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About the Institute

The Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation, a research division of Carnegie Mellon University, specializes in the history of botany and all aspects of plant science and serves the international scientific community through research and documentation. To this end, the Institute acquires and maintains authoritative collections of books, plant images, manuscripts, portraits and data files, and provides publications and other modes of information service. The Institute meets the reference needs of botanists, biologists, historians, conservationists, librarians, bibliographers and the public at large, especially those concerned with any aspect of the North American flora.

Hunt Institute was dedicated in 1961 as the Rachel McMasters Miller Hunt Botanical Library, an international center for bibliographical research and service in the interests of botany and horticulture, as well as a center for the study of all aspects of the history of the plant sciences. By 1971 the Library's activities had so diversified that the name was changed to Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation. Growth in collections and research projects led to the establishment of four programmatic departments: Archives, Art, Bibliography and the Library.

**A EXPLOSÃO DEMOGRÁFICA,
A CRISE CONSERVACIONISTA
E A IGREJA CATÓLICA**

por Hugh H. Iltis

Conservation, Contraception and Catholicism,
A 20th Century Trinity

HUGH H. ILLIS

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ILTIS

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THE POPULATION EXPLOSION, THE CONSERVATION CRISIS,

AND THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

Hugh H. Iltis¹

A sesquicentennial of a University is like a victory, a victory
of human will over 150 years of adversity, of knowledge and faith

*you must
release!*

in a meaningful life over ignorance and superstition. The essay

Sesquicentennial theme

under the

"Knowledge and the Future of Man" sets forth the theme for this

celebration:

"Man's perennial war of survival against the destructive forces
of nature is coming to an end in our day. And we are justifiably proud
that man is the victor.... Famine and ignorance can now be safely
controlled by man's prudent use of his knowledge."

Though ^M man's victory over nature is indeed nearly complete, I am
not sure it deserves much celebration. I cannot be very optimistic.

But

With much of nature all but vanquished, I am not certain either that
man has much of a future. For man's victory, so absolute, so uncon-

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ditional, is in fact a bitter defeat for ~~man~~ himself: the defeat of

as well as for

¹Lecture presented at the symposium "Frontiers of Modern Biology", as
part of the Sesquicentennial Program of St. Louis University, St. Louis,
Missouri, on December 12, 1968.

Do not release before

THE POPULATION EXPLOSION, THE CONSERVATION CRISIS,
AND THE CATHOLIC CHURCH ¹

Hugh H. Iltis²

A sesquicentennial of a University is like a victory, a victory of human will over 150 years of adversity, of knowledge and faith in a meaningful life over ignorance and superstition. A recent essay "Knowledge and the Future of Man" published by the Catholic St. Louis University of St. Louis, Missouri, sets forth a theme common to much of modern technological thinking:

"Man's perennial war of survival against the destructive forces of nature is coming to an end in our day. And we are justifiably proud that man is the victor.... Famine and ignorance can now be safely controlled by man's prudent use of his knowledge."

Man's victory over nature is needed nearly complete, though there is much doubt that it deserves much celebration. I, for one, cannot be very optimistic. With much of nature all but vanquished, I am not certain either that man himself has much of a future. For man's victory, so absolute, so unconditional, is in fact a bitter defeat for himself: the defeat of man's very own environment. It is the only one man can ever have or use; it is the only one to which man is adapted. Thus man's split behavior towards the natural environment, where he destroys the very thing he loves, where he destroys the very environment he must have, makes these victories over nature look empty, even a little sick.

It is in this troubled mood that I begin this, the first of three lectures on "The Frontiers of Biology." Again, the very title alone inspires faith in the most progressive kind of biology, in the future of man, a faith which I do not share.

Thus, in all honesty, I really should not have accepted this invitation, old-fashioned taxonomist and geographer that I am, for no field in biology is more ancient and in some ways more archaic. We, much like Linnaeus some 200 years ago, still go out on collecting expeditions, be it to the Ozarks or to Peru, to gather pressed specimens and moss. We become excited when we find an unplowed prairie, or a flower that is beautiful, or one that is rare. It is in our blood, this love affair with nature.

Even the most incredible achievement of mid-20th century biology, the unravelling of the genetic code, "The Double Helix", first announced by Watson and Crick in 1953, has barely affected us naturalists, or our ways. We are still members of that ancient army of nature lovers, far in the rear of the frontiers of biology.

¹Lecture presented at the symposium "Frontiers of Modern Biology", as part of the Sesquicentennial Program of St. Louis University, St. Louis, Missouri, on December 12, 1968.

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THE POPULATION EXPLOSION, THE CONSERVATION CRISIS,
AND THE CATHOLIC CHURCH¹

Hugh H. Iltis²

A recent essay "Knowledge and the Future of Man," published by the Catholic St. Louis University of St. Louis, Missouri, sets forth an optimistic theme common to much of modern technological thinking:

"Man's perennial war of survival against the destructive forces of nature is coming to an end in our day. And we are justifiably proud that man is the victor---Famine and ignorance can now be safely controlled by man's prudent use of his knowledge."

Though man's victory over nature is indeed nearly complete, there is some doubt that it deserves much celebration. With much of nature vanquished, I am not very optimistic whether man himself has much of a future. For man's victory over nature, so absolute, so unconditional, is in many ways a bitter defeat for himself: the defeat of his own environment. It is the only one man can ever have or use, the only one, in fact, to which he is adapted. In destroying the very thing he loves, the very environment he must have, man's victories over nature are hollow, and in the long run may well be lethal.

In all honesty, I should not have accepted this invitation, old-fashioned taxonomist and plant geographer that I am, for no field in biology is more ancient and in some ways more archaic. Much like Linnaeus some 200 years ago, we still go out on collecting expeditions, be it to the Ozarks or to Peru, to gather pressed specimens

¹Based on an invitation lecture presented at the symposium "Frontiers of Modern Biology", Sesquicentennial Celebration of St. Louis University, St. Louis, Missouri, on December 12, 1968.

²Professor of Botany, University of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin 53706.