

THE HUMAN ENVIRONMENT - OR - WHO NEEDS ECOLOGY

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Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen, and fellow members of a minority within a minority, it is my pleasure to appear here today and participate in your discussions on the environment.

You may wonder why an oceanic type is standing before you here, far from the sea in these beautiful mountain surroundings. Well, it may be news to you, but my earliest memories of observations on fish behavior took place right here in Lake Tahoe and in Pyramid Lake over fifty years ago.

I had hoped to make a tightly-structured talk, leading logically from point to point, to a dramatic climax, but found this too difficult -- every point I will bring up relates to both the preceding and later points, but I'll try for a thread of continuity.

At risk of sounding like an old-timer rambling along, I'll give you a look at my experience in environmental problems. Many years ago I was one of a small group of practicing environmentalists, even before that big word was coined, and even though I had no broad concept of what it really involved.

In my work as a conservationist, I often whimsically thought of myself as "Horatious at the Bridge", fighting off the invasion of barbarians. You who are now playing the part had better keep on fighting -- because if you have seen the Tiber River running full of pollution, you would surely rather fight than swim.

Anyhow, I won a few and I lost a lot of fights, like the rest of you. I feel personally bitter that I lost the sardine and mackerel resources, but at least I can take solace in the victories my former staff people won in maintaining the salmon runs.

During my work with the State and since then I have become rather bitter toward mankind and his inhumanity, not only toward fellow man, but to the entire earth and all its living creatures and to future generations of humans. I have come to see man's lack of will for self-survival. It would seem that the human race would rather satisfy its ego than assure its future well-being; it's more interested in self-image than perpetuation.

¹ Keynote Address presented first morning of the joint AFS-TWS Conference.

Speaking of man's inhumanity, let me make it clear that what I have to say applies not only to America. Man's degradation of himself and his environment is worldwide and goes back to earliest times. Other people are as bad as we have been. We just have a greater capability for destruction because of our advanced technology, our driving ambition to change everything, and our superior organization of manpower. We are deliberately exporting our technology and know-how to every part of the world, and everyone else is quick to adopt our worst practices and ignore our best.

I have personally observed the rape of our natural heritage in all parts of this country. I have seen the results of mindless deforestation and efforts to restore the forests in Latin America, Asia and Europe. I have seen former rivers turned into sewers in all these places, and even in the South Pacific islands. My eyes have burned in the smog of Latin American and European cities, where conditions make Los Angeles' air seem clean. I have seen open strip and dredger tin mining in Malaysia, and devastated saltwater marshes in Mexico. And in many places I have seen slums packed with people who could no longer make a living off the eroded land. In many countries, I have seen the results of uninhibited growth of human populations, not to mention the degradation of man by other man in the form of serfdom or quasi-slavery. I have seen how the change from food crops to non-food cash crops like cotton, sugar and coffee, has contrived to make the rich richer, the hungry hungrier, and the once fertile lands impoverished. Naturally, I have become bitter and have come to wonder why we are "waging an insane war with the earth" as a Russian strip miner is quoted as having expressed it.

So let's try to take a look at various viewpoints of the problem and try to arrive at some basic understandings, as we ask, "Can mankind really survive much longer?" In fact, should it go on as it is?

The progressive destruction of earth's life system goes way back in time, at least as far as the Old Testament. In Genesis 1, 28, after God created man and woman he commanded them to, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves and upon the earth!" This is the one and only commandment that mankind has taken seriously and literally, in spite of theologians' statements that God certainly did not mean to subdue the earth by ruining it and assert dominion by means of mass slaughter.

In other words, since time began, mankind has deliberately tried his best to destroy the earth and all that lives upon it, including fellow man.

Sometimes the destruction of the land and its creatures has been deliberate. A few samples are Rome's successful and permanent devastation of much of northern Africa; our own slaughter of the buffalo herds in order to control and kill off the Plains Indians; the worldwide destruction of forests for profit; and the horrors of warfare. More often, it has been unthinking carelessness, the result of mindless but well-intentioned expansion, development or so-called improvement, and just plain wasteful over-use of natural resources.

The consequences of this destruction go far beyond the extermination of wildlife and forests and scenery. They threaten not only a way of life that many of us cherish, but life itself. You people in this audience, even though wrapped up in the pressing and important details of your own particular work specialty, are well aware that future survival of man in his present way of life is at stake. Most of the world's people are not so aware; thus, it's up to you to do something about it above and beyond your own rather narrow job restraints. It's futile to just gather around and talk among ourselves; we have to get with it or relate; we must become activists and dare to speak out. More of that later.

Let me explain my opening remark that we gathered here are a minority within a minority. First of all, like any minority we are an elite minority and hence subject to suspicion by the majority. Minorities threaten the comfortable status quo and must be suppressed. Never forget that!

The bigger minority, of which we are one segment, is that rather large and growing group of nature lovers -- the serious fishermen and hunters, bird watchers, mountain climbers, desert rats and rock hounds, photographers, and in general the lovers of clear skies and clean

waters. They number in the millions, but percentage-wise are still a small minority. These derisively-termed "nature freaks" are set apart and scorned by the majority as surely as are the Blacks and Chicanos in this country or the whites in some other lands. And for much the same reason -- they threaten to rock the boat.

By and large, these members of our minority love the great outdoors and are willing to fight for it if led properly, but in general they expect someone else to save the wilderness for them. I might add that this "someone else" is usually people like you and the members of the Sierra Club, Audubon Society and the like. Most of them have as yet no real appreciation that human survival depends on maintaining the whole environment, but many are beginning to get the message. This group constitutes mankind's one great hope for the future.

We here at this meeting, and our fellow conservation workers, are the elite of this elite. We understand that earth is no more than a space capsule, and we know how to preserve its delicate life system. Our members are augmented by a goodly number of biologists in other fields, numerous clergymen, geographers and historians. It is our mission to lead whatever forces are available. Repugnant as it may be to meet face to face with masses of people, we must go forth and preach the gospel of survival. And we have our work cut out for us in overcoming both apathy and opposition.

By the way, when I say "we", I really mean "you". I personally have become embittered and I have found out that bitterness gets one nowhere. Once you get that way, it's best to pass the banner on to someone else, and that's what I am doing.

If these so-called nature freaks are a minority, how do we explain the recent gains in the conservation field? Such as the beginning of a halt to air and water pollution and the preservation of small bits of wilderness. One thing is a genuine increasing awareness among many people that the situation has become desperate. A lot of people who scarcely ever venture outdoors have become concerned. There is even a backlash against a computer-like technology that has gone wild. Also, remember that this country, like all others, is really run by minorities. Well-organized groups can get their message across and push the majority around. You can all think of various minorities that get all the attention of the well-known squeaking wheel.

Another thing is people's increasing feeling of being fed up with the impersonal establishment, which along with its many other faults is blatantly anti-environment and pro-pollution. I think that the recent huge vote in favor of "saving our coast" was in large measure a reaction against the vicious big-business opposition to No. 20. Personally, I favor protecting our coastline, but I took extra, real pleasure in pressing down hard on that rubber "X" because it was a vicarious punch in the nose to certain vested interests.

So much for the minority we represent. Who makes up the majority? Everyone else of course; nice people and nasty people, with every kind of motivation for good or evil.

Luckily for the world, the majority is made up of lots of other kinds of minorities, ethnic and otherwise. The majority ranges the whole gamut from those who literally hate the outdoors to those who simply don't give a damn, from those who destroy for profit to those who destroy for pleasure. It includes rich people and poor ones, politicians, businessmen, educated and illiterates, vandals and litterbugs, but mostly just ordinary decent people.

We can classify the different kinds of people who comprise the majority and we should take a look at their various viewpoints. Some may be potential allies, some for various reasons are obvious permanent enemies. In any case, we should understand them. It does no good to damn a subdivision developer, curse a pipeline builder, boycott a power company, or whatever. We have to live with them and the world always has and always will. Anyway, who wants to go without a roof over his head, fuel for his car or lighting for streets and home?

Each of the many groups that I will list (plus those I may forget) has its own way of looking at the environment. And the way one sees his surroundings determines his reaction to them, his likes and dislikes.

To each person, the expression the "Good Life" has a different meaning. To those of us here, the Good Life includes a large measure of the unsullied outdoors -- the mountains, deserts, ocean, or just plain countryside. To the great majority of the people of this world who exist at the starvation level, the Good Life of which they dream consists of a loaf of bread, a bowl of rice or a stack of tortillas. To aspire to that is enough. What does it matter if rivers are polluted and the air is smoggy if industrialization brings a job of any kind to buy that rice?

To many in relatively affluent societies, the Good Life means a six-pack of beer and football on television. To most people the world around, a pleasant environment means a city with sidewalks and stores and excitement. To them, the countryside is an alien, lonely and terrifying place.

Let's face it, more people find their pleasure in urban and suburban activities, preferably in their home towns, than in communing with nature. And when they leave home for another city, the open country is just something to be endured while proceeding as fast as possible from Point A to Point B. I daresay that more people go to Las Vegas, Reno, San Francisco, and other cities than to Yellowstone, Yosemite and the like for their recreation. And no one can convince me that people come to Lake Tahoe anymore for the scenery.

On top of that, the vast majority of people never even leave their own cities. Relatively more do out here in the West, but a true New Yorker considers anything beyond the suburbs as an alien wilderness. Many city people don't even venture across town to a park or beach; some can't afford it but most can, yet won't go. We used to marvel at seeing half a million people enjoying a Sunday in Mexico City's Chapultepec Park -- yet the other 6 1/2 million inhabitants remained crowded into their home neighborhoods.

To these stay-at-homes wherever they may be, whether in ghettos, barrios, suburbs, or millionaires' row, the environment consists of their dwelling, their place of business, nearby streets, shopping area, friends, neighbors, enemies, either pampered pets or stray cats and dogs, a well-kept garden or perhaps a scraggly tree or two. It may be hostile or unfriendly, often shabby, but it's familiar. The horizon is limited. To at least half the people in this country and to over three-fourths in most countries, any talk about ecology and natural resources falls on deaf ears. They could care less, as long as the home team is a pennant contender and the refrigerator is full.

It is not going to be easy to change a way of life that has been developing for centuries. Just spend a few days in the big cities and you may begin to think that the hydrogen bomb is the best solution after all. Is it worth the effort or should we just let the human race drown in its own sewage?

There is only one answer. A truly professional athlete puts forth his best efforts whether he is on a winning team or with a loser. We are all professionals in the real sense. And in addition, many of us have strong religious convictions. Hence, we won't quit. We may get tired and bitter, but we'll keep trying. After all, most of the unthinking majority are really nice people -- less than half the world's population are real stinkers.

Now, let's get on with classifying the groups found in the environmentally unconscious or hostile majority, and how they got to be that way. Then we can examine the rather large group of people who do care, but don't take leadership. And then comes a quick look at the fiery crusaders who proudly fly the banner of Ecology Activism. Strangely enough, all three groups draw their memberships from the same social and ethnic groups, even the same family, and from all kinds of occupations. Individuals often can not be recognized by the way they talk and act; in fact they often pass over from one category to another. All of them together make up the whole human environment which somehow has to be accommodated on this planet's fragile surface.

In discussing these groups, I will consider only the people of the United States because those are the ones that you have to deal with in your work. My remarks apply pretty much, of course, to Canada and other so-called advanced countries, but to different degree and in some particulars.

The people who don't give a thought to the whole environmental picture and who see the word "ecology" only in a cross-word puzzle are to be found in the cities, the suburbs and on the farm. They range from extreme poverty to great wealth, and come from every kind of ethnic background.

The city-bred people, whose ancestors have called some city home for generations, can have no real concept of the wide open spaces nor of their own reliance on natural resources. Who can blame them for thinking that milk comes out of a carton, water from a tap, electricity from a wire, and bread from wax paper? They pay their bills and their taxes, and although they grumble, they expect to be able to get all these things as they always have, and in even greater abundance than before.

The newcomers to the city are refugees from the hard life of the farm. For generations, their families have fought a losing battle against nature, and now they expect the good life of the city, whether they be white or black or brown, whether they had grown to hate a harsh life in Appalachia, Puerto Rico, Mexico, or the back-waters of the South. Hard as we may think their life is now, it may be better than it was. Why should they give a thought to conservation of natural resources? To most of them, there is little or no nostalgia or love for the open countryside, nor appreciation of their continued dependence on natural resources.

The new breed of suburbanite is mostly made up of those who fled the city to escape noise and crowds and neighbors they either hated or feared, but some are also escapees from farm life. Snug and smug in their delightful surroundings, they have the best of two worlds, as they can take their recreation in both city and country. Prone to over-use natural resource products and quick to complain of any shortage, most of them give little thought to the future.

Farmers in general have been the greatest despoilers of the environment, although there are numerous exceptions. They plow where they shouldn't, cut down all possible wildlife habitat, drain and reclaim, use too much water, fertilizer and pesticides, and mistreat their own soil. But they do it only because of public need and demand for their product. After all, agriculture is the firm and only base for any civilization. It can and should be a force for good. That so much of its force has been for the worse harks back to pioneering days when farming was a real struggle against nature. Whether clearing boulders from New England hillsides, cutting down forests and brush, or fighting Indians, our forefathers had to fight for every acre. You can't blame them really for being scornful of the new "nature freaks".

The railway and highway builders, the land reclaimers, the subdividers and all the rest are motivated by profit to be sure, but they share the same heritage of a desire to overcome nature. It has been a national policy to change and tame and over-do everything. The public demands more and more, and the developers will provide it at a handsome profit. In a culture that has always encouraged the grabber, who can fault them for trying to get their share of the national patrimony at the expense of the timid and the weak?

It's the same for industry. Traditionally, an enterprise is supposed to make money for its owners. Until recently, the concept of responsibility to the people who are the real owners of the exploited resources was unknown. The glimmer of change for the better is encouraging at least.

Governments and politicians reflect the desires of the majority, and increasingly of organized and vocal minorities. The majority wants more and more of everything, so that is what government provides. After all, ours is a government of people. The animals and forests, the ocean, rivers and air don't have any votes. Nor for that matter do future generations of mankind. So it's easier to provide quick temporary solutions and keep present voters happy rather than look ahead. He who does gets voted out -- at least until very recently. Those minority groups who contribute handsomely to political campaigns to get something for their money. This has often been a free hand to exploit or pollute in order to make more money. When the public begins to want a better environment, be it clean air or water or beaches or whatever, governments and politicians will begin to change. This we are seeing nowadays in a small way.

Some of our disadvantaged ethnic minorities, particularly the Blacks, Chicanos and Puerto Ricans, are understandably hostile to the ecology movement. Not only are they mostly uninterested in the great outdoors, but they fear that any efforts in behalf of the environment are aimed at diverting funds from activities that would improve their own deplorable situation. I can't blame them for feeling that way, and the environmental movement had better find a way to help them too.

As for the vandals and litterbugs, I have no good explanation for their activities, either in the city or the country. Littering is natural the world over and always has been, but nowadays there is more refuse to throw away. It is mostly carelessness with a considerable feeling of "to hell with everyone else". I suppose that vandalism is a form of ego fulfillment and also a way to fight back at the establishment. It is hatred unleashed. And I must add that it arouses my hatred.

As you well know, the driver of the off-road vehicle has become a serious threat to the environment lately. This type of activity seems to have developed as an escape mechanism, a haven from the tightly controlled urban life with all its necessary restraints on uninhibited and unsafe fun. A guy who is prohibited from risking his life speeding on streets and highways, and who spends five days a week at confining, monotonous and disciplined work, simply has to do something to let off steam. That he destroys the very outdoors he escapes to in his dune buggy or snowmobile or motorbike does not occur to him. I must confess that I empathize with him. Some way must be found to accommodate him without wrecking the backwoods and without seeming to impose what look like needless restrictions.

The people who care, but who don't seem to do much to help the environment, also come from all levels of affluence and poverty. They live in the cities, suburbs, small towns, and on farms. They may not be activists but they are increasingly aware of the harmful effects of an unceasing rape of nature. They are beginning to vote for environmentally beneficial measures and for representatives who "vote right".

They include urban and suburban residents who escape when they can to the beaches or mountains, even if they do display their citified orientation by preferring to stay with the crowds and shunning the more remote and lonesome campgrounds. They include the causal hunters, fishermen and campers. They include a growing number of farmers and ranchers who are beginning to change their ways, not to mention many enlightened planners, builders and developers, as well as industrialists.

This environmentally aware group includes one large ethnic minority, the American Indian, who traditionally lived his admittedly hard life in harmony with nature, and who equates the devastation of his ancestral environment with the white man's greed. Many Indian reservations have indeed become model conservation areas. In fact, they have become desirable enough to be coveted by certain non-Indian interests.

A most encouraging development is the growing awareness among many people who are not really nature lovers of the need to preserve the environment and ration the resources. Many city dwellers and suburbanites who don't dig the outdoors, but who are inherently decent, are beginning to rise up. Even though many labor unions are instinctively opposed to the ecology movement as a threat to employment, many individual members (both outdoorsmen and others) are more than sympathetic and have become active conservationists. These newly aware people of all kinds are the ones who may eventually swing the balance of power-- power -- with a little gentle push from the activists.

Which brings us to the activists. Every cause, at least since the Medieval Crusades to the Holy Land, has had its share of idealists and practical people, of charlatans and knaves, self-seekers and self-righteous, kooks and squares. The ecology movement is no exception. Its shock troops include the good, bad and indifferent. And, like earlier crusades, its ranks are swelled by youths who correctly blame their elders and past generations for what has gone wrong, and who think that they can fly in the face of human nature and make things right.

Most ecology activists, thank God, are well meaning, intelligent, enthusiastic, and effective. They have banded together in powerful organizations, written books, produced films, held seminars, and have stood up in court and slugged it out with well-financed special interests. They have captured a heartening measure of support among both voters and politicians, and in the courts. Of these activists, I need say no more than "thank you and keep up the good work".

The super-zealots and fanatics are something else again. They over-react and too often cry wolf. They turn off many potential supporters. Some are outright phonies and give the movement a bad image. Others are hypocrites who will ride any coattails that may lead them to good pickings. Even some of the truly sincere and dedicated conservationists have gone too far by making outrageous statements and dream-world demands. A whole legion of "doomsday prophets" has spoken out. All this has been self-defeating to some extent. Nevertheless, it has focused public attention on a real problem, as no cautious scientific approach ever would have done.

The Sierra Club, like the other big organizations battling on behalf of future generations, has been burned by over-zealousness. It has lately embarked on a more rational and hence more effective approach. Once accused of being "blindly against all progress", the Club's new watchword is, "opposed only to blind progress". It and its fellow societies have also begun to zero in on urban and metropolitan problems. They now stand up in court beside Blacks and Chicanos fighting against ill-advised developments that would displace humans not wildlife. The movement has gone straight. It recognizes all kinds of environment, including the human, and can relate them to daily city life.

I now revert back to the world picture. Looking at the problem dispassionately, we can state unequivocally that man's technology and his greed are not about to wipe out all life and exterminate every creature. This is not likely, the doomsday syndrome to the contrary.

However, man is rapidly and inexorably making great changes on planet Earth that will result in a profoundly different and less pleasant world in the very near future.

First and foremost, is his overproduction of offspring. The increase in world population is so great as to defy the imagination. All the statistics which you have heard are unbelievable but all too true.

Second, man's undirected blind technology is making all the world's resources available and finding new uses for them. In fact, technology and science have made the population explosion possible, also.

Growing population, plus advanced technology, plus man's innate greed, are together putting an impossible strain on all earth's resources. For the non-renewable resources the end is in clear sight. Most renewable living resources are being so badly managed that their demise is only a matter of time. And, on top of it all, man is not only wasteful, he is dirty. He has yet to fully comprehend that his untidy ways are hastening the end of earth's finite resources, as well as threatening to make his own life increasingly unpleasant.

Over much vaunted technology can do anything asked of it if properly motivated and funded. It is time to plan to point it in a new direction. Instead of new ways to extract and use the resources, it could look to ways to stretch out their life expectancy. Instead of developing quick yet wasteful methods of extraction and use, it could develop methods that would eliminate air, water and soil pollution. Above all, it could develop substitutes, particularly for energy sources. None of these will be cheap nor profitable at first, but over the long haul, they will pay for themselves.

One thing really concerns me which is seldom considered in a discussion of the environment. This is the vast difference in the distribution of wealth and in resource use throughout the world. The vast gulf between the "have nations" and the "have nots" is wide and getting wider all the time. In the not too distant future this gap will spell trouble for everyone, if not disaster.

To those who have not lived or visited extensively in the poorer countries, it is hard to describe the situation meaningfully, but I'll try, albeit in over-simplified terms. Many of you in this audience have been there and know what I am talking about.

First, remember that what is now the United States was originally endowed magnificently with natural resources. By dint of hard work, the resources were put to use. Their utilization is what made us wealthier than any nation past, present or future. Their abuse has now made us dependent on other people's resources, which we can afford to buy to maintain our incomparable standard of living.

No other country seems to have the variety and quantity of resources. In the rest of the world, resources are spotty -- some are very abundant one place and lacking elsewhere. Outside of Europe, Japan and North America, the people have been either too poor or too indifferent to exploit their own natural riches properly. So, Japanese, Americans and Europeans have gone forth to extract the wealth. Selling these resources has made a few people in each country so rich that they don't need to do anything to develop their own nation. Meanwhile, the general population has become more numerous and poorer, so that they can't afford to buy the goodies that our technology can make out of their resources. This makes them mad at us.

It has come to the point where the United States with its small fraction of the world's population consumes and wastes far more than half of the world's resources. Our population and those of the other developed countries have stabilized while our consumption of resources continues to increase rapidly. Each of our people is now consuming more than twice the amount of resources that each of our fathers did. Meanwhile, the population in the less developed countries is leaping ahead at an incredible rate and its purchasing power is being spread thinner. Each person in the poor countries has less means than ever to buy the resources and products that he can see being shipped to us. Some of our leaders are concerned about our worsening balance of trade, but the man in the street could care less. Our people want more of everything and the people of other countries have to keep selling it to us in order to scrape by.

Rather suddenly, all around the underdeveloped world, people are beginning to realize that they are getting the dirty end of the stick. They blame their leaders and millionaires, and they blame the United States. And they agitate.

These people demand industrialization, better jobs, and home use of home resources. They want a taste of the good life, too, something more than that stack of tortillas or bowl of rice. They will get it. But in so doing, they will defile their air, and pollute their rivers, and destroy their life-giving forests and jungles, as they are already doing.

The poorer countries can't afford such things as pollution control; population pressures won't wait for planning for the future. Even more so than here, present people are more important than future generations. Resources will surely be depleted and fertile lands will be ruined. Then what will the growing hordes of hungry people do? Will they be content to starve while we still over-eat in our dream world? It may not be doomsday, but it won't be much fun for anyone. Someone, somewhere had damn well better find some solutions but quick.

You might well ask, "What can I do about all this?" Obviously, no one of you is going to solve the whole worldwide problem. But you can all do something to at least put off that final day of reckoning.

You, as the truly elite, must become involved. Through your participation in the Wildlife and Fisheries Societies, you are already involved, but you can do more.

You can join one or more of the recognized conservation organizations and become active in their work: Sierra Club, Audubon Society, Save the Redwoods, Save the Bay, Wilderness Society and many more. Membership in the local sportsmen's clubs can help guide their narrow and sometimes stumbling path. Your wives can become active in the League of Women Voters, one of the non-conservation oriented groups that is supporting the ecology movement. You can work with youth groups and increase your work in the schools. All this will make great demands on your time, but someone has to carry the burden.

They say that charity begins at home. So do other things. Unless we can clean up the little things at home as a beginning, we can never solve national problems. And until the United States, as pacesetter, cleans out its own house, the rest of the world is not going to do much of anything. Unfortunately, no one at the top is about to hand down solutions. The leadership is not there. Hence, we have to start at the bottom and build upward and outward.

Above all, both in your daily work and in your outside activities, don't get bitter. Don't let the bastards get you down!

Now let me wrap things up with a few quotations. There is a great outpouring of books on the environment, many of which are good and full of quotes worth remembering. Time Magazine has a weekly column on the environment and my third quotation is from a recent issue.

First, we have the newly coined word "Ecotactics", which is the title of a provocative Sierra Club Handbook in which this definition appears, "ecotactics, the science of arranging and maneuvering all available forces in action against enemies of the earth." High sounding maybe, but it tells it like it is.

Next, let's go back to John Muir, who many years ago defined ecology without even using the word as he said, "When we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the universe." And that's what ecology is all about.

Long ago Friedrich Engels warned man to think before he acted, when he declared, "Let us not be very hopeful about our human conquest over nature. For each such victory, nature manages to take her revenge."

Yet to the man on the street, or in the slums and ghettos, there is no connection between man and nature. How can the human race be hitched to a mountain meadow or a jungle in the Amazon? Life style is more important than life.

Actually, I like people as individuals; my best friends are all people. But I am beginning to realize that human nature isn't all that great. As a matter of fact, I'm afraid that the human race is no damn good. Yet in spite of myself, I can't do anything but try to help improve things.

My last quotation is all my own, which I hope will prove wrong, as I give my version of mankind's rallying cry in the name of progress, "Who needs ecology? Damn the torpedos; full steam ahead!"