

Subject: Futurist view of Technology

The most interesting exercise is to map contemporary technological developments into a broader view of society.

- 1; there is the continuing development of art, science and technology since the renaissance;
- 2; there is a continuing development of globalisation, marked radically at this present moment by the information revolution; this is the real globalisation which has been gradually forming over the last 500 years. this is widely agreed upon by economists and leading intellectuals; we are globalising now; note the reflection across culture as a whole, because at any time in history, gross trends are manifest all through society and reflected in many activities.
- 3; there is a continuing development of understanding reality; as art and science continues to understand everything and anything, and we master reality; consider the leading developments in nano-technology, genetic engineering, cognitive science, and so on. it is most interesting to see this develop out of the united states which itself is a highly spiritualised advanced pioneering first world culture.
- 4; there is a continuing development in any activity to factor out common forms and innovate at the leading edge, which is exactly what is occurring with the developments in the information society which is radicalising existing industrial and social structures, but it will flatten out, this is the nature of for instance the transport industry and any technical profession (industrialisation).
- 5; it is acknowledged that the internet and information society is developing into a collective consciousness of man; as it tends to encode all manner of information and becomes a universal medium for humanity (cf. cyberpunk, star trek's borg, the matrix, etc). many people think that this is a somewhat wild idea, but time will show it to be the truth.
- 6; there is a high drive towards creating personal realities, and hence the enjoyment of books, role playing games and now interactive games. the leary style virtual reality was simply ahead of its time given the lack of surrounding technical/economic infrastructure.
- 7; note that across industries, such as manufacturing, design, architecture, engineering, drug design, etc; there is a continuing process to develop computer aided design tools, and continually drive out the handwork; this trend correlates with the same trend in organisational design.

Note that the US Govt has recently approved a lot of funding for nano-technology; it is serious business; and philosophers are investigating what will happen when it is possible for each of us to create anything we design (consider that there are many pointers towards the individualisation of products based on consumer preferences, and how the nano-technology assembler can be seen as a sort of culmination of this; and the virtual reality environment is not much different).

Something interesting also is the rise of a movement called 'the transhumanists' which is gathering momentum, and they sort of sublimate religious belief about self-perfection, into a view of the transhumanist world with an orthodoxy centered on 'high technology' as the primary enabler and driver of human growth and direction. The president advocates the concept of 'dynamic optimism', which can be seen to be some sense of a reflection of the contemporary trend towards continually building and navigating towards the future, something the american culture embodies very well in its individualist spiritual drive.

Furthermore, trends in philosophy and ethics are towards ideas about sentient life forms and the recognition that existing notions of how we relate to the world need to be rethought. For instance, the rise of artificial life forms as they grow from the likes of robots, tamigothchi, electronic agents, etc; pose very interesting questions about the rights of electronic life forms; because at some stage they will have comorable power to humans. The double edged sword of high technology is our increasing dependence upon it.

I did attend a lecture on globalisation from the faculty of history at the university; and most of my ideas and thoughts were in line with their thoughts; so I am not really that wildly off! One big thing is the recognition that there are similarities between the current period of society and the renaissance, in the way that the primarily american cultural/economic engine is largely driving globalisation; as we tend towards a world economy.

I don't know the word & can't find it. I must update myself & my dictionary!

These views certainly have Italian Renaissance links ... man's perfectibility

if you find someone

to explain this as I'm v. intrigued, I suspect you're off travelling but if you're around to explain:

01438 715523 - if convenient