

FIRST ADVANCE CANON: EL HOMBRE ANUMERICO

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I plan to approach the canon book from the point of view of our inability to understand the law of large numbers and all the probabilities that lead to misinforming government policies, confusing personal decisions and increasing our vulnerability to all kinds of pseudoscience. Why do we know so little mathematics? Is our resistance to understanding this aspect, increasingly present in everyday life, deliberate? What is the social and individual cost of this ignorance? To support his arguments about large numbers and probabilities, Paulos resorts to amusing illustrative anecdotes. We then effortlessly understand why we insist on playing the lottery or going to astrologers and fortune tellers, why we suspend trips for fear of terrorist attacks or think that a billion pesos more or less in the state budget matters little, why we waste so much time on trifles and commit so many avoidable blunders.

The biggest problem in society today is that mathematical illiteracy is often presumed, contrary to what is done with other defects, which are hidden. This mischievous taking pride in one's mathematical ignorance is due, in part, to the fact that its consequences are often not as obvious as those of other disabilities.

Another problem with being anomic is that, lacking some understanding of large common numbers, one does not react with the relevant skepticism to frightening reports such as that over a million children are abducted each year around the world, lacking some understanding of probabilities, automobile accidents may seem a relatively minor problem of local traffic.

But the problem does not only fall on the "common" people in many occasions and with the progress of technology by leaps and bounds every day is more noticeable the lack of understanding of numbers by students of different branches of learning even in branches where numbers are the vital part as are the engineering, the problem lies in that every time the machines know more and men know less, that is why very little importance is given to the numbers, and to see that there are no close consequences, "nothing happens" people often say in the form of excuse.

But the problem does not end there, man being increasingly unable to perceive and understand the numbers will reach the point where machines know everything and man does not. The moment the machines fail, man will not have the capacity to solve the errors and the wave of problems and conflicts that this would entail, which, instead of advancing, would turn into a catastrophic setback.

Considering all the above, it is for this reason that I intend to approach the book of the canon focusing on the vulnerabilities that we could have both as a species and as individuals, since by being or becoming anumerical people, we run the risk that our "balance" enters a state of disturbance and destabilizes the world as we know it.

Referencia

Paulos, J. A. (s.f.). *El hombre anumérico*. METATEMAS 20 Obtained from <http://www.librosmaravillosos.com/elhombreanumerico/pdf/El%20hombre%20anumerico%20-%20John%20Allen%20Paulos.pdf>.