FORGED BY CONSCIOUSNESS

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Abstract

Machines that have consciousness, or what some think is consciousness, have become the obsession of the day. Moreover, genetics promises us people who will not only live in eternity, but will not have any disease. Today you can be a woman, tomorrow a man, surgery and chemistry at the extremes... I think that in this context it is worth asking ourselves the question of what consciousness is. In addition, it is worth making the effort to understand the difference between humanity and the rest of nature and, above all, the difference between humans and the tools they have designed. Of course, an individual is slower than a horse, several horses, gathered in an engine, are much faster not only than humans, but also than other machines. The plane and the missile are just one example. Apart from that, we have to admit that many cars do exactly what we want: they save us effort. But nothing is free in this world.

Keywords: *consciousness, machines, Homo sapiens*.

We use energy for all the services we expect from cars. Once upon a time, we needed the energy in order to survive: the warmth of the sun, food... Now that we have reached a high level of civilization, we need the energy that corresponds to the right to prosperity. Yes, even though there is a lot of misery in the world, prosperity has become a right in many parts of the world, and someone has to pay for that right. Consciousness tells us that in this equation regarding the connection between what we want and the price we pay for the satisfaction of our desires, the unknown has crept in. The excessive use of energy sources leads to a paradoxical situation: humans have been transformed to a large extent, by themselves, into machines that medicine tries to keep in working order. Even after the expiration date. On the other hand, we want machines to have consciousness and we are willing to spend from our future to see if this new desire will not lead to the end of humanity. We are obliged to answer the question of whether a better and responsible man is still possible or whether we have crossed the threshold of a civilization in which humanity without humans has become inevitable. Utopia or dystopia are increasingly difficult to distinguish.

In this article, I shall not answer these questions, but I will try to explain the role consciousness played in the formation of *Homo sapiens*. Has the deterioration of consciousness, which we currently observe, become the origin of a new situation in which we prove to ourselves that man no longer has a place in the civilization he created? Catastrophism is no less dangerous than over-optimism.

Genetic inheritance and nature conditioning affect the dynamics of life. Humans, as a distinct part of life, influence their own change over time. They actively participate in their own creation—each person is special! Through consciousness, the purpose that characterizes the dynamics of everything that is alive becomes the driving force of all activities through which people identify themselves.

Humans, compared to the rest of nature, are not only aware of the world to which they belong, but have acquired the ability to be aware of their own awareness. Awareness of purpose – what do we propose? – is part of that condition. Moreover, in their interaction with the world, especially with other people, goal-oriented behaviour shows that the way awareness is perceived by others (people or not) affects their condition. Considering the empirical evidence, it seems that individuals care about the way in which "I know what I know, but I want to know if you know that I know." When we educate others based on example ("this is how you hold a tennis racket," "this is how you ski in the mountains," "this is how you use a hammer," "this is how you use the computer," etc.), we turn mimesis, that is, imitation into a confirmation (I know, but I want you to know that I know),

therefore trust. This confirmation is essential in the student-teacher relationship. Especially in a society where students know more than teachers (or imagine they know).

This awareness is expressed through interactions of all kinds: mothers taking care of their babies, hunters chasing prey, sowing seeds for the next harvest, teachers interacting with their students, artists and scientists in relation to their audience, etc. In fact, *this awareness of awareness* results in the definition of various goals to be achieved. In this way, consciousness guides human actions. Awareness is reflective in nature, part of the action itself. Similar to the morphology of an onion, the objectives are revealed as layers, as levels. The disclosure of successive layers becomes a social good. A shared experience. Sometimes with tears in the eyes— like when peeling onions. Moreover, this experience involves an evaluative aspect: do you realize (the object of the interaction: a baby, a student, a reader, etc.) that I care about you? In short: the reflective, socially embedded and evaluative consciousness allows people to act like humans and not like animals. Being driven by a purpose (survival, in the case of animals or plants) does not imply conscience. Being aware of the goals that transcend survival and being able to formulate new goals necessarily involves consciousness. Religion, science and art represent the expression of conscience. When instead of consciousness we have only technical performance (the machine can paint, it can make music, it can become religion, etc., that is, it can imitate them), it means that consciousness has been sacrificed.

Speaking of empirical evidence: Charles Darwin observed that redness is not a reaction to a physical stimulus, but an anticipatory expression of a social nature: "It is not the mere act of reflecting on our own appearance, but the thinking about what others think of us represents the cause of redness" (Darwin, 1872). No animal blushes. Animals steal, but they are not ashamed. Animals lie (they pretend to be dead! - Thanatosis is the scientific term for this behaviour adopted by the opossum, some species of ducks, some species of snakes, etc.). Animals kill each other when survival dictates it. Man has generated not only a special form (the morphology of the organism is always unique), but also a behaviour that corresponds to goals that no animal can have. This simple observation of redness reveals the profound truth at the heart of human consciousness: it is fundamentally social, that is, it results in the context of community life, and it is also evaluative: values correspond to the objectives shared by the community (Nadin, 1978)

To take over the world, even the very limited world of sexual reproduction – male and female, who will soon become father-mother-child – is at the same time to be absorbed into the world: there is no subject and object, the conscious individual becomes both subject and object. To look at someone else is to see yourself in the other. This is what Philippe Rochat (Rochat,2024). called "co-consciousness" and it means that in taking over reality we become part of it through an evaluative process. Humans are born to become aware, not as part of the process of genetic inheritance, but rather in their own discovery: a dynamic process of development shifts from natural behaviour to increasingly social forms of expression. That is, culture. Again, empirical evidence, suggesting uniqueness rather than a testable pattern, shows how the child becomes aware of his or her own identity. Around the age of 18 months, the mirrored image of a baby is recognized by the baby. A mark on the face, such as the kiss of the mother who has lipstick on her lips, is recognized as part of the ego. And, even more, shared with others: "Look at me..." Not long after, various emotions are noticed: pleasure, displeasure, joy, etc. Self-creation begins early and ends with the end of life.

Fig. 1 To consciously perceive the world is to perceive oneself as part of the world.

Seeing yourself is a first step. It does not end after the 18 (plus/minus) months of the baby's life. On the contrary. The child asserts his presence as distinct from everything else and from anyone else. Before language is acquired, any other form of expression is used to attract attention. These expressions represent the anticipators: redness is the first; crying, throwing objects, smearing with feces (different "languages" at different ages) cause attention. They are identifiers, different from the means by which the ability to act on one's own person is acquired. Children, but also adults (at different ages) act on themselves. This is part of the reflective nature of consciousness. Finger sucking is a common self-soothing behaviour. So are the caressing of the hair, ears or nose; holding a favourite blanket, humming, babbling or stuttering sounds. Crouching in a fetal position or finding a comfortable place. Later in life, listening to music, deep breathing, petting an animal, taking a warm bath, coffee or tea, walking, etc. can help. They influence consciousness, but so do overeating, nail biting or nose cleaning, compulsive gambling or shopping, etc. Intentionality, the goal-oriented aspect is what defines consciousness-guided actions. In this context, we can ask whether those who feel the need for excessive tattooing or piercing represent extreme individualism or creativity that we are not yet aware of?

Nowadays, because artificial intelligence represents the order of the day, it has become necessary to realize that awareness ultimately translates into understanding: of oneself, of the immediate environment, of others. It can be expressed in many ways, language still being dominant, although it competes with many partial languages (Nadin, 1997). But understanding, which means intelligence, is intertwined with the capacity for action. People understand for action or in order to do something with that understanding. A particular form of this understanding (legitimately called intelligence) is the unique human capacity of consciousness to observe and modify itself. Therefore, the lifelong process of becoming is actually one of formation, of creating ourselves (Nadin, 2013). This is the core of what is called autopoiesis or self-creation.

The lifelong process of becoming starts biologically from the single cell formed at fertilization (zygote) and continues with the subsequent germinal stage (from zygote to blastocyst). At all levels of human life, consciousness is holistic in nature (Nadin, 2023). It corresponds to the whole of existence and results in an integrated purpose.

Indeed, the entire human being or, rather, the entire human reality of individuals interacting with a purpose is the author of his own modelling during a long and winding journey. The evolution *of Homo sapiens* is characterized by the development of a unique set of traits that distinguish humans from other species. These traits did not appear all at once, but evolved over millions of years. The first is the *Homo faber stage* – the tools are designed as an extension of the body (the hammer is a longer arm with a stone in its hand). The tools give the feeling of extra power. Those who conceived them are empowered. This development is not related to genetics, but rather to the awareness of increased possibilities and therefore justifies the anticipatory description. The tools allowed for more efficient hunting, food processing, and the act of sheltering. The refrigerator and people's belly (mostly men) are another example (less pleasant).

The following steps (following the *Homo faber moment*), not documented here in detail, but rather extracted from empirical evidence, are relatively well described in various studies (anthropology, behavioural sciences, biology, etc.):

1. **Bipedalism**: The ability to walk on two legs evolved over 4 million years ago. It freed the hands for carrying tools and food. And for many other actions (some reactive, some anticipatory).

2. **Large brains that expand throughout the body** (Nadin, 2017) : allows people to develop cognitive skills, including language, abstract thinking, and problem-solving.

3. **Expression through language**: From the concreteness of things to their representation. This allows for new forms of interaction that eventually became communication – bringing it together. Language changes the perception of time and creates bridges between generations. It is an integral part of consciousness and, at the

same time, shapes it as an active factor regarding the subsequent change of the human being.

4. ***Zoon semiotikon***: semiotic animal, in the sense of having acquired through activity the power of the symbolic expression and the ability to create its own culture. The last 100.000 years have seen the emergence of the complex symbolic expression, including art, music, and religion. It reflects the development of a rich and diverse human culture. And, also, of a new phase in the dynamics of human life: increased possibilities, greater and greater risks.

None of these are genetic in nature, although they are based on the genetic foundation that is part of the living matter. Forged by conscience, humanity has its destiny in its own hands.

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