

Garrett Hardin — realist in ogre's clothing

# Disaster must not be postponed

by Bill Sutherland  
Staff Writer

Some suspect Garret Hardin, the proponent of lifeboat ethics, to be a cruel ogre who finds as much enjoyment in watching Indians starve as others find in pulling the wings off flies.

He is, after all, a devastator of many of our democratic ideals including "Each according



to his ability." "I am my brother's keeper." "Give me your huddled masses," etc. He says our heritage, or at least pretensions, of being the world's watchdog can only worsen the gloomy projections for the future.

Most people disagree with this message:

some are mortally offended. Asked whether he considered himself an ogre, he said:

"I suppose I can seem to be one to those who misunderstand me, who don't see that both choosing to help and not help needy countries must be painful decisions."

He contends that to save lives today with food and aid in the third world, would stabilize their overpopulation and allow it to continue growing exponentially.

"And with the constant escalation of population, the absolute magnitude of emergencies such as crop failures increases. So it ends up being a question of how vast we wish the disasters to be. And if we postpone them too long, we may find ourselves included in one," he said.

Hardin certainly does not look like an ogre. He has neither warts nor a hunched back. He is a human ecologist who is just sixty years old and has an energy level that should be harnessed for a source of power.

He is also a realist, quietly threatening his audiences with brimstone if we continue in our unthinking, altruistic fashion. He can sometimes sound like an ogre, but only because he wants to.

"I really want people to listen and then react. Lately I have been talking about little else but lifeboat ethics and the tragedy of the commons, because I think the time is very ripe for such considerations," he said.

So Hardin is becoming accustomed to outbursts like the one during his speech March 24 in Memorial Hall. Such reactions

are no wonder. He is telling us that a country is an organization responsible for its own well-being, and poorly managed ones will suffer and hopefully learn from experience.

He is forcing us to realize that without authoritarian restraint or the responsibility science. All prosperous countries have some "fat" like pure science, which is useful, while other kinds of fat, like outboards, are basically a waste," he said.

"I decry some of the overconsumption as much as anyone. However a margin of waste is good, because if we tried to monitor all our

*'Prosperous societies are needed, for only they can afford the long-term investment of science.'*

entailed in a vested interest, people will act in their own interests, even at the sake of the commons (i.e., the world). This includes the rich overconsuming and the poor overpopulating.

But for a footnote he added, "I am only stating a guiding principle. Those in practical positions can take the various principles available and come out with the best working compromise."

Hardin stresses the need for cool, rational decision makers, capable of patient foresight. The guilt-ridden-like Hamlet, he says, can never reach decisions and thus cannot contribute to the issues of survival. "Prosperous societies are needed, for only they can afford the long-term investment of

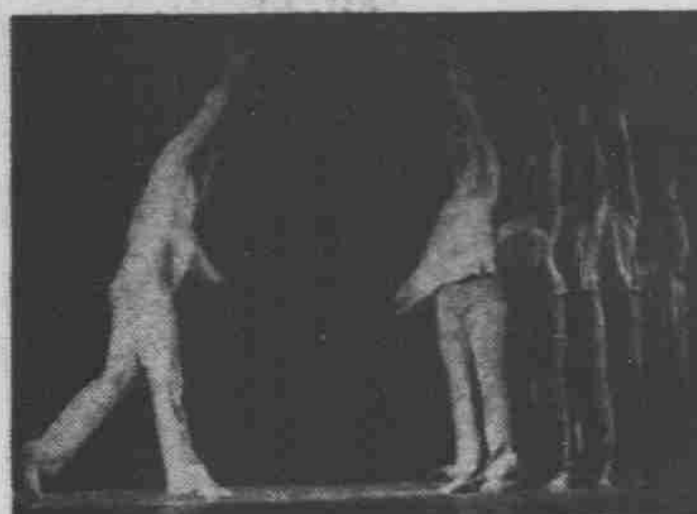
activities it would be even more wasteful."

Many would consider Hardin an ogre for his ideas on population control. He says a country should use whatever will be most effective, even if it is severe by our standards.

He mentioned examples where polygamy and infanticide are particularly effective, adding, "Again it is a problem for each country to solve. If it is cruel, does it work? For if it works, then the cruelest fate of all — overpopulation — may be avoided."

Garrett Hardin, biologist and author of the book "Voyage of the Spaceship Beagle," spoke at UNC March 24 on the concept of "triage."

## Louis Falco



A Memorial Hall audience marveled last Tuesday night at dance numbers performed by The Louis Falco Dance Company. Falco is pictured above right with Georgiana Holmes and at the top left directing five members of his company in "Caviar." At the bottom left, Holmes bends gracefully with Juan Antonio in "Dreamers."

Staff photos by Alton Boyte

The DTH would like to exonerate the Cat's Cradle from the last classified ad in Friday's paper. The ad was a hoax. Both the DTH and the Cradle would like to apologize to anyone offended.

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Panel 4: WE DID? THAT'S MY NAME... TRUFFLES!

Panel 5: OH, GOOD GRIEF!

Panel 6: HEY, BOBBY — DID YOU SEE THAT FIGHT IN THE LOCKER ROOM THIS MORNING? NO, BUT I HEARD ABOUT IT — SOUNDED PRETTY AWFUL!

Panel 7: YOU KNOW, THE FIGHTING JUST SEEMS TO GO ON FOREVER! SOMETIMES I WISH THERE WAS SOME WAY WE COULD BRING THE BLACK KIDS AND WHITE KIDS TOGETHER, TO MAKE THEM REALIZE WE'VE GOT TO PULL TOGETHER!

Panel 8: HOW ABOUT A PANTAMA PARTY? OKAY, BUT I'LL HAVE TO ASK MY MOTHER.