

GENERAL SYSTEMS WELTANSCHAUUNG

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Summary

At times, every human intrinsically produces idealized abstractions as generalized assumptions to help them update their theoretical frame of reference, which is needed to reorganize day-to-day survival. Every generalization is obtained by inference from knowledge of various aspects of particular facts and situations perceived or recognized through various interpretations of related information. Many generalizations, after being simplistically conceived by empowered leaders who aimed exclusively at increasing the submission of common people to their commands, have been diffused as if they were universal values to facilitate their imposition.

A human mind usually “sees” the forest before getting involved with any tree. Based on this evidence Ludwig von Bertalanffy advocated that any individual may improve qualitatively their generalizing needs while trying to be globally minded, through trustworthy worldviews generated by General Systems Weltanschauung, when organizing explicitly his or her local performance. GSW act as catalytic agents when somebody aims at attaining reliable appraisals of everything needed for coping “holistically”, then morally (ethically, ecologically and ethologically), with any possible human enterprise.

GSW, as an ideological medium, may lead researchers and experts in their learning to perform as responsible scientists, conscious enough of humankind’s needs and aware of terrestrial, biological, and social possibilities and restrictions. In fact, this medium is indispensable for building reliable circumstances (systems of ideas) required for identifying one or another way forward that may succor the “civilized” humanity to determine rationally and emotionally its planetary role. It is also necessary for fighting

against the manifestation of shortsighted and narrow-minded actions (those derived from institutionalized, simplistic, and biased generalizations) which are increasing the fragility of the prevalent civilization.

Physiological and intellectual features of humans, as inexplicit GSW which were subsequently identified by Samuel Hahnemann and Maria Montessori without being oriented by Bertalanffian thoughts, allowed these theorists to build peerless medical and educational systems.

1. Simplistic Generalizations have Engendered Civilizations

Human potentiality, commented Mumford in the 1940s, originated because “Man is pre-eminently the handy animal: his meeting thumb and forefinger and his free arms have given him power to manipulate his environment that no other creature possesses.” This characteristic stimulated the development of the human brain through the way our ancestors (first came the “handyhominids” whose experience caused the emergence and evolution of “handymen”) managed to organize their performance. Humans became unique animals, although they never knew what the result of their actions would be as they intended only to survive. The manual work carried out by the first hominids produced the development of their intellectual capabilities, until humans were—gradually or suddenly—capable of generating intelligent thoughts and learning to represent real circumstances by means of symbols. Human thinking, based on symbolism, allows everyone to know that they knew something that had happened or was happening in their surroundings, and also to know that they might be able in the future to know something else. Besides, every human, through reflective and meditative thoughts and reasoning, may project knowledge grasped from experiences acquired in order to know better something different about the same reality, which can be “seen” from different perspectives. Everybody has the capacity to gradually grasp additional aspects of the same events and identify similarities to other events.

Humans intrinsically continue always trying to increase their knowledge about everything. Besides, some of them, supported by various abilities, keep on creating technological means for searching out how to detect what is happening in domains inaccessible to human senses. In addition, others persist in trying to augment quantitatively and qualitatively their perceptual possibilities, learning particularly to develop intuitive, inspiring, inferential, and instinctive possibilities. Humans can always find ways of improving their comprehension of real facts and events, though none of them, neither individually nor collectively, will ever acquire the “total” knowledge of anything, because their perceptual possibilities are unavoidably restricted to intrinsic physiological and psychological possibilities. Instead they can purposefully distort, misrepresent, pervert, and/or forge knowledge acquired.

Intellectual activities help every human to generalize knowledge previously acquired; when he/she tries to grasp the wholeness of current activities. However, generalizations may aim either at improving the human condition or instead at restricting dogmatically the behavior and prospects of other humans. Human intellect has become controversial. Many deviations from “civilizing” processes have been effected by wrongheaded humans in powerful positions because, supported by selfish thoughts, they have

obstructed the development of most humans' potentiality and have restricted their motivations and interests, whatever the means, to short-sighted purposes.

Human intellect, through generalizations, made possible the explicit emergence and development of human gregariousness, which also paradoxically generates in some minds humanitarian attitudes, while in other brains it engenders arrogant and even inhumane and merciless postures, exerted through racialism, tribalism, discrimination between castes, dogmatism, ethnocentrism, colonialism, chauvinism and so on.

The uniqueness of humans, among all other animals, has motivated and still stimulates some people to behave “universally”: aware of terrestrial circumstances; being comprehensive of human discrepancies; recognizing the parallel validity of contrasting human concerns involved complementarily in all kinds of natural and man-made circumstances, those that may happen anywhere. The ways Isaiah, Hesiod, Lao-tse, Buddha, Confucius, Solon, Zoroaster, Jesus of Nazareth, and several others comprehended their surroundings are irrefutable evidence of this peerless characteristic, though their views were usually restricted in their time and were improperly deviated afterwards by inconsistent mysticisms. Feasible and reliable humanism is equally recognized in actions accomplished and thoughts expressed by Hippocrates, Paracelsus, Samuel Hahnemann, Wolfgang von Goethe, Maria Montessori, Mahatma Gandhi, Ludwig von Bertalanffy, Fritjof Capra, Noam Chomsky, and many others, though they are altogether very few compared with the number of “civilized” people.

On the other hand, the same matchless characteristic has impelled many more other humans to act selfishly against or ignore the knowledge acquired by their congeners, who learnt to behave by being socially, biologically, and terrestrially motivated. These selfish troublemakers usually perform as “brainy” fellows in accordance with forged, perverse, and perfidious assumptions, presented as if they were knowledge acquired and transferred by wise personalities or even by one or another divinity. In practice, many “leaders” of masses have caused the frustration of billions of people after systematically cheating and misleading them. Most humans have been obliged to accept fabricated and falsified generalizations while “learning” to behave according to authoritarian rules:

- The sacrifice of the bull (Tauribolium) as a rite of purification by baptizing a child with the dropping of the warm blood.
- The Spanish Inquisition.

Others had only one chance than to behave according to constituted circumstances:

- The Mayan community, who accepted (in Esquipulas) indoctrination by Spanish colonizers rather than continue to be massacred.
- The *Arbeit macht frei* (Work liberates)—the written “suggestion” (instruction) for people entering the concentration camp of Auschwitz during World War Two.

Christianity defeated Roman paganism without it being recognized that the diffusion of simplistic generalizations caused the degradation of the human way of life imposed on the Roman population, that subsequently provoked the collapse of the Empire. Christianity derived from Greek culture and, evolving under the influence of Jewish

thinking, has determined most features of the prevailing civilization. The expansion of Christian domains, in the name of “divine” instructions, has been frankly contradictory.

As *homo sapiens* some peculiar animals could develop the ability to reason. Recently Mumford, Huizinga, and Ferkiss commented respectively: “Man was first of all a dreamer who can remember his dreams.” “Man (is) the playing animal, the *homo ludens*”. Mankind is *homo faber*, a tool-making animal. When we remember dreams or are devoted to play rather than work, contemplation becomes our primary goal. Instead, when we are producers, action is what counts: “for many anthropologists the use of tools has become the primary means of distinguishing proto-humans from other species.”

But the negative uniqueness of humans in powerful positions has tragically restrained and impeded the ability of most humans to exercise, freely and responsibly, their *sui generis* capabilities, because they usually “succeed” in being no more than restricted individualities. “Man was born free, and everywhere he is in chains” said Rousseau in the 1760s. Living species have arisen due to evolutionary forces (see *Evolutionary Complex Systems*). Only the human race has produced specimens capable of conceiving, implementing, and maintaining “successfully” in operation adverse forces (ethnic cleansing, for example).

The trajectory of the whole civilization has mainly been determined by simplistic generalizations, which have become the source of contra-evolutionary forces. All civilized societies have emerged and existed without it being noticed that each one was a risky venture that would inevitably fail because in fact it didn't evolve according to its potentiality. Each attempt was accomplished “intelligently” but without recognizing previous experiences, as most leaders and decision makers have been scarcely interested in knowing what caused the collapse of previous civilizations. Every civilizing undertaking has been hailed as magnificent, though according to “values” assigned arbitrarily to man-made works fulfilled, without it being noticed that the whole event wouldn't contribute to improve substantially the material conditions and the intellectual prospects of common people (see *Axiological Systems Theory*).

The planet, since the beginning of the Christian Era (250 million humans) until today (6 billion humans), has mostly been peopled by petty-minded individuals, who were potentially capable of learning to think and act intelligently, but have been exclusively employed as slaves, serfs, servants, workers, employees, soldiers—human resources for pushing ahead the trends of every civilization, though these tendencies have been notoriously inconsistent with common people's needs. Most people have always worked towards making magnificent every civilization, without enjoying such grandeur themselves because it was a privilege assigned to the upper classes. High society, supported by unscrupulous opportunistic people as their accomplices and vassals, has victoriously institutionalized and gradually improved the “efficiency” of every civilizing process. At the same time enough humans have been tamed and trained as “blind” legions or troops, while a few others have been instructed and educated for making possible the emergence of superb manifestations of human creativity. Meanwhile many kinds of regulations have been and continue being promulgated and enforced for conditioning, restricting, and impeding billions of common people to

develop reasonably their individual capabilities.

During the whole civilizing epoch the vast majority of humans (except the elites), conducted by their leaders, with common people used as human resources, have lived *de facto* as specimens incapable of contributing to the development of the features of their species. The high societies have been very active taking advantage of everything in the surroundings for expanding *ad infinitum* their particular domains and reinforcing their power. The masses have had no other choice than trying to survive passively, intelligently or not, learning to be happy conformists, while trying to adapt their motivations to civilizing circumstances conceived for allowing the élites to “enjoy” their life by means of continuous entertainment, distraction, and diversion, while doing all kinds of good business through an increasing exploitation of everything. Most people seem to believe that they must continue “pedaling”, according to the dynamics of every civilization, as they become easily fascinated by some aspects of the homosphere without realizing that it has been built compulsively by human resources. Very few humans or dissidents have noticed how civilizing processes unavoidably cause the degradation of the whole ecosphere: the destruction of terrestrial features, the life of most living species increasingly restricted, and a miserable life for billions of “second-class” humans.

However, trustworthy global circumstances for improving the prospects of humankind might arise in the future because most humans still aim at being, each one individually, “the” very unique personality, despite the growing deterioration of social, economic, political, and even cultural conditions. Being alive encourages every individual to find out, whatever the situation might be, how to become a peerless human, to be either somebody between an unfeeling brute and a humanitarian genius or somebody else between a compassionate beast and an inhuman virtuoso. However, humans identify themselves as humans because their physical, behavioral, emotional, and intellectual features have similarities. In practice everyone learns unavoidably that they are able to infer something on their own, noticing soon that they have common concerns with others—until everybody realizes that they need to agree about something with others in order to justify and develop their idiosyncrasy. These features were made possible during many millennia, before the emergence of civilizations, during the existence of groups of hunters and gatherers who had to organize co-operatively in order to survive. Those humans learnt to share and complement their non-pareil ability, skillfulness, dexterity, talent, expertise, and adroitness with the skills of others. According to Lee and Devore “the hunting way of life has been the most successful and persistent adaptation man has ever achieved.” Humans urgently need to grasp how their ancestors developed on their own these splendid human traits.

Anyhow, generalizations are peculiarly generated by single minds, always under the influence of other minds who had appraised the terrestrial circumstances in their own way—who could not avoid making biased interpretations of significant aspects of some characteristics of certain human concerns. Generalizations are necessarily limited by the way knowledge of something is interpreted, but they can be continuously improved. Any possible civilizing venture emerges and evolves indispensably through generalizations. But why do most civilizing attempts seem to be the outcome of simplistic and imposed generalizations which impede humanity playing an effective

moral role on the Earth (see *Ethical Systems Theory*)? Extensive research is needed to grasp how the inconsistency of human actions and the incongruity of human performances is generated by human interpretations.

Fortunately or perhaps necessarily, though always unexpectedly, the emergence, here and there, of dissidents capable of identifying one or another *trustworthy worldview* derived from knowledge about the magnificence of the human presence in time and space and generated by intuitive, inspiring, inferential, and instinctive endeavors still offers some hope (see *Axiological Systems Theory*).

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Biographical Sketch

Elohim Jiménez-López was born in México City in 1931. He has a degree in Electronic and Communications Engineering from IPN, México (1956) and a Master of Sciences from Wales (1970). He has lectured on Electric Circuits Theory and, since 1969, Systems Methodology and Systems Engineering.

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