

Cultural Paradigm Shift - towards a world view which sees everything connected so that we can change our world view paradigm in order to have a future on the Earth

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One of the big shifts in our ideas about reality that I'm emphasising recently is the needed cultural shift from 'either-or' ways of seeing reality to 'both-and-and' ways. A key aspect is that all living things are connected and depend on each other in what are called 'eco-systems' (eco-logical and eco-nomic). But everything non-living is connected as well, an example being the way we can see the light coming from the farthest galaxy as well as the light in the house across the road. Our ability to see that everything is connected and act accordingly tends to be undermined by our having grown up before this realisation became public knowledge.

It is the contention of this article that there is a larger issue to consider within which Transhumanism exists i.e. ecological limits that will be, I submit, impacted before the full force of Transhumanism is felt.

Our current civilisation is a materialist one that became dominated by the economic machines of the Industrial Revolution (non-living, designed on hierarchical principles of operation). These in so many ways did enhance our material welfare. Those principles thus became the conceptual model for social organisation, and were associated with a universal logic of black v. white known as 'either-or' and its associated economic ethic of US corporate economics is best for everyone, inc. non Americans. Please see: Wealth Inequality in America: Seeing Reality <http://www.commondreams.org/video/2013/03/06>

"In the upcoming era we are finally recognising and facing the damage that has been done to the biosphere by the 'crypto-conservatism' of our technology. Our machines and those who operate them employ the hierarchical principles of centralised control; and those principles embody no understanding of, or sympathy for, the principles of life, which are eco-systemic and not hierarchical. In its

normal operations technology breaks the rules for life all the time.

"To folk brought up on these hierarchical mechanical principles, the basis on which *successful life* operates is counter-intuitive. It is a 'both-and-and' system. ***That is the eco-systemic principle***: no part of the system is 'in charge' of – or disconnected from - other parts and there is ***no*** centralised control centre. It is a participatory, co-operative system, based only on logic and essential mutuality, and never on 'power over'. Each living entity - cell, organ, individual, species – does its own thing to optimally (*not* maximally) live a healthy life. It sacrifices efficiency in favour of effectiveness. That is because its life is connected to, and depends on, all the other units living optimally, and on the biomass on the Earth collectively living optimally, to provide a host of required life-support services. So it has to choose behaviour that optimises the balance between its own needs and the needs of others and of the larger system overall.

The process of biological evolution has applied 'selection pressure' so that those living entities who didn't evolve to do this, have died off and those who did, have multiplied and flourished into the future.

"Some species are only partly socialised in the required way. These are epidemic or plague parasitic species such as bacteria, grasshoppers, mice, rats, and humans - who expand into epidemics or plagues without any inner self-control until they destroy the living host on which they depend. The epidemic/plague then ends, (a singularity) until such time as the few who have survived 'strike it lucky' and can expand again into a fresh, short-lived epidemic or plague.

In the case of humanity, every great civilisation has reached its zenith and then rapidly collapsed back into Third World conditions, with poverty for the many, no middle class, many fewer numbers, and low-level economies, just as global humanity is beginning to do. A much smaller number will then survive until a new cultural formula is evolved which will allow a fresh flowering, on a new and hopefully more realistic basis. By then perhaps the survivors will have recognised the need to

build and unify a universal high level **general** knowledge, a general 'awareness of awareness' (meta-awareness of systems within systems) *and* a vital new level of general **emotional** intelligence. Only such a new cultural construct may enable us to break out of our repeated, historical 'boom-and-bust' behaviour pattern. "

Certain ideas about cognitive super-intelligence, transhumanism and a technological 'singularity' are a concern of a few thinkers about our human future, especially those developing artificial intelligence ('AI'). They seem to live in a vacuum that is unaware of where global civilization is currently going – or actually not going. Their speculations are about a very major paradigm shift 'within 30 years', where human intelligence would be surpassed by robot A.I. I am skeptical.

Our understanding of the nature of *human* intelligence is still very weak, but it would appear to be analogue in type, linked with the capacity for value judgments, and holistically cross-connected, rather than digital and linear. A prime human characteristic is creativity, which seems to me certain to be sourced in non-linear processes rather than digital. As well, human intelligence and all self-organising life is powered by negentropy, whereas machines are powered by entropy - the qualitatively different energy source that is characteristic of clockwork.

Some studies by the neurologist Antonio Damasio*, who examined rare clinical cases where a persons' capacity for emotional awareness was destroyed by a very localized brain injury that left cognition fully intact, showed that such persons could not function in the world *at all*, because their (e)motive choice-making power had been lost. So I maintain that cognitive intelligence is significantly *less* important than emotional intelligence for the future of humanity, especially in light of the current global civilizational deterioration. Machine-based intelligence will probably always remain without access to negentropy and incapable of making moral judgments – hence its 'crypto-conservatism' – ie., its general probability of being damaging to life.

Summarising: The need is urgent to recognise that our world view needs to change radically. We must come to think in terms of systems, to see that *we and* all those systems are connected, and that we need to shift priorities so that we have everybody maintaining lifelong high level *general* knowledge. It is urgent also that we learn to display routine emotional intelligence, limit ourselves to *life-enhancing* competition, and become routinely honest, real, responsive and helpful. And we *can* readily train ourselves to do this: the methods exist.

* See Antonio DAMASIO, *DESCARTES' ERROR; Emotion, Reason and the Human Brain*, 1994, Vintage paperback 2006, revised.
