

Dignity Through Solidarity

What is so pressing about this moment in time? What are the existential threats to the human species? We know all too well: pandemic diseases, pollution, climate chaos, habitat decimation, loss of biodiversity, resource depletion, escalation of brutal hostilities, and expansion of weapons with annihilation capabilities. And here we are, humbly, as cognitive humans, Homo Sapiens, struggling to grasp the urgency to cooperate to take healthy care of our earthly habitat, much as we witness in other cooperating eusocial species. And what are those? Multi-generations, jointly caring for their young, dividing labor, and cooperatively tending and protecting the nest against threats.

“Groups all the way down,” that’s a chapter in D. S. Wilson’s book, “Evolution for Everyone...” What does it mean? The individual human’s body is already a group of cooperating organs, and those organs are, in turn, groups of cooperating tissues, and those tissues are groups of cooperating cells, that are, in turn, groups of cooperating molecules - groups cooperating at each level of complexity, all the way down. What does that mean for us now? Individual humans and human groups must see the need to cooperate immediately - to tackle the threats against the entire species, against the Earth itself, that is our home and source of life. Each group that cooperates with another group to form a stronger, larger group improves its chances to adapt to the flux of environmental changes, enhancing its chances to survive. Darwinian survival of the fittest has been misconstrued. Sure, individuals, in a given circumstance, may survive by being more competitive, antagonistic, or aggressive, yet the species characterized by cooperation are the ones that have survived and thrived so successfully.

We must also realize that, as humans, we live embedded in a double paradox. First, we are simultaneously individuals *and* social animals. We must constantly navigate the push and pull of each. Second, we are not just “symbol *using*” animals, we actually cannot comprehend our world and our human condition within it, separate from the learned, symbolic linguistic systems, our languages, that construct apprehensions of reality for us. In this age of threats to our very existence, for us to be able to discern, and be able to act upon, the best strategies to avert extinction, planetary destruction, we need to keep this double paradox as guideposts.

If I may quote the preeminent biologist, E. O. Wilson: “History makes no sense without prehistory, and prehistory makes no sense without biology.” And so:

Solidarity

What’s that you say?

Solidarity

No, there’s no other way

For human dignity

In adaptive unity

In panoramic diversity

It’s actually how we came to be

*Solidarity
You have your doubt?
It's survival of the fittest
Please check this out:
Evolutionarily
It's groups all the way down*

*Even the simplest cell
In order to stay alive
It's components all cooperate
That's how molecules survive
At the level of species
Here on planet earth
We evolved to be eusocial
We know how it works:
Multi-generations
Together tend the nest
Division of labor
....And care for the young
Life coalesced*

*Shall we fry, shall we drown?
Shall we fight each other
Visciously
And bring it all down?*

*Or shall we see the light of possibility
Through ingenuity
Through human dignity
Respecting ecology
The life-sustaining
Strategy
Of solidarity?*

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