

Humanity and Sludge: Mass Poverty in India. To Give Up Is to Give In: To Give In Would Be to Let Them Win

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It would be easy to say, "to hell with India." It is easy to say, "to hell with India." To hell with the whole squalid scene of humanity crawling through its own sludge.

From Theni, across the southern belt with its searing heat, with its endless advertisements for cement across to Madurai and beyond. Yes, the multi-billion-rupee cement industry hellbent on continuing the ever-expanding unfinished building site of concrete sprawl and ugliness that is becoming India. Reaching out towards the dusty roadside shacks and concrete box dwellings and huts with their roofs of vegetation.

The endless (undeserved) veneration of local political leaders plastered on hoardings. The endless veneration of Hindu gods and goddesses - who are indelibly culturally rooted in the very nature that's being destroyed - which takes place at the countless temples and shrines splashed across the countryside. The endless plantations of bananas and coconuts and wind turbines and the hundreds of roadside chai and coffee stalls selling pesticide-ridden good old traditional India food - fried anything you like or chicken gravy with rice or samba idli thrown from a vat onto a banana leaf or veg biryani - all mixed in with a biting dose of pollution from the roaring, rusting, horn-blurting parade of bad-tempered trucks and buses that blast on by.

But if you say, "to hell with India" and to hell with its 1.3 billion mass of overcrowded devastation as it destroys everything in its way, you must also say "to hell with Copenhagen", where I arrived from - the world's most liveable city - so they say - and to hell with Russia, the US, the UK and everywhere else.

Because this is the condition of the species. This is the type of sludge we have created, regardless of where we live or how we hide it by exporting it to the oceans, burying it in (nuclear) landfills, transforming Argentina into disease-ridden corn-field nightmares to feed Europe or turning places in Africa into barren wastelands of nature and humanity to feed our cravings for all things coltan.

All of this written while in the South India's 'Queen of the hills' - Kodaikanal. That once pristine hill station of tranquility, wild boar, forest fowl and roaming bison unhindered by humans. Yes, the now ever-sprawling 'Kodai', slowly evolving into hell in the hills with its throngs of weekend trippers escaping the stinking pollution and chaos of Bangalore, Chennai and Madurai only to bring the stinking pollution and chaos of Bangalore, Chennai and Madurai with them.

The incessant blast of vehicle horns, the filth and squalor of paper and plastic, the city habits brought straight into the heart of the hills. The now dethroned Queen adorned in robes of garbage, with her mercury mist and mercury lake courtesy of Unilever's former thermometer factory, and steadily suffocating courtesy of today's city dwellers.

Call some place paradise, kiss it goodbye, The Eagles once sang. In this case, call her Queen for the day(tripper)... and you can soon kiss your love affair with her goodbye.

As for India, though, you really can't say to hell with it. You have to get onside with the thousands of campaigners and activists who are trying to stem the tide of corruption and corrupt policies that pass for 'development'. You must get onside with those who expose Modi's pseudo nationalism for what it is.

Modi's deceptions about 'make in India' while all the time he sells it out to Washington, the World Bank and the handful of Tatas, Ambanis and India's multi-billionaire elite.

Because to say, "to hell with it all" would let them win without even putting up a struggle.

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