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Apparently, soon after World War II, a new age of material prosperity began. However, my grandparent, and my parents as well, carry the signs of a period that for extent could be described as "Age of Anxiety", due to the psychological effects of two World Wars, and the uptight climate of Cold War. Inside people began to dwell anxiety, which they felt towards their existence, culture and destiny. With this statement I mean not to trivialize the current situation of the world. I would like to make sure that nobody considers me speaking by the commonplace that see our time like the worst period in history. In fact, I would like to draw your attention on the fact that every age typically, is characterised by its own challenges, whose possible outcome, has an impact on the following generation. Therefore, the aim of this essay is first to critically analyse the similarities between the two epochs, with particular attention to the historical events on the background, but secondly to deal with the particularity of our time. At present we are facing a critical issue, maybe the only issue stranger to the older generations: a huge Ambiental emergency that poses a new threat to humanity. No one ever before met a similar challenge, but the necessity poses a daunting task: regenerate ourselves not only materially, but also morally, in an attempt to create a new kind of universal solidarity.

Before we start, it is necessary to make a premise. We can not expect to compare the two ages without having clear what is not working properly in our society. In order to do that, I based my research on the Science and Security Board Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists. Founded in 1945 by University of Chicago scientists who had helped develop the first atomic weapons in the Manhattan Project, the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists created the Doomsday Clock two years later, using the imagery of apocalypse (the midnight on the clock) and the contemporary idiom of nuclear explosion (countdown to zero) to convey threats to humanity and the planet. The Clock has now become a universally recognized indicator of the world's vulnerability to catastrophe from nuclear weapons, climate change, and disruptive technologies in other domains. So how is humanity doing now? The new year has just become and we have never been so close to the midnight. Just 100 seconds away from the doomsday. Twenty seconds closer to the midnight, than the highest record in 1953, when both USA and Urss added to their arsenal the hydrogen bomb. However, if we go back just a few years, we shall be made all aware of the fact that since 1991, the midnight only got closer, with just a slow positive tendency in 2010. What happened then to the world? To sum it up humanity continues to face two simultaneous existential dangers, nuclear war and climate change, that are compounded by a cyber-enabled information warfare and the breakout of the first great pandemic of the 21th century, the highly contagious disease known as Covid-19.

In the nuclear realm, national leaders have ended or undermined several major arms control treaties and negotiations during the last year, leading to a renewed nuclear arms race, to the proliferation of nuclear weapons. Throughout 2019, Iran increased its stockpile of low-enriched uranium, increased its uranium enrichment levels, and added new and improved centrifuges. Furthermore, the end of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty became official in 2019, and the United States and Russia have begun a new competition to develop and deploy weapons the treaty had long banned. Dealing with environment, in the past year, some countries have taken action to combat climate

change, but others, including the United States, which formalized this year its withdrawal from the Paris Agreement, and Brazil, which dismantled policies to protect the Amazon rainforest, are taking instead steps backward. The UN climate conference in Madrid was disappointed. The countries involved in negotiations barely reached an agreement and unsurprisingly, these continuing trends are reflected in our atmosphere and environment: greenhouse gas emissions rose again over the past year, taking both annual emissions and atmospheric concentrations of greenhouse gases to record highs. Finally, the world is now facing the most imminent threat to humanity. By the end of December 2019, a new type of coronavirus, named Covid-19, made its first appearance in China. Thought to be harmless, the virus showed an extremely high contagious rate. Like none of the previous events, this virus affected our lives. Despite the low death rate, this virus caught the whole world unprepared to face a global pandemic. Thousands of ill people are submerging hospitals, so that in a few regions the Health Care System is about to collapse. Even worse, the virus brought to knee the world economy since most of the world governments adopted severe measures to limit the spread of the virus, which include quarantine, non-necessary commercial closure, and stop travelling. On the economic front, a severe recession can no longer be avoided, and some economists are already calling for governments to introduce measures to shore up aggregate demand. In effect, the international political infrastructure for controlling existential risk is degrading, leaving the world in a situation of high and rising threat. Global leaders are not responding appropriately to reduce this threat level and counteract. As I said above, mostly steps backward were taken. On the contrary people started to react.

Now that we have a general grounding of our times, it seems reasonable to make a parallel between our epoch and the age of anxiety. As I stated in the introduction, every epoch is characterized by its own peculiarity and challenges. The history of the world consists in a series of moments of prosperity alternating moments of struggling. Clearly this period is a moment of great difficulty for our world, a period that I do not hesitate to define as *New Age of Anxiety*. First, lots of people today are living in a state of great stress and personal despair. Most people must witness silently to their world being manipulated by external forces. We live constantly under the fear that a terrible event might fall down on us. One of those events that not only put at risk your life, but also civilization itself. As I said above, a nuclear war is still a real threat to humanity. Relations between Russia and the USA are uptight, but we should also add the fact that other countries like North Korea and Iran have recently enhanced their nuclear capability. So, the world is living in a political climate that resembles the period of the cold war. It is not by chance that all the countries mentioned, recently withdrew and demised a series of treaties that put a limit to the development of mass destruction weapons. Differently to the old age of anxiety, we are not living, at least in Europe, in a world at war. However, the technological advancement posed a series of new threats to humanity. Information is an essential aspect of human interaction, however misuse of information, like media propaganda, and threats to the information ecosphere especially from new destabilizing technologies in artificial intelligence, extended the level of this threat to a point where, the personal sphere of privacy has to be considered more a utopian dream than reality. Govern can access at any time our personal data, and so do hackers. With social media, we exposed ourselves to the judging eye of society. As a result, our private world is being forced to coincide with the external one, causing detriment of relationship and depersonalization. It seems like we are living in a world predicted by authors like Huxley and Orwell. Huxley in his book, *Brave New World*, portrayed a world where mankind has been dehumanised, and scientific progress has advanced dramatically. In his book citizens of the World State assume a drug,

soma, to satisfy their needs as soon as they arise. They seem to be happy, the same fake happiness that we seek through approval on social media. But at the same time, we live aware of the fact that no matter what precaution we take, there will always be someone that controls over us. Same situation described in 1984, but different circumstances. Similarly, to those novels, our society is superficial, and seems to detest who struggles to maintain his individuality. Therefore, people are experiencing a sort of new alienation. Similarly, to the form of alienation typical of Eliot, that consisted in a feeling void, lack of hope, quite similar to death condition. The modern man is alienated because he feels that the end is upon him, but he cannot do anything to change it. Modern man still fears for the end of the world. Such fear was present also in primitive man, but curiously with advancement of society, we got not rid of this fear. It grew stronger and it is still filling our worst nightmares. This fear in fact reflects the fragility of our epoch, and it is not a case that we find this theme in the literature production of both the old and the new age of anxiety. Maybe the circumstances differ, but the content testifies the same existential problem that writers struggled with: what if humanity ends up in the worst way possible? The intellectuals of the old age of anxiety, basing on the direct experience of the war and the raise of morbid political ideologies, portrayed a dystopian world. A world lead by a totalitarian regime, a world which is the incarnation of the greatest fears of that epoch. Today the incarnation of our greatest fear, reflexes the possibility that human beings could be endangered as a species, leading to the development of a genre known as post-apocalyptic.

So It looks pretty clear that humanity is not at its best. We are not totally responsible for the problems that we have got to face, like in the case of Coronavirus pandemic. It was a natural event, not caused by humans, but it is also true, as I already said above, that most governments all around the world are not fully committed to solve the situation on the whole. In effect, the international political infrastructure for controlling existential risk is degrading, leaving the world in a situation of high and rising threat. Global leaders are not responding appropriately to reduce this threat level and counteract. As I said above, mostly steps backward were taken. It was left to people, to act on their own to cope up with this emergency. I believe people on their own are capable of getting the initiative. I am sure that by this time, almost everybody adopted personal measures to reduce his carbon footprint on the planet. It is plenty of things we can do to save the environment. Here is what my family decided to do: first of all using energy efficient lightbulbs that are a simple way to reduce the amount of power used, every night we turn our computers and electric devices off, again these will reduce the power used. Furthermore, we switched the bath for a shower which can make a huge difference. Baths use approximately double the amount of water a shower uses. This not only saves water, but it saves you money on heating the excess water too. At the same time people started to react and protest publicly. The situation of climate change led to rising concern and anger among growing numbers of people, catalysing a wave of youth activism, and protest widespread all around the world, like the case of the young Swedish girl Greta Thunberg.

All these actions are utterly laudable, however they still leave the problem unsolved, since how we can see the situation is getting out of control, government and financial structures collapsing, ecological crisis, increasing communities disenchanted. It appears that the way we have been operating is not working to its optimum. Unfortunately, if there is one thing that keeps constant during all this, that is human competitive individualism. A kind of individualism that finds its expression in the atomism that characterizes our community: people acting only for their sake, people acting

individually without considering possible negative consequences, people just living for the day and not in perspective. Furthermore, the consumerist vision of modern society made the situation worse. In my opinion to reverse this phase of moral and material degradation of our planet, it is time that mankind embrace a new holistic vision, a vision capable of comprehensive solution toward our own kind and toward the environment. The term "holism" usually refers to the idea that a whole is greater than the sum of its parts. In this sense, "holism" may also be spelled "wholism", and it is in contrast with the atomistic tendency. Like Pope Francis stated in the Encyclical Letter "Laudato Si", expressing concerns and care for our common home, he highly recommends an integral ecology, comprehensive of the human and social dimension. Thus, birthing Holistic Individualism. To do this we need to use the incredible wisdom of the natural environment. In the Body organs and cells are cooperative. There is no struggle nor is there competition. In nature, the natural order adapts itself to the environment through constant communication. Nature is communicative, even more than humans are, therefore holistic individualism laid the bases to form a synergistic and self-regulating, complex system that helps to maintain and perpetuate the conditions for life on the planet, not only materially speaking, but a concrete premise with which regulate human relationship, enhance our ties and embrace a new inclusive vision coping with morality every challenge that life poses us.

In these words, lies the hope that one day institution all around the world would unite to promote collaboration. Personally, I lost all the faith in human nature a long time ago. I was not a boy that I found myself in front of this crude, cruel reality: a world that is falling apart, whose burden, to collect and put together the broken pieces, is left to us. I did not ask for that, but we will have to. Soon the ruling of the world will be in our hands, but I cannot help thinking that a part of our life was irremediably stolen. With my mind departing from my childish illusions, here I am made aware of all the challenges that are waiting to be faced. Here the future generation stands, entering a period of great concern and instability. We are all being advised to change our normal routine and life patterns, for the greater good of the community. But will people learn the lesson? Will it be enough to remit the sins others committed against us? My greatest hope is that this moment of solidarity and fraternity might reunite us forever, opening the eyes of people all around the world, and making a change of heart inside those who are still prey to doubt and abhorrence.