

OLD AGE AND THE NATURE

Muhammad Ali Nasir*

Department of Public Administration
University of Karachi

Abstract

Recent formulations to re-cognize the environmental and moral concerns have all fallen short in their assessment and impact. This work – unlike customary attempts to view nature, morality, and science in isolation – is an attempt in historical analysis to unearth the origins of the moral, existential, and the natural problems confronting modern societies. It will be argued that what we combat today (environmental problems, philistinism, nihilism, anguish, dispossession) is not an offshoot or irrationality of the contemporary rational and anthropocentric existence, but something that is born out of it and one that sustains it. The need of the time, therefore, is to transcend capitalism in both its modern and postmodern variants through a force potent enough to address all dilemmas substantively: Islam.

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* Muhammad Ali Nasir, House no 746, Phase 1, Malir Cantt, Karachi, 0321-8711055

At a certain later stage in life, with the dawning of old age, one usually accumulates enough repose and courage to glance a retrospective look at one's life. Noticing the suspended feeling between life and immortality, harboring of far-flung ambitions and the frivolity of endless creativity, one cannot but pass a cynical smile at one's *juvenilia*. It may be that such luxuries accompanying the old age have died out in our industrious age. Perhaps one would never cease the too abstract and too continuous process of rediscovering and reformulating one's own past, perhaps it would still be the only way to know how one became what one is—but who knows?

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We are presently too exhausted, too fatigued for such lifelong analysis. It is time to content ourselves by merely posing a simple, mundane, routine question that once the West posed to itself and continues to grapple with it: what is Nature? But (wait a minute!) have not they asked this question before? Has it not been always revolving in their mind? Of what benefit would be our effort, if all their attempts have hitherto been a failure? Before the tribunal of such a historical inquisition, a confession can only be obtained by excavating the interpretive frameworks, analyzing the subsequent relation between man and the external world, tracing its existential import, and witnessing the shift from one discursive outlook to the other. We could well have begun by tracing the unbroken linearity of Science, the progression of scientific spirit lying, as if, in wait for us. Our historians, and from the non-West specifically, are usually surprised to note that what took human rationality so long to reach an obvious destination and why they failed to reach it on time. It is only that one finds no trace of Science before the fifteenth century even in the West; everything was (and so was knowledge) a complete whole wrapped over itself (Aquinas, 1994, pp. 238-269): one discerns philosophy and theology (or even this distinction

appeared nonexistent). In such a world of parallelism and completeness, man resembled nature in decline and fall of his politics, in blooming of and withering away of one's maturity¹, in his encounter with the historical circularity (*c.f.* Ibne-Khaldun, 2001), in his art²; while nature in its seasonal cycles, interconnectedness, and duality of the form and the matter represented man. Of this continuous outward change, a remarkable stability was ensured: all the primeval matters (fire, air, water, earth) were balanced by/ between love and strife. Confronted with the orderliness of *phusis*, one's task was to chart out and study the order. Knowledge, therefore, became possible neither through the processes of inquiry nor by analysis but through observation and the authority. It was a world of signs instead of Science. Almost each day represented a Saint, violence of weather signified the wrath of God, miraculous healing vindicated innocence in a juridical test, incantations bore an unknown healing power, providential signs preceded important events, and moon was Cain with a bush of thorns—a world of signs through and through. One had to know the content and meaning of these signs as placed and scattered by God – there was no distinction between God and nature – so as to read why and how were they what they were. Differentiation, analysis of order, and classification of knowledge comprised a scholar's vocation.

Could not we then say that those primordial signs braving the torrent of continuous mutability bore in themselves a superior moral worth? That the existence and preservation in time of human constructs should tend to provide legitimacy to these signs by virtue of the same fact? Or again, if a violation of a sign – a contract, an oath, a submission – be a violation of the natural order? It was neither a coincidence that discoverers of such signs and possessors of signatural wisdom were to be studied in the same manner as

1. For a classic although belated statement, see Shakespeare's seven ages of man in *As You Like It* (Shakespeare, 1994, pp. 608-9). Cf. Chaucer, *The Canterbury Tales*, in *The Knight's Tale* "This world is but a thoroughfare of woe/ And we are pilgrims passing to and fro" (Chaucer, 1994a, p. 307).

2. Nature imitated the eternal ideas of God and man in his turn imitated nature, thus human art was linked both to God and nature, i.e. human art is a grandchild of God (Dante, 1994, p. 14).

nature itself nor a matter of blind chance that those works (holy scriptures, classics, authorities) should have to be restudied and remodeled to dig out the eternal wisdom, comprehend the present, and sort contemporary problems out in such a redefinition. To be authoritative meant a commentary on an authority. In the personal domain too, the idea of order, classification, and the natural proximity held its sway: pride in nobility, importance of blood and exalted ancestors³. Consequently, the primary communal affiliation was erected on biological proximity (i.e. tribe, clan), with those people that approximated oneself closely in the order of nature. Nature always stamped a signature on oneself. This, at the same time, supported the scalar structure of society: not everyone or anyone could do everything or anything. Existence was closely shelled in the inscrutable workings of fate:

“Fate ... is the planned order inherent in things subject to change through the medium of which Providence binds everything in its allotted place” (Boethius, 1969, p. 135).

It is not surprising for us to observe, in the Western political sphere, the naturalness of monarchies (as fallen angels imitated angels in the sky with respective spheres of power) or Universal Kingdom (in imitation of God). Nourished by such a knowledge, Western political thought before fifteenth century, busied itself with commenting on classics (to know the content and meaning of signs) or as manuals to influence the events (to transfer and apply the knowledge of signs). It was a world apart from seventeenth and eighteenth century's quest to unearth the origins of state, analyze its legitimacy, delineate power-boundaries of state, and of voluntarily contractual relationship between the state and the individual. Political thought, and the entire knowledge fabric, of the period gained a lasting grace until its foundations started to be challenged from elsewhere. And, Niccolo Machiavelli was one of those chose challengers.

Machiavelli composed two works of significance for

political thought, viz. *Discourses on First Ten Books of Livy* and *The Prince*. In the former he is a commentator, in latter a perfect courtier. Be as it may, it would be very presumptuous for us to expect too much from Machiavelli. He is as much the child of his times as its master with a whip. He pays homage to resemblance, signs, commentative knowledge, and synthetical view of nature. Proceeding in the customary manner, his works are meant to be an exegesis of antiquity (Machiavelli, 1994, p. 22), of chance, of signatural effects of the lineage, invariability of the nature (Machiavelli, 1994, p. 1), and so forth. It is nonetheless in other deconstructive-half of his work that we are interested. The height of climax in *The Prince* is the height of climax in Machiavelli's political teaching (Machiavelli, 1994, pp. 22-37). As he takes up his issue against the Tradition, most cherished opinions on most cherished topic of virtue are inverted. Virtue for him is not an unqualified acceptance of a stable choice of good every time or a “mean between two extremes” (Aristotle, 1994, pp. 351-352). Stripped of its static and invariable power, virtue becomes prudence, an ability to select either good or evil in uncertain circumstances. This necessarily causes us to raise some questions of philosophical importance: Was not virtue an always available, always unchanging option in an order created by providence? Does such a revaluation with its critique of staticity of virtue imply a revaluation of order as conceived? Machiavelli is mischievous enough to skip the base-card off the house of cards of previous systems of thought; his is a complete reversal. Necessity, helplessness, and fate lose their meaning and impact. It is Fortune that determines existence, and virtue consists in forcing her to determine one's existence as one would like it to be. In contradistinction to Nature, Fortune is a cunning, scheming, and jealous tyrant. Prudence, therefore, requires us to control her power, play with her emotions, vanquish her physically, pound her, or tempt her with trifles. “Fortune is a woman, and if one wishes to keep her down, it is necessary to beat and ill-use her” (Machiavelli, 1994, p. 36).

3. Cf. “Since all that comes, comes by necessity/ Thus to be lost is but my destiny” (Chaucer, 1994b, p. 243).

It is not to side with/ against ancient Rome as compared to holy Jerusalem that Machiavelli wrote his books, he does what appears to him to be the most extraordinary: bring new orders (Machiavelli, 1996, pp. 290-292) and found immortal kingdoms (of thought)—“a thing of the world” (Machiavelli, 1996, p. 3). Even where he dons the traditional garb of a commentator on antiquity, he cannot help creating something wholly revolutionary. In *Discourses*, Livy is his Bible, and like Bible suffers the same instrumental interpretation, suppression of inconveniences, pitting one fact against the other at his crafty hands. Aware of his novel achievement, he therefore invites a second Moses at the end of *The Prince* to liberate the promised fatherland Italy—the time was, he believed, all too auspicious. Should not this simply mean that Machiavelli was the new Creator of his times? Alternatively, does not that entail that his discernment qualified him to be the new unarmed father-the-God to call forth such an armed prophet? Maybe, yes.

To create a different way of thought, in Machiavelli, becomes an ability to laugh at which it is absolutely forbidden to laugh (Nietzsche, 2007, p. 1). Truth therefore becomes power. “Hence it is that all armed prophets have conquered, and the unarmed ones have been destroyed” (Machiavelli, *The Prince*, 1994, p. 9). This meant that justice had its roots in injustice, morality in immorality, greatness in crime and murder, and that of ancient Rome in a bloody fraternal conflict. One should therefore have potential to confound the true and false, good and the evil in order to gain honor. Nevertheless, how could one separate true from false, knowledge from illusion if authority or tradition did not back one’s understanding? What other basis, what other *method* could there be? In addition, how could such a replacement be accommodated in the present structure, or would not the methodological incompatibility push one headlong into falsehood, hopelessness or nihilism?

In the old age of Western civilization, Nietzsche would grapple with the same set of problems, while with the beginning of thirteenth century diverse mechanisms were already being applied to excavate the truth in the

West. These techniques had the power to locate the conditions, identify the content, accumulate evidence, and pronounce a sentence. In short the method of *inquisitio*, or inquiry. This invention was more decisive in its knowledge-effects, existential consequences than the invention of scientific method: precisely because it was *the* scientific method. Its genesis lie not in the exalted corners of pure human curiosity, thirst for knowledge or even in the spirit of scientific discoveries, rather in the abject roots of the grandest and most notorious judicial institution of medieval era: the Great Inquisition.

“The inquiry made its appearance as a form of search for truth within the judicial order in the middle of medieval era. It was in order to know exactly who did what, under what conditions, and at what moment, that the West devised complex techniques of inquiry which later were to be used in the scientific realm and in the realm of philosophical reflection” (Foucault, 2000, p. 5).

Inquisitio, the procedure through which impersonal but societal wrongs were compensated, the manner in which testification and witnesses were brought forth, the development of assiduous method of extracting truth by way of one’s body (torture) to gain an access to and penetrate one’s soul, and the disinterested curiosity accompanying it (Foucault, 2000, pp. 32-52), appeared a guiding thought for all successive methods of knowledge production in the West. It was a perfect convergence of the temporal and the spiritual, of the body and the soul, of the mind and the matter. The then practice of relegating the dispensation of justice to trial by battle or through ordeal or the transformation of justice into a tug of war between the accuser and the aggrieved started to totter steadily. Knowledge suddenly began to lost its correspondence with the single, unitary sign; there had to be a multiplicity of signs for the establishment of any proposition.

As a matter of fact, *inquisitio* became a social ritual of attempting to undo the wrong done to collectivity. Thus, we are able to trace the genealogy of Western

concept of de-subjectivization face to face with the object-to-be-known in such societal revenge. *Inquisitio* began with uncertainty and ended in the ritual of purification of soul through the strict procedure of inquiry, i.e. it knew its task firmly. If formerly an individual engagement, an individual interest or personal sympathy caused one to identify truth in and through sign, it was exactly the opposite that stood as posture for establishing the truth, which would be an attempt to distance oneself from the object, intimidate in a feeling of antagonism⁴, moving through anonymous but curious forces of encounter. Unlike antiquity's belief of acquiring harmony through knowledge, truth and understanding faced each other in a bloody duel. It was the inauguration of age of objectivity. After assembling a number of signs, weighing down their substantiality, viewing and reviewing the evidence back and forth, *inquisitio* would proceed piecemeal in order to deliver its verdict finally:

“Before setting out to attack any definite problem, it behooves us first, without any selection, to assemble those truths that are obvious as they present themselves to us, and afterwards, proceeding step by step, to inquire whether any other can be deduced from these, and again any others from these conclusions and so on, in order” (Descartes, 1994, Rule IV).

It foresaw scientific method in removing the unitary significance of sign. Thence onwards, it had to be the *principle*, a sign denoting uniformity of multiple signs. It was death of sign as previously construed.⁵ It foresaw the scientific method in distancing the subject from object in a curious, inquisitive way. It foresaw the scientific method in unlocking the soul of its adversary, as in scientific endeavor to open nature's secret. It foresaw the scientific method in striving to establish a desubjectivized knowledge of truth. It foresaw the scientific method in its doubtful beginning, assiduous

procedure, and attestation of propositions. What else is *inquisitio* if not the scientific method? Is it a coincidence that the scientist should have replaced the priest in the contemporary Western world in his truth-proclamation duty? Should we be amazed that the scientist is in modern societies what priest was in medieval era?

Contrary to the ritual of judicial test or arbitration of claims adjudicated by nature, what we have in *inquisitio* is an inverted relation: nature versus truth. Initially it was a binary relation of one form of sign contesting with the other, where nature determined the judiciousness of divergent claims—for how could nature absolve the guilty? Through *inquisitio*, one observes a rhombus of nature, multiplicity of signs, the subject, and the truth face to face against each other. Truths were obtained in defiance of nature. The jealous binary relation of knower-subject against nature-object therefore characterized regime of truth. Nature, not unlike Machiavelli's Fortune, could “only be subdued by submission” (Bacon, 1994, p. 107). It was revival of antithetical view of nature, if not its inception. To reject nature's superiority and idea of nature as a mentor implied nature to be a vacuum, a space to be conquered, guided, or goaded. It was this leitmotif to find a space beyond nature, transcend its limitations, improve upon its conditions, celebrate the artificial, which motivated the contractarianist political philosophy from Hobbes to Kant⁶. By consciously rejecting the pre-*inquisitio* mode of know-how, one became the idol smasher *par excellence*. “Four species of idol beset the human mind to which we have assigned names, calling the first idols of tribe, the second idols of den, the third idols of market, the fourth idols of theatre. The formation of notions and axioms on the foundation of true induction is the only fitting remedy by which we can ward off and expel these idols” (Bacon, 1994, p. 109). The previous knowledge outlook simply crumbled.

4. Cf. “That persecution is an ordeal through which truth ought to pass,” Dr Johnson quoted by Mill (Mill, 1994a, p. 279).

5. Cf. “You must not try to see meanings which are not there” (Moliere, 1994, p. 49).

6. Even the Romantic upheaval remained at best a reactionary naturism.

This event was historically contemporaneous with another equally magnificent feat of rearranging the cosmic foci of universe in the astronomic endeavors of heliocentric theorists. Surprisingly, knowledge underwent a drastic increase in such lowering of the standards: Why don't follow in the footsteps of beast, if angel could no longer be imitated? No wonder the pagan Church opposed the shift from moral exaltedness in a good conscience.

Whereas nature as an external reality, infinity of space with infinity of signs, a living sphinx lost its central place, what we have springing up in its stead in the West is a new notion of nature as host of identity and source of wealth. As a source of identity, it swiftly replaced the collectivity of biological affinity for the collectivity of common land occupiers. It was the golden age of feudalism. And one only a single step away from the formulation of nationalism (or existential otherness) as an idea, nation-state as a reality, and war as total and national and instead of a vengeful, royal-cum-personal phenomenon. As a source of wealth, this meant a shift of analysis in the economic sphere from the management of goods, logic of inheritance and status of possessions, dynamics and rules of rapine, questions of coinage to the perfection of what previously was in embryonic form, viz. analysis of wealth, circulation of gold, agricultural produce and price management. Importance of Americas is all too obvious in these strides of ideas for any history of thought.

With such an overpowering of powerless, rigid nature, human knowledge and human power rose exponentially. Optimism was at its all time high. From the consciousness of fact that something rare, unprecedented may have had happened, newer domains of identity, knowledge and truth-genre blossomed. Bacon's *New Atlantis* is not a simple technological paradise or utopia similar to Plato's *Republic*; it is the first 'sci-fi' work—a work conscious of its potential

realization. Chain of historical circularity was burst asunder, it was not in future's 'nature' to resemble the past due to any spatial/ temporal order, it would be and had to be something else—and for them something always for the better.

Inverting order (Bacon, 1994, p. 110), authority⁷, and sand-like unitariness of sign, the corresponding bond within the time of truth and nature became arbitrary. Knowledge grew meaningless. Authority grew truth less. Truth, to repeat, transformed itself into an ability to laugh, lament, destroy, ridicule. It was upon this reversal of authority of antiquity, their concepts of knowledge, and the restlessness in face of their procedure that Hobbes, like Bacon and Bruno before him, concluded his magnum opus *Leviathan* with a jeering sneer of antiquity:

“For if we will reverence the age, the present is the oldest: if the antiquity of the writer, I am not sure that generally they to whom such honor is given, were more ancient when they wrote than I am that am writing” (Hobbes, 1994, p. 282).

Third consequence of this knowledge characterization, and by far most the decisive and altogether novel, was the emergence of the *concept of freedom*. Out of a complex process through which one could trace the origins of this idea, three subsidiary but instrumental and mutually dependent notions stand out. Firstly, in *inquisitio*, in man's power to exploit and control – the determined, already locked in set of rules – nature, in his amassing of hitherto unknown strength and in consciousness of this accumulation. In the battle for truth, man usually vanquished nature through his peculiar quality to exercise freedom⁸. Secondly, with the opening of New World and an exposure into that 'primitive' society, European consciousness became conscious of itself as being wholly different and distinct, if arguably not superior—different because they were free, and hence rational. In classical thought,

7. “Truth is daughter of time and not of authority” (Bacon, 1994, p. 121).

8. “To establish and extend the power of human race itself over the entire universe” (Bacon, 1994, p. 135)

one encounters only freebeings, freemen, and not freedom-as-such. The anti-persona of freeman (for every concept has one) in Greco-Roman system of thought was a slave. Even their celebrated political distinction for any holder of power as a tyrant or a king, did not entail a breach, a transgression or a violation of any abstract notion of freedom. Instead, it was believed that the tyrant was unjust in the simple fact that he equated slaves and freemen, or treated freemen as his slaves. The anti-persona of modern concept of freedom is a collectivity of non-autonomous human selves, ones who would yet have to reach the level of civilization.

From Locke's "Indians in the woods of America" (Locke, 1994) that continue to live in a state of nature and have failed to sanctify property, "merciless Indian savages whose known rule of warfare is an undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes and conditions" of American Declaration of Independence (Jefferson, 1994, p. 3), Mill's "backward states of society in which race itself may be said in its nonage" (Mill, 1994a, p. 272) to postwar creation of colonial 'mandates' of states inhabited by people "not yet able to stand by themselves under strenuous modern conditions" (League of Nations, 1919) (to name a few instances), one marvels at the equanimity with which reflections on the conditional applicability of freedom, discipline formulation for this otherness and artificial categorization were interspersed and intermingled with the thoughts on necessity of freedom, its moral and exalted intrinsic worth, its actualization and rationality in one and the same text. It is for this reason that one witnesses historically a calm commensuration between most radical forms of freedom and most vociferous regimes of nationalism, regimes of identity and difference. Imperialism conceived freedom; freedom justified imperialism. For Mill:

"There are others who have not attained that

state [of being fit for representative government] and which, if held at all, must be governed by dominant country. This mode of government is as legitimate as any other if it is the one which in the existing state of civilization of subject people most facilitates their transition to a higher stage of improvement" (Mill J. S., 1994b, p. 434).

Thirdly, with the breakdown of traditional *telos*, freedom became the central pillar of human thought structure in West. In stark contrast to Plato's justice, Aristotle's virtue, Cicero's *bonta*, Livy's prudence, Augustine's salvation, Aquinas's will of God, freedom signified a new *telos*, a new purpose, a new end; hence a new cosmology. Freedom, generated in an intercourse of the colonist with native and of an intercourse of man with nature, was accorded supreme value in all subsequent knowledge formations. From Enlightenment project onwards¹⁰, freedom gained an unheard, unseen, and unfelt importance, until it became in our times, in the old age of the West, the unquestioned and unquestionable good. The process that began well before fourth century had already been completed by then: our loss of Europe to paganism was complete and final. A decisive rupture from the Middle Ages had finally been finalized.

If there is to be multiplicity of signs, a pure empiricity, how should one account for the fact that this multiplicity could variously be arranged? What determines stability and uniformity of one's significations in a world deprived of order? If there is always to be a change in configuration, could not this mean truth itself is born out of history? Conversely, does not a cosmos built on freedom, with man at its center create an unimaginable horizon for exercising knowledge and authority? If *natura* is change – and always an evolutionary one – then are we not entitled to claim for ourselves an ever-progressive state of affairs? Where should freedom be employed in a world

9. Cf. "The United States government had signed more than four hundred treaties with Indians and violated every single one" (Zinn, 1980, p. 515).

10. Nietzsche is of the opinion in *Human, All Too Human* that freedom could have had a more easy victory over men's minds had it not been for the religious upheaval of Reformation.

of uncertainty and non-transcendentalism? With their decision to escape a certain state of tutelage from transcendental authorities (Kant, 1784), an attempt to return back to a purer and classical Greco-Roman paganism, the West erected a *mythical cage* (an old home perhaps) to preserve itself in its dotage. Myths – a conscious fiction dealing with the meaning of signs – sustain modern condition. An insight into the modern myths has therefore a possibility to provide us with an insight into contemporary situation. Of all possible myths – the progress of reason, dictatorship of the proletariat, the invisible hand of justice, the triumph of Science – none addresses our dilemma more thoroughly than Hegel's account of Master and Slave.

In *Phenomenology of Spirit* Hegel outlines signficatory processes through which the sign-creating subject gains knowledge of himself in/ through History (Hegel, 1977). Moreover, the great classical myth that dominated the West according to which knowledge or truth or understanding was obtained through contemplation is abandoned. Rather than being the scourge of God ("Cursed is the ground for thy sake; in toil thou shalt eat of it all the days of thy life"), labor creates real knowledge and pure truth¹¹. Hegel dispels the antinomy between labor and truth with impunity. From Plato onwards, philosophy (the handmaiden of Western theological structure) equated itself with the contemplation of eternal ideas, an ability to participate in the workings of God's mind; with Hegel, man gained self-consciousness and propelled History in his ability to transform Nature, to transform his nature, in his ability to labor. In its being nonnatural, artificial, technical, labor is the dividing line between human and bestial. Wherever there is no labor, truth and knowledge part company. All Science (phenomenon of labeling signs, identifying principles, progressively gaining self-realization), Art (negatively, in slave's ability to defer his desire for something

nonnatural, dialectical improving of self, and positively in producing something that was not given, one that personifies human freedom) and Ideology (in slave's attempt to realize freedom in abstract) are products of slave's labor. To labor is to actualize freedom's potential. It is the pivot upon which revolves around the modern socio-politico-economic existence: labor evaluates everything and is evaluated by everything in return:

"The price may... sometimes purchase a greater and sometimes a smaller quantity; but it is their value which varies, not that of labor which purchases them. Labor alone, therefore, never varying in its own value, is alone the ultimate and real standard by which value of all commodities can at all times and places be estimated and compared. It is their real price; money is their nominal price" (Smith, 1994, p. 16).

The great idea of reciprocity between knowledge and contemplation was reduced to rubbles, and out of its debris was created the modern interdependent structural triad of knowledge, labor, and progress. Thus the immense condition of conditioning modern existence, of laborizing¹² one's essence, of progressifizing one's rationality, was concocted. Labor and production became the anvil on which the malleable, historical, human existence would be molded. A rationale had been given to anthropology. Social Sciences were thus born. Created out of labor, truth was not eternal, ahistorical, ever-present; it would have to be evolutionary, historical and relative. History of human existence is, therefore, the history of a non-autonomous self-negation (i.e. Slave) attempting to reach its ideal of an autonomous self-consciousness (i.e. Master), in order to negate its negation. This synthesis, dialectical overcoming, is only possible in a satisfactory combination of warlike Master and drone-

11. Cf. "Jove shook from the leaves their honey, he all fire removed
And stopped the wine that ran in rivers everywhere

So thought and experiment might forge man's various crafts" (Virgil, 29 BC).

12. With Marx (and Socialists preceding and succeeding him), biological or land based collectivities are replaced by market-collectivities.

like slave, of fight and work, of passion and reason, of universal and particular, of leisurely contemplation and busy activity—a combination actualized by the modern state. Modern State, in combining Universal with Particular, recognizes each human as an Individual; it is the apotheosis of freedom: the end that progression of freedom in History had in mind. Absolute Knowledge, absolute Truth, absolute Freedom is only possible therefore in an absolute State. A complete inversion: Knowledge is Power; Freedom is Work; Truth is Historical and Institutional.

What originated with the formation of modern Western society is a great divide between truth and contemplation on the one hand, and between leisure and freedom on the other. At the origin of present civilization, with the inter-penetration of knowledge, market, and freedom, one observes the decomposition of Truth, Nature, and Individual. The West's rebellion against the supremacy of God has decomposed the very basis of human existence. Nothingness christened as Progress – in history, in man's productive capacity, in evolution of human studies, in man's amassing unprecedented and unbounded knowledge, in and through technology – thus became the rationality *par excellence*. So, whereas formerly the illusion (heresy, witchcraft, treason) was pure irrationality, what we have with the appearance of modern Western society (death of God, death of Nature, death of Individual, death of Truth) is not an irrationality, a byproduct-as-it-were but pure, unadulterated rationality of contemporary times. This accounts for the fact too that for the contemporary 'industrial humans' temporary, haphazard economic recession takes precedence over permanent, rational environmental recession. Even the efforts to pacify Nature, to flatter her to sheath her vengeful sword become an economic activity, an activity generating capital, an activity promoting productivity. To find an alternative way of production, to invent greener technology, to achieve developmental goals, to pave a middle-way between nature and technology, or to create a bridge between quasi-instinctual human demands and environmental concerns, are all laudable, good-willed efforts. However,

in the longer run, these maneuvers fail to answer or tackle seriously the issues at stake. For this reason, if the climate change debate is a fact, it appears impossible to resolve the issue through the present environmentalist discourse. We have yet to exorcize the devils of progress, productivity, mastery of Nature, and reason of State, which the West had conjured up from the netherworld, to avert for first time a genuine existential and moral threat confronting mankind—a secular, mortal Armageddon. Whereas we, the bearers of the truth, should have undertaken its funeral, modernist circles within us continue celebrating the *valima* of modernism.

Is not this set up, of knowledge and production, of freedom and market, much more satisfactory, much more anthropocentric, and workable than previous formulations? What guarantees a dialectic overcoming of Master and Slave? Is the contemporary state a state of universal Masterhood or that of universal Slavery? If truth is located in the workings of History, then what ensures that our significations are not historically specific? If every principle – every uniform multiplicity of sign – is to be superseded, does this mean we are progressing towards the Truth through the scientific method? Are not the excommunicated and dispossessed modern beings subject to hopeless circumambulation of Temple of Truth without ever succeeding in securing an insight? If – after Hume – reason was no longer applicable in discovering truth, can we return back to the faith, so as to leap into the absurd, or “believe the preposterous” (Kierkegaard, 1994, p. 409)?

Although his solutions are not wholly satisfactory, it is Nietzsche who dares to answer these exacting questions. He marks the culmination of Western philosophy; he dispels every mythical construction to the extent of reaching nihilism. To believe that one can convey modern existence by holding it from the scruff of its neck back to the Kierkegaardian notion of faith a complete reversal of time seems to him to be a sheer futility. He simply radicalizes the notion of freedom. Knowledge, morality, and truth are not predetermined categories; in his formulation of master-morality and slave-morality morals are dependent upon

the *ground*, which one occupies, the *scale* one has reached in the hierarchical ladder, one that depends upon what one is, what position one holds, what power one has. If truth, therefore, is an endless strife, a mere event in historical becoming in infinity of time, always further at hand, always slipping from one's clutches, then it simply is *nothing*.

In *Ecce Homo*, Nietzsche equates Truth with "shooting well with arrows". Truth is not in the first place an expertise to control, to overpower, to lament, to criticize, to hurt or destroy, it is rather the skillfulness in projecting well into Time, in immortalizing the projection, in embodying it skillfully into an arrow. It is a fabricated concept that continues to wound the modern subjects – the historical latecomers, philosophical afterthoughts – well into our period: a base fiction, a gruesome ideal, invented out of clash of incompatible wills. Of such a contest – a clash of competing wills to power – truth sides with the one who manages to defeat the other, who shoots well with the arrows. And it is language that fastens us fixedly to the fleeting time: "every word is a prejudice" (Nietzsche, 1996, p. 323); "every word is a mask" (Nietzsche, 1994, p. 542). We might supposedly be able to debunk truth-the-concept but what of truth-the-word, the exalted and the mighty? That is why, "there may still be caves for thousands of years in which his [God, Truth, Virtue, Evil] shadow will be shown" (Nietzsche, 2007, p. 109).

In Nietzsche, tables are reversed also in man's relation with the Nature. With the metaphorical and literal death of God (and of all stable things connected to this ideal idea), Man too falls apart, splits up, blindly groping the world at hand. But nature has concealed all her treasured secrets, has locked them up and "she threw away the key ... that man is sustained in the indifference of his ignorance by that which is pitiless, greedy, insatiable and murderous" (Nietzsche, 1979, p. 80). Out of continuously passionate and empathetic calls to his pupils, he laments, laughs and warns at modern conception of equating truth with numbers. He sets the Kantian and the Kierkegaardian options of perceiving the limits of reason and embracing faith,

aside. To persistently and joyfully manufacture concepts, to set horizons unto one's self, to transcend these horizons, to welcome eternal recurrence is his message for posterity. Nothingness, eternal recurrence of nothingness is his simple solution.

Have we acquired such a state? It may well be that in the present age of skepticism, reality is produced in cinematic illusions, friendship through visual social networks, concepts by software programming, that art is located in fashion industries, best literature is found in best sellers, knowledge is established through number of written words... The West is now too old, too fatigued to continue with its reminiscences. It has not answered our central problem, how could it dare to carry on! It should now depart to its old home! Perhaps their posterity would fall down laughing at its inability to answer the simple question 'What is Nature?', perhaps in their youthful innocence they might empathize with the imbecility of their forefathers, perhaps in their extreme dotage they might disparage their stupidity, perhaps the West might not spare the posterity such philosophical torments, perhaps ... — but who knows? Only Allah: "Rivalry in world increase distracteth you, until ye come to the graves. Nay, but ye will come to know!" (The Glorious Qur'an, 102: 1-3).

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