysis models

Different schemes have been developed for analysing worldviews. Nash (2012:38) elaborates a model in search of underlying beliefs in five specific areas:

What kinds of beliefs make up a worldview? A balanced worldview includes beliefs in at least five main areas:

- 1) God
- 2) Reality
- 3) Knowledge
- 4) Morality
- 5) Humanity

The scheme of Walsh and Middleton (2010:32) is structured around the understanding that "worldviews are founded on fundamental faith commitments:"

What is a faith commitment? It's the way we answer four basic questions that confront everyone:

- (1) Who am I? Or, what is the nature, task and purpose of human beings?
- (2) Where am I? Or, what is the nature of the world and universe I live in?
- (3) What is wrong? Or, what is the basic problem or obstacle that prevents me from achieving satisfaction?
- (4) What is the solution? Or, how is it possible to overcome this impediment to my achievement? In other words, how do I find salvation?

Pearcey (2017:28) does not formalise an analytical method as such, but outlines a “simple grid” for identifying and analysing “non-biblical worldviews,” assuming that “every philosophy or ideology has to answer the same fundamental questions:”

1. Creation: How did it all start? Where did we come from?
2. Fall: What went wrong? What is the source of evil and suffering?
3. Redemption: What to do about it? How to fix the world?

In turn, Sire (2012:197-198) proposes a model based on seven questions:

- 1) What is the primordial reality – the really real?
- 2) What is the nature of the external reality, that is, the world around us?
- 3) What is a human being?
- 4) What happens to a person when he dies?
- 5) Why is it possible to actually know something?
- 6) How do we know what is right and what is wrong?
- 7) What is the meaning of human history?

In the area of Missiology, Hiebert (2016:365) is one of the few to propose an analytical model of worldviews based on four main axes he calls “themes and counter-themes:” cognitive, affective, evaluative and root metaphors.

1. Cognitive themes and counter-themes
 - Time/space
 - Person/group
 - Categories of realities
 - Causality

2. Affective themes and counter-themes

- Mystery/admiration, peace/shalom, ecstasy/emotion
- Joy, sadness
- Fatalist, optimistic, pessimistic

3. Evaluating themes and counter-themes

- Universalist x particularist
- Attribution x achievement
- Equality x hierarchy
- Individual x group
- Great emotional expression x emotional control
- Other themes and counter-themes

4. Root metaphors

- Naive realism, instrumentalism, realism, critical, idealism, etc.

Upon carefully analysing the main concepts and analysis schemes, it is evident that authors in the theological area build their models on the foundations of Calvin and Kuyper, each with its analytical questions, but within the axes God–Man–World, declares Sire (2012:28). Worldview, therefore, can be understood as the fundamental beliefs about the divine, the human and the world.

Worldview studies have been critiqued, and one of the most objective of these criticisms comes from Roland Muller, missiologist and experienced missionary among Muslims in the Middle East. He points out difficulties around applying existing models of analysis to the Muslim world, suggesting that every worldview model is influenced by the worldview of those who elaborate it (R. Muller, 2013:118). There is certainly something to this critique, although it does not detract from the study itself of existing worldviews or schemas. In the contexts of more traditional societies, such as those of a shamanic nature, one case of which will be discussed here, this same limitation has been evident, not as a whole, but certainly in some of the issues suggested in the different analytical models.

Thus, for this research, a specific model for the analytical comparison of worldviews will be elaborated as naturally influenced by the research proposal itself, but with questions applicable to both Western postmodernism and Yuhupdeh shamanism. Such a model will be built on the basis of the Calvin-Kuyperian structure of God–Man–World, in light of Reformed theology and as grounded in a non-integrationist approach, and in interaction with the human sciences, making use of instruments offered by these for analysis; however, this is never done for the purpose of propositions.

1.8.1.4. Scale of values

The questions of the models presented are open. Those who are not aware of their conceptual assumptions can give different answers to their questions. Here we will go a step further, orienting responses within a range of values.

Although several philosophers and sociologists have ventured into the field of axiology, studies on scales of values were developed by intercultural psychology. Robert Hartman (1968) developed the idea of systematic values organised into intrinsic and extrinsic components, with nine pairs that should be classified as positive or negative values, while Milton Rokeach (1973) created a scale with two sets of values – eighteen of which are called instrumentals and eighteen so-called terminals – which should be ranked in terms of importance by the people surveyed.

Finally, Shalom Schwartz (1992) developed the theory of “basic human values” used to comparatively analyse more than eighty countries in search of similar values in different societies. For Schwartz, despite manifesting in different ways, ten universal values permeate all human society and these can be organised into four dimensions: openness to change, self-improvement, conservation and self-transcendence.

All these models were developed from and for Western urban contexts, so their application in tribal contexts would be ineffective. What is proposed here is to develop a model applicable to both contexts, taking advantage of the “scale” element from the value scales: that is, the idea that values are measured in a variable of greater or lesser importance. And these values will be arranged in binary form so that they can be observed and ranked against each other.

For example, in response to the question “what is the personal orientation in relation to the group?,” the answer could be “more collectivist” or “more individualistic.” This is due to the fact that collectivism and individualism are values present in every society; however, each society will have a greater inclination towards one or the other. Thus, in a “more collectivist” society the group will be more important than the individual and the opposite will happen in a “more individualistic” society. This foundational value will have a series of consequences in relationships, in behaviour around norms and laws, in the way of communicating, in religiosity and in many other areas of life.

Naturally, there is a scale between one and the other, which could be schematised as follows:

Collectivism															Individualism				
5	–	4	–	3	–	2	–	1	0	1	–	2	–	3	–	4	–	5	

However, it is beyond the scope of this work to quantify each value in the societies under analysis, as it would require vast field research and a method that is too detailed. Even so, it is possibly tainted by a significant degree of subjectivity. For this work, it will be sufficient to determine the prevailing value in each case as based on reliable bibliographic sources, the latter as gleaned from field observations.

The much-discussed structuralist anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss extensively used the resource of binary double opposition, represented by the + and – signs in his cultural analysis diagrams (Viveiro de Castro, 2008:238). His understanding is that, like language, culture is also structured and, therefore, such structures can be detected, understood and analysed based on their observable manifestations. This gave rise to structural anthropology. For him, "social relations are the raw material used to build models that reveal the social structure itself, which can therefore never be reduced to the set of observable relations in each society" (Lévi-Strauss, 1967: 301). In the model developed here, his double binary opposition methodology will be used where the + sign indicates the prevalence of a value.

His assumption that the observable elements (relations) are only manifestations of the fundamental values (structures) will also be implemented here. This assumption was also proposed by the much-discussed phenomenologist Edmund Husserl who stated that "it is not philosophy that should come from the impulse of investigation [...] but rather of things and problems," adding that "by conceiving ideas, man becomes a new man, who, living in finitude, moves towards the pole of infinity" (Husserl, 1965:160). Both authors are thus suggesting that sociocultural analysis can start from observable facts but must be deepened at the level of "structures" or "ideas," that is, the most basic notions, conceptions, values or beliefs that together form a worldview.

Proposing to elaborate an analytical comparison of the similarities between shamanism and postmodernism in a reformed perspective, this analysis will be carried out along ten main axes guided by research questions and grouped into the three Calvin-Kuyperian cosmovisional dimensions of God–Man–World.

1.8.1.5. Grounding the model

The “relationship with God,” in Kuyper's terms, will here be called relations with the divine; the “relationship with man” relations with the human; and the “relationship with the world” will be retained as such. Following the phenomenological logic of Lévi-Strauss and Husserl, the order of analysis will be from the most observable to the least observable along the iconic axis of World–Man–God.

1.8.1.5.1. Relations with the world

The dimension of relationships with the world will be examined here with a view to the founding values related to non-human elements and concepts from below, such as nature, time, the universe as a whole and the concept of truth.

1.8.1.5.1.1. Spatiality: What is the basic orientation towards the relationship with the environment? +Affective or +Utility?

This is a relationship common to all human beings, as everyone necessarily needs to interact with their environment to meet their needs. The interaction can be direct or indirect, but it will necessarily exist, being one of the most easily observable relationships among humans. The question to be observed is which value guides such a relationship.

Lucien Lévy-Bruhl begins his studies on “primitive” peoples by exploring the contrast between objectivity, typical of Western societies, and subjectivity, as a mark of tribal societies. Over the years, he sought to understand the mystical element, the pre-logism, the representation, until he established a new concept that he called the “affective category” (Lévy-Bruhl, 2018: 8). Inspired by Lévy-Bruhl, the term affectivity will be used in this work, while understanding that this concept is not exclusive to tribal peoples. Rather, it is a founding value that can be present in different systems of thought, through which the world around members of a community is read in terms of the perspective of affective relationships.

Cardoso de Oliveira, analysing Lévy-Bruhl's work, points out the theoretical contrast that he develops in terms of mystical (or affective) knowledge and utilitarian knowledge (Cardoso de Oliveira, 1991:110-111). Utilitarianism was philosophically developed by Stuart Mill, with the “principle of usefulness,” and Jeremy Bentham, with the “principle of the greatest happiness,” with a view to the quest to be happy (Mil, 2000; Bentham, 1973). In this work, however, the philosophical conceptualisation will give way to that of the term in its more pragmatic

application, that is, the instrumental way of relating initially with the environment and, extensively, with the entire world around. It is what Tim Mulgan calls “active utilitarianism:”

The simplest form of utilitarianism is active utilitarianism. The correct action is the one that produces the most well-being. This suggests that you should aim, on each occasion, to maximize well-being” (Mulgan, 2012:162).

Colin Brown (1989:96) calls this utilitarianism of acts “selfish utilitarianism,” while Francis Schaeffer (2003:71) points out that it is intertwined with processes of manipulation. Charles Colson and Nancy Pearcey (2000:39) note its connection with morality, that is, judging what is right by the logic of functionality.

In this sense, utilitarianism is related but not identical to the concept of hedonism. Hedonism centres on pleasure and seeking self-fulfilment, while utilitarianism centres on need and seeking satisfaction. There are affective and utilitarian ways to meet needs, just as there are real needs and manufactured ones.

In this way, societies with a more affective worldview protect, preserve or use natural resources in a more responsible, non-predatory way, while those who entertain a more utilitarian worldview tend to exhaust their resources as they deal with them in a more pragmatic and instrumental way. Such utilitarian pragmatism extends to relationships with the social and even with the sacred (Silva, 2014:180).

1.8.1.5.1.2. Temporality: What is the orientation in relation to time? +historical or +presentist?

As with nature, the relationship with time is universal, but its conceptions, forms and manifestations can be totally different. It is easy to observe, both in behaviour and in narratives.

Despite the past-present-future triad, the structuring trend is binary, combining past and future in opposition to the present. By contrasting temporality with eternity, St. Augustine made this binary distinction by arguing that past and future do not exist. The past is no longer and the future is not yet, so past/future are abstract times, while present is concrete time:

You would see that all past is repelled by the future, that all future follows past, that all past and future take their existence and course from the eternal present

[...] The past no longer exists and the future does not yet exist (Augustine, 1961:346,349).

There is a cultural pendulum in relation to time, in which some cultures focus on the present and others not. Paul Hiebert calls “existentialist” cultures centred on the present, using the term in its general and not-so-philosophical sense. For him, existentialist cultures deal with “issues that have to do with the here and now, with the living and not the dead” (Hiebert et al, 2009:117). Gilles Lipovetsky (2004:77) calls this phenomenon “presentism.”

Anthony Giddens (2002:72) states that “the reconstruction of the past goes together with the probable trajectory of life in the future,” that is, past and future are interconnected temporalities. Reformed theologian and missiologist Ronaldo Lidório calls cultures centred on the past/future, in contrast to existential ones, in Hiebert's terms “historical.” For him, existential societies “have a worldview strongly centred on active experiences, that is, those of today, more noticeable” while historical societies “have a worldview built from ancient landmarks, which can be historical facts, myths, norms, customs or tradition” and adds that the historical ones, because they are based on the past, nurture “future, eschatological hope” (Lidório, 2014:125). Missionaries who serve in present-focused societies observed that they tend to be fatalistic as well (Silva, 2014:115).

Therefore, as can be seen, cultures with a more historical worldview that values the past more and elaborate their identity based on it, generally value the future as well. They tend to be more patient, persevering and resilient. Valuing abstract time, it seems to develop a deeper and more solid emotional structure. More presentist worldview cultures tend to be immediate, less tolerant of suffering and less concerned with the distant future. Valuing concrete time, it seems to develop a more superficial and unstable emotional structure.

1.8.1.5.1.3. Cosmocentricity: Who is at the centre of the universe? +divinecentric or +anthropocentric?

“Cosmocentricity” in this text refers to the quest for understanding who or what is at the centre of the universe, that which. life orbits around. Until the Middle Ages it was generally agreed in the Western world that God was the centre of everything, therefore, this was a theocentric worldview. For many traditional cultures, some being from beyond is the centre. Such cultures can be classified as divine-centric because they understand that their universe is structured by a divine, spiritual being from beyond, but not always or not necessarily by a god. In this way, theocentrism is a kind of divinecentrism.

The protestant theologian Haroldo Reimer (2005:20) suggests that “with the advance of modernity, there has been, over the centuries, a turn from a theocentrism to an exacerbated anthropocentrism.” However, there are traditional cultures, not yet influenced by modernity, where humanity is at the centre of his world, so that anthropocentrism is not a peculiarity of Western cultures.

As Hiebert rightly observes, in anthropocentric cultures “humans are seen not only as actors in the universe, but as the centre of existence” (Hiebert *et al*, 2009:111). Mary Douglas goes further:

The cosmos is aimed at man. Its transforming energy is woven into the lives of individuals [...] Therefore, the universe is anthropocentric in the sense that it must be interpreted in reference to humans” (Douglas, 1966:85).

Therefore, the reading of life will have humanity as a reference, directly influencing choices, behaviours and relationships, which Naugle (2017:230) calls the “self-referent system.” The perception of who is at the centre of the universe is one of the most fundamental beliefs of any worldview, with different consequences in the different areas of life.

1.8.1.5.1.4. Reality: What is the group's conception of truth? +universalist or +relativist?

The way in which a society positions itself towards the concept of “truth” will define its moral values and its relationship with the worlds below and beyond. Universalism and relativism are concepts applied to different thematic axes, such as culture, morals, politics and civil law. But in this research, we will apply them to the axle of reality, as we understand that this is its basic application from which the others derive. Truth, by definition, is the correct description or interpretation of reality, therefore, it is at the epicentre of a worldview.

In his classic treatise on relativism, C. S. Lewis speaks of societies oriented by “value subjectivism” (Lewis, 2017a:33) and those oriented by what he calls the *Tao*. In Lewis' texts, *Tao* refers to a set of objective moral principles found among different civilisations, cultures and philosophies, which can be considered universal. In his terms, “a dogmatic belief in objective values” (Lewis, 2017a:70). Lewis is thus distinguishing two great patterns of understanding of truth, the one that recognises and assumes its existence, therefore universalist, and the one that is refractory to its conception, therefore relativistic.

For Raymond Boudon, there are three main types of relativism. “Aesthetic relativism,” in which “artistic values would be an effect of fashion or snobbery;” “normative relativism,” in which “the norms would be arbitrary cultural conventions;” and “cognitive relativism,” for which “there is no certainty regarding the representation of the world” (Boudon, 2010:7-8). In other words, for this way of thinking, it is not possible to conceive of any absolute and universal truth.

Thus, more universalistic worldview societies recognise the existence of universal, timeless and supra-cultural truths. More relativistic worldviews understand that all truth is influenced and varies according to time and culture, its conception being particularised and, consequently, its application located.

1.8.1.5.2. Relations with the human

The dimension of relationships with the human will seek to understand the founding values of interpersonal relationships, such as those centred on a group and leadership, as well as the relationship with oneself, with the concomitant desires and conscience.

1.8.1.5.2.1. Collectivist: What is the personal orientation in the relationship with equals? +Collectivist or +Individualistic?

Extensive research has already been developed by intercultural psychology, especially by Geert Hofstede (1984, 1994) and Harry Triandis (1989, 1990), on individualism and collectivism. For these researchers and the many who have expanded their theories, individualism is not a purely personality trait, but it can also be societal. And, in this sense, its contrast is collectivism, which is not a purely social trait, but can also be personal.

For these authors, the most striking feature in society influences the person more than the opposite. Initially, they classified entire regions such as Western Europe, North America, Australia and New Zealand as more individualistic, and Africa, China, Japan and India as more collectivist. They later concluded that in all these cases both traits existed, but it was still evident that one stands out from the other.

Hiebert (2016: 26), in his worldview analytical scheme, contrasts community-oriented and individual-oriented societies, pointing out that, in the former, children grow up learning to think like “us” and in the latter to think like “me.”

And even in the 19th century, Alexis de Tocqueville (1863:119-120) had already contrasted selfishness and individualism as distinct but very close elements. For him, "selfishness is a passionate and exaggerated love for itself, which leads man to relate everything to himself" while individualism leads him "to withdraw himself with his family and friends, so that after he has formed the own small circle he voluntarily leaves society."

Therefore, individualism is not synonymous with personal isolation. Its most common form is one where the individual limits his relationships to his family and closest friends. This is individualism, since the family is the minimum unit of society, that is, limiting yourself to this unit is a minimalist collectivism, synonymous with individualism. And Tocqueville (1893:120) concludes that "individualism, at first, only erodes the virtues of public life, but in the long run it attacks and destroys all others and is finally absorbed by a categorical egotism."

This entails that more collectivist worldview societies value the group more than the individual: consequently, it is easier to seek common interests and more likely to form cohesive groups that, in the end, will protect the individual in exchange for their loyalty. In more individualistic worldviews, the individual's interests prevail over those of the group, which leads the person to worry only about himself or herself, at most, his or her immediate family. In collectivism, there is a search for associative ties that generate a feeling of belonging while, in individualism, the search for the autonomy of the person and freedom prevails (Walsh & Middleton, 2010:102; Bosch, 2002:434).

1.8.1.5.2.2. Authority: What is the group's orientation towards leadership? +hierarchical or +egalitarian?

There is no society without some kind of authority, but the relationship with it varies from culture to culture. Studying Indian castes, Louis Dumont (1992:50,66,293-196) draws a contrast between hierarchical and egalitarian societies, noting that the West has egalitarianism as an ideal: however, every society needs some degree of hierarchy.

Egalitarianism will not be used in this work in the sense of political philosophy of the plea for equal rights. It will be used in its most sociological sense, of social organisation and relationships. Hierarchy, like egalitarianism, manifests itself in different areas of life: however, it can be more clearly observed in the relationship with leaders.

In his cosmovision analytical scheme, Hiebert (2016:32) also contrasts “hierarchy and equality,” relating the first to control and the second to freedom, using Hindu and North American societies as examples.

The observation of such patterns in traditional cultures points out that both conceptions, when very evident in society, can also be observed in their perception of the beyond:

Hierarchical cultures have well-defined socio-religious categories and very clear categories of personal mystical forces [...] Egalitarian cultures have little or no clear categories, either of socio-religious leadership or of spiritual beings. The universe of egalitarian cultures is populated by beings, but in a non-hierarchical way. Socially, leadership is weak and generally revolves only around the head of the family (Silva, 2014:181,182).

Thus, it can be concluded that societies with a more hierarchical worldview will have more evident leadership structures and roles, both in the family and in the social group. More egalitarian worldview societies tend to be refractory to a strong leadership figure and authority roles. This will be reflected in the most different levels of interpersonal relationships, family structure and socio-political organisation, as well as in religiosity. Strongly egalitarian worldviews will have a strong desire for personal autonomy and moral autonomy.

1.8.1.5.2.3. Desires: What is the group's orientation towards personal fulfilment? +altruistic or +hedonistic?

Extensive research has been carried out in the area of commerce on the influence of hedonism on consumption, generally distinguishing hedonistic consumption from utilitarian consumption (for example, Arruda Filho and Dholakia, 2013). However, an underlying contrast here is that between hedonism and altruism.

Extending the philosophical current of utilitarianism, Henry Sidgwick proposes the existence of a hedonic dualism, which he calls selfish hedonism and universal hedonism. The first is the search for personal happiness and the second for collective happiness (Mulgan, 2012:54). Its formulation meets resistance in philosophy for falling into internal contradiction: however, what Sidgwick proposes as “universal hedonism” could be better elaborated as “altruism” in the terms of Auguste Comte (1988). This is because hedonism is directly linked to obtaining and enjoying pleasure as the ultimate goal of the action, therefore, it is essentially selfish and guided by self-fulfilment.

Reformed theologian and philosopher Gordon Clark (2013:162-163) traces the relationship between pleasure and desire, stating that “pleasure is defined exactly as desire [...] the object is pleasurable because it is desired: it is not desired because it is pleasurable.” Altruism, on the other hand, despite being semantically linked to a simple concern for the other, philosophically and theologically goes much further, having its roots in selflessness: therefore, altruism is a way of dealing with desires. As noted earlier, the distinction between hedonism and utilitarianism is that the former centres on pleasure, seeking self-fulfilment, while the latter centres on need, seeking satisfaction.

Therefore, a society with a more altruistic worldview will have the moral value of curbing its desires for the benefit of the other or the environment. In social and environmental relationships, resignation will be present and, at least in part, will guide actions. A society with a more hedonistic worldview, on the other hand, will have as its primary value satisfying its desires, self-fulfilling itself, despite possible social, economic or environmental damage.

1.8.1.5.2.4. Elencticity: What is the orientation of the conscience towards error? +guilt or +shame?

In seeking to understand Japanese culture during World War II, anthropologist Ruth Benedict concluded that “in anthropological studies of different cultures, it is important to distinguish between those that deeply emphasize shame or guilt” (Benedict, 1972:188). Thus, studies of ethnopsychology began, involving the orientation of the conscience or superego.

In his extensive doctoral research, German missiologist Klaus Müller eschews the psychological term superego in favour of the term “elenctic,” coming from the Greek New Testament and introduced into Missiology by Johan Bavink (1960:221). Thus, the term elenctic will be used in this work not in its Aristotelian philosophical sense related to the controversy, but rather as “the study of human conscience guided by shame and guilt in its cultural and religious context,” as postulated by K. Müller (2013:87). He discusses the guilt/shame orientation:

Guilt-oriented conscience has the strongest perceptions on the plane of guilt and law. The imaginary "axis" on which consciousness moves between the two "poles" is close to the lower rail [...] When the axis around which the centre of consciousness revolves is closer to the prestige/shame rail, the conscience reacts more intensely to these elements. In most cultures, people react more

strongly to prestige and shame. We speak then of shame-oriented consciousness (K. Müller, 2013: 107,109).

With extensive experience among peoples of Micronesia, missiologist Lothar Käser observes that every culture has these two elements: however, generally one prevails over the other:

When we examine cultures, societies and groups for their differences and commonalities, we recognise two basic ways in which human consciousness is guided. We have cultures, societies and groups in which the reactions of individuals are preferentially guided by guilt, and others in which the reactions are guided by shame (consider that the emphasis is on “preferably”) (Käser, 2004:136).

Missiologist Roland Muller (2013:134,152,160) adds that guilt-oriented cultures seek innocence, while shame-oriented cultures seek honour.

The orientation of the conscience is fundamental to the understanding of concepts such as sin, righteousness and purity; furthermore it will have significant consequences in the patterns of social behaviour.

1.8.1.5.3. Relationship with divinities

The dimension of relationships with the divine will seek to understand the founding values related to the sacred, regarding the method of interaction with the beyond and the concept of the sacred itself. This stance will centre on the understanding that one has of God or that which is left of this understanding.

1.8.1.5.3.1. Religiosity: What is the method of relating to the divine? +worship or +manipulation?

The way in which each society relates to the world beyond is not a consequence of chance, but rather a result of its cosmovision. Sir James Frazer was the first to point out, more objectively, the distinction between two great patterns of relating to the beyond, which he called religion and magic, suggesting that many traditional societies would not have a religion but a more primitive system to relate to the sacred based on the manipulation of spiritual forces.

Along with the belief that the world is inhabited by spiritual forces, the savage harbours a different, and probably even older, conception in which we can see the germ of the modern notion of natural law, that is, the view of nature as a series. of events that occur in an invariable order, without the intervention of any supernatural agent. The germ of which we speak exists in what we might call sympathetic magic and which plays a large role in most superstition systems (Frazer, 1978:33).

Religion is structured on the basis of worship and submission to spiritual beings in the light of perceived revelation. The principle of magic however is found in two "laws of sympathy" deciphered from the observation of mystical forces and the connection of elements generated by them:

First, that like produces like, or that an effect resembles its cause; and, second, that the things that have been in contact continue to act upon each other, even from a distance, after physical contact is broken. The first principle can be called the law of similarity, the second the law of contact or contagion (Frazer, 1978:34).

Marcel Mauss proposes the existence of a third law, which he calls contrariety or opposition.

One could combine the three formulas into one and say: contiguity, similarity and contrariety are equivalent to simultaneity, identity, opposition, in thought and in reality (Mauss, 2003:100,106-110).

Malinowski (1988) suggests that magic, religion and science are evolutionary stages of the same principle. This cannot be proven, given the coexistence of the three systems in different societies with different degrees of technological development but, in any case, the recognition and understanding of the magical system is fundamental to understand the way of thinking of various cultures.

However, the contrast between "religion and magic," suggesting that magic is not religion, has displeased many over the years and different terms have been used to take note of this methodological distinction in the relationship with the sacred. Lévi-Strauss (1975, 1989), comparing hundreds of societies, prefers to speak of "totemism" and "sacrifice," while Stephen Hugh-Jones (1996), studying shamanic worldviews, uses the terms "vertical shamanism," which generates priests, and "horizontal shamanism," which generates magicians. In turn,

Morten Pedersen (2001) relates such distinctions with “transcendence” and “immanence” in the field of missionary anthropology. Lidório (2014:61) prefers to use “spiritualism” in contrast to magic, understanding that it is also religion.

These terms are not all synonymous, since they are used with different nuances: however, they point to the fact of the existence of two great methods of relationship with the divine in different societies and worldviews. In this work, the terms “worship” and “manipulation” will be used, respectively, for what Frazer called religion and magic.

Further worship worldviews develop personal relationships with the beyond, often involving submission, invocation, reverence and offering, while more manipulative worldviews develop instrumental relationships with the beyond, usually in a utilitarian and pragmatic way.

1.8.1.5.3.2. Sacredness: What is the concept one has of the fundamental reality? +personal or +impersonal?

“Sacred” will not be referred to here in the generic terms of Émile Durkheim (2008) and Mircea Eliade (1999), in which it can involve the divine, transcendent and objects that manifest the divine but, in the more restricted terms of the theologian Rudolf Otto, by explaining the “tremendous and fascinating mystery” (Otto, 2005:23). Thus, it seeks the concept in a given cosmovision about its ultimate reality, that is, God or the idea that that has remained of him.

Sire (2012:197) calls this perception “the primary reality” or “the really real” and states that “this is, as I have not been afraid to repeat, the question of questions.” Schaeffer (2010:170) refers to the “ultimate reality,” while Dallas Willard (2002:100) states that “the most important and unique thing in our minds is our idea of God and the images related to him.”

The conception of the sacred can vary in a school between two extremes, having on the one hand the figure of God as a personal and relational being, transcendent and at the same time immanent, essentially good and just, and on the other the idea of an impersonal mystical force, non-relational and amoral.

The conception of this impersonal force was first recorded by missionary and ethnologist Robert Codrington, in Melanesia, where it is known as “mana.”

Melanesians believe in the existence of a force absolutely different from any material force, which acts in all possible ways, whether for good or for evil, and

that man has a great interest in seizing it and controlling it: it is the *mana* [...]
The whole religion of the Melanesian consists in getting *mana* for oneself, either
for one's own benefit or for the benefit of others (Codrington, 1891:118-119).

Because it was first registered there, it became known by that name, but later research revealed that the concept of “mana” was present in many tractional societies in different parts of the world. In North America, the Wakan of the Sioux is an impersonal force, as are the Shoshone *pokunt*, Algonkin *manitu*, Kwakiul *nauala*, Tlinkit *yek*, Haida *sagâna*, and Iroquois *orenda* (Durkheim, 2008:245-246).

John Howitt, an iroquo linguist, talks about the *orenda* of his own people:

It is a mystical force that the savage conceives as inherent in all the things that make up the environment where he lives [...] to stones, waterways, plants and trees, animals and man, winds and storms, to clouds, to thunder, to lightning, etc (Howitt, 1902:33).

However, Émile Durkheim is certainly the one who explains in the best way the concept of impersonal forces, pointing out that it is the basis for totemism:

It is to this common principle that the cult is actually directed. In other words, totemism is the religion, not of such animals, or such men, or such images, but of a kind of anonymous and impersonal force that is found in each of these beings, without however being confused with any of them (Durkheim, 2008:239).

It also points out the similarity of such mystical forces with physical ones, analysed and manipulated in laboratories, thus helping to understand the impersonality of the former:

[...] anonymous forces, more or less numerous according to societies, sometimes reduced to unity, and whose impersonality is strictly comparable to that of physical forces whose manifestations are studied by the natural sciences (Durkheim, 2008:253).

While Durkheim exposes impersonal forces as the basis of totemism, Mauss holds them to be the basis of magic:

Mana, therefore, is given to us as not only as something mysterious but also different. In short, *mana* is primarily an action of a certain kind, that is, the spiritual action that takes place from a distance and is produced between sympathetic beings. It is also a kind of ether, imponderable, communicable, that spreads by itself (Mauss, 2003:146).

The notion of such forces is by no means limited to traditional, tribal societies. Alvin Plantinga (2016:193) observes that, among the huge variety of religions placed under the names of “Hinduism” and “Buddhism,” there are “non-theistic” religions, which do not relate to any personal being. Sire (2018:162) conceptualises Eastern pantheistic monism, which, he claims, progressively influences the West, as the worldview that conceives of an impersonal force as its ultimate reality. And, Schaeffer (2003: 112-113), dealing with the secularised European environment, talks about the challenge of what he calls “paneverythingism,” which attributes human origins, therefore personal beings, to an impersonal force.

Therefore, the conception of the sacred can be more personal or more impersonal. Worldviews that conceive of what, to them, is sacred, to be more personal, tend to develop an affective relationship with it, while worldviews that conceive of what, to them, is sacred, tend to view it as more impersonal tend to manipulate it in an instrumental way, as a chemist manipulates physical forces in a technical and utilitarian way.

If it is a fact that the idea of God is the basis of the entire system of beliefs and knowledge, morals and religiosity, then the understanding of this concept is fundamental in order to understanding any worldview.

Finally, the comparative model of worldviews can be structured as follows:

A COMPARATIVE MODEL OF COSMOVISIONS		
AXLES	QUESTIONS	NOTIONS
1. RELATIONS WITH THE WORLD		
1. Spatiality:	What is the basic orientation in the relationship with the environment?	+affective or +utility?
2. Temporality:	What is the orientation in relation to time?	+historical or +presentist?
3. Cosmocentricity:	Who is at the centre of the universe?	+divinocentric or +anthropocentric?
4. Reality:	What is the group's concept of truth?	+universalist or +relativistic?

2. RELATIONS WITH THE HUMAN		
5. Collectivity	What is the personal orientation in the relationship with equals?	+collectivist or +individualistic?
6. Authority:	What is the group's orientation towards leadership?	+hierarchical or +egalitarian?
7. Desires:	What is the group's orientation towards personal fulfilment?	+altruistic or +hedonistic?
8. Elenticity:	What is the orientation of the conscience in the face of error?	+guilt or +shame?
3. RELATIONS WITH THE DIVINE		
9. Religiosity:	What is the method of relating to the divine?	+worship or +manipulation?
10. Sacredness:	What is the concept of the fundamental reality?	+personal or +impersonal?

Table 1: Comparative worldview model

1.9. Introductory synthesis

The model of analysis presented in **Chapter 1** will be partially applied to Western postmodernism in **Chapter 2**, in its first two dimensions, that is, relations with the world and relations with humans. The same will be done in **Chapter 3**, applying these two dimensions to Yuhupdeh shamanism.

In **Chapter 4**, the third and most important dimension of the analysis model, that is, relationships with the divine, will be applied to the two worldviews, in the search of reasons for the similarities. **Chapter 5** will present the implications for theology, missiology and missionary practice, including a contrast of the two worldviews with the biblical worldview and notes for cross-cultural missionaries.

Chapter 6 will provide the general synthesis, conclusions and recommendations.

CHAPTER 2 – DESCRIBING THE URBAN WESTERN POSTMODERN COSMOVISION: SIMILARITIES WITH YUHUPDEH XAMANISM

"Postmodernism is a worldview that denies all worldviews."
(Veith Jr, 1999:43)

This chapter will be devoted to a brief description of the urban Western postmodern worldview, focusing on aspects of similarity with the Yuhupdeh shamanic worldview, as will be further demonstrated.

2.1. The concept trajectory

Perry Anderson (1999) traces the development of the concept of "postmodernism," pointing to its emergence in Hispanic literature in the 1930s, exemplified in a style of poetry composed by Federico de Onís. In 1954 it was used in the English-speaking world by Arnold Toynbee in the area of history to refer to a period-related category. Towards the end of that decade, the term entered the arena of sociology in the work of C. Wright Mills and Irving Howe, which critiqued the failure of the modern ideals of liberalism and socialism.

Until that moment, the use of the term "postmodernism" had been slightly circumstantial, until Ihab Hassan, in 1971, began to better theorise the concept in the context of art. David Antin did the same in 1972, referring to both literature and culture. That same year, Robert Venturi and his colleagues Denise Brown and Steven Izenour took the concept into the public domain through architecture, reinforced in 1977 by Charles Jencks, who spread the idea of a new era even more widely.

The scenario was set for the introduction of the concept in philosophy and from there to other areas of knowledge. The philosophical milestone took place in 1979 with the publication in Paris of the work entitled *The postmodern condition*, by Jean-François Lyotard, who referred to the texts of Ihab Hassan, in which he wrote a report on "knowledge in societies with the highest degree of Development" for the University of Quebec, Canada.

Our working hypothesis is that knowledge changes its status at the same time as societies enter the so-called post-industrial era and cultures enter the so-

called postmodern era. This transition began at least in the late 1950s, marking the end of the reconstruction of Europe (Lyotard, 2013:3).

Just a year after Lyotard, the concept of postmodernism gained ground in Germanic countries through Jürgen Habermas, considered to be the greatest European philosopher of the time based on his discourse *Modernity: An incomplete project*, given in Frankfurt in 1980. A mature and expanded version was published in 1985 as *The Philosophical discourse on modernity*. His analysis clashes with the previous ones, objecting to the idea of postmodernity is more anti-modern than it is postmodern, thus an attempt to deny modernity, but without managing to break with it.

Postmodernity deliberately presents itself under the traits of anti-modernity [...] Is modernity as *obsolete* as post moderns claim? Or isn't postmodernity on the contrary, a pure lie as proclaimed by so many voices? (Habermas, 2017:5)

Parallel to that, but on North American soil, Fredric Jameson, arguably the greatest Marxist literary critic of our time, began to discuss the subject at conferences, initially publishing his work entitled *Postmodernism and consumer society* in 1980 and his more mature and decisive work *Postmodernism: The logic of late capitalism*, in 1991. Jameson understood postmodernism not only to be an epistemological theory or an artistic trend, but as a social phenomenon that marked a new stage in the history of capitalism.

For Anderson (1999:93), "Jameson's understanding of postmodernism sets the terms of the subsequent debate," in such a way that leading theorists from that point onward developed their ideas in dialogue with him. Thus, Alex Callinicos (1989) reflects on the implications of postmodernism in politics; David Harvey (1989) analyses economics as the basis of the postmodern phenomenon; and Terry Eagleton addresses its impact as an ideology (1996).

Up to this point, the main theorists addressed the notion of postmodernity in its relation of discontinuity or opposition to modernity, therefore the prefix "post." More recent theorists, however, have come to question this assumption more sharply, proposing reconceptualization. Thus, Anthony Giddens (1991, 2002) speaks of "high modernity" or "late modernity," Zygmunt Bauman (1999, 2000, 2001) of "liquid modernity" and Gilles Lipovetsky (2004, 2007) of "hypermodernity."

For Giddens, there was indeed a break, not with modernity but with traditions. Contemporary society thus is post-traditional, but not postmodern.

To speak of postmodernity as substituting modernity, seems to invoke what is (now) declared impossible: to give some coherence to history and to situate ourselves within it (Giddens 1991:46-47).

Modernity is a post-traditional order, but not an order in which the certainties of tradition and habit have been replaced by the certainty of knowledge [...] In situations that I call “high” or “late” modernity – our world of today – the self, with the broader institutional contexts in which it exists, has to be reflexively constructed (Giddens, 2002:10-11).

In his understanding, what we have is an advanced stage of modernity, or “high modernity,” characterised not so much by discontinuity but rather by an “extreme dynamism,” not only in terms of the pace of change, but also in terms of breadth and depth. This extreme dynamism is the result of three processes: the separation of time and space, the development of disengagement mechanisms and the reflexive appropriation of knowledge (Giddens, 2002:22-26).

Bauman also breaks with the assumption of discontinuity, using the metaphor of the solid versus the liquid. For him, before the technological revolution, modernity was marked by a certain solidity where changes occurred over a longer period of time, making it possible to plan and create goals. From the mid-20th century, however, new technologies and the market imposed such an intense and accelerated pace of transformation that social solidity became fluid, liquid, entering a process of constant change. However, the central elements of modernity have not been abandoned and are still present. They have not been overcome, but they have become liquified.

Liquids, a variety of fluids, owe these remarkable qualities to the fact that their “molecules are kept in an orderly arrangement acquiring only a few molecular diameters,” while “the various behaviours exhibited by solids is a direct result of the type of bond that unites its atoms as well as their structural arrangement” [...] in what appears to be an attempt to offer “fluidity” as the principal metaphor for the present stage of the modern era [...].

We associate “lightness” or “weightlessness” with mobility and inconstancy: we know from practice that the lighter we travel, the easier and faster we move. These are reasons for considering “fluidity” or “liquidity” as adequate metaphors

when we want to capture the nature of the present phase, which is new in many ways, in the history of modernity (Bauman, 2001:8,9).

In turn, Lipovetsky seeks to overcome the antagonism between ancient and modern, highlighting the clear continuity of the central values of modernity in current society: however, these have now been taken to their extremes. Hypermodernity is exacerbated modernity. What was called postmodernity was just a short and failed attempt to break with the past: in fact, modernity has never been surpassed, but super-inflated.

Several signs suggest that we have entered the era of *hyper*, which is characterised by hyper-consumption. This third phase of modernity by hypermodernity, which follows postmodernity and by hyper-narcissism (Lipovetsky, 2004:25).

At a time when genetic technology, liberal globalization and human rights triumph, the *postmodern* label has already gained wrinkles, having exhausted its capacity to express the world the way it announces itself [...] Hyper-capitalism, hyperclass, hyperpower, hyper-terrorism, hyper-individualism, hypermarket, hypertext – what else is not *hyper*? What else does not expose a modernity raised to a superlative power? (Lipovetsky, 2004:52,53).

What we are witnessing is not so much the emergence of a “postmodern” culture in terms of hyper-modernisation of comfort, dominated by the escalation of time and speed and by the over-development of the market and supply (Lipovetsky, 2007:229).

For Lipovetsky, hypermodernity is also an era of paradoxes generated by the coexistence of two logics induced by the impression of overcoming modernity. Therefore, modern values are not only active, but extreme. Thus, "the society of thinness and diet is also that of overweight and obesity", the "hypermodern era produces in a single movement order and disorder, independence and subjective dependence, moderation and immoderation", with "traces of a paradoxical compound of frivolity and anxiety, of euphoria and vulnerability" (Lipovetsky, 2004:21,56,65). These developments are expressed well by the titles of two much-discussed works by the author: *Hypermodern times* (Lipovetsky, 2004) offer a *Paradoxical happiness* (Lipovetsky, 2007).

2.2. The advent background

Despite the conceptual disagreements centred on the discontinuity or continuity of contemporary values with modernity, there is relative consensus among thinkers that the current picture is the consequence of a series of historical events and movements that promoted the transformation of medieval society into modern society.

For Stanley Grenz (2008:93) “the Renaissance was the grandmother of modernity, while the Enlightenment was its true father” and Marcos Azevedo (2015a:31,32) states that the Renaissance, with its humanist philosophy, marked the rupture with the Middle Ages and consequently the inauguration of modernity.

Thinkers such as Descartes, Newton and Kant were responsible for the intellectual foundation of the modern era that was born in the late 1600s, flourished in the 18th and 19th centuries and which now seems to be entering its final stage (Grenz, 2008:120).

Anderson (1999:130-132) points out the importance of the protestant reform, which was, due to its ideological aspect and the fact that it was driven by a set of beliefs linked to individual conscience which generated resistance to traditional authority, an antecedent of postmodernism. And, unlike the renaissance that was limited to the elite, the reform was popular, it democratised ideas, plebeianised concepts, promoted the effective participation of the masses in the processes of change. It was born with and produced radical progressive thinkers: initially theologians, but later also politicians.

Following Jameson's trail, Anderson (1999:100-107) points out three main indicators of the greatest changes that took place in the establishment of postmodernity: the decadence of the bourgeoisie as the dominant order; the technological evolution, in particular the phenomenon of television in the 1950s and 1960s, expanding even more in the 1970s with colour television; and post-war political changes, which resulted in the students' and workers' revolutions in the 1960s and 1970s, of which the May 1968 movement in France was the one that left most legacies. He sums it up:

Postmodernism emerged from the combination of a declassified ruling order, a mediated technology, and nuanced politics (Anderson, 1999:108).

When it comes to the area of communication technology, it is possible to add not only that the invention of the television accelerated great changes, but also the computer in the 1940s, with its most popular use some forty years later, and the smartphone in the years 1990, with its popular use about ten years later.

Azevedo states that “urbanization and the advent of mass media were the two main agents that led post-Kantian thought to become a cultural reality in postmodern society” (Azevedo, 2015a:97).

Grenz (2008:33) observes that, although the concept emerged in the 1930s, it was between the 1960s and 1990s that postmodernism emerged as a cultural phenomenon. This was due to the rapid evolution and massification of the media during this period; the arrival of the information age. According to him, modernity can be seen as an industrial society whose symbol was the factory. Postmodernity is a society of information whose symbol is the computer. Grenz wrote in 1996, but if he would have written today, he would possibly have said that the greatest symbol of society today is the social network symbolised by the smartphone.

Thus, in general, these are historical facts and processes that resulted in postmodernism, Renaissance humanism, Enlightenment rationalism, Protestant reform, the strengthening of national states, economic liberalism, scientism and secularism as well as the Industrial Revolution, the Second World War, the phenomenon of urbanisation, the student and labour revolutions of the 1960s and 1970s and the great technological advance and the growth of the mass media.

2.3. The reformed outlook

There are many reformed thinkers who have analysed and reflected on postmodernism. From a more theological perspective, these thinkers reached different conclusions about the causes and paths of this phenomenon.

Francis Schaeffer traces the path in which contemporary ideas have developed in his book entitled *How should we then live?* (2003). For him, it all starts with the humanism of ancient Rome, passing through the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, the misuse of prosperity generated by the Reform, Enlightenment rationalism, then to gain ground with the rise of modern science, becoming modern philosophy, which subsequently was disseminated by art, music, literature

and cinema, and which moulded the society. But, in particular, the rupture with the idea of an infinite personal God has been the greatest factor among those engendering the postmodern worldview (Schaeffer, 2003:97).

Michael Goheen and Craig Bartholomew (2016:117) follow the path traced by Schaeffer, but they are more specific around identifying the origins of modernity in the Greco-Roman paganism of the 6th century BC, especially in the thoughts of Thales, Anaximander and Anaximenes.

James Sire echoes the reading of Giddens, Bauman and Lipovetsky in the sense that there is, in fact, no “post” in postmodernism, since it merely involves a more recent phase of modernism (Sire, 2018:298-299). However, this clashes with the understanding of causes, likewise following Schaeffer when he avers that contemporary ideas “developed from a rupture in the theistic cosmovision [from the 17th century], resulting, in turn, in deism, naturalism, into nihilism, existentialism, eastern mysticism, and the new consciousness of the New Age movement” to postmodernism (Sire, 2018:14). David Naugle endorses this view (2017:231), emphasising that the strengthening of the naturalistic worldview has been a driving element of the contemporary worldview.

2.4. The traits of the phenomenon

But what are the traits of postmodernism that, after all, resemble the traditional and tribal shamanism of the Yuhupdeh indigenous people of the Amazon? The first eight will be presented here by observing the first two dimensions (relations with the world and with the human being) of the model of comparative analysis of worldviews, while paying careful attention to the way in which they manifest themselves in postmodernism. Chapter 3 will demonstrate how these traits manifest themselves in the shamanic worldview. The third dimension in both worldviews (the relationship with the divine), and how it manifests itself will be described in Chapter 4, along with a demonstration of the probable reasons for the similarities found between the two worldviews.

2.4.1. "I deserve to be happy"

Unlike the indigenous in the interior of the forest or even rural workers who live in direct contact with the environment, Western urban societies, especially those in large cities, have less direct and more distant contact with nature. Despite this, however, there is a real, constant and

inevitable relationship, albeit little perceived, not only with the natural environment that surrounds large urban centres, but also with the global environment. If direct contact is superficial and punctual, the *modus vivendi* of urban citizens generates direct and constant impacts on their environment.

One of the glories of this age is having reached an unprecedented level of products that aim to meet the most basic and elementary needs of the human being, which are at the most artificial, manufactured and superfluous levels. For every felt or imagined need, there is not just one but a myriad of products available.

The frequent sustainability campaigns, involving awareness and even government initiatives nowadays, are very positive things happening. The environmental movement and research on sustainable development brought fundamental knowledge about the risks of a predatory relationship with nature and the alternatives that one has to this. The pro-sustainability movement is certainly also unprecedented in human history.

One of the most widespread slogans of environmentalism are the “3Rs of sustainability:” Reduce, Reuse and Recycle. Reduce consumption, in its different aspects; reuse products; and recycle what cannot be directly reused. A simple and apparently very efficient logic for sustainability.

However, as Lipovetsky (2007:171) points out well, contemporaneity is the era of paradox. The big challenge of the “3Rs” does not reside in reuse or recycling, which by themselves are even only minimally practiced. The great difficulty is reduction of consumption. Despite hearing so much and talking a lot about sustainability, the production and consumption of the most varied products only increases in a dizzying way. As long as there is excessive consumption, there will be excessive production, thereby fatally affecting the environment.

Bauman (1999:87-88) observes that all societies, at all times, and indeed all living beings, are consumers. However, today's society is not just a consumer, but a “consumer society” in the same sense that the old society was a “producer society;” he continues that the “difference between the two stages of modernity 'only' is one of emphasis and priority,” in so far as the orientation of its members was to produce, while the first group's is to consume.

This dynamic prevails despite awareness campaigns, for a very simple fact: postmodern societies maintain an essentially utilitarian logic of their relationship with their environment. Or, in Giddens' terms:

The notion that modernity is associated with nature through an instrumental relationship and the idea that the scientific view excludes ethical or moral considerations, are well known (Giddens, 2002:15).

In another publication, Bauman (2008:109) is even more emphatic that our society is “utility-oriented” and Lipovetsky (2004:54) lectures extensively on “the consumer society” that “shows itself under the sign of excess.” Consumerism is in essence a utilitarian logic: it is invested in the quest to satisfy personal needs without worrying even a little or at all about the socio-environmental implications.

Jonathan Crary (2016:20) masterfully observes how all human needs, such as hunger, thirst, shelter, sex and friendship, have been commodified and how market logic is now trying to reduce the necessity of sleep, as this is the last barrier to what is called the “24/7 regime,” in other words, consuming 24 hours a day, 7 days a week in which not only objects are consumed, but more and more images and information.

Colin Brown (1989:96) confirms that “consciously or unconsciously, utilitarianism has been absorbed into the bloodstream of much of modern thought” and Schaeffer connects the strengthening of this utilitarian vision of today with the weakening of Christian thought in search of peace and personal prosperity. For him, this “prosperity means an extraordinary and ever-increasing pattern of physical life – a life made up of things, more and more things – success is measured by an ever-increasing level of personal abundance” (Schaeffer, 2003:145).

It is thus possible to safely confirm that postmodern societies are less affective and more utilitarian, as based on the axis of its nature, namely the “basic orientation in the relationship with the environment.” This utilitarian logic is also not limited to the relationship, whether direct or indirect, with the environment. It extends and manifests itself in social and spiritual relationships. Giddens (2002:87) points out the utilitarianism in friendship relationships, where some kind of reward is sought, and also in the marital relationship, which remains only as long as self-satisfaction persists. Lipovetsky (2004:33; 2007:131) points to the same consumer utilitarianism in religion, aimed at satisfying the needs of the human being and not towards the pursuit of the divine.

Charles Colson and Nancy Pearcey (2000:39) ponder the implications of utilitarianism in ethics, noting that if “what works best is right, actions and methods are judged only on a

utilitarian basis,” and Gene Veith Jr, argues that the Postmodern utilitarianism is an offshoot of the Enlightenment rationalism, in which he observes its drastic and most serious consequences in terms of public politics:

Utilitarianism is the point of view that justifies slavery, exploits child labour and starves the poor, all in the name of economic efficiency. Today this ethical Enlightenment view, approves abortion which then reduces public spending on social benefits and that also sanctions euthanasia to reduce hospital bills (Veith Jr, 1999:27).

Azevedo summarises, with rare lucidity, this striking feature of contemporary societies:

Adhering to the project of economic power, characterizes by pragmatism as one of its marks, modern man lives under the aegis of utilitarianism, where everything has to be geared towards his satisfaction [...] The result of this individualistic process is, that the post-modern man becomes more and more pragmatic and utilitarian, but less and less ideological, (Azevedo, 2015b:59,124).

Such utilitarianism is duly translated into the much-discussed popular expression “I deserve to be happy.” Whatever the cost, personal happiness comes first and that's what matters.

2.4.2. "Man is nothing other than his life"

The relationship with space and time is an axis of crucial importance for all societies, in all places and at all times. While some value space more, others are more focused on time and each person elaborates his ideas in his own way.

It is consensual among postmodernist thinkers that contemporary societies increasingly value time over space. For Bauman (2001:16,17), the great trend of the current stage of modernity “is the changing relationship between space and time” and he adds that “modern time has become, before and above all, the weapon in the conquest of space.”

This “conquest of space” involves the shortening of distances, as it is possible in today’s time to cross oceans by air in just a few hours, whereas in the past it would have taken weeks or months across water. It involves real-time communication between extreme regions of the planet, thanks to technological advances. And while in this shrinking space the world becomes

a global village, in the shrinking of time something new happens: life focusses on the here and now. David Harvey refers to the phenomenon as “time-space compression:”

As space shrinks to become a "global" telecommunications village and a "planetary spaceship" of economic and ecological interdependencies – to use just two familiar and everyday images – and as temporal horizons shorten up to a point where the present is all that exists, we have to learn to deal with an overwhelming feeling of constriction of our spatial and temporal worlds (Harvey, 1989:240).

This presentation of time can be empirically observed in various areas of life, from instant noodles to instant communication but, certainly, the means of transport and communication present the clearest expressions of this reality. Technological development in these areas constitutes one of the greatest gains in the course of human history and market competitiveness makes this technology not only viable but also accessible. Transport, whether by air, river, road or rail, as well as communication, whether by text, audio or video, present their constant improvements, presented as the most recent. The contest is not only for better quality, comfort and safety, but is also always linked to speed.

Computer operating systems are highly valued because they operate in milliseconds faster than others. Smartphones outperform competitors with regard to functions that facilitate a more agile response. Mobile phones beat their rivals by offering higher velocity in the transmission of data. Time has definitely surpassed space and has been commodified in the most different ways. Lipovetsky (2007:89) observes that “accelerating product obsolescence is present in all sectors” and, in a recent study, Biegging and Araújo (2017:57) demonstrate that the market is already investing not only in product obsolescence but also in the ephemerality of services, as in applications such as Instagram, Snapchat and even WhatsApp, whose fundamental characteristic is no longer the perpetuation of the language, but rather ephemeral images that disappear in the short term and therefore call users to quick viewing.

If, on the one hand, technological development brings unquestionable achievements, it also brings, diverse implications for life, for well-being as well as for our personal identity. Lipovetsky (2004:51,59,78) has already described contemporaneity as “the advent of an unprecedented social temporality, identified by the here-now as the most important” whose temporal centre of importance “has shifted from the future to the present,” in such a way that “the lack of money or freedom causes fewer complaints than the lack of time.” He points out some of the side effects of this phenomenon:

One of the most noticeable consequences of the power of the regime of the present, is the climate of pressure it places on the lives of organizations and people [...] the competitive race causes the urgent to be prioritized in relationship to what is important, immediate action at the expense of reflection, the accessory at the expense of the essential. This also leads to the creation of an atmosphere of dramatization, permanent stress, as well as a whole range of psychosomatic disturbances. Hence the idea that hypermodernity is distinguished by the ideologization and generalization of the realm of urgency (Lipovetsky, 2004:77).

Bauman (2001:163) points out the absence of an expectation regarding the future, which results from the way in which life is presented and he observes that “the memory of the past and trust in the future that have been up to now the two pillars on which the cultural and moral bridges between transience and durability, human mortality and the immortality of human achievements and also between accepting responsibility and living for the moment.” What he calls the “devaluation of immortality” results in a generation “that wants to forget the past and no longer seems to believe in the future,” weakening social commitments, even when it comes to their most elementary ties:

Commitments of the type “till death do us part”, have changed to contracts of the type “while satisfaction lasts”, temporary and transitory by definition, by design and by pragmatic impact – and thus are susceptible to unilateral rupture, whenever one of the partners perceives better opportunities and greater value outside the partnership than trying to save it at any – incalculable – cost (Bauman, 2001:205).

For Azevedo (2015a:111), an inevitable consequence of the present way of life is the frenetic here and now of social dynamics where everything is urgent, and Giddens exposes an even more complex and reckless implication, which is fatalism:

Fatalism, a term which, as we have shown, has more to do with modern social life than with more traditional cultures [...] An outlook of fatalism, is a position of resigned acceptance that things must be allowed to take their course. It is an outlook nurtured by the mainstream orientations of the modern age, although it is opposed to them (Giddens, 2002:107-108).

It is not only technology that we find behind this trend, but a philosophy of existentialism in particular. Existentialism reduces man to its own existence, or, as Jean-Paul Sartre (2017:30) says: “man is nothing other than his own project [...] nothing other than his life.” It also reduces the divine to something irrelevant. Whether God exists or not does not matter because what matters is, again, our existence (Sartre, 2017:19,23). If nothing of importance exists beyond the the present and beyond our existence, everything that matters is in the here and now, in the present. The existentialism of Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Sartre and others, which permeated widely into education and the media after World War II, was effective around instituting an ingrained worldview of the here and now in the postmodern West.

In this way, on the time axis, on the subject of "orientation in relation to temporality", there seems to be a general consensus that postmodernism presents itself not only as a worldview without history, but rather as a worldview that focuses on the present, in which its values are centred on the here and now, without attachment to the past, while longing for the future either, leading to an attempt to eternalise the moment, valuing empirical experience and the transience of life. Immediacy, impatience, little reflection, stress and psycho-emotional disorders, lack of personal engagement, weakening of social ties, emotional vulnerability, existential fatalism and adding a certain superficiality to life, are the collateral side effects that surround this generation.

2.4.3. "Man is the measure of all things"

Until the not-too-distant past, even great scientists who made great discoveries such as Nicolas Copernicus, Johannes Kepler, Galileo Galilei, René Descartes, Isaac Newton, Albert Einstein and others, were convinced that the world has a Creator and that he, as a consequence, and rightfully, occupied the centre of the universe. The Renaissance cosmology however elevated humanity to the centre of reality and the Enlightenment elevated the individual to the “self-determining centre of the world” (Grenz, 2008:92). Some resist this idea, arguing that in postmodernity there is no longer a “centre” (such as Heidegger, see Veith, 1999:68), but empirical facts and the prevailing philosophy show otherwise. Both utilitarianism and contemporary presentism are evidences of an anthropocentric society eager to see the world orbit around it.

The cosmocentric axis seeks to understand who or what, in a collective sense, “is at the centre of the universe Postmodernism is humanity's cosmovision, the apex of humanism, therefore markedly anthropocentric. And, again, the existentialism so in vogue in these times strengthens not only presentism but also this anthropocentrism. Sartre (2017:18) argues that

the foundation of existentialism is the understanding that “existence precedes essence” and, as a result, the world must be understood as an “intersubjectivity,” that is, “a world in which man decides what he is and what others are” (Sartre, 2017:34). Existentialism is therefore a humanism with the mission of reminding man “that there is no other legislator but himself, and that it is in his helplessness that he will decide for himself” (Sartre, 2017:44). In this way, existentialist philosophy places man at the centre of the universe, left to his or her own devices. In Protagoras' terms, man becomes “the measure of all things” (Reale & Antiseri, 2004:77).

Due to this anthropocentrism, religious values were replaced by human values and, “instead of being centred on God, we should be centred on man” (Veith Jr, 1999:65). For Azevedo, the ascendancy of anthropocentrism in reaction to traditional theocentrism has led to triumph by the rationalist movement:

So, to get revenge on God, for having cast him out of heavenly paradise, man now casts him out of his earthly paradise. With this turnaround, where Theocentrism is surpassed by anthropocentrism, and religious faith becomes a servant in the realm of human reason, the traditional society is permanently buried and modern individualism is born, in which the Cosmo centric view is replaced by an anthropocentric view (Azevedo, 2015a:16)

Giddens notes that the quest for control is the dominant emphasis of modernity – “human control of the natural and social worlds;” the “control of time” which he calls “the colonization of the future;” and “the subordination of the world to man’s dominion” (Giddens, 2002:104,106,135). Therefore, man not only feels at the centre of the universe, he or she also tries to control his world.

In turn, Bauman draws attention to the fact that man is left to itself by making an empirical observation of the strong attraction for television talk shows. This popular attraction is not just a matter of curiosity or even greed for gossip, but a quest for guidance. “In a world full of means, but notoriously unclear about the ends, the lessons learned from talk shows respond to a genuine demand and have undeniable pragmatic value, as we already know that it is up to us to make (and continue to do) the best possible of our lives” (Bauman, 2001:88-89). In other words, since man is at the centre of the universe, it remains for him to seek guidance from his peers, learning from his mistakes and successes, since he himself “is the measure of all things.”

From a reformed theological-philosophical perspective, Schaeffer (2003:48,96) relates anthropocentrism to Western humanism in its search for man as an autonomous being, reinforced by the Enlightenment rationalism that rejects any type of knowledge that does not come from man. Naugle (2017:229) also notes that the shift in gravity from God to man results in the shift from “Scripture to science, from revelation to reason,” resulting in a self-referential system.

Therefore, one of the results of Renaissance humanism and Enlightenment rationalism, as well as secularist existentialism, was to turn mainstream postmodern culture into anthropocentrism, placing man where it should not be. This is the causative factor of utilitarianism in the relationship with the environment and even with the social environment, exacerbated by consumerism and, possibly, also it is one of the main reasons for so many psycho-emotional illnesses and exhaustion in contemporaneity.

2.4.4. "There are no facts, only interpretations"

In the great centres of education, young university students are convinced and even indoctrinated into questioning the idea of absolutes. Under the banner of resistance to oppression, everything that claims arbitrary authority is systematically deconstructed by libertarian and egalitarian hermeneutics. Not only university students, but children in their first years of formal education are literate in anti-universalist logic, learning that the meaning of the text is not in itself, but in the reader, so that every text can have multiple meanings according to the subjectivity of its readers. This is because the main currents in education today are markedly relativist due to the strong and almost omnipresent influence of deconstructivism, also called post-structuralism.

Jacques Derrida, labelled to be the greatest exponent of deconstructive philosophy, triggers a real uprising against the traditional notion of truth, defending the need to deconstruct without destroying and then reconstruct concepts without the guidance of “metaphysical onto-theology,” that is, to elaborate reality by rejecting the possibility of there being something that transcends it (Derrida, 2004:13). Williams (2013:46) classifies Derrida's deconstructivism as “an undermining of structuralism's most fundamental claims to absolute truths.”

Michel Foucault (1979:12,54) echoes this by drawing a relation between truth and power where he argues that the first does not exist without or outside of those who have the power to elaborate it. So, truth is just historic, a fruit of its time. Ultimately, it preaches the abandonment of the search for truth, seeing only interpretations.

As Naugle (2017:232) clearly demonstrates, radically relativist deconstructivism is in line with Nietzsche's perspectivism, which, despite not denying the existence of a single reality, denies the possibility of a single and objective understanding of it.

There is only one perspective view, only the perspective of "knowing;" and the more affections we allow to talk about something, the more eyes, and also different eyes that we know how to use for that something, the more complete will our "concept", our "objectivity" of it be, (Nietzsche, 2002:108).

As a consequence, in this conception "there are no eternal facts: just as there are no absolute truths" (Nietzsche, 2000:16), or, even more emphatically in the aphorism attributed to Nietzsche, "there are no facts, only interpretations" (Kaufmann, 1954:688). Perspectivism became a radicalisation of the philosophical principle of doubt, generalising it and taking it to its ultimate consequences, so that it permeated everyday life and, in Giddens' terms, became "a general existential dimension of the contemporary social world," because "modernity institutionalizes the principle of radical doubt and insists that all knowledge takes the form of a hypothesis" (Giddens, 2002:10). Thus, reality itself was relativised, so that the question remains whether there is any truth or not. In fact, even in the exact sciences the relativisation of reality is present, as averred in an article published by none other than Stephen Hawking, shortly before his death, together with the renowned physicist Thomas Hertog, in which, by taking the theory of relativity of Einstein to its extreme, they recognise as plausible the possibility of multi-universes (Hawking & Hertog, 2018) – or until then only part of a science fiction film they uphold "the multiverse that replaces the universe" (Grenz 2008:37). Pearcey (2018:47-48) observes that a line of thinkers argues that even mathematics is a social construction and therefore arbitrary and not exact.

Grenz sees deconstructivism as the final blow to the rationalist Enlightenment, initially in literature, from where it has spread to different areas of knowledge and life, stating that "postmodern philosophers have applied the theories of literary deconstructivism to the world as a whole" (Grenz, 2008:18).

It is based on this logic that Lyotard proposes an extreme conceptualisation of postmodernity: "simplifying to the extreme, disbelief in relation to meta-reports is considered 'postmodern'" (Lyotard, 2013:xvi). Meta-reports or metanarratives are the great construction systems of truth and knowledge, seen as the main guidelines of a society. Lyotard had Christianity and Marxism in mind in particular. Postmodernity would thus be a break with these patterns of

thought, but without proposing new patterns, thus freeing modern minds from universalist logic and leaving them free to build their particular ways of conceiving the world.

Therefore, in relation to reality, “what is the group conception of truth” in postmodernism? The answer cannot be otherwise. It is not a universalist conception, but, on the contrary, an essentially relativist one. As Grenz still observes, even in postmodern relativism there is a concept of truth: however, it is related and limited to the community in which the individual participates, including urban “tribes,” in the terms of Veith Jr (1999:137). Therefore, it will always be a relative truth:

Since human communities are many, there will necessarily be many different truths. Many postmodern people come to believe that this plurality of truths can exist side by side. Postmodern consciousness, therefore, implies a radical kind of relativism and pluralism (Grenz, 2008:29).

He concludes that “the central feature of postmodern cultural expression is pluralism” because “by replacing the modern worldview with a multiplicity of views and worlds, the postmodern era actually replaced knowledge with interpretation” (Grenz, 2008:37,64).

Likewise, Veith Jr concludes that truth has not in fact been excised from the postmodern mind, but has come to be conceived as relative, especially as it becomes a construction:

Truth is not a discovery made from the outside world. Rather, truth is a *construction* [...] Consequently, truth is relative (Veith Jr, 2006:56)

He also links this relativisation of truth with deconstructivism, arguing that “because it erodes the very concept of truth, deconstructivism provides an intellectual basis for the popular relativism that is pervasive in a postmodern society” (Veith Jr, 1999:50). However, he observes that not only deconstructivism, but also existentialism underlies the basis of the relativisation of life:

Existentialism provides the logical basis for contemporary relativism. Since each creates its own meaning, all meanings are equally valid (Veith Jr, 1999:31).

It is important to mention that the relativist movement has, in fact, brought a significant gain in the area of interculturality by softening ethnocentrism, which throughout history has served as

a platform for dominant postures of technologically more developed and majority cultures over less developed and minority cultures. However, the issue is that relativism does not limit itself to the conception of culture, becoming the lens for reading ethics, morals and even personal identity. This is so because, before being applied to these notions, relativism is born in the relationship with reality itself.

And if philosophy is the main space of conception and education the means of construction, contemporary media is the main means of communication for relativism. In all the media, there is no lack of heralds to propagate generalised relativism, giving voice to the main movements that support it. The feminist movement relativises femininity and life itself to defend the empowerment of women; the homosexual movement relativises biological identity in favour of free gender choice; social movements relativise the rule of law and society itself in defence of minorities; human rights relativise criminality in defence of the person; the media in general relativises the family in defence of personal happiness and morality in defence of freedom, ethics in defence of self-fulfilment, religion in defence of scientism and a relative God in defence of man's emancipation. In 2016, the Oxford Dictionary elected, not surprisingly, "post-truth" as the word of the year, in the sense that objective facts have become less important than narrative construction (Borges Jr, 2019:498).

2.4.5. "I'm my own boss"

The West of old had been marked by the value of the family and high regard for honourable persons. The church as a community of faith was seen as a place of support and lonely people found in it a true brotherhood. Nationalism generated a sense of belonging, strengthening citizenship and identity. However, significant changes have profoundly altered this perception of the group in recent generations.

Lipovetsky (2007:99,101,104-105) uniquely describes how habits of consumption were individualised in the second half of the 20th century. Whereas before household equipment was by nature for collective use, such as a television for the whole family, a landline telephone, a car and so on, in recent decades multi-equipment has been clearly individualized with the emergence of the personal computer, the cell phone and later the smartphone. The radio and the record player, for collective listening, were initially replaced by the Walkman and this by more sophisticated equipment such as the iPod, making music consumption individualised. Equipment such as the answering machine, freezer, microwave and video recorder enabled individual and autonomous control of space and time.

It was not just domestic equipment, but also the provision of services that was individualised. Before, the customer needed to go to a market and negotiate the purchase of products with the owner-supplier. After that, the concept of the supermarket arose, where the customer no longer traded but was assisted only by the seller in the purchase of products with fixed prices. Then came the hypermarkets, without owners or sellers, leaving the customer face to face with the product itself. Finally, the need to go to the commercial point was overcome with e-commerce, and the product is now available to the customer with just one click. The space and time that distanced customer and product, as well as intermediaries, have been surpassed. The provision of services has become individualised with the concept of self-service.

Individualised consumption and self-service are just examples of what has become the standard in almost all areas of life, what Lipovetsky (2004:55-56.73) has come to call “hyper-individualism.” Therefore, on the group axis, “what is the personal orientation in the relationship with equals” of postmodernism? Individualism is the obvious answer, that is, orientation that becomes less and less collectivist and more and more individualistic.

For Bauman (2001:45), the presentation and individualisation of life are the two great distinguishing features of current times, so that “to speak of individualisation and modernity is to speak of one and the same social condition.” And this condition results from the search for the emancipation of the person, firstly from religious traditions and secondly from institutions, whether private or state-owned (Bauman, 2001:263), as expressed so well in the popular motto “I’m my own boss.”

Behind this process, according to the understanding of Giddens (2002:196), is the “principle of autonomy” that mobilises the search for personal emancipation in such a way that it starts with the elaboration of one's own identity. While identity traditionally is elaborated in relationships of social contrast, the principle of autonomy instigates the attempt at a self-identity, defined as “the self reflexively understood by the person in terms of his or her biography” (Giddens, 2002:54).

Schaeffer (2003:145) understands this yearning for emancipation to be a search for personal freedom and peace, in the sense of each one “having their own personal lifestyle, undisturbed during your whole life, not caring about the consequences in the lives of my children and grandchildren.” Brian Walsh and Richard Middleton (2010:20) relate autonomy to individualism, which is a consequence of the former, and state that “here we reach the heart of modern secularism: the postulate of human autonomy” (Walsh & Middleton, 2010:102).

A different and interesting perspective on individualism is that of Robert Calvert, who denounces it as idolatry in reference to today's society:

An era of individualism in which people find their own way to whatever god may exist, basically means that intellectual autonomy has become in fact a kind of God and the ultimate judge on all important issues (Calvert, 2015:191).

Such denunciation evokes the much-discussed image postulated by Nietzsche (2011:12-13) in Zarathustra's speech. Concluding that "God is dead," the figure of the *übermensch*, "superman" or "beyond-human," emerges, who surpasses all traditions, values, politics and humanity itself. A being totally autonomous and also individualised, who no longer needs a God.

Postmodern societies have developed traits of the *übermensch*, not only sticking to the autonomy of the person but also, as a consequence, becoming markedly individualistic. As human beings are intrinsically social and their survival paradoxically depends on this, there is a constant appeal for community and socialisation. Today's communities, however, are essentially virtual and homogeneous, so that the individual's relationship with them is instrumental. Effective sociability is restricted to reduced circles of family and close friends, which, as indicated, is nothing more than a minimalist collectivism, which is also a trait of individualism according to Tocqueville (1863:120).

2.4.6. The era of "advisers" and "experts"

The person's excessive autonomy and individualism bring with them a consequent refractory feeling regarding the figure of authority. The emancipation of the person, by definition, is an uprising against traditions, institutions and leadership. Or, in terms of Azevedo (2015a:57), it is the "revolt of individuals against hierarchy in the name of equality."

Christianity forged a strong sense of equality in the West, even within the historically more marginalised segments. Women were valued and gained social space, vulnerable minors became targets for protection by the State, slavery was widely fought by prominent Christian leaders, the less favoured were given rights and the human rights movement itself is a Christian legacy.

By definition, therefore, equality evokes the equality of dignity, importance, rights and obligations. Egalitarianism, on the other hand, is a political doctrine that evokes an absolute and absolutising equality in all social dimensions (Houaiss, 2009). Even political egalitarianism is also a legacy of Christianity, but in its extreme form it becomes an attack on social order by opposing any form of hierarchy.

In the West, the seeds of exacerbated egalitarianism can be seen to have started in the family, as the mother cell of society, where the traditional idea of the man as the head of the home came to be perceived as oppression against women. Parents' own authority over their children is often questioned, if not rebuffed. From home to school, the teacher's authority has been emptied. From school to church, the idea of ecclesiastical leadership has become frowned upon and, in particular, the exercise of discipline, once valued as a means of grace, has become a practice of the past.

In the larger society, civil and military authorities are questioned and political authorities trivialised. Therefore, a broad and generalised egalitarianism is being established in the West resulting, in the long term, in the weakening of democratic states under the law and democracy itself, which increasingly lacks statesmen to lead great nations.

Thus, “what is the group's orientation towards leadership” in postmodernism, with regard to the figure of authority? It certainly involves an egalitarian orientation and even resistant to hierarchies. When comparing Indian and European societies, Louis Dumont (1992:293-296) concluded that in the former there was an excess of hierarchy, while in the latter there is an excess of egalitarianism. This is because excessive egalitarianism leads to anarchy.

Bauman observes this phenomenon and points out that it is not exactly the abolition of authorities, but their limitless multiplication, that makes the notion of “authorities” contradictory:

Soft, consumer-friendly capitalism has neither abolished law-making authorities nor made them expendable. It only gave way and allowed authorities to coexist in such a large number that none could remain for very long, let alone reach the position of exclusivity [...] Thinking about this, “numerous authorities” is a contradiction of terms. When there are many authorities, they tend to cancel each other out and the only effective authority in the area, is the one who manages to choose between them (Bauman, 2001:83).

The same author also points out that the figure of a leader has been systematically replaced by the “adviser.” Leaders are loyally followed and acquire authority over their subordinates, while directors are hired and can be fired. The prevalence of councillors can easily be seen by the popularity of self-help books, talk shows and the more recent phenomenon of virtual influencers (Bauman 2001:84,87-88).

Continuing with the same logic of thought, Giddens expounds the contrast between authorities and experts. Pastor or priest figures, for example, are traditionally seen as spiritual authorities, while the psychologist or psychoanalyst are experts in their field. The idea of authority evokes the person's suitability, while the idea of a specialist evokes his or her technical competence (Giddens, 2002:181). Bauman's advisor and Giddens' expert are functional substitutes for authorities in the society of egalitarianism.

It is possible that this process of social egalitarianism has its recent roots in Marx and the uprising against class oppression. And, according to Friedrich Engels, such an uprising starts exactly against the mother cell of society, when it understands that the root of all oppression is seated in the heterosexual and monogamous marriage:

In an old unpublished manuscript, written in 1846 by Marx and myself, I find the following sentence: “The first division of labour is that made between a man and a woman for the procreation of children.” Today I can add: the first antagonism between classes that appeared in history coincides with the development of the antagonism between man and woman in monogamy; and the first oppression of classes, with the oppression of the female by the male (Engels, 1984:70-71).

2.4.7. "Follow your heart"

In many Eastern societies it is virtuous to repress personal desires in a public setting, while allowing freedom only in a private setting. Even in the West, with a view to its Christian tradition, the self-control of desires was historically encouraged as a personal virtue, especially when it came to morality as a limiting element.

But times are different now in Western societies. In Bauman's words (2001:51), “the public was colonized by the private” and intimate desires gained popular notoriety. Hedonic ideas of the past, generally linked to sex and orgies, were crossed with the commodification of life increasingly exploited by commerce, especially by advertising.

Giving wings to one's desires has become the standard motto and in many other areas where this premise is evident, consumption seems to be most easily observable. Like few others, Lipovetsky describes this new reality when he analyses the "hedonistic consumption" or "hyper-consumption" of hypermodernity, stating that "a new modernity was born: it coincides with the civilization of desire that was built up over the second half of the 20th century" (Lipovetsky, 2007:11). To him, hyper-consumption is directly linked to hedonism as it deals not only with needs, but desires: "The truth is that there is an intimate, structural link between hyper-consumption and hedonism" (Lipovetsky, 2007:67).

In this hedonistic logic of consumption, the market's focus is not on products but on the consumer, and not on their needs but their desires, and not only on their natural desires but mainly on the production of new desires, which will result in more consumption. Advertising from this hedonic era does not only offer presents, products and solutions, but seduces the consumer, awakening their most intimate desires and excusing the purchase. Postmodern hedonism is a further escalation of classical utilitarianism.

Lipovetsky (2007:31) also points out that hedonism is not only "consumption-seduction" but also "consumption-distraction" when it comes to the overlapping of sales and leisure. Not only sensual images and slim bodies are associated with the products, but also images and elements of relaxation, fun and entertainment. Basically, it is the search not only for satisfying the need, but the search for pleasure and happiness that guide current consumption. Exposing the current Western culture, Lipovetsky says:

It created, at the same time, an everyday culture dominated by the mythology of private happiness and hedonistic ideals. The society-of-objects, presents itself as a civilization of desire, worshiping material well-being and immediate pleasures. Everywhere the joys of consumption are displayed, everywhere the hymns to leisure and vacations resound, everything is sold with promises of individual happiness. Living better, "enjoying life," enjoying comfort and commercial innovations appear as individual rights, a goal themselves, everyday concerns of the masses. A whole culture spreads that invites you to enjoy the pleasures of the moment, to enjoy happiness here and now, to live for yourself; it no longer prescribes renunciation, it makes the new Gospel sparkle in neon letters: "Buy it, enjoy it, this is the truth, not taking or adding anything" (Lipovetsky, 2007:102).

Bauman entertains a very similar interpretation of today's society, showing that "hedonistic feelings" stand out among the main marks of our time, in which "desire becomes its own purpose, and the only uncontested and unquestionable purpose (Bauman, 2001:36,94).

Today's consumerism, however, is no longer about satisfying needs [...] It has already been said that the *spiritus movens* of consumer activity is no longer the measurable set of articulated needs, but *desire* – a much more volatile and ephemeral entity, evasive and capricious, and essentially not referential to "needs," a self-generated and self-propelled motive that needs no further justification or "cause" (Bauman, 2001:96).

In another publication, Lipovetsky (2004:61) observes that the result is a "hedonistic culture" that goes far beyond the consumption of products and information. Giddens (2002:158,185) suggests that narcissism is the main form of hedonism and Azevedo (2015a:124) avers that, coerced by this new order, the narcissistic culture emerges, which will find its greatest expression in servicing the body.

What, therefore, is "the group reference regarding personal fulfilment," in postmodernism when it comes to desires? Hedonism is the answer. A little bit of an altruistic society, which does not repress or limit its desires but, on the contrary, gives them wings.

Schaeffer ponders precisely that this picture results in the death of the Christian conscience, the only force strong enough to face the impulsive desires of the human soul. In the absence of Christian altruism, the alternative "is hedonism, according to which each person does what he/she wants" (Schaeffer, 2003:158).

This hedonistic way of dealing with personal desires permeates different areas of contemporary life, including the marital relationship that becomes disposable as soon as it no longer meets expectations of self-fulfilment. Morality is affected, as self-fulfilment is more important than modesty and so, what once was embarrassing, is now extolled in the name of freedom. Even personal identity is strongly impacted, as being what you want is more important than accepting who you are. And, finally, religiousness in its different aspects is humanised, making the person's yearnings the focal point and no longer the transcendent. In a hedonic society, the popular "follow your heart" becomes the great slogan of life.

2.4.8. "There is no law giver but man himself"

Studies of the elenctic or the orientation of the superego, were engendered by contrasting Western cultures in Europe and North America with Eastern and tribal cultures. By default, the understanding is that Western cultures are mostly guilt-driven, developing internal processes of seeking innocence to a greater degree.

Authors such as Lothar Käser (2004:137), Klaus Müller (2013:108) and Rolland Muller (2013:133) point in this direction, suggesting that Western cultures are like this because of their Christian heritage of a vertical relationship with the all-seeing God: therefore, they develop feelings of guilt even when mistakes are made without realising this. The opposite would be occur oriental and tribal cultures, where conscience would be guided by more horizontal relationships with people: therefore, they develop feelings of shame in the face of error and public censure. The feeling of shame, in turn, would lead to the quest for honour.

Interestingly, in a more recent study, Giddens (2002:16,69) argues that, in late modern Western cultures "mechanisms of shame, not guilt, take centre stage [...] in the conditions of modernity, it's the shame and not the guilt that tends to occupy the foreground as a characteristic of the psychic organization."

In Giddens' logic, the conscience's orientation towards shame has different nuances and, in the present case, it is directly linked to narcissism. As the West breaks with the Christian heritage of a relationship with a God from beyond who sees everything and is offended by personal mistakes, only society itself remains as an element of measurement. However, unlike Eastern societies where shame is compensated by honour, shame in postmodern Western societies is revealed by evidence.

Shame is a negative side of the agent's motivational system. The other side of shame is *pride*, or self-esteem: confidence in the integrity and value of the self-identity narrative (Giddens, 2002:67).

While guilt is linked to morality, shame is linked to prestige. Guilt stems from the feeling of having transgressed norms or values accepted as ideal by the individual, while shame stems from the feeling of having disappointed other people, of being seen as inadequate, of not being accepted or praised. In the horizontalisation of Western life, with its sceptical relativism in relation to values and established anthropocentrism, little really remains of the feeling of guilt, while great importance is given to embarrassment. So, "what is the orientation of the

conscience towards error” in postmodern societies?” Less and less guilt and more and more shame are the answer.

When understood in this way, the prevailing culture of imagery of today makes sense with its excessive use of the self-image, always conveying an air of happiness, achievement, an ideal life, attracting admiration, or else then an air of sadness, disappointment and an unhappy life which attract looks of compassion. It is the result of a conscience oriented not towards a divinity from beyond nor to moral values from below, but to society itself, in search of applause or empathy, through likes and the amount of hits on social media, whose importance goes beyond veracity. The previous guilt/innocence society has turned into a society of shame/evidence because, after all, as already mentioned, “there is no other judge but himself [man himself]” (Sartre, 2017:44).

2.5. Initial conclusions

Thus, considering the first two dimensions of analysis, it can be concluded that urban Western postmodern societies, in general, with regard to their (I) **relationship with the world**, present (1) a more *utilitarian* orientation in terms of the relationship with its environment, seeking to satisfy its needs in a consumerist way without measuring or minimizing the consequences; (2) greater *presentism* in relation to time, with a constant effort to immediately overcome temporal limits; (3) a greater sense of the *anthropocentric* in its cosmic allocation, seeing life that orbits around the person; and (4) a more *relativistic* attitude regarding the conception of truth, understanding even the most crucial values of existence as mere descriptive possibilities of reality.

In (II) their **relationships with humans**, they present (5) a more *individualistic* orientation with regard to the group, seeing the individual as more important than the collective; (6) a more *egalitarian* stance in reference to leadership, being, in fact, refractory to the authority figure; (7) a more *hedonistic* perception in relation to desires oriented towards self-fulfilment; and (8) a greater awareness of *shame* around the orientation of conscience, seeking more evidence and approval from society than inner peace. As we will try to demonstrate later, such notions go beyond the specific axes used for analysis, manifesting in and influencing the most divergent areas of life.

POSTMODERN WORLDVIEW		
AXLES	QUESTIONS	NOTIONS
I. RELATIONS WITH THE WORLD		
1. Spatiality:	What is the basic orientation in the relationship with the environment?	+utility
2. Temporality:	What is the orientation in relation to time?	+presentist
3. Cosmocentricity:	Who is at the centre of the universe?	+anthropocentric
4. Reality:	What is the group's conception of truth?	+relativistic
II. RELATIONS WITH HUMAN BEINGS		
5. Collectivity	What is the personal orientation in the relationship with equals?	+individualistic
6. Authority:	What is the group's orientation towards leadership?	+egalitarian
7. Desires:	What is the group's orientation towards personal fulfilment?	+hedonistic
8. Elenticity:	What is the orientation of the conscience in the face of error?	+shame

Table 2: Postmodern worldview

CHAPTER 3 – DESCRIBING THE YUHUPDEH SHAMANIC COSMOVISION: SIMILARITIES WITH WESTERN POSTMODERNISM

*“If Western multiculturalism has relativism
as public policy, then the Amerindian perspectivist shamanism
has multinaturalism as cosmic politics.”*

Viveiros de Castro (1996:120)

This chapter will be devoted to a description of the Yuhupdeh shamanic worldview, focusing on aspects of similarity with the Western postmodern worldview presented in the previous chapter.

3.1. Amerindian shamanism

Studies on shamanism were initially developed in Asia, where the term “shaman” probably derived from the Tung language of Siberia, conceptualised by Eliade (2002:15) simply as the “ecstasy technique.” Considered the oldest religious system of the traditional peoples of Asia, it was soon perceived not to be a particularity of that region, as it was equally present in the Amerindian peoples.

Extensive research has been carried out on Amerindian shamanism (Goldamn, 1963; Reichel-Dolmatoff, 1971; C. Hugh-Jones, 1979; S. Hugh-Jones, 1979; Jackson, 1983; Bidou, 1983; Hill, 1993; Buchillet, 1995; Wright, 1998; Viveiros de Castro, 1998; 2002; Lima, 1996; 2005), which has led to the understanding that it is more than a religious system: it is a system of thought, a cosmovision, which centres on the relationship between the human and the non-human, as defined by Viveiros de Castro, one of the most highlighted disciples of Lévi-Strauss and considered the most prominent Brazilian anthropologist:

Shamanism can be defined as the capacity manifested by certain humans to cross bodily barriers and adopt the perspective of non-human subjectivities (Viveiros de Castro, 2002:468).

This non-human, extra-human, or beyond-human can include entities from the hereafter, such as animals, vegetables and even minerals, or those from beyond, such as spirits and mystical beings, with the shaman occupying a privileged position in such a cosmovision namely to hold

knowledge of the non-human and the ability to mediate human society's relations with it. Viveiros de Castro says:

The shamans occupy the role of active interlocutors in the cosmic dialogue. They are like diplomats who take charge of interspecies relations, operating in a cosmopolitical arena where different socio-natural categories confront each other (Viveiros de Castro, 2002:468).

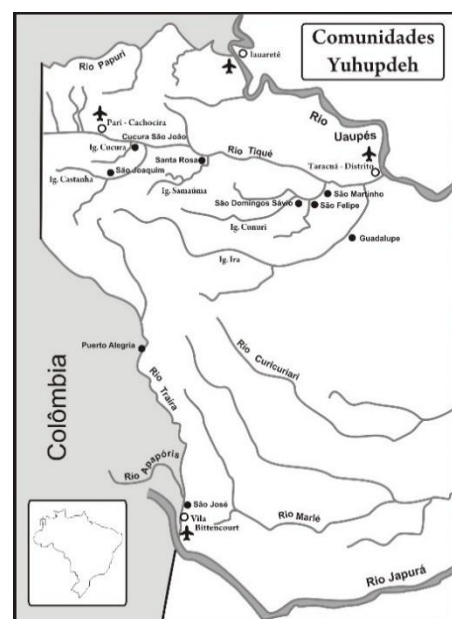
Shamans not only mediate relationally between different entities in the universe, but they are also the main maintainers and transmitters of the shamanic worldview, deeply rooted in these societies. In indigenous languages they receive different names, usually translated into the regional Portuguese of the Brazilian Amazon as “pajé,” “blesser” or simply “elderly man” (Lolli, 2010:29). Since shamanism is not a standardised dogmatic system, each people group presents its shamanic nuances and peculiarities, as we see with the Yuhupdeh.

3.2. The Yuhupdeh people

The Yuhupdeh is a minority indigenous people of the Amazon rainforest, inhabiting the border region of Brazil and Colombia. In linguistic and ethnological literature, they have been referred to as Macus, Maku, Yahup, Yohup, Yihup, Yuhup, Juhup, Yuhub-de, Yuhupda, Yuhupda, Yuhupde; however, their self-appointment is Yuhupdeh, a word comprised of *yuhup* – “people, person” and *deh* – “collectivizer,” therefore, literally “persons, a people” (Silva & Silva, 2007a:2; Silva, 2011:10; Silva & Silva, 2012:66-68).

In 2010 there were about a thousand persons in the group, with the majority in Brazilian territory, dispersed in seven villages on the small tributaries of the Rio Tiquié in the Alto Rio Negro region, and one village on the Apapóris River in the Alto Rio Solimões region. In Colombian territory, there is a known village on the Traíra River, bordering Brazil, and others on tributaries of the Apapóris River (Silva, 2010:7; Mahecha *et al*, 2000:195).

Traditionally nomadic hunter-gatherers until a generation ago, they did not live in villages but in small temporary camps, transiting through the interfluves of rivers in



search of game and fruit. And despite having entered into a sedentary process in recent decades, their nomadic culture remains vivid, maintaining a high rate of fluidity and mobility. They became incipient farmers, cultivating cassava and some fruits, as well as skilful fishermen using cassava and fish derivatives as their food base, despite maintaining sporadic hunting and gathering practices, seeing these as the most pleasurable (Silva & Silva, 2011:9-10).

They are socially organised in clans, formed by groups of families that identify themselves as descendants of common ancestors: therefore, even if there is no real blood relationship, they see themselves as relatives and, hence marriages within these groups are prohibited; they are seen to be acts of incest (Lolli, 2010:22). In this way, they are guided by a clan exogamy and currently there are sixteen clans (Silva, 2011:15).

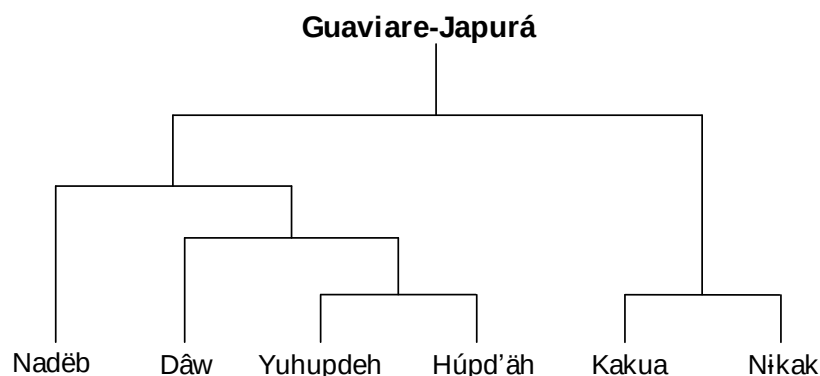
Their language is insulating, with most words made up of just three phonemes; it is tonal, with the presence of four tones that generate changes in meaning both at the level of morpheme (words) and syntax (sentence); it has a high incidence of laryngealisation, where phonemes are formed or modified with the closure of the larynx; as well as high nasalisation productivity, where many lexical contrasts are produced by oral-nasal alternation. Until recently unwritten, the language has been reduced to writing with the adoption of its own spelling in 2007 (Silva & Silva, 2007a; Silva & Silva, 2007b).

3.3. Ethnolinguistic classification

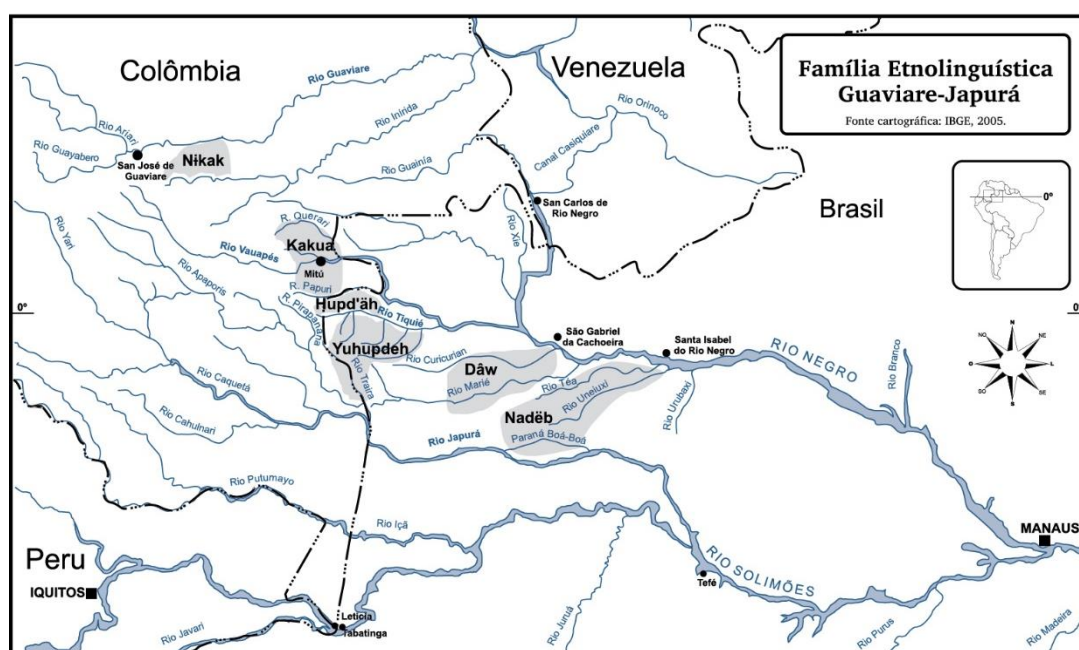
The Yuhupdeh are part of an ethnolinguistic family formed with the Nadëb, Dâw and Hupd'äh peoples in the Basil, Kakua and Nukak in Colombia, all of nomadic origin, traditionally hunter-gatherers, referred to by other peoples in the region and also by a good part of the region's ethnological and linguistic literature as the "Maku." This ethnonym, however, is not natural to them, having been attributed in a pejorative way, bringing with it a strong load of prejudice and discrimination.

"Maku" is a word of Arawak origin, literally meaning "speechless" and semantically "primitive, wild," and is attributed to this group of peoples probably due to their habitat inside the forest in contrast to other river-dwelling peoples; their social organisation of only clan exogamy, thus marrying women of their own ethnicity, in contrast to the riverine peoples of ethnic exogamy; and their laryngeal tongue, giving it a certain hoarse sound that riverside peoples relate to animal noises (Ramirez, 2001a:1; 2001b:198).

In an attempt to avoid such a pejorative term, some researchers have called the language family “Nadahup,” with the initiatives of the Nadëb, Dâw and Yuhupdeh peoples, but excluding the Kakua and Nukak (Epps, 2005:8-11), and “Uaupés-Japurá,” while excluding the Nukak (Ramirez, 2001a:2). Using a geolinguistic criterion, Silva and Silva (2012:55-58) name them the “Guaviare-Japurá” family.



With the exception of the Nukak, who remained isolated in the forest until the 1970s, the other peoples of the Guaviare-Japurá family, generally considered “forest Indians,” were always marginalised by the majority peoples of their respective regions, considered “river Indians,” and establishing a relationship of subservience. Such relationships have been classified as slavery (Wallace, 2004:612; Koch-Grünberg, 2005:238; Giaccone, 1949:88), domination relationship (Assis, 2001:65), a boss/servant relationship (Silverwood-Cope, 1990 :70-73,197-198), symbiosis (Ramos, 1980:170-171) and as a relationship of exchange of goods and services (Angulo Sandoval, 1997:101).



The Nadëb and Dâw historically developed relationships with the Baré of the Rio Negro, and the Hupd'äh, Yuhupdeh and Kakua with the peoples of the oriental Tukano family of the Uaupes River channel, while the Yuhupdeh of Colombia also related to the Letuama and Tanimuka peoples (Sandoval, 1997:6-7).

3.4. Ethnohistory

The first reference to the Yuhupdeh as “Macus” emerges in the work of Canon Francisco Bernardino de Souza (1873:118) in the 19th century where he listed peoples of the Apapóris River:

The banks of the Apapóris are inhabited by the following tribes: Launas – Jupuas – Peluanas – Tiimtla – Puias – Jabahanas – Macunas – Tocandiras – Uerimas – Barabatanas – Macus – Lacunas – Cumacuihans – Juris. All these tribes, with the exception of the Macus, are very peaceful.

Three decades later, German ethnologist Theodor Koch-Grünberg, in his two-year expedition among the indigenous people of the Upper Rio Negro, mentioned them while navigating the Tiquié River in 1904. The researcher did not have contact with them because, at that time, they were considered savages who lived transiting the interior of the forest. But their guide, an indigenous person with knowledge of that region made specific references to them in passing the mouths of the Ira and Castanha streams, both tributaries on the right bank of the Tiquié River:

A few hours past its mouth [Tiquié], where it is almost 150m wide, enters to the south the considerable tributary Ira-Paraná which, for having yellowish-black water, received the name of “Rio do Mel” (Honey River). Its lower course is unpopulated; but in the region of its sources, among other peoples, there are many Makú who are partly sedentary, and further south are the Yahudna and Miránya (Koch-Grünberg, 2005:259).

In the afternoon we passed the mouth of the Castanha-Paraná, a respectable tributary on the right [...] With a light canoe going up for seven days, we arrived at a “bad path of the Makú” which in a five-day march made a connection with the Yapurá (Koch-Grünberg, 2005:280).

During the so-called “second rubber cycle,” in the 1940s, when the extraction of rubber latex from rubber trees for the manufacture of rubber broke out again in the Brazilian Amazon, rubber workers advanced to the most distant areas of the forest in search of new plantations. According to oral reports, it was at this time that the Yuhupdeh established contact with Baré indigenous people at the service of rubber tappers, being employed in the extraction of latex by means of syringes, beatings and balata and paid with industrialised products such as factions, axes, aluminium pans, phosphorus, salt, sugar, clothes, hammocks and abundant alcoholic beverages (Silva, 2011:9,30).

Once this extraction phase had passed, the Yuhupdeh themselves left the isolation of the headwaters of the small streams and began to approach the Tiquié River, which was navigable, where small merchant boats transited seeking to exchange forest products such as animals, fish and later vines for industrialised products and alcoholic beverages.

In the 1940s, Catholic Salesian missionaries had superficial contact with the Yuhupdeh of the Ira and Castanha streams (Giacone, 1949:87) and tried to intensify such contacts in the 1960s without much success (Massa, 1965:73,88). In 1975, the Summer Institute of Linguistics sent missionaries Daniel and Cheryl Jore to serve among them, and they managed to stay for only four months, but conducted the first linguistic survey of the Yuhupdeh (Jore & Jore, 1980), arousing academic and state interest. Even in that decade, Salesian missionaries tried to organise the tribes into villages, open schools and catechise them, but again without success.

Introductory linguistic research has been carried out both in Colombia (Reina Gutierrez, 1986; Ospina Bozzi, 1995) and in Brazil (Vina, 1991; Lopes, 1995), where only one was done at the doctoral level (Ospina Bozzi, 2002). In the ethnological area, in the 1980s and 1990s, researchers were directed to all or part of the linguistic family in Brazil (Pozzobon, 1983; 1997) and in Colombia the family was mentioned in introductory works (Angulo Sandoval, 1997; Cabrera Becerra *et al*, 1997; Franky Calvo and Mahecha Rubio, 1997; Mahecha Rubio, 2003). Advanced doctoral research in anthropology (Lolli, 2010; Junio Felipe, 2018) has been conducted only recently, but this was based on limited field research time.

Between 2006 and 2020, through a bilingual intercultural education project and church planting actions, the presbyterian missionaries Cácio Silva and Elisângela Silva lived for a long time with the Yuhupdeh and extensively documented their language and culture. Silva and Silva's information is used in a privileged way in this work because, due to the long coexistence with the people, they provided data in the area of values. Despite its relevance, the other sources deal minimally with values opting instead for objective questions due to the

short periods in the field of their authors, who could not get to learn the language of the people and develop relationships of mutual trust.

As a result of this educational project, elaborated in response to the Yuhupdeh's insistent requests, approved by the Brazilian State and developed by the missionaries, in the last decade people have been going through an accelerated process of sociocultural transformation. The language was written down, eleven teaching materials were produced, families were documented, schools opened in their villages, teachers of their own ethnicity were trained, four groups of students completed elementary school, one class finished high school and some are now applying for admission to college.

The school introduced money to the villages through teachers who were hired by the state, salaried local health workers, elderly people with social security benefits, pensioner widows and mothers assisted by government programmes. Monetisation has had an unprecedented sociocultural impact, for better or for worse, with oars replaced by small outboard motors, gloomy villages lit up by electric-powered light bulbs, wheels of shaman myths being replaced by television programmes, natural food by industrialised versions, including everything obtainable in the city, which put them on an inevitable and irreversible path to the urban centre located between three and four days of river travel from their villages.

Moving through the city, they found access to all the benefits and ills of the surrounding society, increasing the abuse of alcoholic beverages, living in precarious camps in the vicinity of the city, concomitant with outbreaks of fights, aggression and abuse especially of women and children, in addition to homicides and suicides. The exception has been a group that converted to the Gospel and organised itself into a church of reformed faith, which is still in the process of consolidation, while the impact of these transformations is being cushioned already, thus embodying a refuge and alternative for those interested in the gospel.

Despite this scenario of sociocultural transformation, the following description of Yuhupdeh shamanism concerns its traditional values, prior to and prevailing in the current framework of transformation. Culture has been changing, but not the worldview.

3.5. Yuhupdeh shamanism

In the Yuhupdeh language, the term for shaman is *săw*, which can designate two shamanic categories. The *mih-rîin-săw*, usually translated as “healer” or “elderly man,” is a shaman of

general knowledge, an expert in healing formulas, protection and everyday issues, and may be a *pě'-mih-rin-săw*, that is, a specialist in curing illnesses; the *dahah-mih-rin-săw*, specialises in healing snake bites, *băäh-săw* in curing illnesses with water effusion, *õh-këy-săw* in interpreting dreams and *sõow'-këy-săw* in dream premunitions.

The second category is the *yăam-săw*, generally translated as “shaman,” the strongest and most feared, and he is capable of magically transforming himself into a jaguar and is a specialist in causing and curing diseases; he may be a *hăg-bi'-săw*, a specialist in causing death by “pulling out” the person's life force, or a *pey-săw*, an expert in manipulating thunder to send down witchcraft (Silva & Silva, 2012:416-417; Junio Felipe, 2018:136-137).

Such specialties can be developed by anyone who puts in the hard work of learning myths, memorising complex formulas, consuming a lot of mental stimulants (made from the coca leaf), following strict dietary restrictions and enjoying considerable perseverance to practice what they learn. Few are willing, so the most common is the *mih-rin-săw*, the “general practitioner” of basic knowledge, but enough of the latter to master the practice of white and black magic, transmitting and perpetuating the shamanic worldview (Lolli, 2010:52).

But what are the traits of Yuhupdeh shamanism that, after all, resemble Western postmodernism? The first eight of these will be presented below, covering the first two dimensions, those centred on relations with the world and with the human, as based on the comparative analysis model of cosmovision in the light of the features presented in the previous chapter. Chapter 4 will deal with the third dimension, that centred on relationships with the divine as found in both worldviews, not only describing how they manifest themselves but also demonstrating the probable reasons for such similarities.

3.5.1. “Our grandparents used to do it like that and it never ended”

While urban societies are in indirect contact with the environment, Yuhupdeh society lives not only in direct contact with, but are, in fact, immersed in its environment. You drink water directly from the river, in the same part where you cool off from the scorching heat and sanitise the children with several daily baths. There, you also wash bowls, dig up fish and prepare animals killed in hunting. Food comes directly from the forest, whether it be collected fruits, hunted animals, fished fish or products cultivated in the incipient fields such as cassava, pineapple, sugar cane and bananas.

Their homes, likewise, are built with direct products from the forest. The structure of the houses is made up of sturdy tree trunks, with the supports, beams, rafters and slats joined by the mooring of strong vines. For coverage they use palm leaves and when they decide to close it off (not every house is closed) they do it with thick bark or clay.

But this exotic contrast with urban societies is soon softened when one observes their way of relating to the environment. Silva describes facts that contradict common sense: that every indigenous person lives in perfect harmony with their environmental, social and spiritual environment. An example is the collection of fruits from the Patauá palm (*Oenocarpus bataua*), from the same family as the açaí, which is very rich in protein and which, in its adult age, can reach a height of 25 metres, with a smooth and ringed trunk. The fruit is highly coveted in the forest, but it is difficult to climb the trunk due to mosses that make it slippery. Indigenous people have developed super-creative techniques to climb such palm trees: however, among the Yuhupdeh the most common is to avoid climbing fatigue and felling the palm tree to sometimes collect a single bunch of fruit (Silva, 2009a:301-305).

Silva describes an episode when the indigenous people noticed only one mature bunch among others that were still green, but seeing that climbing would be laborious, they felled a first palm tree of a height of about 15 metres. It was tangled with others of similar height and the collectors did not hesitate felling a second and third tree. Three ancient and fruitful palm trees felled to collect a single bunch of fruit: and this is not an isolated fact, but a common and traditional practice. Asked by the missionary if this practice would not end with the Patauazeiros, the answer was always standard: *tih big in du reh hit yi' ni nene ni sun ãm yip hi' tóh hu' nih* – “our grandparents did this for a long time and never it's over” (Silva, 2009a:305).

Marcelo Carvalho, a Presbyterian missionary, who lived for sixteen years with the Hupd'äh people of the same ethnolinguistic trunk and inhabitants of the same region, describes the same practice among those people and mentions an episode when only one couple felled seven patauá palm trees to collect two ripe curls. And, justifying himself in the face of persistent awareness campaigns by the authorities against this practice, he argued: “That's how we learned from our parents and that's how we're going to do it. I'm going to keep knocking down” (Carvalho, 2014:57-58).

The same relational logic with the environment is observed in the traditional fishery with timbó, a vine of the papilionoid family (*Derris spp.*), whose bark and roots extract a toxic sap that rapidly affects fish. These, in the process of suffocation, float stunned and are easily captured.

This practice, also referred to as “tinging,” widely known not only by the Yuhupdeh but by various peoples throughout Northern Brazil, Central America and even North America (Heizer, 1986:95-97), has been persistently opposed because it kills not only adult fish but even small fry, causing a severe impact on the ecosystem.

Despite being expert in various other fishing techniques that are not harmful to the ecosystem, the practice of dyeing is common among the Yuhupdeh in the summertime, and persists despite awareness campaigns by environmental NGOs and school education (Cabalzar, 2005:317-318). The justification is basically the same as for the felling of the patauá: “our grandparents had been doing this for a long time and it never ended” (Silva, 2009a:89). Likewise, Carvalho describes the same practice among the Hupd’äh, where the fisherman concluded: “Tinging is our custom and I will continue to dye with my community. If we don't dye, we don't eat fish!” (Carvalho, 2014:97).

This is clearly a utilitarian logic, which is justified by meeting basic needs with less effort, despite the environmental damage it can cause. Such logic can also be observed in the early extraction of straw to cover houses, uprooting the palm groves closest to the village to avoid long walks to mature palm groves, as well as the early extraction of vines, coveted in regional commerce, equally uprooting the vines. The examples above are enough to conclude that, in the spatiality axis, about the “basic orientation in the relationship with the environment,” the Yuhupdeh society, contrary to common sense, is equally utilitarian. It is a fact that the impact of this utilitarianism on its environment is much smaller than that of urban societies, but the difference is not in axiology, in values, but in demography, with a reduced population and less technology. A Yuhupdeh population in the thousands and with technology would do as much harm to the forest as a postmodern Western urban population.

This picture takes on greater meaning when remembering that, as already mentioned, the Yuhupdeh are traditionally hunter-gatherers (Ramos, 1980:144; Silva & Silva, 2007:5; Junio Felipe, 2018:5,21; Barbará, 2020:104). To use Bauman's (1999:87-88) logic: like postmodern societies, they are not producers but consumers, and with the added weight of this being a trait of their tradition. Western societies, in earlier stages of modernity, were essentially producers and in later generations they become consumers. The Yuhupdeh, on the other hand, have always been consumers by a millenary tradition, different even from indigenous peoples of the same region, such as the Tukano and Aruak, traditionally farmers (Galvão, 1979:210; Ramos, 1980:154-158; Ribeiro, 1995:112-121). Therefore, utilitarianism is an even more fundamental value in that worldview.

Going beyond the relationship with the environment, such utilitarianism can be seen in the traditional practice, no longer practiced today, of abandoning the elderly. According to the elders, at the time when they were totally nomadic living in frequent transit through the forest and taking shelter in makeshift camps, when an elderly person became a burden to his family and was no longer able to hunt or accompany the group for long walks, he was left by himself to die alone. Some sacrificed themselves, fleeing the family before being abandoned, while others were tied to trees and left behind, as they lost their usefulness to the small group (Silva, 2009a:273). Although today this practice has been abandoned, families frequent frequently accuse each other of valuing their elderly people because of the retirement that the Brazilian State grants them. Even so, when the elderly is already in advanced age in a state of weakness and depending on their relatives, it is common for them to be deprived of greater care, sometimes even in terms of food, until death takes their lives. The explanation that critics usually give for this is that "the elderly man was no longer good for them" (Silva, 2009a:360).

This elucidates the fact that the spouse is evaluated for their readiness at work and providing food and caring for their children. The husband can be drunk and even aggressive, but if he is an expert hunter and fisherman, he will be considered a good husband. In the same way, the wife can be ill-tempered and cursing, but if she is a hard worker, bears many children, and prepares the family's food, she will be considered a good wife. Except for the younger ones, aesthetics is of little importance. The husband may be toothless, the wife dishevelled and unhygienic, but if they fulfil their livelihood roles, they will be well regarded by each other. Likewise, the most respected men in the village are not exactly the oldest and wisest, but the best hunters, the best shamans and, more recently, those who obtain more benefits from the external society (Silva, 2009a:33,295). In this utilitarian logic, status and reputation are measured by what one does and has to offer.

In the relationship with non-indigenous people, this logic is even more evident. Benefits are expected from government agents, whether in education, health or territory. Researchers, environmentalists and missionaries are also very welcome, as long as they bring benefits. Silva reports his first perceptions of this utilitarianism at the beginning of his journey with them. His project was a response to requests for help from people who wanted to have the language written and schools in their villages, but when they started their linguistic studies, their informants demanded payment to teach them the language. The missionary's logic was: "I am studying your language to help your people." The informant's logic was: "you are going to help my people, but what do I get out of it?" (Silva, 2009a:140). When answering someone's request, the missionary was shocked to see that the reaction was not one of gratitude, but of expectations around receiving more of being attended to as well (Silva, 2009a:161). The

language was written up, and when the first teaching material was published, the reaction of the village representative was surprising: “the booklet is beautiful, but next time you have to give us a party on the day of delivery” (Silva, 2009a:199).

Finally, utilitarianism can also be seen in its relationship with the mystical world. The myths have different and contradictory versions without any concern about the group when it came to deciding which version was more correct, as their great value lay in providing shamanic formulas for protection, attack or solutions to life's problems. It did not matter if it was correct, but if it worked (Silva & Silva, 2012:64). At the time of an illness, there was no problem in resorting to the magic of the shaman, the pharmaceutical medicine of the nurse, the prayer of the priest and the prayer of the pastor: after all, the source of the solution made no difference; it mattered only that it worked (Silva, 2009a:34.97). Consider Carvalho's record of a representative of another people close to the Yuhupdeh:

Actually, I'm not worried about who wants to help us. For me, it doesn't really matter who wants to help. We want help [...] It can come from the anthropologist, the linguist, the priest, the evangelical missionary, the city hall, the councillor... The important thing is to receive help (Carvalho, 2014:159).

3.5.2. "Today's food is for today"

The conception of time in the Yuhupdeh worldview is significantly different from that of the West. Until recently, without knowing a clock and without the concept of the calendar week, the traditional perception of time was developed around the Sun-Moon – *Wero*, which marks both the day – *wag*, in its brightness, and the night – *sääm*, in its darkness, well as, around the constellations – *wero-meéh*, which mark the seasons more or less equivalent to the idea of months. The full moon indicates the closing of a cycle of days, more or less like a month: so, having been in contact with the non-indigenous calendar, they translated “month” as *wero*. And the equivalent concept of the calendar year was marked by the summer or dry season – *häm*.

The “brightness” – *kawag* of the day is not conceived as coming from the sun, as it appears before it. It is a cosmic light that starts around 5:30 am, described as *kawag saki way* – “the light is already rising,” meaning the day is starting. And from then on, the day is marked by the sunrise (*wero saki way* – “the sun is already rising”), the peak of the sun at noon (*wag mih tut* – “noon”) and the sunset (*wero noh sunu kah* – “when the sun enters [the hole]”). There are several intermediate “schedules” marked by animal habits (like, *yëç kukupu kah* – “when the

jacú sings,” around 5:00 am) or by the shade of trees (like, *tëguhu kah* – “when [the sun] is among the trees”) (Silva & Silva, 2007c:2-3).

Thirteen constellations – *wero-meéh* – indicate favourable times for fishing different types of fish, gathering fruits and hunting animals. Eleven of them mark winter (*sōh-dēh*, with the highest rate of rains and floods) and two mark the most severe summer (*hām*, or drought). They are roughly equivalent to months, some with less and others with more than 30 days. Severe summer indicates the closing of a cycle of constellations, more or less like a year, so that they translate “year” as *hām* (Silva & Silva, 2012:361).

Unlike languages such as Portuguese, where temporality is highly important, comprising nine verbal suffixes that express time in addition to several temporal morphemes, in the Yuhupdeh linguistic structure temporality is extremely simple. There are just three specific morphemes to mark time: *ām* indicates “distant past,” encompassing events that occurred from yesterday to the most remote past; *sāama* indicates “anaphoric past,” encoding events referred to or known by the interlocutors; *pah* or *pa* is “recent” time, encoding events that occurred around yesterday to those that will occur around tomorrow. The present tense, therefore, is not marked, and can be called morpheme zero, that is, if the sentence does not have any of these three temporal markers or any morpheme that indicates something like “tomorrow” or “next summer,” by default the reference will be to the present (Silva & Silva, 2012:96).

While the concept of time is so different from that of the West, this linguistic structure and its relationship to time indicate a very familiar element.

Through linguistic analysis, we found that the Yuhupdeh, from the Amazon, have only three time markers [...] The present is marked by the zero morpheme, that is, unmarked forms indicate the present. There is no future tense marker. To reference later events, they use temporal locators and verbal aspects. These are linguistic facts and, behind them, underlies the idea of cultural existentialism centred on the here and now (Silva, 2014:176).

In other publications, Silva describes cultural episodes that seem to have practical implications for the structure of thought mentioned above:

Our Yuhupdeh friends are experts in this spectacular technique for preserving meat [...] But we've seen them hungry, spending days with just flour and water. And our question then was: But why don't they store it? Why not roast fish and

game for the time of scarcity? Sometimes they roast kilos and kilos of fish to bargain with the rescue boats that go up the river, exchanging industrialized goods and alcoholic beverages for products from the forest. Why then don't they also roast to feed their own family in the shortage? Sometimes we even try to convince them to stock up on fish, but this idea is so strange to them! As logical as it seems to us, the idea of stocking food seems to make no sense to them. What you have today is to eat today (Silva, 2010b:23).

It was a period of scarcity, families were dispersed in camps, leaving only eighteen adults and a few children in the village. One woman reported seeing fresh tracks of pigs and they all went out in a frenzy to hunt. Around noon they returned with four huge pigs, in a festive atmosphere. They quickly treated the four pigs, but to our surprise they didn't roast a single one for later consumption. In a matter of hours, the four pigs were totally devoured by those few people! And, of course, we also enjoyed the plentiful meal (Silva, 2009a:75).

What we have here are different facts, one linguistic and two cultural, but they point to the same value. In the time axis, about the "orientation in relation to temporality," like the postmodern worldview, the Yuhupdeh are clearly and strongly present-oriented.

Silva (2008:79) observes that they are "organized on the basis of protection and livelihood," which in itself already indicates presentism, and describes frequent cases of immediacy, such as a ten-day trip with the whole family decided on in a matter of minutes, and the requirement of, in acts of negotiation of objects, receiving the "payment" immediately. Even when some help is promised, the expectation is that it will be given at the same time (Silva, 2009a:34,38-39). The same immediacy is registered by Carvalho among the Hupd'äh, including in the form of asking for help: "Let's go to the bank with me to register my late father. Let's go! Let's go right now! [...] Register my late father in my place. Let's go! Help me. Let's go now!" (Carvalhos, 2014:168).

In his mythology, the origin of life is not explained, as there are no myths of cosmogony (origin of the cosmos) nor anthropogony (origin of humanity) per se. Its oldest myths are about the transformation of a pre-existing land with pre-existing ancestors in the land and people as we know them today already present (Silva, 2009a:60). There is also no clear idea about life after death. In a non-consensual way, some shamans suggest that after death the "heart" – *hãgäg*, the vital energy – returns to the place of origin of its ancestors, while others claim that the *hãgäg* turns into animals, and for others it simply ends, reintegrating oneself into a cosmic

force that gives life to everything that exists. As can be seen, there is no concern with the past or the future (Silva, 2009a:19,23,53; Silva & Silva, 2012:65).

Thus, there is no conception of reward or condemnation in life after death and, consequently, there is no fear of dying: however, there is terror for suffering. Suffering, not death, is the great fear of a Yuhupdeh. As suffering is something inevitable, the melancholy generated by it is very common leading to the constant search for joy in collective drunkenness as well as to a certain fatalism and propensity to commit suicide in apparently trivial situations. In fact, a very old myth already carries a suicidal report (Silva, 2011b:22).

Probably for the same reason, in one's kinship system, past generations quickly fall by the wayside. Different from more historical peoples who remember the names and deeds of their ancestors from ancient times, the Yuhupdeh usually keep the memory of only two generations past (parents – *íp*, and grandparents – *du*). The generation of great-grandparents is referred to by the generic term *tí'*, without distinction of sex, nor of royal great-grandparents and other people of their time. They are those who have already fallen or are falling into oblivion (Silva & Silva, 2012:565). Riviève (2001: 137) observes the same fact among the indigenous people of Guyana, which he refers to as "genealogical amnesia."

Thus, the Yuhupdeh are bearers of a strongly presentist worldview, focused on subsistence in the here and now. Western societies were once more historical and are now becoming more presentist, whereas Yuhupdeh society has always been so.

3.5.3. "It's the shaman who sends rain"

While angels, demons, spirits, ghosts and other spiritual beings generally fall into the category of superstition and fantasy in the Western world, in the world of Yuhupdeh mystical beings populate the entire universe.

The *wag* – "cosmos" – is inhabited by different types of beings. This space where we live in is the *yuhup-bö-saah* – "land of mortals," formed by the forest – *háy* and the rivers – *děh-mi*, with the spatial-horizontal orientation based on the river, with several expressions that indicate "upstream" and "downstream." The vertical-space orientation is based on the *wero-tíw* – "path of the sun," a trail travelled daily by *Wero* – "Sun-Moon" – which in his conception is not a star but a being. Not only the sun, but also the stars – *wero-meéh* – are beings, just like thunder – *Yãam-Tok-Döw* (Silva & Silva, 2012:64,413).

The river is populated by a large number of *hōp-uy-reh* – “fish people” – such as the *Dēh-Běj* – jandiá, *Dēh-Big* – anteater, *Dēh-Pān* – sloth and many others, including the boto – *Táy*, who in their eyes is a mystical being, and each of these attacks travellers, especially if there is a menstruating woman on board the canoe. The most feared creature of the water, however, is “the” (for them male) anaconda – *Meeh-Pög* – not because of the risk of physical attack, but of its shamanic version, because in his conception he is the great shaman of the waters, owner of the fish, and out of pettiness he launches mystical attacks against fishermen (Silva, 2009a:42-43).

Not only the river, but also the forest is infested with malevolent beings. The *We* – “raptor” – deceives people who become hypnotised and get lost in the forest; one of the most dangerous is the *Kuayö* – Kurupira – considered to be the owner of the hunts that, out of pettiness, launches shamanic attacks against hunters; and even some real animals are perceived as mystical beings, such as the *Kukuy* – the night monkey. The most feared is the *Hay-Koog*, described as a large, strong being, with hair all over the body, large claws and red eyes, similar to a large gorilla (recall that gorillas are from Africa, not the Amazon), whose shamanic attacks would be terrible (Silva & Silva, 2012:412-413).

In his view, all these beings have bodies, have physiological needs, eat and excrete faeces, marry or mate and reproduce, and do not die a natural death, but are not immortal and can be eliminated by some powerful shaman, although there is no mention of such a feat in their myths or ethnohistory. Therefore, such beings do not fit the common description of “spirits” and, for that reason, are referred to here as “mystical beings.” Silva (2014:158) observes that, since all these beings possess bodies, in the Yuhupdeh’s religion there is no practice of and, in their language, there is not even a word for “possession.” The only being without a body in his cosmovision is the *nám* – “spirit of the dead” – a kind of spectre that hovers over the relatives and belongings of the deceased person right after his death and makes noise and, if he touches a living person, causes illness. It is as if a person’s vital energy is in a state of confusion immediately after physical death, without his or her awareness of no longer having a body. She, however, no longer incorporates, having to be chased away by the shamans until she follows her destiny or reintegrates into the cosmos (Silva & Silva, 2012:231).

However, despite so many mystical beings to be found everywhere in the cosmos, there is a detail of crucial importance:

They believe in the existence of many spirits that inhabit the river and the forest, but all are malevolent and extremely hostile to human beings, which they attack,

causing illness and death. There is no good being that they call upon or ask for help. There is no cultic ritual, reverence or worship (Silva, 2014:73).

None of these beings are at the centre of your universe, as they are all malevolent enemies. Nor does there exist in their cosmology the figure of a Creator, a Supreme Being: rather, only mythical heroes exist who organised the universe, making it habitable. These heroes are not gods, but great shamans with superhuman powers. And they no longer exist, having died and remained in the past. Contrary to common sense, which imagines every indigenous person worshipping the sun and moon, as well as the impression that every indigenous shaman distils spirits through their pores, this is not the case for the Yuhupdeh. They adore nothing and invoke no one. Despite the very strong mystical conception of the universe, his or her cosmovision is definitely not divine-centric at all, that is, it is not centred on any being from beyond.

In addition to mystical beings, the Yuhupdeh world is inhabited by animals, fish, vegetables, insects and a range of living beings, about which the indigenous have an extraordinary knowledge. In their encyclopaedic dictionary Silva and Silva (2012:36) recorded in a non-exhaustive way extensive lists of species known to the Yuhupdeh, all named, including more than 190 kinds of fruit, more than 190 fish names, more than 180 birds and 71 fighters. None of these species, of course, occupy a privileged place in the cosmos, not least because they are food for humans.

On the axis of cosmocentricity, the aim is to understand “who or what is at the centre of the universe.” Despite the broad mystical aspect of the Yuhupdeh world, at its centre is not a god, a demigod, a spirit, or anything of the beyond. In the Yuhupdeh worldview, his universe is as anthropocentric as is the postmodern worldview. Humans place themselves at the centre of their world so that life orbits around them.

Silva (2009a:35) is emphatic that “at the centre of the universe and of social interest is man, not gods or religious convictions, and the most precious asset of the Yuhupdeh is human happiness itself.” This self-perception justifies utilitarianism in its relationships with the environment, with the spiritual world and even with society. It is also aligned with presentism since, if the centre is the man which is finite, it is important to live in the here and now.

In his reading of postmodernism, Giddens (2002:135) observes as part of the unfolding of anthropocentrism the struggle for “subordination of the world to the domination of man.” Man not only feels that it is at the centre of the universe, but also wants to dominate it. For the

Yuhupdeh this is not a wish but a fact. In his view “it is the shaman who sends rain” (Silva, 2009a:313). Not just rain. Shamans control winds, thunder and lightning, can cause severe droughts and floods, attract and drive away game, make a land unproductive and revitalise deforested areas, not with forest management, but with mystical techniques (Silva, 2009a:342). As Cayón (2002:23-24) explains about the shamanism of the Makuna, people from the same region and with a similar cosmovision, the shamans are the “curators of the universe,” mystically performing ecological management for the world to work.

Yuhupdeh shamans interfere with the workings of the universe with their mystical techniques of manipulating energies. To make it rain in a certain place, they transfer the “urinary” capacity of the butterflies to the clouds, causing rain. To prevent a child from choking on fish bones when starting a solid diet, shamans transfer to that child the ability to swallow from the socó bird (*Tigrisoma lineatum*) which, with its large throat, swallows whole fish without any difficulty (Silva, 2014:157).

Therefore, in the Yuhupdeh worldview, man is not only at the centre of the universe, but also controls it through the shamans who, of course, occupy a privileged place in this perception. And, if Western society was once theocentric and became anthropocentric, as Reimer (2005:20) points out, Yuhupdeh society has always been strongly anthropocentric.

3.5.4. "It can be like this for him"

Until quite recently, given that there was no access to television and no schools in their villages, all knowledge in Yuhupdeh society was transmitted from parents to children, from grandparents to grandchildren, from the oldest to the youngest, in an oral and experiential way. The deepest values of their cosmovision were revived and passed on in long walks through the forest, by hunting, gathering or fishing, working in the incipient gardens and by listening to mythical narratives, legends, tales and descriptions of real events contacted by shamans, parents and seniors around the fire. Girls learned about women's culture from women, and boys about men's culture from men.

About a generation ago, contact with boatmen and other agents of the regional society became frequent, but in a punctual and commercial way, aimed at the purchase of industrialised products. This was not enough to interfere with the value system. Also, given the lack of schools until recently, the Yuhupdeh were never influenced by Derrida's deconstructivism, Sartre's existentialism, and much less Nietzsche's perspectivism, yet they still have a strongly perspectivist worldview.

Viveiros de Castro (1998, 2002) and Tânia Lima (1996, 2005) developed the theory of Amerindian perspectivism, defending, with extensive ethnographic documentation, the fact that Amerindians in general have a peculiar way of interpreting reality called “cosmological perspectivism:”

“Perspectivism”, a cosmopolitical theory according to which the different centres of agency scattered in the universe are endowed with incompatible points of view: the view that humans have of themselves and their environment is different from that which animals have of humans, like the view that animals have of themselves (and their environment) is different from the view that humans have of animals, and so on (Viveiros de Castro, 2013:102).

Philippe Descola (2005), another applauded disciple of Lévi-Strauss, had already revised the old theory of animism, in terms of what he called the “animal model,” showing that, in the perception of Amerindians, the relationship between humans and animals is not guided by the trait of animality (humans are also animals), but by the trait of humanity (animals are also human). Dialoguing with the concepts of relativism and multiculturalism, Viveiros de Castro and Lima went beyond Descola, arguing that, in the view of the Amerindians, it is not only understood that animals are also human, but also that animals see themselves as such while humans also see themselves as animals.

To give the canonical example: humans see themselves as humans and jaguars as jaguars; but jaguars see themselves as humans, and humans as wild pigs—jaguars see the blood of their prey as corn ale, or some other drink enjoyed by every self-respecting human; and so on (Viveiros de Castro, 2013:103).

Details aside, what matters at this point is to note that Nietzsche's philosophy and Viveiros de Castro and Lima's anthropology, whether in urban Western societies or in Amerindian shamanic societies, show that the perspectivist conception of reality is nothing more than a form of relativism.

Amerindian perspectivism was widely documented among the Yuhupdeh by Silva and is also mentioned by Junio Felipe (2018:142), noting that their shamans have the ability to “turn into a jaguar” as well as to “wear the fish shirt”, in the sense of mystically assuming the perspective of animals.

Silva and Silva (2012:65) state that the Yuhupdeh are both perspectivist in Viveiros de Castro and Lima's terms and soulish in Descola's terms. For them, not only are animals human, but also many vegetables; animals and fish party, including piracemas (effervescence of spawning fish) where there are times when the fish are drunk and therefore can easily be caught; and like humans, animals have their shamans who even perform protection rituals to avoid being hunted and also launch mystical attacks against hunters and fishermen (Silva, 2009a:308,312,318,322,344). Carvalho (2014:119-120) makes an identical record among the Hupd'äh, describing the piracema of the aracu fish as a moment of collective intoxication.

For Silva and Silva, the classification of the universe and its beings in the Yuhupdeh cosmovision is not "black and white" but a "wide gray band:"

The distinction between the physical and the metaphysical is like a broad gray streak, so that the kukuy or "night monkey" is both a real, visible animal, but also a metaphysical being who can make shamanic attacks. As well as the boto, the anaconda and many others. They are animals, but they are also people. Certain fish, such as pirarara and stingray, were people in the past and that is why some do not eat them. Fish like aracus are also people and their piracemas are, in fact, parties of dabucuris watered with a lot of caxiri, where they get drunk and therefore it is easy to capture them (Silva & Silva, 2012:65).

This perspectivist perception of reality is an underlying aspect of the Yuhupdeh worldview, establishing broad relativism in the most different areas of life. Their mythical accounts present contradictory, non-consensual variations and, curiously, little or no importance is attached to such contradictions. Its most founding myth, the story of the *Yäh Baah Hóh* – "Canoe of Transformation" – tells of how their ancestors, in pre-human form, undertook a long journey inside a snake-canoe, going up rivers from east to west and, as they left the snake-canoe, transformed themselves into the current human form and also populated their territory. From clan to clan, from village to village and even among shamans of the same village, the mythical versions are discrepant and, when asked which would be the correct version, the answer is that *tih nihip yí' ni yí' uh nihip* – "for him it can be like that" (Silva, 2009a:30; Silva & Silva, 2012:64).

Silva (2009a:257-258) reports the discrepancies in versions of myths between two reference shamans, where one stated that the commander of the primal canoe snake was from the *Soop-Uy-Reh* clan, while for the other he was from the *Tõh-Uy-Reh* clan; for one, the

ancestors of the *Yãam-Uy-Reh* clan became the stream Ira while, for the other, it was the Esteio stream. As in the myths of origin, there is also a lack of consensus about the after-death, as for some the *hãgäg* – “life force” – goes to a mountain called *Boos-Paç*, and for others it goes to a place called *Tëg-Ag-Móy*. Some understand that the *hãgäg* becomes an animal and for others it simply ends, being reintegrated into the cosmos (Silva, 2009a:215-219,282,308). But the curious thing is not the fact that there are variants of these myths, but the acceptance of all versions as plausible, even though they are irreconcilable: after all, “it can be like that for him.” While in the West the concept of post-truth has gained traction only in recent years (Borges Jr, 2019:498), here is a traditionally rooted idea of post-truth in a tribal society.

It is possible to see the underlying relativism even in the Yuhupdeh linguistic structure. There is a considerable number of homonymous words, such as the morpheme *baak* that, without any phonological modification can be a verb – “tinging”, a classifier – “bundle shape” or even two distinct nouns – “jupati palm” and “insect house”, as well as, if pronounced with a descending tone it means “blowgun.” The *tuk* morpheme as a verb can have five distinct meanings – “to capsize,” “to want,” “to sting,” “to have wagging ears,” “to be dark,” and is still used as a temporal adverb – “in the morning” (Silva & Silva, 2012:93-94).

Phrasal constituents are also largely flexible. In most languages, there is a predictable structure around the position of the subject (S), verb (V) and object (O). In the Yuhupdeh language, however, the phrase may have the structure SOV, OSV, OVS and SVO depending on which of these elements one intends to focus on (Silva & Silva, 2012:103-196). Even the phrasal construction follows a logic of perspective.

This relativistic way of perceiving reality manifests itself in visible elements such as the structural aspect of the villages. Already at the beginning of their acquaintance with them and in light of previous experience with indigenous people from the Macro-Jê trunk, Silva and Silva (2007a:6) observe the absence of standard housing, with square, rectangular and round houses in different sizes, types and shape of coverage, some open, others closed with sticks, others with bark and still others with clay. While the Macro-Jê villages are always in a half-moon shape and the Tupi in general in a circular one, the Yuhupdeh villages do not have a standard shape (Silva, 2009a:10).

The same is true of their social organisation, a clan structure. They have fourteen clans that are of fundamental importance to identity. Upon meeting a stranger, one asks *niih yuhup ãm yih?* – literally, “what kind of people are you?” to which the other responds by declining his

clan affiliation, eg *paç-uy-yap ãh yip*, “I am [do clan] stone.” Therefore, one belongs to the ethnic group as a whole, belonging to a particular clan (Silva, 2011a:15).

Each of these clans has its own *corpus* of knowledge, including personal ethnic names, shamanic skills, and legends. This knowledge is related and similar to that of the other clans: however, it is often contradictory and, again, without any concern for reaching consensus. It is governed instead by the logic of “it can be like this for him.” This logic applies to the knowledge of other clans, other peoples and non-indigenous people. Thus, in contact with knowledge that differs from their cosmovision, whether in terms of school education, Western medicine or Christian missionary work, being different from the other is not necessarily seen as wrong, just as being different from the culture itself does not call on disrepute. These are just possibilities of parallel truths, even if they refer to the same reality.

Writing about postmodernism, Grenz says:

Postmoderns live in independent social groups, each of which has its own language, beliefs and values. Consequently, postmodern relativistic pluralism seeks to make room for the “local” nature of truth. Beliefs are held to be true in the context of communities that defend them [...] Postmoderns are also not necessarily concerned with proving that they are “right” and others “wrong” (Grenz, 2008:30).

One could well transcribe this statement by substituting Yuhupdeh for postmoderns and community for clan. Distinct societies, but both multiculturalists, and, as Veith (1999:137) observes, when talking about the “new tribalism” in postmodernity, “an effect of this multicultural perception is the intensification of relativism.”

While Bauman describes Western societies as liquid, noting that liquidity is a characteristic of fluidity, several researchers of the peoples that make up the Yuhupdeh ethnic family describe them as societies marked by “flexibility,” “mobility” and specifically “fluidity” (Reid, 1979:96-97; Pozzobon, 1983:240; Athias, 1995:222), while fluidity is a trait directly linked to relativism.

Even the perception of the cosmos does not escape relativistic logic. Postmodern cinemas explore and scientists discuss the possibility of multiple universes (Hawking & Hertog, 2018), while the Yuhupdeh by tradition already have their multiverse:

As we have already mentioned, the Yuhupdeh believe in the existence of an underworld, called *péj-dëh-saah* or *land of the umari river*. This world is below the dimension we live in, and the celestial stars, sun and moon, pass through this world daily, on a path called *werho-tíw* or *path of the sun* [...] a place where there is plenty, no one goes hungry you don't even have to work to eat. There live the umari fruit people, who see us as stinky (Silva, 2014:95).

In another source, Silva and Silva (2012:64) add that, in contrast to *yuhup-bö-saah* – “land of mortals” – where we live, in *péj-dëh-saah* “everything is inverted, so when here it's day there, it's night and vice versa.” In other words, a notion of the multiverse in the most expressive terms of scientific speculations, influenced by the most entrenched relativism, in fact, which seems not to be peculiar to the Yuhupdeh, but something present in other indigenous cosmologies, as suggested by Danowski and Viveiros de Castro (2017:107), who term it “a relational multiverse.”

Therefore, on the axis of reality, where one seeks to understand “the group's conception of truth,” ample ethnographic data point to considerable relativism that traditionally underlies the Yuhupdeh cosmovision.

3.5.5. "I alone, separately"

From an urban Western perspective, in light of common sense and what is propagated in the media, there is a generalised impression of indigenous people as strongly collectivist societies, living in villages in a harmonious way, sharing everything and clinging to nothing. Not only common sense, but also the vision of classical anthropology itself in asymmetrical comparison declare of the virtues of tribal societies in contrast with the ills of urban societies.

However, in recent decades, different ethnologists, describing different indigenous peoples, have pointed out, to the general surprise, the trait of individualism among indigenous peoples. Nelly Arvelo-Jimenez (1971:112) speaks of the “individualist tendencies” of the Yekuana indigenous peoples on the borders between Venezuela and Brazil; Sally Koehn (1975:100) describes the Apalaí, from the borders between Brazil, Suriname, and French Guiana, as “very individualistic;” on the Wayana of the same region, Jean Lapointe (1970) observes that they give more importance to individual roles than to collective ones; and John Gillin (1936) emphasises the individualistic nature of the Carib peoples of the Rio Barama region of Guyana.

These curious quotes became so abundant that one of the most brilliant British ethnologists, Peter Rivière (2001), dedicated himself to studying the phenomenon of individualism among indigenous people, analysing the Guiana region. He concluded that the individualism of the peoples of Guyana is not a personal trait, but a social one:

I hesitate to regard it [individualism] as some kind of psychological characteristic, but instead I propose that it is an attribute of the atomistic social systems that individuals constitute (Rivière, 2001:133).

According to Rivière (2001: 128), the individualism of these peoples is so marked that “many ethnographers have pointed out that an adult man and woman form a self-sufficient productive and reproductive unit” and he adds that “with the obvious exception of biological reproduction, virtually there are no tasks essential to individual survival that need cooperation” (Rivière, 2001:132).

He not only analyses the peoples of Guyana, but also compares them with available data gleaned from other ethnographic areas, in particular north-western Amazonia, where the Tukano, Hupd’äh and Yuhupdeh live. His conclusion is that there is a strong similarity with other regions of South America, “the Guyana mosaic being simply one piece of a larger mosaic” (Rivière, 2001: 28).

Such a trait is repeatedly mentioned by Silva in his descriptions of the Yuhupdeh. Traditionally forest nomads, they are designed to survive in a hostile environment in a small group, be it the nuclear family or just the couple. Thus, the degree of autonomy of the person is extremely high and results almost inevitably in a marked individualism.

Until a few decades ago, the Yuhupdeh did not live in villages, but in extended families scattered through the forest, circulating between the interflaves of rivers and streams according to the flow of hunting and the seasonality of the fruits, as one of their elders reports:

In our grandparents' time, there was no school. They didn't live in communities like they do today. The families lived apart, walking along the forest paths and small streams. From time to time some families would meet and have a party. They danced, drank caxiri of wild fruits and, in the end, distributed umari beiju. It was at these meetings that marriages took place. There were no houses like today. They lived in camps and lived in tents made of sororoca and patauá leaves (Silva & Silva, 2011:9)

Since the 1960s they have been forming villages: however, the nomadic logic of small autonomous groups remains vivid in their cosmovision (Pozzobon, 1983:188-92). Thus, Silva (2009a:20) observes that collective activities in favour of a family are minimal and always paid for. The main activity that requires the group's participation is the felling of trees, with an axe, to make cassava fields. The family that needs to cut down the trees invites the men of the village to join forces, most of them consanguineous or related, who generally attend willingly, but not for free. The collective effort is always paid for with fermented drink, served at the end of the work; and if it is not abundant, gossip and criticism will be inevitable.

According to them, the men willingly participate in the joint efforts because they know that, at some point, they will also need the support of others to cut down their own fields. This agricultural practice is not traditional to them. It was adopted from the Tukano peoples and became necessary because of the change to a more sedentary existence. An indication of this is the fact that there is no specific word in the mother tongue for joint effort, using the generic term *bɛ'* – “work” – or more commonly the word “ajuri” in regional Portuguese.

Community service does occur. It is aimed at the whole group and not a family, and includes cleaning the village yard, renovating the community centre or school. By the same logic, such activities are also paid for, in this case by the village leader serving fermented drink (made from manioc) from his garden in abundance at the end of the work, because if this does not happen, he will be poorly spoken of and will soon lose his leadership.

Even though the Yuhupdeh already live in villages, the camps are fronts. Where they used to set up hunting camps in the interior of the forest, in recent decades they started to set up fishing camps on the banks of rivers and, in recent years, money camps near the city in search of government benefits. In these camps, the nomadic logic, centred on the small family, is again evident. There is no community activity there, with each family taking care of its own provision. In fishing camps, they prefer families to camp at a good distance from each other (Silva, 2009a:394-395). On the outskirts of the city, with little space available, the proximity of the camps is inevitable, as well as the many discussions with animosity and fights where physical aggression is inevitable (Silva, 2011:25).

Despite the internal cohesion of families, each forming its own little world and self-sufficient unit of production, full harmony and internal collectivism do not exist. In fact, quarrels and manifestations of individualism within the small family group are frequent. Physical aggression

among siblings is common on days of drinking and fratricide cases do even occur (Silva, 2011:26).

Silva (2009a:142) mentions day-to-day facts that shocked him during his early days together with the community, especially because of the image he had of a strongly collectivist group. On one occasion, a young couple built their house all alone by themselves, with close relatives nearby, blood family, who did not move a straw to help them. At another time, a couple with small children, the wife eight months pregnant, carried heavy bundles of straw to repair the roof of their house alone, preparing it for the arrival of another child. Nearby, the husband's brothers and nephews and even the wife's teenage brothers, orphans raised by her, did nothing to help. Interestingly, those who worked hard themselves had no expectation of receiving help, as in their fields there was not enough cassava to pay for the help with fermented drink, so each one worked *ãh hu' ãh pa ni pa* – “I alone, separately” – or, more loosely translated, “privately.” “Me alone, separately” is the work pattern in that culture, not the exception (Silva, 2009a:364).

More frightening for the missionary (Silva, 2009a:368-369) was witnessing the solitary work of the older couple in a small village, being they the parents, in-laws, grandparents or uncles of literally everyone there, he was also the shaman and both of them with weak health. While he was changing all the straw in his house – always hard work in the blazing Amazon sun – nearby, day after day, all his relatives went about their business as usual, as if nothing was happening, with no one helping the elderly. On a hot afternoon, one of their young children and two teenage grandchildren who lived with them were having fun in the village courtyard. Another unmarried son rested in a hammock at school, while the elderly couple arranged straws in the hot sun by tying them with a vine. The missionary could not contain himself and went to help, but the old shaman soon asked him what he would want in payment, as he had nothing to pay with. Silva helped him throughout the afternoon, making it clear that he was doing nothing while waiting for payment but, still, when he finished the work, the shaman observed: “later I'll pay by telling you a myth” (Silva, 2009a:369).

This individualistic logic is forged since childhood, because even among children who live together daily there is no habit of sharing. There were three children in the same room, and three cookies were given to one of them, but she did not share it with the others and they did not try to take it. They would rather speak to the donor with the expectation of being considered for cookies as well.

It must be said that, in fact, there are some manifestations of collectivism present in everyday life in a more spontaneous way, such as the morning breakfast which, not in all villages and not every day, but certainly most of the time involves gathering together. This is also the time to deal with matters that concern the group as a whole. When large animals such as a tapir or several wild pigs are hunted, they are usually eaten collectively. The dabucuri – *pã* rituals – are essentially collective, where men from a village present visitors or women with fruit, fish or game. And, finally, there are frequent caxiri parties – *äg* – when everyone drinks together. However, all these practices are regional symbols of collectivism, the way of being a village, therefore, not traditional Yuhupdeh, but practices imported from the last generations when they gradually changed to a sedentary way of life (Silva, 2009a:15,31).

The individual prevails in the traditional Yuhupdeh worldview and is seen as more important than the group. Indeed, he or she seeks independence from the group, despite the fact that it cannot be comprehensively achieved. Evidence of this is the fact that even young people and adolescents enjoy autonomy to make personal decisions that are contrary to the majority opinion without suffering retaliation (Silva, 2009a:32).

This way of relating to the other can be observed within the nuclear family, within the extended family and within a village, as well as within the relationships among villages, among ethnicities and among indigenous and non-indigenous people. Therefore, in the group axis, which analyses the Yuhupdeh's "personal orientation in the relationship with equals," the trend is individualistic, despite certain manifestations of collectivity. Here it is worth remembering the minimalist collectivism of Tocqueville (1863:120), only of the family and friends who, in the end, is nothing more than individualism. Just as in postmodernism a strong appeal for communities exists, usually virtual and homogeneous ones, which, in the end, are at the service of the person and not the other way around, so among the Yuhupdeh there are communities, real and generally monoethnic, but they centre on the individuals and not the group.

3.5.6. "He's the one who knows"

In the same way that the common imagination imagines indigenous societies to be models of perfect and harmonious collectivism, the figure of the chief, in the Western imagination, is that of a traditional leader who enjoys broad and unquestionable respect, with authority and autonomy to decide and guide, and even to forbid and enforce.

In this regard, the Brazilian ethnologist Julio Cezar Melatti (2007:155) frustrates the popular imagination by stating: “no one thinks, however, that the head of an indigenous village is like an absolute master, who does what you understand.” And he assertively describes the overall leadership picture of an indigenous village:

In general, indigenous societies in Brazil lack a centralized authority, an administrative machine, judicial institutions. Its political system is not very complex. It seems that none of them gets to have a chief who commands them as a whole, except those that are limited to a village. In fact, the biggest political unit is the village; each village is politically independent: it does not recognize any authority higher than that of its chief, and may even enter into armed conflict with other villages of the same ethnicity (Melatti, 2007:155).

What Melatti is affirming is that, throughout indigenous Brazil, there is no tribal chief figure or any traditional authority above the village, even in peoples with a larger population consisting of several villages.

This same pattern was observed among the peoples of Guyanas:

There is little evidence of the existence in the memory of the inhabitants of the region of any forms of organization that overlapped the villages. In the absence of any far-reaching, hierarchically ordered institution, each village rules itself and its internal political structure will be better studied in isolation (Rivière, 2001:105).

Referring to the Akawaio of Guyana, Audrey Butt, a British ethnologist from Oxford, states that they have no idea of what authority is and are in fact characterised by a “very independent nature” (Butt, 1954:33,44-46).

In the understanding of Rivière (2001:51), “the size of a village is the index of the effectiveness of its leader” and adds that, in the Guianas, “the average village contains about 30 people and the largest ones rarely contain more than 50” (Rivière, 2001:107).

The leader does not have the authority to intervene and resolve social conflicts, which are inevitable in community life. The result is that the form of solving conflicts is separation, with the offended leaving the village to take up residence elsewhere (Rivière, 2001:108).

The same ethnologist holds a caveat about the Tiriyo villages, some of which are ten times larger than others. He concludes, however, that the large villages are those with a religious mission nearby, because the missionaries manage dissension by avoiding fissions (Rivière, 2001: 51).

Exactly the same pattern has been registered in the northwest of the Brazilian Amazon by different researchers among different people groups. Renato Athias (1995:160), researcher of the Hupd'äh, a group belonging to the same family as the Yuhupdeh, observes that the average population of the traditional villages of that people is 40, with the exception of four villages, which he calls "mission villages:" each of these had more than 200 people due to the presence of Catholic nuns who intermediated and resolved social conflicts.

The pattern observed by Silva among the Yuhupdeh is no different. There is no leadership beyond the local village (Silva, 2009a:11) and in those with more traditional characteristics the population average was 50 people in 2010. The only exception was a village in a distant region with more than 300 people, because there was a Protestant missionary who assisted around community health. It was an attraction for the families, as well as the fact that she helped to alleviate conflicts and prevent fissions (Silva, 2010:7).

The leader in the Yuhupdeh language is called *muhúk*, a traditional term for the head of the family, usually the oldest or most virile, who had better traits for undertaking hunting, guiding the youngest through the forest and providing what is necessary for the family (Silva & Silva, 2012:224). With the formation of villages and following the regional model of a community leader, this function was instituted, which in regional Portuguese is translated as a "captain" in reference to the commander of a vessel. The village *muhuk*, however, as in the cases of the other peoples mentioned above, has very little authority over the community. Resolving conflicts between people or families is unthinkable. Giving orders or making prohibitions would make him a laughingstock, and if he would insist on such behaviour in the short term, he would be deposed of his function.

This role is generally not disputed and few accept to run for it, as they know that to lead in those villages entails considerable patience around listening to demands, constant criticism and frequent slander. The *muhúk* is, in fact, a representative of the village, showing the moral of the village to the outside world such as when a visitor arrives. The few internal articulations centre on simple actions such as organising the cleaning of the courtyard and the renovation of the community centre or the school, as indicated (Lolli, 2010:36-37; Junio Felipe, 2018:34). Even so, when he organises a collective action, he has to "pay" the community members by

serving an abundance of fermented beverages made with manioc from his own fields, again as indicated. The good *muhúk* is the one who, internally, manages to motivate people, organises the few community actions by "paying" well and externally manages to bring the greatest number of benefits to the village, maintaining contact with government institutions responsible for assisting indigenous people in the areas of territory, education and health. Generally, the leader is the one who has the largest number of consanguineous and related relatives in the village, as his leadership is channelled by kinship ties rather than by authority (Silva, 2009a:39).

Silva also observes that there is no kind of social sanction for mistakes made, so that, in cases of serious mistakes, the transgressor himself takes the initiative to leave the village or be absent for some time, until his deeds, in theory, fall by the wayside. If he does not do it voluntarily, neither the *muhúk* nor anyone else will impose any sanction on him: however, the gossip will be unbearable (Silva, 2011:15).

Within the family, parents do not discipline their children, even in acts that become known to the public and bring embarrassment, such as petty theft committed by children and adolescents. If the practice persists and becomes a major constraint for the family, the smallest offender is usually taken to the shaman in search of a ritual for him to abandon the practice (Silva, 2009a:171, 282-283, 300-301).

This picture shows that, on the authority axis, which seeks to understand the "group orientation in relation to leadership," the Yuhupdeh cosmovision is markedly egalitarian and, in fact, refractory to the figure of strong leadership. And this egalitarianism is manifested in other areas of society, such as in the structure of the villages, where each one builds their home in the place and format they want, making their villages shapeless, without a characteristic pattern like the villages of the Yanomami peoples from the same region or Tupi and Macro-Jê from central and eastern Brazil (Melatti, 2007:120).

Despite living with the Tukano peoples, which in their internal social organisation maintain a hierarchy among clans where some are considered to be elders and others intermediates and minors, the Yuhupdeh have not been influenced in this direction over the generations. Some recognise, in a non-consensual way, a certain subdivision of their clans into "major" and "minor," but among the clans there is no hierarchy (Silva, 2011:20).

Even in cosmology, egalitarianism is present, seeing that the many mystical beings in their universe are not superior to humans but are equal with them, and can indeed even be exterminated by a shaman, at least in theory (Silva & Silva, 2012:65).

This strong egalitarianism is directly linked to the high autonomy of the individual in Yuhupdeh society. So, for example, a family goes on a trip or goes to a camp without asking anyone for permission and without giving anyone any satisfaction. If you would ask someone when that family will return, usually the answer is *tih hu' uh yap yãh pãhap* – “he is the one who knows” (Silva, 2009a:61). This expression indicates the person's autonomy to choose for themselves and make their own decisions without depending on anyone's permission. While Western societies have become increasingly egalitarian, Yuhupdeh society has always been.

3.5.7. "We drink caxiri for fun"

The process of commodifying desires does not directly affect the Yuhupdeh, as does the use of the body in consumer seduction, so characteristic of Western societies. Marital relationships are long-lasting and, in fact, only recently did we hear about separations in already consolidated unions which, even so, were sporadic. However, abnegation and resignation of desires are not characteristics at all related to that society. On the contrary, there are different ways to achieve this, but these are equally oriented towards the satisfying of desire and self-fulfilment.

One of the most notable evidences of this is the frequent party abundantly watered by the fermented drink known as caxiri – *ãg*. In fact, “party,” “drink” and “caxiri” are indicated by a single word in the Yuhupdeh language, so feasting and drinking are exactly the same thing in their worldview.

Caxiri is a common drink among many indigenous peoples of the Amazon, and is made through fermentation of cassava in a process that can take three to four days, as described by Galvão, who adds that it is “the favorite and mandatory drink in any social or religious meeting.” He is referring to the indigenous people in general of the Alto Rio Negro region, where the Yuhupdeh live, and, as its alcohol content is similar to that of barley beer, when it is “consumed in large quantities, caxiri is capable of causing drunkenness” (Galvão, 1979:161-162). Both Lolli (2010:40,123-125) and Junio Felipe (2018:35) comment on the use of caxiri among the Yuhupdeh. Elisângela Silva (2018) did specific research on this practice among them and Lenita Assis about it among the Dâw, from the same language family.

Parties/drinking are frequent and do not follow a calendar, being spontaneously scheduled by someone's suggestion. At the time of collection of certain fruits, they become even more commonplace, and can also be provoked by visits to other villages, cultural events and, more recently, educational, sporting or political events. In fact, any gathering beyond the ordinary ends with a party/drinking.

The preparation of caxiri is the exclusive responsibility of the women, each in their own homes and with cassava from their own fields. As the swiddens are incipient, the best cassavas are used in the preparation of the caxiris and those of secondary quality for daily food. At the time of the party, the men sit in a circle in the community room while the women serve one after the other, with gourds for collective use, the caxiri they have prepared. As a result, the women themselves drink and when everyone is already drunk, even children aged 6 or 7 also drink (Silva, 2018:24-25).

As they consume large quantities and only stop when they finish all the drinking, the result of collective drunkenness is almost always confrontations and aggression, as Junio Felipe witnessed and described:

However, as the dance progresses into the night and the alcohol level increases, conflicts are generally unavoidable. On the first night of the party, I witnessed two fights, one between a couple and the other between father and son. The reasons are numerous, jealousy, suspicions of treason, accusations of stinginess, old resentments erupt in the drunken state, giving rise to conflicts involving, many times, several contenders. On the other hand, there are many who take action to appease tempers and, not infrequently, the confusion ends in the whining of all those involved (Junio Felipe, 2018:56).

Silva (2009a:141,148,348-349,369-370) made several extensive accounts of the consequences of this state of collective drunkenness, such as physical aggression from parents to children, young children to elderly mothers, fights between siblings including even stabbing, husbands assaulting pregnant wives, couples assaulting each other, houses burning, villages dividing and even cases of murder and suicide.

Even though they are aware of the harm and often complain about them, the practice is deep-rooted and persistent throughout the region. Assis, analysing the traditional caxiri of the Dâw, suggests that it has to do with a process of "social integration," to "strengthen the bonds of

social reciprocity between families” (Assis, 2001:46). Be that as it may, it is still an expression of hedonism when through collective drunkenness desires are released and justified.

An indication of such a perspective is the fact that this intoxicated environment is particularly motivated by the search for joy, entertainment, extravasation. As Silva (2011b:22) notes, it is said that “we take caxiri for fun.” Another sign of the said hedonism, even more significant, is sexual release that occurs during drunkenness, with common marital betrayals, usually considered reprehensible, now seen to be justified in those circumstances (Silva, 2018:25).

Sex among young people is also free during drunkenness: it is seen as a diversion for singles, without damaging the girls' morals as long as they do not get pregnant (Silva, 2009a:232-233). In fact, when teenagers start to menstruate, their parents take them for a shamanic ritual so that they do not get pregnant before they get a husband, assuming that from then on, sexual practice will be inevitable (Silva, 2009a:59).

Carvalho describes a similar scenario among the Hupd'äh on caxiri days, where fights between relatives, couples, parents and children break out and homicides, thefts, marital betrayals, and free sex occur among young people along with thefts – and the same justification is used: “That's right, the drink is the joy of the party! Without caxiri it is difficult to live. It is with caxiri that we feel happy. Without it our life is very sad” (Carvalho, 2014:134-136).

Sexual liberality among the Yuhupdeh is not only easily observed in their behaviour, it is also recorded in their mythology. *Saah-Säw*, its main mythical hero, demiurge organiser of the universe, was sexually depraved (Silva, 2009a:420). His daughter, whose name is unknown, was sexually compulsive, had sex with almost every animal in the forest and became pregnant without knowing who the child's father was. *Dö'-Saa*, the son of this pregnancy, who became the second most important mythical hero, began his sexual activity in early childhood (Silva, 2009a:433-435).

Therefore, the “group frame of reference regarding personal fulfilment” in the Yuhupdeh cosmovision is also hedonistic, as it follows the logic of satisfying desires, even if at a high cost for the family and their social environment.

3.5.8. "Waiting to pass the shame"

While it is surprising to note the shift in the Western worldview from guilt to shame, it is not at all surprising to note the centrality of shame in the Yuhupdeh worldview, which matches the notes of Käser (2004:137), K. Müller (2013:108) and R. Muller (2013:133) about tribal societies.

Silva and Silva (2012:65) mention the Yuhupdeh myth of the first incest, according to which, in early times, a young woman was being sexually molested in the dark of night. Unable to identify her molester, she prepared a gourd with genipap paint, used for body painting that, once soaked into the skin, does not come off easily. That night he appeared again and during intercourse she marked his face with ink. The molester was *Wero*, the Sun-Moon, her brother, who at daybreak noticed the mark on his face in the reflection of water and was terrified to think that everyone would discover incest. Just thinking about it, the shame was such that he threw himself into the water and committed the first suicide. *Saah-Sāw*, the mythical hero, resurrected him, but *Wero* could not bear the idea of living with that shame and for that reason he distanced himself from everyone, rising to the cosmic path that he still travels day and night.

Boho' – "to be ashamed" – is one of the most frequent and embarrassing words in the everyday life of the villages, while "right" and "wrong," both related to guilt, are non-existent. The closest concepts are *tuhup* – "beautiful, beautiful" – as well as *teheh* – "ugly, bad;" however, generally a behaviour is only classified as "ugly" if seen by others: only therefore does it cause shame and embarrassment (Silva, 2009a:21-22).

This orientation of conscience towards error leads to escape and avoiding behaviour, including a very common expression for such practice: *boho' wah pu* – "passing the shame." After fights in collective drunkenness, those who feel ashamed avoid transiting through the village and participating in gatherings for a few days, until "the shame passes." When the embarrassment is greater, sometimes the whole family leaves the village, going to a camp or to another village where they have relatives, staying there for weeks or months, hoping to "pass the shame." And in very serious cases, the embarrassed family leaves the village, settling elsewhere, so as to not have to live with embarrassment (Silva, 2009a:142,294). Therefore, regarding the axis of elenctic, where one seeks to understand "the orientation of conscience in the face of error," the Yuhupdeh worldview is clearly one of shame.

Not only the Yuhupdeh, but all peoples in the region share this orientation. Faced with public embarrassment, some exalt themselves by becoming aggressive, while others sink into a

deep melancholy and, as in the *Wero* myth, even commit suicide when deeply ashamed (Silva, 2006:23). Even indigenous believers found in villages that had been reached by the gospel seven decades ago maintain differentiated relationships in the face of embarrassment. Silva (2014:84) mentions an indigenous pastor who asked to be disciplined because his single daughter had brought shame to the family, as well as cases of believers who self-discipline when they commit sin, moving away from church activities not because they abandon the faith, but because they are waiting for “the shame to pass.”

3.6. Initial conclusions

This chapter has sought to show that, despite exotic sociocultural differences, the Yuhupdeh shamanic worldview is underpinned surprisingly by values that are deeply similar to the urban postmodern Western worldview when it comes to the first two dimensions of analysis. Only the manifestations differ.

In (I) **relations with the world**, the Yuhupdeh cosmovision has (1) a more *utilitarian* orientation towards the environment, making use of natural resources in a purely instrumental way, not causing greater environmental damage due to low population density and little access to technology rather than by an affective, preservationist conscience; (2) a more *presentist* in relation to time, clearly expressed in linguistic structure and sociocultural behaviour, without attachment to the past and concerns about the future; (3) a more *anthropocentric* view around its cosmic allocation, where the world is infested with mystical beings of which none occupies a privileged place, and without the figure of a creator, gods or any cultic ritual life centred on man; and (4) a more *relativist* view regarding the conception of truth, while perceiving the world, its entities, narratives and values in a strongly perspectivist way and with a clan-based social structure that expresses and reinforces relativism.

In their (II) **relationships with the human**, they present (5) a more *individualistic* orientation with regard to the group, maintaining a nomadic forest logic where the person is programmed to survive in the most autonomous way possible; (6) a more *egalitarian* view with reference to leadership, with no traditional expression of authority beyond the family and, in fact, a refractory attitude around hierarchies; (7) a more *hedonistic* view in relation to their desires, with social mechanisms that allow desires to escape and the search for joy and sexual freedom; and (8) a view where *shame* determines the orientation of conscience, with processes of avoidance in the face of embarrassment where the evaluation of the other is more important than to the behaviour itself.

How two societies so distinct and without historical connection can have such similar worldview values will be the subject of the next chapter.

YUHUPDEH WORLDVIEW		
AXLES	QUESTIONS	NOTIONS
1. RELATIONS WITH THE WORLD		
1. Spatiality:	What is the basic orientation in the relationship with the environment?	+utility
2. Temporality:	What is the orientation in relation to time?	+presentist
3. Cosmocentricity:	Who is at the centre of the universe?	+anthropocentric
4. Reality:	What is the group's conception of truth?	+relativistic
2. RELATIONS WITH OTHER HUMANS		
5. Collectivity	What is the personal orientation in the relationship with equals?	+individualistic
6. Authority:	What is the group's orientation towards leadership?	+egalitarian
7. Desires:	What is the group's orientation towards personal fulfilment?	+hedonistic
8. Elenticity:	What is the orientation of the conscience in the face of error?	+shame

Table 3: Yuhupdeh worldview

CHAPTER 4 – ANALYZING THE SIMILARITIES: REASONS, AND CONTRIBUTIONS TO STUDIES IN POSTMODERNISM

“In the same way we may be able to show that the same logical processes operate in myth as in science, and that man has always been thinking equally well.”

Claude Lévi-Strauss (1963:230)

This chapter will be dedicated to the description of the third dimension of analysis, the relationships with the divine, as found in both worldviews, seeking to indicate the probable reasons for the similarities between them.

In the relationship with the divine, we seek to understand the axes of religiosity and sacredness in the light of the respective research questions "what is the method of relating to the divine?" and "what is the concept of fundamental reality?." In contrast with the previous chapters, these two axes/questions will be considered together here for each of the worldviews, first the shamanic, in continuance with chapter 3, and finally in the postmodern.

4.1. Relations with the divine in the Yuhupdeh worldview

As mentioned, the Yuhupdeh do not have a figure of a creator in their cosmology, as their myths about the beginning start with a pre-existing cosmos already containing forest, primeval races and a large lake, known as *dēh-pun-dēh-hóy* – the “lake of milk” or the “primeval lake.” The ancestors were amphibious in shape, surviving both on land and in water, and waged great wars resulting in the extermination of entire peoples. Great shamans already existed and, thus, Saah-Sāw and his grandson Dö'-Saa, became the great mythical heroes of that primordial epoch, demiurges who gave rise to contemporary cultural habits, while leading humanoid ancestors through a process of transformation into their human form as known today (Silva, 2014:111,215-219). These demiurges were neither gods nor spirits, but great human shamans with superhuman powers who died and no longer exist.

At present, the cosmos is infested with mystical beings who cannot be classified as “spirits” in the conventional sense of the term. They have physical bodies, although many are invisible: they feed, have physiological needs, marry or mate, reproduce and are mortal, despite not dying naturally – therefore, they have a certain resemblance to the gods and demigods of Greek mythology, although they cannot be classified as such. Among them are common

beings and shamanic beings who attack humans with witchcraft, causing diseases and death. All are malevolent and must be repelled, blocked or, more commonly, deceived by human shamans, and are never to be invoked or even treated in a cordial manner. The relationship with them is that of a state of war with no possibility of a truce (Silva, 2014:158).

Thus, in the traditional Yuhupdeh religiosity there is no cultic ritual, sacrifice, adoration or even reverence for anyone or anything (Silva, 2014:73). This does not mean, however, that there is no religious expression in their culture. On the contrary, they are deeply mystical, with a deep-rooted religiosity that manifests in all areas of life, from the major issues of the group to the most common problems of the individual.

John Calvin understood that human beings carry within themselves a *sensus divinitatis* or “sense of divinity:”

That there is in the human mind, and indeed by natural disposition, a certain census of divinity, we consider as beyond any doubt [...] there is no nation so barbaric, no people so savage, that this conviction is not deeply rooted: God exists! (Calvin, 2006:47)

Here however, in the Yuhupdeh, we find a worldview that defies such understanding, given the absence of a creator figure in their cosmology as well as the absence of any benefactor from beyond reality in their religious expression. Even so, there is a *sensus divinitatis* among the Yuhupdeh: however, their conception of it is distant from that of biblical revelation. What they have left of the divine revelation is no longer a personal being but rather an impersonal mystical force.

4.1.1. The concept of an impersonal mystic force

Émile Durkheim (2008) carried out extensive studies on forces. “Force” can be understood as an agent capable of autonomously triggering actions or events, which can be natural or mystical, personal or impersonal (Houaiss, 2009). Impersonal forces contrast with personal beings, which can be natural or mystical. A human being is a **natural personal being**, as he or she is endowed with intelligence, personality, and exists in this world, not beyond. God, angels, devil, demons are also examples of personal beings, but not in a natural state: they are **mystical personal beings**. “Mystical” in this case does not refer to mysticism but rather to the spiritual or supernatural that are not subject to natural or physical laws. Gravity, electromagnetism, in a way even wind and water, are good examples of forces, as they are

agents with the capacity to trigger events autonomously: however, they are not entities endowed with intelligence and personality, they are not beings, nor are they people, therefore they are impersonal forces. They are natural, not mystical. Therefore, they are **natural impersonal forces**. However, is there any example of mystical impersonal forces?

Being/Force	Being Personal	Impersonal Force
Natural	Man	Gravity
Mystic	God	?

Table 4: Being x Force

As mentioned earlier, Robert Codrington, an Anglican missionary and anthropologist on Norfolk Island, Australia, was the first to record and describe the concept of an impersonal mystical force, called *mana*, by the Melanasiens.

Melanasiens believe in the existence of a force absolutely different from any material force, which acts in all possible ways, whether for good or for evil, and that man has a great interest in seizing and controlling: it is the *mana* . . . The whole religion of the Melanasiens consists of acquiring *mana* for oneself, either for one's own benefit or for the benefit of others (Codrington, 1891:118-119).

Here, then, we have an example of a mystical impersonal force.

Being/Force	Being Personal	Impersonal Force
Natural	Man	Gravity
Mystic	God	<i>Mana</i>

Table 5: Concept of "mana"

4.1.2. *Dăăwă-Wág* – The “cosmic life” of the Yuhupdeh

Robert Marret (1914:99-121) and Durkheim (2008:245-246) expanded and disseminated studies on *mana*, recording the use of this concept amongst different peoples from different parts of the world, including North American Indians such as the Sioux, Shoshone, Algonkin, Kwakiutl, Tlinkit, Haida and Iroquois.

Among the indigenous peoples of the Amazon, however, this concept was registered among the Yuhupdeh only, as far as is known, by Silva, and was documented in his field notebook and in later publications:

08/05/2008: Today Duy spoke to me of an element called Dääwä-Wág ["live" + "cosmos"], translating only as "life." According to him, Dääwä-Wág is a "life" that is present in everything that is alive, such as animals, trees, fish and also in the river... It is everywhere and does not end with death. He said that any child learns from his parents that – yuhup böi dääwä-wág hu 'nih – "we human beings die, but 'life' never ends." Ordinary "life" (dääw – existence, and pib – physical vigor) ends with physical death, but the Dääwä-Wág remains beyond man and the world. We seem to have finally found the concept of a force of life and it's an impersonal force! (Silva, 2009a:312-313)

The mystical force that surrounds the cosmos, animating and sustaining everything in it, is called *dääwä-wág*, literally "life of the cosmos", or simply "life." It is not, however, a simple life that begins with conception and vanishes with death. Everyone knows that *in yuhup, böi dääwä-wág hu' nih*, that is, "we humans die, but life never ends." Without this force all living beings would die, the forest would end, the rivers would dry up, nothing that exists would exist. The *dääwä-wág* is little known and understood, but it is the central element of the Yuhupdeh universe, involving the entire cosmos and keeping it alive, as well as generating a trace of continuity between what we call human and non-human, culture and nature. The different entities of the universe have *hãg-wãg*, literally "heart," but, in fact, "soul," this being the point of concentration of the *dääwä-wág* in each being so that its extinction generates death. The existence of this centre of captivating force is what keeps the trace of humanity in each being and it's connection to the entire universe (Silva & Silva, 2012:65-66)

Behind this picture is the *dääwä-wág*, an impersonal force that gives life to everything and everyone, that *animates* the universe, and without which nothing that exists could exist. It is great, because it is above all, it is also omnipresent, because it involves the entire universe, it is powerful, because it can make anything happen. It is the generator of life, in fact, it is considered life itself, but it is totally impersonal, non-relational, a-ethical and manipulable (Silva, 2014:73)

Referring to the impersonal strength of the Melanesians, Durkheim states:

Individuals die, generations pass and are replaced by others, but this force is always present, alive and similar to itself. It animates today's generations just as it animated yesterday's, just as it will animate tomorrow's (Durkheim, 2008 [1912]:240).

In a common everyday phrase expressing especially a certain fatalism in the face of reprimands or warnings, the Yuhupdeh state:

in yuhup böi dääwä-wág hu' nih

“we humans die, but life [impersonal force] never ends” (Silva & Silva, 2012:65).

Even though he spent limited time among the Yuhupdeh and did not learn their language, Junio Felipe also makes mention of this concept in his thesis when he describes the ritual of naming a new-born: “It is part of the vital force, *daawa-wag*, accumulated in the original moment when the transformation of the fish people into the ancestral humans took place” (Junio Felipe, 2018:131-132). In fact, the idea is that each living being has a small portion of this impersonal force, which is what gives them life: this is their “vital force.” In the case of humans, it is lodged in the central part of the meeting of the abdomen and chest, which is called the “heart.” If that force is gone, the person dies. This happens with everything that is alive, such as birds, fish, animals, insects, vegetables and also the river. Mystical beings alike are alive by having a portion of the *Dääwä-Wág*, as is the entire universe. It is, thus a typical picture of what would once have been called animism: however, not in the sense of souls or spirits animating the universe, but rather an impersonal mystical force.

Durkheim calls the system of thought centred on impersonal forces “totemism,” arguing that it is the oldest and most elementary form of religious structure.

In other words, totemism is the religion, not of such animals, or such men, or such images, but of a kind of anonymous and impersonal force that is found in each of these beings, without however being confused with any of them (Durkheim, 2008:239).

In this sense, a system of thought centred on man as centred on natural personal beings would be “humanism;” centred on impersonal natural forces it would be “naturalism;” centred on God as a mystical personal being it would be “theism;” and the system centred on impersonal mystical forces would be “totemism.”

Being/Force	Being Personal	Impersonal Force
Natural	Man “humanism”	Gravity “naturalism”
Mystic	God “theism”	<i>Mana</i> “totemism”

Table 6: Concept of “totemism”

4.1.3. The Yuhupdeh totemism

The *Dääwä-Wág* not only “animates” the Yuhupdeh universe, but it is also the ultimate reality of its worldview, the remnant of the *sensus divinitatis* in that society. Therefore, on the axis of sacredness, it can be said that the Yuhupdeh perceive their “fundamental reality” as totally impersonal.

For ordinary Yuhupdeh, the *Dääwä-Wág* is nothing more than the life of the universe and everything that inhabits it. For shamans, however, it is the source of all power by which to manage the cosmos, cure disease and cause illness, defend against and counteract mystical beings and unfriendly shamans.

The *Dääwä-Wág* is omnipresent, encompassing everything from the macro to the micro-universe; it is also extremely powerful, limited only by the shaman's skill around using it properly; it is pre-existent, not having been created; infinite, as it passes from generations to generations while remaining the same; and inexhaustible, since it can be used exhaustively without being exhausted. Not being a personal being, but a force, it is naturally amoral and a-ethical, and can be channelled for both good and evil. It not only gives life to what exists, but also connects all beings in the universe. The Yuhupdeh clans are a social expression of totemism: so, for example, the jaguar clan does not, as some think, harbour a feeling of mystical kinship with the jaguar feline, but rather only enjoys a connection of strength via *Dääwä-Wág* with that feline.

4.1.4. Totemism and religiosity Yuhupdeh

Marcel Mauss (2003:151-152) explores the connection of impersonal forces with religiosity, showing that a system of thought centred on some kind of *mana* leads society to develop a religious system of manipulation, thereby being a system of magic.

The three much-discussed laws of magic or “laws of sympathy,” namely contiguity, similarity and contrariety (Frazer, 1978:34; Mauss, 2003:100), only make sense in terms of the belief in

an impersonal force that generates the necessary connections between the part and its contiguous whole, the part and its similar whole, the part and its opposite whole. This is an explicit fact among the Yuhupdeh, as their religiosity has nothing to do with worship and everything with manipulating the *Dääwā-Wág*.

For Frazer (1978:34), the “law of contiguity” is the logic according to which “things that were in contact continue to act on each other, even at a distance, after the physical contact is cut.” This is so real to the Yuhupdeh that in their shamanic logic, witchcraft can be performed against a person through their clothing, the hammock they slept in, or hair or any other object they were in contact with. Even in children's tales, which are intended to entertain and relax, such logic is present, as in the story of the tapir and the tortoise:

Once the tortoise had bathed in the tapir's well, then the tapir found the tortoise and stepped on it in the chavascal, burying it in the mud. The tortoise only came out of the mud a year later. He thought for a moment and then went looking for the tapir. He walked on and saw a branch that the tapir had broken. So, he asked the branch: “When did your owner came by?” The branch replied, “Well, it's been a year.” The tortoise continued walking and saw the tapir's poop. “Well, when did your owner came by?” The poop replied, “It's been 5 months.” The tortoise continued walking and asked to the tapir's urine. The urine responded that it had passed about 3 months ago. He continued walking and saw a fresh footprint of the tapir. He asked the footprint and he replied: “It's been a while. You should meet my owner just ahead. He is eating umari.” The tortoise continued walking and soon saw the tapir! (Silva & Silva, 2009b:21)

In this tale, which children love to hear, the tortoise, regarded as the great smart-aleck of the forest, plots revenge against “the” tapir (they refer to all animals in the masculine) who had wallowed in the mud. Interestingly, from the tortoise's point of view, all the elements that were in contact with “the” tapir (branch, urine, faeces and the footprint) maintain a direct connection with it, which will become its “owner.” In fact, the idea of this “owner” entails that these elements, somehow, are now part of the tapir's own being, since part of the tapir's vital force has infected these elements. Therefore, it is possible to affect the whole of the tapir through its parts. This connection is made by *Dääwā-Wág*.

The “law of similarity” is the logic according to which “that which is similar produces the similar, or that an effect resembles its cause” (Frazer, 1978:34). In addition to so many other areas, in Yuhupdeh's shamanic logic, such a principle can be easily perceived in cosmic managing

such as causing rain by transferring the supposed “capacity to urinate” of butterflies to a cloud. The logic lies in the similarity of the drizzle-shaped secretions of butterflies with the rain itself. The same can be seen in the magical ritual of preventing children from choking:

To prevent children from choking on fish bones, there is a specific magic formula that is drawn from one of the myths. At the time of its origins, the mythical hero *Saah-Săw* passed through a lake called, Socó Lake, where he taught such a formula to his ancestors: “Like the body of the Socó, like blood of the Socó, like the wings of the Socó, like the bone of the Socó...” It's a huge formula, needing the correct sequence of words. Socó is a bird with a large throat and that's why he doesn't choke. If the shaman pronounces the formula correctly and transfers it to the child, blowing on it, the natives believe that it will have the same ability as the Socó bird, not choking on anything. It's the *law of similarity*. The like acts on the like (Silva, 2014:157).

This is true not only in rituals: the principle also acts in many omens, especially through dreams. For example, if someone dreams that he has stuck his finger in a hook, he wakes up in distress and immediately goes to the shaman in search of a protective ritual, as he is sure he will be attacked by a fold. The logic is the similarity between the sharp and curved end of the hook with the sharp and curved tongue of the snake (Silva, 2009a:44)

Finally, the “law of contrariety,” according to which “the opposites act on their opposites, that is, the similar makes the similar break in order to give rise to an opposite” (Mauss, 2003:100; Montero, 1986:22), is equally observable in Yuhupdeh shamanic logic:

In the universe of dreams, the *law of contrariety* is evident. Dreams have interpretations more or less standardized by different criteria. Some of them are interpreted by opposites, so that dreaming of a child or a dead child may indicate that a good hunt is to come, while dreaming of dancing and feasting may indicate that someone is going to die. It is the opposite acting on the opposite (Silva, 2014:157-158).

It is worth noting that this example does not centre on magic formulas but on dreams, guesswork. There are magic formulas that are also organised in terms of contrariety, but this example shows that magic is viewed to be part not only of rites but is found in all of life. Rightly, Paula Montero demonstrates that magic is not just a religious system, but a system of thought, the “magical thought” (Montero, 1986).

This Yuhupdeh thought system is the result of the belief in impersonal forces. What is most grandiose, powerful and founding to them is not a being, but a force: therefore, what remains is to find ways to manipulate it, therefore, magic. Magic is a system of manipulating the forces of beyond to obtain what is desired in the here and now.

The logic of this system can be summed up in three elements: (a) belief in a manipulable mystical impersonal force; (b) use of verbal formulas to interfere with this force; and (c) channelling it into specific objects. There are also three basic magical processes: (a) white magic – in theory, the manipulation of force for beneficial purposes; (b) black magic – manipulation for evil purposes; and (c) negative magic – an accident in the manipulation process, leading the causing agent to be victimised by his own magic, as occurs when he breaks some taboo.

In ancient myths, shamans discovered the verbal formulas for interfering and manipulating forces, whether for better or for worse, or whether for defence, attack or counterattack. Such verbal formulas are repetitions of magic words in a specific order, while upholding a certain logic and sequence. Once manipulated, the force is transferred to some object among which tobacco, pepper and water are preferred, and these objects are applied to the person targeted by the ritual. Thus, the magical ritual is discreet, and it does not draw attention, but it is present in everyday life and is used in the most divergent aspects of life. It is also for an individual, not the collective, that the ritual is performed by the shaman without requiring a gathering and without an audience.

The father of a sick child came to the shaman asking for a healing ritual for his son. Sitting as he was, he began to whisper magic formulas. Nearby his grown sons were just talking, his old wife was weaving a basket, and his daughter preparing some food. His grandchildren played casually and bumped into their grandfather, while the sick child's father began to tell stories to the shaman's children. Nothing extraordinary happened, nothing special to distract anyone's attention. No invocation, adoration, reverence for anything. The shaman simply whispered words and phrases. When he finished, he asked for a cigarette from the father in need, puffed on it and by then the father already knew what to do. He went back home and smoked that cigarette blowing the smoke on his sick son. Here you have a shamanic healing ritual, in a strongly magical orientated culture (Silva, 2009a:61)

This is the essence of Yuhupdeh religiosity. Magical processes of manipulation of the mystical impersonal force, for the most divergent situations in life, from large to small, from the most special to the most common. It is a religious system that, although deeply mystical, does not require the existence or belief in a God. It is a religion without God. Therefore, on the axis of religiosity, that is, the axis of “the method of relating to the divine,” the Yuhupdeh worldview is clearly one of manipulation, not worship.

Consequently, when exposed to the Gospel, the tendency will be to decipher the same ability from its worldview codes, seeing the God of Scripture as a force. Even after understanding that he is a Being, the tendency will be to try to relate to him through a logic of manipulation and not in worship. This behaviour is extrapolated, not only to God, but to the local group, the external society approaching them, the social agents who are in contact with them, government institutions, researchers, NGOs and so on. If the ultimate reality of this culture is not a relational being, but a manipulable force, all areas of life will be developed on the basis of the logic of manipulation.

YUHUPDEH COSMOVISION		
AXLES	QUESTIONS	NOTIONS
III. RELATIONS WITH THE DIVINE		
9. Religiosity:	What is the method of relating to the divine?	+manipulation
10. Sacredness:	What is the conception of fundamental reality?	+impersonal

Table 7: Relationships with the divine in the Yuhupdeh worldview

4.1.5. Totemism and the Yuhupdeh value system

In light of Calvin's (2006:41) premise, according to which "the sum of our knowledge" is the result of "knowledge," namely the conception or understanding that one has of God, it can be said that the values of the Yuhupdeh society are the result of its concept of an impersonal mystical force as the ultimate reality of his cosmology, a remnant of God's natural revelation.

As shown above, in (I) **relations with the divine** there is a cause-consequence correlation between (1) the *impersonality* of the *Dääwä-Wág* and the magical religiosity of (2) *manipulation*. Likewise, there is a correlation with the other core values of one's worldview.

In (II) **relations with the world**, (3) *relativism* is certainly the most evident and founding value that results from the conception of the *Dääwä-Wág*. An impersonal force does not reveal,

impose or determine ethical, moral or even less, universal issues. A force cannot establish the interpretation of reality, first, because it is not a being: therefore, it is not revealed, it is discovered, and it does not explain itself, but is interpreted. Second, because it is fluid, amoral and a-ethical, it can be used for good or for evil and does not make value judgments. If the fundamental reality of the universe is a fluid force, all reality is interpreted from within a wide grey area.

The logic of (4) a *utilitarian* relationship with the environment, which extends to the social environment, is nothing more than the development of magical thinking. If the relationship with what is greatest and most powerful in your cosmology is utilitarian, seeking to meet personal needs, the relationship with the rest of the universe will also be radically shaped by this.

As an impersonal force, the *Dăăwă-Wág* is beyond temporality: it remains always unchanged, without markers of the past and without any future projection, and always manifests itself in the present, in the here and now. So, here is the causative factor of (5) the *presentism* that is so evident in the Yuhupdeh worldview and its sociocultural behaviour.

Though omnipresent and so powerful, it is only involved in and gives life to the universe, but does not occupy its centre: it demands nothing and pleads nothing, it just exists. Here is the centre of the universe at man's disposal, without any competitor, so the result is a strong (6) *anthropocentrism*.

In (III) **relations with the human**, the same correlation operates and (7) *individualism* is certainly its most fundamental feature. Ultimate reality is not a triune being, therefore communitarian, nor even a relational spirit. In fact, it is not even a being, so the way is open to the centrality of the person. Several Eastern societies also work with impersonal forces and are equally anthropocentric: however, at the centre of life they place the group, resulting in a collectivist anthropocentrism. The Yuhupdeh allocates the centre to the person, with their needs and desires, resulting in an individualistic anthropocentrism. This fundamental trait directly influences several other values of their culture.

A logical development is (8) *egalitarianism*, because in the beyond there is no being that demands submission and would have established a hierarchy and, below, the centre is not the group, but the individual. So, it makes perfect sense for this society to be indifferent to the figure of leadership. If there is no hierarchy in the afterlife, why should there be in the present life?

Similarly, (9) *hedonism* makes perfect sense, since in this worldview the ultimate reality of the universe is an inexhaustible source of satisfaction, and here there is also no group or leadership to impose restrictions on the individual, nor is there any thought of reward or condemnation in life after death. All that is left is to make the most of life is to give room to desires and self-fulfilment. As the presentist fatalism of biblical times already expressed, “let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die” (Isaiah 22:13; 1 Corinthians 15:32).

Finally, as there is no being on the present side who is offended by personal mistakes, the group becomes the only source of censorship to the individual: therefore, guilt is peripheral while (10) *shame* is central. Error is what the group censures, disapproves of, what embarrasses the individual. Thus, the entire value system of the Yuhupdeh worldview is directly or indirectly the result of the conception of an impersonal mystical force as the fundamental reality.

4.2. Relations with the Divine in the postmodern worldview

Impersonal force, *mana*, magic, manipulation of forces, these are concepts that sound at least similar to fantasy and, at most, exotic to the West – but are they really that alien?

Roberto DaMatta (1978:4), the Brazilian anthropologist, states that the ethnologist's work is “to transform the exotic into the familiar and to transform the familiar into the exotic.” In the previous chapter the focus was on familiarising us with the exotic Yuhupdeh. In the remainder of the present chapter, we will “exoticise” familiar Western thinking, showing how similar to indigenous shamanism our society has become.

4.2.1. Impersonal forces and magic in popular superstition

When reading about a mystical impersonal force, perhaps what comes to mind as to that which is most similar to the West is the idea of luck and bad luck. For starters, despite two different words, luck and bad luck refer to a single element which, when manifesting in a positive way, is called luck and, when manifesting in a negative way, is called bad luck. However, they are not distinct things, but one unlucky unit. It is not a god, a spirit or any other personal being, but an impersonal force, which is therefore not natural. It is mystical. Being today considered a superstitious belief by most, in past times there were active beliefs in this force, generating specialists (prayers, healers, guides) who manipulated it for good (causing luck, white magic) or for evil (causing bad luck, black magic). It was also surrounded by taboos that, once broken,

generated random, unprovoked bad luck (negative magic). This concept resulted in sacred objects, such as talismans, to ward off bad luck and amulets to attract luck.

The way of relating to this force had nothing to do with adoration, reverence or worship, but rather was restricted to magical manipulation, as can be seen even today in a very common remnant in Brazil. When someone has a bad feeling, very commonly they use a "ritual," clearly of magical logic, saying "isolates", followed by three light and quick punches on wood. "Isolates" is the specific word, serving no other. It is the logic of a magic verbal formula. It does not fit to use two or four punches, but specifically three. And it cannot be done on a stone, plastic or masonry surface, but must be done on wood. It centres on manipulating an impersonal mystical force (luck/bad luck), through a verbal formula ("isolates"), using a proper gesture (punch) and channelling it into a specific object (wood). As banal as this seems today, it is clearly a residue of magical logic.

The horoscope, signs of the zodiac and birth chart, still so common in different media, result from a totemic logic, with a belief in an impersonal mystical force that involves the cosmos, from the reading of which it is possible to predict the personality, character, inclinations and even important facts in the life of a child at birth. And, in light of such predictions, it is believed to be possible to manipulate your astral aura to avoid suffering and attract happiness. Magical-totemic logic and, interestingly, even large-circulation Euro-American newspapers maintain a horoscope session, such as *The New York Times*,¹ *The Guardian*,² the French *Le Figaro*,³ the Spanish *El País*⁴ and many others.

4.2.2. Impersonal forces and magic in fiction

Departing from superstitions, which are not taken seriously by the majority of the Western population, we have in postmodern cinema the best and most explicit depictions of mystical impersonal forces.

The *Star Wars* saga by filmmaker George Lucas presents a totemic universe enveloped by a mystical impersonal force, referred to only as "The Force," which is extremely powerful and omnipresent, but not personal, and which can be manipulated by experts who are extensively trained to control their abilities. Being an a-ethical and amoral force, it is used for good (white

¹ <https://www.nytimes.com/topic/subject/astrology>. Captured on July 29, 2021.

² <https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2009/nov/08/neil-spencer-horoscopes>. Captured on July 29, 2021.

³ <https://madame.lefigaro.fr/astro/horoscope/quotidien>. Captured on July 29, 2021.

⁴ <https://elpais.com/noticias/horoscopo/>. Captured on July 29, 2021.

magic) by the Jedi and for evil (black magic) by the Sith.

The character Obi-Wan Kenobi, one of the greatest Jedis of the line, explains what The Force is in Episode IV, *Star Wars: A New Hope*, 1977:

Force is an energy field created by all living things: it surrounds us, penetrates us; it holds the galaxy together; it comes from everything; she's everything; Strength is life and life is Strength.

Between 2001 and 2011, the *Harry Potter* saga of eight films was widely successful in world cinema, especially among teenagers. Authored by the British J. K. Rowling and produced by Warner Bros, the main setting was a highly regarded teen magic school, presenting the real world as surrounded by a magical reality of unnamed mystical impersonal force used for both good and evil and concentrated on special objects such as magic wands, gems and various relics. Not just the movies, but the voluminous books in the saga have been an unprecedented success.

The epic film *Avatar*, written and directed by James Cameron, topped box office records in 2009, featuring an equally totemic universe, the planet Pandora enveloped by a mystical impersonal force called Eywa. Despite minimally exploring the magical manipulation of such a force, the ubiquitous Eywa environmentalist setting is enchanting, connecting the universe and the parts as a whole: the Na'vi humanoids, animals, vegetables and even minerals, hence forming an ecosystem of perfect balance and a society organised in totemic clans, each with its own speciality, but which together make up the whole and are connected to everything.

In 2017, DC Comics' *Justice League*, whose origins date back to the 1940s, was given a new guise with director Zack Snyder putting the heroes Batman, Superman, Wonder Woman, Flash, Aquaman and Cyborg in an epic battle against the Steppe Wolf, general of the arch-enemy Darkseid, around control of the Mother Boxes. Such Boxes would give access to the Anti-Life Equation, a mystical force, mentioned in comic books from the 1970s onwards as an energy capable of giving its bearer the ability to restructure the multiverse at his leisure.

But certainly, the most acclaimed recent expression of mystical impersonal force in theatres has been the Infinite Jewels in the epic Marvel saga, *The Avengers*, developed between 2011 and 2019 in twenty-two films. Thanos, the villain, wanders the universe with his great warriors and countless army in search of six gems that, united in a gauntlet, would give infinite power

to their bearer: space (Tesseract), reality (Ether), power (Orb), soul (gem on the forehead of the Vision), mind (gem of Loki's sceptre) and time (the Eye of Agamotto).

In the 2018 film *Avengers: Infinite War*, the monk Wong and Doctor Strange explain what gems are:

At the dawn of the universe there was nothing, until boomm! The Big Bang sent six elemental crystals drifting through the virgin universe. Each infinity gem controls a different aspect of existence: space, reality, power, soul, mind and time.

Clearly the concept of an impersonal mystical force is at work here, in this case distributed and concentrated in six elements that, however, is a single force that, when unified, generates infinite power. Being a-ethical and amoral, it can be manipulated for evil, such as by Thanos, to disintegrate half of the living beings in the universe and for good, as by Hulk and Iron Man, undoing the evil caused by the villain.

These are just some of the most notable appearances of the concept of mystical impersonal force in film, but the list is long. On television it would be difficult to catalogue all the relevant references due to the large number of movies and animations that use the concept. In Marvel's *Iron Fist* series, created in the 1970s, the warrior-monk hero Danny Rand draws his power from Chi, an impersonal force known from pantheistic Eastern monism. Also, since the seventies, Marvel's oriental hero Chang-Chi has had his power coming from Chi, as well as animations such as *Kung Fu Panda* (2008) by DreamWorks Animation and *Mulan* (1998/2020) by Walt Disney, all centred on the use of Chi.

Not just movies and sitcoms, but much of the cartoons shown daily on open TV for children bring the concept of mystical impersonal forces and their magical manipulation. One of the most successful animated series of the 1980s was He-Man, "the most powerful man in the universe," and his sister She-Ra, the "Princess of Power," both created by DC Comics, fighting to defend the planets Eternia and Etheria from Skeleton and Hordak enemies. The balance and maintenance of life on both planets came from an unnamed power, but concentrated in Grayskull Castle, protected by the Enchantress. The fragile Prince Adam raised the Sword of Power and to transform into the mighty He-Man and pronounced the magic formula: "By the powers of Grayskull, I have the strength." Already the intrepid Princess Adora raised her identical sword and said: "By the honor of Grayskull, I am She-Ra." In the plot, the Sorceress

used white magic to protect the castle and the planets, while the Skeleton villain used black magic to try to seize these.

In Episode 1 entitled "Saving Eternia," in the new season of *He-Man* released in 2021, the Evil character explains the origins: "Eternia was born of magic, the first planet of all creation, but now that the sword is gone, without magic Eternia will rot and die. And just like Eternia, so does the universe."

And the season's development shows that this "magic" is, in fact, an impersonal mystical form, understood, controlled and concentrated in an orb by the former King Grayskull. The orb was hidden in a secret mystical location inside the castle, which is nothing more than a distraction for enemies. The strength is not in the castle, nor in the Sorceress, but in the orb, and the Sword of Power is the object that channels it. Being an impersonal force, it is also amoral and a-ethical and can be used either by He-Man to protect the planet or by Skeleton to subdue and control it, which in fact happens in Episode 5 entitled "Homesickness" when Skeleton takes over the Sword and pronounces the much-discussed magic formula that reads: "By the powers of Grayskull, I have the strength." And, to the viewers' surprise, the formula works for Skeleton, just as it did for He-Man.

In the same 1980s, the animation *Dungeons & Dragons*, a picture by Marvel, featured a group of teenagers lost in a parallel dimension, trying to return home. They were guided by the mysterious Dungeon Master, who gave each character a magical weapon: Hank, the leader of the group, was given a bow that shot magical arrows; Eric, rich and selfish, received a shield; the acrobat Diana a stick; Sheila, an invisibility hood; Presto the nerd was given a sorcerer's hat; and Bobby, the smallest of the group, a barbarian club. While they used white magic, the antagonist, Avenger, was a malevolent sorcerer who made use of black magic, having as an aid the Shadow Demon.

Slightly different from *Dungeon Master* and young warriors, the Avenger's powers came not from an impersonal force but from an entity he served, known as He-Whose-Name-Must-Not-Be-Spoken. There is, thus a contrast between the heroes who use manipulation-magic and the villain who uses worship-spiritualism, where magic is presented as good and spiritualism evil.

In the same vein, Walt Disney's famous 1980s *ThunderCats* series entertained heroes who were a group of cats hailing from a destroyed planet called Thundera. Each character had a magical weapon, such as Panthro's Chaco, Tygra's Whip, and Cheetara's staff, all connected

to the power of the Mystic Eye of Thundera, a gem embedded in the Punisher Sword and used by the young leader Lion-O. Thundera's Mystic Eye was like a jewel of infinity, the essence of a star that held an impersonal mystical force of incalculable power, which the villain Mumm-Ra was trying to seize to control the universe. While the ThunderCats reconciled magic and technology, Mumm-Ra was a cadaverous mummy linked to spiritual beings and, to become a powerful being, he invoked the spiritual powers of evil, chanting: "Ancient evil spirits, transform this decaying form into Mumm Rá, who has life eternal." Again, magic is seen as good and spiritualism as evil. This trend has become the standard in cartoons from that decade to the present.

The Smurfs, which first appeared in comics in the 1950s, made television in 1981 and became a film hit in 2011, 2013 and 2017 through Sony Pictures Animation. They hosted a mystical impersonal force concentrated in the blue pigmentation of your skin. Papa Smurf, with enchanted formulas taken from his Book of Magic, manipulates this force to balance his world and protect his small gnome people, while Gargamel, an evil wizard, tries to extract the strength of the Smurfs to control the world.

A considerable number of cartoons shown in cinema and on daily television for children, entertained the concepts of impersonal forces and magic, such as the adventures of the naughty fairy Tinker Bell (by Walt Disney, in a new guise in 2008), with its "magic dust;" Little Princess Sofia (by Walt Disney, in 2012), with her "Amulet of Avalor," who takes daily magic lessons with the sorcerer Cedric who, in fact, wants to seize the amulet to control the kingdom of Encantia; and Frozen (by Walt Disney, 2013), with the magical powers of Elza, the princess-witch. Not to mention the classics through which Disney explores the content of magic, such as Snow White and the bewitched apple (since 1937); Cinderella and her enchanted slipper (since 1950); Sleeping Beauty and its magical charm (since 1959); Jamine and the Magic Lamp of Aladdin (since 1992); Rapunzel and Her Magic Hair (remaker 2010); Merida and the enchanted cookies (2012).

One of the clearest cartoons about magic is *Tree Fu Tom* (by Fremantle Media Kids and Family), whose main character, Tom, uses a magic move to shrink himself into a magic tree that gives access to the world Treetopolis, whose main element is a mystical force concentrated in the tree's sap like a bright orange magical liquid. To perform his magical rituals, Tom asks for help from the general public who watch him from home, guiding the children who are viewers to make movements and pronounce magic words so that the formula works. It is, in fact, a fun magic class for children.

4.2.3. The magicalisation of religiosity

Contrary to what was thought years ago, that secularism would supplant Western religiosity, in fact the postmodern West has proved to be strongly religious: however, this development has been going hand in hand with an increasingly deinstitutionalised, non-dogmatic, markedly private, individualised religiosity, where everyone believes whatever they want and experience the sacred any way they want.

Bosch notes that, despite many expectations and predictions that religions would disappear, “just the opposite seems to be happening today. Not religion itself, but the belief that predicted its extinction proved to be an illusion” (Bosch, 2002:422). Peter Jones, a renowned Reformed theologian, goes further, making incisive warnings about the resurgence of paganism:

secular humanism, once the most feared movement by Christians, has been replaced by the rise of religious paganism. The hope of some that secularism would wipe out religion has been dashed: we are living in an era of unprecedented religiosity. But the religion of the present age is as opposed to biblical Christianity as was secular humanism, and is determined to destroy faith in the God of Scripture (Jones, 2011:9).

In his book *Global witchcraft*, together with seventeen theologians from different parts of the world and specialties, Jones (2011) demonstrates, with extensive field data, how postmodern Western religiosity has become a true neopaganism, revitalising in one guise or another ancient beliefs such as astrology, witchcraft, Kabbalah, Gnosticism, African and Chinese spirituality. Transpersonal psychology, an offshoot of Jungian therapy, has popularised occult practices. Various ecological movements linked to the theme of environmentalist global warming, including the use of leading celebrities and renowned scientists, have intentionally promoted the dissemination of neopanthemism.

Jones' warning (2011:16) is enlightening: “the techniques common to pagan religions are, in fact, the same with regard to their beliefs about God, the world and spirituality.” In other words, the Calvin-Kuyperian tripod of God–Man–World is being systematically influenced by neopaganism.

In the same work, James Herrick, Marcus Toole and Davi Gomes specifically discuss the influence of shamanism, respectively Oriental, North American Indian and South American Indian versions, not only on the religiosity of these regions in particular, but on global

spirituality: “the revival of idolatry and paganism in South America, although unique in its cultural expression, is no different, in principle, from what is taking place in other parts of the world” (Gomes, 2011:103).

Jones (2011:10) further notes that “opinion makers in Western civilization are nurtured and strengthened by these traditions.” Thus, celebrities, filmmakers, artists, environmentalists, human rights activists are the main propagators of this new spirituality. It has become commonplace among celebrities and common people, even from secularised Europe, to use crystals, amulets, different objects and mystical rituals, without any constraint. Mystical fairs are becoming fashionable in Europe, the United States and in various parts of the world, offering services such as holistic therapy and esoteric products. While it seems old-fashioned to visit a Christian temple service, it even sounds sophisticated to participate in a spiritualist ritual, whatever the belief that happens to underpin it.

What is most common in all these neo-pagan tendencies is the element of manipulation. The different forms of postmodern spirituality are not expressions of submissive adoration and fidelity to spiritual beings: they are expressions of manipulation of the sacred seeking to obtain what is desired. They are expressions of magic, as magic is a non-dogmatic, individualised, private, utilitarian religious system and, most importantly, does not require a God. Yes, magic is a godless religious system, therefore it is the ideal religion for secularised Western postmodernism. In the West, magic is not limited to superstition and fiction. It tends to become the prevailing religious system.

Not surprisingly, even the Protestant practice of worship has been largely affected by the logic of manipulation. On the one hand, in more conversational and traditional churches, worship tends to become an empty formalism, with no real expectation of being before the Creator. On the other hand, the churches that grow the most in the Americas and export their style to several other parts of the world are the neo-Pentecostal, clearly influenced by a magical logic, mixing worship and manipulation, as if God could be manipulated.

So “what is the method of relating to the divine” of postmodernism? It’s a method of increasing manipulation and decreasing worship.

4.2.4. The de-personalising of the sacred

Behind this tendency towards magic is the triggering process of the shift in the whole Western worldview. The orchestrated attacks of atheistic philosophy and naturalistic science on the

idea of God have not resulted in an atheism rooted anywhere, but have operationalised a process of de-personalising the idea of God. And alongside the philosophical and scientific attacks is the growing influence of Eastern religiosity in the West:

There is no personal God in Eastern religions like Buddhism and Hinduism. The divine is a non-cognitive, impersonal spiritual forcefield... When Eastern thought entered the Western world in the 1960s, it combined with Western elements and formed the New Age movement. essentially the same (Pearcey, 2018:165).

Contrasting pantheistic monism with Christian theism, Sire (2009:191) observes that “in theism, personality is the main characteristic about God as well as about people.” Speaking, in turn, about the secularisation of the West, Schaeffer (2003:112) points out “the use of the word *God* to mean the definitive impersonality, as in the case of pantheism,” calling this picture “paneverythingism,” a religious system where the personal God is not disowned, but is treated as an impersonal force:

Thirdly, there is the possibility of an impersonal origin that some form of impersonality has always existed, even if in a form infinitely different from what we know now. This idea of an impersonal origin has many variants, including the use of the word *God* to mean ultimate impersonality, as in the case of *pantheism*. A more precise word than *pantheism* to describe this position is *paneverythingism*. The word *pantheism* ends up taking on the connotation of personality, although the concept excludes it by definition. In much of today's thinking, everything starts with the impersonality of the atom or molecule or particle of energy, and then everything – including life and man – ends up arising by chance (Schaeffer, 2003:112-113).

Note that Schaeffer is talking about the origin of the universe because, in his understanding, the view that one maintains of the origin determines the worldview of society. As his fellow scholar Nancy Pearcey (2018:168,196) most clearly put it: “in any worldview, the concept of creation is fundamental: as a first principle, it shapes everything that follows” and “thus, the centre of the battle is whether the universe is the result of intelligent agency or haphazard and non-cognitive forces.”

Pearcey (2018:232) seeks to prove, with a vast literature and an incredible abundance of data, how the shift in the Western worldview was leveraged by the development and expansion of

Darwinism. Goheen and Bartholomew (2016:117) identify the origins of today's postmodern values in Greco-Roman paganism as long ago as the 6th century BC, among philosophers such as Thales, Anaximander and Anaximenes. Such humanistic values were fought by Jesus himself and apostles in the New Testament period, by the church fathers in the early centuries, by the 16th-century Reformers and the Puritans of the later centuries. They have always been present, as a constant threat to Christianity: however, one element has somehow slowed down their triumph, namely the belief in an infinite-personal God (Schaeffer, 2003:97).

In Pearcey's understanding (2018:120), "Darwin offered the missing puzzle stone for naturalism to become a complete philosophy." Although Darwin himself (2017 [1859]) did not propose to explain the origin of life, limiting himself to the origin of species, the developments of his theory were widely embraced by science, philosophy and came to dominate common sense. Journalist Fred Heeren (2008:384-416) masterfully lists fifty great Christian scientists who have marked human history, such as Francis Bacon himself, considered the father of the scientific method. Science and religion were not irreconcilable areas, but Darwinism and its offshoots, proposing to explain the universe without God, accentuated science's break with the idea of an infinite-personal creator.

Going beyond the origin of species, the Belgian priest and astrophysicist Georges Lemaître (1931) developed in 1927 the "primary atom" hypothesis with a view to trying to explain the origin of the universe, a hypothesis that later became known as the Big Bang Theory, according to which everything that exists began at a point or cosmic singularity that began to expand. It is a theory that, in fact, does not explain the origin of life itself and was questioned for decades even in the naturalistic scientific milieu, especially around the idea of a creator. From 1965 onwards, however, it gained strength in scientific acceptance with the confirmation by scientists Arno Penzias and Robert Wilson of "cosmic microwave background radiation" (Penzias & Wilson, 1965).

The fact is that, for the Big Bang to be at least reasonable, it is necessary to recognise the existence of something beyond the primordial atom: a personal, intelligent creator, or something else that caused the particles to interact. The Big Bang theory has increasingly been anchored in the theory of fundamental forces: gravity, electromagnetism, strong nuclear forces and weak nuclear forces (Heeren, 2008:255). For life to exist in the universe, each of these forces should have an exact intensity, neither greater nor lesser, neither stronger nor weaker. Since no intelligence was used to calibrate them, in this fortuitous, random way life came about. In order to believe this, a greater demand for faith is required than believing in an intelligent personal creator. This became necessary because of the scientific break with

the idea of the infinite-personal God. Here we see Westerners exercising enormous faith to believe that the entire universe, with its vast and most complex forms of life, originated in an atom expanded by impersonal natural forces. In fact, this has always been a necessary and inevitable implication of evolutionism. If life did not originate from a personal spiritual being, then it would have to have originated from an impersonal cosmic force. The West has migrated from Christian theism to, in Schaeffer's terms, a secular "paneverythingism."

This fact in itself largely explains the similarities of the postmodern worldview with Yuhupdeh shamanism. For Pearcey (2018:196), "every worldview has to start somewhere: we start with 'time + causality + impersonal' or we start with a personal being who thinks, desires and acts," and this initial, pre-existing element is, in any worldview, again in Schaeffer's terms (2010:170), its "ultimate reality." In this case, both the ultimate reality of the postmodern Western worldview and the Yuhupdeh shamanic worldview are impersonal forces. But there is still a significant distinction: the first is natural and the second is mystical.

In the 1960s, British environmentalist James Lovelock, with the collaboration of American biologist Lynn Margulis, both evolutionists, developed the thesis that came to be known as the Gaia theory, according to which the earth is alive, forming an organism or system control asset (Lovelock & Margulis, 1974; Lovelock, 2006; 2011). The term Gaia was inspired by Greek mythology, in which Gaia was a deity equivalent to planet earth, mother of the great gods of Olympus, including Zeus.

Such a theory is itself of a scientific-environmentalist nature: however, as Jones (2002:173) points out, it was seized by part of the global academic feminist movement, proposing that instead of fighting the millenary idea of the male Jewish-Christian God, the origin of all social oppression, it would be more efficient to have a suitable substitute. Gaia was appropriated by feminism as the goddess of the gods, known throughout history and in different civilisations by different names. In ancient Egypt she was known as Isis; in India as Kali-Durga; in Mesopotamia as Ishtar; in Palestine as Asherah, even fought in the Old Testament; in the Andean cultures of South America as Pachamama; and in Greek philosophy as Sophia, the name preferred by academic feminism for suggesting a reinterpretation of the Scriptures, proposing that the wisdom (Sofia) of Proverbs 8, "architect" or "adviser" of Yahweh in creation, as well as the Logos of John 1, would be none other than Gaia who was therefore greater than the Judeo-Christian Creator.

Peter Berger, renowned Lutheran sociologist, delivers a revealing satire on a speech given at no less than the Harvard Divinity School on “the other phase of Gaia” in the light of modern feminism:

There are still those who think that religion is in decline in our time. It is becoming increasingly clear how wrong they are. What is in decline is the tattered residue of the Judeo-Christian tradition in churches and synagogues, and the dehydrated secularism that is the belated fruit of that tradition. This particular god is dying, if he is not already dead. But other older gods are alive and agitated. Above all, it is she who is on the way, the oldest of all, the Great Goddess, who long believed herself dead and now fills the sky with the omens of her advent [...] And so, more recently, there was the revelation of Gaia, the entire earth as a living entity. The Great Goddess has had many names and this is only the most recent (Berger, 1994:15).

Hand in hand with feminism in this movement comes the neopagan religion Wicca, the biggest promoter of the Halloween celebration, which declared Sofia the “goddess of witches.” Indeed, a statement by journalist, playwright and writer Zsuzsanna Budapest, one of the most famous witches and feminist activists, is revealing in this regard:

A witch is a woman or a man who considers the earth to be a living, breathing and conscious being – part of the family of the vast universe – who must be regarded and respected as the God (Goddess) Himself. To be a witch, you have to see yourself as part of God, who is present within, not separate from us and all living beings (Budapest, 1989:57).

Jones (2002:223-234) notes that much of the homosexual movement has embraced Gaia as its goddess with regard to the pagan history of sexual liberalism, resistance to the traditional gender pattern and the relationship between environmentalism and birth control. Yes, homosexuality is now seen as the most effective contraceptive method, given the need to curb the planet's overpopulation.

Though sometimes referred to by these movements as a being Gaia is in fact nature. She is not a being, but a mystified natural force. In Jones' terms (2002:179) she is “clearly identified with the form of pagan monism,” that is, an impersonal mystical force.

Apparently, these are the two main paths of postmodern Western religiosity. On the one hand, a spark of secularised Christianity, which de-personalises the figure of the Judeo-Christian God and, on the other, an effervescent movement that permeates segments of strong militancy such as feminism, environmentalism and homosexuality, proposing the replacement of the Christian spark by a neopaganism that mystifies natural impersonal forces. On both paths, the end is an impersonal mystical force as the fundamental reality, which shapes the entire worldview: a “paneverythingic” worldview.

In his classic *The Screwtape Letters*, originally published in 1942, C. S. Lewis creates the devil Screwtape who, as advice to his nephew Wormwood, pens down the strategy for undermining Western Christianity: it would not be to discredit the Judeo-Christian God, but to turn your person into an impersonal “Vital Energy” or “Force.”

On the other hand, when they believe in us, we cannot make them materialistic and sceptical. At least for a while. It is my high hope that we will soon learn how to appeal to feelings and turn their science into myth to the point where what is, in effect, a belief in us (though not by that name) will creep in, while the mind human being will remain closed to belief in the Enemy's existence. The “Vital Energy”, the veneration of sex and some aspects of Psychoanalysis can be very useful here. If we can do our perfect job – the materialist wizard, the man who does not use, rather, truly worships what he vaguely calls the “Forces” while denying the existence of “spirits” – then the end of the war will be at doors (Lewis, 2017b:46-47).

So “what is the conception of fundamental reality” in the postmodern Western worldview? An increasingly conception of impersonal strength. While the Yuhupdeh have always conceived their ultimate reality in this way, Westerners have been passing through this way in accelerated way in the last generations. This is the main contemporary shift in its worldview, which triggers several others and makes postmodernist values so similar to Yuhupdeh shamanic values.

POSTMODERN COSMOVISION		
AXLES	QUESTIONS	NOTIONS
III. RELATIONS WITH THE DIVINE		
9. Religiosity:	What is the method of relating to the divine?	+manipulation
10. Sacredness:	What is the conception of fundamental reality?	+impersonal

Table 8: Relationships with the divine in the postmodern worldview

4.2.5. “Paneverythingism” and the Western value system

While Pearcey sees Darwin and his evolutionism as the fundamental structure of postmodernism, Sire (2009:267-268) understands that Nietzsche is the greatest exponent of the postmodern worldview. Nietzsche was a critic of Darwin and Darwinists: however, John Richardson (2008) sought to prove with a wealth of data and argumentation that all Nietzscheanism, despite not recognising it as such, is more influenced by Darwinism than previously thought. Nietzsche wrote within a scientific culture already transformed by Darwin and departed from many of the evolutionary assumptions. There is a clear relationship between Nietzsche's “will to power” and Darwin's “natural selection,” argues Richardson (2008:34,60), as well as an extension of Darwin's “biological selection” to “social selection” and Nietzsche's search for freedom (Richardson, 2008:86,91,107).

Veith (1999:47) and Boudon (2010:30-32,47,86) agree with the strong influence of Nietzsche (1844-1900) on postmodernism, but they add Marx (1818-1883) and Freud (1856-1939) on an equal footing. If Darwin's (1809-1882) influence on Nietzsche has been questioned by many, there is no doubt about his influence on Marx and Freud. In this case, we have here the main founding thinkers of the postmodern worldview and they all attacked the idea of the Judeo-Christian God.

In the field of biology, Darwin (2017 [1859]), with his natural selection of species, set out to explain the nature without God; in philosophy, Nietzsche (2002 [1887]), with his perspectivism, proposed to explain reality without God; in sociology, Marx (2013 [1867], 2014 [1885], 2017 [1894]), with his egalitarianism, set out to explain society without God; and in psychology, Freud (1974 [1913]), with his Oedipus complex, set out to explain the godless soul. None of these approaches were strong enough to uproot the idea of God from the West, but together and with their offshoots they affected three main areas of axiology within the Calvin-Kuyperian framework of worldview: the concept of fundamental reality, that is, the idea of God; the person's relationship with society; and the reading of reality, that is, the concept of truth. And these unfolded in other shifts around the core values of the Western worldview.

To synthesise these developments: (I) in **relations with the divine** the central and most significant blow has been the (1) *de-personalisation* of the idea of God, the fundamental reality. If, in terms of Calvin (2006:41), the sum of our knowledge results from the knowledge we have of God, conceiving ultimate reality as an impersonal force, whether natural or mystical, impacts the entire cosmovision. The most obvious development is (2) magical *manipulation* as a

method of relating to the sacred; after all, there is no possibility of relating to a force. It can only be manipulated.

In (II) **relationships with the human**, the central and most significant blow is the excessive importance given to the individual in the search for the person's autonomy; therefore, (3) one is looking here at *individualism*. If the ultimate reality is an impersonal force, not intelligent as well as fluid and random, it remains for man to control it and use it according to his or her interests and needs. After all, one cannot expect a force to control life and interfere in the problems of existence. Humanity itself needs to take control of his or her existence and starts to occupy the centre of the universe, becoming the embodiment of an anthropocentric cosmovision.

In this case, however, there are two possibilities. One is to value the human collectively, the group, which can be the family, the clan, the people or society, resulting in a more collectivist trait, as is the case with many oriental, monistic worldviews which, even when dealing with mystical forces from beyond, value the group over the individual. This is a collectivist anthropocentrism. The other possibility is to value human individuality or the person to be more important than the group, which renders an individualistic anthropocentrism. This is the picture in both Yuhupdeh shamanism and Western postmodernism.

A markedly individualistic society will almost inevitably also be (4) *egalitarian*, resistant to authorities because, after all, if there is no hierarchy in the afterlife, a being that stands out from the rest, why should it exist here? And being the individual responsible for the control of his or her own life, why would one repress one's desires and will? This centres on (5) *hedonism*.

However, no matter how great the person's autonomy, there is no society without some concept of error and reprehensible acts. If, in the afterlife, there is no moral being who takes offense at my transgressions, but only an amoral and a-ethical force, who would be the censor of errors? People, of course. The society. Therefore, the orientation of conscience towards (6) *shame*, since sin is reduced to social transgressions. So the personal identity needs to be validated too by those who have the power of censorship, so that the search is either for honour or evidence.

Finally, (III) **relationships with the world** are equally impacted, and the central blow at this level is to the interpretation of reality. If what exists was not created by an intelligent mind, by a being that reveals itself and makes its own description of the reality that it created, then the

interpretation is at the discretion of the one who occupies the centre of the universe, man. And since it embodies an individualistic (7) *anthropocentrism*, “man” is understood to be the individual. Therefore, the truth is in the person who interprets reality and not in reality itself. The result is a higher degree of (8) *relativism*.

Since the ultimate reality of the universe is a powerful force that can be manipulated with man at its centre, (9) *utilitarianism* is inevitable, because if it is possible to use the greatest force in the cosmos in an instrumental way, why also use the environment and the social environment? And, finally, (10) *presentism* is an obvious development engendered by this as the force does not guarantee the existence of a promising tomorrow; in fact, a force does not guarantee the future: so “let’s eat and drink, because tomorrow we die” (Isaiah 22:13; 1 Corinthians 15:32).

In the Yuhupdeh shamanic myth, life began in the *dēh-pun-dēh-hóy* or “lake of milk,” engendered by the pre-existing impersonal force *Dääwä-Wág*, as indicated. In the Western evolutionary myth, Darwin speculated in a personal letter from 1871 that life might have arisen by random chemical interactions in a “little warm pond” (Pearcey, 2018:217). Here, then, are two totally different societies, exotically different, with no historical connection, but with an almost identical set of underlying values resulting in surprising similarities.

COMPARISON OF COSMOVISIONS			
AXLES	QUESTIONS	SHAMANIC	POSTMODERN
I. RELATIONS WITH THE WORLD			
1. Spatiality:	What is the basic orientation in the relationship with the environment?	+utility	+utility
2. Temporality:	What is the orientation in relation to time?	+presentist	+presentist
3. Cosmocentricity:	Who is at the centre of the universe?	+anthropocentric	+anthropocentric
4. Reality:	What is the group's conception of truth?	+relativistic	+relativistic
II. RELATIONS WITH THE HUMAN			
5. Collectivity	What is the personal orientation in the relationship with equals?	+individualistic	+individualistic
6. Authority:	What is the group's orientation towards leadership?	+egalitarian	+egalitarian

7. Desires:	What is the group's orientation towards personal fulfilment?	+hedonistic	+hedonistic
8. Elenticity:	What is the orientation of the conscience in the face of error?	+shame	+shame
III. RELATIONS WITH THE DIVINE			
9. Religiosity:	What is the method of relating to the divine?	+manipulation	+manipulation
10. Sacredness:	What is the conception of fundamental reality?	+impersonal	+impersonal

Table 9: Yuhupdeh and Western worldviews

CHAPTER 5 – IMPLICATIONS FOR THEOLOGY, THE MISSIONARY AND MISSIONARY PRACTICE

“The most fundamental decision we all face throughout life is what we will recognize as the ultimate reality, the causeless source and cause of our existence. Everything else in our worldview depends on that initial decision.”

Nancy Pearcey (2018:29)

In this chapter, some implications engendered by the analytical comparison between Yuhupdeh shamanism and Western postmodernism will be pointed out as contributions to theological, missiological and missionary practice reflection. For the theological and missiological parts, biblical theology itself will be privileged while, for the missionary aspect itself, practical applications will be discussed. The biblical quotes in this chapter are from the NIV – New International Version, by IBS – International Bible Society.

The development of biblical theology will be guided by the foundational narratives of the first chapters of Genesis, while observing its development throughout the Scriptures, having as reference the recent studies on the Ancient Near East. Since Jon Levenson (1984) and Gordon Wenham (1994) drew attention to the importance of such studies for a better understanding of the Old Testament, new light has been shed on the early Genesis narratives in particular by authors such as John Walton (2006, 2016) and Gregory Beale (2014, 2021) in recent decades.

5.1. Theological contributions

The axiological similarities between postmodernism and Yuhupdeh shamanism engender new reflections on what has been understood until now of the postmodern worldview. As indicated, in secular academic understanding, postmodernism is seen as the result of historical events and movements such as Renaissance humanism, Enlightenment rationalism, Protestant reformation, the strengthening of national states, economic liberalism, scientism and secularism, as well as, the Industrial Revolution, the Second World War, the phenomenon of urbanisation, the student and labour revolutions of the 1960s and 1970s, great technological advances and the advent of the mass media (Anderson, 1999:100-108,130-132; Lyotard, 2013:3; Habermas, 2017:5; Giddens, 2002:10-11; Bauman, 2001:8.9; Lipovetsky, 2004:52,53).

Since traditional Yuhupdeh shamanism entertains underlying values so similar to those of postmodernism, but without being influenced by any of the historical facts and processes listed above, we are led to conclude that these facts and processes only formed an alternative path to the axiological development of the West; however, it did not include its founding causes.

Theological studies of postmodernism recognise this path while understanding that the axiological cause is linked to the break with the idea of an infinite-personal Creator, particularly in the 17th century (Sire, 2018:14; Naugle, 2017:231), making space for the development of values already present in the West since ancient Rome (Schaeffer, 2003:97) or the Greco-Roman paganism of the 6th century BC (Goheen & Bartholomew, 2016:117).

The ethnographic data of Yuhupdeh shamanism corroborates this theological understanding in the sense that a break has occurred with the infinite-personal Creator: however, they go further, indicating the existence of the founding values of postmodernism outside of the Greco-Roman axis. That which makes it possible to develop such similar values, even for societies so far apart and without historical connection, is the biblical fact of the fall. The connection point between Yuhupdeh shamanism and Western postmodernism is the Garden of Eden.

The seed of the *de-personalisation* of the Creator can be seen already in Genesis 3, in the serpent's discourse. Waltke (2010:99) observes the intentional selection of words in the creation narrative, where Genesis 1:1 to 2:3 employs the term '*elohim*' as the only one used to refer to the Creator. From Genesis 2:4 to 3:24 the terms '*elohim yhwh*' are used, with the exception, however, of 3:1-5, in the dialogue between the serpent and the woman. And from Genesis 4:1 to the end of the Old Testament, the term mostly used becomes *yhwh*, occurring over 5 400 times.

Marvin Pope, who researched Ugaritic texts from the 14th and 13th centuries BC, notes that even in times before Abraham, '*elohim*' (or more commonly its singular form '*el*'), in addition to its function of acting as the generic title for "deity," was generally used by Semitic peoples of Palestine to indicate a sovereign god, ruler of the gods, maker of destinies and father of years (Pope, 1955:1,19; also Beale, 2014:120-121). He was, however, a universal god, who was related to no one and was worshiped by no people. This universal and distant god became personal by revealing Himself to patriarchs such as Noah and Abraham, covenanting with them (Genesis 6:8-22; 12:1-3; 17:1-2), later revealing His personal name *yhwh* to Moses (Exodus 3:13-15). Thus, '*elohim*' is the universal and distant god who personalises himself as *yhwh*, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of Israel, relating himself through a

covenant with his people. Satan sows the first seed of God's de-personalisation by avoiding the pronouncement of his personal name in Eden (Genesis 3:1-5), a seed that immediately germinates in Eve's heart (Genesis 3:3).

Beale and Kim, in the light of recent research on the Ancient Near East, read the use of God's names in the same way:

First, *the name of God is changed* from "the Lord [Yahweh] God" to "God." While this does not sound like much in English, "the Lord God" is the personal name of God that signifies an intimate and covenantal relationship, while "God" is the God of power who created all things (*Elohim*). While Genesis 2 presents the Lord God issuing commands in covenant relationship to his special people, Eve appears to look at this personal God from a distance in Genesis 3. (Beale & Kim, 2014:26).

The seed of relativism was also sown in the primordial garden by the serpent when he relativised the following statement of the Creator: "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?" [...] "You will not certainly die" (Genesis 3:1,4). As Beale and Kim rightly note, still, about the serpent's dialogue with the woman, "God's permission is minimized [...] God's prohibition is maximized [...] the consequences of sin are minimized. God says, "you shall surely die" (literally, "dying you shall die") but Eve only says, "lest you die." (Beale & Kim, 2014:26). In other words, the Word was relativised through the same modern philosophical argumentative logic to cast doubt on certainty, in order to deconstruct the truth.

Interestingly, the same argumentative logic was used by Satan when tempting Christ in the desert: "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread." And: "If you are the Son of God," he said, "throw yourself down" (Matthew 4:3,6). The intention was to introduce doubt about His identity. In other words, "are you really the Son of God?" or, "prove that you are the Son of God," as biblical commentator Rienecker (1998:40) well observes.

Likewise, *individualism* first manifested itself in Eden, when in her ideal of freedom or (why not say) in her search for moral autonomy and yearning for personal emancipation, Eve was seduced by the possibility of being like God (Genesis 3:5). In the sequence, Adam's posture is not at all collectivist, protecting the wife: on the contrary, it is totally individualistic, trying to avoid the guilt and transfer the responsibility to the woman (Genesis 3:12). Kidner (1991:65-66) notes that the fact that God first addressed Adam indicates the degree of greater responsibility assigned to him, whose duty it was to "guard" the garden. He, however, transfers

the responsibility to the woman who, in turn, transfers the responsibility to the serpent in a characteristically individualistic way. Here, in the earliest account of human history, we find the most basic values of both Yuhupdeh shamanism and Western postmodernism.

Its developments can also be seen in Genesis: "When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable" (Genesis 3:6). This is the most seminal expression of *hedonism* as the self-fulfillment of personal desires. "Eve listened to a creature in place of the Creator, followed his personal impressions against the instructions received, and set self-realization as her goal," as Kidner (1991:64) points out. Stott (1982:86-87) notes that the same movement is expressed by the apostle John in reference to Genesis 3:6: it is "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life" (1 John 2:16). Again, this is hedonism in its full expression.

The *egalitarian* subversion of authority can be seen in the serpent's influence over woman and man as they peacefully accept to eat of the restricted fruit. Both Beale (2014:128; 2021:70, 83-84) and Walton (2016:48,101), in the light of Ancient Near Eastern research, see the prerogatives of royalty in order to subdue and dominate creation (Genesis 1.28), thus identifying Adam and Eve as God's "vice regents" or "rulers" on earth. Despite being imbued with such authority, in this episode Eve, instead of subjecting and dominating the serpent, guarding the garden from impurity, subjected herself and let herself be dominated. In continuity, Adam, instead of leading his wife, let himself be led by her. It was not by chance that the Creator rebuked him, saying: "Because he listened to his wife's voice and ate from the tree, I had commanded him not to eat, cursed is the earth because of him" (Genesis 3.17), as Kidner observes (1991:64): "led, as it was by the woman, instead of driving".

The conscience's orientation to *shame* also manifested itself in Eden. Whereas before "Adam and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame" (Genesis 2:25), now, "they realized they were naked; so, they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves" (Genesis 3:7). About this, R. Muller writes as follows:

Guilt was not the only consequence of sin in the Garden of Eden. When Adam and Eve realized they had sinned, they immediately hid (v.8). Adam and Eve were ashamed. The shame had befallen Adam and Eve, but their shame was not just for them. Shame, like guilt, passed to humanity from that moment on (R. Muller, 2013:126-17).

Although there is little exegetical certainty about the nature of Cain's offering (Genesis 4:2-7), it is possible to see a glimpse of an attempt to *manipulate* the Creator with a sacrifice of unacceptable quality (Hebrews 11:4). As for the Babel episode (Genesis 11:1-9), Walton (2006:26-27) observes clear evidence in Ancient Near Eastern culture indicating the construction of the ziggurat as a way for humans to manipulate the descent of gods to control them. In the same vein, Harrison says:

In this way the ziggurat provided an adequate framework for the power of divine life to manifest, possibly creating the conditions for proper communion with God. However, it was not a worship of a transcendent deity as in Christianity, but a sense of community with an immanent god (Harrison 1969:560).

In other words, contrary to the common imagination that the Tower of Babel was erected for the worship of the gods, it was actually used to manipulate the deities in a utilitarian way, extracting vital energy and fertility from them.

As part of the corruption of humanity described in chapter 6, *utilitarianism* as a lifestyle guided by the pursuit of happiness is implied in the words that “the sons of God saw that the daughters of humans were beautiful, and they married any of them they chose” (Genesis 6:2). Exegetically it is not clear who these “sons of God” would be (Chung, 2019:89-91). However, the process reflected in the words “saw... beautiful... took...” correlates with “seeing... nice... took...” as found in Genesis 3:6, which is a clear indication of self-fulfilment-oriented choices despite the Creator's orientation (Waltke, 2010:141; Kidner, 1991:78). Jesus himself explained this context by stating that, in the days of Noah, they were “eating, drinking, marrying and being given in marriage” (Luke 17:27).

In this regard, Hendriksen (2014b:343-344) as well as Morris (1990:244) observe that there is nothing objectively wrong with the acts of eating, drinking and marrying. The problem arises when such acts become ends in themselves, that is, when human happiness becomes the greatest good in life – in other words, utilitarianism.

The idea of *anthropocentrism* also underlies the narrative of human corruption, as found explicitly in the Babel project, already in the post-Flood period, of which the motivation was “that we may make a name for ourselves” (Genesis 11:4). However, Walton points to anthropocentrism in the very act of the fall itself. In his understanding, Eden was a sacred space where God and his habitation would be the centre of all things, from which life would

flow and around which all creation would orbit. The desire to become like God and take hold of his wisdom would have been an act of self-centredness.

Adam and Eve chose to make themselves the center of order and the source of wisdom, choosing the disorder of the cosmos [...] I propose that, by disobediently taking the fruit, they tried to be like God by placing themselves at the center and source of order (Walton, 2016:133,136).

Finally, *presentism* is not explicit in the Genesis text, but both in the Old and New Testaments we find its echoes, especially in the proverbial expression “let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die” (Isaiah 22:13; 1 Corinthians 15:32).

Champlin claims that such an exclamation reflects the thinking of many philosophical movements and even of various ancient societies. Among the Jews, it had its expression in the Sadducees, who did not believe in the resurrection. Among the Greeks, its greatest expression was the Epicureans, who were also presentists. He thus quotes an old text from Horacio, which exclaims:

Be wise; I have guaranteed your wines for you; and eliminate your distant hopes, adapting to the brevity of life. As we speak, an envious time is flying by. Cling to the present day, relying as little as possible on any future day (Champlin, 2000:258).

Shamanism and postmodernism are just parallel paths to the development of these same values. Their manifestations differ, but in essence they are the same. Behind both processes, the same mind seeks to lead entire societies, whether by mythologies or ideologies, mysticism or scientism, tribal clans or urban tribes, cosmological perspectivism or philosophical perspectivism, as far away as possible from God and the biblical worldview.

5.2. Missiological contributions

The biggest challenge to communicating the Gospel is the cosmovisional detachment from the Scriptures. The farther a society is from the biblical worldview, the more difficult it will be for it to communicate Gospel truths.

What happens in the cases of Yuhupdeh shamanism and Western postmodernism is an extreme departure from biblical revelation, to the point where its fundamental reality loses its personality trait. Each of the values analysed here are examples of human rebellion against the Creator, thus distancing themselves from the values of the Gospel.

Reformed theologians David Charles Gomes and Wadislau Gomes together coined the term “theoreference.”

It means that God is the only reference for everything. It's not just central to everything that exists. It's more than that: everything that exists exists in reference to God. All things originate in him, subsist in him and are for him (Gomes, 2013:39).

Theoreference is a way of seeing and interpreting life in the light of God's revelation and this affects every area and detail of one's being, above all, the cosmovision.

In the same way that theoreference affects our way of seeing life in relation to God and those who are saved along with us, it also affects our view of the world (worldview) [...] God wants us to have a worldview according to his own view, that is, he wants us to look at the world from his point of view (Gomes, 2013:41).

The core values of the shamanic and postmodern worldviews are antagonistic to the biblical worldview as this is a theoreferent worldview. Let's look at theoreference in the Calvin-Kuyperian order of the biblical worldview, starting now from the most foundational and working to the most evident.

5.2.1. Sacredness: The fundamental reality is essentially personal

The fundamental reality of Scripture, its only pre- and self-existing element, is not an impersonal force but an essentially personal, intelligent, self-sufficient and self-revealing God. The Scriptures begin with the act of cosmic creation, initiating time and space not by chance, but by a perfectly crafted and detailed plan executed by the personal Creator.

In the light of discoveries about the Ancient Near East, Walton (2016:43) conceives of Eden as the formation of a “sacred space,” what Beale (2021:80-81) calls a “garden-temple” destined for habitation of the Creator. Beale and Kim (2019:2-3,18) further note that this dwelling was intended for the government and personal relationship of the Creator with his

creation and that such relationship should not be restricted to the first humans, but should be expanded throughout the land. In fact, Eden as a temple-garden should be expanded.

This relational purpose is evident throughout the Scriptures. In the temple-garden, God relates to Adam, commissioning, instructing and providing him with everything he needs (Genesis 1:29; 2:16-17; 3:8). Being personal, He delights in Abel's offering, rejects Cain's (Genesis 4:4-5), pours out His holy wrath on corrupted mankind, but provides an escape for righteous Noah and, establishes a covenant with him, his entire family and all creation (Genesis 6:7-8; 9:1-18). He expands His covenant with Abraham, whom He calls a friend (Genesis 12:1-3; 15:1-21; 18:17-18; 2 Chronicles 20:7). He eternalises the covenant relationship with Moses, with whom He speaks out loud (Exodus 19:3-8; 20:1-17; 24:1-11). And He becomes fond of David, including him in His eternal covenant (2 Samuel 7:8-16; Psalm 89:3-4). Covenant theology is par excellence an expression of the personality of God, who calls godly kings his children, speaks to the prophets, corrects his rebellious people, forgives the repentant and reveals himself to distant peoples.

The infinite-personal Creator incarnates and becomes the most humane human who ever walked the earth. He lives on this planet, He lives with sinners, is angry, is sad, cries, rejoices, smiles. He touches people and is touched by them, suffers, dies, resurrects and sends the Holy Spirit that tabernacles in His people. Finally, He will take the saints to dwell with Him in an eternal and inexplicable personal relationship in the interior of the temple-city, His eternal habitation (Revelation 22:3-5).

5.2.2. Religiosity: The relationship with God is essentially one of worship

Revealing himself as sovereign, omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent, there is no space in Scripture for any manipulative relationship with the Creator. Faced with the beauty of His perfections, it remains for humble mortals to contemplate his holiness and adore Him.

Around Genesis 2:15, Walton (2016:98) proposes “that the terms 'serve' and 'take care' convey priestly tasks rather than agricultural and gardening responsibilities”, while Beale (2021:84) states that the two commonly translated Hebrew words “cultivate/serve” and “take care/keep” occur “in other OT texts in reference only to the Israelites 'serving' God and 'keeping' ('obeying') God's word (approximately 10 times) or to the priests who 'take care' of the 'service' (or 'responsibility') of the Tabernacle,” thus concluding that “Adam is being portrayed as a priest in the exercise of his functions.” Beale and Kim (2014:29) conclude that “Eden is a place of God's presence, and the place of God's presence is a place of worship.

The expansion of Eden, therefore, is an expansion of the worship.” Therefore, Eden as a temple-garden was formed by the Creator to dwell among and personally relate to his creatures through worship. It is no accident that cultic worship is so central throughout the Word.

Abel offers the first explicit worship of God in the Scriptures (Genesis 4:3-5) and in the times of Enos “began to call on the name of the Lord” (Genesis 4:26). In the days of Noah, the worship of God was already instituted through sacrifices as an expression of worship (Genesis 8:20), which was perpetuated by Abraham (Genesis 15:9-21) and his descendants, gaining richness of details with the institution of the Tabernacle and priestly office (Leviticus).

With the destruction of the temple and exile of the people, bloody sacrifices were replaced in synagogues by reading and exposing the Scriptures, but in an equal environment of worship (Matthew 4:23; Luke 4:16-17; Acts 13:14-15), as noted by Frame (2006:46-47). Jesus revolutionised worship by showing that “God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth” (John 4:24). New Testament churches inherited the practice of synagogue worship with praise, prayer, Scripture reading and exposition (Acts 2:42; Ephesians 5:19; 1 Timothy 4:13; 2 Timothy 4:1-3) while believers were encouraged not to limit themselves to collective worship but make personal and family worship part of their day to day lives. Finally, Revelation paints a scenario of eternal worship of the Eternal God (Revelation 4:10). In a theoreferent worldview, there is no room for manipulation of the sacred but only for submissive adoration of the true Lord.

5.2.3. Elenticity: Guilt orientation underlies shame

R. Muller (2013:170) states that the theme of shame/honour is as or more present in Scripture than the theme of guilt/innocence, pointing out more than 190 references to honour while the various forms of the word guilt are mentioned only about 40 times.

There is no doubt that the theme of shame/honour is mentioned extensively in Scripture and is opportunely useful for evangelism in societies oriented in this way, but in a Reformed biblical perspective it is difficult to downplay the theological importance of the concept of guilt/innocence. R. Muller (2013:139-140) is correct to note that guilt/innocence is a result of the concept of law, but to suggest that the theology of the church fathers and reformers was influenced by the *lex romana* may be an exaggeration. After all, the influence came rather from the *lex romana*, because the Scriptures present the Law of God and, in fact, the very biblical definition of sin is intrinsically linked to the concept of the divine law: “Everyone who

sins breaks the law; in fact, sin is lawlessness” (1 John 3:4). Stott (1982:105-106) comments that this is “the clearest and most revealing” definition of sin, which is “essentially an active rebellion against the will of God and a violation of His holy law”.

Genesis 3:7 shows that, before sewing garments out of leaves and hiding from the Creator (actions related to shame), the man and woman “realised” that they were naked (feeling related to guilt). About this, Waltke (2010:109) observes that “with the sense of guilt and the loss of innocence, the couple now feels shame in their naked state.” That is, guilt preceded shame since it was the first awareness of the transgression of God's law.

By transgressing God's Law, the sinner becomes guilty before God, regardless of whether his or her transgression is public (related to shame) or not. For this reason, the biblical theology of justification by faith and Christ's atoning sacrifice that removes our guilt is so central to Scripture. The sacrificial system of the Old Testament centred on the removal of guilt and Romans is a true treatise on justification and is therefore rightly central to the studies of soteriology.

Furthermore, the Scriptures emphasise not the eyes of people who reproach sin, but the penetrable eyes of God who, in his omniscience and omnipresence, all-seeing, all-searching, making the transgressor feel guilty and offering forgiveness by grace to the repentant transgressor (1 Samuel 16:7; Psalm 139; Hebrews 4:13).

Thus, biblical theology presents a fundamentally guilt-oriented worldview with a view to the divine law textually canonised in special revelation and engraved in the conscience by general revelation (Romans 2:15). The error seen in a perspective informed by the relationship with the holy God brings guilt to the sinner, from which he or she can be freed by the grace that again emanates from God.

5.2.4. Desires: Selfless altruism precedes self-fulfilment

Altruism implies self-denial, curbing or even voluntarily renouncing of one's desires for the sake of the other or a greater good. The roots of selfless altruism are found in creation when, for their own good and the good of the cosmos, Adam and Eve were prohibited to eat from the tree of knowledge (Genesis 2:17; 3:3).

With a view to Genesis 2:16-17, Kidner establishes that there is not only a prohibition there (“you must not eat” v.17), but, before that, a providential and generous permission (“you are

free to eat" v.16), and that the ban was given "for his spiritual awakening, since he was made in the image of God [...] man is called to set a course and keep it" (Kidner 1991:57). This "course" points to the Creator's will and not to the creature's desires or, in the terms of Waltke (2010:103), not to the "human autonomy to know morality apart from God." The prohibition was thus a call to self-denial: to deny oneself and bypass self-satisfaction in order to satisfy the Lord and serve others.

It is in accordance with this logic that Jesus makes his forceful statement: "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me" (Luke 9:23). Hendriksen (2014a:607) calls this the "self-sacrificing spirit" and Rienecker (2005:139) adds that it is "saying goodbye to one's own will, inclinations and desires [...] living as if we no longer care about ourselves and our will." Serving God and others implies curbing personal desires, that is, the route contrary to hedonism.

Christ experienced this principle when, tempted in the wilderness, he chose to obey the Father rather than be satisfied (Matthew 4:4,10), as well as when, in anguish in Gethsemane, he did not shy away from the indescribable suffering on behalf of all the chosen ones (Matthew 26:42). This sense of Christian selflessness is expressed as clear altruism in the second great commandment that reads "Love your neighbour as yourself" (Matthew 22:39) and in Jesus' new commandment that reads "Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another" (John 13:34).

Thus, while the Western and Yuhupdeh worldviews encourage the self-fulfilment of personal desires despite collateral damage, the Christian worldview, in light of the fundamental relationship with Christ, steers the control of personal desires in favour of the greater good.

5.2.5. Authority: The creation was structured in a serving hierarchy

The many cases of punctual and systemic abuse of authority throughout human history in the most diverse social settings, including the religious, are unquestionable. This, however, should not overshadow the biblical model of hierarchy.

Ancient Near Eastern studies show how the biblical account of creation includes a clear aspect of cosmic government, with the Creator at the top of a royal hierarchy.

As we noted in Psalm 132, the temple was the center of divine government. In the ancient world, it was the command base of the cosmos – the control room

from which God maintained order, established decrees, and exercised sovereignty (Walton, 2016:46).

The image, therefore, is of the Creator and sovereign of the entire universe forming for himself a dwelling place from which he would govern all creation. And Walton (2016:45) further shows that, “when God rests on the seventh day, he is taking up his residence in the ordained system he established for the previous six days,” that is, God's “rest” on the seventh day, portrays an opening ceremony of the cosmic royal palace.

As the Sovereign he decided not to govern his creation alone, instituting Adam and Eve as “vice regents” or “co-regents” (Walton, 2016:48,101; Beale, 2021:83-84). Both Walton and Beale see in the order to “subdue” and “master” the earth (Genesis 1:28) clear attributions of royalty. If the command to “cultivate” and “guard” the garden (Genesis 2:15) gave them priestly functions, “subdue” and “dominate” gave them royal functions. Adam and Eve were made viceroys over the creation of the sovereign God.

Beale and Kim (2019:15) note that “Adam reigns over creation speaking and naming the animals, just as God reigned over creation speaking and naming parts of creation” (Genesis 2:19). And Kidner (1991:61) points out that the act of naming animals “pictures man as a monarch over everything he sees.” Waltke (2010:164) notes that in the narrative of creation (Genesis 1:26-30) and the Flood (Genesis 6:21) an established hierarchy is found:

First, life in the ark represents the social hierarchy that God intends. Within this miniature of the cosmos, which is designated by the Creator (see 6.15), human beings under God's rule, care for creation (6:18), the animals remain in submission within their space (6.20), and the vegetation sustains their masters (6.20) (Waltke, 2010:188).

Therefore, since creation, there has been what Chung (2019:104) calls a “God-man-animals-plant hierarchy.”

This structuring hierarchy runs through the pages of the sacred Scriptures, manifesting itself in various areas of life. In the family, Waltke (2010:104,112) comments on Genesis 2:18: although “both sexes are mutually dependent” in creation, the “*helper*” word presupposes that man has governmental priority;” commenting on Genesis 3:16 he notes that “male leadership, not female domination, was assumed in the ideal situation before the fall.”

In similar vein, the apostle Paul states that “the head of Christ is God” and as an offshoot that “the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man” (1 Corinthians 11:3; Ephesians 5:23); Christ is also “the head of the body, the church” (Colossians 1:18). Lopes points out that such statements are not about subordinationism, fought by the church fathers and reformers (Calvino, 2006a:152), according to which the Son has been subordinate to the Father since eternity. “Christ is not inferior to God. He is co-equal, co-eternal and co-substantial with the Father. However, in the economy of redemption, Christ submitted to the Father to come into the world [...] the divine hierarchy is: God-Christ-Man-Woman” (Lopes, 2008:206). Therefore, the hierarchy of authority begins with the Trinity, passes through creation, reaches the Church and reaches the family, despite the fact that this involves an unconventional way that is not commonly found in social structures.

God's people in the old covenant had authority figures such as elders, priests, judges and kings (Leviticus 9:1; Judges 8:13-14; 2 Chronicles 34:29), just as the new covenant churches received leaders such as apostles, elders and deacons (Ephesians 4:11; Acts 14:23; Philippians 1:1). Sociopolitical leadership is also mentioned and endorsed in Scripture (Romans 13:1-2; Titus 3:1). The hierarchical structure is present in the sacred text because the creation itself was hierarchically structured.

It is true, however, that the biblical concept of authority and hierarchy is distinct from the world's. As Jesus himself pointed out:

²⁵ Jesus called them together and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. ²⁶ Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, ²⁷ and whoever wants to be first must be your slave — ²⁸ just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many” (Matthew 20:25-28).

In the biblical worldview there is equality of dignity and hierarchy of authority, equality of importance and hierarchy of functions. In the family, the husband leads the wife, but in love and protection (Ephesians 5:25-33). The father leads his children with teaching and discipline, but without excesses that provoke their anger (Ephesians 6:4). In the church, elders lead the flock, but “not because you must... not pursuing dishonest gain... not lording it over those entrusted to you...” (1 Peter 5:1-4). Therefore, the biblical worldview is hierarchical, but it embodies a servant hierarchy, given that human authority figures are seen in reference to the God who gave the Son “all authority in heaven and on earth” (Matthew 28:18).

5.2.6. Collectivity: The Trinity presupposes collectivity

The biblical perspective of collectivity derives from the Holy Trinity itself, in the mysterious teaching of three persons in a perfect unity of essence (Matthew 3:16-17; 28:19; 1 Corinthians 12:4-6; 2 Corinthians 13:13; 1 Peter 1:2). Bavinck (2012:340) states that “the doctrine of the Trinity is of the greatest importance to the doctrine of creation [...]; creation everywhere reveals to us traces of the Trinity, and these traces are most clearly evident in humanity.”

In the Old Testament there is already a “seed” or “record of the gradual development of the doctrine of the trinity,” as Bavinck asserts (2012:268). Berkhof regards attempts to find a biblical basis for the Trinity in terminological distinctions between *yhwh* and *'elohim*, as unfounded: however, he sees “the passages where God speaks of Himself in the plural, Gen. 1:26; 11:7” as combining to form a “clear anticipation of the fullest revelation of the Trinity in the New Testament” (Berkhof, 1990:87-88). In this way, already in creation, there are evidences of the triune God and its traces can be seen in human sociability: “It is not good for man to be alone” (Genesis 2:18). About this, Waltke comments (2010:104) that “the relationship is modeled after God who does not exist in isolation, but is a triunity, surrounded by a heavenly court”

The human being is essentially social because its Creator exists in a triune collectivity. From this trinitarian collectivity emanates the biblical idea of marriage, where two become one, as well as the idea of family, where people of different personalities are united by bonds of blood and love (Genesis 2:24; Mark 10:7-8).

Horton (2016:890) emphasises that “the catholicity and unity of the church are found only in the communion with the triune God,” that is, the biblical idea of the Church is also derived from the Trinity. God's people in the old covenant were made up of twelve distinct tribes, but at the same time they were a collective unit (Genesis 49:1-28). This collectivity is continued by the Church in the new covenant, not as another people that replaces Israel, but as the same people in essence, the Israel of God (Galatians 6:16; 1 Peter 2:9-10), now formed not by tribes and clans, but by people of the most divergent ethnicities and nations of the earth, mysteriously constituting a Church that is one (John 10:16; Romans 12:4-5). The Church, in its multiplicity of faces, colours, languages and nationalities, yet forming a holy unity, is the clearest expression of biblical collectivism, beautifully typified in the Lord's Supper, which expresses the believer's union with God and with his people (1 Corinthians 10:16-17).

This collectivist aspect of the Church is only possible through the teaching of our union with Christ (Berkhof, 1990:449), according to which the regenerate are in a mysterious and

indissoluble way united to him in their suffering and blessings in terms of the past, present and future, as well as, with its body, the Church (Romans 6:6; Ephesians 1:3-14), which is yet another biblical teaching from a collectivist perspective derived from the Trinity, as noted by Boor (2002:236). The Gospel values individuality but rejects individualism.

It is important to point out again that collectivity is not synonymous with socialist collectivism. Morecraft rightly speaks of the concept of the Trinity as an effective corrective for the excesses of both socialist collectivism and capitalist individualism:

A trinitarian Christian perspective on life and society stands over and against these views because it believes neither in the sovereignty of the state nor in the sovereignty of the individual, but in the sovereignty of the triune God. It does not exalt the group over the individual, nor the individual over the group. The Bible's emphasis is on the individual within a family context working for the church discipling the nations of the world (Matt. 28:19-20) [...] God's Word is an authoritative and sufficient user's manual for individuals and groups, on private morality and on public justice (Morecraft, 2009:388-389).

5.2.7. Reality: The Word of God is the universal truth

The Word of God is the Creator's self-revelation (Exodus 3:14). The doctrine of inspiration evokes the infallibility of Scripture (2 Timothy 3:16) and Christ himself claims absolute truthfulness for his Word (John 17:17). Bürki emphasises (2007:55) that "every saying of God written down is breathed by God and therefore invested with authority for the church."

The Word of God, in its operative power, has been present from the beginning of creation for, in fact, everything that exists only came into existence through the creative Word of God, as embodied in the crucial phrase that reads: "And God said" (Genesis 1:3,6,9,11,14,20,24). Calvin understands the permission and prohibition of Genesis 2:16-17 ("you are free to eat... you must not eat...") as God's normative Word, so that he sees the fall as flagrant disobedience to the Word:

Now, since, because of her lack of faithfulness, the woman is turned away from the Word of God by the subtlety of the serpent [...] And, in fact, when the Word of God is despised, all reverence for it is broken, because his majesty among us is not preserved otherwise, nor is his worship kept intact, than when we attentively listen to his voice (Calvino, 2006b:18-19).

Therefore, the Word of God as the universal truth, the only sufficient rule of faith and practice, was already present and founded at the creation, as Beale and Kim (2014:26) conclude: “Adam and Eve failed to guard the Garden of God through obedience to God’s word.”

As a self-revelation, the Word is the faithful description of the pre-existing Creator and of all created reality: therefore, it is the source of the ultimate truth, the basis of the only cosmovision that, in Schaeffer's terms (2002:249), “will resist all questions that will be presented to us as we are confronted with the reality of existence.” Even though it is not a cosmic encyclopedia containing all the knowledge of the universe, as a revelation of the Creator the Word gives us the proper lens through which to examine and understand all reality: the Word is the Truth.

And it is not a particular truth, valid only for the Judeo-Christian world. It is, yes, the truth embodied in a specific time and space, but applicable to all cultures, peoples and social segments, and is therefore timeless, applicable to all times and generations. In short, it is the eternal and universal Truth.

5.2.8. Cosmocentricity: The Gospel is essentially theocentric

Beale makes an interesting comparison of the temple garden of Eden with the Tabernacle and temple of Jerusalem, as well as the eschatological temple of Ezekiel 47 and the temple city of Revelation 22:

Thus, one can see an increasing gradation of holiness that goes from outside the garden to the inside: the space outside the garden is related to God and is “very good” (Gen. 1:31), in the sense that it is God's creation (= the Outer Court); the garden itself is a sacred space separate from the outside world (= the Holy Place), where the priestly servants of God worship him through obedience, cultivation and protection of the garden; Eden is where God dwells (= the Holy of Holies), source of physical and spiritual life (symbolized by the waters) (Beale, 2021:75).

The image is of God's dwelling place at the centre of the entire cosmos: “God is, by definition, the source of wisdom, and his presence, therefore, establishes a center” (Walton, 2016:136). The same image appears in Revelation 22 where the throne of God is the centre of the new heaven and new earth. Just as a river flows out of Eden that watered the garden, where the

tree of life was (Genesis 2:8-10), so from the throne of God flows the river of water of life, on whose banks is the tree of life (Revelation 22:1-5).

Through the lens of the Gospel, it is not the world that revolves around humanity, but the entire creation that centres on the Creator. He is the centre of all things, where everything comes from and where everything converges (Ephesians 1:10).

The Scriptures reveal God to be not only the author and Creator of life, but also the “conservator” of all existence (Numbers 16:22; 27:16; Colossians 1:17; Hebrews 1:3; 2:10). Therefore, all control of the cosmos is in Him, all provision comes from Him and all worship, honour, and exaltation is due to Him alone. Any attempt at cosmocentrism and self-centredness is an act of rebellion against the true and only centre of all things.

With the Creator at the centre, all creation is invited to live in him and for him, submitting in gratitude and love to his sovereign and holy will. The relationship of submission and worship to God puts man in its place: not on the throne but at the feet of the truly enthroned.

5.2.9. Temporality: The God of Scripture is past, present and future

To Moses, God revealed his personal name as *yhwh*, usually translated as “I Am” (Exodus 3:14). Several Hebraists note, however, that the meaning of such a name when linked to the concept of existence goes beyond the present and expresses a tri-temporal idea: “He who was, who is and will be,” – he is even timeless, “eternal” (Harris *et al*, 1998:345-238; Cole, 1996:67).

This possibility is most evident in the references to the incarnate Son: “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever” (Hebrews 13:8); “from him who is, and who was, and who is to come” (Revelation 1:4); “I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, “who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty” (Revelation 1:8). As Pohl comments:

The expression goes back to God's self-identification in Exodus 3:14. There it appears three times – “I am who I am” (BLH), which later Judaism liked to relate to the three times: God was, is and will be (Pohl, 2001:38).

The first verse of Scripture presents the self-existing Creator calling temporality and spatiality into existence from eternity: “In the beginning [time] God created the heavens and the earth [space]” (Genesis 1:1). He is the physicist and theologian, as Lourenço observes (2011:77-

78). He not only called into existence, but also structured time into day and night (sun and moon), the calendar week (seven days) and the seasons (with a view to the stars).

Time is universally conceived as tripartite, consisting of past, present and future, and theologians such as Bavink (2012:330) and others see in this triple temporal division vestiges of the Trinity. In fact, this division appears already in the first chapters of Genesis. In Genesis 3, the woman and the serpent dialogue at a given moment in time and space and are therefore present ("Where are you?" v.9), while God refers to the past ("Because you have done this" v.14) and, simultaneously, the pericope brings hope for the future ("he will crush your head" v.15).

The same occurs in the dialogue with Cain, as found in Genesis 4: "Where is your brother Abel?" v.9 (present); "What have you done?" v.10 (past); "you will be a restless wanderer on the earth" v.12 (future). The pattern recurs in the Noahic Covenant and other dialogues.

The biblical worldview is not centred on the present, nor is it tied to the past, nor is it fixed on the future. It celebrates the past, experiences the present, and yearns with hope for the future in the certainty that the Christ of yesterday is the same today and will be the same tomorrow. It is, therefore, a worldview that is not presentist but rather historical, contemplating and valuing all the facets of time. Because it is historical, it is not fatalistic but hopeful, not immediate but patient, not existentialist but eternalist. The personal relationship with God, as a fundamental reality shapes the way of seeing and dealing with temporality.

5.2.10. Spatiality: Christian stewardship is markedly affective

The way to relate to the environment, whether environmentally (as related to nature), socially (as related to people) or spiritually (as related to the beyond) is directly linked to the understanding of and relationship with the fundamental reality.

The biblical north for such relationships is the teaching of stewardship, commonly attributed to Jesus' parables about stewards (Matthew 25:14-30; Luke 19:12-17). These in fact have their basis in the creation account itself. For Beale (2021:87), the double commissioning of Adam as viceroy with the duty to subdue and dominate the land and as priest, with the duty to cultivate and guard the temple-garden, imprints on him the image of a steward.

Walton (2016:99-100) mentions that, in the Ancient Near Eastern world, it was common to have gardens and also herds of animals connected to sacred spaces, where priests had the

role not only of serving in the temple but also of taking care of its surroundings. In this scenario, Adam and Eve are the priests who worship God, Creator of all things, as well as his stewards, who take care of his garden and flock (animals).

The same image is seen in Noah, who, as Beale points out (2021:96-97), receives the same commission as that of Adam. Chung (2019:94) states that the "ark is the second temple where God makes himself present with his remnants after the loss of Eden," showing that it does not have a boat structure, but that of a house with broad parallels with the temple of Moses, so that one can conceive of it as an ark-temple. There, Noah also exercises the role of priest-king, relating to the Creator and taking care of his ark-temple and his animals (Beale & Kim, 2019:24).

Chung (2019:14-16) further points out how the double commission originally given to Adam was not only transmitted to Noah and other patriarchs, but was also attributed to Christ (Zechariah 6:12-13) and, through him, to the Church (1 Peter 2:9), making everyone stewards. Stewardship is the teaching that all creation belongs to the Creator, where human beings are the beneficiaries and also benefit by commission.

It is a logic that is antagonistic to utilitarianism, where the latter holds humanity to be the centre of all things with the rest of creation at his disposal so as to satisfy his needs. Christian stewardship involves a logic of relational affectivity, where man relates to his environment in the light of his relationship with the Lord of all things, in such a way that affectivity is extended to creation because of the fundamental affective relationship with the Creator.

COMPARISON OF COSMOVISIONS			
AXLES	CHRISTIAN	SHAMANIC	POSTMODERN
I. RELATIONS WITH THE WORLD			
1. Spatiality:	+affective	+utility	+utility
2. Temporality:	+historical	+presentist	+presentist
3. Cosmocentricity:	+divinecentric	+anthropocentric	+anthropocentric
4. Reality:	+universalist	+relativistic	+relativistic
II. RELATIONS WITH THE HUMAN			
5. Collectivity	+collectivist	+individualistic	+individualistic
6. Authority:	+hierarchical	+egalitarian	+egalitarian
7. Desires:	+altruistic	+hedonistic	+hedonistic
8. Elentricity:	+guilt	+shame	+shame

III. RELATIONS WITH THE DIVINE			
9. Religiosity:	+worship	+manipulation	+manipulation
10. Sacredness:	+personal	+impersonal	+impersonal

Table 10: Christian, shamanic and postmodern worldviews

5.3. Missionary contributions

Durkheim (2008:211) observes how totemic thinking resists changes to society, so that, even with the passing of generations, external influences and even when converted to a majority religion, a totemic society can maintain its worldview at an underlying level. It also observes the ability of the traditional totemic worldview to influence an entire region, despite advanced technological development, suggesting that the whole of Australia shares a totemic background with the traditional totemic societies of Java, Sumatra and Melanesia (Durkheim, 2008:217). Totemism therefore involves a framework for religious syncretism in local societies that receive Christianity and reinterpret it in the light of a totemic base, and in majority societies that can be subtly influenced by a base-level totemism.

Hesselgrave (1995:301-304) and Silva (2009b:599) alert one to the challenge of syncretism in mission fields, where it is not enough to have understand the predominant religion, making it necessary to analyse *in locu* the religious manifestations in search of the understanding of its underlying values.

Such observations are relevant to the present project. Although the shamanic and postmodern worldviews have been analysed here so as to tease out the prevalence of their founding values, in practice, a large part of the world's social contexts have already operationalised to form a mixture of values, resulting in cosmovisional syncretism.

Thus, there are cases of previously totally totemic shamanic societies that received Christianity and reinterpreted it in the light of their traditional worldview. Although they minimally understand the God of Scripture as personal, they try to relate to him with utilitarian manipulation. They are organised in churches, but internal individualism prevails instead of collectivist communion (Silva, 2009b:599-601; 2014:171-174).

Likewise, there are cases of postmodern societies that move towards a framework similar to the classical shamanic one despite maintaining the discourse and structures of Christian heritage. Thus, in discourse they are affectively preservationist with the environment but, in practice, they are predatory utilitarian. Presentist immediacy is opposed to a discourse of hope

for better days. Maintaining hierarchical sociopolitical structures, they live in an excessively egalitarian way. Despite the Christian heritage of a view underpinned by vertical guilt/innocence, they seek social validation to counteract horizontalised shame.

MIXTURE OF WORLDVIEWS	
AXLES	CHRISTIAN POSTMODERN SHAMANIC
I. RELATIONS WITH THE WORLD	
1. Spatiality:	+affective +utility
2. Temporality:	+historical +presentist
3. Cosmocentricity:	+anthropocentric +divinecentric
4. Reality:	+universalist +relativistic
II. RELATIONS WITH THE HUMAN	
5. Collectivity	+collectivist +individualistic
6. Authority:	+egalitarian +hierarchical
7. Desires:	+hedonistic +altruistic
8. Elenticity:	+guilt +shame
III. RELATIONS WITH THE DIVINE	
9. Religiosity:	+manipulation +worship
10. Sacredness:	+personal +impersonal

Table 11: Syncretism

The missionary challenge in such syncretic contexts is complex and challenging, requiring an accurate analysis of the worldview, theological assurance and a great deal of creativity in communication.

Stanley Grenz (2008:233-246) outlines some guidelines for spreading the Gospel and evangelisation of postmodern contexts. The first is the need to firmly resist the widespread rejection of metanarratives, because we believe the Scriptures to be the universal and absolute Truth, hence *the* metanarrative. The second is the possibility of joining postmodern criticism with the rejection of Enlightenment epistemology, in what is in fact antagonistic to the Gospel. The third is to use certain contours of postmodernism to communicate the Gospel in a way that makes sense to this generation: to value the search for community; balance rational

understanding with affective experience; overcoming the dualism between sacred and profane; to balance knowledge with engagement in the most divergent areas of life. This embodies a contextualising approach.

Gene Veith Jr (1999:210-213) suggests a resistance approach, noting that, in postmodern times, the fastest-growing religion is Islam, even in secularised Europe and the United States. He also notes that the most significant religious resistance to Hitler's regime came from confessional churches that resisted both syncretic Christianity and the totalitarian state. Thus, he suggests that "confessional Christianity" would be the best resistance to postmodernist influences as well:

Christians, if they are going to constitute an alternative to postmodern relativism, need to confess their faith in word and deed. That implies knowing their faith. Christians in each ecclesiastical body could start by returning to their own doctrinal heritage [...] The target should be "living orthodoxy," a faith both experimental and based on truth, with room for both feeling and intellect (Veith Jr, 1999:213).

Keeping in mind traditional ethnic contexts, thinkers such as Paul Hiebert (1999:15-16) and Lothar Käser (2004:15-20) have demonstrated the importance of using the tools of anthropology and ethnology to understand local societies, aiming at effective communication of the Gospel. Going beyond this, Ronaldo Lidório (2014) proposes an elaborate and relevant method of cultural analysis in the service of missiology for an adequate and relevant communication of the Gospel.

The comparison of Western postmodernism with Yuhupdeh shamanism engenders new and important guidelines for both missionary practice and missiological formation. Whether in a contextualising or resisting approach or both, and whether it be in a traditional ethnic or urban Western context, attention should be paid to the following:

5.3.1. Worldview studies are crucial to missionary-formation curricula, primarily because they enable those with vocations to reflect on their own worldview. There is a further need for equipping missionaries to communicate the Gospel not on the surface level of cultural manifestations but on the underlying level of cosmovisional values. Cosmovision is a subject covered in different disciplines within Brazilian missionary-formation curricula: however, it has not yet been properly explored in a broader way. In addition to the already-important and

relevant studies in the area of missionary anthropology, it would be healthy to add studies in the area of Christian cosmovision.

5.3.2. Totemism, as a system of thought, has not been explored in worldview studies and has been elided and viewed as of secondary importance even in contemporary anthropology, despite, as indicated here, its contemporary operation and influence in many societies. Abstract elements around which we do not have elaborate concepts or even general information, easily go unnoticed. It would thus be a gain for transcultural missions to add such a totemic matrix to cosmovisional studies.

5.3.3. Apologetic studies are an equally necessary for missionary formation, whether for those who will serve in Westernised urban postmodern contexts or for those who go into tribal shamanic contexts. These must not merely involve a fierce, rationalist apologetic, but especially a loving, affective, creative one in the mould that Francis Schaeffer made of presuppositional apologetics. In the curriculum of missionary formation in Brazil, similarly, apologetics is not yet widely contemplated, but it would be valuable to explore it.

5.3.4. The personality of God, who reveals himself as an essentially relational being, is an emphasis of crucial and determining importance in both shamanic and postmodern contexts. In fact, the message about the infinite-personal God is the foundation of foundations, without which no construction of Christian knowledge will make sense, while it will resist “paneverything” and totemic thinking. Covenant theology, showing the way in which God relates to his people, communicated in a confessional and at the same time creative way, is necessary and strategic in such contexts.

5.3.5. The universal and eternal veracity of the Scriptures as the correct and in fact the only coherent description of reality, therefore, the only Truth, must form the basic and non-negotiable argument in the communication of the Gospel to both worldviews. Otherwise, the underlying relativism will corrode the content of the message. It is important to be aware that rejection of the message is a possible and even probable reaction in many cases: however, rejection is not always synonymous with the failure to communicate.

5.3.6. The figure of the church as a relational, welcoming and affective community must oppose the individualism rooted in these cosmovisions. The example of the Church as that which embodies the people of God, body of Christ and dwelling place of the Holy Spirit in a healthy biblical ecclesiology sets the tone of collectivism that is necessary to maintain the appeal for a sense of community. In this way it provides a counter to the excessive autonomy

of the individual. Of course, not only the message of the church but in particular how you experience a local church one can make a significant difference.

5.4. Excursion: Impacts of the Gospel on the Yuhupdeh worldview

Recently, by the grace of God, a church was born among the Yuhupdeh. The present excursus aims to objectively report how this process took place and the first implications of the Gospel in the cosmovision of these people.

My wife and I started missionary activities among the Yuhupdeh in 2006 through the WEC International mission, which organised a missionary team to work in the northwest of the Brazilian Amazon bordering Colombia and Venezuela. A total of 23 people-groups lived in that region, of which 16 had not been reached by the Gospel, and the Yuhupdeh were the people who had enjoyed the most recent contact with external society, and had an unwritten language and had not been properly inserted in the schooling movement. For some time at that stage, the leader of one of his villages had been asking all the institutions that passed through for support to open schools in the villages of his people.

We started our activities in response to this request with a project to support bilingual intercultural education, through which, over the years, equally by the grace of God, the language was analysed and alfabetised, families were documented, small schools opened in each village and representatives of the ethnic group trained as indigenous teachers. An association of schools was also created, more than a dozen teaching materials were produced in the mother tongue, technical materials about the people and an encyclopaedic dictionary was published. Over fifteen years of work we saw, by the goodness of God, four groups of students completing elementary school and one class completing high school.

Parallel to these socio-educational actions, we developed an evangelisation and church planting project, equally with the consent of the people, who had little idea of the Gospel but were interested in accessing all non-indigenous knowledge. The first three years were intentionally dedicated to developing good relationships, studying the language and making sociocultural analysis, seeking to understand their exotic worldview. With good linguistic and anthropological consultancy, at the beginning of 2009, still with a lot of insecurity, we embarked on a more systematic process of evangelisation, while aware of the great communicational challenges involved, especially given the complex totemic system of thought and magical religiosity.

The few notions that the Yuhupdeh had of the Gospel came from a failed attempt by Italian Catholic missionaries, of the Salesian order, present in the region since the 1920s. Along the Rio Uaupés, one of the main tributaries of the Rio Negro, lived 15 indigenous peoples, 13 from the Eastern Tukano ethnolinguistic family and two from the Guaviare-Japurá family, namely the Yuhupdeh and Hupd'äh. The first are called "river Indians," lords of that region, who see themselves as superior and are, in fact, more technologically developed. The latter are considered "forest Indians," subservient to the former and, in fact, with a more rudimentary technology. The relationship is similar to that between the Indian Brahmans and the Outcasts.

The Salesians catechised the Tukano, but they were unable to effectively reach the Yuhupdeh due to their nomadic forest-interior habits. In the 1960s and 1970s, the Salesian strategy was to send Tukano catechists to catechise the Yuhupdeh; however, they had little success as they were the dominators trying to Christianise the dominated. As a result of this endeavor, as well as the sporadic contact with the Tukano, a superficial Yuhupdeh religious syncretism had developed.

In our cultural analysis, we found that they related the figure of God the Father to their main mythical hero, *Saah-Säw*, who had been a sex-hungry and sometimes half-foolish organising demiurge of the cosmos. Maria was identified as the daughter of *Saah-Säw*, of unknown name and reprehensible morals. In myths around her, she was reported to be sexually depraved, had sexual intercourse with all the animals in the forest, became pregnant without knowing who the father was and was finally brutally murdered and devoured by an enemy people; despite this, her unborn child survived. Jesus was identified as this surviving grandson of *Saah-Säw*, named *Dö'-Saa* who, as a result of his mother's murder, developed an irascible and vengeful character, established various cultural habits, exterminated enemy peoples and even murdered his own grandfather. Ultimately, Satan was identified as the main malevolent mystical being of the forest, the *Hay-Koog*, described as a strong, furry being with reddish eyes and large fangs who cast witchcraft on hunters.

So, some said: "We already have this Gospel in our culture, it's just a little different. For us this Father God was a grandfather and was called *Saah-Säw*; that God the Son was a grandson named *Dö'-Saa*; and it was not the Son who died, but the mother, that Mary, who in our stories we do not know her name; and only this Satan that he still has today, he lives in the forest, his name is *Hay-Koog* and he is really dangerous."

This superficial syncretism in no way interfered with the people's religiosity, since merely embodied the way they in which they understood the Catholic message, interpreted in the light of their cosmovision. We realised beforehand that such syncretism posed little threat to an adequate understanding of the Gospel: however, the *Dääwä-Wag*, its impersonal mystical force, was indeed the greatest challenge, since, despite lack of personality it was, in its cosmology, that which came closest to the concept of God due to its great power and omnipresence. Our first challenge, then, was to introduce the biblical concept of God, detaching him from the figure of the mythical hero *Saah-Säw*, while avoiding that it would be glued to the notion of the *Dääwä-Wag* force. God identified as *Saah-Säw* was no more than a mythological reference, a being from the past, no longer present. Identified as *Dääwä-Wag*, it would be understood as present, but impersonal, amoral and manipulable.

By divine providence, a term for “deity” had already been introduced into the language and culture in a superficial way. They used the term *Kä'-Teh* to designate both God and the saints mentioned by Catholics and, as a result of the syncretism described above, also for their mythical heroes *Saah-Säw* and *Dö'-Saa*. The term literally means “son of the bone,” but it has nothing to do with this etymological concept, meaning “deity” in a generic and superficial way. It is a foreignism, translated from the Tukano language, in which a Catholic deity is referred to as *Ö'äki* (“son of the bone”), which is probably also a foreignism coming from the language and cosmology of the Baniwa people, in which there is a myth about three demiurges who came from a bone, called *Nhãmpirikuli*.

To start the communication about God, we added an adjective to distinguish concepts: *Kä'-Teh Hup Mih Nig Yap* – “True Divinity” or “True God.” And from this term, we presented the main attributes of the person of God, always with emphasis on his personality (to avoid connection with the mystical force), his sovereignty (to avoid the idea of manipulation), his holiness (to avoid amorality) and current presence (to avoid bonding with mythical heroes).

The best way to introduce this True God was to present him as the Creator of all things. There was a vacuum in their cosmology, as everything was viewed to be pre-existing and the mythical heroes just made the primeval world, which was viewed to be extremely dangerous to live in, into a habitable world. A fundamental biblical teaching in this process was on the Trinity. Yes, what seemed so complex to communicate turned out to be simple and revolutionary, with the perception that your world is essentially understood as “base three.”

In this cosmovision, the world is formed by three main elements: *saah* “earth”, *dëh* “water” and *wöhöt* “wind;” there are three main types of land, namely *saah-wáh* “firm land,” *boók*

"chavascal" and *wég* "sand;" three types of forest, namely *háy* "virgin forest," *wāk* "caatinga" and *boot-bíg* "capoeira;" three parts to the tree, namely *tíh* "root," *tëg* "trunk" and *nów* "branch;" three parts to the branch, namely *keét* "leaves," *soo* "flowers" and *ág* "fruits;" three types of hunts, namely *tu hām kō' reh hũ* "fighters of land habits," *kān hũ* "fighters of tree habits" and *kē hũ* "winged hunts;" three types of watercourses, namely *dēh mi-sá'* "sea," *dēh mi-pōg* "river" and *dēh mi-tēh* "igarapé;" fire has three elements, namely *tëg-hön* "flame," *ki' ah* "warmth" and *bee'* "brightness;" the days are classified into three kinds, namely *sāam* "yesterday," *nih tóh* "today" and *wag hi* "tomorrow;" and the human being is formed by three parts, namely *sap* "body," *hāg-wäg* "heart" and *pāh-kēy* "thought." These are just a few examples of the "base three" of the Yuhupdeh world. Interestingly, they had never realised this and were blown away. After introducing this idea, they themselves began to notice "base three" in hundreds of elements; and not just elements, but their own language, which is topologically classified as insulating because most words are monosyllabic, made up of three letters. Look again at some of the examples above, where most words are made up of three letters:

Three types of forest: *háy, wāk, boot-bíg*.

Three parts of the tree: *tíh, tëg, nów*.

Three types of watercourses: *dēh mi-sá', dēh mi-pög, dēh mi-tēh*.

Three elements of fire: *tëg-hön, ki' ah, bee'*.

Three types of day: *sāam, nih tóh, wag hi*.

Three parts of the human being: *sap, hāg-wäg, pāh-kēy*.

As we had recently alphabetised their language and were dazzled by the writing, the traces of the Creator could be seen not only in their environment, but now also in their own speech. They were able to discern one craft from another by the peculiar way in which each woman had to braid the vines, thus leaving her "mark" in the woven basketwork. Now they began to perceive the "mark" of a triune Creator in their world.

We emphasised the personality and collectivity of the Trinity as ideals for human beings and society, as well as its contemporary omnipresence, having not only created everything that exists, but also maintaining the created world.

Another attribute of God that stood out in this context was sovereignty. When searching for the term "Lord," the first suggestion we were given was to use *muhuk pög yap* – "the great boss." We discarded it immediately, as the "boss" in that culture was a devalued figure and one who suffered gratuitous resistance. The closest term found was *nom nih yap* – "owner" – and so we spoke in the first two years of *Kä'-Teh Inih Nom Nih Yap* – "God our owner" to

designate "God our Lord," until an elder explained that he already understood what we meant, but that this expression sounded strange. The objects of *nom nih yap* were always things, such as a house, canoe or garden, but never people, so it was as if we were "thingifying" the person by talking about God as his "owner." He then created a hitherto non-existent expression for "Lord:" *inih-tōno-yap* – *inih* is the first-person plural as object, "us;" *tōn* is the verb "to possess;" and *yap* is a "nominaliser." Therefore, it means "he who has possession over us." This expression became clear and communicative in such a way that even those who had never heard it understood it, despite the strange idea of a deity who owns people. We then proceeded to speak of the *Kā'-Teh Inih-Tōno-Yap* – "God: he who has possession over us" to express his lordship over all things created by himself.

Our initial emphasis was on the lordship of God as the owner of all things and as he who sustains us, providing everything we need such as fruit, game and fish, as well as sending out rain, sun and wind, making the land productive and providing ample fields, all this out of sheer goodness and self-will. Being personal and having no way of paying you for any of this, the human response must be a grateful heart. And being so powerful as well as omniscient, He cannot be manipulated as an impersonal force: the only possible relationship with Him was submissive worship.

But this concept was revolutionary for those interested in the Gospel, going beyond what we imagined. Before, they were marked by constant fear, since the forest was infested with malevolent mystic beings, the rivers likewise, and society always had enemies and shamans who could send witchcraft at any time. But now they began to understand that all these enemies feared the "owner" of all things, so walking with Him was the best protection one could have. There was no longer any reason to live in fear.

We later saw an underlying meaning in this expression. Due to the strong individualism in that society, each one took care of what was theirs and did not expect help from the other. An adult who saw a child thrown to the ground and crying in the middle of the courtyard would not cherish him or her. At the most, she would scream for the mother to take care of her child, because each one took care of what is hers. By understanding God to be our "owner," they began to have a sense of acceptance that they had never imagined before. If He was my "owner," it meant He took care of me.

In the wake of the person of God, teaching about the Word as a revelation of this God, and as the absolute and universal Truth, was another key element that opened the door to all other fundamental teachings. This initial communication about the Gospel, introducing the people

to God and his Word went on for years, while always adding new concepts and remembering those already introduced. All of the main teachings of Scripture, as centred on the frameworks of creation, the fall, redemption and consummation, were introduced on this trail of Trinitarian theontology. Communication took place in personal and collective ways, through informal conversation and the formal exposition of the Scriptures, in the village or in incursions through the forest and rivers, seizing and creating opportunities, talking about the same subject in different ways and in different contexts, for men and women, adults and children, in an abundant seeding of the Gospel.

In November 2011, at the end of the third year of evangelisation, that is, the end of the sixth year of being among them, the first conversion took place by the grace of God. It was a young man of seventeen, shy and reserved. He did not live in the main village where we lived over longer periods and our primary target there was his father, the most influential man in his village. God's eyes, however, were on that quiet boy.

He gave himself to Christ in a moment of remorse and shame, after physically assaulting his great uncle, an elderly widower, during a collective drinking party. It was a real conversion and the individualism of that culture was used by God in his favour, as no one was opposed to his personal decision. He was intensively disciplined and, as part of the first group to complete elementary school in the village, went out to complete high school at a government boarding school on the outskirts of town. He developed his use of the Portuguese language, learned to move around the urban centre and became an avid reader of the Scriptures. After successfully completing high school, there was a possibility of studying medicine, but he spontaneously preferred to study theology, because he wanted to be involved in the evangelisation of his people. He completed three years of Bible college while translating portions of the Scriptures into his mother tongue with us. He understood his ministerial calling, matured in the faith, grew as a leader, and became a bold exponent of the Word.

Meanwhile, the evangelisation of the people continued, but there was a long period of no new responses. In 2015, now nine years after our arrival, a group finally converted, the church was born and began to structure itself in one of the villages. The following years were ones of intense theological teaching where, in this second phase, the theology of the trinitarian alliance was the main focus. The materials produced were published in the form of a book aimed at theologising churches in traditional contexts (Silva, 2019).

Our young seminarian completed his Bible institute course, returned to the village and assumed leadership of the nascent church. In this phase, we dedicated ourselves to teaching

Reformed ecclesiology, as applied to that reality, which resulted in the publication of a second book focussed on traditional contexts (Silva, 2020). There were fifteen main thematic axes to our biblical teaching:

CREATION

- 1) **The Scriptures** – Especially making a distinction between biblical revelation as absolute Truth, and tradition/mythology as relative truths.
- 2) **The Creator** – The person of God as an infinite and personal being, the relational, pre-existing, Creator of all things and never created, owner of all that exists, present today, sovereign over all things, existing in a Holy Trinity.
- 3) **The creation** – The world, beings from below and beings from beyond, angels, humans, animals and life itself as gifts from God, therefore belonging to him and not humanity.

FALL

- 4) **The evil** – Satan, his character and his demons, his strategies and devices.
- 5) **The sin** – The fall as a historical fact, the origin of all evils, especially the depravity of the human heart, and the consequences for yesterday, today and tomorrow.

REDEMPTION

- 6) **The providence** – God's absolute control over all things and facts of life, making everything result in glory for him and for his benefit, the reason for our hope in this fallen world.
- 7) **The covenant** – The way in which God relates to us, assuming a commitment with responsibility on both sides, as well as a trustworthy model for understanding the Scriptures in continuity between the Old and New Testaments.
- 8) **The salvation** – Christ's sacrifice, planned by God even in eternity (election), happened in time and space as a result of his promise (covenant) applied to humanity by the Holy Spirit (regeneration), generating an effect in our lives in the past (justification, freeing us from the guilt of sin), the present (sanctification, gradually freeing us from the dominion of sin) and the future (glorification, when we will be freed from the presence of sin).
- 9) **The Saviour** – The person of Jesus, pre-existing God, God incarnate, life that is our model, his resurrection and absolute government today.
- 10) **The Holy Spirit** – His work in us, convincing the lost, applying salvation, working the improbable in us, refreshing us in weakness, warning us in temptation, lifting us up when we fall.
- 11) **The Christian life** – Various crucial elements such as devotion (prayer and meditation on the Scriptures), worship, communion with the saints, stewardship, evangelisation and the dangers of idolatry, magic, backbiting, debauchery.

12) **The church** – As people of God, body of Christ, dwelling place of the Holy Spirit, one, holy, apostolic, universal and local, invisible and visible, a spiritual family formed by different peoples and segments breaking ethnic and social barriers.

13) **The sacraments** – Baptism and the Supper, their meanings, forms and importance.

14) **The evangelisation** – The privilege and duty of the Christian and the local church to witness the Gospel near and far, creating awareness that the believer must generate new believers and the church plant new churches.

CONSUMMATION

15) **The end** – The return of Christ, the final judgment, condemnation of the lost, reward of the redeemed, our hope.

In November 2020, by the goodness of God, we had the joy of ordaining two elders and a deacon, the chief elder being the first convert. The church is still in the consolidation phase, still in its first years of walking. It was the first and until then the only church not only among the Yuhupdeh, but in the entire channel of the Uaupés River, with its 15 people-groups, three towns and 116 villages.

In general, some observations are pertinent:

(1) The concept of the personal, triune, relational and non-manipulable God was well understood, confronting the concept of impersonal mystical force.

(2) Intense teaching about worship, both in liturgical and personal contexts, faced the practice of manipulative magic. However, especially in times of more serious illnesses, shamanic rituals were still a temptation for some.

(3) The Word of God was relevantly well understood and accepted as universal Truth, therefore giving a decisive blow to radical relativism.

(4) Individualism has been gradually broken, with insistent teaching about communion in light of the triune collectivity. It is still a challenge to break this, especially in relation to evangelistic practice, as it is embarrassing to approach someone with an issue that confronts them.

(5) Utilitarianism and presentism have been persistent values manifesting themselves especially in the lack of care for collective goods and mismanagement of money now that they are being funded through the schools.

(6) The introduction and ordination of officers into the church has been a good opportunity to deal with egalitarianism, but it is still too new to examine.

(7) Hedonism was well amortised by breaking away from the collective drunkenness, certainly the greatest witness to God's influence in the eyes of the entire region. The idea of someone rejoicing without being drunk is still a novelty, and the church has been surprising in this sense, with a joyful, lively liturgy and pleasant communion. The area of sexuality is still a challenge among young people.

(8) Anthropocentrism has thus been deconstructed little by little, but in an effective way.

(9) The improvement in the quality of life in the village where the church was born is evident and unquestionable when compared to the others. Among believers, the abuse of children and women is no longer heard of, drunkenness has been overcome and, with that, there are no more physical attacks, homicides or suicides. The houses are cared for and with access to money the straw roof has been replaced by aluminum roofing, the walls of sticks are becoming sawn boards, the shabby clothes new and clean. Feeding has also improved significantly, as the fields that were once small and insufficient due to the large amount of cassava that used to be used for caxiri (fermented beverage) are now large and plentiful. Personal emotions underwent a revolution: once marked by melancholy, they are now marked by joy. And marital relationships have become more stable and secure without cases of adultery.

(10) There is still much to be done, both in the consolidation of the church and in the evangelisation of other villages and peoples in that region. May the Lord be glorified in everything, his people edified, and each of his elect drawn to his feet.

CHAPTER 6 – SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this chapter is to present a general synthesis of the research and offer its conclusions and recommendations.

6.1. Synthesis

This research began with the curious and thought-provoking observation of similarities between the basic values of urban Western postmodern worldviews and those of the indigenous shamanic of the Yuhupdeh people.

As this researcher lived for fifteen years with these indigenous people in the interior of the Amazon Forest, its exotic shamanism began to transmit an air of familiarity to him and he realised that, despite such divergent cultural manifestations, in its cosmovisional base it was very similar to dominant Western values.

Early ethnological and sociological readings of both postmodernism and Amerindian shamanism indeed pointed to such similarities, thus increasing the sense of the need for broader research. Since the Yuhupdeh have always been isolated deep in the forest, without any historical connection to the Western world, how could these two societies have developed similar values? Since the postmodern worldview is understood to result from a series of historical facts and movements, which the Yuhupdeh had not gone through or been influenced by, could the comparison of these two worldviews shed new light on the understanding of postmodernism? Could it bring new insights to missiology and missionary practice in both societies?

Thus, the research project was conceived under the following problematisation: *What are the reasons for the similarities between Western postmodernism and Yuhupdeh shamanism?* This engendered the following derived questions: *Which values of postmodernism are similar to Yuhupdeh shamanism's values? How do such similarities manifest themselves in Yuhupdeh society? What are the possible reasons for the similarities between such worldviews and what could be the contributions that could be made to the Reformed theological study of postmodernism on the basis of these reasons? What implications do these insights carry for missiology and missionary practice in terms of these two worldviews?*

In the light of exant readings on postmodernism and shamanism by general authors, while favouring reformed thinkers, it was established as a central theoretical argument that the similarities between Western postmodernism and Yuhupdeh shamanism are not coincidences, but rather are the result of two common traits to both worldviews: the de-personalisation of the notion of God and the consequent centralisation of humanity in the universe. Among the Yuhupdeh these are millenary conceptions while, in the West, they are developments that have been intensified over the last centuries.

Thus, the main purpose of this study was to develop a comparative analysis of urban Western postmodernism and Yuhupdeh indigenous shamanism, focusing on their similarities, while searching for possible causal factors and the missiological implications that these might hold.

Since a study of this exact nature did not exist, a specific analytical model was needed for the present project.

Chapter 1 discussed an analytical model in a Reformed and theological-missiological way. The first theoretical reference was to John Calvin (2006a:41) on the premise that "almost the sum of our knowledge, which in fact should be judged as true and solid knowledge, consists of two parts: the knowledge of God and the knowledge of ourselves". The second was to Abraham Kuyper (2014:28) who proposed that every "system of thought" is the result of the understanding that one has of "the three fundamental relationships of all human life: namely, (1) our relationship with *God*, (2) our relationship with *man*, and (3) our relationship with the *world*".

In the same way, the comparison of the two societies made use of the three major areas that structure any cosmovision: relationships with the divine; relationships with humans; relations with the world. Aiming to enable a sound understanding of these large areas, key research questions were elaborated along eight thematic axes applicable to both societies. For each axis, values were established in binary pairs according to a scheme commonly used in studies, known as value scales. The intention would not be to quantify each value, but rather to elucidate the prevailing value on each axis by using those literary sources and descriptions of social, religious or linguistic facts that indicate worldview patterns.

Following a phenomenological analytical orientation, which aims to understand the underlying notions from observable facts, that is, from the most to the least evident, the order of the three major areas was inverted, starting with the relationships with the world (most observable) to the relationships with the divine (less observable).

In (I) **relations with the world**, we sought to understand (1) the group conception of truth, as a correct description of reality, namely +universalist or +relativist; (2) who or what is at the centre of the universe, therefore, its cosmocentricity, that is, +divinecentric or +anthropocentric; (3) the group orientation in relation to time, therefore, its focus in terms of temporality, that is, +historical or +presentist; and (4) the basic orientation towards the relationship with the environment, therefore, the relationship with spatiality, that is, +affective or +utilitarian. In (II) **relationships with the human**, we sought to understand (5) the orientation of the conscience towards wrong behaviour, its elenticity, that is, +guilt or +shame; (6) the orientation of the group regarding personal fulfilment in view of their desires, that is, +altruistic or +hedonistic; (7) group orientation in relation to leadership and authority, that is, +hierarchical or +egalitarian; (8) and personal guidance in relation to peers regarding their sense of collectivity, that is, +collectivist or +individualist. In (III) **relationships with the divine**, we sought to understand (9) the method of relating to the divine in its religiosity, that is, +adoration or +manipulation; and, finally, (10) the concept that one has of the fundamental reality in its sacredness, that is, +personal or +impersonal.

In **Chapter 2** the first two areas of the analytical model were applied to postmodernism. A literary-historical examination of the postmodern phenomenon demonstrated that the main thinkers of philosophy and sociology understood post it to be the result of various historical factors and movements: Renaissance humanism, Enlightenment rationalism, Protestant reformation, the strengthening of national states, economic liberalism, scientism and secularism, as well as the Industrial Revolution, the Second World War, the phenomenon of urbanisation, the student and labour revolutions of the 1960s and 1970s, great technological advances and the advent of mass media.

The main Reformed thinkers on postmodernism recognise the influence of historical factors and movements: however, they understand that the causative factor of postmodern values is the break with the idea of an infinite-personal Creator, particularly as it occurred in the 17th century, creating room for the further development of values already present in the West since the Greco-Roman paganism of the 6th century BC.

By applying the first two areas of the analysis model to postmodernism, the urban western society, in older times marked by affection in relation to its environment, became strongly *utilitarian* and consumerism became a great expression of this value. Once a historical society, which valued its past and projected its future with hope, it became markedly *presentist*, immersed in an existential immediacy. Once theocentric, it became strongly *anthropocentric*,

where humanity was seen as the central reference of all things. When in the past even Western science held the belief in universal truths, today one of the main marks of the West is a strong *relativism* that manifests itself in all areas of life.

The Christian influence on the West imprinted on it marked traces of *collectivity*, but today it is characterised by *individualism*, even though a nominal search for a sense of community persists. The idea of hierarchy, with exponents and influential leaders at all social levels, has been rapidly replaced by an ideal of *egalitarianism* so exacerbated that it resulted in a feeling of resistance to authorities, even though the old hierarchical structures have been maintained. *Hedonism*, as a self-fulfilling lifestyle, is the prevailing value in the West today, standing against selfless altruism. And, finally, the orientation of conscience in the face of wrongdoing is a transition from internal guilt, which seeks innocence, to external *shame*, which seeks evidence and social validation.

Therefore, it is concluded that the urban Western postmodern worldview, in general, has become or is becoming more utilitarian, presentist, anthropocentric and relativistic in its relations with the world, as well as more individualistic, egalitarian, hedonistic and guided by shame in their relationships with other humans.

Chapter 3 the first two areas of the analytical model of worldviews were applied to Yuhupdeh shamanism. An ethnological summary presented the general features of Amerindian shamanism and an ethnographic description was given that situated the Yuhupdeh people in their socio-environmental and ethnolinguistic context. It is a minority people, which numbers about one thousand, consisting of traditionally nomadic hunter-gatherers who have settled in small villages, becoming fishermen and incipient farmers. Living in the interior of the Amazon rainforest, bordering Brazil and Colombia, they remained isolated for generations and only recently came into more frequent contact with the outside world. The values analysed here, however, relate to their traditional distinctive features and not the recent and still superficial influences of the majority world.

Little academic research has been carried out on the Yuhupdeh and the extant research, of a linguistic and anthropological nature, did not significantly contemplate aspects of values due to the limited time spent with them and the linguistic communication barrier. Thus, the analysis was based in a privileged way on academic and technical materials published or made available by this researcher over fifteen years of work among the people. Added to this personal ethnographic data, however, there is extensive ethnological literature on Amerindians that confirms each conclusion made here.

By applying the first two areas of the analytical model to shamanism, it was concluded that the Yuhupdeh society, contrary to what common sense imagines, has always been strongly *utilitarian* in its relations with both natural, social and mystical environments. Abundant cultural and linguistic data give evidence of a markedly *presentist* worldview, even manifesting immediacy and fatalism. The universe is conceived in an *anthropocentric* way and reality is interpreted in a fundamentally *relativistic* way.

It is surprising to observe the marked trait of traditional *individualism* in the Yuhupdeh society, with a very high level of autonomy of the person, when common opinion imagines every indigenous people as *collectivist*. Equally surprising is its very strong *egalitarianism* and the concomitant resistance to leadership, while it has frequently been imagined that every indigenous person has leaders. In that society, the void of desires is encouraged and socially justified, so that *hedonism* reigns in the wake of individualism-utilitarianism-presentism. And, finally, the only unsurprising trait is *shame*-oriented consciousness, something already known in studies about tribal societies.

Therefore, it was concluded that the Yuhupdeh indigenous shamanic worldview is traditionally more utilitarian, presentist, anthropocentric and relativistic in its relations with the world, as well as individualistic, egalitarian, hedonistic and shame-oriented in its relations with the human.

In **Chapter 4** the third and most important area of the analytical model was applied to the two worldviews in the search for reasons for the similarities. Surprisingly, and again, contrary to the common imagination that all indigenous people have their gods and are possessed by spirits, worshiping the sun and the moon, it was found that the Yuhupdeh do not worship or even revere anyone or anything. Although they conceive their world as plagued by mystical beings, the latter do not have a friendly relationship with anyone as they are all malevolent and attack humans and cause illness and death. The relationship with them is a constant state of war comprising attacks and counterattacks. Nor do they conceive in their cosmology even of the idea of a personal Creator: they see everything that exists as pre-existing.

Their *sensus divinitatis* is so far removed from the biblical worldview that it has no personality at all, but only manifests as an impersonal mystical force that envelops the universe, giving life to everything that is alive and connecting everything to everyone. In ethnographic literature, socio-religious systems centred on impersonal forces are known as “totemism,” widely studied

in Melanesia, but recorded in various parts of the world. Therefore, the Yuhupdeh have a totemic worldview.

As force is not a person, one cannot be related to it, and so it is not adored but manipulated, a process called “magic” in ethnographic studies. All of Yuhupdeh religiosity centres on the manipulation of this mystical force which, being amoral, can be used for good or evil. Thus, in its religiosity, the method of relating to the divine is by means of *manipulation* through magic, since the concept of fundamental reality is totally *impersonal*, again as related to totemism.

Although the concepts of an impersonal force/totemism and manipulation of forces/magic sound strange to the postmodern West, they are in fact not all that strange. They are present in popular superstition in very similar concepts, namely luck/bad luck. Even in mainstream newspapers in the world's most secularised countries, such concepts appear daily in the horoscope or zodiac section. They are ubiquitous in fiction, in record-breaking films such as the *Star Wars* saga; the magic of the Harry Potter saga, and so on, as indicated.

Far beyond fiction, Darwin's evolutionism operationalised an emblematic and significant shift in the concept of the fundamental reality in the West. The big bang theory gained credibility with the discovery of the “fundamental forces” of gravity, electromagnetism, strong forces and weak nuclear forces, which would have provided the necessary conditions for the evolution of the primordial atom to the most complex forms of life that exist today. The West had come to believe that its fundamental reality was not an infinite-personal God but rather impersonal natural forces.

Despite its wide acceptance, evolutionism and its offshoots were not strong enough to extirpate the idea of God in the West: however, its repeated and orchestrated attacks have operationalised in recent generations a true de-personalisation of the figure of God, which Schaeffer called “paneverythingism,” that is, a religious system where the personal God is not disowned but is treated as an impersonal force.

This western “paneverythingism” has different ramifications. In the non-Protestant segment, there are those who in fact relegate the idea of God to something without any value and those who replace it with a concept of a mystical impersonal force and develop a religiosity that is also mystical and spiritual, centred on energy, crystals and integration with the universe, in a true revitalisation of pagan beliefs and practices. In short, it is neopaganism.

The scientific Gaia, according to which the earth is a living organism, was seized by academic feminism and part of the homosexual movement, proposing to supplant the concept of the sexist and oppressive Judeo-Christian God by the goddess Sofia, androgynous and liberal, known in different cultures by different names, such as Isis, Kali-Durga, Ishtar, Asera and Pachamana. In all these cases she is not so much a being as an impersonal mystical force: mystified nature. The resulting religiosity in any of these cases is only magic/a form of manipulation, since it is not possible to relate to a force. Magic suits postmodern secularism as it is the religious system that dispenses with a personal God.

Even the Protestant segment was not unharmed by these developments. Some churches show a proclivity for liturgical formalism where the personality of worship no longer exists, while others introduce magical practices into worship, as in neo-Pentecostalism, trying to manipulate the personal God as if it were an impersonal force. In both cases, impersonality is the hallmark of the development.

6.2. Conclusions

6.2.1. **Chapter 4** reflects the most important conclusions of this research. The main reasons for the similarities between Western postmodernism and Yuhupdeh shamanism can be formulated precisely by paying renewed attention to the three great cosmovisional foundations of the Calvin-Kuyperian tripod:

6.2.1.1. **In relations with the divine**, the Yuhupdeh have always conceived an impersonal mystical force as their fundamental reality, so that their religiosity is essentially magical. Postmodern societies have de-personalised the traditional idea of God and, as a result, their religiosity has increasingly gained traces of magic.

6.2.1.2. Also as a consequence of this impersonality of the sacred, in their **relationships with the human**, the Yuhupdeh are traditionally individualists. After all, since there is no collectivity in the beyond, why would there be in this one? Equally, since there is no hierarchy in the afterlife, the below is conceived in an egalitarian way. Without authorities to restrict the unbridled waste of desires, hedonism is the obvious consequence and, as no one in the hereafter takes offense at personal mistakes, conscience is oriented horizontally with a view to what others think and say, that is, it is related to shame. Postmodern societies are following the same route, which is why they develop such similar values.

6.2.1.3. As a consequence of the de-personalisation of the sacred, in their **relations with the world** the Yuhupdeh are traditionally relativists. Since their fundamental reality is a manipulable, amoral and unrevealed impersonal force, the interpretation of reality is at the discretion of human perspectives. The centre of the universe is occupied by humanity with his or her interests: therefore, anthropocentrism results along with utilitarianism and presentism. The more the West de-personalises the notion of its fundamental reality, the more similar to Yuhupdeh shamanism its values become.

6.2.2. Finally, **Chapter 5** summarised the implications of the findings made in the present project and the potential contributions or useful insights engendered by this understanding.

6.2.2.1. **For theological studies** of postmodernism, the main contribution is that these ethnographic data from the mission field corroborate understandings that are extant in literature, in the sense that postmodernity is not only the result of historical factors and movements but, instead, involves a break with the idea of an infinite-personal God.

Moreover, the findings of this research go beyond current understandings even in theological studies, showing that the connection point between shamanism and postmodernism, is in fact, the Garden of Eden. The seeds of de-personalisation, individualism and relativism, as well as the other values studied here, are in the report of the fall. They were developed along different but parallel paths. The values of postmodernism were not born in the Greek-Roman paganism of the 6th century BC, but in the primordial garden.

6.2.2.2. **For missiological studies**, this research points to the distancing of shamanic and postmodern values from the biblical worldview as a challenging element for the communication of the Gospel. The biblical worldview is diametrically opposed to these two worldviews in the cases of all values discussed here.

The fundamental reality of the whole Scripture is God who reveals himself as infinite and personal, good and just, loving and holy, all-powerful, unmanageable, with whom the only acceptable means of relationship is humility and transforming *worship*. The biblical worldview is theocentric, so that everything else is just an outgrowth of this fundamental understanding.

Thus, the idea of Church presupposes *collectivity*, which breaks with exacerbated individualism. Despite the presence of the *shame/honour* element in Scripture, the *guilt/innocence* orientation precedes that in view of the relationship with the all-seeing God. *Altruism* precedes self-fulfilment, as desires are curbed by selflessness. Despite the biblical

ideal of equality in dignity and worth, the Trinity is a model of servile *hierarchy*, where the largest is the smallest, the one that leads serves, while this is contrary to the subverted logic of the mundane hierarchy.

The reality created by God has its own description, the Word of God, that is, the *universal* truth, which does not cover everything but provides the only lens capable of coherently interpreting all reality. Life centres on God and not man, so the universe is *theocentric*. The Christ of Scripture is past, present and future, so temporality is *historical*. And Christian stewardship generates *affectivity* in all relationships, whether with the natural, social or spiritual environment.

6.2.2.3. **For missionary practice**, it is important to observe the syncretistic element already existing in most societies, including traditional shamanic ones that have already received the Gospel and reinterpreted it through a logic of impersonality and manipulation and Western postmodern ones that, without realising it, are influenced by shamanic values.

Some practical implications:

6.2.2.3.1. In missionary formation, in addition to the already-relevant studies in missionary anthropology, it would be healthy to add or reinforce studies of worldview.

6.2.2.3.2. In the case of worldview studies, it would be opportune to add the subject of totemism.

6.2.2.3.3. Apologetic studies would be equally timely for missionaries going to work in postmodern and shamanic contexts.

6.2.2.3.4. Covenant theology, showing God's personal way of relating to his people, communicated in a confessional and at the same time creative way, is of fundamental importance for both contexts.

6.2.2.3.5. The universal and eternal veracity of the Scriptures, as the correct and in fact the only coherent description of reality, must be the fundamental and non-negotiable element in evangelisation.

6.2.2.3.6. The analogy of the church as a relational, welcoming and affective community must counteract the individualism rooted in these cosmovisions, both through teaching and experience.

6.3. Recommendations

This research is not exhaustive, so that several subjects discussed here can be explored further, including the following possibilities:

6.3.1. Despite having been widely studied by great figures in the human sciences such as Durkheim, Freud, Boas, Radcliffe-Brown and Lévi-Strauss, research on totemism has fallen into disuse in academic institutions. Boas (1916:321) considered it “an artificial unit,” Lévi-Strauss (1975:27) referred to it as an “illusion” and, perhaps because of such assertions, totemism was relegated to intellectual oblivion. However, the present project includes ethnographic data that can stimulate new research not only in missiology, but also in the fields of anthropology and sociology.

6.3.2. The analytical model used here was designed for the purpose of comparing the two worldviews in question. However, with some adaptation, it can be useful for the analysis of other worldviews. It would be interesting to see it improved and tested in other contexts so as to assess its usefulness as a missionary tool.

6.3.3. The Yuhupdeh have been evangelised over the past fifteen years, and a good part of them has surrendered to Christ, so that a church was born there which is now in a process of consolidation and already enjoys ordained local leaders whereas part of the Scriptures have been translated into their language. A survey of how the Gospel has impacted that society and how it has been interpreted by converts would be very timely and certainly enriching.

6.3.4. The subject of the de-personalisation of the idea of God in the postmodern West has not yet been widely explored and offers a promising area for missiological research.

6.3.5. Finally, research in the opposite direction, namely to trace the dissimilarities between the Yuhupdeh worldview, or some other totemic society, with the Western worldview, is equally promising.

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