

# DISCERNING EVOLUTION: TOWARD A ROBOTIC WORLD?

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by Marina Zaoli

*"If I am not mistaken, within Humanity is close to occurring, essentially a rebound of Evolution upon itself .*

*At first, through the unreasoned use and combination of the elemental forces of energy received by nature and given off by the Planet, processing of lower organisms up to and including Man. Then, and later, through the **use of the refined forms of energy scientifically captured and utilized within the Noosphere**, super-evolution of Man (individual but also collective) through the harmonized effort of all men working by reflecting, unanimously, on themselves.*

Speaking of "evolution," so far it has been considered mainly the biological evolution that has taken place over the past millions of years and led to human consciousness. Now it is under attention especially the technological one that will lead, it seems, to transhumanism, infosphere, distributed artificial intelligence in a cloud: almost a new Big Bang of human hand (Kurzweil's "singularity") origin of a new Artificial Humanity. There are those who say (theologian A.Vaccaro) that this could represent a kind of incarnation of the Holy Spirit after the previous evolution was the incarnation of the Son... Can the Noosphere, as an evolutionary step toward the Christosphere, be compared, perhaps implemented, in the 'communion of saints'?

Is it the same evolutionary line? Is this what Teilhard foretold when he spoke of the further growth toward the Noosphere and the Christosphere?

Biological evolution was good because it led to consciousness and thus the ability to love. Where will the technological one lead? Is it a true evolution, that is, a **growth of** humanity?

Teilhard already had a vision of the future, historical or meta-historical unification.

*"The measure of the Progress of Humanity is--I have tried to demonstrate--an increase in that power of reflection through the joint reflection of human consciousnesses with each other."*

He thought of the Noosphere as a network of personal interrelationships, but could not yet imagine of digital interconnections.

I believe that Teilhard's optimism, on a path of growth for all humanity, can be shared. Similarly, however, we also cannot fail to consider his warning about safeguarding with respect to our own behaviors, so that we can keep evolution moving in the right direction.

Always assuming that very little is in our hands, with respect to what the future of our planet will be, as far as physical or even astrophysical events of a certain kind are concerned, it is clear, however, that we humans also bear enormous responsibility.

*"Planetizing itself, humanity acquires new physical powers that enable it to superorganize Matter. But, even more important effect, does it not become capable, by direct rapprochement of its members, of unleashing (as if by resonance) certain hitherto unsuspected psychic powers?"*

As a physician, I can say that medicine certainly has made tremendous progress and to some extent we are already robotic. And also 'chemo-commanded'.

The tiny lenses that are placed to replace the lens in cataract surgery, to be able to see after a certain age, dental implants, prostheses in the joints, the stents that we place in the arteries of the heart and brain in particular, but also in other districts of the body, the very small prostheses that replace the chain of ossicles in the ear, are examples of these, along with many other principals, which I think we all use.

The drugs we take every day in cases of need, when something in our bodies has altered and no longer works, allow us to continue living normally in cases where, on the other hand, until half a century, a century ago, we would have had to succumb. They regulate our heart, lungs, intestines, brains, thyroid, urinary, musculoskeletal, practically everything.

And even the ability we are discovering to use stem cells or monoclonal cells, or new research to correct genetic errors in inherited diseases, opens us up to new hope, which every researcher shares with everyone else across the planet.

*"Who could tell, indeed, where the combined knowledge of the atom, hormones, the cell and the laws of 'heredity will lead us tomorrow, turned on our own organism? maximum consciousness emerging from the system of organized and arc-connected individual brains. Exactly what could be expected!"*

Technology is giving us tremendous help. With robotics, we can do surgery even from distances of

hundreds of kilometers.

On an individual level, we can share a wealth of information that until a few years ago we would not have even dreamed of having. We can connect and talk together with people from all parts of the world, and that is a wonderful thing. But the problem is precisely this: do we know how to use these tools? Wikipedia was and still is a wonderful example of how, those who wanted and could, made a contribution in their particular area of knowledge and expertise so that everyone could use it. It is suggestive to think that this is another layer of what Teilhard envisioned as the Noosphere: we now possess an additional fabric of shared information that our minds can access and that covers the entire globe. And on the Web everyone can make a contribution.

*"Diving into the heart of the Noosphere (today we understand it better) is the only means by which we can hope, in order to be sure, to find, all together and individually, the fullness of our Humanity."*

After all, the neurons in our brains implement the same task. It has been seen, already for several years, with special MRI staining, that by asking a person a question, many neurons are activated, firing, calling to mind particular memories and differentiated responses. But having to then deliver the unambiguous answer that was asked for, the areas that are assessed to be of less interest for what was asked for are then turned off, canceled, since they are not needed for the task, for the delivery given. We could define it as a kind of *brainstorming*, with critical scrutiny, however, of what is produced. In fact, we have areas of the brain devoted to this, and also to what we can call **moral consciousness**, so much so that lesions to the frontal lobe and particularly to the prefrontal cortex induce loss of impulse control, attention and concentration.

But will the whole of mankind, or the various human groups, be able to create a similar situation of great variety and creativity, a similar *brainstorming*, giving a satisfactory answer every time? Will we be able to use this possibility for a shared good, for a world that is increasingly conscious and aimed at mutual protection? Will the hypotheses of lots and lots of brains be able to find the directions for resolution to the various problems to come? Probably so, but thousands more years will not be enough if the whole planet has to be involved, considering that, in the 2000 years from the birth of Christ to now, the growth in consciousness has been minimal.

We can better understand this by going to consider how social media are used. The modes are very opposing: they can be a true exchange of information to share and solve problems for which not everyone has the required skills and are of extreme utility, but also and solely to hurt, to offend, to denigrate, quickly creating serious damage to individuals, which is multiplied out of all proportion by the potential of the web network to spread. Just think of the cases of bullying in schools where everyone can contribute to the defamation and teasing of the weaker, designated individuals without them being able to defend themselves or sometimes even knowing it, because things are not carried out as in ancient fights where one had to face each other face to face, look into each other's eyes, and could assess the rival's strengths and weaknesses and prepare strategies for

defense or escape.

So welcome a shared culture, but only if there is a shared consciousness. But that does not mean the homogenization of ideas and behaviors, identities and projects; diversity is our great wealth, it is what makes us grow, but learning not to hurt each other anymore.

*"... Science must recognize another phenomenon, it too reflexive in nature but this time extended to the whole of Humanity! Here, as elsewhere in the Universe, the Whole manifests itself as superior to the mere sum of its constituent elements. No, the human individual does not exhaust in himself the vital possibilities of the race. But, along every fiber identified by Anthropology and Sociology, an inherited and collective current of Reflection is established and propagated: the advent of Humanity through Humans;-the emergence through human phylogeny, of the human branch.*

Everyone has to have their own specialization, their own characteristics, we have to be very careful not to homogenize everything, because it cannot work in any area. Everyone must maintain their own sexual identity, their own racial identity, their own cultural identity, this is only an enrichment for everyone, homologation is not good, it would be a lowering to a level without growth. It is only in duality, in confrontation, in *dia - log* as that *logos* grows. Without the kind of genius, the kind of diversity that created human history, humanity would perish from it. And we also need male and female, certain characteristics in order for life to flow, for new creatures to be born. It takes a man and a woman to have children, without placing blame on those who were not born heterosexual (it was not a choice and they often struggled to accept it), but let us accept the existence of other sexuality so that we can live in love and harmony with those who, until recently, were considered 'different.'

So we can absolutely say, with Teilhard and his optimism, that maybe we will make it someday, but that we will only succeed in having a shared consciousness at the time when we have a **super-ethics** that is truly **shared** by everyone.

As F. Euvé writes *'We have therefore been led to emphasize in his reflection in particular "optimism" (a word, moreover, that Teilhard did not refuse to use), the "zest for life," the energy needed to "build the earth"...*

*In the eyes of his enthusiastic readers, engineers, doctors, researchers, entrepreneurs, Teilhard succeeded in reconciling the modern notion of progress with Christian spirituality. Contrary to a principled devaluation of human activity still prevalent in circles marked by Jansenism, he showed that man's work participates in the coming of the Kingdom of God'.*

On the other hand, as for creating robots that can replace humans, I think it can work very well a use of machines such as washing machines, dishwashers, printers, various computer programs, cars that protect us from accidents, automated machines in industries, which decrease the risks of workers, all wonderful and of great use, but nothing can replace the interhuman relationship, the contact between people, because in this case humanity would end. Man must be together with others, just

like the neurons in our brain, just like the cells in our body, if there is no interconnection it is the end. Life in total solitude is meaningless. It fails to give sufficient meanings of survival strength to our mind.

The puppy that is not completely licked by its mother at birth will turn away and allow itself to die. He does not try to feed himself.

For a very simple reason: the mother licking it answers the basic questions that every cub in nature asks, charitably unconsciously, the moment it is expelled into the world. "Why am I here? What am I doing in this new, different and certainly not as cozy a place as my mother's womb? There I could always feel her warmth, her breath, her heartbeat, her voice, her cradling me as she walked, her total protection. There it was a cozy refuge without hunger, thirst, cold, heat, fear. What sense, what meaning does my life have now without all this?"

And without finding meaning the puppy would let itself die....

Indeed, it is precisely the closeness, the mother's licking, that fully answers these questions. "You are not alone, my pet, I am with you again and as you see I lick you in every part of you., to show you my love, because I will still protect you, because I have called you to life and will teach you how to live, making you grow and nurture you until you are able and willing to leave, to go independently on your new path. You are here because I called you and I called you to love you."

And it is only out of love, mutual closeness and the security of counting for someone that we find the strength to be in the world, to grow, to overcome difficulties, in short, to face life.

I think this very reason is why we need to be sure that we have a Heavenly Father who loves us. Because we need God. And why God brought us into the world: to love us and to teach us love.

The idea of creating robots with human forms, then, can be fun, decorative, but not enough to keep us company. It can perhaps serve in part only in the case of frankly pathological people with enormous social relationship problems.

Just think of the huge prevalence of pets we have since we live in cities where relationships between people are minimal and work relationships are particularly stressful. We need someone to welcome us with love, to touch us, but also to be caressed. The man, though it may not seem like it, needs to care and be pampered in return, to feel that there is a relationship of affection. Even the best robot, perfectly imprinted, can never give you that, you can never mimic the surprise, the unpredictability, the warmth, the joy that gives a living being with its own autonomy and unrepeatable identity, with its tastes, its emotions, its character, its ability to love.

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P. Teilhard, The Future of Man, pp. 148, ed. Jaka Book

Ibid, p. 150, ed. Jaka Book

P. Teilhard, The Future of Man, pp. 148 - 149 Ed. Jaka Book

Ibid, p. 147

P. Teilhard, The Future of Man, pp. 155 Ed. Jaka Book

Consider with respect to this the value of mirror neurons.

P. Teilhard, The Human Phenomenon, p. 167, ed. Queriniana

The 'future of the world according to P. Teilhard de Chardin, F. Euvé, Essays, taken from Uni - versum, fascilol 1 p. 10

The puppy survives in the wild only if it is truly licked all over, because psychologically it needs a response of love and protection to find the strength to fight back, and biologically it needs its mother's saliva, which contains 'disinfecting' lytic enzymes, to prevent it from getting sick with infections that could be lethal to it.

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