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Abstract

Homage to Marshall McLuhan. The World at Twitter Rhythm

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This paper refers to “classrooms or schools without walls”, as envisioned by **Marshall McLuhan** (1911 – 1980), educator and philosopher, in his writings of fifty years ago. It also pays homage to his centennial birthday. McLuhan almost predicted the World Wide Web thirty years before it was invented, and influenced all communications media before, and after his death.

It starts by referring to two authors. The first author is the Argentine, **Domingo Faustino Sarmiento** (1811-1888), who in his inaugural speech of the inter-oceanic telegraph cable that connected Argentina with Europe, (October 5, 1874), said that “*the cable unites the whole world into one family and one neighbourhood*”. Thus he foresaw the present on-going

planetary communications, and he anticipated the expression, "*the global village*" coined by McLuhan one hundred years later.

The second author is British-American **T. S. Eliot** (1888-1965), an extraordinary poet and essayist, who in section I of "Burnt Norton", the first poetry of his "Four Quartets" wrote: "*Time present and time past / Are both perhaps present in time future, / And time future contained in time past*". Then he wrote the following singular line in section III: "*Not here the darkness, in this twittering world*".

He uses the word "*twittering*", which in English defines the light chirping sound made by nervous birds in a garden or a wood. It is surprising how Eliot's metaphorical thought about bird twittering of the last century, has evolved into the present reality of the gigantic and popular Twitter network. It is worthwhile to remember his well-known critical comments about the world included in "Four Quartets", and in "The Waste Land".

Finally, this paper refers to the educational situation, inserted into the huge communications world of today.

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