

# MAN AND CITY. MYTH AND VISION

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## 1. Introduction

Myth, science and art are characteristic creations of human civilization. At each historic period, each one of them followed a development that corresponded to the dominant needs, ideals, virtues, curiosity and structure of the society. Generally, the cities form a suitable and convenient place for their formation, growth and evolution and the activities and way of living of the citizens are driven and conformed by the morality and the cognition that these creations inspired. (Figure 1)

Regarding the environment, the level of respect which was induced by the citizens in the ancient civilized societies was determined, at a great degree, by the myths and, through the evolution of civilization and human history, it passed at the responsibility of science. In this work art tries to find its field of application between the myth and the science and suggests interactions.

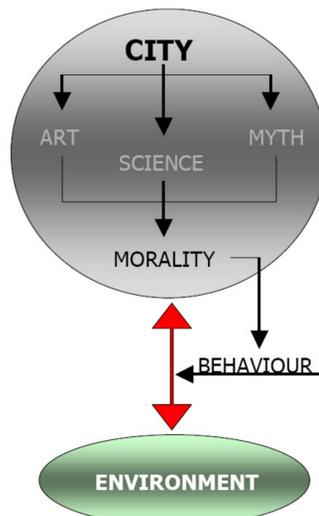


Figure 1: Introduction flowchart

## 2. Myth as an expression of the collective unconscious

Myths are the expression of a group's unconscious. The genesis of a myth is the result of the civilization's experience which target in past societies was to build a guide for the social behavior. Myths are early science, the result of man's first attempt to explain what he saw around him. At the same time, myths were the common source of morality and religion.

A famous myth dealing with the subject of the moral and objective limits of human activity within its environment is this of Daedalus and Icarus. In this ancient greek myth, Icarus flies from the tower where he is imprisoned, on wings made of wax and feathers. Forewarned by his father Daedalus not to fly too high so the sun won't melt the wings, Icarus continues to soar higher and higher as he was overwhelmed by the thrill of flying, until his wings melt, and he falls to his death.

After the substitution of the role of the ancient myth as an explanatory instrument by the science and its combination with the rise and domination of urbanization, a more or less manipulated myth's role gets established in people's behavior, predominantly by means of a culture of consumption. This occurs because modern man is characterized by a lack of moral behavior towards the environment which stems from the disproportional trust to science and technology.

## 3. Cities, environmental issues and a rational modern way of thinking

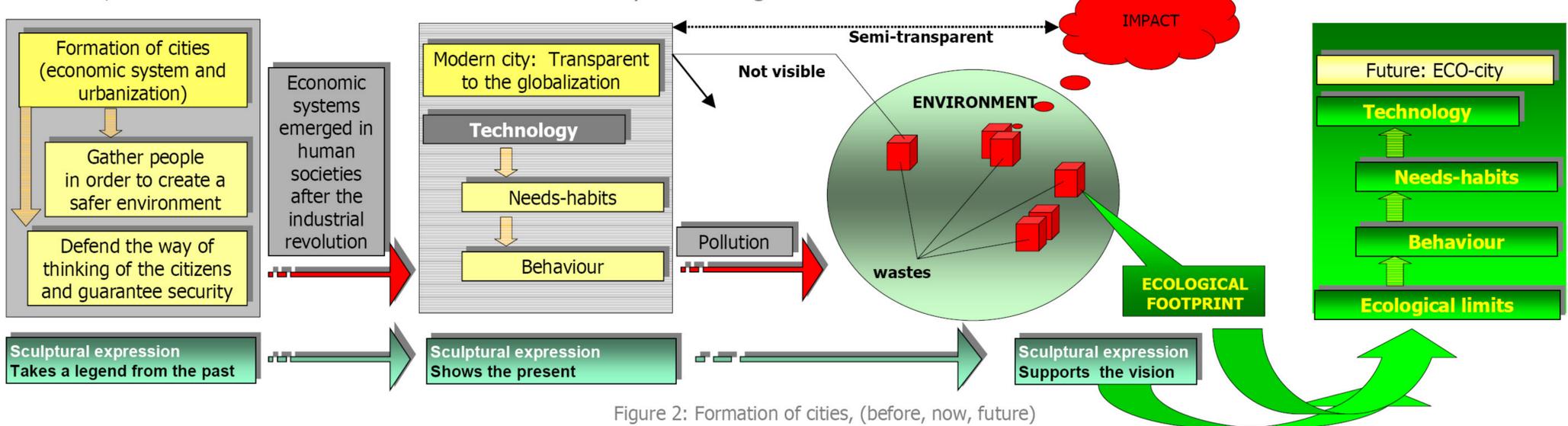


Figure 2: Formation of cities, (before, now, future)

## 4. Sculptural expression of environmental concerns

In analogy to the myth of Icarus, the evolution of the modern society driven by technologic development, shows signs of disrespect towards the environmental equilibrium. In an attempt to shape the above conception, an artistic application is created which tries to interpret in a modernized framework the issue of the interface between man and its environment. At this end, a conceptual city is given shape (G. Lagos) which expresses the field of action of the modern man. Georges Perec, using a poetic rationality, refers to the city as following: "We could never account for the city. The city is here. It is our place, we don't have any other... There is nothing inhuman about a city- except for the humans." In this paper's sculpture work, the citizens are represented by little Icaruses (sculpted by Fivos Sargentis), firmly connected to the city, expressing the personal tragedies as well as a questioning on our way of living which is not conformed to an environmental and ecological morality. The myth is applied at the city, which is the place of its vitalization, and the transformation of man into Icarus refers to every individual's contribution in the generation of environmental problems. With respect to Aristotle's definition of the tragedy, «μίμησις πράξεως σπουδαίας και τελείας μέγεθος εχούσης... δι ελέου και φόβου περαινουσα την των τοιούτων παθημάτων κάθαρσιν», the city is a "theatre" of individualities which experience the tragedy by imitating and reproducing Icarus actions. Analyzing the figures in a modern pattern, we end up at the present schematization.

## 5. Conclusions

It is true that the concerns about environmental impacts are today much more proliferous than they used to be. Instead, there are no obvious signs of the necessary rational solutions that are required and this is the result of a misconception about the way that science relies on its own interpretation of the formulation of reason. The scientific progress uses the tactic of the onward march. It evolves on fields where it encounters little resistance for the solving of the problems which, our level of development, enables us to handle. And this means basically the handling of those problems which are characterized by the concurrence of single law-governed phenomena. However, the concurrence of multiple law-governed phenomena, with multiple, equitably important interactions, are those who generate problems of significantly difficult management and resolution. This is where morality should involve towards the concerns that preoccupy humanity.

In the present work, the art tries to find its area of application between the science and the myth. For the expression of a rational elaboration of the actual order and situation in the modern city, the environmental problems, that mainly concern the ethics of the attitude of humans towards the ecosystems, are represented through images that refer to an ancient myth characterized by environmental respect when seen under a modernized worldview. The vision of the modern city should include a more substantial consideration of the environment, with rationalization of the human needs and of the technology used to achieve them.

The attempt for the intermediation of the art in the representation, communication and philosophical elaboration of the environmental and therefore social problems, detected by scientific means, constitutes a new substantial approach for the rationalization of humanity's actions. The present work suggests that the combination among the communicative capacity of the art, the respect towards the nature emitted by the ancient myth, and the power of a rationally used science, can underlie a substantial discussion on sustainability issues.

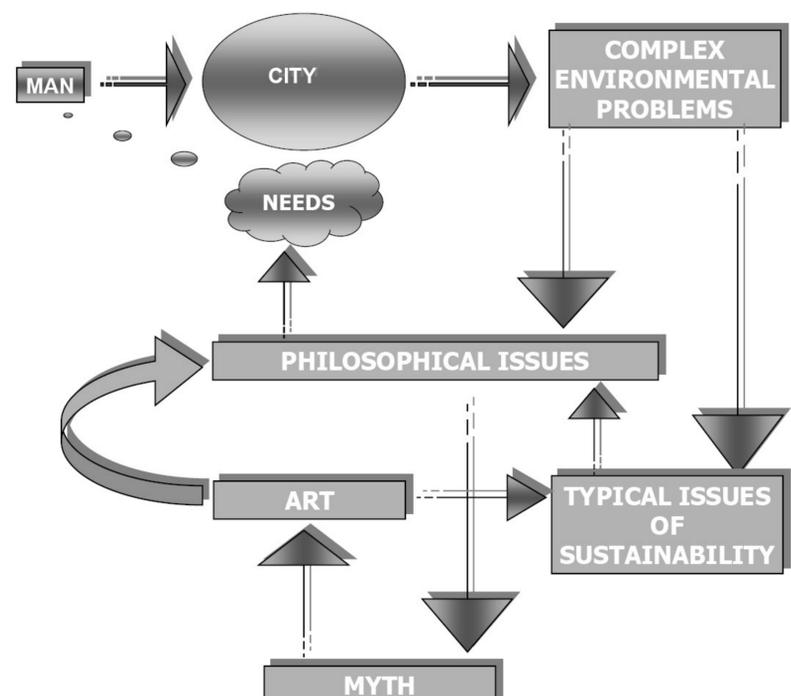


Figure 3: Conclusions' flowchart