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Healing together

In centuries the history of mankind, or rather of the “human condition”, did not followed a marked path, prepared from the beginning. God did not arrange the world like a colour palette in which the human race could rule the roost and paint whatever it wanted. Actually, ending up and perceiving ourselves in our deadly substance has meant that the human, once projected in this world, would feel at the mercy of natural phenomena, sealed and addicted to them. Consequently, the outburst regarding the natural learning and evolutionary process, actually, was always marked by uncontrolled and uncontrollable events, first of all the natural phenomena that cause catastrophic effects to the inherent human being’s weakness.

Taking a cue from Stanley Kubrick’s film “2001: A Space Odyssey”, in a way, the real human nature immediately revealed through the discovery of the ability to damage its neighbour. Thereby, throughout the historical periods mankind has always fluctuated between the disarming concept of feeling at the mercy of natural and supernatural phenomena and the impossible attempt to rule what he does not know. Here is the trick, or rather the self-deception, that the human race tells herself in order not to drive herself mad: once got aware of the unequal fight with the power of nature, a losing battle, on the other hand, she has a fantasy that at least she can build up the instruments in order to rule over her own, in order to manipulate and warp that reality which scares her so much. This self-deception makes her slide gently toward the feeling of omnipotence. All the scientific discoveries, the conquest of the space, the fight against disease, the use of “regime-like” policy instruments trigger the belief that man has in itself the ability to rule, to guide the future and the destiny of peoples, even to “create” in labs beings like himself. Otherwise the man could exploit scientific discoveries for unlawful profit purposes. Either way, he does not do this for the common good. “Discoveries”, indeed, not “creations”. Through the centuries man gets tired, is in despair, is exhausted in an effort to discover what existed before, thinking of being able to conceive as many creations with massive efforts. He does so standing on the neck of his own kindred, using legal or illegal devices in his unfulfilled search for what really matters to him, the power. In order to obtain the power, the biggest illusion, the most successful fiction that in the end made the mankind drunk there can be betrayals, deaths, deception, mass murders, wars, parallel realities: all that leads inevitably and inexorably to have the power in our own hands.

Well, here is your power, man! You have got four mobile phones, five cars, villas, hotels, money at will, and a micrometric being (to be exact, coronavirus is of the order of the Angstrom that is the thousandth part of a micron) was enough to make you fall on your knees, defeated, at the mercy of the same and exact sensations that you had when millions of years ago you held the cudgel in you hands, not knowing how to escape from a thunderstorm or from the flood of a river. Nothing has changed over time, it just the illusion to change from time to time, always different, always new, always doomed to failure. Somehow we were created, placed in this spinning world, not knowing how, when and, above all, for what purpose, with absolute limits towards a nature that is not only kind just because the sun rises and sets and it shines through the stretches of wheat. Nature can also do much harm through seaquakes, earthquakes and natural disasters. Actually, these are the facts, take it or leave it: we could either resign to consider ourselves like an invisible grain of sand at the mercy of the universe, with the idea that, once here on the Earth, we will be back for the One who put us here, or we are doomed to come to nothing, to be a fish in the aquarium which dreams of climbing the Everest all its life and it gets mad because it cannot make it. Bet you still have to learn to be a ruler, human!

Guess coronavirus would be a better ruler than you, man! But what actually is the so-called coronavirus? It is a new virus called the severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-

CoV-2 or COVID-19) that has been identified as the cause of a disease outbreak that began in China in 2019. Its symptoms can be very mild to severe and include a fever, cough and shortness of breath. Some people have no symptoms while in others symptoms may appear 2 to 14 days after exposure. WHO and CDC recommend following these precautions for avoiding COVID-19: avoid large events and mass gatherings; avoid close contact (about 6 feet) with anyone who is sick or has symptoms; keep distance between yourself and others; wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer; cover your mouth and nose with your elbow or a tissue when you cough or sneeze, then throw away the used tissue; avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth if your hands aren't clean; clean and disinfect surfaces you often touch on a daily basis.

How many times did we watch the advertising spot on TV suggesting those series of recommendations? Well, several times. In my opinion this bombardment of news, in a way rightly wanted by Italy's government, is only increasing the anxiety in everyone. Overall, the current state is like a hanging and unreal dimension in which we are catapulted in a world as yet unknown, with the terror that a simple contact with people or things could give us a ticket to death. This tunes us in a state of everlasting anxiety because of which we cannot find peace and we are always forced to alert our physiological defence mechanisms, stress, fear. It is something pretty much similar to what people during the Age of Anxiety felt. Not outsiders but Europeans themselves invented the expression Age of Anxiety to describe what they thought was happening to them in the twentieth century. They dwelt increasingly not on the growing enlightenment of their times, as so many had done in the 18th and 19th centuries, nor on Europe's continued greatness, but on the anxiety they felt about their existence, their culture, and their destiny. "Today," said the Protestant theologian-philosopher Paul Tillich at mid-century, "it has become almost a truism to call our time an age of anxiety." Tillich believed that anxiety infected even the greatest achievement of contemporary Europeans in literature, art, and philosophy. The special form of anxiety that Tillich identified was the anxiety of meaninglessness. He traced it to the modern world's loss of a spiritual center which could provide answers to the questions of the meaning of life. Suffering is the result of living without purpose or faith. The knowledge that man was alone caused anxiety because the responsibility for making whatever values there were came entirely from man. Man was free (free to choose without reference to God or an ideal world of essences) but his freedom was a dread freedom, involving crushing responsibility and the eternal threat of non-being.

The new artists saw Europe now plunging into total decadence, a decadence worse still than the one identified by Nietzsche and other thinkers a generation earlier. When civilization is in the process of decay, the only recourse of these writers was in artistic endeavor and not politics or public life. "I hate politics and the belief in politics, because it makes men arrogant, doctrinaire, obstinate and inhuman," wrote Thomas Mann. The English writer, Aldous Huxley (1894-1963) added, "I have to recognize that I don't care a penny for political principles." Dealing with Huxley and all the dystopian novelists works (Orwell and Golding), we can highlight some differences and some similarities from our conditions nowadays and characters' condition in 1984, *Lord of The Flies* or *Brave New World*. To get started off on the right foot, in Huxley the "great art" is sacrificed in the name of "happiness". These days many artists are reacting to the virus organizing home concerts and flashmobs from their balconies for the lucky ones and from their mobile phones for the others. Art is indeed in full bloom these days and keeps us alive (also happy).

Also, the productivity, main objective to pursue for the society in *Brave New World*, is what in nowadays society took a break. In addition, Huxley's new world is bereft of any hope in the future, while today I see a way out as long as people collaborate with each other.

Moreover, I can see some similarities in today distorted numbers and statistics about coronavirus diffusion around the world given by newspapers and governments with the manipulation of information in Orwell's 1984. Also, nowadays we can consider us type-approved, not for our all the

same grey clothes, but as human beings against a virus. In addition, Orwell's 1984 was in a state of permanent warfare, today is quite the same thing but, to add more, we also have to fight against the virus: this is relevant because it is obvious that when an emergency occurs it is added to the other millions previous problems and it just makes everything worse. On the other hand, when it comes to Golding, I believe in the construction of a new society more aware and responsible instead of the one created by the guys on the island. Also, the sociality inherent in the human being is now blocked by the state of quarantine. To add more, in front of the fear, the guys on the island do not need a rational leader (Ralph), but they need a strong one who assures them tranquility and food (Jack): this statement assumed by Golding's novel pretty much resembles on what modern elections exert a leverage. It is a more and more relevant topic when it comes to the elections being held in America in real time.

According to a holistic vision of the world, also Pope Francis in 2015 said his piece with the Encyclical Letter "Laudato Si". It is focused on the "care for our common home", our Mother Earth, which complains about the bad that we provoke to her, due to the irresponsible use and abuse of the goods that God has placed on her. The concept of "integral ecology" represent the heart of the encyclic, understood both as conceptual paradigm and spiritual path. According to the Holy Father "everything is closely interrelated": basically, there must be a relationship between the single parts and the whole in order to achieve an ecosystem in which phenomena and ambiental issues (global warming, pollution, resource depletion, deforestation, etc.) are, inevitably, connected to our daily life affairs, social issues. Given the breadth of the changes, it is no longer possible to find a specific and independent answer for every single part of the problem. On the other hand, it is essential to seek integral solutions, which take into account the interactions of the natural systems between them and with the social systems. Therefore, from the integral ecology we reach the social ecology that is the dimension in which, being all in relation, "...the health of a society's institutions has consequences for the environment and the quality of human life." What is happening today with the coronavirus medical emergency is clearly proving it so far: the battle for the salvation of humanity goes through an integral and global approach in which the individual must always interact with the whole; the ecological and social dimension must lead to the integration of each level, from the single patient in quarantine to the institutions that have to govern society that in turn relates to the other societies. It is necessary to develop common solutions through dialogue for the governance of the Global Commons in order to break the spiral of self-destruction in which we are sinking. We need to create a global society which has to be fair, right, free and responsible, in which its citizens should feel united with everything that exists.

Ultimately we must relate to nature with respect, not because it welcomes us and we owe it gratitude, not because it is manifestly stronger and we are afraid that it will crush us, but because it must maintain its perfect balance, which we risk altering or even destroying by going inside in it and violating its rules. This new way of relating, this awareness, must be able to overcome the critical mass and then settle in the collective unconscious, not as a side effect, but starting from the specific will of man to want to strongly preserve and deliver an unaltered good to the generations to come. This path must start from a precise will, from a shared inner motion, and it is a path that contains in itself positive, but also, as always, completely involuntary negative consequences.

The forced lockdown of the activities that the virus imposes on us, undoubtedly has favorable effects on air pollution as never happened so far, precisely because of the forced decrease in traffic jam. We are witnessing a daily total commitment of health professionals and scientists, both in the direct assistance of patients and in the anguished search for therapeutic solutions through the development of new vaccines, despite the ever-looming shadow of pharmaceutical multinationals and the disaster of the virus pandemia.

Unfortunately, there is also the dark side of the same coin when we think of the breakdown of economy of which we will again pay very heavy consequences. A large portion of the population is also uncovered in these emergencies, in which many people still violate government provisions only



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for the sake of transgressing in the name of a “sacrosanct freedom”. Quarantine can certainly represent a too restrictive regime and trigger social media discussions that inevitably lead to racism and the concept of discrimination, but at the moment almost all governments are following this direction in order to contain the virus: you have to stay at home! We will regain possession of our time and life will regain the right rhythm. This will allow us to rewrite the scale of our life's priorities, savoring again voices, perfumes and forgotten sensations tossed in a corner of our mind. At any rate we want to face our life, this eventually ends. It is not a race for those who arrive first without excluding shots, but a path that must be savored to the last drop, even if it is the last.