

Modern obsession with technological apocalypse, usually in science fiction, religious, or them vs. us political terms, obscures the facts of the very real creeping menace of avaricious expansion into parts of the planet they can only destroy.

VENUS RETROGRADE

By Jay Turney

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Venus Retrograde

Jay Turney

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CHAPTER THREE

“Now the earth was corrupt in God’s sight and was full of violence. God saw how corrupt the earth had become, for all the people on earth had corrupted their ways. So

God said to Noah, “I am going to put an end to all people, for the earth is full of violence because of them.”

Humans are predetermined to destroy themselves. Our intelligence, fecundity, and extraordinary social adaptability have led to the environmental manipulation that once was as hallmark of our success, but now appears more and more like a liability. We have undermined our viability as a species. We eat of the earth, and return not nutriment, like other living things, but poison. We have to feed a world with an always increasing population, so we use chemicals that kill the living foundation of our environment. In the name of commerce we race across the skies and oceans at unprecedented speeds, bringing with us creatures that have not co-evolved with the creatures that already live in a

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habitat, and that alter that habitat by killing off the established biota.

We encourage luxury instead of humility, eviscerating and stealing from the body of the earth to provide meaningless ornaments for an army of prostitutes and weapons and machines for legions of murderous fools.

Worst of all, we wantonly and consciously torture and massacre billions of living organisms we envy for its plumage or horns or lust after for filling our repulsive gluttony. It pleases our vanity to murder these animals' children for a new trendy taste for our self-confessed decadent palates.

Your own children smash the beaks of toucans for "fun," torment puppies and kittens because mommy and daddy are assholes, shoot the last tiger out of boredom, slaughter lions so their cubs will starve because of male-pattern baldness and impotence, tear the wings off bats – the deeds of the "noble savage" who also cut the hearts out of their own kind so the sun will rise again. In a science-fiction story whose author's name I do not recall, aliens visit this planet to determine if its people are worthy of surviving, come across a pair of children killing ants, and logically decide the

human race must be annihilated in the name of life itself. The message is inescapable if unpleasant: the love for life itself requires the mass deaths of a species that fell in love with its own death-dealing skills.

What is humanity, that its talent for murder should take precedence over all other life? Because no moral compass for our universe exists – not that a moral person is bound to respect – only if the species-cidal proclivities of humanity redounds upon humans themselves can this holocaust be stopped. Our half-hearted, sentimentalized, usually profit-motivated and con artist style of “saving the planet” will always give way to the best propagandists with the most corporate money, involving grandiose plans to redesign the planet for better human consumption. Depending on the good intentions of people is useless – being a cute furry animal that looks like our babies may be a mixed blessing of becoming a pet in one region, or a fur stole in another region. Love it, skin it, or eat it after torturing it – when the fate of animals is left in the hands of humans with hungry purses and hungry guts, all bets are off. Perhaps it is impossible to care about nature without anthropomorphic distortion, but if that is so, it is still better than a fake

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objectivity whose purpose is to conduct Auschwitz-style experiments on them to help defeat the global crisis of halitosis, psoriasis or crow's feet, or to exterminate every ant in a 100-meter radius because a few of them got into your peanut brittle.

The concept of Gaia is anthropomorphic, and probably not even true, given not only the mass extinctions of the past, but the sun-engulfed future that is certain, but given the difficulty of any human truth being transcendent, it is better than pseudo-objectivity or the blind, psychotic Watchmaker who resembles a cross between the Wizard of Oz and the marquis de Sade. Along with Gaia you must accept Medea, killer of her own children, as a mythological figure depicting both the justice and the harshness of nature. But the Medea of nature is not a sadist getting pleasure from her actions, but a predetermined fate based on what we know, up to now, about how reality works. (67)

The mythologies of the world change with the sort of societies that create those myths. Hunter gatherers tend to treat the animals they hunt for food with great respect – as in the paradigmatic case of Diamond's bat-haters in New Guinea shows, animals not so used are no better off than

baby calves are in the USA – and use animals as gods, and demi-gods such as the Trickster. Large tribes and the horticultural, fishing and agricultural-based city-states they evolve into, are more apt to see animals as competition if they can't be domesticated, either as food or as helpmates against the other animals. These cultures, reflected in what we would call classical myth and stories, still use animals for educative purposes, as in Aesop's fables, or as gods with less authority than the humanoid gods, as in ancient Egypt.

Today, of course, the appeal of animals to children, and the susceptibility of children to commercialization and commodification, has led to the Disneyfication of nature. These animals are stupidly and narcissistically given human, not animal traits, and are especially good at performing as surrogates for snarky, cynical spoiled brats and their formerly spoiled brat parents, well on their way to becoming the sophomoric, smug consumers we need for our economic survival in the post-industrial West. TV ads also use animals, often humanizing them to the extent that cows tell consumers to "eat more chickin'". "These animals are usually stand-ins for human fools and undesirables – the annoying "camel" and the hapless "gecko" of a particular insurance

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company and its endless scourge of advertising campaigns comes to mind.

Disneyfication and McDonaldization go hand in hand.

These projections are anthropomorphic in a truly negative sense, for human stupidity and arrogance are simply transferred to animal characters. Even many otherwise splendid wildlife documentaries are marred by this vulgar, kitschy neurosis, this need to strip other beings of all dignity, whether it is cloying easy-listening jazz as a background to animals mating, or goofy sidekick music used to accompany the serious life and death struggle to secure safety or a meal. Why not blooper reels consisting of immature or crippled animals being chased down and eaten – for it is in the same spirit as the infantilization of the USA’s public. Sometimes, as with the builders of steel turbine windmills that massacre millions of eagles and hawks and seabirds, animals’ friends are worse than their enemies. Green is still primarily the color of money.

One of these projections is that curiosity killed the cat. Curiosity, in a cat, is limited, as any cat-lover knows. Solitary hunters require a certain amount of controlled curiosity

about their environment. Situations that don't offer food or shelter are methodically avoided, not only by prey, but by hunters. Yet human curiosity, paired with the typical neurotic fear of what one is curious about, is unrestrained until disaster strikes, both individually and socially. In hunting and gathering societies, the unknown was symbolically domesticated with the creation of sacred spaces, and one of the reasons for early warfare was to hamper alien or hostile societies by conquering their sacred spaces. This policy extended to the age of the ancient city states, with the well-known cutting down of pagan sacred trees in Europe and the replacement of them on the site with Christian churches, being only one example. (When Islamic Arabs captured Jerusalem, they erected a mosque on the former site of the Jewish Temple.)

The human need to establish and participate in a series of gestalts, or coherent patterns that supposedly give a meaning to life beyond the mere living of life, can be seen in the creation of sacred spaces, and of course, without necessarily religious or sacred implications, in social living in every period of history. Early Freudians singled out the masochist's lifelong series of unconsciously pre-arranged

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failures as a common neurosis, and they can surely be seen as a form of gestalt, though in a negative sense. Obsessions and compulsions in general are constantly renewed, but not efficient, gestalts, and they are greatly aided by modern technology. Participating in the Internet is a technologically arranged series of gestalts, sought not in the name of life-affirmation or metaphysical meaning, but as part of the advertising and consumption mania our society is run by. The superego we are pleasing is a machine, and the government-corporate interests hiding behind the machine. It is no longer even really a part of our mental universe, but is imposed externally, like a virus.

For human consciousness construed as a mirror or eye looking back at God or Atman and the Creation is actually still locked in a biological trap baited with the necessity to survive. What looks back at the universe is looking at what it can destroy, including the God-concept itself.

The rapacious eye has been invoked in various forms by three of our most cogent philosophers. Leo Marx, in *The Machine in the Garden*, begins by quoting from notes Nathaniel Hawthorne was making preparatory to writing a short story, in which a train interrupts an idyllic reverie: "The

noise of the train, as Hawthorne describes it, is a case of alienation in the root sense of the word: it makes inaudible the pleasing sounds to which he had been attending, and so it estranges him from the immediate sense of meaning and value,...”(68) He later quotes extensively from a major speech by Daniel Webster in which Webster defends the pragmatic apology for exploitation against its attackers, summing the speech up accurately as stating, “The noise and smoke, the discomfort and visual ugliness, even the loss of peace and repose – these things, the rich voice proclaims, are of little consequence to true Americans.” (69) David Nye, in *American Technological Sublime*, also quotes an American luminary, this time Andrew Jackson, who in his second annual message to Congress said, “What good man would prefer a country covered with forests and ranged by a few thousand savages to our extensive Republic, studded with cities, towns, and prosperous farms...?”(70) And Andrew Delbanco, in his cultural meditation, *The Death of Satan*, refers to an incident also used as an anecdote by Nye, in which the reformer Margaret Fuller, visiting and trying to comprehend Niagra Falls, describes the following: “Once, while just as I had seated myself there(Table Rock), a man came to take his first look. He walked close up to the fall,

and, after looking at it for a moment, with an air as if thinking how he could appropriate it to his own use, he spat into it. ... Well before mid-century, even the intrinsically conservative legal system began to shift from protecting antecedent property rights to removing obstacles to development." (71)

The naked acceptance in the USA, though it took a few decades to win wide approval, of exploitation, and in many cases outright sadism with no true economic motive, of animals, only gave that exploitation and sheer delight in cruelty an unprecedented scope and enfranchisement. It has existed since the very start of the man-ape's society. Wherever large numbers of humans have been, the disappearance of entire species of large animals prized for food has happened. Once controversial, the idea that most of the large land mammals of North America were hunted to extinction by Native American carnivores is now generally unquestioned. (72)

But everywhere hunting societies thrived, the megafauna, the large animals, were destroyed, and agricultural societies, with livestock to protect, continued the damage, both with punitive predation, and the clearing

of forest habitats. We can trace, in historical times, the great expansion of the Polynesian peoples from Southeastern Asia, and other regions, originally, as far away as Central Asia, into the Pacific, as far away as New Zealand, Hawaii and Easter Island. Along with human movement to colonize the entire Pacific, we can follow the extinction of large, prominent, vulnerable animals, by both the people themselves, and the domesticated animals – pigs and dogs – and unwelcome guests, such as rats, they brought with them.

Probably beginning around 1200 BC,(73) the west Polynesian and Micronesian colonization was well on its way by 1000 BC, and after a period of consolidation, more remote East Polynesian island groups, like the Cooks, Societies, Marquesas and Australs, were occupied around 600 to 800 AD(74) with the Marquesas acting as a jumping-off place for Hawaii from 500 to 750 AD(75) and the Society Islands providing the same service for Easter Island by 800 AD.(76) It was New Zealand, too far south to be well-known and accessible, that was colonized last, around 1200 AD.(77) and it was on these islands the first really well-documented

mass extinction was recorded through oral histories of the people responsible.

The signal extinction of the moa, along with the elephant bird of Madagascar the largest birds on earth at the time, by New Zealanders, both by killing the flightless birds and stealing their eggs, was paralleled in time by the decimation and eventual extinction of the elephant birds by distant cousins of the people who were to become Polynesians, but who migrated west instead of east and combined with the small number of Negroid people already living in Madagascar.(78) It took the Europeans, both by trading guns for slaves and by using guns themselves, to put the finishing touch to the annihilation of the elephant bird of Madagascar and the dodo on nearby Mauritius Island. (79.) But the murderous Maoris didn't require the help of the all-time great genocidal maniacs, the Europeans. They had two ways of killing moas – they ambushed the males as they were guarding their nests, spearing them in the side so that they would die of exhaustion while running in pain, or surrounded them, escaping their fatal defensive kicks while spearing them as they stood on one leg to kick. This, along with bravely raiding nests for eggs, wiped out most of the

moas by the early 1800's. When the Maori were themselves decimated by Europeans later in the century, one of their poetic tropes was, "Alas, we are lost as the Moa is lost." (80)

If only the same can be said of the United States citizens whose ancestors wiped out the passenger pigeons!

Between hunting and habitat destruction by both indigenous peoples and European occupiers, the islands of the Indian Ocean and Pacific Ocean, including Madagascar, Mauritius, Reunion, Polynesia, Melanesia and New Zealand have seen a long lugubrious list of extinct species, especially birds, which learned over thousands of years to specialize and thus were especially susceptible to habitat destruction. The Broad-billed parrot of Mauritius, last seen around 1650, the Mauritian red rail, last seen in 1680, the Mauritian barn owl, last seen around 1700, the Mauritian blue pigeon, last seen in 1826, the Reunion Ring-necked parakeet (c. 1800,) the Bay thrush, the Tonga ground skink, Tonga Tabu Tahiti Flycatcher, Tahiti sandpiper, Mysterious starling, all of the Society islands and perishing between 1780 and 1800, and the Black-fronted parakeet of Tahiti, last seen around 1850, comprise only part of the list. (81) A study of just one island, Lifuka in the Tonga group, by Steadman, Pregill and Burley,

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yielded evidence of extinction for an iguana, seabirds, (shearwaters, petrels, boobies, prions and terns,) and 16 land birds, including a kind of osprey, pigeons, doves, and parrots. (82) The authors added that “The rapid and unreversed artifactual and faunal changes that we discovered on Lifuka ... are not unique to Lifuka, but occur on each of the Tongan islands where we have developed an extensive archaeological record.” (83)

Especially lamentable, considering Hawaii’s reputation as a paradise on earth, is that island group’s horrific record of mass extinctions, a record which, of course, is far from finished. The great biologist EO Wilson, in his book *The Future of Life*, has written eloquently of this “killing field of biological diversity.” (84) Wilson points out that Hawaii once was home to at least 145 species of birds found nowhere else, and that only 35 of these still exist, and that 24 of these are endangered, many probably beyond recovery. (85) Honeyeaters and honeycreepers, being particularly specialized, have been very hard hit, with 40% of the species extinct and another 40% on the verge of extinction. (86) Four different kinds of O-O, wiped out between 1837 and 1934, many Akiolas, Nukupuus, Alouwahios, Amakihis and

Akepas belonging to these two groups are gone forever. Other victims included songbirds such as the Molokai Omao, Oahu Omao and Lanai Omao, and finch-like birds, the Greater and Lesser Kou Finch, the Konu, and the Mamo, which was actually hunted to extinction for its black and scarlet feathers, used for the royal regalia of Hawaiian chiefs, and not destroyed because of the introduction of new species and the plantations of Europeans, which determined the fates of most of the others. (87)

In short, in the words of Wilson, “What we celebrate in the colonization of Polynesia as a grand historical epic for humanity was for the rest of life a rolling wave of destruction.” (88) The anecdote of the New Guineans torturing the bats (89), as well as the extirpation of animals by indigenous peoples all over the world, should curb some of our romantically wistful dreams about the “Noble Savage.” Guilt, ignorance and psychological coercion lead to easily influenced armies of politically correct warriors who know very little about what they love to opine about, but the fact is still that native peoples have never carried slaughter, especially senseless slaughter, to the level Europeans have, especially the Europeans who established

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exploratory and colonial posts all over the world. Close to home, we can let ourselves be outraged by just one of our earlier civilized American biocides, the absolute destruction of the awe-inspiring Steller's sea cow. We can also take a glimmer of hope – not for humanity's moral salvation, but for the salvation of one individual, and by implication, a few other individuals – from the man for whom the species was named, 26 years before it was wiped out.

This sea cow was by far the largest sea mammal, besides the whales, and at 30 feet long and 14,000 pounds, was comparable with elephants in size. Until encountered by Europeans, beginning with Vitus Bering's expedition to the northwest Pacific coast, it thrived by the thousands in the waters of the Arctic. Bering's expedition was shipwrecked, and a member of the expedition, a physician named Georg Wilhelm Steller, had time to closely observe many aspects of their behavior, and oddly enough gives us our only glimpse of them before they were exterminated. He even gives us a detailed account of the cruelty of their hunters.

In one among many passages I could quote, he wrote, "When an animal caught with the hook begins to move about somewhat violently, those nearest in the herd begin

to stir also and feel the urge to bring succor. To this end some of them try to upset the boat with their backs, while others pressed down the rope and endeavored to break it, or strove to remove the hook from the wound in the back by blows of their tail, in which they actually succeeded several times. It is most remarkable proof of their conjugal affection that the male, after having tried with all his might, although in vain, to free the female from the hook, and in spite of the beating we gave him, nevertheless followed her to the shore, and that several times, even after she was dead, he shot unexpectedly up to her like a speeding arrow. Early next morning, when we came to cut up the meat and bring it to the dugout, we found the male again standing by the female..." (90)

It's size – one sea cow could feed 33 men for one month – and it's delicious flavor – said to surpass beef – doomed it. Because, as we have seen, it was hard to kill, probably three were wounded and left to die for every one that was caught. In 1754, Russian colonists on Copper island petitioned the authorities to stop the slaughter, but this came to nothing, and 13 years later they were all gone. (91)

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Steller's compassion and shame, as well as that of the Russian engineer who pleaded for the preservation of this emotionally complex creature, are exemplary. We should remember that not all humans are unfeeling, self-obsessed monsters, and that the very existence of the dissenters from human stupidity entitle us to judge the rest as harshly as we feel we should. Am I separating goats and sheep? Am I claiming some people are morally superior to others? If one admits that morality may be derived from aesthetics, from an appreciation for the dynamic forms of nature, then, yes, I am, and I make no distinction between liberals who talk a good game and do nothing, wanting the rewards for their virtue-signals without actually doing anything to earn it, (which is almost the definition of the modern "liberal,") and the actual killers themselves, many of whom do what they do to survive.

What I question is whether humans have any transcending right to survive at all. This impression is strengthened when one reads about perhaps the worst holocaust of any life in history, the extermination of 5 billion passenger pigeons in less than fifty years in the United States of America. At the beginning of this slaughter, in the

1860's. the passenger pigeon may have been the single most numerous species of bird on earth. In 1914 Martha, the very last of her kind, born in captivity in the Cincinnati Zoo, died at age 29. (92)

Here is Day again, describing salient episodes of the species-cide: "With the advent of the telegraph and railroad, hunters were able to follow and slaughter the migrating birds wherever they landed. ... Hundreds of railway boxcars were sent with the hunters and waited to be filled with the carcasses. ... The best professional hunters used huge, specially designed traps and nets. Some of the large nets were baited with decoy birds. These birds were called 'stool pigeons.' They were captured birds with their eyes sewn up and their legs pinned to a post or 'stool.' The fluttering wings of these blind birds attracted other pigeons ..." (93)

What was the essential human need responsible for this atrocity? Adult birds were a cheap source of protein, and the squabs were considered especially delectable. The gizzards, entrail, blood and dung were sold as medicine to cure everything from gallstones to epilepsy. The down and feathers were used to stuff pillows. Live birds were also sold for "sporting" purposes – the courageous males would pay

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a lot of money to shoot birds in traps – with the result often being that the mighty hunters couldn't even kill them then, but just broke their wings and necks when they were hurled from the catapult traps. (94)

According to Day, when there were only about 250,000 pigeons left, there was one last great hunt outside Bowling Green, Kentucky, in April, 1896. 200,000 carcasses were taken, with another 40,000 mutilated and left to rot. In fact, a derailment of the train carrying the carcasses caused all 250,000 rotting corpses to be dumped in a ravine a few miles from the depot. Also, 100,000 baby pigeons deemed not mature enough to be eaten were just destroyed in the nest. (95)

Still think the human race deserves to survive, or that any so-called God who didn't make up whatever passes for its "mind" to wipe us out deserves, not just to be crucified, but to be slowly roasted over a blazing fire while people who actually love life urinate in his hideous face? (Or hers. Or their face.)

Compared to what we did to these two species unlucky enough to meet the needs of a bloodthirsty gluttonous

human race, crying about the Armenian, Jewish, African-American and every other holocaust is just special pleading.

Rather than expanded this list and simply depressing those few of you with an actual functioning moral code, which is probably less than even I suspect, we will move ahead to the modern Holocene Holocaust of all of macroscopic nature itself, which may not be as depressing because it may, like the current pandemic, end up decimating the human population enough so that the rest of the living planet is saved.

Humans, in their infinite wisdom, have tended to ignore not only what they can't see, although we are the most sensorily limited megafauna in global history, but also what doesn't overwhelm their vanity with the vaunted "sublime," ie, which doesn't cause you to shit your pants with abject fear while your entrails twist in a vertiginous knot. The more very small creatures we discover, the more we discover just how extensive and interrelated the sacred web of non-human life is spread over this and probably billions of other worlds. (Which makes the passage of this one species of "intelligent" mega-brute even less a reason to mourn, for there are billions of chances a less noxious form of

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anthropoid ape exists somewhere capable of creating a few Mozarts and Frederick Douglasses without being murder-obsessed monsters.)

Our last task for this chapter will be to briefly sketch the disastrous devastation of what humans themselves call “useful” microfauna. The development of a government response in the USA to insect pests of agriculture runs parallel with the development of chemistry itself, and is associated with the most renowned names in European chemical science at the time.

Around 1838, J. von Liebig began to see that organic and inorganic oxides had to be researched differently. Organic acids had to be combined differently with bases – for example, the hydrogen could be replaced with metals. (96). More progress was held up by the lack of agreement about a universal value for atomic weights, as reflected in the lack of consistency in chemical formulas, which remained simplistic and confusing throughout the first two-thirds of the 19th century. Leading chemists met at the Karlsruhe Congress in 1860 to consolidate the science. (97). Mendeleev had begun to work out the implications of the periodicity of the occurrence of certain elements naturally in 1869. (98)

The German industry, by concentrating on results as much as or more than theory, came up with a dazzling array of products before anyone else, including the work of Ehrlich, of “magic bullet” fame, played by Edward G. Robinson in a movie, who noted the periodic relations between arsenic and nitrogen, because of the selectivity of specific dyes for certain bacteria and tissues. Thus, the dyeing industry and the antibiotic industry were reciprocal to each other. (99)

At about the same time German chemists were working out a system of atomic weights, formula notation, and the periodic table of elements, a harmless, handsome little fellow known as the Colorado beetle was feeding on buffalo dung in the Rocky Mountain region, when in the 1860’s settlers began to arrive. They planted potatoes. The beetles had never seen potatoes before, but once they tasted them, they loved them. They swept across the North American continent and got to Europe, becoming possibly the greatest agricultural scourge, in insect form, in the world at the time. (100)

The new cottage industry of applying arsenical compounds to such uses as dyes, medical treatments, embalming and weed-killing was also put to use in killing the

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Colorado beetle. Considered best for this use was Paris Green, (copper acetoarsenite,) an emerald green powder formerly used as a pigment, often in wallpaper, subsequently used against fungus, and then, famously against the offending beetle. (101) The use of Paris Green to kill the potato beetle began in 1868. (102) The same old story, not so old then, occurred: at first the insects dropped dead in gratifying numbers for the farmers, but not only did the beetles develop resistance to the powder (103), but it had noticeable health effects on the farmers who touched or breathed the powder, as well as being difficult to prepare properly or apply affectively. (104)

Improvements in the mechanics of applying the poison helped shape the modern pesticide industry, including innovations like perforated cans, powder guns with hand-cranked gear drives, and wheel-drawn pressurized pump sprayers, which could be adapted for steam power in 1894, and gasoline in 1900. (105) Meanwhile, other chemical solutions were investigated as substitutes for arsenites and arsenates, or for Paris Green specifically, utilizing other arsenic compounds. Calcium arsenate for cotton boll weevils, lead arsenates for coddling moths, sulfur and

copper sulfates for certain fungi, were all used, but over time it became apparent that not only could the plants easily be damaged by these chemicals, and the farmers made sick, but the soil itself became unusable for the unforeseeable future. (106) As the chemical industry progressed, the search was on for a more suitable pesticide without these damages.

Synthetic organics became the new darling of the researchers – one of them, DDT, had been synthesized in 1874 and was marketed by a Swiss firm, JR Geisy, under the name Gesarol. (107) It wasn't until 1939 that US manufacturers began to produce it, but it was ready for use in Casablanca against malarial mosquitoes, and in Naples against spreaders of typhoid. In 1944, Leyte island was crop-dusted with DDT before troops were landed there. (108) After the war, both US and British intelligence stumbled upon the archives of IG Farber, whose star researcher, Gerhard Schrader, had studied about 300 organophosphates, including what US companies would later market as Parathion, which was effective at relatively low doses. (109). Of course, IG Farben had created the poison gases of World War One and the gases used to kill the inmates of

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concentration camps in the Second World War. US authorities of the Chemical Warfare Service were also working on herbicides for the destruction of enemy crops, both during and after the war, and they were assisted by the US Department of Agriculture. (110)

The first state and federal entomologist were appointed to do field research in 1854 in the United States, before the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) was established in 1862. (111). It seems unbelievable that the full role of insect pests in agricultural damage was underestimated until then, but what seems to have taken place is a disconnect between the worker in the field and the various university authorities. The disconnect between the governed and those who governed hem can be seen on both sides in the arsenic controversies, for the USDA famously exhorted farmers to spray liberally, if certain precautions were taken, yet the farmers often failed to follow through on these instructions, and nobody systematically checked up on them to ensure spraying practices were safe and efficient. (112) As more and more produce was being exported with arsenic residue clearly visible, causing, for example, notable uproar in Great Britain over imported apples both in the 1890's and more

seriously in 1925-6, the search for better insecticides became intensified, (113) and DDT was used first against the Colorado beetle, with great initial success, in 1939. (114)

The USDA was made a Cabinet-level position in 1889, with nine employees (115) Identification of insects and their life cycles, and those of their natural enemies, including birds, was a developing focus of study, and such pests as the cotton leafworm, chinch bug, Hessian fly, squash bug, apple moth and codling moth were main targets. (116) Actually, many entomologists, including those working with the USDA, much preferred biological control, but such devastations as wreaked by the Colorado beetle, gypsy moth and boll weevil predisposed the public to want a quick chemical fix. These chemical fanatics ignored the warnings by entomologists that the fix was always likely to be quick, and then worse than useless, because of insect resistance built up over time, reasoned in generations of a few years.

Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* landed like a meteorite in the public awareness of 1962, and still stands as a classic of ecological science, if not one of its founding documents. One needs simply to quote her to show how prescient she was sixty years ago: "One species – man – has acquired

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significant power to alter the nature of his world. During the past quarter century this power has not only increased to one of disturbing magnitude but it has changed its character. ... To adjust to these chemicals would require time on a scale that is nature's; it would require not merely the years of a man's life but the life of generations. And even this, were it by some miracle to be possible, would be futile, for the new chemicals come from our laboratories in an endless stream; almost five hundred annually find their way into actual use in the United States alone. The figure is staggering and its implications are not easily grasped – 500 new chemicals to which the bodies of men and animals are required somehow to adapt to each year, ... Can anyone believe it is possible to lay down such a barrage of poisons on the surface of the earth without making it unfit for all life? They should not be called insecticides but biocides.”
(117)

Of course, Carson was attacked by small armies of journalists and scientists – so much for the purity of either group, especially scientists! – but because both journalism and science are designed as self-correcting, especially the latter, the irrefutability of Carson's facts and reasoning

didn't just win, but won in a landslide. Or is it proper to speak of victory in a world in which the new, improved IG Farben, that is, Bayer, as well as Monsanto, Dow Chemical, DuPont, etc., have rampantly continued their slow-motion genocide and biocide with barely a slap on the wrist from our allegedly "liberal" Federal Government? The victory was merely victory in a debate, while the poisoners of our planet simply shrugged their shoulders and doubled-down on their criminal activity. "The crusade to create a chemically sterile, insect free world seems to have engendered a fanatic zeal on the part of many specialists and most of the so-called control agencies. On every hand there is evidence that those engaged in spraying operations exercise a ruthless power." (118)

Of course, the truly powerful among these ruthless groups and individuals are the multinational corporations, whose stated needs to control, decimate, homogenize and exploit the world's people are corporations and foundations – the intellectual wing of the corporate entities – such as Monsanto, Bayer,(ex-IG Farben) Conagra, Cargill, Armour, Tyson Foods, the Rockefeller and Clinton Foundations, etc., to which must be added the propaganda wing of the

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intellectuals, such as Google, Microsoft, Facebook and Twitter.

We will target Monsanto-Bayer now, because the agenda of these corporations is far from obscure and can still be found all over, in physical and electronic libraries, because, after all, trying to stop them is like throwing snowballs at the sun, and the sun doesn't care about your snowballs. Obviously, the information I have about Monsanto-Bayer is also readily available.

Monsanto was founded in 1901 by John Queeny and named after his wife, Olga Mendez Monsanto. It's product then was saccharin and their main customer Coca-Cola, and though the government sued Monsanto because saccharin had been established as unsafe for humans, the government lost, and Monsanto ploughed its profits from saccharin into industrial chemicals, introducing another proven poison, polychlorinated biphenyls, (PCPs) into our planet. By the 1930's, they had created, among a host of other products, its first hybrid seed corn. (119)

Interestingly, Monsanto partnered with the Walt Disney Company to construct parts of Tomorrowland out of plastic

in the 1950's. which despite assurances to the contrary proved not to be biodegradable or non-toxic. In the 1960's they partnered with DOW to create Agent Orange, with the extreme poison dioxin, and, as they did with sweetener aspartame, paid hired gun researchers to lie about the toxicity of these chemicals, contradicting the unbought scientists at the FDA. However, leaving no stone unturned, Monsanto and its partner and later subsidiary G D Searle hired former Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, former US Attorney investigating them, Samuel Skinner, and even former FDA scientific consultant Arthur Hill, who resigned under a cloud of suspicion to work for Searles' PR firm. Monsanto even convinced President Reagan to fire FDA head Dr. Jere Goyan, who was about to rule against aspartame, and hire their hand-picked replacement, Arthur Hull, who promptly declared the sweetener, marketed as NutraSweet, safe. (120) Research had not only linked aspartame with dozens of serious illnesses, including blindness, joint pain, fatigue, obesity, insomnia, coma, nausea, mania, chronic mood changes, numbness, deafness, tinnitus, rashes, dizziness, debility, seizures, memory loss, headaches, anxiety, heart problems, diarrhea, and panic attacks, but indicated it was as addictive as crack cocaine.

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Hull resigned, and, not exactly shockingly, was hired by Searle as a PR consultant. (121)

In the 1990's Monsanto lobbyists and money defeated state and federal legislation against the dumping of dioxin and other pesticides into drinking water, and in 1994 the FDA allowed Monsanto's Synthetic Bovine Growth Hormone, derived from genetically modified E. coli. Dairy companies who dared to label their products growth hormone free were sued by Monsanto, who claimed harm to their growth hormone's sales from such labelling – which is if not an admission of guilt, is surely censorship meant to control the conversation about the harm these hormones may cause.(122) But this was just the foot in the door: the truly significant production of GMO seeds resistant to the proven toxin, the Monsanto-engineered herbicide Roundup, followed a year later.

Soybeans, corn, cotton and canola oil seeds are dominated by Monsanto's self-pollinating, Roundup-resistant seeds, which makes natural pollinators of crops redundant, destroys the tradition of small farmers around the world from re-using their seeds each year, end up, despite rosy promises, providing smaller yields, and not only

are responsible for crop pests developing resistance, but for killing weeds where natural predators on the pests like to hide and wait for their victims. In short, the number of pernicious effects from these seeds, and their large, though not exclusive, role in ecological catastrophe, has been completely factored out by our government at every level. The only punishment has been, of course, in civil court, after the damage has been done, with recent lawsuits rewarding a few of the victims of Roundup's proven toxicity large sums. This may well end up gutting Bayer, who merged with Monsanto recently, but by that time, it will probably be too late. (123)

The laid-back, "no problem" fuzziness of the popularized soft green cottage industries talks as though GMO seeds are just an x-factor that should be discouraged because we don't know much about them, and moreover, that just saying bad things about GMO's means the battle is won, and the brilliant consumer – flattery can get you anything with voters – will defeat Monsanto, DuPont, DOW and ConAgra in the supermarkets – themselves largely owned now by mega-corporations. The terrible truth is that the battle is about over, and the victors were, as usual, the

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corporations and their paid flunkies in the government. As far back as fifteen years ago, according to Engdahl's figures, 25% of world acreage was planted with GMO seeds. (124) Monsanto, Novartis, DOW and DuPont, all of whom have secret deals among themselves to drop copyright-infringement law suits, (125), control 75% of corn seed sales, 60% of soybean seed sales, and the vast majority of the production and sales of agri-business chemicals. (126) 3% of US farms control 50% of hog production, through factory farms best described as concentration camps, four companies control 84% of steer and heifer slaughter, four companies control 89% of the breakfast cereal market, with one, Cargill, controlling 40% of all grain storage. Around 1990, 600 seed businesses existed globally, many of them owned by families, but by 2009 only 100 were left. (127)

Throw onto this sobering fact the Orwellian nightmare that factory farms, which feed the mindless, self-destructive gluttons we call our fellow Americans, are exempt, thanks to the cheap and easy bribery our high-minded public servants in Congress and the White House are subject to, are exempt from cruelty to animal laws. The boorish and sadistic fools who abuse their pet dogs are rightly treated as pariahs –

corporations that multiply this sin a billion-fold are lauded as heroes and role models, because that's the way the public in the USA likes it, despite our effortless whimpering to the contrary. Virtue signaling is always easier than cracking a book or voting against a candidate who waves the flag with just the right cinematic gusto. (128)

Another little-known fact is that 10% of our largest farms get 72% of tax-payer funded subsidies. (129) You are paying these companies to poison you (besides cancer, GMO seeds have been linked to stroke, diabetes, obesity, metabolism diseases, Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, multiple sclerosis and hepatitis C.,(130), poison their neighbors, whose fields can't be kept free from these pesticide-intensive seeds that kill pollinators and the predators of pests the poisons can't even kill effectively, and decimate the most important species on this planet, the insects, as well as making the animal and human population more vulnerable to vector-borne epidemics, especially through demanding farmers plant one crop per farm, that is, monoculture, which encourages pests that otherwise could not be concentrated in one place, and also depletes the soil, forcing farmers to turn to less productive lands, often at the

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expense of wild habitats where the animals that promote vector-spread infections and contagions come into much more contact with both humans and domesticated animals than they otherwise would.(131)

These monoculture crops, grown from GMO seeds, need three times the usual amounts of pesticides, which of course accelerates the resistance of the pests, while attaining 10-12% lower yields. (132) Soybeans grown in a monoculture are killed by Roundup – except for Monsanto’s Roundup-Resistant soybean seeds. Monsanto actually has won the right in court to buy up seeds from seed banks and patent them for genetic manipulation to their own products, thus paving the way for an actual genetic monopoly of every crop grown for mass consumption around the world. (133) As an example, political pressure on the US government from Monsanto and Cargill, and then on the Argentine government from our government, especially CIA-sponsored terrorism squads, forced farmers to plant soybeans, which before 1970 were 9500 thousand hectares, but by 2004 were 14 million hectares, or 48% of all Argentine farmland. (Dairy farms were crowded off the land, so that Argentina, once an exporter of dairy products, is now

forced to import.) (134) Asian farmers coerced into buying Monsanto's rice seeds have seen yields drop, and West African farmers forced to buy Monsanto yams have found them sickly and disease-prone in the field. (135)

Big agribusiness clearly wants the rest of the world under their thumb the same way farmers in the USA are. As Engdahl writes, "The farmer gradually became a contract employee. ... He no longer owned the animal or the farm. He was effectively becoming a feudal serf, indentured through huge debts ... to a global multinational corporation such as Cargill, Archer Daniels Midland, Smithfield Foods or ConAgra." (136)

These rural behemoths run, like Hollywood, from offices in NYC, destroyed the hopes of what has become known as the red states as long ago as the 1970's, adding the Midwest to the South and Rust Belt of the northeast as both plundered treasures and paper-thin fortresses.

Now that they have raped what they could in the USA, they moved on to the "Third World," easily grabbing financial control of the mineral resources, including, crucially, the vast oil reserves of Venezuela, backed up by

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the US and UK militaries. Grabbing the agricultural resources of Latin America proved a little tougher, but the Rockefellers and their allies in the corporate world and in the governing international banking systems of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund had plenty of time to achieve it. Operating behind a cloak of secrecy and censorship, controlling the federal agencies responsible for so-called oversight and regulation, (similarly to what we have already observed with Monsanto, Coca-Cola and the rest,) they offered loans to the governments of Asia, Africa and Latin America, always subject to revision of interest rates upwards, never downwards, which were used to implement projects recommended by global corporations – enormous dams, international airports and ports, and monuments featuring the local Fuehrer or Peron or Amin – and almost always entailed destroying long-time habitats, forests and water sources, draining the farms of workers and filling the disease-and-addiction-traps of the burgeoning cities with only temporarily employed people, in the long run not improving the economies of those nations for anyone but the local Quislings who played ball with the suits. (137)

These developments, besides widening the wealth gap in the developing countries and adding to the desperation of those without even the right to protest (but with the ability to build bombs and fly planes into buildings) also accelerate and deepen the destruction of their environments. They cut forests not only for lumber but for palm oil, as in Indonesia, increasing deforestation that would have happened anyway because of growing populations and industry, including industrialized, USA-style farming. They force monoculture on lands where before sane farming practices, successful for millenia, preserved the soil, only to watch yields decrease in spite of petroleum-based fertilizers, many times more expensive than traditional ways, and pesticides that, because they were sprayed on one-crop fields demanded by the agribusinesses, only improved strains of the pests they were trying to control. The notorious herbicide Roundup, brought to you by the same people who shot shells filled with poison gas into the trenches of both sides in World War One and murdered more than six million Nazi concentration camps, kills the “weeds” that predators on the pest feed on and hide in, thus multiplying the very pests, again, they claim to want to control. Evidence is growing monocultures encourage

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such pests as locusts, now suddenly making appearances world-wide said to be unprecedented, and encourage some of the worst fungal and microbial pests of the very plants – wheat, corn and rice – the genetically-modified seeds are supposed to make healthier. (138)

As one of our leading experts in microbial resistance, Laurie Garrett says in her book, *The Coming Plague*, “Genetic change in plant microbes was accelerating due to agricultural practices that exerted strong selection pressures on the microbes; to changing geography of plant growth due to international trading of plant seeds and breeding practices; and to the deliberate release of laboratory genetically altered plant viruses that were intended to offer agricultural crops protection against pests.... Studies showed that plants such as corn, wheat and tomatoes were commonly co-infected with up to five different viruses, and those viruses could exchange genetic material (139)

Viruses, based on RNA changes, can evolve million times faster than their hosts, which are DNA-based life forms. RNA-virus populations are one big gene pool, and one strain of one virus may dominate briefly, and then be replaced by

another, with heightened resistance both to the hosts' defenses and to any drug meant to kill them, in a time and place unpredictable for us. The changes take place during replication within the host, and include the genes that code for the proteins on their outer surfaces – like the spikes protruding from the spherical Covid-19 microbe – that are recognized by the host immune system. (140)

It isn't hard to see the dangers for humans in this scenario, and to the advent of new zoonotic diseases like Covid-19 and H1N1 avian flu, but the disaster extends to crops, weeds, insects, and insect pests, in a complex changing landscape we are always too late to ameliorate. Not only are we always playing catch up, we have to run faster, expend more energy and endanger more lives and habitats, just to not fall further behind.

Habitat change due to corporate deforesting practices, enlarging farmland to compensate for corporate seed yield depletion of the soil, and crop monoculture was singled out by teams of entomologists as the main factor responsible for what seems to be an unprecedented die-off of important insects, (141) The second main factor is pesticide poisoning. (142)

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An explosive article released in January of 2019, based on reviews of 73 studies of insect loss in regions around the world, claimed that the total mass of all insects on earth is decreasing by 2.5% a year, that 40% of such economically crucial pollinators as butterflies, moths, bees and hoverflies have declined in the last few decades and further losses of 40% are almost inevitable (143), and that as well as the familiar vulnerable specialists, the insects known as generalists, adapted to more varied environments than the specialists, are having their capacity for adaptation hampered by the decrease of habitat diversity that fuels the diversity of their gene pools, that is, limits the number of possible beneficial adaptations these species achieve by exchanging genes with varieties slightly different than they are – varieties within the same species. (144)

Though some have criticized this meta-study, saying that even 73 different studies, given the immense gap between what we know about insects and what we ought to know, may be skewed, others, such as Jennifer Zaspel of the Milwaukee Public Museum, point out that the studies all represent areas where practices of fertilizing, spraying,

habitat destruction and monoculture are typical of global agriculture and industry. (145)

Of course, with a few (as of today, 500,000 out of 8 billion, or .000062%) humans, the costliest global parasites this world or any world could possibly sustain for more than a few millenia, dying after six months of this, historically, rather tame pandemic, the destruction of the greatest genus of survivals on our planet, needed by plants for pollination, predation on plant predators, and necessary food providers for almost all birds, reptiles, amphibians, and some mammals, due directly and unquestionably to our activities, activities done moreover not to feed the hungry, but to further psychologically imprison the fat, helpless, morally blind victims of First World luxury, will of course land like a fluffy milkweed sees in the blood-soaked no man's land of modern media sensationalism. (If they used to call it yellow journalism, the word for it now is putrid green.)

In fact, the human enterprise in the past five hundred years or so resembles nothing so much as the career of a super-virus that has become too good at killing its hosts and now itself faces destruction. One really does not have to invoke, unless one needs to for emotional reasons, an angry

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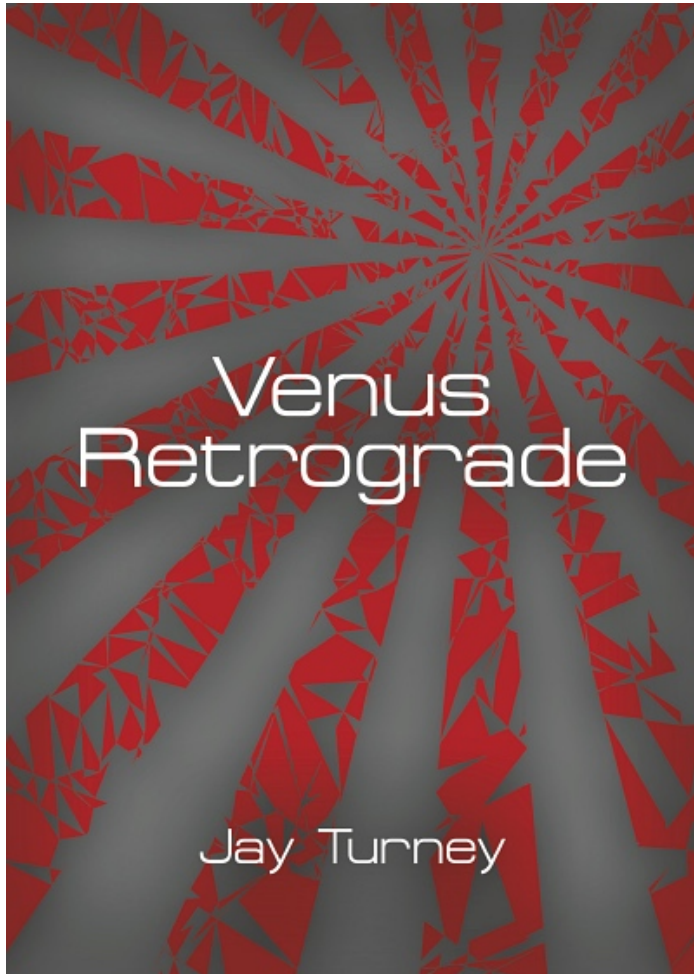
God or Day-the-Earth-Stood-Still type alien intervention to understand this. I mentioned in another book that metaphorically you could see humanity as an embodiment of entropy, the heat death of the universe, in a small accelerated fragment capable of lysis – a catalyst in reverse – or dissolution of a once stable structure.

How many times have you heard humans referred to sententiously as the most dangerous creature in the forest, death on two legs, or the most ruthless hunter, and hearing that nodded your head, perhaps pleased with the felicity of phrase, and glad to see people are capable of such concise descriptions, such succinct phrases, just like Jefferson and his “all men are created equal.” Perhaps phrases meant to wake you up to the truth of your condition are more than just lapidary statements designed to titillate your aesthetic sophistication?

Whatever. Grab your bong, your twelve pack, your remote, maybe your erotic robot or virtual reality helmet, and doze the doze of the living dead.

Jay Turney

Our next and last chapter, an epilogue, really, will touch on some current events, as seen from an outpost in Kansas, or some other place of exile.



Modern obsession with technological apocalypse, usually in science fiction, religious, or them vs. us political terms, obscures the facts of the very real creeping menace of avaricious expansion into parts of the planet they can only destroy.

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By Jay Turney

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