

Noosphere and masses

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Reflections on contemporary challenges are recorded in the dialogues. An interpretation of ideas about the noosphere is given in the context of the demographic transition and those changes that follow.

Maksim:

There have been changes in the program of the Arctic station Vernadsky. The "Noosphere" project was closed because of the war.

Homo sapiens destroys the biosphere, creating a synthetic environment over it, but in the biological sense, it's all doomed. We are massively facing climatic and biospheric stress.

In fact, not a single living organism is in a free state on Earth. All organisms are inseparably and continuously connected, first of all by nutrition and respiration with the material and energy environment surrounding them. Humanity is inextricably linked with the biosphere and cannot be physically independent of it for a single minute [Vernadsky].

Vernadsky defines the noosphere as a new geological phenomenon on our planet. He indicates a new historical subjectivity of man, who becomes the largest geological force. Further, according to Vernadsky, a man must rebuild the area of his life with his work and thoughts.

Every year, we face new and new extreme natural conditions. Every year, the heat wave and the damage caused by it is stronger, not to mention the extreme melting of glaciers at the Earth's poles and rising sea level. The Earth's biospheric reservoirs are overflowing.

It must be said that Vernadsky's generalizations about the noosphere were caused not only by a positivist belief in progress, but also by a terrible destructive war: "in the history of humanity and the biosphere as a whole, a war of such power, duration and strength is an unprecedented phenomenon".

Vernadsky's article on the noosphere was published in 1944, during World War II, when the scientist said that the movements of geological masses and substances caused by destructive human actions are comparable in scale to the processes of evolution.

Although Vernadsky speaks of the release of man's creative powers in the new era, one cannot but admit that the scientist's idealistic ideas are far from the behavioral attitudes of the masses.

Emilio:

I have not delved into the topic of noosphere, but it fits perfectly into my thoughts about man, space and life on Earth. The issues related to it also emerge independently of the noosphere concept in many of my works and reflections.

I find the project very interesting, and I think such reflections are necessary today in order to understand where the world is going and how life is transformed on Earth and in relation to space.

It seems to me that your approach is based on established scientific thinking, and the noosphere is interpreted as a human-mediated evolutionary process. As you may recall, my approach takes into account the scientific paradigm, but also seeks to resist the humanistic vision. I am convinced that it is necessary to continue to experiment, reflect, and act taking into account simultaneously the two great cultural polarities that today are still too much locked into their own paradigms.

The arts and humanities can contribute greatly today to the problems of imagining and envisioning the future, just as science can advance the creation of technological prostheses and new chemical, physical, and biological processes.

The concept of collective consciousness or diffuse consciousness reveals the future direction of human beings to transform the concept of the unconscious (as an individual specific) into a much broader idea involving, if anything, our participation in a consciousness understood not only as a state generated by living together, but as an entity in itself.

In this sense, beyond confessional references, it seems interesting to me to consider some of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin's¹ reflections on the noosphere as generalized consciousness and as cosmological interpretation.

Maksim:

Thiers de Charde created a universalist concept. He also operates with the concept of noosphere, which is brought closer by man. One of his main ideas is that man is an arrow points the way to the final unification of the world.

Evolution as a whole is an essentially non-linear process, which is associated with many factors. It is not biological species that evolve, but all physical objects. Nevertheless, the evolution of biological species is largely associated with mutagenesis, which is influenced by physical factors, which in general terms can be called climate.

Another thing is that ideas about scientific and technological progress were, on the contrary, linear. In this sense, the noosphere was presented as a progressive development, as the fact that the human mind comprehends the physical world and begins to control the physical world. Of course, one cannot deny the positive achievements that began with modern times. Nevertheless, today humanity mainly produces garbage, this applies not only to the waste itself, but also to informational garbage.

¹ The description of the Noösphere and its attendant biology, as here propounded, is no more opposed to the Divine Transcendence, to Grace, to the Incarnation or to the ultimate Parousia, than is the science of paleontology to the Creation, or of embryology to the First Cause. The reverse is true. To those prepared to follow the author in his thinking it will be apparent that biology merges into theology, and that the World made Flesh is to be regarded, not as a postulate of science—which would be in the nature of things absurd—but as something, a mysterious Alpha and Omega, taking its place within the whole plan of the universe, both human and divine. Pierre Teilhard de Chardin's. Excerpt from]The future of the man, chapter X. The Formation of the Noosphere: A Plausible Biological Interpretation of Human History that was first published in 1947. Editions du Seuil, Paris, 1955 to 1976.

In this sense, we are trapping ourselves. We have to live in garbage, rake up garbage and spend our main resource on it.

It seems to me that a possible way out of this situation is to build local, horizontal connections. As in the past, when big challenges appeared: political, biological or physical. We need “centers” and a separation between the conditional poles: garbage and not polluted.

The loss of subjectivity also occurs for reasons of exceeding adaptive capabilities. Psychic energy “evaporates” because of too much load. Of course, in the past, man did not live globally, but locally. He was tied to his place, to his land. As we understand there are many more illusions in the modern world.

Emilio:

The concept of the noosphere is linked to the idea of subjectivity, which should be regarded as an evolutionary achievement of consciousness. But it is not. I prefer to speak of transformation rather than evolution. Science and technology are constantly seeking new prostheses that can expand the horizon of human possibilities. At the same time, however, they reduce the possibilities of life by accumulating non-biodegradable material.

Evolution has been imagined as a line constantly progressing through positive changes. But it is easy to see that human evolution in terms of goods, health and quality of life affects only a small part of the population. However, it leads to enormous pollution of the environment and disruption of the natural balance. If evolution is understood as the general acquisition of positivity, we should recognize that this is not the case today, since we cannot say that the benefits outweigh the harms.

How and why can humanity, led by a few people, self-destruct?

We owe it to the lack of awareness and selfishness of human beings. Yes, of course. But this selfishness is a degenerate expression of a very important step in the transformation of human beings: the conquest of individuality. It is necessary for every single human being to become aware of his or her individuality, but unlike today, not through selfishness, but through selflessness. This transformation can only take place by respecting all living beings and controlling one's instincts and impulses.

This, in my opinion, is the only tool we have to oppose this worldwide drift. The present generation will not be able to see the benefits, and it will take many years and many catastrophes before this change takes place, but we cannot fail to fight for a principle of individuality that is combined in attention to the other than oneself.

Maksim:

Dizzying population growth means more and more crowds bursting to the surface of history and no time to absorb culture.

This hyperbolic growth is reaching its limits now, our generation is witnessing this unprecedented explosion and fading, demographic and not only.

We are experiencing the destruction of spiritual and material values due to the mass of politics, we see this in the example of modern Russia, those militaristic moods and the outbreak of war in Europe. These are examples of mass politics and the arbitrariness that is caused by the admission to power of unrestricted populists.

Ortega y Gasset offered us in the last century to look at the mass man, this is what he says: for the "plebeian" of all times, "life" meant, first of all, constraint, duty, dependence - in short, oppression.

Progress has freed the masses from oppression, but it would be strange to think that this could lead to a dawn. The new social fact analyzed here is this: European history is revealed, for the first time, as consigned to the decisions of the common man as such. Or, to turn it into an active voice: the common man, hitherto led by others, has decided to rule the world alone [Ortega y Gasset].

The population explosion has changed political and behavioral attitudes. Vernadsky, in the mid-20th century, believed that a great future lies ahead for man, but only if he understands it and "would not use his mind and his labor for self-destruction."

The limits of population growth are well-developed, Heinz von Förster was the first to formalize this problem, later the famous report "Limits to Growth" by D. Meadows and co-authors was published.

Sergei Kapitsa, one of the creators of the hyperbolic population growth theory, spoke of the demographic transition as a change of the growth regime to the world population stabilization regime.

Actually, the growth of humanity encompasses five orders: from the initial 100,000 population units in the Lower Paleolithic, 1.6 million years ago, to the projected 10 billion after the demographic revolution, after which we should expect a transition toward stabilization of the population of our planet [Kapitsa].

Since the transition is of a fundamental nature, primarily associated with the passing of the limit of the system's growth rate, it is reflected in the phenomena of culture and consciousness, accompanied by a collapse and crisis of values [Kapitsa].

Within the framework of these approaches, growth is considered as non-local behavior of the entire humanity developing as a single entity, as a superorganism.

The demographic revolution and the transition to a permanent population on our planet are undoubtedly the greatest shocks in the history of human development. At the same time, the changes will affect all aspects of our life, and by chance we have witnessed this greatest upheaval [Kapitsa].

Emilio:

I find your ideas very interesting and formulate a complex idea about noosphere. There is an analysis of the forms of power, the role of the masses, the demographic situation. All of this gives a rather disturbing and contradictory view of the future. If, on the one hand, population growth should establish a certain political stability, on the other hand, the abuse of raw materials, of nature in general, the growth of waste should lead man to self-destruction.

Your analysis goes so far as to establish a close relationship between the biosphere and the noosphere, where in the latter humans will not be able to curb the power of the former except by changing paradigm. Totally agree.

At this time it is important for everyone to work to change the state of affairs. Beyond analysis, it would be wonderful if individual behaviors, decisions, and choices were folded into archipelagos of meaning in which people are united by their choices.

It is important to strive to open horizons and act with confidence in change. For as Vernadsky says, there is not a single living organism on Earth in a free state. All organisms are inextricably and continuously interconnected: biosphere is a man-made word and, according to its etymology, refers to life on Earth, its inhabitants and everything connected with nature. It continues to influence man-made processes of degeneration by rebalancing, often dramatically, what is being corrupted.

The curve of world population growth projections will generally increase², but not for Europe. Is there a possible connection between declining population growth and Europe's history and culture? Europe, custodian of ancient cultures, cradle of liberalism and capitalism, colonial empire par excellence, world financial hub, implementer of unscrupulous policies, example of consumerism and squandering. A soft reaction of the biosphere or an "unconscious" impact of the noosphere

Maksim:

The ability to generalize thinking about phenomena and objects has provided man with unlimited possibilities of orientation in the surrounding world and made possible the creation of science. But the full development of personality occurs only under the influence of communication with other people, that is, it is determined by the upbringing and education received in society.

In addition to our skills of analysis and synthesis, our vision is a key function. We alter our conscious field of vision by focusing on some object, we have complex interactions: muscles, the lens and the nervous system as a whole, which allows us to focus on a specific area. Some believe that the evolution of Homo sapiens is primarily related to the evolution of the occipital lobes, where visual images are processed.

The biosphere is overloaded with the human population and its activities. The Earth, as a planetary system, is much more stable than the human population.

If destructive attitudes prevail, then the biosphere will get rid of its excess cargo, from us.

Bibliography

² According to the latest [population projections](#) issued by Eurostat, the EU's population will decrease by 6% between 1 January 2022 and 1 January 2100, equivalent to 27.3 million fewer people. After a decrease in 2020 and 2021 due to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, the population of the EU started recovering during the course of 2022. As a consequence of the mass influx of refugees from Ukraine into the EU as a result of Russia's aggression against Ukraine, the population is estimated to have reached 451 million persons on 1 January 2023. Furthermore, the EU's population is projected to peak at 453 million people in 2026, before decreasing to a projected level of 420 million in 2100. This information comes from the [population projections](#) published by Eurostat today. The results are based on assumptions of partial convergence of EU countries' fertility, mortality and migration patterns.

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