

PICKING UP THE PIECES OF THE FRAGMENTOCENE

It's more than mere ownership, it's an invitation to become your true self and express your individualism. Yet, little do you realize, as you enter a world of ownership the notion of „mine“ and „yours“ get imposed on your livelihood. On a large scale, it enables the control and restriction of resources that everyone, including you, depends on.

Fragmentocene: The era dominated by a tendency to view and therefore handle the world in isolated fragments rather than as a holistic and interconnected system.

The Fragmentocene emerges from the mental phenomenon of fragmental thinking. Everything is viewed as separated and categorized. It is uncommon to allow different or far-apart elements to be seen as connected. The world is viewed and treated in isolated fragments rather than as a holistic and interconnected system.

Through structures and patterns of categorization and separation, most of humanity has been trained to leave no room for connections that look behind appearances or connections that go beyond dualistic thinking. However, most connections exist no matter how an individual thinks or feels about them. Ignoring them leads to destructive and irrational decisions on all scales.

While certain divisions and separations are given and normal, the belief that separate or divided elements can be treated as isolated, ignoring their connections, is dangerous.

Once upon a time in 1500, the world consisted of diverse civilizations, a „polycentric and non-capitalist world“ with „several co-existing civilizationsas“ Professor Walter Mignolo describes. However, with the rise of capitalism and colonization, a dominant worldview took root, suppressing other perspectives. Mignolo calls it a „double colonization—of time and of space“ as the Middle Ages were redefined, and the New World was conquered (Mignolo, The Darker Side of Modernity, 2009).

This marked the birth of the Fragmentocene, an era fractured and categorized by the dominant worldview. So, as the night sky unfolds, remember the diverse civilizations of our shared past. Sleep tight, and watch out for insatiable monsters under your bed.

Probably the biggest fragmentation is separating humans and „nature“ or the „artificial“ and the „natural“.

The roots of this mental separation may stem from the physical separation caused by the design and creation of inhabited spaces, such as cities, houses, and cars. Being surrounded by processed materials or designed tools automatically builds a close connection to them. This is because connections tend to be defined through spatial closeness, rather than invisible cycles. For example, many people build close relationships with their cars or even personalize them because they sit in them daily and because their design is intended to represent facial expressions.

„A 2008 study, published in the journal Human Nature, confirmed what many people have already felt – that cars seem to have personality traits associated with them, and that this is similar to the way people perceive facial expressions“ (Mensvoort et al. Next nature 2015).

One doesn't have to climb a tree to be able to breathe its oxygen, neither is it designed to imitate facial expressions and therefore it requires awareness and knowledge to feel connected to it.

It is difficult to formulate an all-encompassing definition of the relationship between humans and „nature“ as emphasized in the book Next Nature.

„The dividing line between nature and culture is difficult to draw. When a bird builds a nest, we call it nature, but when a human puts up an apartment building, suddenly it's culture. Some try to sidestep the problem by claiming that everything is nature, while others claim that nature is only a cultural construction. It's tempting just to lump the two together and give up thinking about it“ (Mensvoort et al. Next nature 2015).

But no matter if there is a correct division between „nature“ and the human world, it's crucial to be aware of their connections, and that neither can be defined without the other which makes a fragmented perspective a distortion of reality.

I quantify and measure, forgetting that I am connected to this world. My manufactured bubble of existence shields me from the consequences of my actions. In this state of mind, I can evade responsibility since I only feel accountable for things I am linked to. In a fragmented world, I can act without constraints.

In this Fragmentocene era, I observe the impact of human structures on my surface. The construction of brick walls, fences, and districts creates divisions, disrupting the natural flow of my interconnected landscapes. Rivers, once free-flowing, now serve as borders, marking territories on my expanse. Maps and borders imposed on me fracture my unity, revealing a fragmented perspective. The division of hemispheres and the grid of longitude and latitude depict me as a puzzle of isolated pieces rather than a cohesive whole. I miss the time when my interconnected ecosystems were appreciated, not dissected for the sake of human structures.

Today in 2040, we live with the consequences of neglecting these warnings. Our society is fragmented, completely isolated in different chambers. The result is societal division, breakdown of communication, erosion of trust, and ultimately a complete stop of progress, cooperation, and innovation. I can not travel back in time but if I could, I would warn them.

Since the 2000s digital media accelerated this fragmentation creating a new reality where the unity of life was lost. Everyone started to live in their own reality resulting in fractured societies, that struggled to find common ground.

Friends, let's reflect on our past, haunted by the ghost of fragmentation through representation. Back in the day, Guy Debord warned in *"Society of the Spectacle"* (1967) that we connected to the world through representations, not real experiences. He spoke of dangers: *"Fragmented views of reality regroup themselves into a new unity as a separate pseudoworld that can only be looked at"* (Debord. *Society of the Spectacle* 1967).

and connected.
elements are, in fact, one
ferent or far away ele-
understanding that dif-
tices can promote the
question of what prac-
This still leaves the

It can be overwhelming to live in
a world with so many facets, and
when realizing that they are all
connected it seems impossible
to come to a rational conclu-
sion that guides you through it.
Maybe it is not about a rational
thought, but a feeling. An in-
stinct that knows exactly what to
do because you come from this
entangled world. It's your crea-
tor; your home.

It is time to put the puzzle of
the fragmented world back
together to start a transfor-
mation that bridges the gap
between fragmented thin-
king and an interconnected
world.

Real change starts in the mind and
to change we have to view and treat
the world as connected, moving away
from fragmental thinking towards a
holistic approach.

People who are aware of the connectedness and also act accordingly can often be found outside the dominant Western system. This mostly includes indigenous ways of living.

„While there is great diversity among Indigenous Peoples, there are also some commonalities in Indigenous worldviews and ways of being. Indigenous worldviews see the whole person (physical, emotional, spiritual, and intellectual) as interconnected to land and in relationship to others (family, communities, nations)“ (Cull, Indigenous ways of knowing and being 2018).

Instead of being connected with the natural cycles, the fragmented time is split into a fixed framework of free time, sleep, and work. Years are seen separate from months and hours separate from minutes, forgetting that they are all connected and add up to a life that is spent.

In the Fragmentocene, time is broken into pieces. Years are cut into months, months into days, days into hours, and so on. Until an indivisible entity is reached, the present moment. Author James Gleick concludes that clocks *„create a continuous fragmentary present“*. He argues: *„Far from anchoring us in time, clocks cast us loose from the past, dislocate us from our natural sensation of continuity“* (Gleick, *The Toll of the Clock* 2021).

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