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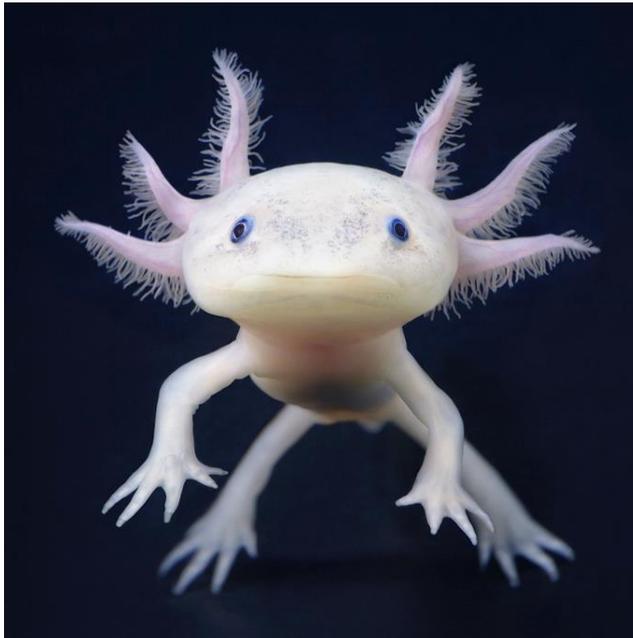
English Period 1

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The Difference Between a Utopian and Dystopian Future

The Possibilities

There is a mystical animal with regenerative properties like no other. It can regrow severed limbs within 40 to 50 days. This animal is known as the Axolotl(AHKS-Ohl-OH-tuhl). Let's look forward to the future. The year is 2170. Humans have figured out a way to extend the average life expectancy from 150 years of age to 200. This is all because of the Axolotl, who's



regenerative properties made a huge breakthrough in science. But this future is only possible if we save the axolotl. Most likely it will look like this: The year is 2170. Humans are on their last legs. With a rapid mortality rate of from dehydration, malnutrition, and suffocation from lack of and toxic air, the humans are going to go extinct within 30 years. The pollution is so bad that food is at a minimum, clean water is

depleted, and the air is very toxic.

Addressing The Problem

This is the problem. Axolotls are critically endangered, with an estimate of 700 - 1200 left in the world. They are dying because their lake that they live in is being drained, and also because of pollution. How can we help these little, smiley salamander friends?

Some Help For The Axolotl

This is a problem in the world that I will refuse to put up with, because the Axolotls endangered because of pollution and their lake being drained, and this will cause a lot more problems in the future than just the extinction of the Axolotl. This is also very bad because Axolotls might just have a critical key for medical scientific advancement. One possible solution to this problem is to support and/or donate to the World Land Trust.

The Background

So the axolotl is an uncommon creature, and the endangerment of it has been a problem since 2006, so it has been around for about 13 years, but does this matter to you if you don't know what an axolotl is? As described by Toronto Zoo, "The axolotl is an amphibian, which suggests it has a double life, part water and part on land. The axolotl, however, has a preference for remaining in water as a sexually mature larva; (an adaptation known as neoteny) they do not metamorphose. The axolotl belongs to the order Caudata, since it retains its tail in adult life as other salamanders and newts. The term axolotl should be restricted to the Mexican species *Ambystoma mexicanum* from Lake Xochimilco, even though it is also used to describe the larval form of the tiger salamander, *Ambystoma tigrinum*, from western Canada and the northern states of the U.S., and is a close relation to the axolotl."(Torontozoo.com 1). This quote is important

because it shows some basic information about the axolotl, and can help people understand what an axolotl is.

The Causes



Moving on, axolotl endangerment is caused by the draining of their lake, and also pollution of their lake. This is shown by the quote from National Geographic, "Populations are in decline as the demands of nearby Mexico City have led to the draining and contamination of

much of the waters of the Xochimilco Lake complex. They are also popular in the aquarium trade, and roasted axolotl is considered a delicacy in Mexico, further shrinking their numbers. They are considered a critically endangered species." (Nationalgeographic.com). This quote shows the causes behind why axolotls are endangered and can give us some leverage to help stop it because we understand the problem.

The Negative Effects

Finally, there are a lot of negative effects of axolotl endangerment, especially because if they go extinct, that would cause a huge chain reaction in the ecosystem, creating chaos. This is shown in the article by the quote from axolotl.weebly.com, "Large fish and birds are the most common predators of the Mexican Axolotl. If the Axolotl were to die out, these animals would become endangered due to starvation for not having as much to eat. As for the Mexican Axolotls' prey, which are mollusks, crustaceans, worms, and insects, they would overpopulate from the axolotl

not being able to eat them." (white Mexican axolotl.weebly.com) This quote shows that if Axolotls went extinct, then the ecosystem could break down from the predators starving, and then those predators would starve, and create a chain reaction with everything in that ecosystem either dying or coming really close.

What Can We Do?

So, if you are angry about this problem, you might be wondering what we could do as a solution. While there are a lot of solutions to Axolotl endangerment, like the one proposed by Smithsonian, "In one sense, a homogeneous stock can be good for science, as it is much more likely to facilitate reproducible studies. 'On the other hand, it can compromise the health of a captive population,' Voss explains.

Captive populations are more vulnerable to catastrophe. Disease, or even an accidental fire, could wipe out an entire lab population almost instantaneously. Between the inbreeding and efforts to cross the Axolotl with the tiger salamander to introduce some genetic diversity, the collection is also very different than the wild populations; not only are their genomes different, but they are highly domesticated and adapted to humans"(smithsonian.com 1) This means that



they have proposed a way to preserve the Axolotl, but it could be risky. I, however, believe that this is not the best solution. I think that the best solution was proposed by global press journal,

“The open-air breeding ground managed by CIBAC is one of several conservation projects. In 2013, 2,800 Axolotls were released in

this 200-hectare (494-acre) ecological reserve. In 2015, the Secretaría del Medio Ambiente y Recursos Naturales, the environment and natural resources ministry, released 500 Axolotls from CIBAC in the water channels south of Mexico City, 225 of them wearing a chip that monitors their behavior.

This program's success is only part of what's needed to save cannibalistic Axolotls from extinction. The Axolotls natural habitat in the lake complex has changed dramatically in recent decades as its water has been used to quench thirsty Mexico City and as predatory fish have been introduced into the system.”(globalpressjournal.com 1) This solution is good because it shows that they can create a new habitat that, unlike the idea of keeping Axolotls in labs, does not have as large of a potential to have as many accidents where the whole lab population could die instantly if there was a fire or another accident. This means that we can help the Axolotl and have the paradise mentioned earlier.

I can only hope that people are wanting to help this unnoticed creature, and this solution can help us reach this goal much easier than most others.

Once Again as a Recap

Right now, we are facing the current problem of Axolotl endangerment, which could potentially cause a great loss for science and the environment, with the predators of the Axolotl becoming endangered and/or extinct, and the pray of the Axolotl overpopulating because nothing is eating them. This is a large problem because it could end up with a whole ecosystem collapsing.

What Did I Do?

To support the Axolotl, what I and a group of friends did was ride our bikes from Driggs along the bike path to Victor(y), with posters that included information about the Axolotl strapped to us. This was scary, because we did it on a windy and rainy day, and with posters



strapped to us, I turned into a sailboat. This made me very scared that we would blow away! For a while, I had very little control over my bike, so I took the poster off of me and taped it to my handlebars. This was something fun that we did that also raised awareness about the Axolotl.

Whom Should We Support?

There are a lot of organizations out there, but the best for solving the problem of Axolotl endangerment is the World Land Trust. Their goal is to find problems in the world that have to relate to nature in some way and try to help solve them. It just so happens that they are trying to help the Axolotl right now! This means that you can help the Axolotl by donating to the World Land Trust. Their mission is on their website, and it goes like this,

“To protect and sustainably manage natural ecosystems of the world. To conserve their biodiversity, with emphasis on threatened habitats and endangered species

To develop partnerships with local individuals, communities, and organizations to engage support and commitment among the people who live in project areas

To raise awareness, in the UK and elsewhere, of the need for conservation, to improve understanding and generate support through education, information and fundraising”

(WorldLandTrust.org 1). This is their mission statement, and it shows exactly what they do. So if you are nervous to listen to me because I am just a kid with a computer, then you should check out the World Land Trust website. I am sure that you will be convinced.

What Can You Do?

So, you might be wondering now what you can do to help, and an answer to that question, I say that you should just think about the Axolotl and the possibilities that there are if it lives and what we lose if it doesn't. Also, you should maybe check out the World Land Trust website, and read about what it does and how you can help.