**Why we have become so ignorant**

( “Perchè siamo diventati così ignoranti” by Claudio Magris, Corriere della Sera 26-02-2014)

<http://www.zeroviolenzadonne.it/rassegna/pdfs/26Feb2014/26Feb20143d98009596e5bedb959d7971a9656492.pdf>

Internet, Google, Wikipedia & Co are told to be damaging to our culture despite of the incredible amount of information they supply. They are considered dangerous because of the shattering number of data all put together they offer. This is a vexed question, a question to be faced without any outdated disapproval for today's moral corruption, without any passive acquiescence for the way things are going.

**The surplus of knowledge brings ignorance**

The surplus of information could weaken culture and this is not unusual. In fact such surplus prevents information from being selected and hinders culture which is not just a stockpile of notions and concepts. “Culture is to love and to hate with a good reason” said Lin Yutang. Even mere data, information without any kind of thinking over, is becoming impoverished and this actually is unusual.

Nowadays we own incredible means to quickly reach information, such as search engines. These engines seem to be very useful, making easy to find information. Other ways it would take a long time and a hard work to find such information. I use search engines as well, as everyone does, when I need to find information for the things I write.

The information I find is the precondition for the culture and not the culture itself. What is strange is the regression of the quality of information even considered the technological means we have got: it seems like we are living in a world without television, books, jurnals and internet.

Bruno Arpaia and Pietro Greco quote some funny and incredible examples of modern ignorance in their book *La cultura non si mangia*. A member of Italian parliament (democratic party) who was asked about what a synagogue is answered: “It's the place where Muslim women go and pray for their God”. Fifty years ago, even a hundred years ago almost everyone, illiterates too would have know that synagogues are linked to Jewish.

Another Italian politician said that Netanyahu is “the president of Iran”. This looks easier to explain. She once opened a journal and read something like “Netanyahu protests against Iran” and so the two words are now bound together in her mind.

Arpaia and Greek sympathize with center-left, but they don’t spare ignorance wherever they find it; obviously in their book there are examples as clamorous as the previous that concern exponents of right center. Recently, Umberto Eco reminded that some people, indicated by name and surname in the quiz transmitted on TV, demonstrated to believe that Mussolini was still alive at the end of the Eighties or Nineties.

Perhaps what's wrong with these people is that they are not ashamed of their inconceivable ignorance: they were more likely pleased for their awful appearance on TV instead of ashamed into the desert to hide themselves. However they can take comfort, because they are in good company in the world. It is often the ruling class (or the supposed one) that crowds the benches reserved for schoolchild with their donkey’s ears. A young woman of Jewish family, whose grandfathers died in a concentration camp, proved to know very vaguely who Hitler was. When I was a teacher at Bard College, a great American college where Hannah Arendt used to teach and where she is buried, only one up to 39 graduated knew who Tito was and nine of them didn’t know who Stalin was.

It is difficult to understand how this can happen, considering that now it is easier and quicker than ever to know who Stalin was. Perhaps nowadays there is a great imbalance between supply and demand, especially in culture. Only a few people go to the library asking for a book they are really interested in, only a few of them go to the library with personal and motivated requests. Generally, people go to the library to ask what is arrogantly offered and not for their own choice while the search engines suggest that motion as a consumer’s initiative and question: even if search engines offer an answer such answer is inflated and sometimes even misleading. However not even this explains for sure how it’s possible that in the age of knowledge our knowledge becomes weaker and weaker.

**Function of each paragraph:**

From “internet” to “generale” : introduction of the problem : **Why we have become so ignorant**

From “non è” to “ riflessione” : presentation of the thesis: The surplus of information could weaken n culture

From “è indubbio” to “cui scrivo” : introduction of the usefulness of WWW:  
 - easy to find information  
 - to quickly reach information

From “quelle informazioni” to “internet”: difference between information and culture: The information is n the precondition for the culture. the regression of the quality of n information is taking place.

From “nel libro” to “Novanta”: explain how information can deceive people’s ideas : reading and finding n out information head people to a shallow comprehension.

From “il guaio” to “era Stalin”: not only in Italy, it is a global problem for our culture: globalization n question.

From “è difficile “ to “ meno” : conclusion where the author explains how while technology and modality of n knowing are improving, our knowledge is disappears given that interest n runs out ( a imbalance between supply and demand in culture).