

Environmental CPR and Climate Change

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Story of the Prince

Once upon a time in a faraway land, there lived a king. As he was growing old, the King decided to hand over the throne to the prince. But the King wanted to make sure that the prince was ready.

To teach him the lessons of wise governance, the King ordered the prince to live in the forest for six months. The young prince was quite puzzled. "Since I would be governing men," he thought, "what could I possibly learn from the forest?" Being a good son, however, the prince saddled up his horse and trotted away into the forest dark and deep.

After six months, the prince returned to the palace. When ask by the King as to what he had seen in the forest, the prince answered: "I saw trees birds and streams. I saw rotting leaves on the forest floor. Oh, there were so many birds. Because they looked so nice, I shot them, and look, I even brought you some."

The King was disappointed. So again he ordered the prince to live in the forest for one year. Grudgingly, the prince mounted his horse and ran off to the forest.

Hours crawled into days, days rolled into weeks, and weeks marched into months. The prince was near despair, wallowing in the depths of solitude and quietude.

One morning, amidst the sound of birds, the prince decided to sit beside a gurgling brook. All of a sudden, he looked up and saw a shaft of light that beamed through the forest canopy. Suddenly like the blinding flash of light that rushed through his mind, everything became clear. The prince quickly mounted his horse and galloped back to the Palace.

There, at the feet of his father the King, the prince humbly knelt, and as one tear fell from his eye, said:

Father, I have learned...
"I have seen the wind
As it caressed the branches and the leaves
And wrapped me in its embrace.

I watched the flight of leaves
As they glided down to the forest floor,
There to stay, and death and decay,
Become the soil that nourishes the plants,
That in turn nourishes bird, bee, and me.
I have danced with the birds,
And joined them in the great drama
Of flirtation, of birth, and of life.

The lizard the deer and the boar
I have fed then in my hand in friendship.

Once I saw a monkey fall out of its mother's arms.
I took care of him, nursed him back to health
And then returned him to his mother.
Both are now my friends.

Father these and more I learned from the forest."

Brimming with pride, the King pulled out a quill and parchment paper. In quick strokes, he scribbled and signed a royal decree. From then on, the decree said, all the plants and the animals in the forest are hereby declared part and parcel of the Kingdom. As such, they shall forever be protected and cared for by the Prince – the new King.

The Throne of Dominion

Let us pause and figure out the point of this little story.

Perhaps like the prince in the mid-story, we are not yet ready to assume the throne of dominion over the Earth. We were gifted with great intelligence that we venture to call ourselves 'wise' In fact, we now even call ourselves doubly wise – the Homo sapiens. We are an animal, very similar in physical makeup to monkey. A monkey however, eats only the fruit of a tree, but leaves the tree alone to be his home and to bear more fruit. Unlike a monkey, however, man is not content with eating only the fruit of a tree, he goes on to cut it down.

Now, who did you say is smarter?

Yes, someone once reminded us that 'we are not the weavers of a web of life, only a mere strand in that delicate web.' In the words of a bearded philosopher of old, ' we are part and parcel of all things, living and non-living.' Perhaps it is only when we understand this that we can then learn to play our role in the Kingdom of Life. If we are to ascend to throne of responsible dominion, we must learn to work with the Laws of Nature. Only then, will we be ready to partake of – and participate in – the great extravagance of Life.

Man is the Solution

If man is the problem, man is the solution. Like the prince who later learned to see what was around him, we are beginning to see that our wasteful ways will not work, in the short run, and in the long run. Pity our children, and those yet unborn.

What is the solution? Where is the answer? Perhaps, somewhere in Webster's unabridged dictionary, we will find a little clue as to what ails human society and the Earth today. There you will find 67 lines devoted to the meaning of word 'take', but only 21 lines devoted to the word 'give'.

This is probably a clue as to the way we people treat one another, it is even more true in the way they treat the Earth:: we take too much, but give too little.

If that is the problem, what is the solution?

The solution then is very simple – it is the exact opposite: Take less, give more. It is said that unless we learn to treat the Earth with less violence, we will continue to treat one another with more violence.. Put differently, we cannot have peace on Earth unless we have peace with the Earth.

Our present way of economic thinking must also be turned on its head – one hundred and eighty degrees. The economic system that aspires for continued growth by taking us much as we can of the

Earth, and calling it 'income,' can be best describe in one word: Wrong. For how in the world can the business in the economy grow if we took away the natural capital of the business of Life? To understand that does not require a doctorate in economics. All it needs is what the Spanish elegantly call the *sentido common**. To aspire for continued physical growth is not a proper goal of man. That is the goal of a cancer cell. The laws of nature tell us that continued physical growth – in economics and in human body – end up in death.

The economics of extraction must give way to the economics of restoration, of conservation, preservation and restoration (also known as 'CPR' economics). In the past, we tore down forests, put up concrete roads and buildings, and stripped the land naked of vegetation and minerals. Is it now the time to tear down concrete, put up forests, and restore the life of the land around us? Lest we forget, minerals, once removed, will never again returned to the vowels of Earth.

A Menu Options

When the pegs of thought describe above have been securely fastened in our brains and in our hearts, the rest of the solution is really very simple. More fun than child's play, it puts to test who can bring the brightest candle to room of ideas.

A menu of Options in restorative economics is listed below. By no means are they all. The number and variety of options are limited only by the boundaries individual creativity and human genius.

- Network of marine and fish sanctuaries
- Soil and water conservation
- Forest regeneration, bird refuges and wildlife corridors
- Care of protected areas
- Renewable and environment-friendly energy sources
- Efficient, comfortable and convenient multimodal transport systems (twin track or monorail lines, bicycle and walking lanes, waterways, etc.)
- Waste recycling and materials recovery
- Human settlements that embellish emotional, intellectual and spiritual life
- Exploration of marine sciences, terrestrial ecosystems, ornithology (birds), and other branches of biology – the study of Life
- World-class sport and leisure facilities (scuba-diving, boat-making, sport fishing, tropical forest expeditions, camping, etc.)
- Art and culture (literature, paintings, indigenous art, etc.)
- Traditional and alternative medicines

The amount of human labor needed to restore the damage done to the Earth is almost infinite. All of a sudden, the jobless billions of the world will find plenty to do. In a span of only a few years, the Earth's wound will began to heal. Yes, time heals all wounds; after a while, even the scars began to fade.

With restored natural capital, abundance will reign once again. With productive ecosystems humanity maybe freed from the uncertainty of feeding himself. Thus freed, he can begin to live the life of a feeling and thinking animal he claims to be.

The Law?

What about the Law? What can it do? How can it help?

Well, to extent that the law is a tool to guide human behavior, it can serve as an engine of social change. But first let us do something: let us rid the law of myth and mystery. People who talk the language of the law like to talk to much and complicate the simple. Shorn of its pretenses, however, law is more than the raw log of conduct carved into the sculpture of words.

To be sure, the law can be useful. It can use force to make people act this way or that by the authority of the law. Naked power is called 'brute force.' But power clothed with the mantle of the Law is called 'Legal Authority.'

And then we ask: what is the role of Law? Is it only to maintain social order and keep things the way they are? If that is all, then the law is dormant ... and stagnant. Like stagnant water, it will breed mosquitoes - an insect similar in function to the common impression people have on lawyers.

But, no, keeping things the way they are is not the sole function of the law. To be a living-thinking tool, it must be used to shake the box of conventional thinking and challenge the very foundations of human thought. Perhaps, then, and only then, can the law, as a thinking profession, make a contribution to humanity's role as the thinking part of nature.

You accuse me of being idealistic. Yes, knowingly, freely and voluntarily I plead guilty.

Yes, I plead guilty especially to you, my young friend. It is for you friend, That this book was written. To you I plead: do not commit the same mistake that we did. Are forefathers spoiled this earth -- by commission or omission. In our time, we did not do better; in fact, we did worse. Note for example, that it was during our time that drinking water became so scarce it is now more expensive than fuel.

It was our time that we saw the serious symptoms of the Earth's malady. And when we saw that it became too bad, we, in our generation, tried to do a little something. Try's we might, however, the noon of our day is past.

Thus this book is written for you, my young friend, you who have the luxury of time and the energy of youth. Most of all, in your veins, my friend, still run the fires of idealism. Remember, dear friend, that ideals are like the stars. We may not reach them, but we can look up, see their beauty and always, always try to follow where they lead.

The Story of a Barn.

There once lived a rich man who owned a big farm. He had three sons - a lawyer, a doctor and a fisherman. To see who among them was fit to inherit the farm, the man asked his sons to fill up a huge barn with anything they can.

First to be tested was the lawyer, who asked his father for a million pesos. He hired a thousand men to cut the tallest trees in land. All the logs were then brought into the barn. Alas, it did not even fill a small corner of the big barn.

Next came the doctor who asked his father for two million pesos. He hired two thousand men and caught all the fish in the sea. Then all the fish caught were brought into the barn. Alas, it did not even fill a tiny corner of the barn.

Finally it was the fisherman. He asked his father for only one hundred pesos. While walking, he saw a beggar and gave away ninety. With only ten pesos left in his pocket, he brought something from the store. He then asked his father and brothers to go with him to the barn.

There, in the center of the barn where it was darkest, he pulled out a match and lighted a candle. Suddenly, the whole barn was filled with light.

Perhaps, dear friend, this picture book is only like a little candle. Take it with you, my friend, to the farthest corners of the Earth. Let it serve to trigger the molecules of thought and spark the fires of imagination. If in the process, it sows confusion – well and good. That is the intent of this book. After all, confusion is the seed of wisdom. Perhaps then, and only then, can man become man.

My friend, please tell the stories here told to those you meet along the way. The light of ideas may begin to glow in the minds of a few. But for it to give light to many, it must be held by the caring hands of every man, woman and child.

Mabuhay!!!