

RUNNING HEAD: Fatal Progress

Fatal Progress: Destruction After Creation

English 214

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How relatively young our society is, but what a great progress was achieved in less than three thousand years. Especially the last couple of centuries during which humanity accomplished so much in the technological field. Yet there is an evident downside to this progress. The more one talks about technological success, the more the issue of sustainability, primarily environmental, becomes so important that it cannot be ignored anymore.

If one looks at the scale of success versus damage brought upon the Earth by human technological progress, damage has significantly more weight. Almost everything people had ever created to improve life and make it easier and more productive now destroys the environment. Imperative ecological problems due to the extremely high level of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, nuclear pollution, exhaustion of natural resources, and ecosystem instability are so much greater than the advantages of the human progress. To reverse this destructive tendency, humans must to adapt sustainability concepts. International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources, U. N. Development Program, World Wildlife Fund defines sustainability as “A kind of development that provides real improvements in the quality of human life and at the same time conserves the vitality and diversity of the Earth.” However, at the present time, benefit from the progress is shadowed by the apparent destruction of the environment.

In the 19th century people’s lives were eased by the innovation of automobiles and industrial factories, nobody knew that in the following century it will cause an immense damage to the environment. Daily great amount of carbon dioxide is released into the atmosphere causing smog, acid rain, greenhouse effect, and ozone layer depletion. The only salvation is plants that convert carbon dioxide back to oxygen, but the release of carbon dioxide from human activities is higher than the world's plants can process. The situation is made even worse due to decrease of

acres of green forests and damage of vital oxygen producing plants by the acid rain.

Consequently, the amount of carbon dioxide in the air is continuing to increase, creating a complete circle (Outdoor pollution, 2007).

Another ecologically harmful invention of people is nuclear power. The Nuclear Age began in July 1945 when the U. S. tested their first nuclear bomb near Alamogordo. A few years later, in 1953, President Eisenhower launched his "Atoms for Peace" Programme at the UN amid a wave of unbridled atomic optimism (Greenpeace, 2007). However, in practice, development of nuclear energy industry brought more harm and destruction rather than benefit. No atomic station is guaranteed to be safe neither for people nor for environment. One small mistake in atomic station management can lead to unspeakable tragedy. Such incidents had occurred all over the world. Tragedies on the Chernobyl AS, Mayak and Olkiluoto will be always reminding the world of how vulnerable and defenseless people can be in the face of uncontrolled nuclear energy (Greenpeace, 2007).

Besides being inefficient and not safe, atomic energy aggravate two more negative factors. First, it is nuclear waste. There is no secure, risk free way to store it. No country in the world has a solution for high-level waste that stays radioactive for hundreds of thousands of years. Areas where nuclear waste was buried usually have high level of radioactivity, which causes mutations in living organisms. Another problem is a potential danger of nuclear weapons. If such a deathly tool falls into the hands of terrorists of other threatening group or even government, it will lead to the nuclear war.

Also despite people's attempts to create new ways of getting energy, oil remains their primary source. But the problem is that needs of Earth's population cannot be met for any longer than a 100 of years if people continue using oil in the amount that they do now. And this is a

problem not only with oil, but other natural resources are getting exhausted much faster than the earth can recover. Day by day with their demands and hazardous attitude to the nature people simply destroying their own environment. For example, only the U.S. produces about 375 million tons of trash and garbage per year (McCarthy, 1995).

Human activity impacts negatively ecosystems as well. According to the Living Planet report, between 1970 and 2000 populations of hundreds of species of birds, mammals, reptiles, amphibians and fish. declined by about 35% (Sustainability.net, 2007). As the only intellectual beings on the planet Earth, people consciously making decisions that destroy their environment.

Center for Sustainable Communities says:” Sustainability considers the whole instead of the specific, emphasizing relationships rather than pieces in isolation. Sustainability is not about regressing to primitive living conditions. It is about understanding our situation, and developing communities that are equitable and make sense ecologically and economically.” People do not have to wait until hundreds of living organisms die, or environment will be irreversibly polluted. Community has enough natural and intellectual resources to live safely and successfully without interfering with the nature. It is not a myth, that the progress can be beneficial for the environment, and people as a part of it. But it is only people who can make this dream a reality.

References

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