

STOPPING THE HUMAN JUGGERNAUT

By Dr. Michael W. Fox*

This essay was written on the author's 76th birthday, August 13, 2013. It will later be posted on his website and submitted to newspapers in the U.S. that carry his syndicated column dealing with animal and environmental concerns.

The juggernaut of humanity, with its ever increasing population causing destruction of the natural world, the holocaust of animal and plant kingdoms aquatic and terrestrial, and escalating suffering of sentient beings from those incarcerated in factory farms and medical and commercial research facilities, to those being harpooned, netted, trapped, goaded and driven to death, seems unstoppable. The law of physics indicates that only a force of equal or greater magnitude in the opposite direction can stop such a momentous force.

The combined natural and anthropogenic forces of climate change, droughts, floods, famines, pestilence, pollution, and internecine strife, depletion of natural resources, loss of biodiversity and global economic and ecological collapse will eventually stop this juggernaut. But at what cost to the life and beauty of the Earth and all who dwell therein?

Those who believe in technological, economic and other solutions, half blinded by vested interests and enchanted by scientism, are no less deluded than those who resort to various forms of violence in the name of religion, progress, and political ideology.

Until every being, every tree, wolf, whale is embraced, not as some commodity, trophy or resource, but as a sentient Earth citizen worthy of equal consideration, this juggernaut will not be stopped. And its wheels of fortune and misfortune will roll over all of us and every other being in its path.

As a species, like the proverbial Phoenix, we may yet arise from the ashes of our own nemesis caused by the ethical vacuum of human-centredness, and become worthy of the self-anointed title, *Homo sapiens*. With the wisdom of our biology and history, and power of empathy passed on to surviving generations, the life and beauty of the Earth may be restored, protected and cherished, the juggernaut becoming a vehicle for global peace, justice, benevolence and creative co-operation, reflective of a universe that is a communion of subjects, not a collection of objects. Otherwise, as the Hopi Indians prophesy, when the trees are gone, the sky will fall.

The biology of evolution is the study of how species adapt in order to survive. For humankind to survive and prosper in spite of itself, it must do

more than simply adapt to deteriorating conditions that it has created for itself and for other species, many of whom, like indigenous cultures and peoples, now face extinction. It must change those conditions for the good of all life on this planet whose well-being, under the banner of One Earth, One Health, is inseparable from our own.

This means that for the human species, evolution is revolution, a revolt against those forces that are driving the juggernaut of suffering and destruction; a revolution in the name of eco-justice/environmental bioethics, animal rights and human responsibility. Justice, like compassion, must encompass every living being under the boundless ethic of respect for all life, otherwise it is a figment of the common currency of human-centeredness which in many cultures is sanctified by anthropocentric religious and political authority and anthropomorphic gods. How we rule the world as stewards and custodians of all life, which we may hold only in sacred trust, can be inspired and directed by our better nature and by a broader vision of survival and prosperity, rather than by those of colonizers, expropriators, consumers and destroyers of the gifts and sanctity of life. The choice is ours, and the time is now.

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