

Intervention de Philippe Lemoine à la plénière : “The Road to Impact and Sustainability – What have we learned?, Where are we headed?”

The question asked this morning by Max and Christian is: what have we learned? When one sees what happened recently in Bangladesh, the answer could be: Nothing. We have learned nothing. And Bangladesh is not only an accident. It is the normal conclusion of a conception of the economic competition. Like the Subprime crisis. Or like the acceleration of the climate crisis.

With such an assessment, it is easy to be pessimistic. However, in my foundation, Forum d’Action Modernités (Modernity Action Forum) we believe it is necessary to promote in Europe a more positive thinking on the global representation of our society and our future. We are a think and action network. What are the major trends on which we can develop this positive attitude? We see three strengths:

1- First: Alliance between Youth and Social business.

We were discussing on this matter yesterday. It is an important issue for three reasons:

- Youth Unemployment: There is no future for Europe with a Youth unemployment rate of 50% (even more in some countries).
- A transformation in the vision of what is involvement and generosity. I was explaining yesterday that in my generation we had a vertical and layered conception of the social organization: technology at the bottom, then economy, then culture. And at the top of the tower: generosity, sense, politics. Now things appear in a completely different perspective and many young people think that it is possible for a Company to have economic goals but also goals of ethics, of justice, of positive action on the environment.
- And third, in this context, we observe the growing difficulty for traditional companies to attract the best and smartest young talents. Many large companies are interested in the new paradigms of shared value for a major reason: attracting the talents.

2- Second strength: Internet and the power of collective intelligence.

There are many different issues around the Internet. But one of them is of a particular importance: the architecture of the network. As you know, it is a Peer-to-Peer

architecture built on two principles: equality between all the connected people; large availability of tools to facilitate interaction.

This architecture was essential to develop an ecosystem with different characteristics:

- Strong innovations
- Freedom and gratuity
- Volunteer contribution
- Change in Property rights as revealed by the Creative Commons movement.

This ecosystem opens new ways for value creation and has huge effects in the transformation of the economy:

- Efficiency of the pure actors of collective intelligence: Free software, Open source, Wikipedia, Open street map...
- Obligation for the mega Companies of the new economy like Google, Apple, Facebook... to capture this energy of collaborative, collective intelligence. They speak of Open innovation, Open data, Pollen-economy.
- In many sectors a growing struggle between these new actors and the traditional Companies to capture the added value. This can be observed in the Travel sector, Retail, Finance and Insurance, Utilities.

So, there is a growing interest for collaboration and for collective intelligence. You can hear in different circles questions like: Is it true that Man is a wolf to Man? Is it a description of his very nature or was it the project of the Industrial society? Can we build a different world based on different forces like empathy?

- 3- It is a good transition to address the third strength on which we can develop a more positive way of thinking: it is a major change, a major move, in the representations of human being.

I cannot explain here all the transformations I have described in my book: “La Nouvelle Origine”. Major issues are the following:

- With computer and Artificial Intelligence, Man with a big “M” can no longer be seen as the Master of a world of rationality;
- But at the same time, man, with a little “m” is more and more powerful, and more and more conscious of the strengths of exchange and collaboration.

As a consequence, at the scale of the world, there is a strong movement in direction of diversity and in direction of new citizenship. The Honorary Chairman of our Foundation, Edgar Morin, speaks about “Terre-Patrie”, Earth as a homeland. In this context, there are many reasons to find interest in far-eastern philosophies like Buddhism. There is something extraordinary modern in this philosophy when it says: there is no one God. There are many Gods. Each of us can be Buddha. And there is a strong capacity of transformation in the interactions taking place between 7 billions of Buddhas.

At Forum d’Action Modernités, we are convinced that these types of thinking are the roots for a new conception of modernity. For us, the project of modernity today is not progress, is not happiness. It is: to transform mutually, one another.