Sulymn Hago´

Blog assignment question:
"What would you change about the world?"

Change in Attitude

What would I change about the world? I would encourage compassion and eliminate ignorance and selfishness. It would be quite nice if people learned how to coexist with each other in an amiable way, but for some reason it is a constant struggle. I think the focus is placed too much on the distinctions of an individual rather than on the overall similarities . . . . I always thought that was enough to relate and to get along with someone, even those I don't know, but apparently it is not to a lot of people. I think individuals mentally handicap themselves when they choose to discriminate against diverse groups; it is the product of self-absorption and ignorance.

Many falling into this category carry ethnocentric ideas, which I think create much of the tension in the world. The attitude that a person's beliefs are the best and not caring to think differently relates to racism, sexism and prejudice. It seems like an avoidable and unnecessary conflict if people made the effort to be more sympathetic toward each other. Behold the problem: effort. I would like if people cared to put more effort into understanding others. I see too much of the poor attitude about not caring at all because the ill effects won't faze the individual, and as long as it does not faze them, it is okay to continue being inconsiderate to others.

Like the other day, I was sitting around campus and there was this guy near me drinking a soda. Time passes, and he finishes and leaves the soda behind. I thought, "You have to be kidding me? I couldn't believe he did that, especially when four trash bins were approximately 15 feet

from where he stood, but he just decided to leave it there. I'm sure he thought someone else would throw it out; trash is someone else's responsibility, right? . . . . He probably thought he was just one person doing it; however, how many people think they are just one person? As cliché as it sounds, perhaps many "I'm just one person" examples could add up to a change.

A more serious example relates to killing. My childhood best friend was murdered last year at the age of 22, and I sometimes wonder how the guys who murdered him sleep at night. I just feel terrible when I slightly or unintentionally offend someone, but taking someone's life—how do you do it? I think it's one of the most selfish things a person can ever do and just another example of lacking compassion and showing ignorance. On the surface, it may seem as one less person to worry about or just someone no longer existing with us, but death carries so much depth. The people who kill do not have any concern for the ill effects because they do not have to deal with them. But what are they really killing? In my opinion, to kill someone is to destroy hope, a family, holidays, friendships, laughter and many, many aspects of life. I think that is what individuals overlook. I do not know the exact demographics of daily deaths, but I'm sure it is large; every time I hear of one, two, or 100 deaths, I think about how much trauma people related to these individuals are about to endure and only hope the best for them in coping with it.

I am not talking about wanting compassion just toward humans, but toward other living organisms as well. If I witness more trees cut down for another Wal-Mart, I'm going to flip. The purpose is a selfish desire to make a profit, and occurs because humans are superior to animals. It is just cutting down some trees, though, right? There is not much harm done. However, what about all those

> "If we had no diversity, imagine how boring the world would be."

animals? Where do they go? What if the land destroyed was necessary for their survival? It is not our concern, and oh, right, they are just animals and do not have rights.

If we had no diversity, imagine how boring the world would be. We are all living on this Earth together, and there is no changing that. Therefore, we can make it easier and more exciting if we learn how to respect and coexist with each other. We all have our own skills and shouldn't feel inferior when we cannot excel in another field. What is wrong with helping or learning from each other for that purpose alone? It seems some people help when there is something to gain, and they often become selfish and take advantage of others because it is not they who will suffer. I think getting rid of this attitude could contribute to more cooperation and diminish such things as rivalry, killing and hate.

Sulymn Hago'

Blog assignment question:
Without summarizing Wilson's argument, discuss what it brings to mind for you. If you wrote a letter to a senator or legislator, what issue would you write about? Or, in other words, if your letter would change anything in terms of the quality of our environment (or our world), what would you change?

[This discussion forum question refers to Edmund O. Wilson's "The Bottleneck," which is an excerpt from his book, The Future of Life. NY: Knopf, 2002. The article is reprinted in Dynamic Argument, edited by Robert Lamm and Justin Everett. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2007. 573-83.]

Environmental Sustainability

I think the points Edmund Wilson makes in his article about the short-sighted approach of human nature are valid. Living in an era of crisis for environmental sustainability, we are surrounded with information telling us that our future is at risk. However, it does not seem to faze us as being as critical as it really is. I think it is really up to us to know how to act upon the information, and that is when, as humans, we choose the short term approach.

I will admit that I am somewhat guilty of it. I think much of the problem arises from people not being convinced of the harm being involved. Although environmental hazard has a much higher degree of risks compared to other things, I can see how we think like this, especially because its effects have not badly or directly influenced the significant aspects of our lives (as of yet). Therefore, we set it aside and place other priorities first.

I compare the situation with giving someone advice. You can always swamp a person with the abundant risks of a situation and suggestions on how to act toward it, but it is always up to the actual person to decide when to act. Unfortunately, making changes usually follows an awful occurrence, but we should not always settle and wait for

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something bad to happen to act. The environmental crisis is the best example. What if it gets so bad that it becomes too late to reverse the effects? We can never know and definitely would prefer not to find out; therefore, we should do all we can to lessen the degree of harm toward our future.

Another example is just reading this article. We each read it and were informed of the awful effects in the world, but we will still continue doing what we usually do. It is not like an extra 200,000 people born each day will interfere with my grade for this class, right? Carry on.

But is it possible for people to act before adverse effects appear? Hopefully and I think this is where a change needs to be made. There has to be a better, mind-embedding approach to make people aware about environmental sustainability. By just reading or hearing about it, I am not sure it is seeping into our minds. In the article, Wilson explains how people are not taking the problem as seriously as they should: " [I]t is not yet a general worldview, evidently not yet compelling enough to distract many people away from the primal diversions of sport, politics, religion, and private wealth" (583).

I am not quite sure the exact approach that can be taken, but I see a slight bit of progress. An example can be the use of the media, a very powerful medium, and the film *An Inconvenient Truth.* However, I seriously think it is beyond our control and nearly impossible to try to alter our lifestyles in the sense of technology, consumption and other self-interests. We are very comfortable with what we have and know, and change already is not among people's

favorite activities. Perhaps we need to look into catering to people's self-interest and demonstrate harm towards them. That is what we hold deeply, and I know I would do anything to avoid putting my dreams and goals at risk. Maybe it seems like a harsh approach to frighten people somewhat, but it is not like we are dealing with a pretty situation, and it is better than ignoring the inevitable.