



DOOMSDAY: THE ACCOLADE FOR RAVISHING NATURE

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ABSTRACT:

Nature is a big recourse where the entire mankind finds refuge. The relationship between man and nature is like a maternal bond. It is an indigenous rapport where mankind inherently worships nature as a mother goddess. Everything is at peace between man and nature alliance until the emergence of avarice and the idea of mechanization in the psyche of mortals. In their materialistic daze humanity has forgotten that their life is at the clemency of nature. Humanity can have sustenance on earth only by nurturing their love, care and devotion to nature. The animosity of man towards nature has started when man decided to define and mark himself as the centre by repressing nature in the periphery. Mankind being the focal point initiated the chasm and contestation with nature. With the advancement of science and technological innovation humanity begin to colonize nature without realizing it is creating a pitfall for its own annihilation. It is at the dawn of consumerism and philistinism that man has started to ravish nature by replacing the reverence towards nature with negligence. Consumerism culture has a large role in the victimization of nature. This victimization is not a mere accidental injury but a calculated one where nature is mutilated to the condition that recuperation is under question and threat. This paper analyses the unexplored notion of humanity's demolition of nature in the context of cultural materialism and consumerism by focusing on two documentaries namely *Dirt* and *The Plastic Problem*. Besides, it spotlights the looming menace and question of survival strategies in the context of climatic change which has bestowed disparity in food production and consumption among people in the society.

Keywords: paganism, consumerism, materialism, climatic change, poverty, economic crisis.

INTRODUCTION:

“The earth provides enough to satisfy every man's needs, but not every man's greed” (Schumacher¹⁸) by Gandhi sums up the characteristics of Mother Nature. Man's mania in materialism and consumerism has made him to neglect the precious presence of the natural world and venture into the creation of artificial products which in turn renders threat to his own existence. The documentary *Dirt* released in 2009, directed by Gene Rosow and Bill Benenson explores the significance, value and fertility of soil, which mankind has gradually neglected and hesitated to step on it thereby categorizing it as a mere dirt.

This documentary film enables mankind to rediscover their lost love towards the natural world, especially to soil, which Montgomery points out as follows, “Soil is our most underappreciated, least valued, and yet essential natural resource” (Montgomery³). Whereas, the second documentary *The Plastic Problem* released on November 27, 2019 explores mankind ongoing war with plastic pollution, which is looming in the air as a menace ready to attack mankind. The plastic pollution renders problems not only to mortals, but to other creatures as well which plays a vital role in the balance of ecological cycle. This paper examines two main issues, namely soil and

plastic which in turn brings forth many other issues like air pollution, water pollution, climate change, decrease in food production etc. in the light of man-made consumerism and use and throw away culture.

MANKIND AND PAGANIS:

Nature is the most naïve, complex, elegant, resplendent, and a mystical phenomenon which always lies beyond mankind level of apprehension. The mysticism associated with nature is not an obscureness rather a sanctity. Nature is one of the magnanimous gift that almighty has rendered for beings, but mankind takes this surplus present for granted without realizing that the indifference which they are showcasing to nature is indeed an indifference which they have for their own life. Mankind is keen to use nature in abundance, but it doesn't take any precautions and measures to preserve it. Though man is bestowed with complete right to use nature to satisfy his needs, on the other hand, he is endowed with the obligation to conserve nature for the future generations. Every individual on this earth for that matter has a responsibility to preserve nature and present to the next generation as a valuable family inheritance.

Before the arrival of science and innovation made by technology mankind has completely relied on nature for sustenance. Mankind has firmly believed that they are the indigene of natural world and embraced nature as their spiritual leader which in turn standardized principles for mankind livelihood. Besides, mankind conceives the idea that they are created from nature as Bible points out, "And The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being" (Genesis 1:31-2:11) and this renders man to see himself as an inferior creature to the natural world. Nature has fascinated mankind with its every move via

changes of the season, thereby furnishing man with everything he desires as Emerson points out,

Nature, in its ministry to man, is not the material, but is also the process and the result. All the parts incessantly work into each other's hands for the profit of man. The wind sows the seed; the sun evaporates the sea; the wind blows the vapor to the field; the ice, on the other side of the planet, condenses rain on this; the rain feeds the plant; the plant feeds the animal; and thus the endless circulations of the divine charity nourishes man (Atkinson 8).

Man has thought nature to be a god in disguise and felt afraid of doing any harm and always treated it with reverence. The idea of man being the entity of nature is further emphasized by religion and it triggered mankind to develop a motherly love towards nature as Bible says, "In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, for out of dust you were taken; for dust you are, and to dust you shall return" (Genesis 3:19). Man has considered himself to be a child in the womb of Mother Nature and realized that humanity can sustain on earth for years and years only if Mother Nature is alive. Man is inherently built with this knowledge that mankind and nature relationships are quite complementary and any intervention in this cyclic process will turn the earth topsy-turvy. And this limited knowledge has prevented the natural world from its destruction and promised its well-being.

If we scrutinize when an individual starts to get detached from nature, it is during adulthood period where the man turns out to be an autocrat towards nature. For instance child never feels ill will towards nature like adult because both share common traits like unconditional love and emotional attachment. The child feels enormous love towards Mother Nature and yearns to spend a full day in the lap of the natural world. But this

is not the case with today's children because mankind have turned them into a tech-savvy and served their exquisite bonding with nature.

Nature not only renders food, but also looks after physical, mental and spiritual well-being of mankind. But today we have lost everything because of man's avarice and facing lot of pre-mature death, physical and psychological issues. Besides, it is not going to be the fatal downfall to his own generation, but to future generations as well. As long as compatibility reigned between mankind and nature, there are no physical illness and threat to mankind life. Humanity by degrading nature has degraded its own life and now lies on the verge of meeting its own end.

Man's attachment with nature is further strengthened by the profession of farming and husbandry which keep on reminding man that he is merely an integral of this vast natural world. Before the dawn of civilization and culture man has unconsciously lived by abiding the rules of a religion called paganism. Paganism is a belief where mortals give ultimate preference to nature world, thereby worshipping nature as a god and never distinguishing themselves with any other creatures on earth. Paganism is like a utilitarian philosophy which emphasis on the goodness for a greater number of beings, not limited to humanity but to biodiversity as a whole. Paganism makes a man feel the very presence of god in nature as Emerson points out "Nature is too thin a screen; the glory of the omnipresent God bursts through everywhere" (Atkinson 199).

The consciousness that god sees mankind via nature has forbidden man to do any harm to nature and made him a subservient being.

Gradually, with the expansion of man's knowledge resulting from invention and exploration has reversed the table and made man to see nature as a subordinate creature. Besides,

the emergence of multi-faceted cultural and religious practices in clash with scientific inventions befuddled man thereby making him to doubt the very existence of god. This muddiness has made man to conceive himself as superior creature and thereby made him to hurl paganism in the periphery. With paganism taking the back seat paved way for chaotic transformation in man-nature alliance. In other words man's deviation from paganism is the first sign of nature's threat and destruction. To end this bias between man and nature it is important to wholeheartedly embrace Darwin notion of life-forms as Masanobu Fukuoka points out, "In nature's cyclical rhythms, there are no grounds for the discriminatory view that underlies Darwin's view of superiority that deems single-celled organisms as lower, and more complicated life forms as higher. It would be more appropriate to say we are all one continuous life-form" (Fukuoka 112).

CONSUMERISM AS DETRIMENTAL

Consumerism culture is the hallmark of mankind avarice. With the advancement of machines and printing presses aristocrats have formulated a superficial way of living categorized as high-class or ideal life. This demarcation of class division among people in society is one of the root causes for the emergence of a consumeristic culture which has brought a chasm not alone among beings but also between mankind and natural world. At the dawn of consumeristic culture people have become greedy and competitive in securing a place in so-called market of societal hierarchy. By using broadcast as a powerful weapon the capitalists have enabled the thirst for consumption among middle class beings thereby inciting their desire to be one among them as Jean Baudrillard points out, "Consumption is a desire to any goods to remove usefulness and refers it as an indication system rather than meeting the needs" (Baudrillard95). The growth of

consumeristic culture has promised the destruction of natural world thereby wrecking cataclysm in survival and ordinary way of existence.

People usually fall for consumeristic ideals thinking that it will elevate their status quo but in reality it degrades their very level of existence. The notion of consumerism has gradually turned out to be an addiction where people have started to associate things with happiness and prestige as Herbert Marcuse points out, “The people recognize themselves in their commodities; they find their soul in their automobile, hi-fi set, split-level home, kitchen equipment” (Marcuse 9). Consumerism is not confined to specific geographical boundaries or culture, rather it symbolizes the whole humanity who have been deliberately turned into a brand by the capitalist to mint more money at the expense of natural resource depletion. The growth of this consumer culture is complemented with the transformation of many agricultural lands into factories, malls, theatres, amusement park, bridges etc. and this in turn leads to many challenges in the ecological system.

Consumerism has gradually fostered a new culture called use and throw where a lot of non-recyclable things are manufactured in abundance to make an individual way of living easy and cozy. Use and throw culture is viewed as a progress of civilization, but its progress is nothing rather than its commercialization from localization to globalization. People have started to see and embrace this culture as a hi-fi status. Besides, in contemporary society man is used to this culture and deem it as a part of his existence. The two main crises which have been brought forth by use and throw culture are degradation of agricultural lands and plastic pollution.

Earlier for livelihood mankind has relied on farming, but today we have lost that tradition,

especially in India because man has started to see land in the commercial context of give and take policy. In traditional agriculture soil is viewed as a bond of fraternity where beings developed a sort of unexplainable attachment with land and soil as Pierre Rabhi says, Over years, this dirt has taught me a lot. God did not give us this amazing dirt to mistreat it. I have a relationship with this living organism. At times I’m dirt’s father because I take care of it and at times dirt’s mother because she feeds me. And at times, dirt’s lover because we share a loving relationship. I take care of it and it take care of me. I feel the life within it (Dirt 2009).

The Statistics say that only 3.4% are doing farming, whereas others have opted jobs in the corporate sector. The domination of corporate company is so high and via their authoritative power they have converted many agricultural farms into big multinational and international firms. The soil which we worshipped as goddess years ago has turned out to be a mere dirt as Jose Graziano da Silva points out, “The Multiple roles of soil often go unnoticed because soil don’t have a voice” (Silva 2014). In addition, humanity respect towards farming profession has also undergone a drastic change with the evolution of dominating corporate culture. Corporates are keen to make use of the mineral resources that are abundant in soil thereby deliberately neglecting farming which determines man’s well-being and future on the earth as Wangari Maathai points out We think diamonds are important, gold is very important, all these minerals are very important, we call them precious minerals but they are all forms of the soil and that part of this mineral that is on the top like the skin of the earth that is the most precious of the commons (Dirt 2009). As Wangari says we take soil for granted, thinking that it is available in every nook and corner of the world, but one day if we lose soil via natural disasters like soil erosion and flood then the world

will be left only with rocks where human will have no soil to do agriculture for his sustenance.

The use and throw culture at its peak soil has started to degrade with non-recyclable wastes. Especially chemical wastes from industries have declined soil fertility, thereby killing microorganisms and polluting ground water level. Soil issue is not a trivial one because it nurture other issues like the disparity in food production and consumption. Soil plays a vital role in human sustenance as UN points out, “Soils constitute the foundation for agricultural development, essential ecosystem functions and food security and hence are key to sustaining life on earth” (Brown 1).

The world unaware of what to do with many non-recyclable plastics which we casually use in our day-to-day life, just dump it into the land which in turn causes a lot of issues in the production of food. Because plastic takes years and years to decay, thereby turning the soil on which it is deposited barren by making the fertile ground into sterile. This soil erosion cause problems not only to humans but to entire biodiversity for that matter. The problem of soil erosion is not confined with any geographical location because in no time it will turn out to be a global pandemic which possess the capacity to destroy the entire world in a jiffy. The soil erosion always complements poverty and brings great economic crisis in the society. Therefore, it is important to preserve soil to keep the biosphere healthy which in turn looks after mankind’s well-being. Though the government is implementing many awareness campaigns and programs humans are still ignorant of this looming threat. It is high time and beings have to discover and re-embrace their relationship with nature, not in the context of colonizer and colonized but in terms of fraternity. To resume mankind love for the soil, government should make agriculture as a compulsory practice in every household. Before

constructing a house on the site it should be made mandatory to leave a space for gardening. Besides, the government should reserve a piece of land for every family to do farming and should encourage to make contributions to the country’s economic growth and development. In Schools in addition to theoretical class children should be practically taught gardening thereby to increase their love and devotion to nature.

The next major issue which threatens the world is plastic pollution. There is always an ongoing war between plastics and mortals because man addiction to plastic has become irrevocable. Plastic has become man’s favorite because it possesses several advantages like light weight, durability, portability, etc. If we take a survey of how many plastics does an individual use for a day definitely it will take his next ten generations to get rid of the plastics that he has used.

The plastics, live longer than the normal life span of an individual. In developed countries where strict laws exist there is a control in the production and maintenance of plastics. But in rural areas, especially in India, where plastics are produced and used in abundance rules exist but people don’t adhere to it. Besides, there are no proper means to dispose plastics which in turn causes complex health issues like cancer and asthma. For instance, in an empty land outside of the village people used to burn plastics with other organic wastes thereby causing air pollution and soil degradation. The Statistics say that more than fifteen thousand tons of plastic waste is generated in India. With no proper system to collect and recycle plastic wastes people are simply throwing it into the trash, which in turn is dumped into rivers and oceans where lot of sea creatures consumes and dies. Use of plastics might seem to be very easy, but it creates a chain of threats to future humanity because most of the plastics are not recyclable and it causes drastic

climate change which in turn affects crop cultivation and vegetation.

Plastic pollution, mainly affects sea creatures a lot. The ocean swarms with plastic pieces that it seems impossible to clean the shores because the plastic particles usually gets mixed with sand or settles under the rock once they are washed ashore. Research says that if people continue to use plastics, regardless of the complications then in the near future the sea and ocean will be full of plastics instead of fish and it will anticipate the nearing of doomsday. In the documentary film *The Plastic Problem* it is shown how sea creatures are facing problems and encountering premature death because of plastics via the turtle where a straw gets struck into its nose. Besides, it also shows the body of a whale washed ashore in 2019, which has ninety pounds of plastic in its stomach and a seal which has died because of plastic net caught around his neck.

Plastic pollution has become a global issue and it is getting worse day by day. If we trace the history of plastic and how people got addicted it is only after the birth of industrialization where plastics are first produced and used. Initially plastics are manufactured to make life safety objects which promised portability and durability, but after a decade of its invention people have started to see plastic as an indispensable entity with its usage in medical, grocery, industry, commerce etc. Though now everyone knows about the damage that plastic has in store for humanity, man still takes it in a carefree way thinking what difference it will make after all if an individual stops using plastic. Indeed, it will make a monumental difference in the whole world. Each individual should start to see plastic pollution as his own problem and should take necessary steps to prevent the production, purchase and use of plastics as much as he can. The great hindrance which man faces in saying no to plastic is his

disposable lifestyle which is rendered as comfortable and ideal. The only solution to end plastic pollution is to stop popularizing use and throw culture and to embrace recycling culture. The government should pass strict laws in the production of plastic items, by banning the production of unwanted plastic objects. A heavy tax should be laid on factories and household, which dispose large quantities of plastic waste. Goods and service tax should be made higher with the purchase of every plastic item. Instead of establishing more factories for plastic production, we should start companies to recycle waste to generate electricity production. To provide sea creatures, their space of living and to sustain man's life on earth without any threat it is important to stop using plastics by embracing plastic free lifestyle.

CONCLUSION:

The Earth lushly green has gradually changed to grey when a man's compassionate nature turned to be carefree. Whatever heights man reach he has to realize nature and mankind life go hand in hand and any intervention in this cyclic process will make a chaotic transformation in the man-nature alliance. Already we have lost heavenly paradise and if we still continue our negligence and dominance towards Mother Nature we will soon lose this earthly paradise as well. Returning to nature, not only promises nature's well-being but also resolves all kinds of difference among beings by increasing the bond of fraternity as Masanobu Fukuoka says, "The ultimate goal of farming is not the growing of crops, but the cultivation and perfection of human beings" (Fukuoka 151). The natural crisis, which the contemporary society is facing is not created by nature rather it is deliberately caused by humanity's destructive actions. Therefore, it is a global trauma which man has incurred by his choice. The only option that is available for man to compensate all the

injustice that he has done so far to nature is to adopt zero waste living. The five main principles of zero waste life namely refuse, reduce, reuse, recycle and rot makes mankind life more cozy and eco-friendly than single-use disposable products. Broadcast should focus more on this zero-waste lifestyle as a rich, productive and hi-fi standard of living and should motivate humanity to throw consumerism and use and throw culture in the trash. Before taking any actions in relation to environment man should always remind himself that he is sharing this big world with all manner of creatures from large to small like plants, animals, insects, birds, reptiles and mammals.

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