The Future of Anthroposociogenesis – Panhumanism, Anthroporelational Humanism and Digital Humanism

Wolfgang Hofkirchner

The Institute for a Global Sustainable Information Society, Vienna, Austria; wolfgang.hofkirchner@gsis.at

Abstract: The emergence of human life on Earth is not yet finished. Social evolution has reached a point at which the continuation of human life is even at stake. The reason why that is the case lies in dysfunctionalities of the organization of social systems. Those dysfunctionalities came to the fore when hominization was as successful as to cover the whole globe. What social systems could externalize so far, became part of an ever more deteriorating environment on which every system, in turn, has to live on. This system theoretical insight concerns the organization of relations among humans, of relations with nature and of relations with technology. It is tantamount with a next step of humanization and requires an update of humanism: a panhumanism, an anthroporelational humanism and a digital humanism. The first makes a case for an all-embracing system of humankind, the second for a delicate integration of non-human natural systems, and the third for an intelligent design of techno-social systems. The crisis of anthroposociogenesis will last as long as that insight will have become common sense or the social systems will have broken down.

Keywords: global challenges; humanism; Evolutionary Systems Theory; Unified Theory of Information; critical thinking; social systems; information society

1. Introduction

According to Evolutionary Systems Theory [1], the emergence of existential risks signifies an evolutionary crisis of complex systems. Those crises are caused by an environment more complex than the options of the systems are. If the organizational relations of the systems undergo a qualitative change, they can help the systems catch up with the complexity of their environment (the environment might be external or internal). Such a change transforms the systems into elements of a metasystem or suprasystem that represents a complexity gain from which they benefit.

According to Unified Theory of Information [1], by generating information that is required for those systems to increase their complexity with regard to the challenges they are confronted with, they are able to master the challenges. If they fail to generate the required information, they might break down.

According to a critical social systems theory, based upon Evolutionary Systems Theory, the emergence of global challenges by ushering in a new age of the history of mankind 75 years ago is evidence for an evolutionary crisis of the social systems that have grown interdependent but not yet got integrated with each other. It means that they confront a Great Bifurcation of their possibility space of future trajectories. It needs to be passed by a Great Transformation that chooses the right trajectory to guarantee the continuation of anthroposociogenesis.

According to a critical information society theory, based upon both the Unified Theory of Information and a critical social systems theory, the Great Transformation can be realized only if the required information had been generated. This information is about the ultimate cause of the current multi- or poly-crisis as French intellectual Edgar Morin called it [2] and the means of choice for its overcoming. It illuminates that it is the plethora of social relations that have to undergo a decisive change – the social relations among humans, the social relations with nature and the social relations with technology. Their underlying logics have turned anachronistic and require replacement by new logics that adapt to the new situation.

2. The Logic of Egocentrism needs to be replaced by Panhumanism

The social relations among humans are still determined by a logic of egocentrism. Egocentrism signifies the denial of belonging of a social partition to a greater social whole, whatever the partition may be – a nation, an ethnic group, a private enterprise or an individual. That logic deprives the masses of the world population as well as classes of populations of the access to the societal common good. It is a logic of domination, exploitation and oppression in the anthroposphere yielding a gap between rich and poor, hunger, diseases, and much more.

The anti-colonial liberation struggle – with Frantz Fanon's "Les damnés de la terre" in 1963 [3] – was the first sign of an awakening worldwide awareness of the role of social relations in the age of global challenges. It provoked the emergence of the solidarity movement all over the world.

The current pandemic situation is but another example for the anti-humanism of egocentric social relations, since a zero-Covid strategy is only implementable if all countries of the world are put in the position to fight the virus by sufficient vaccination. No country can reach a zero-Covid state without the rest of the countries committed to the same policy, just like no single person can be protected from infection unless a sufficient number of persons is vaccinated without being there free riders that frustrate solidarity.

Egocentrism must give way to a logic of Panhumanism as Morin underlined in a recent article [4]. Panhumanism can be defined as a logic of conviviality [5] of the single integrated humanity, of living together for the good of all. That logic is inclusive. It does not exclude any part of the common humankind by antagonisms (zero-sum plays that benefit some at the cost of others) but includes all of them in synergisms (the composition of parts achieves any benefit shared by any part). Being an objective community of destiny denies humanity any rationality of competition that does not serve the co-operation for the common good.

Since Panhumanism includes the concern for the next generations being provided with at least the same developmental potential as the current generation, it implies principles for the social relations with nature and technology in the sense of German philosopher Hans Jonas [6].

3. The Logic of Hubris needs to be replaced by Anthroporelational Humanism

As long as the social relations among humans are still egocentric, the social relations with nature are determined by a logic of hubris. As long as social systems do not take care of other co-existing social systems, they also do not take care of co-existing systems of natural origin. Such a logic undermines the ecological foundations of human life on Earth. It is a logic of extractivism and contamination of the biosphere and the geosphere yielding a decrease in biodiversity, an increase of the heating of the planet, and much more.

The book of US-American biologist Rachel Carson "Silent Spring" in 1962 [7] was the trigger of the global environmental movement. Concerned with the risks of the misuse of chemical pesticides, it has brought to the fore the role of the social relations with nature in the age of global challenges.

Again, the Covid-pandemic is an example for the risks of repressing and penetrating wildlife nature.

Hubris must give way to a logic of Anthroporelational Humanism [8, 9]. Anthroporelational Humanism means that humans relate to nature by not giving up their specific position of an *animal sociale* or *zoon politikon* when giving up their anthropocentric perspective. In a systemic perspective, humans as self-organizing systems need to concede self-organizing capacities to non-human natural self-organizing systems according to their place in physical and biological evolution when integrating them with their panhuman social systems. They concede intrinsic values to them in a staged way. Thus, humans are prompted to relativize their own positions. Social relations with nature while taking into consideration human values need to do justice to natural intrinsic values. Is the objective function of a panhuman system the global common good, so is the objective function of anthroporelationalism an alliance with nature in the sense of German philosopher Ernst Bloch [10].

Anthroporelational Humanism implies principles for the social relations with technology.

4. The Logic of Megalomania needs to be replaced by Digital Humanism

As long as the social relations with nature are still hubristic, the social relations with technology are determined by a logic of megalomania. As long as social systems do not take care of co-existing systems of natural origin, they also allow themselves the production and use of tools that are not designed to take care of those systems. Such a logic hypostatizes the effectivity of technology beyond any rational measure. It is a logic of omnipotence ascribed to the technosphere and yielded the deployment of nuclear first strike capabilities, the use of chemical weapons, waging information wars, the development of autonomous artificial intelligence, surveillance, trans- and post human developments, and much more.

This global challenge became clear in 1945 and gave rise to the international peace movement, documented by the Einstein-Russell Manifesto in 1955 [11].

The Covid-pandemic, however, belies the omnipotence of technology, since many states have been experiencing the limits of their health services that were not prepared for a pandemic despite anticipating warnings. Though zero-Covid strategies are followed by some states, in many other states politicians, economic interests and misinformed people are hindering the acceptance of recommendations of scientists.

Megalomania must give way to a logic of Digital Humanism [12, 13]. Digital Humanism is the logic of civilizational self-limitation as Austrian-born writer Ivan Illich coined it [14] – a limitation of the technological tools to their role of serving anthroporelational and panhuman purposes only. Digitalization can provide solutions for boosting those purposes, since any information technology helps smoothen frictions in the functioning of any technology. But digitalization must be ethically designed and the tools cultivated. The observance of the precautionary principle – the "Prevalence of the Bad over the Good Prognosis" [6] (31) is a *sine qua non*.

5. Conclusion

The becoming of humankind is not yet finished. The ushering in of the age of global challenges is evidence for a Great Bifurcation of anthroposociogenesis that needs to be passed by a Great Transformation. In order to accomplish the next step in social evolution the social relations among humans, the social relations with nature and the social relations with technology have to undergo a decisive change. The logics those relations have been following have brought about the social evolution so far but are not functional anymore. They need to be replaced by logics that adapt to the conditions of humanity being an objective community of destiny. Humanity is on the point of transforming into a meta- or suprasystem, becoming a subject of its own. Evolutionary Systems Theory, Unified Theory of Information, a critical social systems theory and a critical information society theory build cornerstones for an understanding of those processes.

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