

The Interim

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Curriculum Supplement For Schools

The *Interim Plus* is a periodical dedicated to educational matters and specifically designed to assist teachers in integrating relevant life issues in their lesson planning.

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This February edition of *The Interim Plus* focuses on the production and consumption of food. Does the world suffer from hunger? Is food wasted shamelessly? Is food too cheap or too expensive? Is human justice and human well-being dependent on food? Should the availability, quality and pricing of food be a topic of political interest? Are there too many people relative to the earth's resources? Must populations be limited or controlled to avoid mass starvation and other environmental catastrophes? What can private individuals do to ameliorate the situation?

These are some of the basic questions that flow from a consideration of the production, transportation, marketing and consumption of food across our globe. Who can or should decide on the answers to these and other thorny questions? The answers are controversial because inevitably there will be a moral dimension to them in addition to the practical ramifications on how populations organize or rule themselves and how the free market operates in the international economy.

What more basic need is there beside food and its companion water? One can do without clothing or permanent shelter in certain geographic areas, but no one can do without food and water beyond a very limited period of time. Life itself is contingent on the availability of food and water.

One general approach to the topic is to discuss it as a debate between two classes of people, pessimists and optimists. The latter group believes in a benign future for human beings and the planet itself. People in this group tend to see endless positive benefits from physical resources developed by human ingenuity and fueled by technological progress. The former group can be characterized as incorrigibly pessimistic about humanity's future unless drastic action is taken to curb population growth and thus avoid the disaster that will overtake the planet and destroy the human race itself. Perhaps, the more appropriate stance lies in a reasonable middle position that recognizes certain dangers, but, also accepts human responsibility and stewardship, and the capacity of the human race to adapt and take appropriate steps to feed the growing population of human beings as well as take caring for the integrity of the earth.

The Pessimists vs The Optimists

There are many exponents of these two schools of thought. We are choosing a couple of well-known advocates of the respective stances. The late Julian Simon, an American professor of economics and business administration, definitely belonged to the optimistic school of thought, arguing that the world is not running out of its resources and that the world is not in danger of overpopulation. Although his main points are found in these publications from the 1980s and 1990s, the thrust of his arguments still holds up and has current champions. See www.juliansimon.com/writings/Norton/ and www.wired.com/wired/archive/5.02/ffsimon_pr.html.

Simon introduced his paper in this way:

This is the litany: Our resources are running out. The air is bad, the water worse. The planet's species are dying off - more exactly, we're killing them - at the staggering rate of 100,000 per year, a figure that works out to almost 2,000 species per week, 300 per day, 10 per hour, another dead species every six minutes. We're trashing the planet, washing away the



topsoil, paving over our farmlands, systematically deforesting our wildernesses, decimating the biota, and ultimately killing ourselves.

The world is getting progressively poorer, and it's all because of population, or more precisely, overpopulation. There's a finite store of resources on our pale blue dot, spaceship Earth, our small and fragile tiny planet, and we're fast approaching its ultimate carrying capacity. The limits to growth are finally upon us, and we're living on borrowed time. The laws of population growth are inexorable. Unless we act decisively, the final result is written in stone: mass poverty, famine, starvation, and death.

*Time is short, and we have to act **now**.*

That's the standard and canonical litany. It's been drilled into our heads so far and so forcefully that to hear it yet once more is ... well, it's almost reassuring. It's comforting, oddly consoling - at least we're face to face with the enemies: consumption, population, mindless growth. And we know the solution: cut back, contract, make do with less. "Live simply so that others may simply live."

There's just one problem with The Litany, just one slight little wee imperfection: every item in that dim and dreary recitation, each and every last claim, is false. Incorrect. At variance with the truth.



Julian Simon

On the other hand, **Ernest Partridge** would definitely be ranked among the more pessimistic thinkers on the subject. His paper (<http://gadfly.igc.org/papers/cornuc.htm>) refutes many of the optimistic claims made by people like Julian Simon about the world's true resources. He introduces his position in this way:

Human beings thrive on hope. Without some sense that our individual deliberate effort brings us closer to a fulfillment of our personal goals, we simply cannot function from one day to the next.

And yet, hope often betrays us, as it blinds us to clear and evident danger and leads us to courses of action and inaction that will eventually result in the loss of our property, our livelihood, our liberty, and even our very lives.

.....in this paper we will confront some of the arguments of the optimists, and sadly conclude that their reassurances cannot stand up against scientific evidence, fundamental natural laws, logical scrutiny, or even plain common sense.

PART A

The following salient points are taken from *The Doomsayer*, an essay written by Ed Regis in 1998 about Julian Simon's views on prospects for humanity (<https://www.wired.com/tag/magazine-5.02/>) The more detailed original source is Simon's own work *Scarcity or Abundance? A Debate on the Environment* (<http://www.juliansimon.com/writings/Norton/>)

The Doomsayer

- Our species is better off in just about every measurable material way.
- Just about every important long-run measure of human material welfare shows improvement over the decades and centuries, in the United States and the rest of the world.
- Raw materials - all of them - have become less scarce rather than more.
- The air in the US and in other rich countries is irrefutably safer to breathe.
- Water cleanliness has improved. The environment is increasingly healthy, with every prospect that this trend will continue.
- Fear is rampant about rapid rates of species extinction, but the fear has little or no basis. The highest rate of observed extinction, though certainly more have gone extinct unobserved, is one species per year ... in contrast to the 40,000 per year that some ecologists have been forecasting for the year 2000.
- The scare that farmlands are blowing and washing away is a fraud upon the public. The aggregate data on the condition of farmland and the rate of erosion do not support the concern about soil erosion. The data suggest that the condition of cropland has been improving rather than worsening.
- The world is not being deforested; it is being reforested in general.

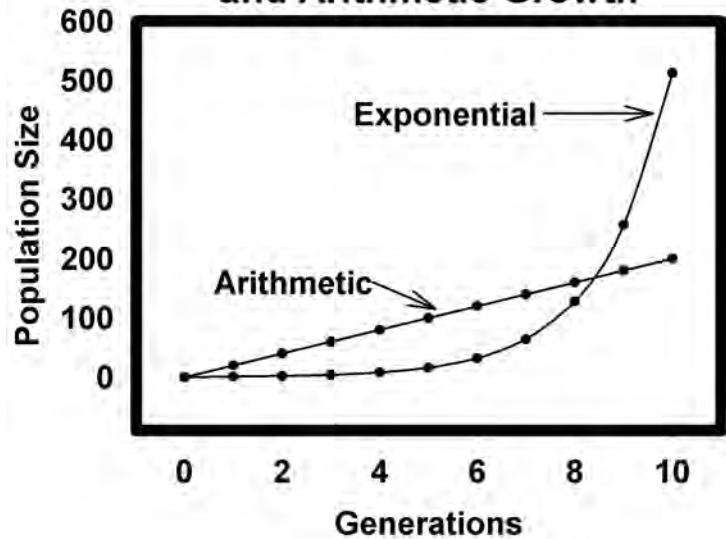
- Still, there is one resource that the world does not have enough of, that's actually getting rarer - that resource: people. People are becoming more scarce, even though there are more of us.

As Ed Regis explains, Simon had started off as an antigrowth, antipopulation zealot. He'd been won over by the central argument made by Thomas Malthus in 1798 in *An Essay on the Principle of Population* in which Malthus stated that "Population, when unchecked, increases in a geometrical ratio. Subsistence increases only in an arithmetical ratio. A slight acquaintance with numbers will show the immensity of the first power in comparison of the second."

Mathematically speaking, a geometric progression, if carried on far enough, will eventually overtake an arithmetic progression. If population increases geometrically while "subsistence," or food, increases arithmetically, then sooner or later the population will run out of food.

Simon changed his mind as he found that "Population has never increased geometrically. It increases at all kinds of different rates historically, but however fast it increases, food increases at least as fast, if not faster. In other words, whatever the rate of population growth is, the food supply increases at an even faster rate."

Comparison of Exponential and Arithmetic Growth



The studies showed that while population growth rates varied from country to country and from year to year, there was no general negative correlation with living standards. People did not become poorer as the population expanded; rather, as their numbers multiplied, they produced what they needed to support themselves, and they prospered.

The trends were the same for food supply. Rising population did not mean less food, just the opposite: instead of skyrocketing as predicted by the Malthusian theory, food prices, relative to wages, had declined historically.

There was pushback from various predictable quarters. Paul Ehrlich wrote *The Population Bomb*, published in 1968. The book was solidly Malthusian. Ehrlich boldly asserted that: *The battle to feed all of humanity is over. In the 1970s and 1980s hundreds of millions of people will starve to death in spite of any crash programs embarked upon now. At this late date nothing can prevent a substantial increase in the world death rate, although many lives could be saved through dramatic programs to 'stretch' the carrying capacity of the earth by increasing food production and providing for more equitable distribution of whatever food is available. But these programs will only provide a stay of execution unless they are accompanied by determined and successful efforts at population control.*

Simon received a fair amount of bad press for his contrarian, heretical beliefs, particularly for his pet claim that what the world needs most is lots of additional human beings. They're not just mouths to feed, he argued. Newborn babes grow up to be creative adults; they turn into individuals who contribute and achieve, who give back far more than they ever take.

Simon also showed that the relationship between deforestation and species extinction was not what was claimed to be. He cited the example of Puerto Rico, where human activity had reduced the area of primary forests by 99 percent by the 1950s. This massive forest conversion did not lead to a correspondingly massive species extinction. Actually more land birds have been present on the island in the 1980s (97 species) than were present in pre-Columbian times (60 species) according to the findings of Ariel Lugo, the Director of San Juan's Botanical Gardens. And much of the forest has grown back.



The environmentalists' abstract principles and speculative analyses seem very logical and believable regarding these matters. The facts themselves appear wholly illogical and impossible to explain. People are fruitful and they multiply. The stores of raw materials in the earth's crust certainly don't. How can it be possible that, as the world's population doubles, the price of raw materials is cut in half as Simon predicted?

People produce resources, they create them, whether it be food, factories, machines, new technologies, or stockpiles of mined, refined, and purified raw materials. As Simon explained: *"Resources come out of people's minds more than out of the ground or air...Minds matter economically as much as or more than hands or mouths. Human beings create more than they use, on*

average. It had to be so, or we would be an extinct species."

According to Simon the defect of the Malthusian models, superficially plausible but invariably wrong, is that they leave the human mind out of the equation. *"These models simply do not comprehend key elements of people - the imaginative and creative."*

As for the future, Simon ventured this rather optimistic view: *"The material conditions of life will continue to get better for most people, in most countries, most of the time, indefinitely. Within a century or two, all nations and most of humanity will be at or above today's Western living standards."*

Questions for class discussion

1. What are four assertions that Simon made that surprise you?
2. What startling conclusion does Simon draw regarding the relationship between the rate of population growth and availability of food supply?
3. What about the correlation between population growth and living standards, negative, positive or neutral?
4. Who was Paul Ehrlich and what dark predictions did he make regarding world population? Was he correct? Why was he wrong?
5. What is problematic about these "environmentalists' abstract principles and speculative analyses"?
6. Do you think Simon was overly optimistic? Why or why not?
7. Several economic forecasters see the 10 largest economies in the world by 2030 as China, India, United States, Indonesia, Turkey, Brazil, Egypt, Russia, Japan, Germany. (<https://www.visualcapitalist.com/worlds-largest-10-economies-2030/>). Does this projection correspond to Simon's basic thesis regarding population and prosperity?
8. Why would forced population control measures prove calamitous to the well being of nations?
9. In the meantime, the demographic deficit is leading some countries to adopt pro-natalist policies. What is Hungary doing in this sector? Would such policies help reverse the falling population rate? Should Canada adopt similar policies? Would banning abortion help to correct the demographic imbalance?

Julian Simon Was Right: A Half-Century of Population Growth, Increasing Prosperity, and Falling Commodity Prices

By **Marian L. Tupy**

February 16, 2018

Many people believe that global population growth leads to greater poverty and more famines, but evidence suggests otherwise. Between 1960 and 2016, the world's population increased by 145 percent. Over the same time period, real average annual per capita income in the world rose by 183 percent.

Instead of a rise in poverty rates, the world saw the greatest poverty reduction in human history. In 1981, the World Bank estimated, 42.2 percent of humanity lived on less than \$1.90 per person per day (adjusted

for purchasing power). In 2013, that figure stood at 10.7 percent. That's a reduction of 75 percent. According to the Bank's more recent estimates, absolute poverty fell to less than 10 percent in 2015.

Rising incomes helped lower the infant mortality rate from 64.8 per 1,000 live births in 1990 to 30.5 in 2016. That's a 53 percent reduction. Over the same time period, the mortality rate for children under five years of age declined from 93.4 per 1,000 to 40.8. That's a reduction of 56 percent. The number of maternal deaths declined from 532,000 in 1990 to 303,000 in 2015 — a 43 percent decrease.

Famine has all but disappeared outside of war zones. In 1961, food supply in 54 out of 183 countries was less than 2,000 calories per person per day. That was true of only two countries in 2013. In 1960, average life expectancy in the world was 52.6 years. In 2015, it was 71.9 years — a 37 percent increase.

In 1960, American workers worked, on average, 1,930 hours per year. In 2017, they worked 1,758 hours per year — a reduction of 9 percent. The data for the world are patchy. That said, a personal calculation based on the available data for 31 rich and middle-income countries suggests a 14 percent decline in hours worked per worker per year.

Enrollment at all education levels is up. For example, the primary school completion rate rose from 74 percent in 1970 to 90 percent in 2015 — a 20 percent increase. The lower secondary school completion rate rose from 53 percent in 1986 to 77 percent in 2015 — a 45 percent increase. Tertiary school enrollment rose from 10 percent in 1970 to 36 percent in 2015 — a 260 percent increase.

Even our air is getting cleaner. In the United States, for example, aggregate emissions of six common pollutants (i.e., carbon monoxide, lead, nitrogen dioxide, ozone, fine and coarse particulate matter, and sulfur dioxide) fell by 67 percent between 1980 and 2016.

And, in spite of a recent increase in terrorist killings and the number of civil wars, the world is still much safer than it was at the height of the Cold War. Last but not least, an ordinary person has greater access to information than ever before. All in all, we live on a safer, cleaner, and more prosperous planet than was the case in 1960.

<https://www.cato.org/publications/economic-development-bulletin/julian-simon-was-right-half-century-population-growth>

Question for further discussion

1. How does this picture of progress and prosperity compare with that of environmentalists and climatologists and their dire predictions about world catastrophe?
2. Why is there such a contrast between facts and theories? Or is there any contradiction?

PART B

A different point of view is presented in this section. Ernest Partridge's scholarly article can be read in its entirety by going to <http://gadfly.igc.org/papers/cornuc.htm>. (October, 2007) A much redacted excerpt appears below to give a sense of Partridge's arguments that he claims refute the optimistic assumptions or beliefs of Simon and Sagoff.

Perilous Optimism

By Ernest Partridge

Human beings thrive on hope. Without some sense that our individual deliberate effort brings us closer to a fulfillment of our personal goals, we simply cannot function from one day to the next.

And yet, hope often betrays us, as it blinds us to clear and evident danger and leads us to courses of action and inaction that will eventually result in the loss of our property, our livelihood, our liberty, and even our very lives.

Throughout history, and most recently in the mid-Twentieth century, millions have perished due to stubborn and ill-advised optimism.

Today's Cassandras hold advanced degrees in biology, ecology, climatology, and other theoretical and applied environmental sciences. In a vast library of published book and papers, these scientists warn us that if civilization continues on its

present course, unspeakable devastation awaits us or our near descendants. Turning away from that “present course” toward “sustainability,” will be difficult, costly and uncertain, but far preferable to a continuation of “business (and policy) as usual.”

As a discomforted public, and their chosen political leaders, cry out “say it isn’t so!,” there is no shortage of reassuring optimists to tell us, “don’t worry, be happy.”

I sincerely wish that I could believe them. But brute scientific facts...forbid.....While the optimists are numerous and their reassurances familiar, we will focus our attention primarily on two individuals: the late economist, Julian Simon, and the philosopher, Mark Sagoff.

First of all, Julian Simon makes the following hopeful, yet highly controversial, claims:

- “The supply of natural resources [is] really infinite!”
- “There is no reason to believe that at any given moment in the future the available quantity of any natural resource or service at present prices will be much smaller than it is now, or non-existent.” (Simon, 1981, 48).
- “We now have in our hands, in our libraries really, the technology to feed, clothe, and supply energy to an ever-growing population for the next 7 billion years... We [are] able to go on increasing forever.” (Myers and Simon, 1994, 65).
- “Even the total weight of the earth is not a theoretical limit to the amount of copper that might be available to earthlings in the future. Only the total weight of the universe...” (Simon, 1980a, 1435). [After all, alchemy is said to be] “preposterous because it is impractical now. But ... so was electricity considered impractical a century ago.” (Simon, 1980b, 1306). “In the end, copper and oil come out of our minds. That’s really where they are.” (Myers and Simon, 1994, 100).
- “Population density does not damage health or psychological and social well-being.”
- “There is no statistical evidence for rapid loss of species in next two decades.” (Simon, 1984, 14).
- “The climate does not show signs of unusual and threatening changes.” (Simon, 1984, 14).
- “For most relevant matters, aggregate global and U.S. [environmental] trends are improving.” (Simon, 1984, p. 15).
- In short: There is only one scarcity: Human brain power – “The Ultimate Resource.” Simon writes: “The main fuel to speed the world’s progress is the stock of human knowledge. And the ultimate resource is skilled, spirited, hopeful people, exerting their wills and imaginations to provide for themselves and their families, thereby inevitably contributing to the benefit of every one.” (Myers and Simon, 1994, 33) It then follows that population growth rates are not a problem, except possibly in the sense of being too slow.
- Mark Sagoff believes that human ingenuity, combined with accumulated information and technological advancement, will overcome any and all resource and consumption limits in the near or distant future.
- Sagoff also maintains that food is more plentiful and less expensive on international markets today than at any time in history.
- Similarly, proven reserves of non-renewable resources, such as metals and petroleum, have generally increased, not decreased, with consumption, and [recently] real prices for these commodities have declined. Shortages of raw materials tend to be local and temporary and [do not result] from physical limits nature sets.” (Sagoff, 1997, 2).



In brief, both Sagoff and Simon are confident that knowledge and human ingenuity, combined with market incentives, will suffice to meet any upcoming environmental emergencies.

In contrast to the preceding list of optimistic factors and data, Partridge questions the prospect of “Endless expansion” by presenting the following data:

- on an average day at the turn of this new century, 63 million tons of CO₂ are added to the atmosphere (UNEP, p.24),

- 95 square kilometers of agricultural land are lost to desertification (Hauchler& Messner, 1999),
- 410 square kilometers of forests are razed – an annual loss (at 150,000 sq. km.) almost twice the area of Austria (83,000 sq. km.). (Myers and Simon, 1994, 74).
- on this average day, an estimated 74 species will become extinct (Wilson, 1992, p. 280).
- on this ordinary day, human population will score a net gain of 210,000 (World Watch, 2000b, p. 99), which adds up to more than seventy million a year – about 90% of the population of Germany.
- since 1950, the world's population has more than doubled, while at the same time, twelve million square kilometers of land (the combined area of China and India) have been seriously degraded (World Resources Institute, 1992, Ch 8),
- since 1960 twenty percent of the world's tropical forests have been lost (Bryant, 1992, 14),
- since the onset of the industrial revolution, atmospheric carbon dioxide (the major “greenhouse gas”) has increased by more than thirty percent. (IPCC, 2001, 4)

Partridge then cites E. O. Wilson (Wilson, 1993) in concluding that we should beware “*Because Earth is finite in many resources that determine the quality of life including arable soil, nutrients, fresh water and space for natural ecosystems doubling of consumption ... can bring disaster with shocking suddenness.*” Partridge pleads that we should take the optimists seriously, and carefully answer and refute their arguments, for the simple reason that the political-economic paradigm of endless resources and constant growth dominates the thinking of those who establish and implement governmental and corporate policies throughout the developed world.

Partridge then questions what, if any, meaning and lessons might be drawn from history. It is foolish to believe that history is a *reliable* predictor of the future. Eco-scientists instead believe that “business as usual” is undermining the physical-biotic structure that supports that “business,” and that the more our industrial “business as usual” continues as it has, the less likely it is that we will be able to continue. We are, as eco-scientists like to put it, “living off our biotic capital.”

Regarding Food

Partridge [citing (Brown, 1999, 115)] laments that “*industrial agriculture is vulnerable agriculture, as monocultures are assaulted by ever-more resistant pests, which are then attacked by every more toxic pesticides. All the while, soil is lost and ground water degraded by the massive importation of chemical pesticides and fertilizers. A further loss of “natural capital.”*”



Regarding Forests



Partridge gets technical, saying that Sagoff cites the Indian forestry practice in terms of numbers of trees, not biomass: i.e., the weight of a harvested tree against the weight of four seedlings. If my neighbor were caught cutting down and hauling away the ancient oak tree on my front lawn, I would not be compensated with four acorns. Moreover, every tree cut and hauled away carries with it the nutrients which, in a natural forest, are recycled through the death and decay of the old trees. Still more drain on the “natural capital.” Forest industry advertisements to the contrary notwithstanding, industrial forestry is not sustainable.

Regarding Water

...None of the water that enters my house is, strictly speaking, *destroyed*. But believe me when I tell you that it is *altered*! There is more to that water when it leaves than when it enters, and that “more” is economically less. Thus, while I would willingly dip a ladle in to the inflow I would not do so to the outflow. And what would it take to make that outflow a useful resource again? *Energy*, of course the same “ultimate resource” required to restore any natural capital (by reducing *entropy*). And the more intensively we “use” water, the more polluted the outflow, the greater the loss in natural capital, and the more energy required to restore it.

Regarding Energy

...The remaining supply of fossil fuels can only be depleted. And since oil consumption has doubled each generation, this means that we have extracted, each generation, an amount equal to all that has been extracted before. A superficial appreciation of the sequence of powers of two tells us that this trend is not sustainable. Thus one must devoutly hope that Sagoff is correct when he assures us that the demand for oil is leveling out. But with the vast majority of the world's population, and most significantly the populations of China and India, aspiring to imitate our high-consumption life-style, one must wonder.

Because the earth is not producing any more coal or oil, the qualified term, "proven recoverable reserves" testifies to our expanding technological capabilities, not to the an infinite supply, and eventually that technology must encounter the limit of that supply. When it does, there will still be petroleum and coal in the ground, but the price of extraction will be greater than its market price, a price considerably higher than it is today.



Regarding Falling Pricing or Costs of Raw Materials

Partridge claims that resource prices are often artificially low due to "politically arranged" government subsidies: the virtual "free gift" of national forest timber to private corporations, and oil depletion allowances are cases in point. The pricing is not taking into account the needs of future generations of human beings as well as other species. "And what will we do when we finally run out of fossil fuels and petrochemicals?" "How are our grandchildren supposed to deal with global warming, or UV radiation, or radwaste?" Answer: "We, correction, *they*, will think of something we know not what." More bluntly, "that's their problem, not ours." In short, the cost reductions in resources that Sagoff quotes are systemically myopic according to Partridge.

Regarding the control or management of mysterious Nature

However, I would insist that this very mystery and miracle of nature those qualities that give it its intrinsic value confound the conceit that nature is "manageable," and will permit perpetual growth and artificialization by whatever amount of knowledge that we can come by. For any attempt to artificialize and manage nature produces new management problems, requiring still more knowledge in short, the quest for "total management" suggests a race to overtake our own shadow, as the solution of immediate problems produces still more problems. We seem to believe that we can catch up, if only we just run a little bit faster.

"The Facts speak for themselves."

To the anticipated criticism, "but what about the other side's data?", Simon boldly replies, "there are no other data." No data? Perhaps he just has not bothered to look. Simon claims that "There is no documentation of further data produced by biologists since 1979 to demonstrate what Norman Myers was saying" about mass extinctions. Myers replies, "during those thirteen years, the number of papers published on the mass extinction crisis is over three hundred... No documentation, no data, Professor Simon?" (Myers and Simon, 1994, 129)

Simply put, Simon counts as "data," what he wants to use as "data." The rest, he simply disregards. As we stated at the outset, the problem with Simon's argument is not that the data which he cites is not factual, but that it is partial or irrelevant. And it is that vast body of unacknowledged fact and theory that demolishes the cornucopian view.

".....as anyone even casually familiar with the philosophy of science knows full well, "facts" only speak to us *in context* of other facts, and guided by theory. This is what distinguishes sound scientific theory and *ad hoc* caricatures such as "creation science" and, I submit, cornucopism. In the case of science, theory arises



out of observation of facts, effectively classified and organized as the result of prior investigations (thus enabling the scientist, in his subsequent investigations, to distinguish “relevant” from “irrelevant” data). Reciprocally, a developing theory refines “the investigator’s eye” as he returns to further explore the “facts” with a sharper sense of “relevance.” Thus, in principle, all components of a sound scientific system (theory and facts) are “fair game” for reassessment. All scientific assertions, that is to say, are vulnerable to “the falsifiability principle:” i.e., the principle that scientific theories must yield implications that can clearly and unequivocally be shown to be otherwise, if the world is not what the theory describes it to be.

In the case of pseudo-science, a preconceived dogma selects facts and pre-determines what is to count as a “fact” and as “evidence,” all the while this “preconceived dogma” remains outside the realm of “permissible inquiry,” not amenable to reassessment in the light of new factual information, which is to say “the non-falsifiable in principle.” In the present case, Julian Simon offers us the non-falsifiable, “super-empirical” reassurance that somehow, sometime in the future, economic incentive combined with human ingenuity is capable of solving any environmental problems that may arise, by means we cannot even guess at today.

“Facts do *not* speak for themselves.” Give someone a *carte blanche* license both to pick any “facts” that he chooses and to disregard any others that he may find inconvenient, and he will be able to claim a “demonstration” of virtually any strange notion under the sun. However, by violating the “falsifiability rule,” this self-concocted “ability” to “prove anything whatever” amounts to a capacity to prove nothing at all.

Regarding Man, Nature and Entropy

In short: the biosphere and human culture are “entropy pumps” powered by “imported” solar energy (in the case of human culture, solar energy “stored” in biomass and fossil fuels) – i.e., localized eddies of increasing complexity and decreasing probability, against the universal entropic current flowing toward dispersion, simplicity and disorder.

The implication for environmental policy and management is stark: *most if not all anthropogenic environmental “problems” are the result of prior “solutions”!* (By “anthropogenic” we mean to exclude from this rule environmental problems of natural origin such as earthquakes, volcanoes, tsunamis, etc.). Think about it! The “solution” to premature death has resulted in the population explosion. The “solution” to mass transportation has led to air pollution and climate change. The “solution” to intensive agriculture has caused nitrate pollution of ground water and the eutrophication of streams.....Antibiotics marshaled against disease have spawned new varieties of highly virulent drug-resistant bacteria that pose new threats to human health. Methods for preventing forest fires have been so effective in preserving the dry underbrush that wildfires are now enormous conflagrations... (Winner, 1996, 1052)

While, in the past, we have “exported” our “entropy cost” to the environment as pollution, we have managed so far to “get away with it.” For, true to the traditional pioneer spirit, we have been able to “use it up, then move on.” But now, with the expanding population, there is no more “on” to “move” to, and still worse, the pollution sink that is the environment is nearing saturation, whereby the synergisms, feedbacks and threshold effects begin to kick in. In fact, this has already happened in the Grand Banks fisheries, and is likely happening in the atmosphere with ozone depletion and global warming. But don’t expect the cornucopians to recognize any of this. “Entropy” and “thermodynamics” (along with the additional physical principles, “synergism,” “threshold,” and “feedback”) are missing from the indexes of the two Simon books on my desk.

Finally, the principle that “order (negentropy) is purchased at the price of greater disorder (entropy)” may be the undoing of Simon’s “secular eschatology.” i.e., the faith that “we’ll think of something, don’t underestimate the ingenuity of human beings.” It is the irreparable hole in the cornucopia, since however we might manage to “fix” (reverse the entropy of) developing environmental problems, these “fixes” are very likely to create still more problems (entropy).

The rule that “every man-made environmental problem we now have is the result of a prior solution” appears to counsel despair: The rules of the thermodynamic game seem to forbid ultimate success: “we can’t win, we can’t break even, we can’t leave the game.” There is, however, an acceptable option – quite possibly the only option – and that is to cherish and preserve the natural system that brought us here in the first place, namely the biosphere. If so, we must, like the ecosystem itself, recycle basic



resources and charge the entropy bill to the sun's account. The more we maintain the complexity of the global ecosystem and the civilized condition by drawing from solar entropy, and the less we maintain this complexity at the cost of polluting our air, water and nutrients, and depleting our non-renewable energy sources, the longer we will be able to sustain the advantages of industrial civilization. So long as we keep the entropy that drives our sustainable civilization at a safe distance of one-hundred forty million kilometers, we might achieve a plus-sum technology: at long last, "solutions" that do not bring about still greater problems. Finding and following that path toward sustainability is the task of ecologically informed scientific research, technological development, and public policy-making.

That enlightened policy will not be forthcoming from the cornucopians, whose world-view takes no account of the laws of thermodynamics and the entropy principle. Since these laws are at the foundation of modern physics and thus "no exception to [the thermodynamic laws] has every been observed," (Ehrlich, Ehrlich, Holdren, 1993, 69) it follows that the cornucopians must be positing a different physical universe than the one we happen to reside in. Any economic and industrial policy based upon a belief in this fanciful universe is fated to fail.

<http://gadfly.igc.org/papers/cornuc.htm>

Questions for discussion

1. Why does Partridge place himself among the pessimists or Cassandras of the world when it comes to these problems and solutions to population, food supplies, and environmental concerns?
2. In your opinion, does Partridge effectively refute the arguments of the optimists? Give a concrete example of what you believe is a good argument against the optimists?
3. Are the "facts" that Partridge cites convincing? How are the reconcilable with the claims of Simon and Sagoff? (food, soil, forests, water, resources, energy, pricing) Who is right?
4. How do the two groups (Partridge and Ehrlich vs Simon and Sagoff) fundamentally differ in their respective philosophical outlooks and understanding of the nature of man, the function of nature, origin and purpose of creation, the place of the earth, the growth and future of the human race, respect for the environment, respect for human freedom?
5. Which approach would you support and why?

PART C

In this section we take the problem of food production, distribution and consumption to the local Canadian community. It is likely that a similar situation holds in most developed nations and yet there is still hunger among the people of Canada and the world.

New report by Second Harvest, agency that works to reduce food waste, says one-third of loss could be rescued

Andrea Janus · *CBC News* · Posted: Jan 17, 2019



Produce is shown in a grocery store in Toronto late last year. A report released Thursday says more than half of all food produced in Canada is lost or wasted.

(Nathan Denette/Canadian Press)

A whopping 58 per cent of all food produced in Canada — 35.5 million tonnes — is lost or wasted, according to a new report, and about a third of that wasted food could be "rescued" and sent to communities in need across the country.

The report, entitled "The Avoidable Crisis of Food Waste," was released Thursday morning by Second Harvest, a Toronto agency that collects surplus food throughout the supply chain and distributes it to agencies ranging from shelters and drop-in centres to breakfast programs and summer camps.

According to the research, some 4.82 million tonnes of food, or nearly \$21 billion worth, is lost or wasted during the processing and manufacturing process. Some 2.38 million tonnes of food, or

more than \$10 billion worth, is lost at the consumer level.

In total, the value of all food that is lost or wasted in Canada is a staggering \$49 billion, the report says. The amount of food is enough to feed every Canadian for five months, Second Harvest CEO Lori Nikkel told reporters on Thursday.

The annual cost of avoidable food loss and waste in Canada is \$1,766 per household.



Second Harvest CEO Lori Nikkel

“The outcomes of this report make it very clear that we need to radically change how we as Canadians value food,” Nikkel said during a news conference. “The abundance of food we produce has led us to dismiss its intrinsic value.”

And the waste comes with environmental impacts. Each year, food waste in Canada creates some 56.6 million tonnes of carbon dioxide-equivalent emissions, according to the report. Food in landfills also creates methane gas, which is “25 times more damaging to the environment than carbon dioxide,” the report says.

“All of us — from farmers to manufacturers, from producers to distributors, from stores to homes — need to rethink how we view excess food and change our habits,

so that people can benefit and an environmental crisis can be avoided,” the report warns.

According to the research, there are two types of food loss and waste: avoidable, which occurs when produce, for example, makes it to market but is not purchased; and unavoidable, such as when inedible food by-products, like animal bones, are discarded.

Second Harvest dubs the research as a “world first” because it measures weight using “a standardized system across the whole food value chain,” and includes all food types from both land and water. It also includes primary data from across the supply chain, among other features.

The report identifies a number of “root causes” of avoidable food loss and waste. Included among the numerous causes are:

- Consumers buying food at the grocery store, particularly when there’s a sale, and throwing the surplus away.
- Consumers and retailers throwing out food near or past its best-before date, despite the fact product dating practices “have no correlation to food safety” and the food can often still be eaten or donated.
- Produce being left to rot in the field due to labour shortages, or low prices creating an environment in which it is no longer worth it for farmers to harvest.
- Thousands of acres of produce being “plowed under” due to cancelled orders.
- Fish being caught and tossed back into the water to die if they don’t match a quota.
- For its research, Second Harvest partnered with Value Chain Management International (VCMi) and consulted more than 700 food industry experts.

The report includes three “approaches” to reducing food loss and waste and getting some help to the four million Canadians, including 1.4 million kids, who struggle to access healthy food.

Under those banners are dozens of recommendations for industry and government aimed at preventing food loss and waste at the source, improving the redistribution and donation of edible food and managing waste when it does occur.

Second Harvest CEO Lori Nikkel said Thursday that Canada’s food waste problem is ‘among the world’s worst.’ (CBC)

Nikkel and Martin Gooch, CEO of VCMI, both said a big barrier to reducing food loss and waste is the “stigma” associated with feeding people with diverted food.

“We must demystify food which can be rescued from businesses and not call it waste,” Nikkel said. “This is unsold, this is surplus, this is excess food. It is perfectly edible.”

A key barrier to food diversion (or donation) is confusion about best-before dates, she said, “and the perception that that means ‘bad after.’ It doesn’t.”

Only five foods expire and should not be eaten after a best-before date, she said, including meal replacements, such as Boost, baby formula, protein bars and a couple of prescriptions. Otherwise, those dates identify the “key freshness” of a product, not its safety, and the dates are often very conservative.

“Nothing happens at the stroke of midnight on a best-before date,” she said.

The report calls for imminent change at the industry and government levels. To that end, Nikkel and Gooch said they will be attending a meeting with federal government officials



Viewer Comments

Christine Beckett

It is to weep. The wastage at source, the wastage of so-called “past best-by date”, these are things the individual consumer can do little about. We need a strong legislative approach, a complete re-think of where food goes in Canada. Especially with hungry homeless on our streets. Montreal, Toronto, Winnipeg, Vancouver, so many homeless, so hungry. And their needed food being thrown out, one way or another. It is to weep.

Carl Shulgin

The problem here is not that there isn’t enough, the problem is that everyone having enough isn’t profitable. The incentive is to waste as much as you can of everything but the best, and then attach the highest price tag you can to what’s left.

That’s what those tiny baggies of carrots for \$\$\$ are about in the grocery store. Anyone else notice that the price of food has basically tripled at the same time as the packages have shrunk by more than half? And yet we’re “wasting” it. Yeah, right

Philip Lucas

If 58% of the food is lost or wasted it implies there is no need to grow, process or import 58% of the food we have. Perhaps farmers could plant less, allow fields to rest or grow wild flowers and natural vegetation for bees, insects, birds and other

fauna. Perhaps importers can reduce the food they bring in and save on fossil fuel costs, pressure on foreign farmers and water use. Perhaps we could develop new food combinations so the smaller amount of food we produce can be equitably distributed...

Naomi Forbes

I can't even think of enough adjectives to describe this because it is beyond SHAMEFUL and DISGUSTING! As someone who has witnessed in person the horrific and cruel reality of starving children I have to say that we Canadians should be totally ashamed of ourselves. Then there are the politicians who keep looking the other way and not doing their jobs properly like usual.....they are failures at addressing this issue. This food waste has to stop and the Fed. Minister in charge needs to resign or be fired.

Ken Worth

When one of the grocery chains was having a labor dispute I ended up taking 4 trailer loads of produce to the dump in one day. They didn't have the staff to unload or re-ship it at the warehouse so after 3 days at proper temperature sitting in the yard it went to the dump. 176,000 lb from just our company in one day and several others were doing the same thing. I would think any food bank would have been happy to take it with shelf life it still had. At most it was 5 days off the field.

Questions

1. What is the most shocking aspect of this report to you?
2. Would you agree that there is a genuine problem?
3. What should be done about it?
4. Who or what is to blame for this situation?
5. What can schools do to improve the situation locally?
6. Should it be an election issue?
7. Which comments from the viewers above appeal to you and why?
8. What might be some of the obstacles or problems in addressing this shameful state of affairs?

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/food-waste-report-second-harvest-1.4981728>

PART D

ASSIGNMENT FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

The teacher can give the assignment individually to the whole class or divide the class into two with each half taking a position or a different point of view (Simon vs Partridge) and then presenting the various arguments supporting their respective positions. In a controlled manner, the two sides can debate the salient ideas proposed and thus arrive at a better/fuller understanding of the problems associated with the production, marketing and consumption of food. A novel approach is offered by certain non-governmental international organizations. A particular one is featured later in this section. For now let's concentrate on the concept of sharing food. This site <https://www.sharing.org/information-centre/articles/dialogue-sharing-food> has a lot of ideas but one must be careful about the philosophical principles which underpin the recommendations. An alternate approach is to make each of the questions the topic for a short, one page individual essay.

1. Is the principle of sharing an effective way to help reduce consumption, conserve resources, prevent wastage or address poverty in society?
2. What factors have led to a situation in which people are now talking about the need to share food in a world of plenty? Why can't we allow everyone access to the food that is so abundantly available?
3. Is it cruel when our world denies access to food for those who have no money to pay for it?
4. Is it unjust that corporations will waste or destroy surplus food rather than allow it to circulate freely? Should such wanton waste be criminalized? What economic factors



work against the free distribution of surplus food?

5. Is it wrong to commercialise food in its production, distribution and consumption? Is it wrong to make profit from these activities? We are told that the profit margin is very low, but how many supermarket chains exist that gladly profit from relatively cheap food? How many tons of food are they throwing away at night?
6. How can a poor, small farmer compete effectively with the big corporations? Is land reform needed in many countries to make it possible for small private property owners to own the land and grow food? Doesn't the farmer deserve a return on his investments and labour?
7. There's a huge surplus of food in the world, rice, grains, fruit. When there are millions of people who are hungry in the poorest regions, should people redirect food as a matter of emergency in order to prevent anyone from dying from starvation or malnutrition?
8. Is there a need for international cooperation, for effective global governance to use the food and resources of the world in a manner to ensure that hunger is completely eradicated? Should the United Nations formulate an international program of economic restructuring and resource redistribution so as to eradicate world hunger once and for all? Is this a pipe dream, a totally impractical goal?
9. Do affluent nations have a duty or obligation to share their riches in terms of food?
10. What must we do to ensure freedom from want for all the world's inhabitants?
11. Charity, according to some observers, is an outmoded form of thinking in our societies when attacking the problem of hunger. Such commentators insist that we need to think about sharing food in relation to justice and ending hunger. Do you agree? Why or why not?
12. Should Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, ("Everyone has the **right** to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care) become the founding principle of every nation?
13. Should the price of food be left to the vagaries of market forces, even though the wholesale commercialisation of food allows it to be hoarded, wasted, speculated upon for profit?
14. Should meat consumption be outlawed as a measure to save the environment and establish better nutrition programs more environmentally sound?

PART E

There are in fact many non-governmental organizations that do great work to feed the poor and needy. One such charitable entity is the Ontario Christian Gleaners, a group motivated by Christian faith and principles to care for one's brother [neighbour]. As they state on their web site <http://ontariogleaners.org/> their aim or mandate is to "use surplus produce to feed a hungry world".

Mission Statement

The Ontario Christian Gleaners is an Interdenominational Christian organization that seeks to visibly demonstrate God's love and grace by working with volunteers to collect, process, and make available surplus agricultural produce for the relief of the hungry in overseas nations.

They achieve their mission through activities such as producing soup as described here:

Soups

The Gleaners provides missions and humanitarian aid organizations with a soup mix that is nutritious, versatile, and easily and inexpensively transported to areas of need. Provided free – paid for by the love and participation of volunteers and the financial and in-kind gifts of faithful supporters. Monday through Fridays, an average of 60 volunteers arrive ready to trim 4000-7000 pounds of donated fresh produce. The produce is diced in our dicing machine and dried in our dehydration oven creating 25,000 – 30,000 servings of soup each day. Throughout the year, weeks are set aside to mix and package the soup mix in 100 serving bags weighing approximately 3 pounds each.

Dried Fruit

Donations of fresh apples and pears and trimmed by our volunteers,





diced in the dicing machine and dried in the dehydration oven. The dried fruit is then packaged in 3 pound bags ready for distribution. These fruit snacks are sweet treats for children in overseas countries and are often considered to be luxury items.

Distribution

Millions of servings of Gleaners soup have helped feed the poor in over 40 different countries around the world including: Haiti, Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Burkina Faso, Sierra Leone, Malawi, Philippines, India and Romania in Central and South America, Africa, Eastern Europe and Asia.

Our 3 pound bags of soup mix are given free of charge to relief organizations and missions teams. They are required to complete an application form indicating the country, people group, adequate transportation funding, staffing for distribution in the specific area and provide feedback by means of images and reports. This information is passed on to our volunteers and supporters.

Their work is much appreciated by the recipients of the bounty sent their way. Here is an expression of the gratitude:

From a Dietician in Malawi...

I'm not often impressed with food aid, but today, you gave me a pleasant surprise! I was visiting Village of Hope in Malawi who was fortunate to receive a gift from you, which will be a wonderful complement to the foods they are getting locally. They serve about 70 or so kids 3 meals a day and they get a good deal of variety from their local markets and their own garden, but they aren't to the point yet where they can get all the nutritious foods in the quantities they need.

When the staff first told me they have a dried soup mix that was delivered, I thought, oh no, probably loaded with MSG, artificial flavours and colours. I was SO impressed at your product when I saw it. It is dried so nicely and presented in such an easy to use and understand way. And dried apples, wow! I've been suggesting this to people for years, I can't believe that someone actually does it!....

Congratulations on your work!

Stacia Nordin, RD (Registered Dietitian)

Your school could be a partner with the Gleaners if it is located in the Cambridge area . They offer a tour for groups and explain to them what their mission is and how it works.

TOURS & TALKS

Tours

We would love for you to bring your community or church group, family or friends to visit us at the Gleaners and we know that you will leave excited about the work that is happening here.

A tour begins in the fellowship area where information is given about the Gleaners. While touring the facility, you will see volunteers preparing, processing and drying the produce. Our volunteers love to share stories about the work they are doing. The tour concludes with a question and answer session.

All tours begin at 10:30am and are approximately 45 minutes to 1 hour in length.

**** PLEASE NOTE: THERE WILL BE NO TOURS DURING THE MONTH OF JULY ****

To book a tour, please complete the **booking form** and we will send a confirmation to you.

Open House tours are scheduled twice monthly on various days of the week. The tour begins at 10:30am and all are welcome to join us on these tour dates. Please view the **EVENTS** page to see when the next Open House tours are scheduled.

PART F

This section of the curriculum provides provocative commentary on two aspects of the general theme of this curriculum supplement: an editorial critiquing depopulation policies and another offering a satirical look at one source of food that may be in danger of extinction if animal rights activists have their say.

Eliminate humanity for the good of the planet?

Editorial, January, 2019 *The Interim*

We recently reviewed *Population Bombed: Exploding the Link Between Overpopulation and Climate Change* in these pages (“Persistently incorrect population worries,” October), in which authors Pierre Desrochers and Joanna Szurmak argue that concerns about the environment are always – always – accompanied by the desire to control reproduction. Put another way, the solution to real or imagined environmental challenges inevitably includes depopulation control measures that include (often coerced) birth control and abortion. If the problem is that people are using too many resources, the solution all too often seems to be to reduce the number of people using those resources. So it is no surprise that when former U.S. vice president Al Gore addressed the United Nations COP24 climate change summit in Katowice, Poland last month, he offered the usual solutions to global environmental concerns: restrictions on liberty and consumption, massive redistribution, global government, and extreme population-control measures.

Gore got into high dudgeon saying with certainty that averting the coming climate change catastrophe will force international institutions and all citizens to face “the single most important moral choice in the entire history of humanity”: to commit to radical action or perish. He predicted a “hell on Earth” with a long list of calamities. For global climate change zealots, slightly increasing temperatures over time are to blame for every current global problem, including, in Gore’s recounting, the civil war in Syria, declining IQ scores in Poland, every natural disaster in recent years, and worsening allergies around the globe. Of course, he offered scant evidence for these outrageous claims, and settling into full social justice warrior mode, called the adverse effects of climate change “environmental racism” because they disproportionately affect Africa, Asia, and South America.



To reduce carbon dioxide emissions, Gore offers a long laundry list of policies to reduce humanity’s carbon footprint, but the most important, he said, was more and stricter population control. He celebrated China’s one-child policy that is enforced by coerced abortions. He praised the one- and two-child policies in some of India’s states that deny government social programs, jobs, and promotions to families that violate the child limit imposed by the local government.

Gore showed a graph that he suggested proved Africa produces too many babies. He called for contraception to be made “ubiquitously available” in every country. Despite the fact that it is the industrialized west and Red China that are responsible for the vast majority of carbon emissions, Gore indicated cutting

African and Muslim populations was the key to meet (illusory and unnecessary) cuts in carbon emissions. While he spoke of environmental racism, the real racism seems to be in the solutions Gore and his ilk are demanding.

The former vice president said that artificial intelligence and other technologies are crucial to the “revolution” to prevent climate change catastrophes, but also said that, “it’s not happening fast enough to stop the climate crisis on time.” The population must be curbed, and now. But demographic change takes time, too; indeed, reducing population by preventing births will take decades because population growth over the past century has been largely driven not by high birth rates – indeed, family size has been steadily decreasing around the globe over the past 70 years – but longer lifespans. It is not a stretch to think that depopulation policies will expand beyond controlling reproduction through contraception and abortion to the aggressive promotion of euthanasia. How long until governments incentivize, or outright coerce, euthanasia and assisted-suicide?

Lest you accuse us of fear-mongering, the same week that Gore told the UN climate change conference that depopulation is necessary to prevent catastrophic climate change, the New York Times published a column by philosopher Todd May of Clemson University, wondering if human extinction would be a tragedy?

May concludes that human extinction, “would be a tragedy and that it might be a good thing.” Employing some advanced philosophical thinking, basic literary criticism, and clever word games, May concludes that humanity is a “tragic character” because, like Shakespeare’s *Lear* or Arthur Miller’s *Willy Loman*, we commit a significant wrong but are still sympathetic in our (deserved) descent. To May, humanity’s significant moral wrong is the destruction of the earth and the suffering caused to the animals that inhabit it. The destruction

is climate change and the encroachment of human populations on previously uninhabited (by human beings) land. In other words, the mere existence of human beings is a threat to present ecosystems, from waterways and plants to birds and beasts.

May concludes that the disappearance of humanity might be “a good thing,” but, he argues, that is only part of the equation. The good of protecting the planet and all its non-human life forms at the price of humanity’s existence must be weighed against the benefits that human beings produce: art, science, literature, reason. May provides no persuasive reason why an extinct human species should care that these goods are lost; if humanity did not exist, why would it matter that people were no longer writing great books and composing beautiful symphonies – or developing philosophical arguments about the benefits of human extinction. If we deny human exceptionalism, there is simply no reason to favour the well-being of human beings over plants or animals. Indeed, environmentalist do not.

May and Gore seem to view humanity as an invasive species. It is a dreary vision of their fellow man and brings us back to a point that Desrochers and Szurmak make in their book: most environmental doomsayers that are scientists are biologists with an expertise in bacteria, birds, or insects. But humanity is not like these creatures. We have reason to solve problems. Fewer people mean fewer problem solvers. More importantly, we are creatures made in the image of God.

Carbon dioxide is exhaled by every human being with every breath we take. The war against carbon is a war against people. Al Gore and Todd May are simply reaching the logical conclusion of their Earth-first environmentalism.

Questions

1. What is one of the recurring demands or highly recommended courses of action when considering environmental challenges according to the editorial? How do environmental concerns relate to the growth of human population?
2. What was Al Gore saying about climate change and its terrible consequences?
3. According to Gore what is the most important measure that could/should be taken to reduce carbon dioxide emissions?
4. Were his suggestions racist in nature if implemented in the manner he described?
5. What did philosopher Todd May lament in his column for the *New York Times*?
6. Are Gore and May environmental extremists in their calls for action? Why or why not?
7. Which approach from the earlier sections does the editorial sympathize with, Julian Simon and Sagoff or Ehrlich and Partridge? Why?



Some are more equal

By Joe Campbell, *The Interim*, January 2019

Thanks to the animal rights people, I’ve developed a guilty conscience. After reading their literature, I realize that I’m unfair to animals. I’ve been unfair to them, I’m embarrassed to say, for as long as I can remember.

It’s not that I dislike animals. It’s just that I treat them unequally. I discriminate, and that’s wrong.

But I can’t help it if I have a discriminating palate.

Although I’ve tried elk, buffalo, and pheasant, I prefer lamb, suckling pig and chicken. It’s not that I have anything against the more exotic animals. It’s just that, to me, they aren’t as tasty as the more familiar ones. I hope the animal rights people understand that.



Joe Campbell

I hesitate to admit it, but I don't wear fur. Again, it's not that I have something against mink, foxes, and baby seals. I think they're cute, in fact. It's just that leather suits me better. What's more, I don't mind it when others wear fur. I hope the animal rights people understand that, too.

While I'm at it, I may as well confess that I discriminate against dog shows. I'm sorry but they bore me. I prefer to go to the circus and watch the trainers put lions, tigers, elephants, and bears through their paces. Oh, I know that dogs are more talented and do more complicated tricks and routines, but there's something about seeing wild animals acting tame that attracts me. It's just more entertaining.

Happily, I'm not the least bit prejudiced when it comes to animal experimentation. As far as I'm concerned, researchers can try out new surgeries and drugs on whatever animals they think are most suitable. Wild or tame, they're all the same to me. That ought to count for something with the animal rights people.

I should also get points for my policy on pets. Unlike some of my friends, who keep dogs, or cats, or gerbils, or budgie birds, I don't discriminate. I keep none. Again, it doesn't mean that I have anything against companion animals. It just means that I'm not a petophile.

So, you see, my commitment to animal welfare is solid. Not only do animals feed, clothe, and entertain me, they participate in medical and pharmaceutical experiments that could save my life. What's not to like about that?

Still, because of my guilty conscience, I sometimes dream about animals. My latest dream concerned a future meeting of the United Nations, where Canada was judged the most democratic country in the world because it was the first to admit animals to full citizenship. Certificates of commendation were awarded for every breed of animal imaginable. The animals didn't actually attend to receive them. They deferred to their human champions, the rights activists, compliant politicians and bureaucrats, sympathetic judges, and media cheerleaders, who had combined to outlaw species discrimination and constitutionally recognize the equality of animals and people.

A reporter from a country with a poor animal rights record – it considered animals inferior to humans – got an exclusive interview with the leader of the Canadian delegation. "How in the world did you bring this off?" he asked, enviously.

"Biological relativism," the delegate replied. "Once we got consensus on that, everything else followed, slowly but surely."

"How clever," the reporter said, admiringly. "Against a theory like that, species discrimination doesn't stand a chance, nor does any form of inequality."

"Exactly," the delegate agreed. "Once this became generally recognized, we had no difficulty approving affirmative action to overcome exclusion and alienation."

"I understand this includes reparations to compensate for loss of freedom and culture."

"We had to do something tangible for all those domestic animals that spent their lives in servitude."

"I understand. But I thought Canada had abolished this servitude years ago and that the affected animals are long dead."

"True, but their descendants are still with us and carry scars from the ill treatment of their forebears."

"You, of course, had your detractors," the reporter said. "One critic, in particular, must have been difficult to endure. His research showed that compared to animals in the wild, many in captivity were better fed, had better health, experienced less violence and lived longer."

"Yes, but those are only facts. That critic lacked an egalitarian vision and his conclusions were hurtful and hate filled."

"Is it true that he ran afoul of the Federal Animal Rights Commission and was bounded out of his university professorship?"

"There's no place for insensitivity like that in the new Canada. I believe in academic freedom, but this was license. If it had been allowed to stand, some malcontent might have tried to justify the consumption of meat which, happily, we abolished decades ago."

"Do you believe that in our time animals will sit in Parliament?"

"Absolutely, and when it happens you won't notice any difference."

Questions for class discussion

1. Are human rights activists extremists or simply deeply respectful of non-human species?
2. What are some of the organizations who espouse animal rights? What are some of their principles and demands?
3. What points is Joe Campbell making in his satirical column?
4. Does he make sense?
5. Is the humorous approach effective?
6. How does Campbell make a case for the concept of “human exceptionalism”?

Father Ted Colleton Scholarship Prize Winners

It was a long haul, but we have come to the end of the road with this year’s Father Ted Colleton Scholarship program. Niagara Region Right to Life is happy to announce the three prize winners for the 2018-2019 edition of the scholarship and essay contest. The participants wrote creative essays on a challenging topic, in which they were asked to place themselves in the position of the preborn child and offer an opinion on whether all the current medical and technological breakthroughs clarifies their status and strengthens their right to life as a pre-born human beings.

Congratulations to all the candidates for taking part. The final results were as follows:

first prize to **Julia Alphonso**, Father Michael McGivney Catholic Academy, Markham, Ontario;

second prize to **Izaak Falk**, Cornerstone Christian School, Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan;

third prize to **Claire Mackness**, St. Thomas More High School in Hamilton, Ontario.

Their essays will be published in a spring issue of *The Interim* newspaper. The scholarship program is made possible thanks to the generous patronage of Niagara Region Right to Life which provides the funds for the contest. Kudos to Niagara Region Right to Life

**See you on May 9 on
Parliament Hill.
The 50th anniversary
of the worst law ever to be
passed
by a Canadian parliament.
Join us to witness against it
and to stand up for justice
for the pre-born children of
Canada.**

