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The Four Walls Theory – an Essay

Florian Marcel Nuță¹

I believe that the biggest problem of the environment is that it is taken for granted by everybody. Nobody really owns it. Nobody holds the using rights for the fresh air so we all breathe it. If we wish to capture the rain water and later use it nobody is going to tell us we have to pay for it. If we want to taste the water from a mountain spring we free to do it unless a wild beast is chasing us. The human mind is used to price things to hold value on things and calculate the rent for using things. So if no price tag is hanging on a fluffy cloud it must have no value and accordingly no importance for the human society. If nobody is accruing on every breath that we take it means that the air that we inhale is not participating in the production process and have no economic value what so ever. No mountain spring is included in any growth model so it must be expendable for the decision makers. The nature or the environment is nobody propriety and for anyone to take it. All the economic models consider three production factors. So, being a production factor and contributing to the added value brings the right to be reattributed and protected. Nobody considers the environment as bringing any added value. It only brings headaches regarding the compliance standards, the environmental liabilities, the audits, etc. Somehow the nature is tolerated and its depletion is considered normal even by the most fanatic ecologists. It only varies the accepted rates of depletion, the quantities of pollution, the level of deforestation, etc. And until the nature is considered an equal partner it will be only tolerated and its damage and depletion considered normal and accepted if not exceeds an arbitrary level or rate.

391

The human mind is set to protect and respect propriety. The individual will protect his own propriety and respect the neighbors' or try to make it his own. One will gladly throw the garbage over the hedge to keep his yard clean because outside the hedge is nobody's land. Those who smoke have always ashtrays at home, maybe even collectors' pieces, but will gladly throw the cigarette butts on the sidewalk. Of course some would say that it is the local government fault there is no public ashtray in the zone, but I guess will throw the cigarette butts in the living room, but will find an ashtray in another room. There is of course the worst case when one will not find any ashtray in the entire house. In that case the window is always the answer. Why? That is because the window is the border between his home and the no man's land. Everything inside the four walls of our home must and will be protected because it is ours and everything beside that it is no one's care.

As the human evolved and developed communities basically created his own ecosystems (if it may be putted this way) and little by little excluded the nature from these ecosystems. His entrepreneurial behavior damaged the nature and from an age to another put to extinction other species and destroyed habitats. Everything was at our disposal for making the human life easier and many thought increased the quality of life. There are many to discuss about the inventions and discoveries that made the human life easier and more fun, but maybe one of most important scientific discovery was the plastic and the variety of industrial applications of it. I guess we couldn't imagine life today without plastic. Maybe we can manage without the planetary ocean, but certainly not without plastic. Of course, scientifically speaking it is hard to imagine life on earth without the planetary ocean, but the "average Joe" is not

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thinking scientifically and not even long term when he enjoys the immediate benefits of using plastic (in all fields of daily life). He is not even thinking about the mortal menace of plastic for the aquatic life and in the end for his race continuity on earth. That is because the human is made to think on short term between his four walls. Maybe because, as Keynes once said, on long term we'll all be dead. The human may have evolved from the cave man to the digital man, but is still hard to convince a human being not to fire wood when he is cold, not to kill beasts for his own entertainment, not fire fossil fuels for his own commodity, not to throw food and so on. The human mind as much evolved as we think it is still responds to primary needs and still has a basic impulse to survive in any conditions with all the damage for the environment is supposed by its own survival. And even long term survival of the human species is at risk due to the present behavior of it the short term needs will prevail. And yes! We all do it. We are all beneficiaries of the modern society commodities. And yet we understand the harm we are doing. Is it wrong to harm the environment and still discuss about the harmful behavior modern society have? Is it less true the environmental protection message from one who benefit from the air conditioning or fossil fuels? Do we need to become minimalists in terms of modern tech to be heard and considered relevant for the environmentalist message? No! I do not think that if we benefit from all this should make us stop protesting. I do not think that the ignorance or even worse the hypocrisy as some people consider it should stop the message.

The human is a profound intolerant being. Man is intolerant of his fellow men, of the nature, of other ecosystem partners and moreover is intolerant of the future generations of men, because the close perspective is always a matter of survival. The close perspective in terms of time and space will always prevail because survival, which is a close perspective, human has it in his genes.

The man is always in the center of his universe. He is kind and rational towards other living beings. He placed himself as a "protector" of what he considered of value for him and a punisher or even executioner of what was harmful or considered a menace for him and his estate. At some moment in history the wolves were considered harmful, and so, they nearly disappeared from Europe. At other moment in history someone considered the sparrows are eating too much grain, and so, slathered them. In the next years the famine killed millions of men. The examples are multiple and various throughout the history of mankind.

We are still looking for the best way of living in this world but still missing the point. The point is that we cannot live without considering the environment as our equal and all the other members of the ecosystem as a part of it. Until then our search for a better way will be a series of misjudgments and tragedies.