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Systems thinking and systems analysis can sometimes seem quite abstract and theoretical. The 'system' with its feedback loops, processes of emergence, chaos and complexity, tipping points and explanatory array of figures, diagrams and arrows can be quite daunting. What sometimes seems missing is a concrete apprehension of the real or, at least, the phenomenological world which can be seen, felt and indeed breathed. This is not the case with Dr Nafeez Mosaddeq Ahmed's compelling and frightening study Deforestation and the Risk of Collapse. It is very real. You can feel its significance.

Dr Ahmed starts with the current Covid-19 pandemic placing it in context as a symptom of a much broader set of interconnected planetary crises. We are well aware of these crises although their gravity and seriousness is something that many of us sometimes close our eyes to assuming that something — a new technology or a new scientific discovery for example — will turn up and everything will be consequently just fine. Well, that's not necessarily the case. It may not even be probably the case. We are in the midst of a planetary, systemic, crisis of which Covid, climate change, biodiversity loss, ocean acidification, natural resource depletion, economic growth, deforestation, inequality and so on are existential risks to our and our planet's future survival as a habitable place.

This is not to say that governments, NGOs, civil society organisations, universities, think tanks, businesses and individuals have not studied, discussed, debated these systemic issues intensely and publicly. They have but too often we perceive the problems and attempt to tackle them individually as distinct and discrete affairs leading to distinct and separate actions masquerading as solutions to something that can be 'fixed'. What systems analysis offers is both a viewpoint and a possibility to fashion means, actions, that address these crises holistically as manifestations of a planetary system that is quite possibly teetering on the brink of collapse.

If we are to fully understand the situation we are living through and act in such a way as to effect beneficial and regenerative changes to our planetary systems we must not exceed those planetary boundaries Dr Ahmed refers to and certainly not assume any policy prescriptions offer easy solutions that will enable us all to blissfully and blindly return to what is euphemistically termed 'business as usual'. We must dispense with simplistic narratives that apportion responsibility and blame for deforestation and other crises on to others whoever those others are. Far, far more is required. We need to be able to shape systemic transformation in a positive, ecologically sound and equitable manner. We can all start to do

this by understanding our world as ultimately constituting a systemic whole. Deforestation and the Risk of Collapse is a model of such an understanding and the Schumacher Institute is proud to publish the report as a Special Issue of System Change.

For Dr Ahmed, like many other analysts, identify the root cause of these interconnected planetary crises in the structures and processes of our industrial civilisation and the way we conceptualise them politically and scientifically. Capitalist social property relations and the forty year hegemony of neoliberal economic ideology has accelerated cycles of fossil fuel exploitation, biodiversity loss, unsustainable agricultural practices, climate change and global inequality. Seeing deforestation as but one specific albeit crucially important emanation of a very tangible risk systemic collapse. To do demonstrate this comprehensively and convincingly is a great achievement and although by no means definitive in terms of precisely identifying what a systemic transformation might ultimately lead to, Deforestation and the Risk of Collapse is certainly a means by which we can at least imagine what the contours of a future ecological civilisation would look like how we might get there and how we might, and should, live our lives.