Chapter X

Ontological Reflections on Peace and War[1]

Hayward R. Alker, University of Southern California &
Watson Institute, Brown University, USA

Abstract

Responding to a provocative question by Hiroharu Seki about Hiroshima ontologies, this chapter reviews related thinking about the ontological primitives appropriate for event-data making, accessing high-performance knowledge bases, and modeling intelligent complex adaptive systems of use to researchers on war and peace. It cautions against "Cliocide," defined as of the "silencing" or symbolic killing of collective historical-political or historical-disciplinary identities and identifying practices by historical or discipline deficient "scientific" coding practices. It proposes that more intelligent multi-agent models in the "complex, adaptive systems" tradition of the Santa Fe Institute should include the socially shared memories of nations and international societies, including their identity-redefining traumas

and their relational/migrational/ecological histories of community-building success and failure. Historicity in an ontologically distinctive sense of the "time ordered self-understandings of a continuing human society" is still a challenge for the computationally oriented literature on war and peace.

Introduction

Faced with the challenge to honor the late Hiroharu Seki, whom I knew and have admired for several decades, I was at first not sure what would be an appropriate appreciation of his significant, wide-ranging career. The theme of ontologies relevant to researchers interested in peace and war finally crystalized in my mind followed hearing him speak from the audience at a recent International Studies Association meeting. Politely, but insistently, he asked a distinguished panel of scholars (I paraphrase): how can you put Hiroshima ontology into your approach to international relations? At a panel where epistemological and ontological pluralism was a central issue, and before an inter-disciplinary professional group where socially constructed international relationships have been a hot topic[2], his remark was both highly appropriate and particularly challenging.

Seki's difficult but powerful insistence deserves sustained reflection. I see his injunction as closely related to the development of a collective sense of history as a basis for both an international society of states and a global society of individuals having the capacity to direct themselves towards a better future, away from horrifying pasts, toward a world where Hiroshimas, Auschwitzs, and Chernobyls never reoccur. In other words, Seki appeared to be trying to discover how can a powerful, shared sense of history and tradition, of prohibitions and morally preferable possibilities, be developed, shared, and deeply transmitted to future generations. I think he had in mind their culturally transmitted, phenomenological, and ontological ways of seeing and encoding reality, as well as their more consciously reflected upon norms and practices.

To pay homage to Professor Seki, I have decided to make some earlier thoughts along similar lines more widely available. First, I shall recall briefly the international relations simulation world of the 1960s, which Hiroharu

Related Content

Multi-Criterion Decision Making for Wireless Communication Technologies Adoption in IoT
Abhinav Juneja, Sapna Juneja, Vikram Baliand Sudhir Mahajan (2021). *International Journal of System Dynamics Applications (pp. 1-15).*
www.irma-international.org/article/multi-criterion-decision-making-for-wireless-communication-technologies-adoption-in-iot/267915

A Generic Adaptation Framework for Mobile Communication
Hong Sun, Ning Guiand Chris Blondia (2013). *Innovations and Approaches for Resilient and Adaptive Systems (pp. 196-207).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/generic-adaptation-framework-mobile-communication/68951

Cellular Automata
Terry Bossomaier (2008). *Applications of Complex Adaptive Systems (pp. 57-84).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/cellular-automata/5134

Survey of WSN Routing Protocols
Devika G., Asha Gowda Karegowdaand Ramesh D. (2020). *International Journal of Applied Evolutionary Computation (pp. 34-51).*
www.irma-international.org/article/survey-of-wsn-routing-protocols/243458

Buffer Management in Cellular IP Networks using Evolutionary Algorithms
Mohammad Anbarand Deo P. Vidyarthi (2012). *Principal Concepts in Applied Evolutionary Computation: Emerging Trends (pp. 254-275).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/buffer-management-cellular-networks-using/66824