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The Creation of Disaster

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One can't help but feel remorse for the thousands of victims involved in the massive earthquakes that recently hit India. Despite one's political views, the kind of hardships many have had to endure because of this incident, has granted a good deal of sympathy from those aware of the situation. But what are the lessons being learned? Is the aid sent with the notion that it will help rebuild the areas that have been struck, or will it go to help prevent. Either way, the most likely outcome will be that the tragedy will go down in history books and the dead mourned, but India will rebuild, and business will go on once again. That is till the next earthquake or other 'natural disaster' strikes. This wouldn't be unlikely, as it is how every other major 'disaster' of recent times has been treated. This isn't the first or last incident of this caliber and type to occur, so what do we do? We rebuild and move on, with more effort and passion than before, to help hold up the impossible ideal that we can sustain our way of life. It is becoming more and more necessary that we re-assess this reoccurring situation. The mentality that no matter what cards nature deals us (even if those cards are dealt by global warming or underground testing of nuclear arms or some other 'necessary evil of progress'), we will endure, and each time with more vigor and endurance. Every time a 'disaster' of this type occurs, we treat it as if nature has done us wrong. In many cases, we don't even offer more than sympathy and aid to those who suffered, primarily out of joy that it wasn't us who were forced to endure such hardships. Either way we turn a blind eye to the reality of the issue: that nature acts in cycles that we cannot possibly understand.

The balance of nature, and our attempts to refuse it.

The cycles of nature are completely different than any human cycle that has been created (aside from the basic birth to death cycles, which as much as we try to, we can not change.). The cycles of nature are built upon a balance, which has kept the natural world functioning for its millions of years of existence. They are unpredictable and chaotic. They will never come and go in the same way, or even have the same individual effects. The only thing they will do for sure is catalyze the life cycles of all living things. This is what provides the air we breathe, the food we eat, the water we drink, and everything else that allows life to occur on this planet. Is it disaster? No, disaster entails destruction in a very negative sense. It implies misfortune and death (of course, this itself provides insight to the inner functions of civilized-conquering-rational thought). Is a life cycle something destructive? Of course it is not. There may be death involved in it, but it is not the end of life (as our languages would imply), but the flourishing of life. Nature will replace and renew itself; this is essential to life (the outlook that death is something to be mourned is another part of our self-removal from the whole of nature.). So how does this become a 'disaster'? It's obvious that there is misery involved when things like the earthquake in India, massive floods, ravaging fires, and so on, but why is this? Did the earth in India

suddenly open up and devour thousands of bodies or did the movement of the crust (a natural cycle of ecological sustainability) cause the foundations of the unsustainable, above ground structures to be off set, and in most cases, to the point of collapse? Despite our growing up with science fiction and outrageous stories of action and adventure, we know that the Earth does not open up and swallow thousands of lives when an earthquake hits. So the obvious problem is that the misery is caused by the fact that our towering cities cannot take the cycles of the Earth. This has been the reason for lots of highly paid developers try to create foundations that can take slight movements in the Earth's crust. However, it has not been the reason for a mass rethinking of the foundations of civilized thought. Incidents like this are signs of the Earth screaming, 'enough is enough!' but we're not listening. Instead we come together to combat our loss of domination to nature and work to reclaim our throne. There is something inherently wrong here. What constitutes a disaster? Or better yet, what causes the misery of a disaster? This Earth has been inhabited for millions of years by billions of species, yet civilized humans seem to be the only ones who fear the natural cycles. Why is this? The foundations of civilization are obvious: humans felt that they would modify their surroundings to suit a lifestyle that would provide them with more of what they wanted. Was it all humans? No. Isn't it because we are formed in the image of God, and the Earth is left for our dominion? No, we existed well before civilization and lived as all other species do, but it should be no surprise that the idea of God only arose when it came to tricking the mass of people who would have otherwise been slaughtered by a thoroughly convinced minority. The idea of God/s gave justification for the war humankind would wage on nature to become its' kings. Does this mean that there is no god/creator/external power? No, there is obvious reason for skepticism, but there is no way of knowing either way. Regardless of if God does or does not exist, it is obvious that there is no glory in the mass destruction civilization has caused on nature and its' inhabitants. With or without God, we are headed towards suicide (this fact is widely seen, and it will not be the focus of this essay to deal with this issue more in depth.).

Polluting the Web of Life.

All things are dependent on a web of life; further than they could know exists, in order to perform the bare minimum of survival functions. This dependency is fixed upon the cycles of life, and while there is room for change, it requires balance. When balance is lost at one end of the cycle, the entire web will be affected. This is not uncommon, and that is why nature goes through cycles to keep the balance of life in order. All things follow this basic rule of existence, and those who don't become extinct or fall back in line. This is how life works, whether we like it or not. As the case would be, about 10,000 years ago, a group of Homo sapiens decided they didn't like it. They decided they didn't like it. The mass of Homo sapiens lived by gathering, hunting and in some cases, small scale agriculture (but by no means the sole or primary means of providing the basics of life.). This group decided that they would partake in full-scale stewardship of the Earth. Unlike other groups, this one required a change to the order of things. The amount of change gradually increased as the dependency and surplus led to excesses in population and need for more resources. In line with

this change was settlement. In order to consistently grow food, there needed to be a constant and long-term involvement with certain areas of land. This is where the dependency on the web of life moved to become a dependency on sameness. In order to provide for the group, there needed to be a certain amount of food available. Any unforeseen blow to this would result in devastation, as long as alternative means of survival were not available. As any of us can see as we look upon our current situation, that group grew and conquered until it required the entire planet to play different parts in providing the necessary (and increasingly more and more unnecessary) elements for survival. The foundation of this has been stability of the land. The majority of physical structures have risen in the last five centuries and have required constant maintaining, or they are subject to the laws of gravity. They are built upon the impossible idea that nature will refrain from its' life cycles where we have placed our flags of domination. This brings us to our current state of disasters.

The disaster of dependency.

In the case of an earthquake, non-civilized life would feel little effect. There is always the possibility of a tree falling on an unsuspected animal, but this is in light of our situation; in which a building will collapse, becoming a tomb for thousands of unsuspecting inhabitants. The first situation, which may cause temporary hardship, is by no means a large-scale center of devastation. When a city is torn apart, it becomes a prolonged hardship. The people in the city are dependent upon life following the synthetic cycles of civilization. If there is no food on the shelves at the grocery store, they will starve. If their workplace is smashed by such an incident, they won't have the money to buy food. If something like a fire were to wipe out their living space, they would be left with little and their own lives would be at stake. In all cases, the communities surrounding may provide some help, but what of the case of such magnitude as India's earthquake. The message is clear, as long as we are dependent on some impossible ideal of sustained life cycles in order to meet the needs of a synthetic society, our existence is futile. The earthquake in India is one of many warning signs that our lifestyles are out of balance with nature, and if we don't do something to change it, we face certain extinction. The earthquake of India is an extreme warning, and many may feel that they are living in an area where they are unlikely to share the fate of the thousands of Indians. We need not look far to see the warnings closer to home, or in them for that sake. Almost every day on the news you will hear of the tragic deaths of a family who were sleeping when a fire took their lives and all earthly possessions. Or maybe one member awoke and nearly died while trying to save all the possessions they couldn't live without. The cigarette someone flicked on their yard, or the pot the accidentally left on their stove, or the electrical outlet that was faultily wired, or the gas leak in the furnace may have started the fire. There's a million ways to die in any of our modern structures. A fire is just an example, trying to prevent this inevitable possibility won't keep you from falling down the stairs, or from having a sharper possession seriously wound you in a strange accident that you never thought would happen (especially not to you!). These things happen thousands of times a day and we turn the blame for each incident towards whatever target is available. The reality of the situation is that there

is an entire system of thoughts at work here that perpetuate this system.

The failure of control.

Control is a central component to civilization. The control of nature is impossible, as has been shown above. This hasn't stopped us though, our reasons for attempting to control nature's cycles are obvious: they destroy what we work so hard to build and maintain. Erosion takes its toll on the strip malls we build. Gravity takes its toll on skyscrapers (and planes regularly). And when we strip the tops of mountains and hills away, the winds and rains are destroying more and more of the structures we build in their old places. There is no stopping nature, and our attempts will fall back on us. This is especially clear when it comes to 'forest management.' We have specialists who spend years in schools learning how to extract resources from nature, in a way that may allow some life to still exist beyond its' direct resource needs. This is of course not exempt from the massive deception and corruption that the power we have self-proclaimed has instilled. A forest fire is not a disaster, no matter how hard we pretend one is. What happens in a forest fire is beyond our capacity of knowledge to understand. It is becoming increasingly clear though; that what is taking place is a revitalization of life in the forests. However, when we sanction the remnants of nature off into 'parks,' we have to provide a service to those whose feel they pay for them to not be cut down. That is those 'parks' exist for the amusement of the city living, taxpayers (must unaware of the massive deforestation going on on those lands.). So they have to keep the parks in order for those who come to see them, and to let a fire play itself out naturally could be devastating. So in the name of preservation, a forest fire is doused with chemicals, which will later, find their way back into rivers and streams, soil and air, and the bodies of all life (of course, this also includes unnatural fires, such as those caused by campers without the decency to watch their own flames). There is a fear that the fire will spread to nearby cities. Again, this is the disaster of our dependency. Tribes and animal societies never worried themselves of these things, because they aren't a threat. Fires didn't brew in basements and gas lines, as they obviously don't have these things. They don't wipe out one's surplus if they don't have one. It can be a hardship, but it is not deadly as it is to us. Nonetheless, this doesn't stop us from trying to control nature. We poison the environment and ourselves to give the image that we can sustainably control nature. It is beyond our control.

The faulty foundations of civilization.

The foundations of civilization are built upon shortsightedness. We see only what is resourceful for us, but the entire web of life is beyond our contemplation. When we exterminate insects or rodents, we don't understand why there has been an increase in the population of other 'pests.' The web of life balances itself, when we only see the parts closest to use, and carry forth with no respect for life outside of that, we throw the balance off. When we clear-cut the rainforests, we don't understand why the trees aren't healthy like the ones before. This is because we didn't know that they need bacteria that take hundreds of years to

flourish, but we destroyed them all when we cleared out the forest before hand. It's not an issue of lack of knowledge, it's just a fact that civilization has refused to acknowledge: life is too complex to try to understand all of its functions. We aren't meant to understand it all, only to carry out our part of the cycles. When we stepped out of our cycles and set forth towards domination of the planet and its' inhabitants we overlooked this basic fact. Towards the point of near total domination (taking us into the very core of life as we know it, DNA), we are realizing more and more the results of our shortsightedness. Centuries of carefree industrialism have caused massive implications for the ecosystems, and the reality of this has been hitting us in the face and giving us tumors for years now. Obviously, this should be ground for a massive rethinking of the basic assumptions of civilizations. However, it's only led to slight greening of the industrial system and massive trickery on the part of public relations. We still live by the dictum of 'progress by any means necessary.' The circle of 'necessary evils' is constantly expanding to meet the level of resources needed to fuel the death culture. Our rationality of determining what we will allow to happen in order to fill our consumptive lifestyles is pulling from the depths of greed in the name of our representation-turned-god, money. Our air, water, soil, and very essence of life are being polluted. We live by the out-of-sight, out-of-mind mentality, as we throw out what we feel we have no use for into the heaping trash mounds that surround our cities (and beyond those limits, as our trash is now being poured into space and underwater.). This all to keep up the idea that we are superior, and exist outside the realm of nature, that we have the ability to control it, and determine its' fate that we can reach into the DNA and manipulate evolution to keep up with the diseases (the bi-products of industrial/technological existence). We are covering our ears to the warnings of nature that this is not so, but that won't keep the consequences from pushing us into extinction. We have to start listening, and ask ourselves, "is it worth it?"

Learning lessons from destruction.

It is beyond obvious that we are not meant to rule nature. What is it that we are holding on to that we can't just let go of? Our mediated existence, the future we constantly look forward to but never reach, anticipation of not having to work anymore to meet the basic needs of survival, all our material possessions that could be wiped away in an unpredictable fire, yet we would be willing to die for. The whole of civilized existence is a burden, on the planet and our own lives. How long will we try to hold up the impossible empire? How long will we try to justify our destruction, when the very thing we are worshipping could destroy us at any second? Our lives are at risk in civilization. We never know what disaster could happen or when, but we are trapped. Everything around us could take our lives and what would we have to show for it aside from a contribution to the impossible dream, and it won't be shedding a tear at your funeral. Disasters are one of the many costs of civilization and settlements, they will occur as long as these things exist. So do we start listening to the warnings or do we learn lessons from societies that function in balance with nature? One solution ends in disaster and the other solution is life. It's up to use to choose which will be our fate and to act upon this decision.

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This essay will appear in species traitor 1. It was also written before the earthquake in Seattle, which is ironic in a strange way, but it just makes it all make more sense