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Post hoc...? Renaissance?! A Call for renewed solidarity with the EARTH – our COMMON HOME

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For millennia human species have been on a relentless march for the domination of the planet earth with the intention to usher in progress. The human tyranny over the earth has been and continues to be ruthless, and positioned itself to be the master of the Universe to exploit not only the non-human species but also their own vulnerable kind.

In 1920 R.H. Tawny wrote a prescient book *The Acquisitive Society*, which speaks eloquently about the rights of property and be based upon the principle of function. It spurs us to rethink the industrial organization and its function in our times. Hundred years later in 2020 Thomas Piketty writes a tome on *Capitalism and Ideology* in which he titillates us to explore cooperative economics in the form of global participatory socialism. The two authors, although hundred years apart, sound the alarm about the fragility and the inhumanity of the dog-eat-dog market economy (now turned into market society), which perpetuates and exacerbates inequality, struggles between classes and human misery. R. H. Tawney advocated that rights of property and industrial organization ought to be based on the principle of Function. This principle of Function would promote obligations to society and would organize industry as a profession directed to the service of the public.

For the last 2000 years every couple of hundreds of years or so pandemics have upended human “progress” and forced to reorganize its priorities, re-think how the economy and social relations are organized. It has been a systematic centennial tug of war between the wealth-hoarders and the viruses, in which the latter always comes out victorious, compelling human species to re-organize its values and its relationship with the planet earth.

Human species has assigned itself the supremacy and dominion over other species to the extent of extinguishing them and treating them as nuisance to be defeated, conquered and destroyed. However, every hundred years pandemics have reminded us, the humans, that we are fragile, and our grand illusions of economic structures and political systems can collapse without much notice. As climate change is exacerbating the collapse of various ecosystems the other tiny, but potent, species have the force to reorganize the planet ecology with or without humans.

In the quest for planetary domination, human species have also developed technologies which have expanded its ability to impact the earth drastically; however, an array of lifeforms, such as viruses, bacteria, and other forces of the

nature are constantly thwarting our attempts to wrest control of the world around us.

What is the human relationship with the planet earth and among humans themselves? R. H. Tawny and Thomas Piketty at two critical junctures of the global turmoil, albeit hundred years apart, have expounded on ghastly economic inequality. They dare to propose a radical change of economic structures of our society, in which the economic system discharges obligations to society and organize the industry in such way that provides service to the public. Tawny, in his *The Acquisitive Society*, argues that in a functional society “the purpose of industry is to provide the material foundation of good social life...” [1] May be post-coronavirus moment calls for the consideration of Piketty’s participatory socialism.

In the Middle Ages, the Black Plague brought about the downfall of feudalism and set the stage for the Renaissance and the eventual emergence of Western Democracies. History shows that the centennial pandemics have systematically dismantled prevailing socio-economic orders. They have also forced the human species to take into consideration other species in the ecology of the earth, and find ways to live harmoniously with other species. This time around the coronavirus pandemic joins forces with the climate change and exposes how it brings about the collapse of the eco-systems of many animal species, suddenly and sooner than expected.

The tyranny of dominion exercised by human species over the planet earth, and ruthless economic exploitation of their own species cannot continue and must be challenged. The language with which we describe or speak about the Coronavirus-19 - virus the enemy, we are at war with the virus, virus the evil, etc. - is illustrative of how we envisage our relationship with the ecology of the planet earth. Pandemics are not exceptions in the history of the earth. However, they have played a significant role in shaping human history and who we are as humans.

The last paragraph of Albert Camus in his *The Plague* is insightful:

“And, indeed, as he listened to the cries of joy rising from the town, Rieux

remembered that such joy is always imperiled. He knew what those jubilant crowds did not know but could have learned from books: that the plague bacillus never dies or disappears for good; that it can lie dormant for years and years in furniture and

linen-chests; that it bides its time in bedrooms, cellars, trunks, and bookshelves; and that perhaps the day would come when, for the bane and the enlightening of men, it would rouse up its rats again and send them forth to die in a happy city.”[2]

Pandemics make us realize that the planet earth is a COMMON HOME, and it is an ecology in which everyone and everything is connected to everyone and everything. Human tyranny over the planet earth gets upended every few hundred years. Planet earth is not a collection of countries, but a common home for all sentient beings. Nevertheless, humans have waged supremacy over the planet and chose to tyrannize the planet in the name of development, which is being proven that it is not sustainable. Once again, it is time for Renaissance – a renewed relationship of solidarity with all species in the ecology of the earth.

COVID -19 tethered to Climate Change...?! Alea Iacta Est!

Notes:

1 Tawny, R.H. (2019). *The Acquisitive Society*. Good Press.

2 Camus, A. (1991). *The Plague*. Vintage Books.