



Let's imagine that for a long time we humans have been the object of study by an astonished alien species; let's imagine that our universe is lying under a microscope on the specimen stage in a parallel universe. The unknown observers send out space probes which aim to find out the inner workings of the civilization of us two-legged creatures and the forces holding it together. What would the reports from these expeditions look like?



Which resulting theses, misunderstandings and odd explanations would they contain? Like the eye of the ethnologist, the visitors seek to understand from within without preconceived notions. Observations and careful soundings are the means with which these insights are obtained.

These are expeditions into the heart of our civilization. In the very areas we think we know ourselves best, these expeditions discover virgin territory. The alien perspective in the reports of the extraterrestrial expeditions shows us mysterious, alienating, astonishing and fresh dimensions in that which is all too familiar. Astonishment and the need to understand the world are therefore at stake here. Hovering leisurely over us and equipped with a snooping „tentacle camera,“ the probes collect material for the reports. Full of curiosity, naïve, sensitive to pain and adventurous, they stray into every trap that our civilization offers.

The resulting reports, however, in spite of all the amusing false conclusions, actually reveal new and enlightening material about each topic. They enable us two-legged creatures to gain a fresh perspective of our world.

The first six 14-minute pilot episodes are complete at this time. They include wandering in the labyrinth of the *NET*, the discovery of *SIGNALS*, the question *WHAT IS SEX FOR?*, the mystery of the *TALISMAN*, the language of the *DRESS CODE*, and the search for a *RESPONSIVE PARTNER*.

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A sample can be viewed at www.denkmal-film.com/abstracts/Xpedition.html





Xpedition: The Net

The first area we want to explore is a metropolis. A slight miscalculation causes us to land several yards too far down in the gully. Consequently, our initial attempt to understand civilization comes from the perspective of the sewers. We suspect that the sewers form a kind of network for communication, leading the substance of messages to information centers. The wastewater treatment plant may be regarded as a sorting center to link each two-legged creature with the larger whole, i.e. the oceans. First insight: sewer systems are the basis for every great culture. Discovery: the sewer systems constitute only one of many subterranean networks that link the two-legged creatures with each other. Those with two legs are therefore interlinked creatures, and civilization is the network. There is a lot to learn before actually contacting civilization.

Xpedition: Signals

Our initial approach out of the sewers to the world on the surface is marked by a shock: a tile cutter at the point of emergence disables our audio system. Logical observation: communication between the two-legged creatures consists solely and successfully of signs! These are signals between them, all the gesticulation of daily life: hand signals, gestures, body language, bearing. All of this forms a complete system of direct visual communication that appears to render the acoustic world superfluous. When our audio systems are reactivated, we become totally confused. The added dimension of verbal communication raises the question whether, with the senses we possess, we will ever be able to understand the two-legged creatures...

Xpedition: What is sex for?

The two-legged creatures are divided into two basic types with differing behavioral codes and tasks. It is not easy to differentiate between the two because there is a lack of consistency, for example, in using the toilet. It probably involves separation into subspecies. Pairing the two types is ruled by complicated rituals. A partial insight: the choice of partner in such pairing is for the purpose of combining genetic material. We explore the costs and usefulness of this dangerous and extravagant method of reproduction and examine Erotica Fairs and dance temples. The extravagances appear to be used as a brilliant strategy to fight parasites and optimize genetic material in the process of evolution. The question of who gets together with whom appears to be the most important driving force behind civilization.

Xpedition: The Talisman

Money is the universal means for change: It flows in broad streams around the earth, branching out even into the finest capillaries of civilization. It is exchanged, collected, and stored. Without this elixir, participation in civilization does not appear to be possible, because it actually constitutes civilization's metabolic system. The elixir's name is money, which is the universal means for change. (Surprisingly, even the dimension of time can be transformed into matter by means of money!) We explore the function, the psychology and the mystery of money. But the two-legged creatures contradict each other: Is money simply a medium of exchange or is it something magical, a talisman? Our expedition investigates in some confusion the religious dimensions of money: creed and credit, creed and creditor, price and praise, host and coin. As long as the two-legged creatures do not themselves understand what they are doing, we must urgently warn against contacting them.



Xpedition: Dress Code

The two-legged creatures communicate in many different ways with each other. Optical signals on what we assume is protective covering determine whether, with whom and how they will communicate. We can call this the dress code. By means of careful soundings we determine the meaning of the signals. Order among the two-legged creatures appears to be order of clothing. Nudists present the Xpedition with an insoluble problem.

Xpedition: The Search for a Responsive Partner

The crucial question for establishing contact with someone is: Is that person likely to be responsive? Who is important? Whenever the two-legged creatures organize a multilegged grouping, we suspect the arrangement of the group might make it easier to find a responsive partner.. It is possible that those persons are important whose likeness is reproduced frequently on billboards and other surfaces of the city. Beauty and image distribution rate make persons important. What else? Weight? Size? Brain volume? Sex? Muscle power? Wealth?

The reproduced likenesses are honored in large and small temples. How can contact be established? Our Xpedition ventures into the Mount Olympus of civilization: Madame Tussaud's Wax Museum. The search for the most important two-legged creature loses its way, however, and dissipates in the haze of copies made from copies.