

## Abstract

# Interactive Matter: The Free Flow of Information, and the Shift of Moral and Ethical Responsibility in the Future Digital World Society <sup>†</sup>

David Simon-Vermot <sup>1,\*</sup> and Nikunja Ebner <sup>2</sup><sup>1</sup> Media-Science and Art History, University of Basel, 4001 Basel, Switzerland<sup>2</sup> Nikunja Art Studio; Basel, Switzerland; nikunja.info@gmail.com

\* Correspondence: david.simon-vermot@stud.unibas.ch

<sup>†</sup> Presented at the IS4SI 2017 Summit DIGITALISATION FOR A SUSTAINABLE SOCIETY, Gothenburg, Sweden, 12–16 June 2017.

Published: 9 June 2016

Internet Dataflow, exchange of information in the digital but also in the analog biological world is the crucial and central element, developed in the evolution of nature, bringing about the “digital society”. Yet the question arises, how this new form of society will look like: Within the current discourses concerning digital development also critical notions regarding a “digital society” are articulated, as among others by Jaron Lanier, one of the pioneers of the internet.

Fundamentally the understanding has to grow, that intelligence and its evolution is a natural process, linked to the “evolutionary impulses of nature” and thus not standing above the natural laws: All development in nature holds an organic element of non-control and openness towards the system created, a kind of “self-destructive” element, which allows on one hand evolution (see also: emergency theory) and on the other hand the possibility of extinction of those branches of nature’s organic development that become futile.

*“Any order is ultimately in interaction with chaos and only thus evolving. Otherwise it is extinct” (nikunja).*

Thus the question of how the future society deals with the digital intelligence, which enables technological developments, but also the cultural and spiritual evolution of mankind as such, is directly linked to the question, how and by what authorities the flow of digital information is being generated, sustained, guaranteed and controlled. This question is so important, that it may decide on the future of humanity: If new societal developments and a collective evolution takes place or if this branch of the “evolution of nature” fails and thus will be extinct.

According to the theory and principles of *Interactive Matter*, a new perception of matter, the universe and evolution as such would dawn: Evolution and natural process do not happen on a linear time-line but in a multi-field phenomenological environment, which moves away from an assembly/combination of positions and values, to an understanding and application of transposition and *Interactive Matter*, as a *trans-physical, trans-social and trans-medial reality*.

## On Interactive Matter

Interactivity usually is defined by an effect, or the succession of effects. They are perceived binary, linear and on one timeline. In the course of the last 20 years Swiss-French Artist Nikunja developed the artistic and philosophic concept of *Interactive Matter* as a fundament for artistic, natural and spiritual evolution and relates to the comprehension of interaction as matter to be creatively formulated and experienced. *Interactive Matter* is perceived as a multilayered dynamic field environment in a static condition of time and volume between zero and infinite, simultaneously macro- and micro-cosmic. Nikunja’ artwork allows the direct experience of *Interactive Matter* as spreading between analog and digital reality.

*Interactive Matter* is the totality of tension, space, rejection, and attraction emerging in the present between two or multiple objects, subjects, materials, ideas, causalities, histories, media, universes, worlds, personalities, etc. on a physical, psychological and spiritual level.

### *On History as read Evolution*

The illusionary perception of “history” as evolution on a linear timeline, with the idea of a “travel” from worse to better, from primitive to complex, as the ideal of civilisatory and biological evolution, principally comes from the scientific practice, that one conclusion leads to another and thus one may read into that an evolutionary logical development; only nature and the universe do not fully correspond to the human mind and its analytical logic, which in its simplicity can only exist by excluding options “beyond the module of the applied system/discipline”. This does not mean, that the analytical instrument and mindset is to be neglected: Linear History as a concept and as a tool to approach complex developments is indeed helpful—but is frequently being misused to determine and defend established power structures and their social applications. Yet at the same time, the post-modern notion of a fragmented history also reinforces the acceptance of the status-quo, as this fundamental distrust in the idea of societal progress tends to generate a passive—often resignative—attitude [1].

As such History can be—and often is—either a tool of utter conservatism or one of passive acceptance—and is thus irrelevant for the readability of evolution of humankind, the universe or any organism or event in biology, sociology, philosophy, art and science, as long as it is understood as a *static and authoritative concept*.

### *Evolution in digital society*

To allow evolution in a digital society, the flow and generation of information needs a space of no-control, a principle of freedom, “Split Authority” (nikunja) and “Autonome Zone” [2] which allows the continuous evolution of the system. As hackers evolved from a menace to the system to the guarantees of its security and development, society as such needs to accept the strange, foreign, even the self-destructive as an evolutive element: Not only in its analog but also in its digital systems. This politics of the “Opened Circle” is a necessary element for evolution and survival, as can teach us the practices and conditions in the original African societies at the origin of manhood and its philosophy of UBUNTU (means kindness):

“Utmost respect had to be given to the stranger, visiting the community, since (s)he will allow us to adapt to unknown condition and thus allow survival! ” (ubuntu)

If, on the contrary, the fear of this political, social and cultural application leads to the desire of “total control” of the flow and the generation of information, a “repressive, fascist, Oedipus Rex—system” (nikunja) will be established, making any evolution, may it be digital or analog, impossible: As in nature, the continuous degeneration by the procreation inside of the same family leads to failure, destruction and extinction.

A possible key to the necessary evolution away from such stagnating and oppressive concepts (the present states of capitalism, democracies, the concept of nations—all at their beginning also positive concepts) may be seen in the awareness and consciousness of *Interactive Matter*, where the free-flow of information beyond a dominating ruling authority implies a shift of the *guaranteeing authority* of the moral and ethical values in society: Whereas so far, historically and politically, fundamental moral, ethical and spiritual values had been necessarily guaranteed by a *ruling authority* from the chief and shaman in tribal and clan organized societies up to the disastrous implication of “ideals” by ideological fascist and communist systems, religious organizations, racist states and ideologies, etc. in the 20th Century with its devastating wars and millions of deaths, clearly demonstrating the complete failure of these systems as such for any longer evolution, now this guaranteeing authority and thus responsibility is clearly shifting in the democratic societies to *the subjective environment and awareness of the individual*.

To allow this necessary evolution of freedom and moral responsibility in the individual, humankind needs to take the chance to *free the flow and exchange of information from economical and political power interest*, renew the democratic system away from a party-system, and determine a form of general distribution of the generated fortune (for example the worldwide universal income for any human being, a true task for a real *social world bank* as mere distributor), for otherwise the generation of fortune by the colonization and theft of intelligence by non-and trans-governmental bodies will lead to the above described disaster of the “Closed Circle”.

The concept of *Interactive Matter* as a concept of *social awareness* and of *trans-personality* by the *digital as expanded analogon* provides the possibility to enlarge the understanding of democracy and develop new political and electoral processes.

Thus the vision for the “future digital society” is *the trans-national one world society*, transcending finally the disastrous effects of the post-colonial periods, born from aristocratic greed’s and still continued by the greed of the contemporary monetary aristocracy, misusing the systems of nation and currency and hindering a healthy creative progressive evolution.

Governments would be mere bodies of community services and not generative bodies of power, ideology and fortune.

Will it be paradise? No, but this situation will allow finally humanity and the individual human being to grow into a constant creative body and spiritual transcendence beyond firm systems, allowing constant evolution of human intelligence, technology and physical matter, may it be generated by digital or analog means.

## References

1. Hughes, C. *In Relation to Postmodernism See: Liberal Democracy as the End of History, Fukuyama and Postmodern Challenges*; Routledge: New York, NY, USA, 2012.
2. Bey, H. *The Temporary Autonomous Zone (TAZ)—Ontological Anarchy, Poetic Terrorism*; Autonomedia: Brooklyn: New York, NY, USA, 2003.



© 2017 by the authors. Licensee MDPI, Basel, Switzerland. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).