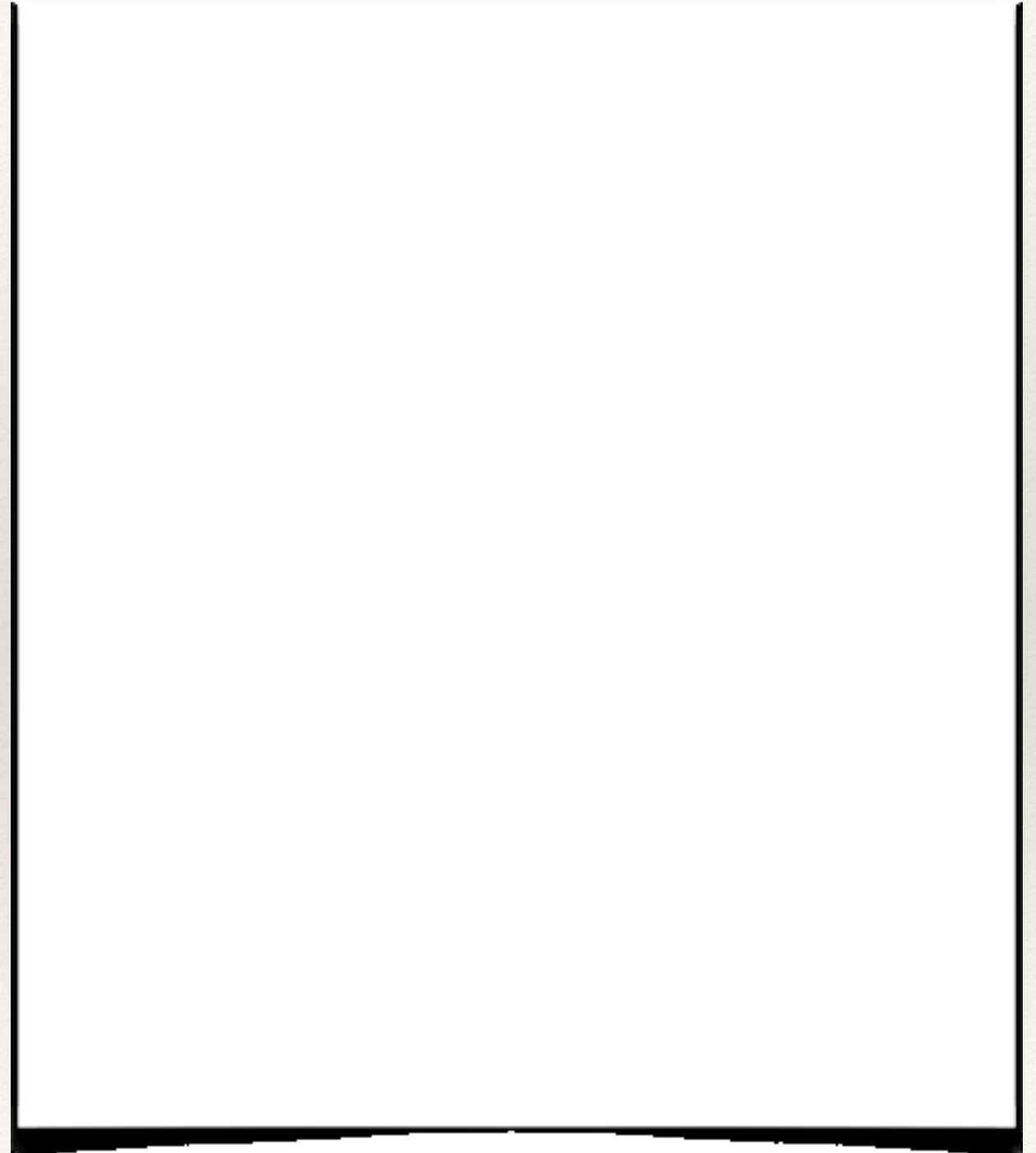# The Nature of Broadcasting - A Theoretical Perspective

Past, Present and Future

Henry Loeser

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Natural Law

- Structure of Nature

- All living things seek utility

- Nurture (Rationality)
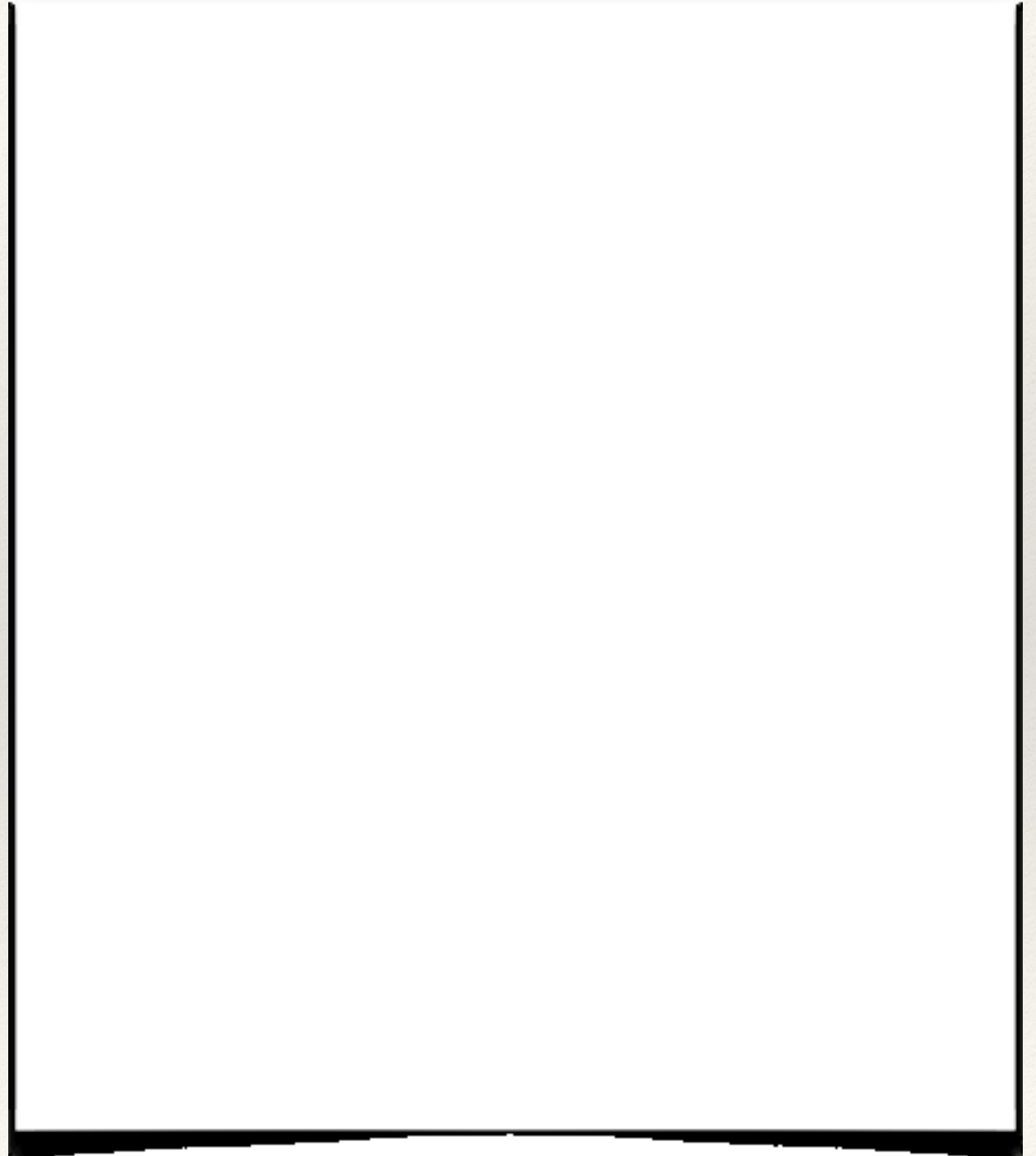
- Communication

Philosophy

❖ What does it mean to be human?

Jeremy Bentham

Human Evolution

- ❖ Groups

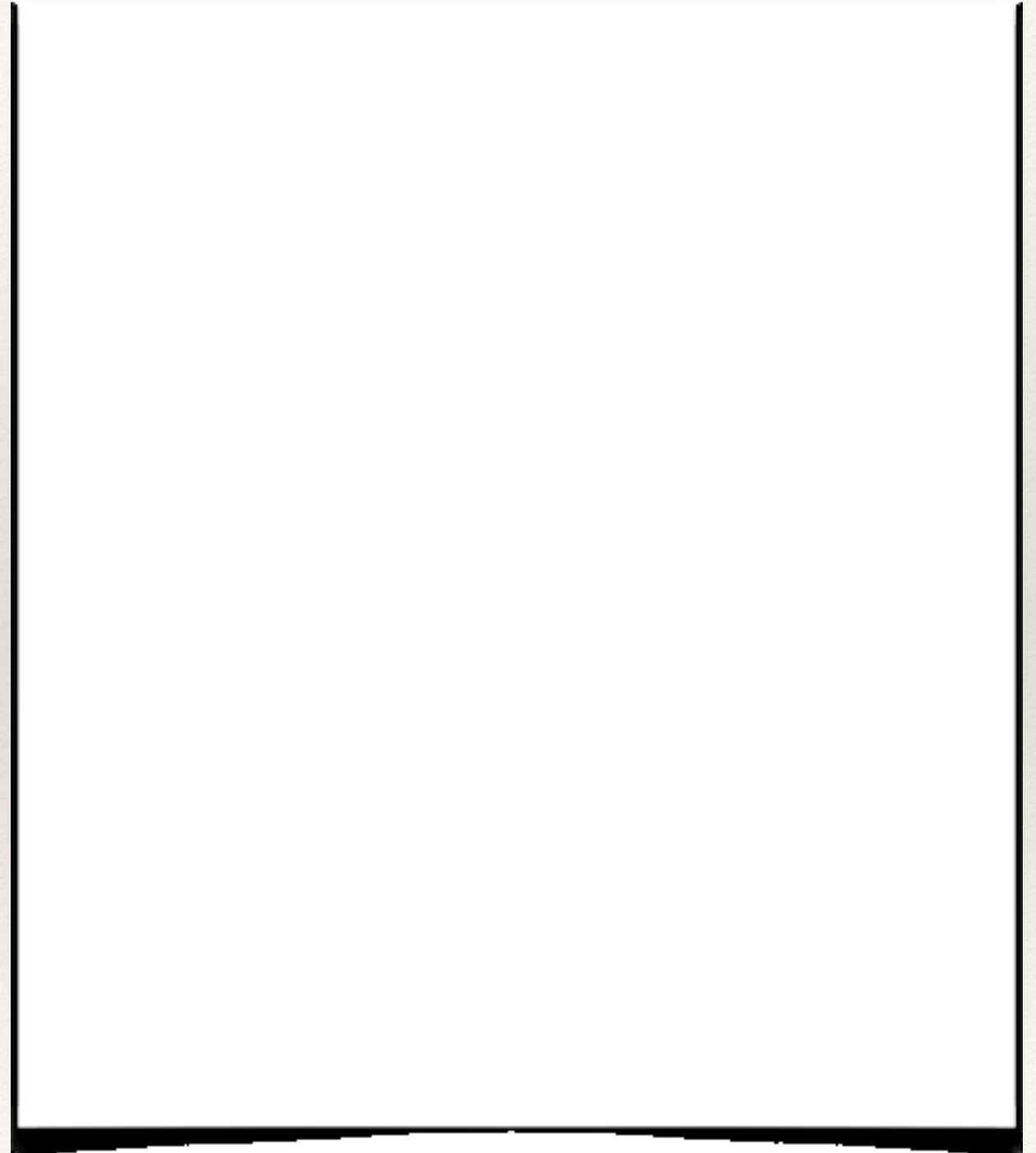- ❖ Symbolic Interaction

- ❖ Language

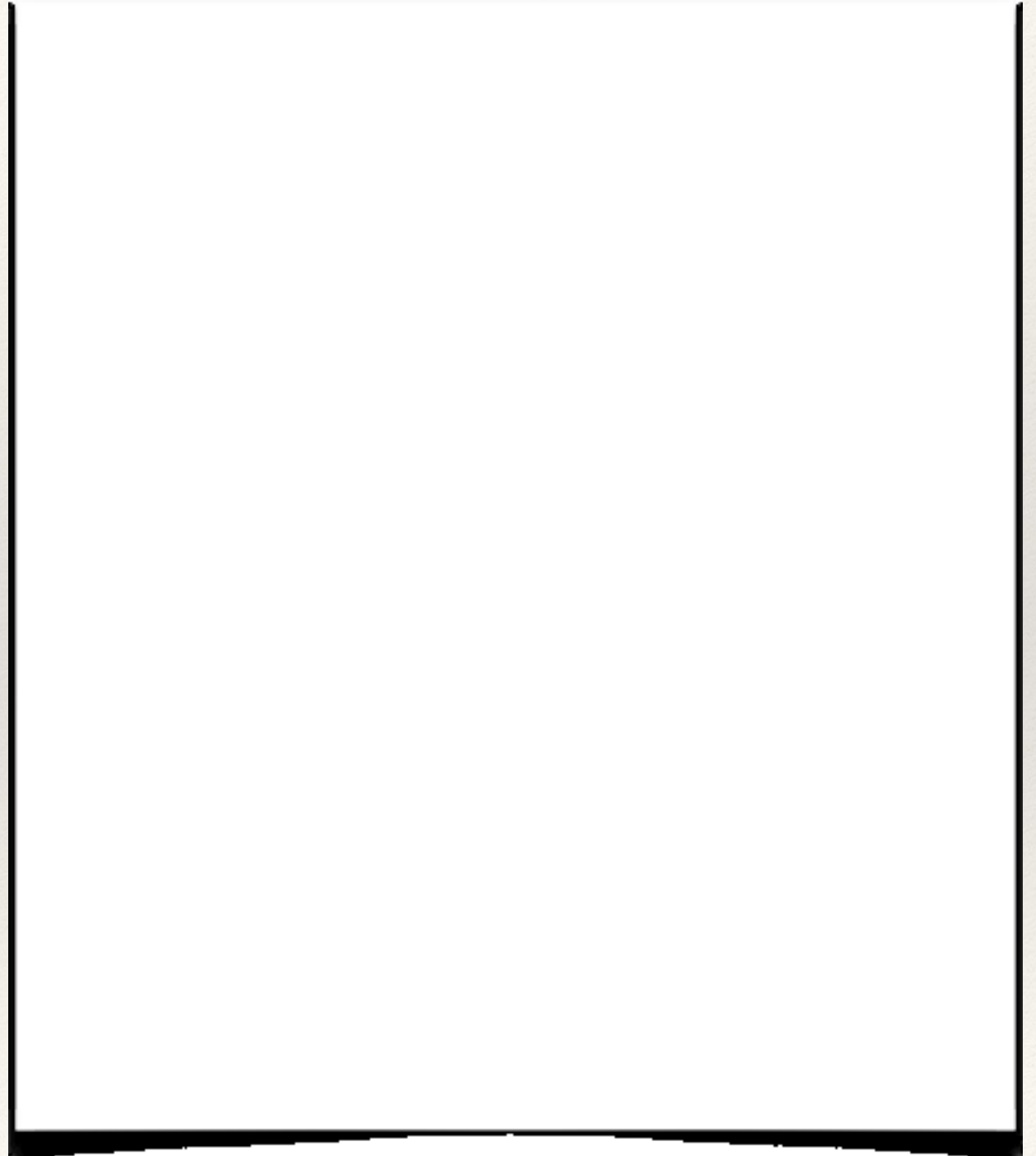# Ontology

- ❖ - religion: faith

- ❖ - science: empiricism

Forming Societies

- Specialization

- Communication

- Greek – Metaphysics (Socrates, Plato)

- Eastern – Muslim, India, Chinese

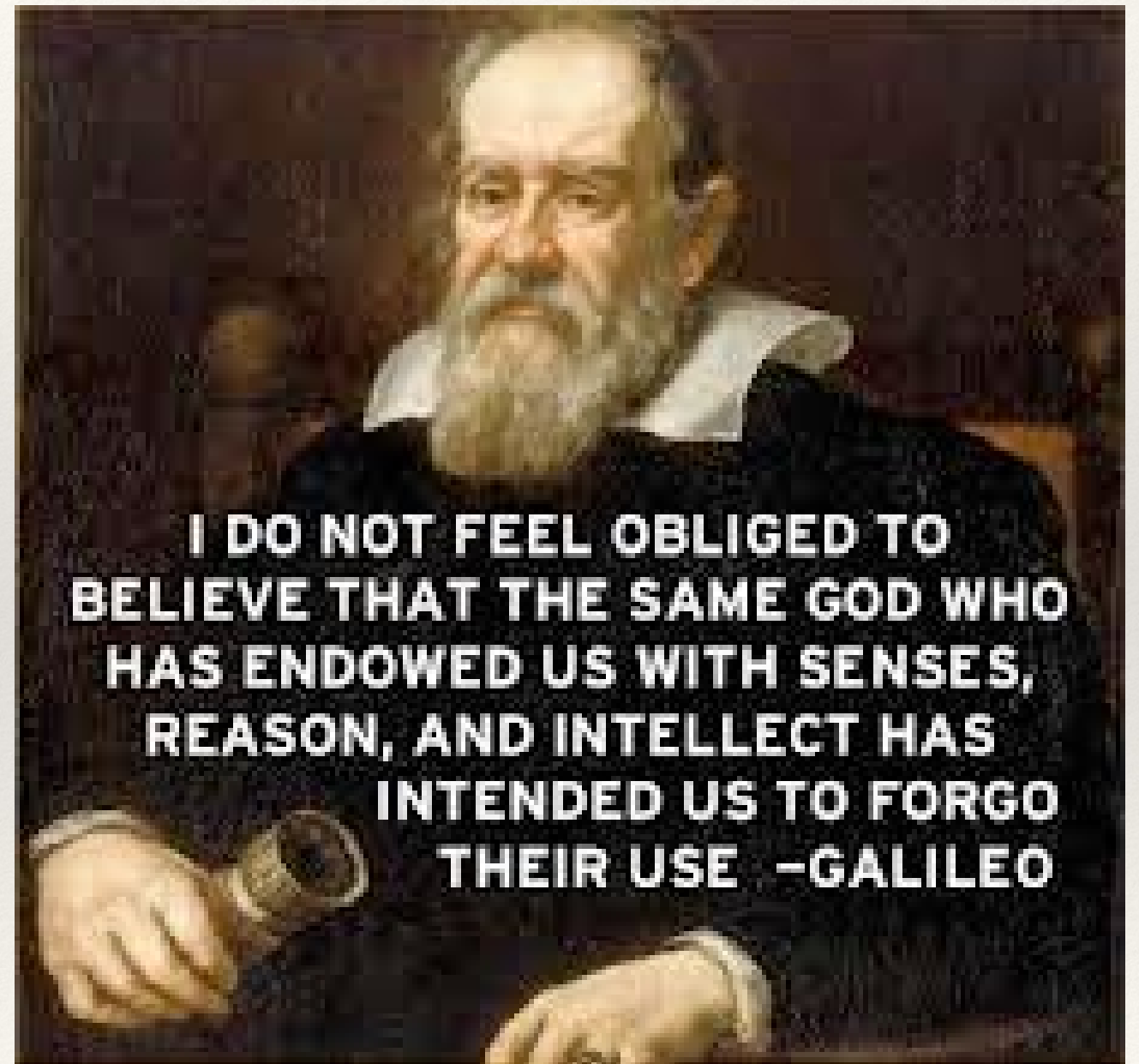# Medieval Europe

- Dual authoritarianism of monarchy and church

- Religion (Aquinas, Bacon)

- Rise of merchant class media

Enlightenment

- Science & technology

- Secularism

- Humanism (Hobbs, Descartes)

I DO NOT FEEL OBLIGED TO BELIEVE THAT THE SAME GOD WHO HAS ENDOWED US WITH SENSES, REASON, AND INTELLECT HAS INTENDED US TO FORGO THEIR USE –GALILEO
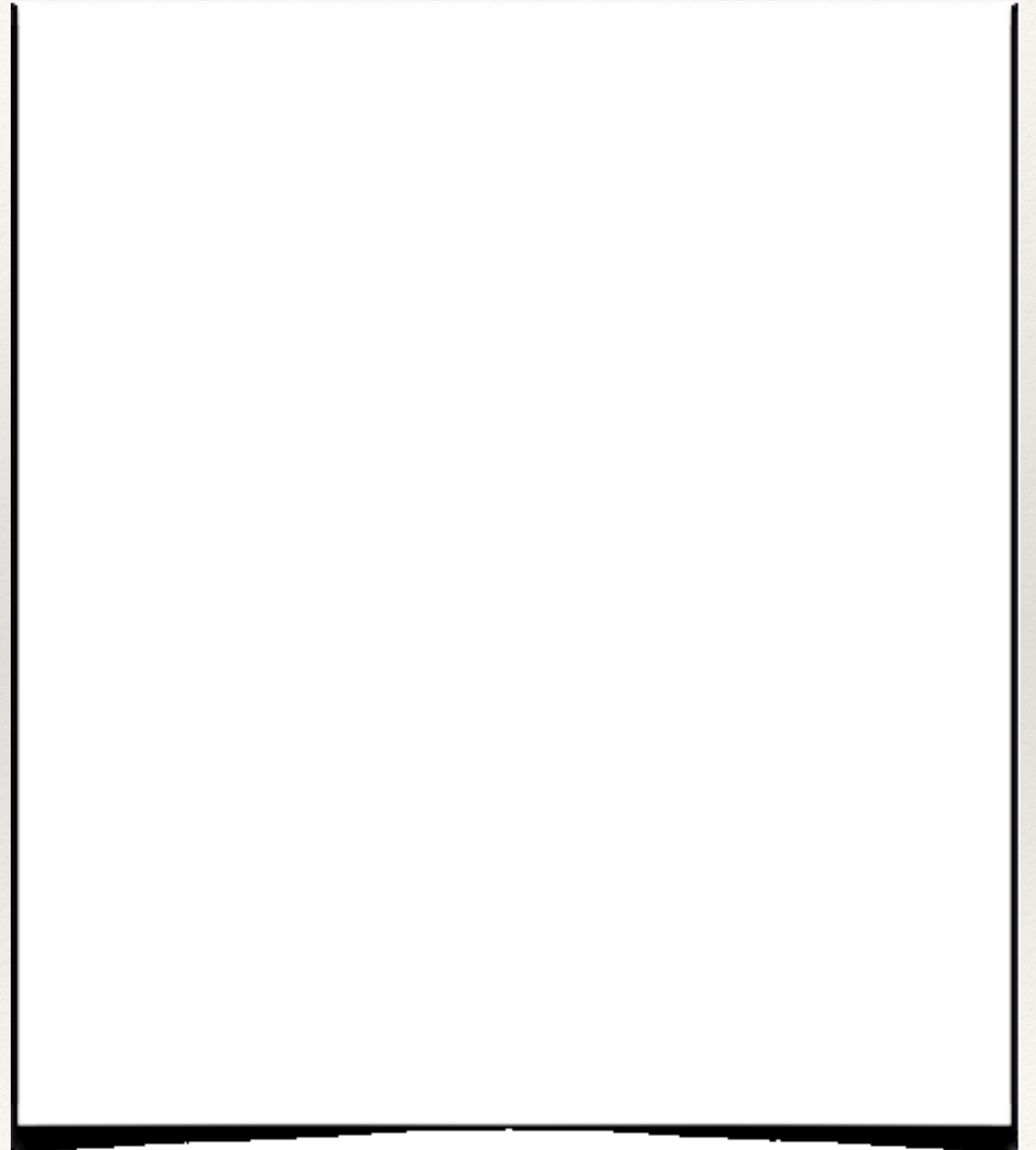
Epistemology

- ❖ - knowledge

- ❖ - logic /rationalism

- ❖ - value

- ❖ - aesthetics

Humanities

- ❖ Language
- ❖ Literature
- ❖ Geography
- ❖ History

Modernity

- ❖ Urbanization

- ❖ Democracy

- ❖ Mass Media forms

- ❖ Sociology (Locke, Durkheim, Hegel, Marx)

Social Sciences

❖ Individual - Psychology

❖ Groups - Sociology, Economics, Political Science

❖ Positivist (Natural Sciences, mathematics)

❖ Interpretivist (Symbolic interpretation / critique)

Sociology

❖ Structure

❖   - Spencer: "each feature, custom, or practice, its effect on the functioning of a supposedly stable, cohesive system"

❖   - Giddens: "the pre-eminence of the social world over its individual parts (i.e. its constituent actors, human subjects)"

Sociology

- Agency

- - Parsons: "the capacity of individual "agents" to construct and reconstruct their worlds."

- - Bordieau: "externalising the internal", and "internalising the external."

- - Berger & Luckman: Society forms the individuals who create society - forming a continuous loop in the "social construction of reality".
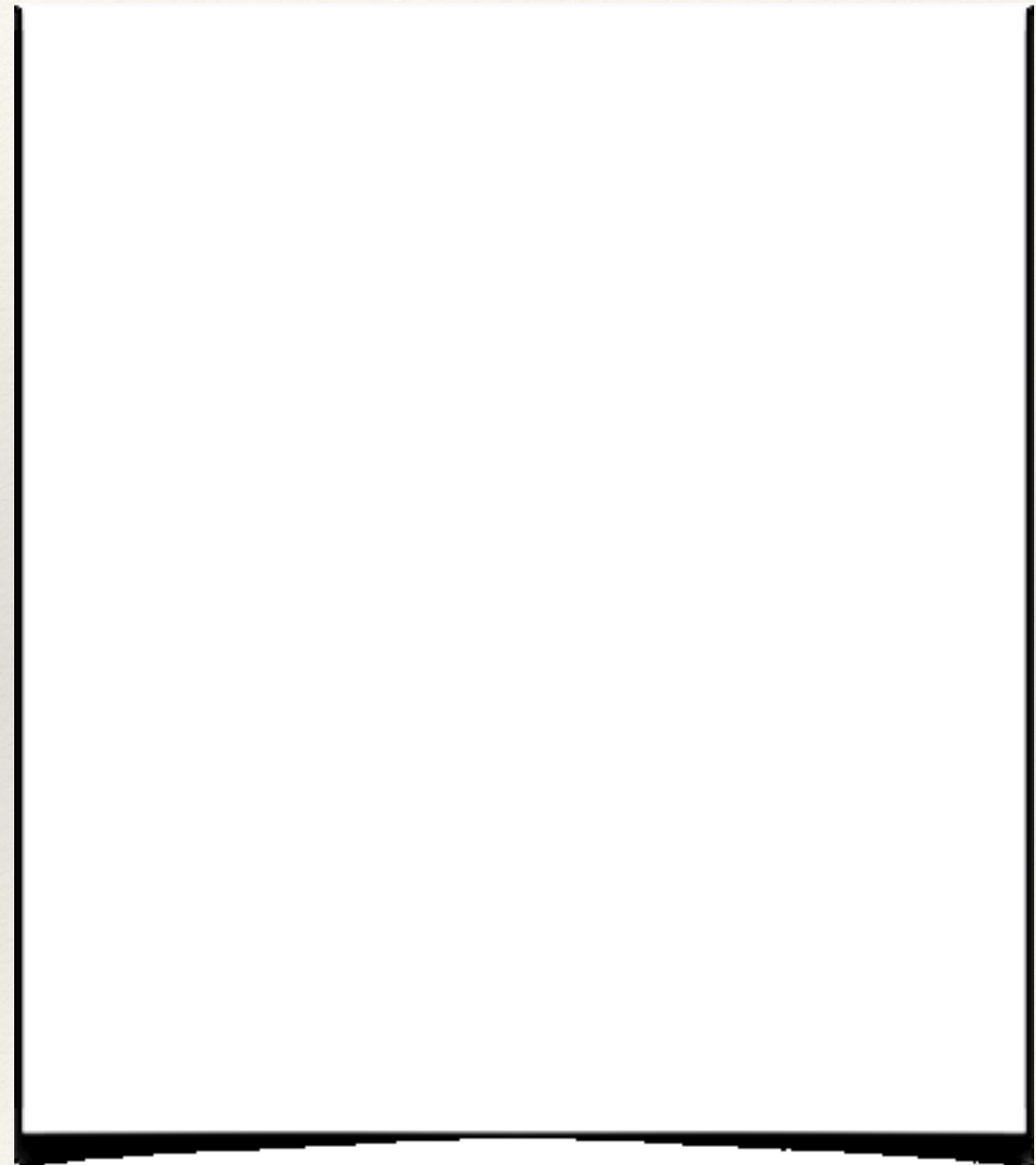
Conflict Theory

- Dysfunctional society

- Agency vs. Structure

- Legal alternativism

Conflict Theory

❖ Horkheimer & Adorno:

❖ In the "culture industries", the rise of 20th century large cultural industry players had created a structured, supply-driven system that "integrates its consumers from above" and was negating the opportunities for individuals and small groups of producers to comprise "a more diverse and pluralistic platform for societal understanding"

❖ Researching the development of public policy should include not just an examination of the actors' behavior, but also an exploration of the value systems upon which the actions were based

The Public Sphere

The Public Sphere

❖ a participatory bourgeois public sphere of real discourse among equals that transformed into a site of spectator politics manipulated by elites who took control of the medium

❖ the public sphere merged the private concerns of literate individuals regarding family and social integration with the larger public concerns of society

❖ presented in spaces reserved for open discourse among citizens and delineated through argumentative discourse intended to identify and prioritize interests for the common good. Individuals could inform and influence public opinion, even if it was in opposition to the current political status quo.
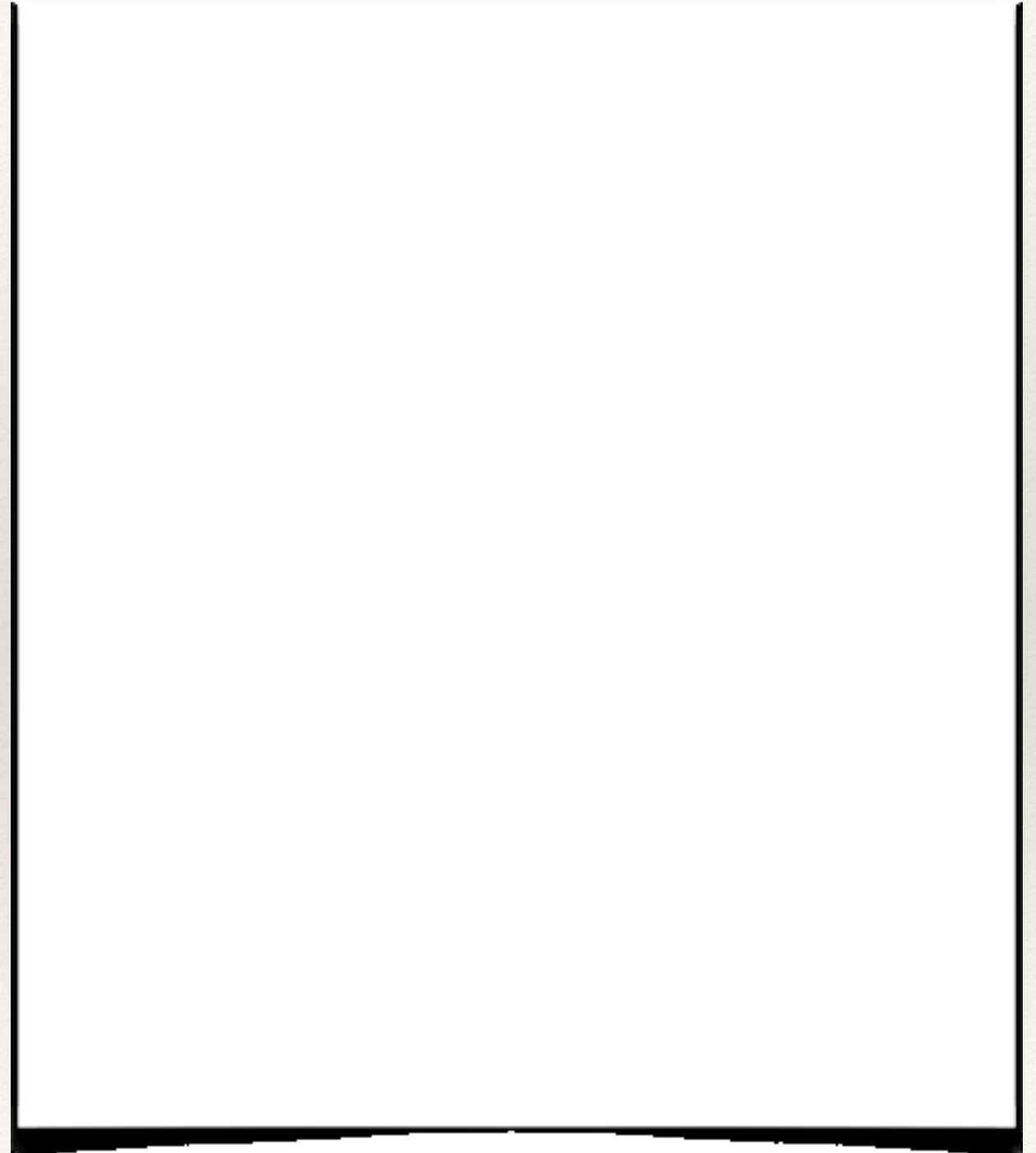
Alternative Press

❖ Activist media

Public Sphere

❖ The degradation of the public sphere began in the late 19th century concurrent with the societal transition to a system marked by merging economic and political forces, the decline of the individual, and the manipulation of the culture industries

Re-Feudalization

- Newspaper conglomerates
- Politicization

The Public Sphere

❖ Habermas: "forum for culture and politics co-opted"

❖ Edwards: "multiple public spheres"

❖ Fraser: "issues of class & gender"

❖ Foucalt: "multidirectional power generation from discourse"

❖ Herbst: "mobilize political resources"

Radio

FIRST FULL-TIME RADIO ANNOUNCER IN THE WORLD
Harold W. Arlin shown as he looked in the early 1920's. He did the first play-by-play of baseball and football and introduced many noted persons in their radio debuts on KDKA.
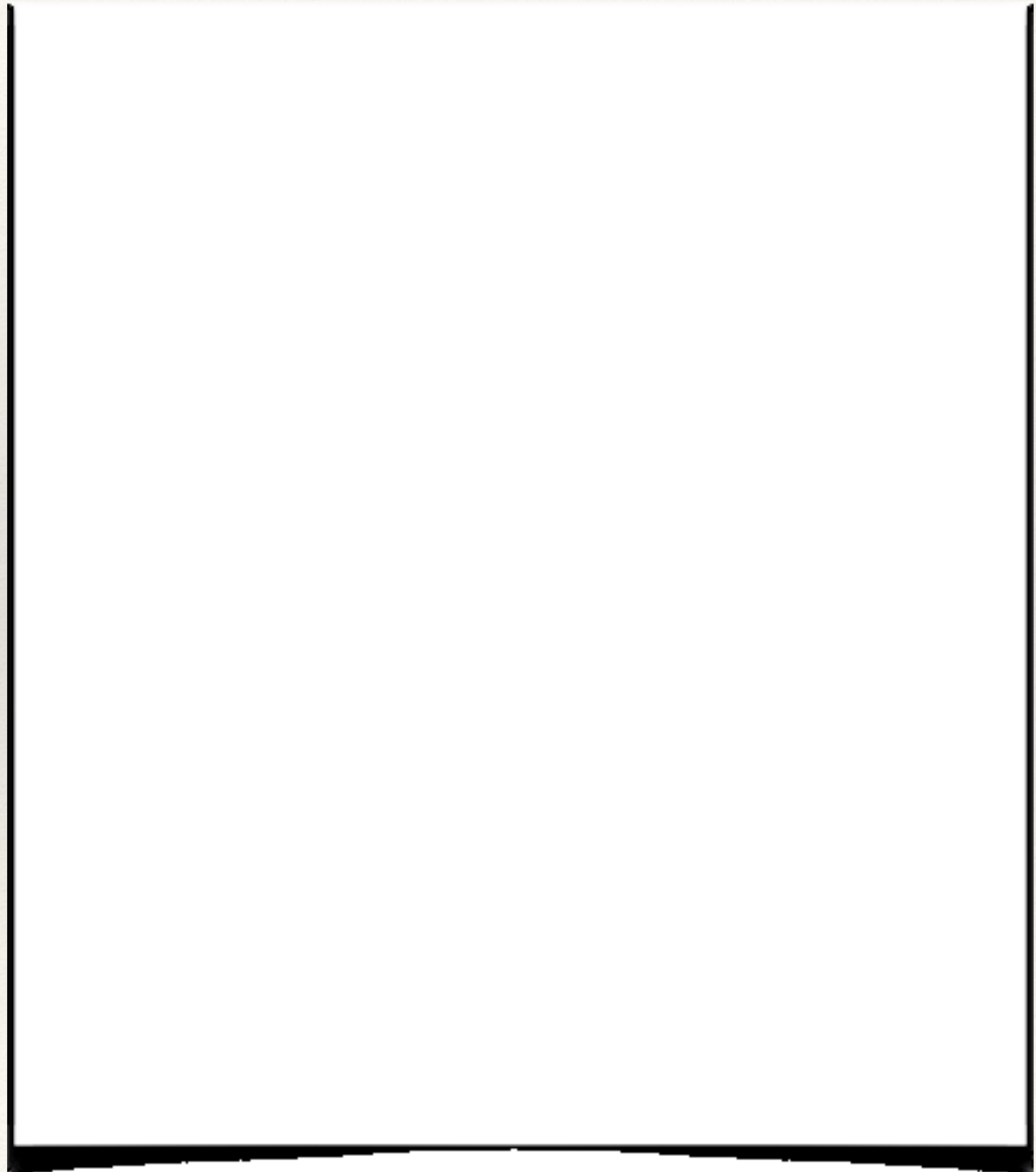
Television

Terrestrial Paradigm

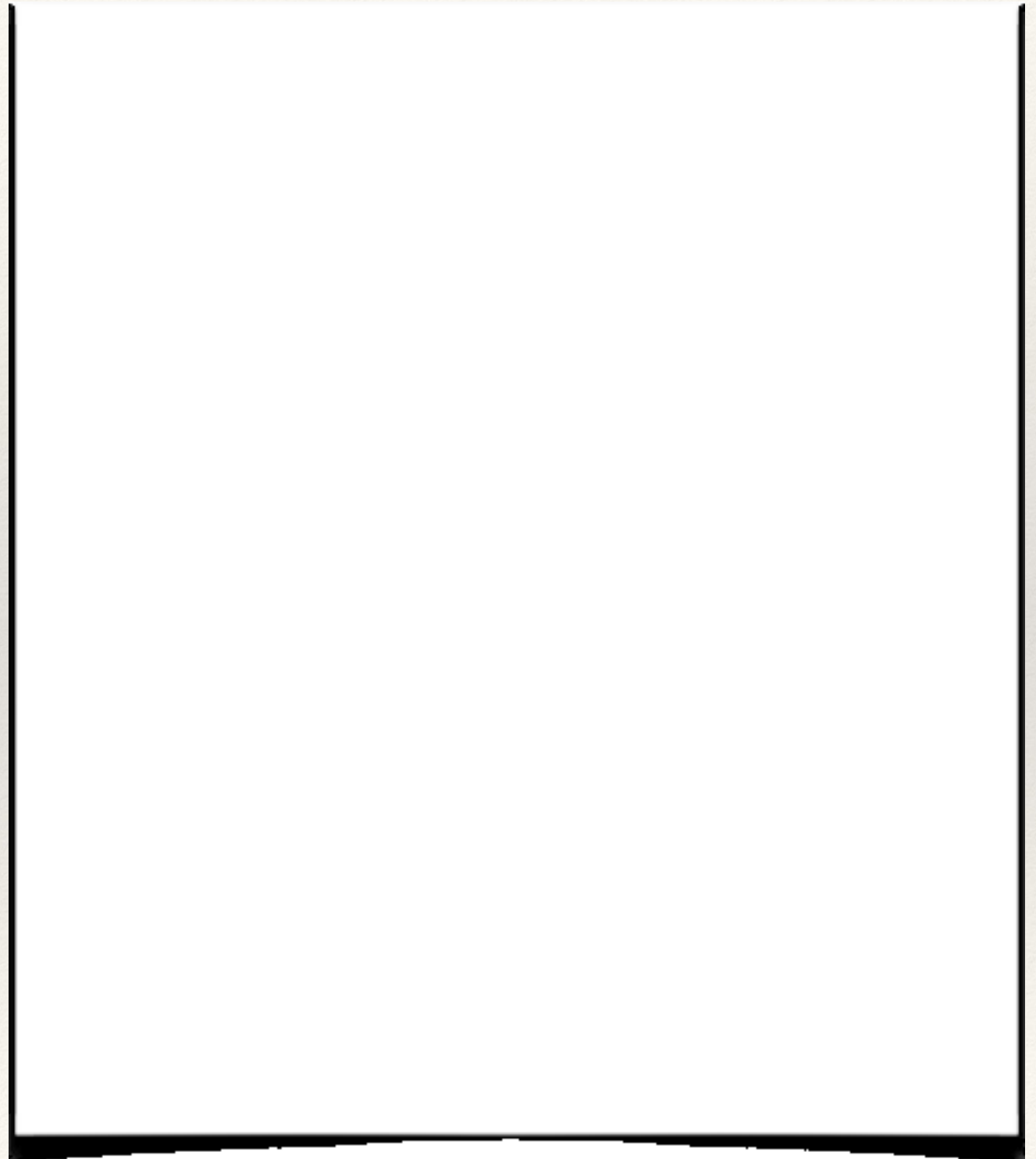- ❖ Public Service
- ❖ Commercial
- ❖ Alternative

Civil Society

❖ a segment of society apart from commerce and government occupied by individuals and groups in public life outside the home, encompassing their cultural, ethical, political, and/or religious interests

❖ Culture

❖ Politics

Civil Society

- Aristotle: "koinōnía politike" (society apart from family & government)

- Hegel: "burgerliche gessellschaft" (citizens' society)

- Heller: "mosaic of identities"

- Habermas: "communicative action in possibility spaces"

- Bordieau, Giddens: "media reproduces culture in civil society"

Re-Feudalization II

❖ Policy issues

❖ Commercial conglomerates

❖ Alternatives struggle

IP - The Great Liberator?

- ❖ One-to-many revolution
- ❖ low barriers to entry
- ❖ virtual democracy

The Present: Content

- ❖ Media Literacy!
- ❖ Information
- ❖ Opinion
- ❖ Entertainment

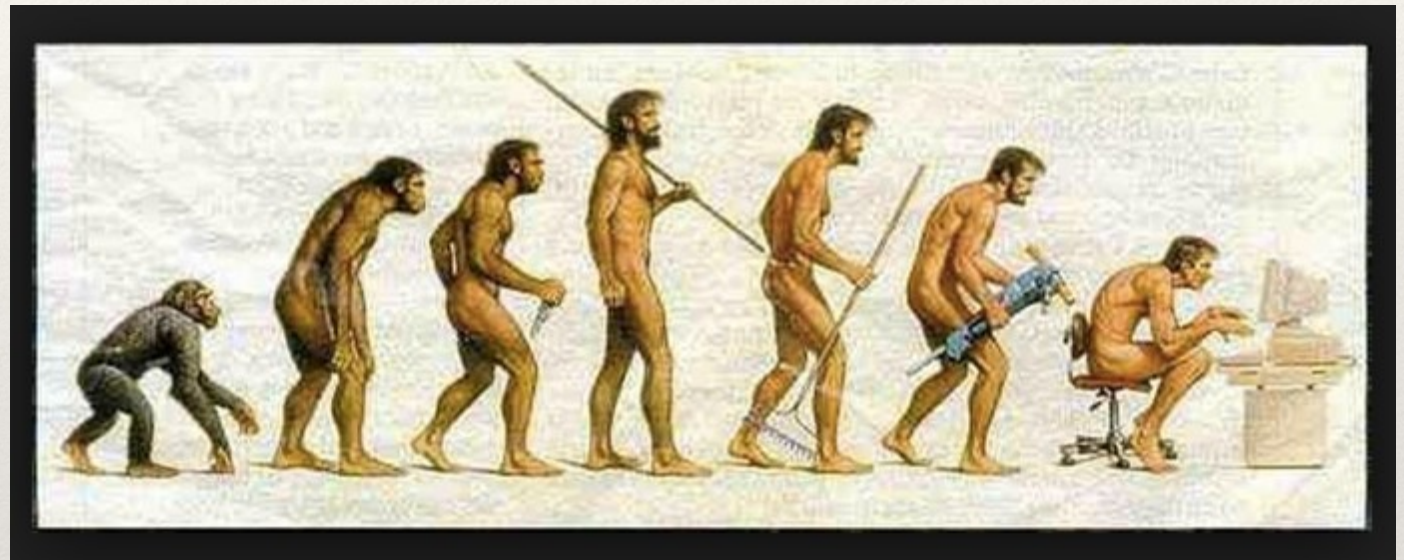# The Present: Your Data

Re-Feudalization III?

The Future

- Beyond RF

- Beyond streaming

- Neutrality

- Creative Commons

- Policy reform

- Funding solutions

Human Evolution

- ❖ Structural Functionalism?
- ❖ The Public Sphere?
- ❖ Broadcasting plurality?

Thank You!

Henry Loeser is a research fellow in MEDIT and teaching member of the
Baltic Film, Media, Arts and Communication School faculty.
Dr. Loeser earned his PhD in 2016 for research into the societal attributes of
Community Media at Masaryk University in the Czech Republic, and holds a
MA in European Politics, BS in Business Administration, and AS in Mechanical Engineering.
He founded the Media Innovation Center at Masaryk University,
establishing the new university broadcast operations of student radio and TV.
He also is an independent media advocate, serving on the board of directors of the Community Media Forum Euro
Since 2003, he is founder and director of Radioexpert, an NGO that is active in Community Media projects worldwi