I would like to start our discussion of Columbus and Other Cannibals by posing three questions: how did we get here? What is here? And what can we do? For our first meeting, I would like each of us to answer the second question, and write a short essay/statement for the others. The following is my answer to the question

As preface to my answer, I want to comment on two things that are important. The use of the collective "we" is necessary, because we are in the "here" together, not because it is a we of solidarity, caring and empathy. Many made little or no 'contribution' to how "we" got here. The countries of the global south who will be most affected first by the catastrophe of global warming, rising temperatures, rising ocean waters, fires, floods, tsunamis, droughts, contributed very little to the production of green house gases. But they are included in the "we." They will become the refugees from the global environmental catastrophe; they will be the first to die of hunger, and the fires, floods etc. And there flight and fate will not be the cause of embrace and inclusion by the global community. And those excluded from the "we" during the pandemic, drugs, patents, a global public health infrastructure, are part of the "we" of the here. They will die first when the next disease emerges; their suffering will be ignored.

Second, Martin Jay in his book Downcast Eyes, says of power that it is a contested concept. Because one's understanding of power, the system of power, determines the ways in which it can be challenged. In the same way, our understanding of the here, will determine our answer to the third question, what can we do.

Third, I believe there are ideas, an inadequate term, in the book that help us understand the here, how we got here, and what we can do. I will answer the question concerning the hear to a great degree as a reflection on the book.

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What is here?

We are facing an existential crisis, more accurately, crises. These crises are obvious, and what is more, nations, their institutions, civil society, global institutions, those in positions of power, have demonstrated that they cannot solve them, in fact, will not even acknowledge them as existential threats. The first crisis is the environmental crisis. Our failure to deal with the problem to this point means that we have already put in motion climate changes that will be disastrous. This cannot be averted. The choice now is continuing not to respond which means that more catastrophic outcomes will occur. The latest IPCC conclusion was that if we don't curb CO2 emissions by 2025, we will create "a world so irretrievably mutilated it will not be able to sustain life as we know it." Second, we stand before nuclear war. According to the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists, we are closer to nuclear war than any previous time, and because of the greater destructive capacity of nuclear weapons, and the failure of people in power to confront the situation in a are closer to the complete. The Doomsday Clock was set by the The Bulletin at 100 seconds to midnight early in January, before the Russian invasion of the Ukraine, and before global corporate media, and those in power began assuring us that we need to meet the threat of nuclear war forcefully. And, thirdly, environmental epidemiologists have concluded that the Corona virus is not the only disease posing a threat to humanity. Globalization and with it human interaction with more and more environments raises the problem of more and more contact with species that carry diseases, and globalization also means that spreading the diseases through global interactions is easier. Also, the system seems incapable on reflecting how government/military/scientific research on biopathogens might be problematic.