HUMANITIES AND FREEDOM
FROM THE VIEWPOINT OF
INFORMATION

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HUMANITIES AND FREEDOM FROM THE VIEWPOINT OF INFORMATION

- Viktor E. Frankl
  - Humanist who discussed “freedom” of human

- Fundamental Informatics (FI)
  - Information theory based on systems theory proposed by Toru Nishigaki
1. Humanities, hermeneutics, humanism

2. Humanities and Freedom in Frankl’s Thought

3. Reinterpretation of Frankl’s Thought from the Viewpoint of FI (Fundamental Informatics)

4. Humanities and the Freedom of Speech and Expression
1. HUMANITIES IN THE 21ST CENTURY

- Global scale transport and communication
- Only one set of values easily becomes dogmatic, self-righteous
- To search the way of co-existence of a variety of senses of values
- Not singular form “humanity” but plural form “humanities”
The word “humanities” also mean academic studies on human culture
- Philosophy, history, and literature

German word “Geisteswissenschaften”
- science of mental activities

Japanese word “人文科学 (jinbun-kagaku)”
- science of human culture

Philosophical word “精神科学 (seishin-kagaku)”
- science of mental activities
Science of mental activities must have a unique framework or a paradigm of “understanding”

Natural science needs logical and methodological procedures

Humanities as an academic field need another way to understand the essence of human culture
“understanding (Verstehen)” of products of mental activities by humans can be realized as comprehensive recognition which consists of not only logical thinking but also emotional factors.

Philosophical hermeneutics quests for the essence of human beings by researching the phenomena of “understanding” such mental activities including the views of the world as their background.
Schleiermacher
Dilthey
Heidegger
Hans-Georg Gadamer

These are philosophical studies quests for the essence of human beings by researching the phenomena of “understanding”
intercultural information ethics
- Based on philosophical hermeneutics of Heidegger and Gadamer

Angeletics (Angeletik)
- Greek word “angelia” means message
- new areas of interdisciplinary research of message studies
Meanings are “generated inside” a living thing. It cannot be treated as something to be transmitted from one to another.

Hermeneutics / angeletics try to grasp the complex factors which build meanings, such as embodiment or dynamisms of social and cultural contexts.
Heidegger himself was quite negative to the concept of “humanism”

What Heidegger was negative to was not “humanity” or “humanities”, but human‘ism’, that is, human-centered view

“Letter on humanism (Über den »Humanismus«)”
- “über” = on, about, above, over, beyond
- “On humanism” → “Beyond humanism”
II. HUMANITIES AND FREEDOM IN FRANKL’S THOUGHT

- Viktor Emil Frankl (1905 - 1997)
  - Austrian psychiatrist who was deeply affected by Heideggerian philosophy.
  - He discussed “freedom” in his thought and is one of the most famous humanists in the 20th century.

- Anti-materialism and anti-reductionism

- Superiority of mind and the uniqueness of experience as each individual

- Against the reductionisms which resolve all human activities into simple pieces, such as physiological, psychological, social factors
Frankl regards humankind as living being who has the responsibility to his/her own life and to search for meaning.

The deepest desire of humans is to find the meaning of their lives (the will to meaning)

In every situation, the meaning of life is provided by their own life (or natural providence which produced human beings)

Human beings have the “freedom” and “responsibility” to find and fulfill the meaning of their lives
FREEDOM DESPITE OF RESTRICTED SITUATION

 Human spirit has freedom of thought although we are restricted physiologically, psychologically and socially.
 This mental freedom is remained in every situation, as long as we are conscious, by the very moment of death.
 Humanity or humanness are characterized by this ability, the freedom to search for the meaning of life, find it, and fulfill it in every situation.
  ▪ Example of a question to a chess master
The Limit of Frankl’s Thought and Need to Reinterpret It

- Frankl’s thought was built through his experiences and struggles in the concentration camp of Nazi.
- A progeny of the humanism in the 20th century, which was also a century of war.
- It is within the limits of modern view of humans in that time.
- In his thought, the dimension of personal inner liberty is emphasized, but he does not discuss enough the freedom of the social dimension.
Nevertheless, Frankl’s thought has much to be considered for today’s and future humanities.

In order to enrich his argument and apply its essence to consider future humanities, the informatic approach to it, that is, to reinterpret Frankl’s argument from the viewpoint of “information” based on vital information process (meaning-producing process), can be one of the hopeful tactics.
III. REINTERPRETATION OF FRANKL’S THOUGHT FROM THE VIEWPOINT OF FI

- Toru Nishigaki established his information theory “fundamental informatics” (FI) based on systems theory.
- In FI, information is regarded as the process of meaning-producing and is distinguished according to three phases:
  - Life information
  - Social information
  - Mechanical information
**THREE KINDS OF INFORMATION**

- **Life information**
  - Not something based on material such as gene
  - The widest concept of information
  - All kinds of meanings including non-verbal ones
  - Generated inside a living thing (in-formation)
  - Also called “raw-information”

- **Social information**
  - Made from life information into symbols or statements
  - All kinds of symbolized information

- **Mechanical information**
  - Made from social information into the form which can be processed mechanically
  - It is not vital or life information anymore, because it is not generated “inside” a living thing. But allegorically it can be regarded as a kind of information as frozen or dried storage.
Although there is a conceptual gap between the “meaning” of FI and that of Frankl, the latter is considered to be, in a sense, included in the former.

Informatic “meaning”, which is a bulk of sensation of a living thing, can be shaped into “meaningfulness” which Frankl calls “meaning of life”

Frankl’s concepts of “man’s search for meaning” or “responsible being” can be understood informatically as “possibility to find and realize meaningfulness”.
In addition, Frankl’s argument on “freedom despite restrictions” can be explained by using the Hierarchical Autonomous Communication System (HACS) model of FI.

- Humanistic thought of Frankl can be reinterpreted and rebuilt from the viewpoint of FI.
- HACS is a model of situation that more than one autonomous system maintains a hierarchical relationship.
Law-system is a kind of social system, and we usually live within this framework with no doubt.

If we are not specialists of law, we usually do not always clearly aware of how the law-system works in everyday life.

This situation shows a hierarchical relationship, that is, law-system is a higher ranking system and we, living systems being within the framework (to be exact, our mind systems) are lower-ranking systems.

Stable social situation generally remains this kind of hierarchical relationship between social systems and individuals (e.g. Money system and mind systems).
This stability is not equal to “righteousness”

Rather, what HACS model shows is the situation that there are normally invisible or less-visible mechanisms which restrict and lead people to do specific actions with little doubt in such a stable society.

When we have a special or unusual relationship concerning the social system, it appears into our consciousness, and we start to reflect the relationship between the higher-ranking social system and ourselves.

This situation is exactly what Frankl says “freedom despite restrictions”.

HACS model is a conceptual tool which enables us to be aware of and to examine such situations.
The question: Is it “absolute goodness”?

Recently there are world-wide problems both in the East (gag in China) and in the West (conflict between Islamic tradition and Western democracy and freedom of speech)

These situations should be considered not only from the viewpoint of traditional ethical theory, but also from informatic view
Muhammeds ansigt

Ytringsfrihed

Af Flemming Rose

Kulturværdier

- I samme
- Fremme av
- Nutzung af
den offentlige rum. Kunstnerne,
- Kunstneren, som også
- Dette er ikke kommer så
- Bedst
- 12 blade
- Dette har Mongolia
- De er: Anne
- Erik Fodslev (F.P.),
- Larsen Sand Härem, Erik

Stop stop vi er løbet for jomfruer!

Jens Aage Hansen
STOP STOP VI ER LØBET TORD FOR JOMFRUER!

YTRINGSFRIHED AF Flemming Rose

- Remitteren Frank Bhum vender tilbage til at konstatere, at han ikke "er tage gør på krise-
  nom for Ben H.-skabet. 
- En tegneserie, der skul aldrig
  være en加快发展
  pavenes Muhammad i en
  kredsløsh, er ikke en
  stejle anonymitet. Det
  samme gør muslime
  der står
  herved
  at støtte
  en
  nazistisk
  adfærd.

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JENS JULIUS HANSEN
According to Kant who is one of the most famous modern philosophers in the West, a person should not be treated as merely a means to some other end, rather than always an end in themselves.

Did western press treat billions of Muslims who worshipped Muhammad as “persons”, as “ends” in themselves? The answer is no.

Moreover, we can find that there is unspoken double standard, that is, Jyllands-Posten avoided printing such a cartoon of Christ in 2003.
Of course it is true that violence caused by some armed Islamic groups affects on the international situation and often becomes bad flashpoints. However, this is “visible” situation and easily understandable.

Compared to this, problems such as double standard of freedom of speech and expression are “invisible” or “less-visible”. So if we are not careful enough about it, we will never be aware of its defectiveness.
Victims of crimes often suffer from the second damage by invasion of their privacy by mass media. In a country ruled by law, a person of interest (suspected person) should be considered to be innocent until he is proved guilty, but he is often reported sensationally before / after arrested.

If we call this situation “freedom of speech”, “freedom of press”, or “freedom of expression”, they are never “absolute goodness”, but just one situation which was brought by mass media system which is a “super-social system”.

OTHER PROBLEMATIC SITUATIONS CONCERNING FREEDOM OF SPEECH
By observing individuals and society with HACS model, we can see some aspects of the normally invisible or less-visible mechanisms. So it can be a kind of “media literacy” or social criticism method.

But the scope or target of HACS model is not only mass media information, but also every situation of life.

Therefore, it can be a conceptual tool with which we consider the past, present, and future of humanities.
1) Humanities in the 21st century should be considered from multifaceted and multidisciplinary viewpoints

2) Humanities should be clearly distinguished from “humanism” which implies human-centered view

3) The thought of Frankl who emphasized freedom of humans can be reinterpreted from the viewpoint of FI (Fundamental Informatics)

4) HACS (Hierarchical Autonomous Communication Systems) model of FI is useful to see normally invisible or less-visible mechanisms or relationships between individuals and society

5) Although freedom of speech and expression tends to be considered absolute goodness, it is not true from the viewpoint of HACS theory

6) Even though the situation seems to be that freedom of speech and expression is realized, it is not always true

7) HACS model can be a conceptual tool with which we consider the past, present, and future of humanities