

Fragments of nature: How the human mind misperceives nature.

David Attenborough and other renowned naturalists have, for some 50 years, produced amazing documentaries, describing the beauty and perfection of natural processes. The modern human, after his/her processes of industrialization, now has a strong drive to seek out the natural, after much of it has been concreted over. The Naturalists of modern times try to look towards nature, to find a way of explaining situations that humans now find themselves in. Those who realize what nature is however, are few.

When we go into the forests and the mountains and countryside, our common perception is that we humans are separate from this wilderness. We have forgotten how to live in such a seemingly alien land. For many of us who now live in colder climates, our natural habitats a few thousands of years ago would have been in hotter lands, where we would have had a warmer environment, needed less food and less heating materials. However, for whatever reason, the migration to the northern regions meant an adaptation to its climate and harsh environment. But we've forgotten this. A few still remain who know the old ways of living but they now call it "survival". It's always about "survival in the wilderness", having to see the terrain as a dangerous place, full of hidden snares and with the hidden motives of nature, to entrap and destroy. This unfortunately comes from a long history of fear, the fear of separateness that humans have had for hundreds of generations. Since there is a separation from nature, human perception of nature has become utterly fragmented. Everything we see we interpret from our viewpoint only and as such we get a very skewed view of nature. Attenborough and his predecessor naturalists, even before Darwin, have looked at nature from this perspective and inevitably their views become skewed by social norms or the cultural context of the time. Social-religious trends are highly unscientific, more about belief systems and fashions of a particular time than about an understanding of how nature really is. Anthropologists, primatologists and animal behavioral experts, can all see the world through their long-held beliefs, so any statement based upon such beliefs is therefore inaccurate. Science can only be called science when it is a consensus, unfolding from generations of instinctive sensing, without mind-based belief systems (including Newtonian ones), and without condoning consistent thought for the individual or even the group or society, but not encompassing the whole. Our modern society is founded on belief systems, based on an individual's or a group's point of view, supposedly seeing what only applies to a very small aspect of life, separate from all else. (Please see my earlier article "Modern-Branch-Science within Ancient-Root-Science" for more detail on this topic).

The nature of pure observation is such that it requires interest and openness, rather than adding things on and analytical interpretations of the world, which are always there at the root of human thought, to counteract a fear of death or a fear of "ending" in some way. In nature there is no such thing as "survival", it is simply life happening. Survival is only part of the ideology of the "individual".

When observing nature, as Douglas Harding explains, we are One with what we see: the 1st Person perspective. Secondly we also need to realize that Nature is perfect, it cannot

be added to or subtracted from. It is literally the garden of Eden going on in the background of the world we are living in, totally open to see, a 'secret' which is obvious, it is just what's there, totally unhidden and accessible, however without a natural interest in it, it seems a dull and boring place.

It is all of life as One. In this we will see the deer bucking in the spring, we will see the lion taking down his prey, we will see the eating-up of infant birds, chimps and other animals, sometimes by members of the same species, we will see the devouring of placentas after birth, we will see sexual freedom of expression of many males mating with one female, we will see forceful displacements of mating and attracting of mates, we will see the life of plants and animals extinguished, through various processes of mating, expression or provision of the body for another member of their group, in order to sustain them.

All these we will see and the scientist will call it "nature, red in tooth and claw", "violence", "rape", "murder", "prostitution", "primitive", "un-evolved", "lower", "lesser". Since this is the kind of continuum on which the human mind works, these words are used in an attempt to control nature, where energy which is held in repression surges outward with great force, causing what could be categorized as a tendency towards violence.

More than anything else humans fear what they perceive to be "violence" in nature, however no such thing actually exists. What is occurring is very much like an Englishman in colonial days going to Africa, visiting a native tribe which presents him with a display of dancing, and the women dancers are half-naked. Then he goes back to "king and country" and tells them that all native women are "suggestive". Marie Antoinette's expression of "let them eat cake" is another of these *faux pas*, based on a lack of understanding. In the film "O brother where art thou?", George Clooney's character, Everett, and the boys come across a blind man with the powers of seeing their future trials in trying to obtain hidden treasure:-

Everett:No, the treasure's still there, believe me.

Delmar: But how'd he know about it?

Everett: I don't know, Delmar. The blind reputedly possess sensitivities compensating for lack of sight, to the point of developing psychic powers.

Clearly, seeing the future falls into that category.

It's not so surprising, then, that one lacking earthly vision...

Pete: He said we wouldn't get the treasure we seek, on account of our obstacles.

Everett: What the hell does an ignorant old man know?

People will often see what they need in order to confirm their ideas, not necessarily what is in front of them. This kind of thinking occurs all the time in the interpretation of the natural world. Perhaps worse are those who have a deep love of nature but only on their terms, they are happy to accept some of it, but when it gets to the parts which they don't

like, they suggest that humans are more evolved than animals! I'm afraid nature doesn't work like this. It is One, so you need to accept it, hook line and sinker. It is the greater, broader Mother, yet we cannot see ourselves as her children, we constantly negate and do not accept Her, as if we are not attached by the umbilicus of air and food, which are directly from Her expression. How un-evolved!

Human beings, within the box of their minds, cannot see beyond what they wish to see. They want to keep themselves safe within the confines of their own idealized vision of society, and away from triggers to an anxiety or sufferance, often at the root, to do with the fear of the imagined "self" dying and not being present. Interestingly this actually is the view (pure observation) of the 1st person, where there isn't a *person* viewing, so to speak. From the 3rd person we imagine ourselves to be, there is a strong image of something which we hold in the mind, of our "self". From this perspective everything is a threat, everything needs to be controlled, contained, understood. Otherwise it can undermine society and thus be the end of this vision of "self". People pride themselves on attaining goals and achieving things, when in fact they are travelling without moving. There is no place to reach, all achievement is purely to do with social norms and visions.

From this heady dream of misnomers and hypocrisies, we look at nature. We look at it and we analyse it, we say it is violent and abusive, tough and hard, unimaginable. "Poor animals" we think, in their cage of non-clarity, and us "free" to explore the self" and the self-conscious"; a totally fictional world like a hall of mirrors in the mind. We find ourselves exploring a minute area out of an infinite universe. The human's memory has become a burden and a prison - it is not nature that is imprisoned, even in zoos, it is the human within ourselves; a perspective that is very heavy to bear but which we now cannot seem to let go of. We see things through a thicket of previous suffering, with the reasons we have invented for it also memorized, a huge dense forest of illusion which bars us from seeing that nature as it is, without interventions, is utterly perfect and is Eden within our sights.

Again what is missing is our idea of love. It is unconditional, unimaginable and all of nature. The lion taking down the gazelle, is an act of love, there is never a time when the two forces of the lion or gazelle are separate; there is never a time where they hate one another. Though there is the feeling of heat, running, moving, one energy devouring another, like a magnet polarizing another magnet it is never outside of love, never outside of Oneness. There is no good or bad, right or wrong. There is a madness in humans that sees this as a problem. People who are considered to be problems in our society, are always removed to mental institutions, locked away from "society" because there, in a controlled environment these people, who are just being what they are, are prevented from being a danger to anyone. This example shows how deep is our need to control, but this need is in itself violent. The nature of stopping a person being what they are is violence. It is violence to express pent-up energy but also to control it, both expressions are violent. It is a cycle, while in fact, the so-called "perpetrator" and the so-called "victim" are one. The end of this comes when we see the light, that nature is as it is.

Thich Nhat Hanh reaches to clarity in this brilliant poem:-

“Please Call Me by My True Names”

*Don't say I will depart tomorrow...
Even today I am still arriving.*

*Look deeply: every second I am arriving
To be a bud on a spring branch,
To be a tiny bird, with still-fragile wings,
learning to sing in my new nest,
to be a caterpillar in the heart of a flower,
to be a jewel hiding itself in a stone.*

*I still arrive, in order to laugh and to cry,
To fear and to hope.
The rhythm of my heart is the birth and death of all that is alive.*

*I am a mayfly metamorphosing
On the surface of the river.
And I am a bird that swoops down to swallow the mayfly.*

*I am a frog swimming happily
in the clear water of a pond.
And I am the grass-snake
That silently feeds itself on the frog.*

*I am the child in Uganda, all skin and bones,
My legs as thin as bamboo sticks.
And I am the arms merchant,
Selling deadly weapons to Uganda.*

*I am the twelve-year-old girl,
Refugee on a small boat,
Who throws herself into the ocean
After being raped by a sea pirate.
And I am the pirate,
My heart not yet capable
Of seeing and loving.*

*I am a member of the politburo,
With plenty of power in my hands.
And I am the man who has to pay
His “debt of blood” to my people
Dying slowly in a forced labour camp.*

*My Joy is like the spring, so warm
It makes flowers bloom all over the Earth.
My pain is like a river of tears,
So vast it fills the four oceans.*

*Please call me by my true names,
So I can hear all my cries and laughter at once,
So I can see that my joy and pain are one.*

*Please call me by my true names,
So I can wake up
And the door of my heart could be left open,
The door of compassion.*

When we look to nature, when we watch children and how they respond to the world around them, it is not so much that we need to teach them but how they can teach the adults, to watch without judgement, to observe without analysis.

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