

Digitalisation, a cataclysm of the future?

Although current right-wing extremism, which is connected to destructiveness and misanthropy, is of course a danger for a community based on the rule of law and humanist values and thus is not to be underestimated, i. e. if it must be considered a threat which can only be countered by all democratic-minded people standing together, if all this must be necessarily and rightly so stated, nevertheless another threat for peace, liberty and democracy is going to result from frequently invoked digitalisation which is soon going to monopolise almost all human spheres of life. The total surveillance state, advanced levels of robot technology, coming along with possibly unprecedented unemployment rates, at first probably most of all in the field of so called routine jobs, artificial intelligence whose intended perfection is a potential threat for mankind as a whole, such as weapon systems controlled by artificial intelligence and independently identifying its targets – all these are no unreal visions but scenarios whose prospects will cause considerable concern for humans with their attitudes and values in a not distant future and which are thus going to dominate the thus-concerned political debates – hopefully, as must be emphasized.

The public appeals by the majority of politics and sciences – both evidently and sometimes rather hidden – to support, enforce and accept digitalisation – and this, at least in the public discourse – mostly in a ‘positivist’ sense and in a matter-of-course-way, i. e. without sufficiently taking into consideration the many social-critical and cultural, however also ethical reservations – anyway the aspirations precisely by the so called exact sciences to first of all perfect those societal structures which are anyway covered by their activities and effects instead of – in a way inter-disciplinarily – decidedly viewing at the necessity of a reduction of socio-economic deficits and disparities, that is counting most of all on technical/technological perfection, after all on artificial intelligence instead of firmly counting on overall-society based developments and requirements from a humane and ethically responsible point of view, all this shows that relevant forces of society – here: in the field of education and the sciences – consequently and increasingly aim at market orientation and a kind of technological progress which is blind in several respects, moreover also at a kind of authoritarianism which is connected to digital technology and a kind of policy which is thus consequently connected to a kind of neo-conservatism.

Yet still: from now on, open and unbiased discourses are going to prove to be desirable in the course of which all those issues and problems connected to digitalisation and of course also those achievements of the new technologies which are undeniably ethically responsible – just to mention the field of medicine – are going to be on the agenda. It is about discourses which will sufficiently take into consideration the social-critical potential which over decades has been developed among others by philosophy and also by pedagogy and which will particularly refer to the people with their expectations and desires, however also, if necessary, to remedying the shortcomings of education, and also to people's fears and scepticism.

Many questions and debates may be supposed to be necessary to take care that finally, under the conditions of a zeitgeist which is dominated by the topic of 'digitalisation', the search for a future prospect of man which is worthy to live can be honestly and insofar realistically considered to produce promising results.

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