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The ontological property of holism

History has always played a crucial role on human conditions. Throughout the centuries, the succession of certain events led to radical changes on people's daily lives and to a critical disruption of their routines. Undoubtedly, the time, the place, and the immediate consequences are not predictable, but perhaps the dissemination of a deep sense of togetherness and universal solidarity among different cultures could prevent them.

In order to highlight the strong influence of certain historical, political and social events on humanity, I decided to take into account two important epochs: the Age of Anxiety (1950/1960s) and our current society. After WW2, anxiety was an emblematic mental health problem, caused by the brutal experience of the horrors lived while fighting. Indeed, as well as the shell-shocked veterans of the 1920s, the war deeply affected the soldiers of the 1950s, leading to a more pessimistic vision of the human life and to a state of deep depression, that could be cured by specific mental health treatments. Furthermore, this particular disorder of anxiety is analysed and it is clearly conveyed in the charming anti-utopian novels of Aldous Huxley and George Orwell: *Brave New World* and *1984*, or even in the Nobel Prize William Golding is *Lord of the Flies*. In *Brave New World* emerges a new concept of civilisation, characterized by the abolishment of the private property, the strict control of the population imposed by the government, the foundation of "Conditioning Centres" to allow artificial births, and the use of a particular drug, "Soma", to let the citizens live in a constant state of happiness. The introduction of these measures is the result of a dystopian society, forced to live in a condition of terror and deprivation, and in which the population is evidently alienated. Indeed, Huxley utilises this concept to create a parallelism between men's alienation of the "Roaring twenties" and its major causes: economic depression, totalitarian regimes, or even corrupted rationalism. Thanks to this, the author is able to show to what extent a historical event, such as WW1, has influenced the human conditions and the whole society, causing a real dehumanisation and depression of mankind. Similarly to Huxley, George Orwell expresses the impacts of contemporary political regimes on humanity in *1984*, by denouncing the totalitarian ideologies that were diffused in Europe during WW2. Indeed, the Big Brother's way of administrating Oceania is nothing else that a clear allusion to the despotic policies adopted by Hitler and Stalin, and this is marked by the government's decision to abolish the citizens' individuality and guarantee the absolute control of "The Party" (cf. Chapter 2, *1984*: "I have it in my power to inflict pain on you at any moment and to whatever degree I choose"). Finally, in *Lord of the Flies*, Golding describes the pessimistic perception of human life as a psychological consequence of WW2 and he clearly depicts the darkness of the human's natural predisposition to control and destroy. Indeed, the emblematic character of the story is Jack, who shows the human tendency toward evil, by usurping Ralph's power in order to dominate children.

At the same time, nowadays our ordinary lives have been completely overthrown by the spreading of Coronavirus. As well as the two World Wars did in the past, this epidemic is having a remarkable impact on the human conditions and the collective wellbeing. The first to be targeted are the citizens, indeed the rapid spread of the virus led to different reactions among them. Hopefully, the major part of it, like my family, wisely decided to isolate themselves to assure the prevention of any contagion to those who are most at risk, whereas some still believe that this virus is just a simple flu, therefore they keep acting as usual. However, the Italian government decided to adopt clear lines of action in order to reduce as much as possible the possibility of infection, by declaring a state of emergency, which is automatically required to enforce the total suspension of people's daily lives and to impose travel restrictions and a ban on public gatherings. Certainly, the defeat of this tremendous pandemic is the main current priority of the Italian government and, due to the fear of a possible massive shutdown of the economic system, the Italian Prime Minister, Giuseppe Conte, defined and approved

the decree: “Italian Care”, which expects 25 billion euro to support families, doctors and enterprises. Subsequently, as the illness is spreading around the world, European governments are starting to adopt the same policy of complete lockdown as Italy, deeming it a real example to follow, except for the UK. Indeed, Prime Minister Boris Johnson initially pursued a policy of non-intervention, refusing any complete shutdown and imposing modest controls, as he believes that is too soon to act. However, due to a progressive increase of deaths day by day, he is becoming aware of the economic devastation that this virus will cause to his country, therefore he decided to announce a new policy, which expects 25.000 swabs per day and an extra production of the emergency equipment for the hospitals. Moreover, the whole current society has been shocked by such a dramatic event, as no one would have ever expected the diffusion of a virus in a planet which is constantly making incremental advances in the medical industry and has a wide range of powerful technological assets. Since a clear scientific response to this has not been found yet, we just have to bear in our mind that “everything happens for a reason”, as the wise psychoanalyst Carl Gust Jung says, therefore we should continue to live our lives in a different way to what we are used to and hope to get back to reality as soon as possible. Hope is what actually remains to the human being, today, as in the past. Indeed, similarly to the hope of the proletariat and the lowest working classes, during the twentieth century, to rise up against a tyrannical party in order to restore freedom, we are currently hoping for the end of Coronavirus’ spreading and for a sort of awakening from what seems to be a real nightmare.

Furthermore, historical events do not only affect the human conditions, but also contribute to a radical change, and perhaps improvement, of the society itself. The happening of such a dramatic event is leading to a boosting of what Pope Francis defines “solidarity” in the Encyclical Letter “Laudato si”, and it is presently marked by the simple choice of the citizens to stay at home, for instance, in order to prevent any form of infection. Indeed, the ordinary act of following clear measures adopted by our government is a way of showing sympathy and a profound sense of respect towards our state and fellow citizens. Thus, this could be one of the only benefits of nowadays’ fearful pandemic. Moreover, I believe that the building of interrelationships and the feeling of fraternity are also essential within the social and environmental realm. In the Encyclical Letter, the Pope states: “Strategies for a solution demand an integrated approach to combating poverty, restoring dignity to the excluded, and at the same time protecting nature.” Therefore, humanity needs to face social problems as a whole community, with the aim of forestalling any kind of possible violence, deprivation of freedom, total control or lack of respect for the law. Even though these considerations are the fruit of a Christian perspective of the human existence, it is fundamental that everyone takes them seriously and becomes aware of the fact that we all belong to a diverse community, in which the cultural variety should be preserved in order to guarantee social order and environmental prosperity. However, the Pope believes, and I inevitably agree with him, that nowadays men have been radically affected by consumerism due to a rapid spread of globalization, which immediately caused the loss of many cultures’ values and identities. By using the term “integral ecology”, he tries to depict a clear scenario of what the world would be like if everyone succeeds in respecting human and social conditions. His way of using the word “ecology” instantly recalls its definition in the vocabulary, namely: “Branch of biology concerning interactions among organisms and their biophysical environment”; indeed, the use of this simple term combines cultural ecology with the environmental one in order to convey a holistic vision of the world. In chapter 4, it is also stated that “every violation of civic friendship harms the environment”, which shows that humans and nature are inevitably interconnected, therefore one’s bad behaviour or lack of respect has a remarkable effect on the other, leading to a spontaneous framework of cause and effect. As a result, the harmful lack of enforcement of the strategic environmental assessment directives could lead to a rebound effect on other societies, prolonging the deterioration of nature and mankind itself (as the Pope states: “what takes place in any one area can have a direct or indirect influence on other areas”). For instance, the mere presence of violence could damage the various social strata, causing social conflicts and serious repercussions on the

environment. At the same time, humans are not aware enough of the negative behaviours that nature could manifest if humans keep underestimating its preservation and control measures. We strongly depend on the wellness of the environment that surrounds us, for instance, ecosystems can purify water, break down waste or even control and prevent the spreading of illnesses and epidemics, like Coronavirus. It is thus essential that we become friendlier towards nature by adopting appropriate behaviour and wealthier economic strategies in favour of a correct preservation of our marvellous ecosystem. Our actual behaviour patterns are the result of a lack of awareness of the natural and human heritage that we possess. Indeed, the way in which we are exploiting our environment does not only affect the safeguard of nature itself, but also the retention of certain cultural identities or social structures, therefore causing the degradation of mankind and the decay of the earth. Furthermore, apart from the radical change of the humans' attitude, another possible solution aimed to reach the achievement of a real "integral ecology" could be the promulgation of strict moral laws, and thus legal intervention, in order to assure the strengthening of the relationship between living organisms and the environment. For instance, there are many regulatory norms that have been redacted to reduce the amount of pollution produced by business activities. The U.K. has issued the Pollution Prevention Act (1990) to implement serious practices for pollution prevention and the increasing efficiency in the use of energy, water, or other natural resources.

Hence, if the whole humanity succeeds in following these simple measures, the major outcome would be a complete holistic vision of our existence. The meaning of the adjective "holistic" is complex, but appropriate, to convey the concept of universal solidarity, which is expressed by the Pope, and I believe it to be crucial for the fulfilment of a prosperous future. Indeed, it assumes the overcoming of the natural human conflict between reason and instinct, showing a balance between these two extremes aimed at achieving intergenerational solidarity and productivity for the welfare of the whole community. Hence, the major requirement of such a global perspective of the human existence would be the abolition of any form of utilitarianism, individual self-interest and atomistic vision of life. The desire of a broader perspective of the world has always existed in the history of humanity, but the cultures involved have been too self-centred in trying to meet their personal needs, without evaluating their hidden correspondence with the rest of the society, and, even more, with the ecosystem. Likewise, the need of a change of humans' mentality has been declared by the Pope, who states that: "in addition to a fairer sense of intergenerational solidarity there is also an urgent moral need for a renewed sense of intergenerational security". Certainly, as emerges from the statements I made, I believe that the basis and major sign of a wealthy community is the perfect coexistence between humanity and nature, which is denoted by a profound dialogue between them and a continuous attempt to prevent any undesired side-effect, which could alter the course of history, and thus, harm the human conditions.

In conclusion, different issues continuously threaten humanity, starting from the outbreak of a war to the diffusion of an unexpected virus within a society greatly affected by global ecological problems. Therefore, the promotion of international human solidarity seeks to symbolize the world's unity in diversity and contribute to an increase in the wellbeing of society.