

MODUS OPERANDI OF NATURE AND HUMANS FOCUSING ON VIOLENCE IN LORD OF FLIES AND WORLD POPULATION

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ABSTRACT

Nature is a powerful source for exploration and inspiration to humans. Humans learnt and imitated nature in their own ways. Nature sometimes acts as a benevolent mother and sometimes it displays wrath in an extreme form. Natural catastrophes have been the part and parcel of human existence. This aggression and violence of nature was feared and imitated by humans. Violence of nature is arbitrary as well as impartial but not of humans. Violence in human world has been used as a tool by one group for its advantage or for mental, physical, emotional, cultural and financial exploitation of the other. I want to raise the issue, whether violence is the need of hour for human's survival and whose violence will be more effective, humans or nature? Will humans be humane in their violence? Piggy in Lord of Flies raises a fundamental question,

“What are we? Humans? Or animals? Or savages?” (129)

Introduction

Literature and history are replete with examples of various types of aggressions. If we go back to later eighteenth century literature of Gothic fiction which was not for long but hold a significant place hitherto, we will find examples of domestic violence, torn relations, exploitation of young maids and submission of wives. This violence has been more brutal at the individual level. Sometimes, I wonder if it was already there in real life as well to a larger extent. This was due to rival lovers, family members, communities, powerful and corrupt religious heads. Even curbing one's own desire, loathing one's self and thinking of committing suicide is also violence to self. The complacent world is no more now. As Golding opines in LOF,

“The world, that understandable and lawful world, was slipping away.” (128)

Humans are inherently aggressive and evil lurks in their heart. They have exploited and hurt each other

since civilisation started. There have been very short periods in history when humanity lived with peace. In *Lord of Flies*, Darwinian Theory, survival of fittest, is truly applicable. The powerful in the novel manipulates and controls the weak. Ralph is physically strong, but he is a weak leader. Jack with his shrewdness, violence and terror takes the control of the situation. At the end, we witness violent change in the behaviour of the innocent boys who turn themselves into “savages”. William Golding rightly said, “Man produces evil as a bee produces honey”. (Fable, 87)

Ralph, who is innocent and good boy, for survival goes on to say,

“The fire’s the most important thing. Without the fire we can’t be rescued. I’d like to put on war-paint and be a savage. But we must keep the fire burning.” (204)

Golding believes people love pleasure, violence and savagery. To counter argue, we can say that even having evil and savagery humans successfully enjoyed the pleasures of civilisations and have come this far. Today, we boast of new advancements which have increased life expectancy, missions to mars and genetic modifications to name few. Reality is humans wear masks to meet masks. Golding asserts, “The mask was a thing on it's own, behind which Jack hid, liberated from shame and self-consciousness.” (89)

I am a teacher in front of students. At home, I am a son, a brother, a grandson, a husband, outside in a bus I am a stranger to my fellow passenger. There is unexplained fear in us. Two innocent children like Piggy and Ralph brood in their solitude, “Life . . . is scientific . . . I know there isn't no beast . . . but I know there isn't no fear, either . . . Unless we get frightened of people.” (119)

Ultimately, we have to live in society and with reference to Freud’s theory of id, ego and super ego, humans repress desires and life goes on. So, even if civilisation prospers, they are just hiding the “beast” which lurks deep in their heart, which is not completely destroyed. Simon in his hallucination realizes, “Fancy thinking the Beast was something you could hunt and kill! You knew, didn’t you? I’m part of you? Close, close, close! I’m the reason why it’s no go? Why things are what they are?” (206)

This force is primordial and natural and what makes it beautiful is the resistance from being a savage. The characters of Piggy and Ralph show how to act responsibly by keeping monsters of violence and greed of power at bay. Violence occurs when humans stop suppressing the beast. It is ego and super ego which controls their dark desires. Violent people succumb to these impulses as an attribute to natural forces. Eli Roth believes,

“Natural disasters are terrifying - that loss of control, this feeling that something is just going to randomly end your life for absolutely no reason is terrifying. But, what scares me is the human reaction to it and how people behave when the rules of civility and society are obliterated.”

Does this violent beast help humanity to keep a balance? If humans follow rules of brotherhood, and there is peace, no deaths, humanity prospers, leading to more numbers in population, and ultimately to consumption of resources at alarming rate to go extinct. They will start questioning like Piggy, "Which is better — to have laws and agree, or to hunt and kill?" (259)

Nature has been an omnipotent force which man tried to tame but in vain. Humans are suffering the slaps of nature since civilisation started. Today, we experience catastrophes like tsunami, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, flood and drought. Some call it wrath of nature and console each other by saying nature is trying to restore the balance that has been devastated due to population explosion.

Sir David Attenborough, a naturalist, said that the human population can no longer be allowed to grow in the same old uncontrolled way. If we do not take charge of our population size, nature will do it for us.

Yes. Nature is doing it very systematically. Recent happenings in China, Japan, U.S., Pakistan, Afghanistan and India are ominous enough for something very tragic and horrible. Well, do we need to support those people who say it should go on. Nature must do violence to humanity. It should keep on bringing calamities and destroy certain chunk of population every year, even every quarter for the survival of human beings as God's natural order. Otherwise, due to this modern plague of over population, we will be extinct. Yes, it is a fact that we need to consider seriously. Already, it's too late and drastic measures are needed to be taken. If we look back at the development of human civilisation, we will find that nature kept a balance by bringing natural but violent calamities like plague in fourteenth century in England when one third of population was wiped away and the result was revival of learning-Renaissance. This continued in the form of natural disasters, earthquakes and mass diseases and so development.

Humans with their gifted knowledge opened the gates of advancement in science and technology. Now except few viruses, there are no fatal epidemics. We have improved life expectancy. Isn't it good? But this goodness has its own price. The more the people live, the more is consumption of resources. The more the consumption of resources, the lesser is the time humans would enjoy before extinction.

Gore Vidal argues that think of the Earth as a living organism that is being attacked by billions of bacteria whose numbers double every 40 years. Either the host dies, or the virus dies, or both die. It may be an eccentric idea for many but it is true.

Just look at the earth's population history from the very beginning to the early 1800s. It was just one billion people. Surprisingly, it took only about a hundred and fifty years for the population to reach the four billion mark in the 1970s. We will reach eight billion very soon. We daily add a quarter million and every year we are adding the equivalent of the entire country of Germany.

From last 50 years, we have consumed natural and man-made resources at an alarming rate. There is no coming back now. It is very disappointing. Whether it is population, GDP, average surface temperature, ozone depletion, foreign investment, water and paper use, motor vehicles and species extinction, it is like a steep ascent leading to doom.

Nicolas Machiavelli asserted that when every province of the world so teems with inhabitants that they can neither subsist where they are nor remove themselves elsewhere... the world will purge itself in one or another of these three ways (floods, plague and famine).

Suppose, we put rabbits on an island and provide them radish and carrot fields and no other animal or human to hunt them they may grow happily. They have a feature; they grow rapidly and then multiply. So what will be the result? They will end up consuming all the resources and die. Don't you think that same is going to happen with humans? Is it too late? Can we take drastic measures? Even up to what extent?

Drastic measures

What are the alternatives we are left with? We can plan migration to Moon or Mars. It may take many years or may not even happen. Though science is working on this but results are unpredictable. Jawaharlal Nehru – Indian Prime Minister once said that some of these (Asian) countries, like India, far from needing a bigger population, would be better off with fewer people.

Mass elimination of the population is one violent way which is an extreme option. If one third of the population is eliminated, we can start a fresh and save humanity. It is inhumane and we can't even consider its implications. Hitler tried to do it, though he was unaware of over-population demon. He wanted only one race in the world. Similar thing happened in the novel when even a good hearted Jack

begins to break the rules of civilisation as it is the survival and violent instinct that propels him to say, when Ralph reminds him,

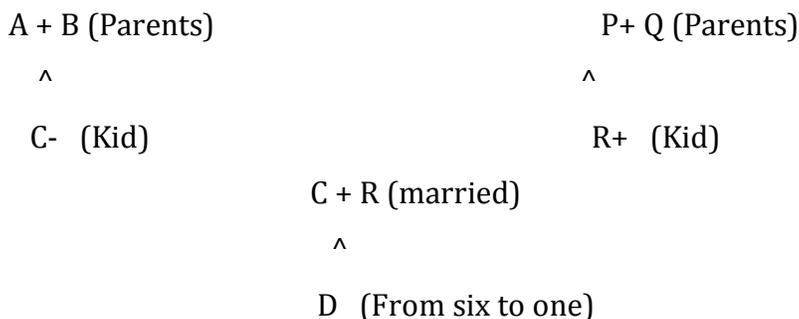
"The rules!" shouted Ralph, "you're breaking the rules!"

"Who cares?" (129)

Epidemics in earlier centuries kept population in check. Science has provided vaccines to increase our immunity. You never know a scientist may develop a programmed virus which will make one half of the population infertile in proportion to male-female, communities, countries and religions. That way also, we can control population. But what do we call that person a messiah or a terrorist?

It can be argued fiercely that this is callous. Some of you may label him as devil's party. But look at the practical nature of all the mathematical calculations. We do not have much time. On one side is nature and other is its creation Man. Both are trying to restore the balance intentionally or unintentionally. For example; Hitler, Osama and by spreading viruses like AIDS, humans already are doing it. I am not glorifying these real life villains but what I want to mention is their contribution as a tool of nature for restoring balance by violent ways. This may be termed as 'end of innocence' and reign of 'darkness of man's heart'. This cannot be thinking of all humans as Rogers in LOF "gathered a handful of stones and began to throw them. Yet there was a space round Henry, perhaps six yards in diameter, into which he dare not throw. Here, invisible yet strong, was the taboo of the old life" (86-87)

Another option may be, like China, to have one kid in a family. But now even China has opened the door for parents to have second kid analysing the impacts of one child policy on economy and growth of country. In case it is implemented in highly populated countries, the pair of parents who have two kids and their kids marry and produce a kid. This process goes on, and then the population will decrease in numbers after five or six decades. The following family tree will explain it clearly.



Conclusion

Again the question looms. Do we have that much time? There may be other issues like lack of young people to work. It is a difficult call to make. How can we humans be so cruel for our survival? So can we rely on nature rather than on humans to take a toll and maintain the balance? Nature is a great equaliser and no one can challenge its authority. I would like to end by reading a quote from *Inferno*.

"The darkest places in hell are reserved for those who maintain their neutrality in times of moral crisis."
(Brown)

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