

Water Not Oil: Battle Cry of the “Blue Planet”

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It's a battle cry inspired by the dire climate crisis that has been sung by many for years yet still hasn't been resolutely taken up by the world as a whole. So the question remains: what ultimately is more important: Water or Oil? The Human World is starved for both. But which of the two will ensure the ultimate survival of life on this tiny orb called the Blue Planet? The dilemma of modern human civilization and plight of the planet are one and the same. The lack of water eventually will kill both, while the abundance of oil eventually will also kill them both.

There's a very real, simple reason why every aspect of the planet's corporate world order – and especially its corporate mainstream press, government's and political parties – refuse to fully and truthfully air the real ramifications that underlie why there exists a climate crisis in the first place, and what actually would have to immediately be done – not by the year 2025, 2030, 2040, 2050 or 2100 – but Now – Today – to lower pollution emissions that are inexorably producing ever-greater planetary climate change imbalances to all the air and water. The reason is simple. No truthful dialogue is occurring to come up with immediate, workable solutions for the planet because it would require a complete and utter re-definition, re-calibration and re-tooling of modern human civilization's entire raison d'être. It won't ever happen until what eventually will happen, finally happens. Until then humanity's modern civilization will continue to whistle in the dark while applying whatever band aids to wherever the hurt is greatest while paying lip service to all the rest.

As a result, a fatal disconnect exists in Canada, as indeed it does everywhere else in the world, between an avowed desire to protect and care for Planet Earth's natural world, its finite resources and the opposing reality of mankind's greedy, desperate, burgeoning political-corporate-societal needs for ever more copious amounts of oil and fossil fuels needed to continue: to run all of its vehicles, planes, trains and ships; grow all its food crops for an ever-exploding population, while; operate a slew of every oil and petroleum starved man-made thing in the modern world that keeps humans gainfully employed and the whole business of life running smoothly, however greedy, unbalanced and suicidal that business may be.

This is why countries like the United States and Australia still refuse to fully and openly discuss the climate crisis issue and ongoing degradation of their nation's pristine habitats and finite natural resources, even though in places like Australia's New South Wales a recent report revealed that the destruction of its natural habitats, forests and woodlands have increased five fold from what the crisis was a few years ago; while in the United States, ever since its horrifically-monstrous debacle of the Dakota Access Pipeline occurred the need to alarmingly expand the amount of barrels of petroleum in that pipeline needed continues to increase with no end in sight. One can only call what is going on everywhere in the world nothing more nor less than a form of sheer madness coupled with unparalleled

greed.

Yet to keep mankind's world running as it is means that ever greater amounts of the planet's pure, precious, finite waters must, knowingly and willingly, continue to be consumed, polluted and destroyed to perpetuate human civilization's hopelessly-addicted fossil-fueled way of life hell bent on its own self-destruction and that of all life on our exquisitely beautiful Blue Planet. It's a cliché to say the time has long since past the critical tipping point when humanity can't have it both ways. Every human must, once and for all, choose which side of the debate they're on and then accept the consequences of whichever side is chosen.

One prime example of the decision to continue to choose the fatal addiction to oil and fossil fuels is Canada's recent approval to continue the building of its Trans Mountain pipeline from the Tar Sands of Alberta to the coastal waters of British Columbia that will increase the flow of dirty, toxic bitumen – one of the dirtiest of all substances known to exist – to a world hopelessly hooked on yet its next fix of the black stuff. Canada's *in-between a rock and a hard place* decision flies in the face of whatever constantly re-adjusted Paris Accord Agreement or proposed grandiose Green Environmental Plan designed to help humanity once and for all kick its fatal attraction to what some call "The Black Death". It boils down to a falsehood of perpetually trying to have one's cake and eat it, too.

It's always a curious fact to note that oil is what remains as a by-product of one of Earth's most primitive epoch's in its evolutionary journey yet also is perhaps the main cause of what scientists now refer to as the Anthropocene Epoch in geological history that is in the process of repeating yet the sixth great extinction of all of life on earth.

It's by-products like bitumen that are fueling this epoch extinction and literally every aspect of the human world's modern civilization. We must keep reminding ourselves of the fact that such decisions are bringing about, if not speeding up, this geologic epoch that, in order to do so, must knowingly and willingly continue to consume and destroy ever-larger amounts of the earth's precious, finite natural sources of water; water that, literally and figuratively, is the very essence of life that, in the long run, is the only thing that sustains all of earth's living things as we travel safely through time and space together on our tiny, resilient blue orb through an incredibly harsh, unforgiving, hostile universe. Therefore, no matter how else one may put it: *Water is the Most Sacred Substance of all that Protect's the Journey we're on Together.*

This should be the single mantra that the people of Canada and everywhere else in the world repeat to themselves as they awaken each morning to greet the new day. It's a mantra to be repeated, as well, on the full moon of each month when we can especially feel the waters in our bodies, mystically, being pulled this way and that or watch as the currents and tides cause the planet's own waters to ebb and flow. It's a mantra to be repeated everytime we turn on a tap to fill up a glass of water to quench our thirst and then pause for a moment to give thanks and ponder the whole story of the earth's endless journey through time and space and its ability to quench the thirst of every one of its lifeforms with the same waters that literally and figuratively always was since the beginning of time and always will be to its final end.

Such awareness should give one cause to pause for just a moment longer before quenching one's thirst to consider how wondrous this precious, finite substance is that already has

been in the bodies of so many famous or infamous humans or taken such an eons-long circuitous journey through ourselves and still other innumerable living creatures and lifeforms going all the way back to the ancient dinosaurs and beyond and continues to enrich our lives as it did their's. It's a mantra especially to be repeated, too, before Canadians and the peoples of the world decide to give any further support whatsoever to the corporate world order that continues to pursue a destructive fossil-fuelled way of life that, daily, through the primitive, brutal mining and extraction of countless dirty, toxic ores and minerals poisons and destroys forever colossal amounts of this precious, finite substance that without it the Earth no longer would be blue but instead become just another brown, shrivelled-up, lifeless hulk hurtling through empty space.

In a National Observer opinion article ("The Juggernaut of corporate oil must be stopped" June 18th 2019), Guujaaw, an Hereditary Chief Gidansta of the Haida Nation, who also is an advisor to British Columbia's Coastal First Nations, spoke out in response to Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's decision to approve the extension of the controversial TransMountain Pipeline from the Tar Sands of Alberta to the coastal waters of British Columbia and beyond.

Guujaaw's words, amplified here, is one exceptionally inspirational First Nation version of "The Battle Cry of the Blue Planet", that is a modern version of a centuries old cry that has been sounded in every corner of the earth, many times over, in as many ways as there are a multitude of fine orators who have ever come and gone upon our earth. It should be taken as a renewed living retort to all those Canadian politicians-indian leaders-energy CEO's and voters alike who consider themselves, consciously or unconsciously, to be part of the corporate world order as they willingly and knowingly continue to support the sacrifice of the earth's precious finite resources that instead of being bequeathed as a legacy to future generations, instead continues to be misused to satiate whatever humanity's immediate selfish needs.

Guujaaw/Chief Gidansta seeks to call to all our minds what those basic responsibilities are that we of this living time in the evolution of the earth now must do, when he reminds us that:

Through the years of legal battles and a very measured examination of Aboriginal issues, the Supreme Court of Canada (SCC) has given well-considered definition to Rights and Aboriginal Title in the context of Canada in the modern world.

Aboriginal Rights are a far-reaching right of the collective, held not only for the present generation but for all succeeding generations. The rights also include an economic component coupled with a very deliberate and appropriate "inherent limit," which requires that the land "not be used in a way that is irreconcilable with the attachment an Aboriginal group has with the land" nor shall it be encumbered in ways "that would substantially deprive future generations of the benefit of the land." This is, in fact, a limit that, if applied to all, could go a long way in looking after the earth.

In difficult times, our people stood to look after our land and restore our rights leaving us a solid legal base from which we can uphold our responsibilities. This changed the legal and political dynamic requiring governments and industries not only to consult, but to make accommodations, while the Supreme Court also called out for "reconciliation."

And so it began: out of the sacrifice and efforts of our champions to look after the lands came the attention of Corporate Oil, with the tried solution of simply buying its way.

Regardless of owner or name, a pipeline and all that comes with it crosses the “inherent limit” and certainly does not carry any Aboriginal Rights. There is none amongst us of any colour or creed that can claim a right to disregard the neighbour downstream, or who can claim a right to neglect life. There is none amongst us with the right to harm the great killer whale or the little barnacle.

An Indian pipeline would be a business venture as any other and is not “reconciliation”; rather, an infringement and a threat.

Be certain that the apparatus killing this planet is a nasty one and it seems intent on finishing the dirty deed. It gains strength through violence with the jack-booted obedient servants at its beck and call. It is commanding enough to recruit our cousins if not you and me. Though it is tough as hell, it’s not that smart.

Left to its devices this Juggernaut will continue killing our planet, and without intervention our fate is sealed and we may as well prepare a dignified exit, but that would be irresponsible.

While it must be stopped, don’t wait for the Indigenous people to lead. The Indians are few in number, battle-weary, and, along with the multitudes, distracted by the ballgames and trying to pay the bills. We are too easy to imprison, too easy to kill, and as you see, as fallible as any.

Be assured, however, that on the front lines the Indigenous people are already standing up for the health of the planet, already standing for basic clean air and water. Most of us love this planet and respect life before money.

Children all over the world are calling out for us to stop this careless behaviour and fix this disorder. The grown-ups still ignore the symptoms and avoid the cure.

Reach out across the chasms to your fellow earthlings and devote some time to figuring this thing out. In each of us is some measure of good and understanding of truth, and somewhere in there is the solution. There is no need to put anyone in harm’s way.

We, the multitudes, allowed it to come to this. We, the creators of the Juggernaut, have got to fix it together.

So with this amplification of Guujaaw’s wise words, there’s nothing more left to be said other than for each human being in Canada and every other country to now do what their individual conscience and morality directs them to do to stop all the dirty deeds of the nasty Juggernaut and its jack-boots in the world that daily are steadily killing all our lives and that of our crystalline Blue Planet.

Each human being must now open up and speak truth to power in the face of the next wave of all the propaganda that will continue to be unleashed to try to convince us all that what is being done to reduce the world’s climate crisis by pumping yet more bitumen throughout the world is right and just for British Columbia, Canada and everyone else.

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Jerome Irwin is a freelance writer who, for decades, in North Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, has sought to call attention to problems of sustainability caused by excessive mega-developments, the resulting horrors of traffic gridlock, loss of single family neighbourhoods and a host of related environmental-ecological-spiritual issues and concerns that exist between the conflicting philosophies of indigenous and non-indigenous peoples.

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