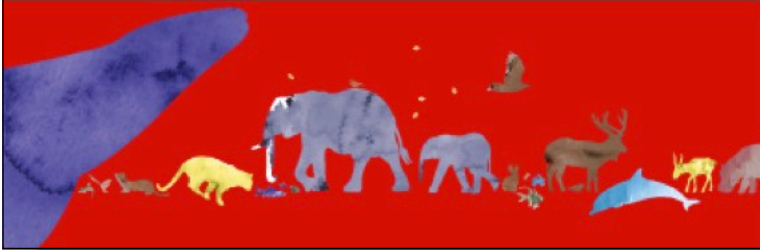


ENDANGERED SPECIES IN THE DIGITAL AGE

Miriam College High School
Parenting Conference
24 February 2018



CONVERSATION
pieces

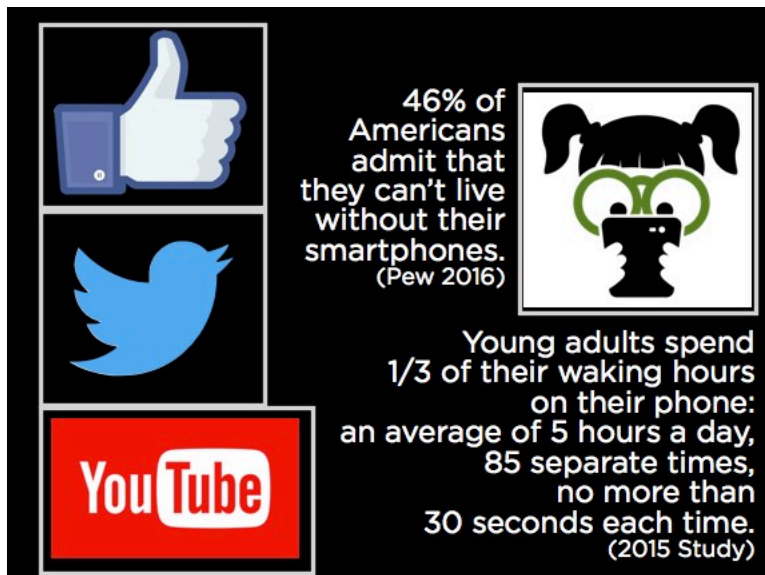
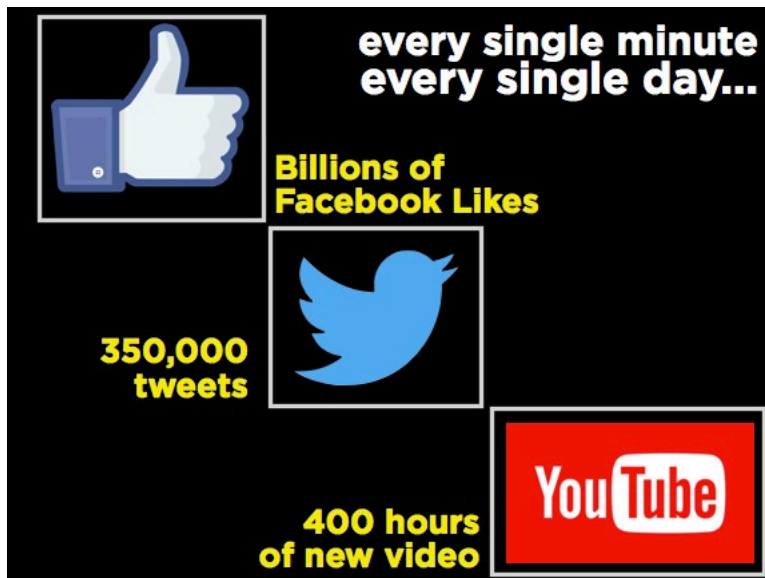
to provoke
TALK+
THOUGHT

social media + communication technology

Not just a great means or tool for
communication, entertainment,
social interaction or education,
but a **powerful reality**
that affects our lives + selves.



YouTube



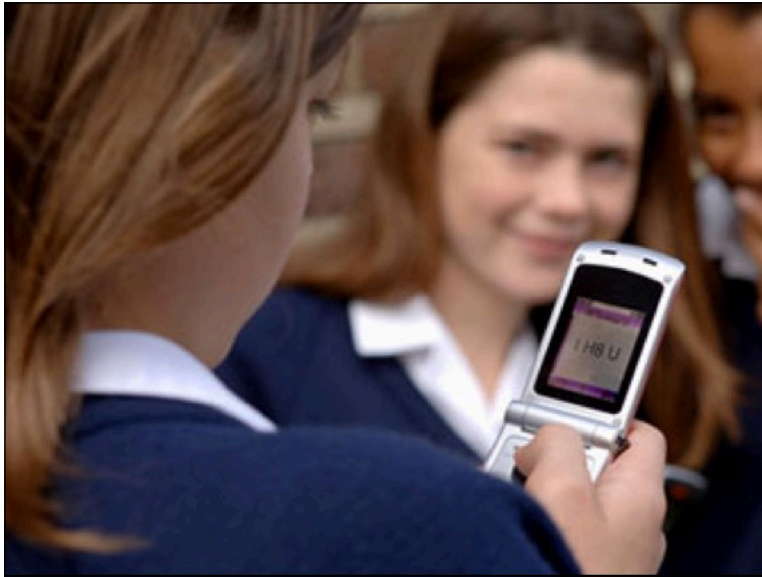
Two important questions
about virtual reality...

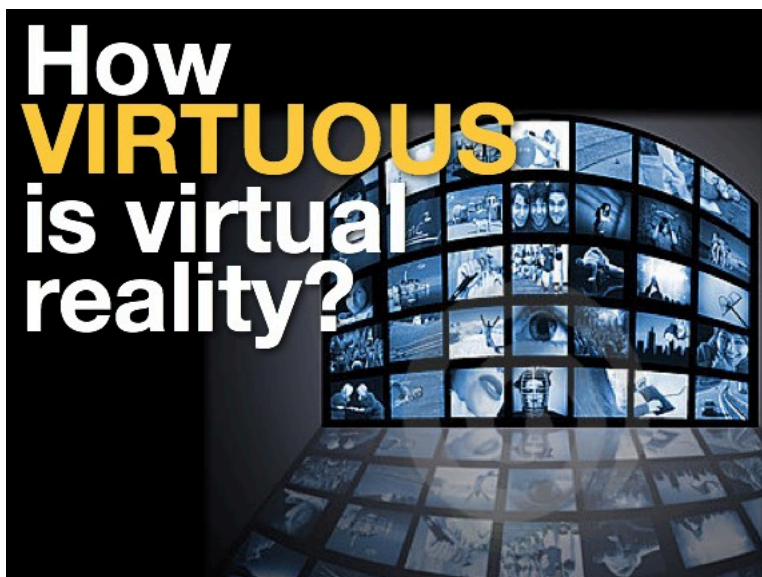
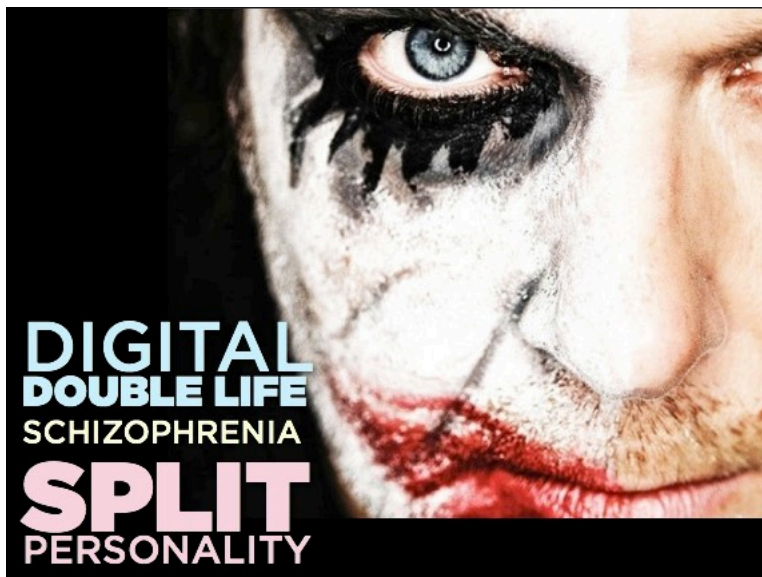
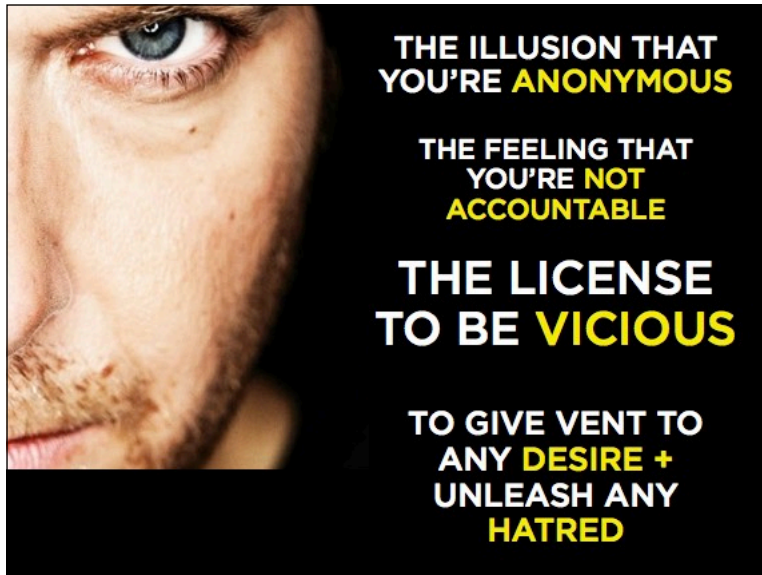
How **REAL**
is virtual reality?

How **VIRTUOUS**
is virtual reality?

Virtual
reality is
REAL?

can you guess
what's going
on here?





ENDANGERED SPECIES OF THE DIGITAL AGE



Popular TV shows
and their hidden
messages

**Survivor and
Amazing Race -
Win at all costs!**

**DANGER #1:
ENDANGERED VALUES**

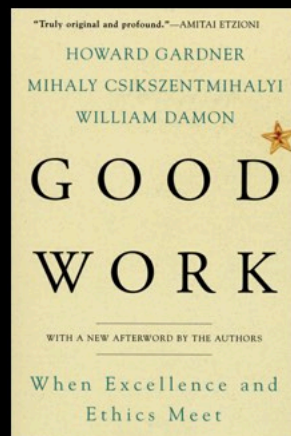
**The Bachelor
and the
Bachelorette**

**Love = Shopping
“Try it on” as
much as you
want before
deciding and
maybe
committing.**



Disturbing findings of
The GoodWork Project

**For young people,
the end simply justifies
the means.
Do whatever it takes to
be successful now.
Be ethical—maybe later?**





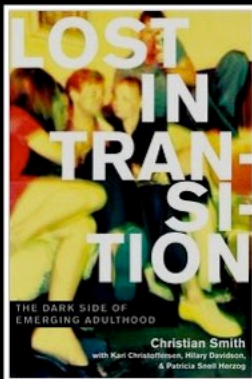
"Never in history have there been so many ways to cut corners."

- Alan Greenspan on human greed

"Americans believe each person should develop his/her own morality and not judge others."

- Allan Wolfe

Lost in Transition



by Notre Dame Sociologist
Christian Smith



Life Instructions			
Have fun	Do not hurt people	Do not accept defeat	Strive to be happy

What: In-depth interviews with 230 young people (18-23 years old) from across America

Topic: Their moral lives

How: Questions about right and wrong, moral dilemmas and the meaning of life.



Rape and murder are clearly wrong,
But with drunken driving, cheating in a test, or cheating on a partner: **"I don't really deal with right and wrong that often."**

"It's personal," they said. **"It's up to me!"**



Respondent X: "I mean, I guess what makes something right is how I **feel** about it. But different people feel different ways, so I **couldn't speak on behalf of anyone else as to what's right and wrong.**"

vs. obeying authority

"Depends on whatever makes me happy or how I feel!"





Emotivism: it's impossible to secure moral agreement in our culture because all judgments are based on how we feel at the moment.



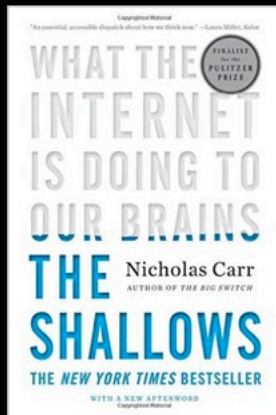
MORAL INDIVIDUALISM
Don't be JUDGMENTAL:
OPENNESS & TOLERANCE
but also **RELATIVISM**

EASY OR HARD TO DO THE **RIGHT** THING?

		EVIL	GOOD
		MORALITY	
PLEASURE	INSTINCT	hard!	easy!
PAIN		easy!	hard!

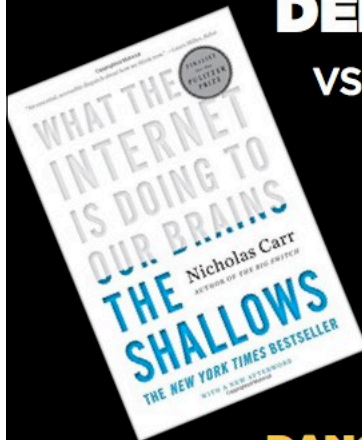
Are most your decisions shaped by **instinct** or **morality**?

DANGER #2: **ENDANGERED THOUGHT + TRUTH**



“...what the Net seems to be doing is chipping away my **capacity for concentration and contemplation**. Whether I’m online or not, my mind now expects to take in information the way the Net distributes it.”

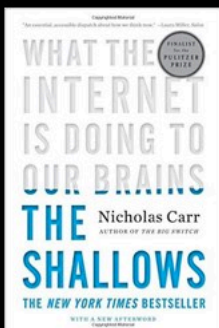
DEEP READING **vs. SKIMMING**



The explosion of CONTENT (writing, video, & photography)

DANGER #2: **ENDANGERED THOUGHT + TRUTH**

An ecosystem of interruption technologies

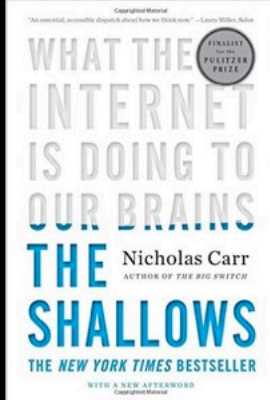


...when we go online, we enter an environment that promotes **cursory reading, hurried and distracted thinking, and superficial learning**. It’s possible to think deeply while surfing the Net, just as it’s possible to think shallowly while reading a book, but that’s not the type of thinking the technology encourages...

N Carr. The Shallows

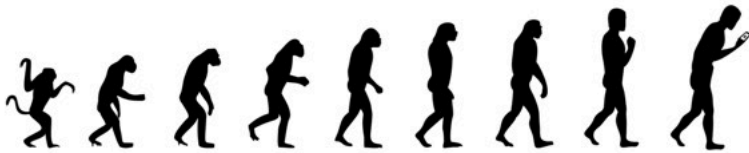
An appetite for soundbites & info-nuggets

"A DISTRACTION SICKNESS"
A Sullivan



Calm, focused, undistracted, the linear mind is being pushed aside by a new kind of mind that wants and needs to take in and dole out information in short, disjointed, often overlapping bursts--the faster, the better.

N Carr. The Shallows



What we're experiencing is, in a metaphorical sense, a reversal of the early trajectory of civilization: We are evolving from **being cultivators of personal knowledge to being hunters and gatherers in the electronic data forest.**

N Carr. The Shallows

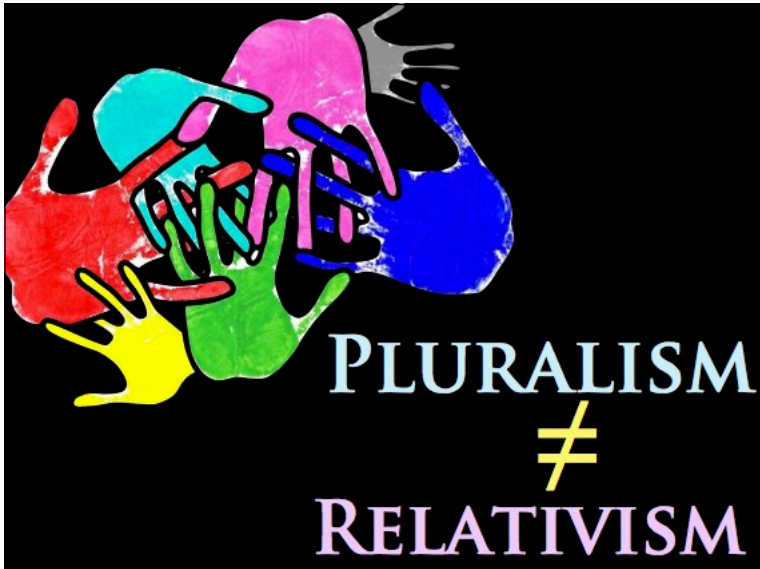


Are you more a **cultivator of personal knowledge** or just **a hunter/gatherer in the electronic data forest?**

THE PROBLEM ...

	High Access	Limited Access
Minimal Quality Control	Internet	Oral Tradition
High Quality Control	???	Printing Press

POST-



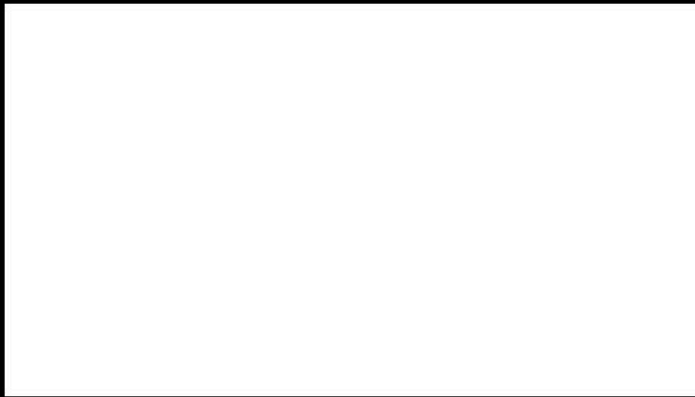
A "POST-TRUTH" AGE?

"Never in history
have there been
so many accounts
and claims to
truth."

- Howard Gardner on
the digital media



"Everyone is right as long as
it feels right!"



truth in peril

DANGER #3: ENDANGERED RELATIONSHIPS

"Alone together"



Sherry Turkle

The loss of true intimacy



"Truly being with another person means being **experientially** with them, picking up countless tiny signals from the eyes and voice and body language and context, and reacting, often unconsciously, to every nuance. These are our **deepest social skills**."

DANGER #3: **ENDANGERED RELATIONSHIPS**

Communication technology can **supplement** relationships--especially for people we can't relate to face-to-face.



Communication nurses
our relationships.

But communication technology should not **substitute** personal interactions.



We remove or drastically filter all the information we might get by being with another person. We reduce them to mere outlines--a Facebook "friend," an Instagram photo, a text message...
We become each other's "contacts," efficient shadows of ourselves.

A Sullivan

DANGER #3: **ENDANGERED RELATIONSHIPS**

DANGER #4:
ENDANGERED SELF



How
high
is your
SELFIE-
worth?

SELFIE -
worth =

Getting lots of **LIKES**  on
my Facebook posts

TRENDING worldwide with my 

Going **VIRAL** with my  video

Forbes

Millennials
AGES 18 TO 34
'a generation of
deluded & self-entitled narcissists'



Millennials

AGES 18 TO 34

'a generation of
deluded & self-entitled narcissists'

* SOCIAL MEDIA IDENTITIES

"Invent your own selves and create mass followings!"

* GAMING

"We can all be heroes and star athletes!"

* EASY REWARDS

"I deserve 'A' for effort & trophies just for being there!"

Millennials

AGES 18 TO 34

an addiction to audience
+ instant & constant affirmation



We are like "lab rats
constantly pressing levers
to get **tiny pellets of
social or intellectual nourishment.**"

N Carr. *The Shallows*



HORROR VACUI

* The Internet has created a fear of empty spaces.

* We can get an addiction not only to validation but also to information, entertainment, and every form of stimulus.

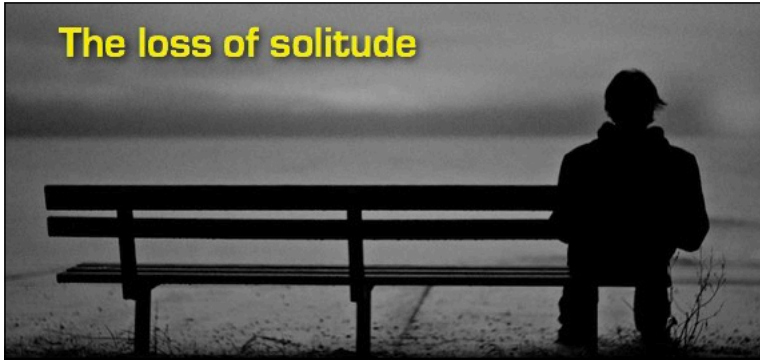
DANGER #5:
ENDANGERED SILENCE



"the death of
silence"



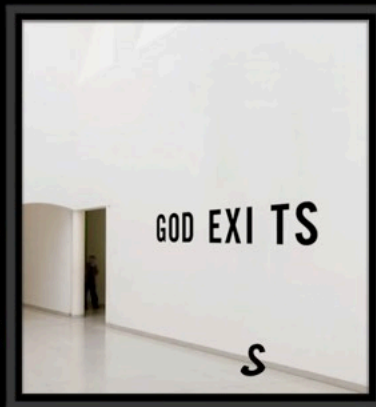
The loss of solitude



Feeling my feelings alone,
by myself and with myself.
Being alone with my feelings
without instant distraction
or digital support

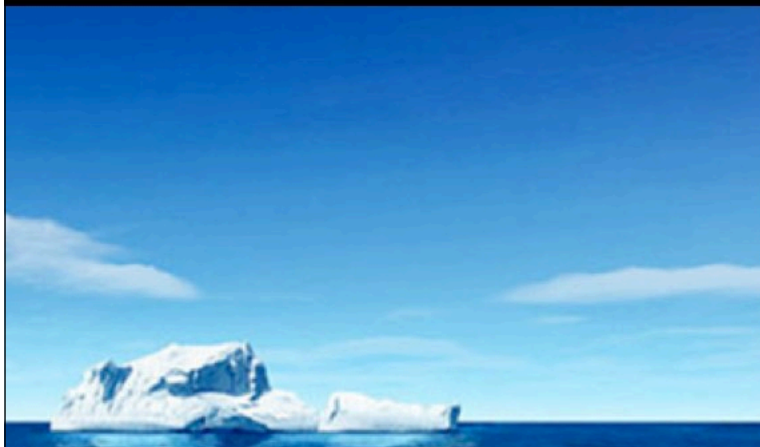
The loss of our sense of the sacred

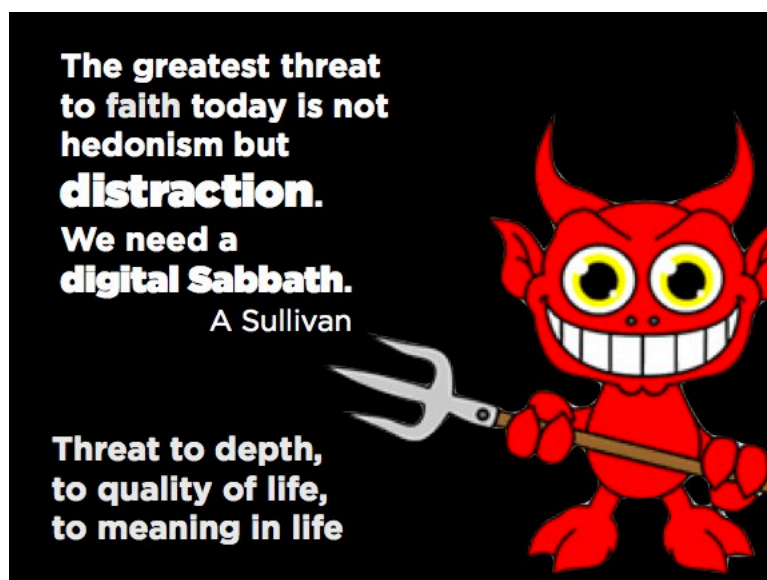
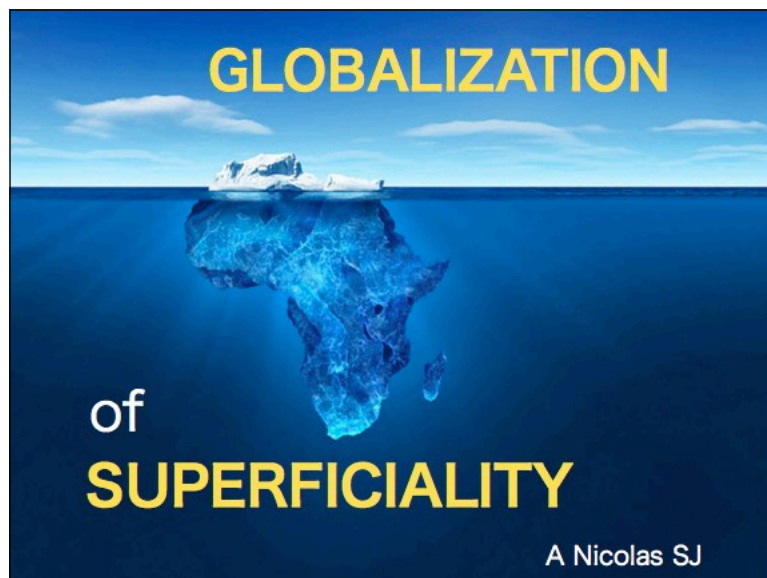
"The reason we live in a culture increasingly without faith is **not** because science has somehow disproved the unprovable, but **because the white noise of secularism has removed the very stillness in which faith might endure or be reborn.**"



Andrew Sullivan (2016)

GLOBALIZATION





ENDANGERED SPECIES

IN THE DIGITAL AGE



Do I see signs
of these **threats**
in my child + in my own life?
How can I **protect**
these endangered species
and help them to **flourish**?

VALUES
THOUGHT+TRUTH
RELATIONSHIPS
SELF
SILENCE
ENDANGERED