

**The Idea of Self as a Site of Modulation: An Anthropological
Testing of the Management Discourse**

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PRASHANT KUMAR SINGH

13SAPH06



DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY

SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

UNIVERSITY OF HYDERABAD

HYDERABAD-500046

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Department of Anthropology
School of Social Sciences
University of Hyderabad

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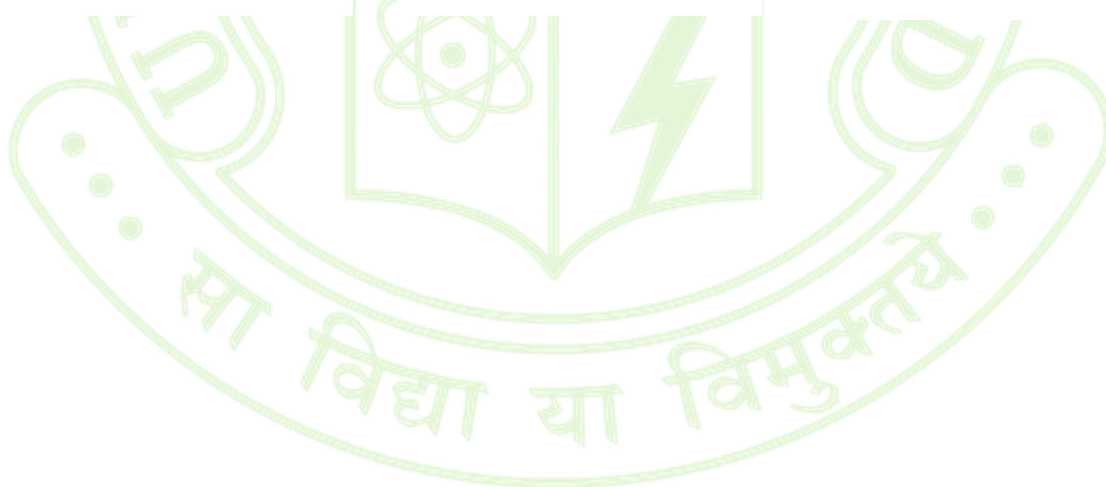
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Research Supervisor
(Prof. M. Romesh Singh)

Head of the Department
(Prof. M. Romesh Singh)

Dean of Social Sciences
(Prof. P. Venkata Rao)



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Chapter: Introduction

Introduction and significance

In the movie ‘Chhoti Si Baat (1975)’, which was directed by Basu Chatterjee, there is a portrayal of a young man living in Mumbai. This young man ‘falls in love’ with a woman commuter traveling in the same bus daily and working in a company that is located in the same building. The woman seems aware of his feelings to her, however waits for the man to initiate courtship with her. The young man lacks courage, stammers in her presence, and shies away when there is a chance of eye contact. And then enters a competitor; a totally different personality, confident, articulate, pedantic, and fully trained in the ways of courtship. The protagonist is always humbled by this competitor in front of the lady. In a last attempt to save his ‘love’ from sliding away, the protagonist goes to a retired colonel, who trains him in proper ways of eating, dancing, speaking, courtship, and ways of overpowering the competitors. After training, he returns a changed man; implements all the prescribed steps, enters into a period of courtship and gains an upper hand on his competitor in every aspect. All was going well until his competitor guessed his final move, since both were trained by that same colonel, and reveals the next step in the plan to the lady. In the climactic scene of the movie, in spite of so much proximity, the hero is shown to have abandoned the prescribed technique in the courtship manual and saved himself from losing her forever. What in the beginning helped the hero in gaining her sympathy could have forever ended her trust. A strange outcome could have ensued if the protagonist were following the procedure in the manual. The story points to the significance of having a well-groomed personality and the difference this personality can make in everyday life.

One of the most conspicuous things of our times is the way in which different aspects of life are increasingly coming under the lens of elaborate and standardized procedural manuals designed for efficient interventions. The question of managing different aspects of life; relationships, personality, parenting, moods, along with money and other life goals, efficiently and optimally have become part of that burgeoning genre of literature known as self-help books. The story narrated above about personality development reflects one such intervention where it is assumed that through proper training and

outlook, one could achieve better results in fields hitherto outside the domain of management. The proliferation of management as a field of study, churning out new graduates every year and its application in domains till now outside its ambit do speak for its popularity and its establishment as a paradigm for understanding. Management as a discipline developed in post-war scenario where older models of economic arrangements were under stress from all sides and larger foundations on which they were laid were losing legitimacy (Lyotard 1984, Boltanski 2005). There was an increasing de-synchronization between individuals and the larger goals of economic prosperity and nation's wealth resulting in a crisis situation of a different order (Lyotard 1984). And the resolution of this de-synchronization happened with the rise of a new class of individuals known as managers, an individual who was more flexible, more mobile and adaptable, and with an idea of self-growth based on performances and incentives (Boltanski 2005). Bauman (2000) who has registered the shifts in the social world, referred to this period as liquid modernity, where being light and mobile are the virtues, as compared to the older ideas of stability, durability, and security.

But what does the proliferation and application of management discourse in different fields of life, outside of economy, indicate? Do we have a crisis like situation developing in all these other fields? Does the spread of management discourse (vocabulary, methods and ways of understanding) point to a general situation of crisis, whose contours were defined by Lyotard in the form of postmodernism? It is possible that the success of management discourse in one field resulted in its application to all other fields of life, as all of them have the same ideas of lightness and flexibility reflected in them. When sense of security and stability were prime concerns, they were provided by the moldings of family and nation-state (Deleuze 1992); but when the desired features become lightness, flexibility and adaptability, can we say that they are provided by the modulating techniques of management discourse?

It is therefore not difficult to visualize the general sense of crisis that the emerging management culture is trying to tackle by carving niche areas for itself. A cursory glance would suffice to make us aware that we are now running largest conservatism schemes in history. We are saving water, rivers, and oceans; we are saving mountains and flat lands;

atmosphere and climate; endangered flora and fauna, up to the point that now we are talking about saving earth for future generations. All these are new additions, apart from regular stuff of saving individuals from abuse and exploitation; diseases and disorders; failures, poverty and low self-esteem, and lastly from other individuals. Furthermore, the question being asked from every proposed model of solution for the management of crisis is about its sustainability and adaptability; durability figures somewhere lower in the hierarchy. If one were to make inventory of all the domains of life in which a niche managerial approach has developed, we would find that the range of things expounded in those manuals would be sufficient to form a worldview¹ of its own.

The worldview that emerges from this juxtaposed viewing could only be matched by the theological cosmologies in their scope and magnitude. Just as they had prescriptions for individuals in every field of life and laid down procedures to the last detail for every kind of act; this new worldview, emanating from management discourse, abounds in procedures and methods for the individuals. The theological worldviews were durable; their persistence even today testifies to this fact. The ‘idea of self’ that emerged from these theological worldviews had their sources in the moral codes and values sanctioned by these worldviews. Similarly, the sources of the modern self, according to Charles Taylor were grounded in the moral philosophical traditions of western civilization (Taylor 2001). So there is continuity in deriving the ‘idea of self’ from the moral framework enshrined in both religious as well as modern worldviews.

But were they sustainable and adaptable? The western history, at least in the Marxian traditions, suggests something else; revolutions and counter revolutions, inquisitions and crusades hint that they were anything but adaptable. The emergent worldview from the management discourse is shaping up a new culture of management, and this culture of management is perhaps one of the most popular cultures of our times. The hero in our story gave up his training in the end because he realized the absurdity of the overall situation in which they both were finding themselves. Maybe the movie implicitly sent

¹ Worldview refers to a set of ideas, codes and procedures required for inhabiting the world in a particular way. It is a detailed exposition about the world and the relation between its existents.

home the message that the purpose of all training is to make the individual look beyond the prescribed methods of training.

Research problem

What characterizes the postmodern condition, according to Lyotard is the breaking up of grand narratives and loss of hope in the project of modernity. These grand narratives had to do with the teleological destiny of humans; supported by the truth of Science, purpose of History, and the idea of nation-state (Lyotard 1984). Bauman (1997) interpreted postmodernity as a time when there is a preference for freedom and happiness over order and security. Whereas modernity is understood as a period when eschatological destiny of humans, as imagined by religion was replaced by a new destiny ordained by history. With the fall of the grand narratives and a resultant vacuum in the field of collective destiny, what we now have is the idea of happiness and freedom fulfilling the existential meaning for individuals. With each passing phase in history, there has been a successive truncation of the imagined human destiny in terms of magnitude and scope. From transcendental to historical and finally to existential, the journey of the individual is marked by lower expectations and a distrust of anything higher or grander versions of life. Modernity, as post-theological order didn't allow the realm of transcendence and divine as a legitimate mode of expression in its scheme of things. Similarly, postmodernity distrusts everything that aspires for universalism in time and space. If we contrast this theorization about self with the happenings in the popular culture, we would find that there is stark disjuncture in the trajectories of the '*ideas of self*'².

Coinciding with the period of post modernity, i.e. post-war Europe, there emerged certain things that are considered to be part of popular culture, intended for mass consumption. The novels of Ayn Rand, and J.R Tolkien with their characterization of hero in heroical-mythical frame, the genre of self-help literature, the proliferation of management studies as a discipline, and the rise of fantastic super-heroes happened alongside the post-

² The 'self' defined here would have something of an aspirational or referential attribute attached to it. It is the 'self' which contains ideas about agency and mastery, action and destiny in this world, which the being aspires to become or which serves as the referential point for the 'Being' to have it as one of its dimensions or modes and that is why we have used the term 'idea of self'. Unlike Being, which cannot reside outside of it, self doesn't have a fixed location. It usually floats. Sometimes it merges with being as one, sometimes it entices being into action by acting as a model.

modernist rejection of grander version of history, self, and individual destiny. However, most of the academic analysis viewed these cultural developments as escapist phenomena or camouflaged ideologies (Boltanski 2005, Baudrillard 1998, Debord 1967, Deleuze 1992). These developments in popular culture do portray a certain heroic-mythical image of the individual, who is not afraid to think in fantastic terms, nor feels burdened by the lessons of the history. So while theoretical analysis is grappling with the post-war scenario in terms of postmodernity, consumerism, society of network or spectacle, where the idea of self and its capacities are stunted in growth; we are seeing a totally opposite formulation of heroism in the popular culture. Critique of these elements as ideological tropes of capitalism never explains their novelty, or their proliferation, or why there is a stark disjuncture between the fate of the self in the analysis and in popular culture in the same period.

Just as the 'idea of double' in the literary genres of late 19th century onwards had to be understood using the recessive or discarded ideas of personality in modernity (Nandy 2005); similarly the 'idea of self' emerging from the literary genres associated with management discourse have to be understood using categories that are either renounced or recessive. The relationship between the 'idea of self' in academic analysis and the 'idea of self' emerging in popular culture, as in management discourse, has to be probed to understand their respective origins and dynamics. Once we differentiate between the two 'ideas of self' emerging from two different fields, we would be able to trace their respective genealogies and the method of their unfolding. The importance of knowing this differentiation between the two 'ideas of self' is that it would allow us to understand the specificity of each of them, the conditions they reflect and the points where they intersect. We can formulate a comprehensive 'idea of self', if and only if we know what they both are/were trying to do for the individual and its destiny.

In order to distill the 'idea of self' from the management discourse, we would look at how different personality development manuals and self-help literature portray individuals in their relation to the other individuals and to the world? Whether they resemble a new dogma, a new creed? Or are they seriously trying to answer the most serious problem of our times; the problem of crisis? And most importantly, whether the

idea of self-development refers only to tangible and transactional matters or they point to something much more than that? Whether they break the trend of continuous downfall of imagined destiny of individuals and reorient the vector of self for new ascensions? Addressing these conundrums will assist to see whether this new worldview suggests a break from the past in imagining about the world and the individuals or is it a continuation of the previous philosophical-theological worldviews with same universal tendencies in terms of scope and magnitude.

Objectives

By briefly summarizing the overall theme, which we have tried to articulate through our discussion about the present situation of crisis in almost all walks of life, and more specifically about the emergence of a new worldview through management discourse, we can say that there is something common that manifests itself in all the crisis situations. The epidemic of crisis cannot be fully understood just by focusing on a particular crisis situation nor can be tackled just by trying to manage it using temporary solutions and innovations. Crisis situation is always symptomatic of some fault in the overall design and structure of an entity. Anthropologist Bruno Latour has argued that crisis, especially ecological crisis, have their source in the modern worldview, which constantly renounces the past and engages in purification of hybrids into subject-object and nature-culture dichotomy. In this argument, the relation of modern worldview with its theological predecessors has not been taken into account or is not been fully discussed. The objective of this study therefore is to understand whether is it only the modernity or modern worldview that generates crisis, or is it inherent in the overall design of all the cosmologies and worldviews that have dominated the world in the last two millennia. We are referring about worldviews that have their origins after the fall of the antiquity, especially Christianity and its successors. Although Judaism predates Christianity and most of the theological assumptions of Christianity are derived from Judaism, the focus of this research is after the advent of Christianity because of its tendencies and ambitions of universalism in the world.

In order to trace a common thread or connecting link between successive worldviews, an emphasis is placed on understanding the 'idea of self' emerging from each of them and

how they are linked to their antecedents and how they are shaping their consequents. Addressing these questions throw light on the postmodern predicament of the self; why it is robbed of its earlier grandeurs and why the vector of its destiny has continuously seen a downward orientation. The post-modern predicament forms the fulcrum of our analysis of self from where we would traverse in both directions; backwards to look at historical worldviews and forward to look at the management discourse and the popular culture associated with it to know about the orientation of the vector of self-destiny.

An important aspect in the evolution of the management discourse over time has been the reintroduction of the idea of spirituality to deal with the crisis of meaning and purpose of life affecting the individuals. Crisis reflects the idea of self-growth articulated in initial management literature has reached saturation point. As a result, Ideas like *spiritual leadership* (Fry 2005, Krishnakumar 2015) and *workplace spirituality* (Benefiel 2005, Biberman 2000, Fry 2005) have become popular in management literature and there is a proliferation of organizations to motivate and guide individuals in search of their higher aims and goals of life. The synchronization of individual and organizational goals with higher values of altruism and common good ensures that there are no disjuncture between the inner life of individuals and their work life. From modulating individuals to seek mobility and self-growth in the post-war period to recognizing their inner life and aspirations for higher values for a meaningful life; the vector of self-fulfillment has not only been reoriented upwards, but substantially raised by the management discourse. The idea of the hero imagined in terms of self-perfection and self-growth in popular novels of Ayn Rand and in the genre of self-help literature ensured that the vector of self-destiny is reversed in the upward direction. This new hero was not averse to the higher and grander goals of life.

This reversed ‘vector of self ‘ enabled us to understand the entire idea of spirituality and spiritual process, hitherto abandoned as illegitimate expression and to formulate a sequential and inductive ‘idea of self’, which would also be sustainable in its design and unlimited in its idea of self-growth.

The main objectives and related research questions of this study therefore can be summarized as follows:

- To show the interrelation between the current situation of crisis in different spheres of life, and the ‘ideas of self’ prevalent in our times especially in academic analysis and to situate them in larger historical narrative.

Do the crisis situations in different spheres of life primarily a consequence of the modern worldview, as some scholars have argued, or is there a pattern in worldviews leading up to the present situation crisis? How the ‘idea of self’ prevalent at a given point of time reflects the larger cosmological configuration about the world? And, in what ways, any fault in the larger design affects the smaller subset of ‘idea of self’? How the questions of subject/object and epistemology/ontology have designed contours of self in any of the worldview?

- To outline historical processes that enabled transformation and propagation of the ‘idea of self’ in different cosmologies in order to frame an anthropological ‘idea of self’ that differs from historical ‘idea of self’ in design and workings.

What is the role of iconoclasm in shaping up the individual in monotheistic cosmologies, during the period from the fall of antiquity up to the present day? How do the histories of ‘ideas of self’, point to a series of iconoclastic acts and gestures? How the mutation of iconoclasm have constantly removed the world from the definitions of self and limited its process of becoming? And do we have an alternative reading of self, with which we can do a comparative study of the ‘self’ informed by iconoclasm?

- To understand how ‘idea of self’ emanating from the management discourse as popular culture fits in the overall context of postmodern condition and this ‘idea of self’ is reorienting and reversing the vector of self for understanding spiritualism and spiritual process in new light.

What is the characterization of hero in the management literature, and how this idea of hero is different from the ideas of hero hitherto provided in the different worldviews? In what ways the question of self-perfection is linked to the idea of hero? How could the idea of self-perfection be saved from its present predicament by the question of perfection answered in spirituality? And finally, how the new 'idea of self' is characterized, which includes spirituality as one of its important principles of existence?

The overall objective of this study is to frame a new comprehensive 'idea of self', by answering all the research questions and summarizing them in order to arrive at the sum total of all the objectives mentioned above. For doing this, we have used range of methods for analysis which we are discussing in the next section.

Methods of analysis

This study is informed by Dan Sperber's distinction between Anthropology and Ethnography, where the author argued that while Ethnography deals with field study and making sense of data, Anthropology is concerned with distilling a theory out of that ethnographic material (Sperber 1985). In our study, this distinction has been kept in mind and we have tried to use both accordingly in the course of the work. Just as Anthropologists like Claude Levi Strauss and James Scott have theorized about savage mind and state using ethnographic literature; this study has tried to theorize about 'self' by distilling it from the vast corpus of ethnographic literature. In order to look at the trajectory of 'self' distilled from the ethnographic literature, this study undertook field study where I tried to look how the question self and its destiny are taken into account.

Since we have tried to locate the advent of crisis in specific cosmological configurations and further narrowing it down to the 'ideas of self' ingrained in them, our analysis, most of the times, involves a comparative study of successive 'ideas of self' emerged in a particular point of history with their antecedents in previous epochs in the course of the western civilization. Along with it, we have also referred these successive 'ideas of self' to our theoretical standpoint of 'anthropological self' derived from the enormous corpus of anthropological literature dealing non-modern societies and their cosmologies. The

most important framework in understanding the traditional, tribal and non-modern cosmologies has been underlined by anthropologist Claude Levi Strauss (1962) in his book titled 'The savage mind', which deals with the classificatory schemes deployed by tribal societies in composing their worldviews. The tools and techniques used to construct a seamless whole by the tribal societies have been defined by Levi Strauss as characteristics of the savage mind. The classificatory schemes employed with the help of totemic operators never operate with fixed categories of subject/object and imparting the entire agency to the subject (Levi Strauss 1962). In fact there are no such things as objects for the savage mind; all they have is entities with varying degrees of agencies and articulative powers (Latour 2004, 2013). The totemic operator weaves a network of humans and non-humans, where each entity refers to the other through relations facilitated by what are known as totems that could be anything from flora to fauna or even anthropomorphic things (Levi Strauss 1962). Whatever outside of this network are neither nature nor object waiting to be recognized but simply chaos and disorder (Latour 2004). We have discussed about this style of cosmological configuration in detail later in chapter one to highlight the basic differences in constitution of worldviews associated with western civilization to that of tribal societies. We would use these characteristics of savage mind and their world to compare the status of things as objects in the dominant historical cosmologies of the west. How relations are forged, how they are extended in the space and what are their totemic operators enabling that networking? And what are the positions of non-humans in that network? Whether they are included at all or thrown in to the ever expanding pool of nature and objects?

In order to construct a new 'idea of self' which is both sustainable as well as manageable, we have to include the organizing principles of the savage mind and historical experiences of all the 'ideas of self' formulated in western history. For doing so, we have made use of philosopher William James's distinction between 'saltatory truths' and 'ambulatory truths' to differentiate between two types of truth. Ambulatory truths are the ones that have all their connecting links intact leading up to their final proposition and can be traversed in both directions, much like an experimental setup where each and every step is known as important for reaching the final stage (James 1978). Saltatory truths are the ones whose trails and links connecting it to its previous stages has been

obliterated and therefore there's no traversing in both directions or knowing the sequences (James 1978). This distinction of truth has been employed by anthropologist Bruno Latour in science studies for studying the process of fact-formation in sciences (Latour 1986, 1999). All the experimental steps and apparatuses enable the transformation of real tangible samples into their realization in abstract equations and formulas. These steps form the connecting and mediating links which ensure the mobility of facts on both sides; from samples to equations and vice versa along the same path (Latour 2003).

For our purpose, we have simultaneously read James's distinction of truth with Gabriel Tarde's idea of '*Being as Having*', to formulate a sequential 'idea of self', with its successive levels of abstractions and existence. According to Tarde's idea of being, the philosophy of '*to be*' never informs us about the world and its multiplicity in shaping the being and its final becoming in the form of 'to be' or 'I am' (Tarde 2012). It is like the saltatory truth, described by James, that obscures its process of becoming by removing all steps and mediating links leading up to the final position. Whereas being as having implies the idea of possession as intrinsic to the shaping up of the being; a possession that links the individual with the world spatially as well as temporally to define the contours of its being (Tarde 2012). Having as possession provides the logistics of becoming as well as enables transformation and perpetuation over time. They are like apparatuses in the experimental setup which enable the movement of a sample in becoming an abstract formulae; an autonomous truth (Latour 1986, 1999). This idea of being resembles what has been discussed above as ambulatory truths; truths which have their mediating links intact and well maintained up to the last point in the process of evolving truth. This sequential 'idea of self', ensures that the mobility of individuals at any level is not obstructed so that it can easily traverse from objective and tangible levels to the most abstract and transcendental levels and vice-versa.

In order to study the different 'ideas of self' that have become prominent over time, it is important to know apart from their genealogical history, their modes of operations and modes of existence. If historical analysis of 'self' would help us in visualizing the directionality of the 'vector of self', and its desired destiny; then a study of their

operating processes and their modes of existences would reveal to us their spatial and temporal dimensions. These dimensions would guide us to see their relations with the world, the mediating links they established with things of the present as well as of the past, things their inheriting from the past and things they are bequeathing for future selves. Finally this study would add to the emerging field of Anthropology of self, which was developed by Milton Singer in his book *Man's Glassy Essence* by formulating an Anthropological idea of self, which would have a continuity of existence, externality of relations and an aspiration for verticality

Chapterization

Chapter 1: The Age of Crisis and the Misadventures of Cosmologies

This chapter dealt with the question of crisis in our age especially the ecological crisis, and tries to understand the interrelation between different cosmologies and their 'ideas of self' with the on setting of the '*Times of crisis*'. It looked at the relationship between the world and the corresponding worldviews about the world by delving in to the question of subject/object and ontology/epistemology dichotomy. And finally what kind of unity is proposed by all these cosmologies, which also serves as their driving ideal.

Chapter 2: Iconoclasm and the construction of self in history

In this chapter we discussed about the processes and techniques employed by historical and contemporary worldviews to make sense of the world and the corresponding 'ideas of self' imagined by them. It analyzed the continuously increasing bifurcation of the world into subjects and objects and devaluation of the world of non-humans in the cosmologies. In this chapter we also focused on the replacement of religious worldviews by the secular ideologies and studied those ideologies for the 'ideas of self' ingrained in them.

Chapter 3: Two sources of 'self' and their two modes of existence

In this chapter, we inquired about two sources of self and their two modes of existence. This chapter forms the crux of the arguments developed in the previous two chapters about historical worldviews and the processes employed by them to constitute world and

its inhabitants. We did a comparative study of 'self' emerging from these historical worldviews with that of 'self' emerging from non-modern worldviews forming the subject matter of Anthropology.

Chapter 4: The final frontier of self; modulation and the management discourse

In this chapter, we focused on the changing relationship between the different 'ideas of self' and the State in discussing about the rise of '*political self*'. It is in this chapter that we dealt with the development of the management discourse, where all the contemporary floating ideas about self and the social concretize in the form of a coherent and powerful set of statements and ideas, especially in the form of self-help literatures and personality development manuals. We tried to read the management discourse in line with the course of development of western history as well as a counter statement to the overall project of the western history.

Chapter 5: Verticality and the unlocking of the domains of self-perfection

In **this chapter**, we focused on spirituality and spiritual process, which provides one of the powerful avenues of self-realization and self-perfection. We tried to look beyond the healing capabilities of the spiritual process, as enunciated by psychoanalytic tradition, into a positive process of self-development and self-realization. We chose Auroville as our field of study for two reasons; firstly for its proclamation about the descent of supermen in its setup. Secondly, Auroville, although being a project inspired by the modernist obsession of creating a new 'Being, it added a spiritual dimension to that 'Being' hitherto absent in the modern imagination of new 'Being'.

Conclusion: Abstracted self as sustainable self

The study can be concluded by propounding a new 'idea of self', which would resemble much like the anthropological and mystical 'idea of self' in the non-western and non-modern traditions but with all the knowledge and experiences of the history ingrained in it.

In the next chapter, I begin by analyzing the crisis in detail and would try to locate the genesis of crisis in the overall designs of the worldviews that have historically shaped the world in one way or the other.

Chapter 1: The Age of Crisis and the Misadventures of Cosmologies

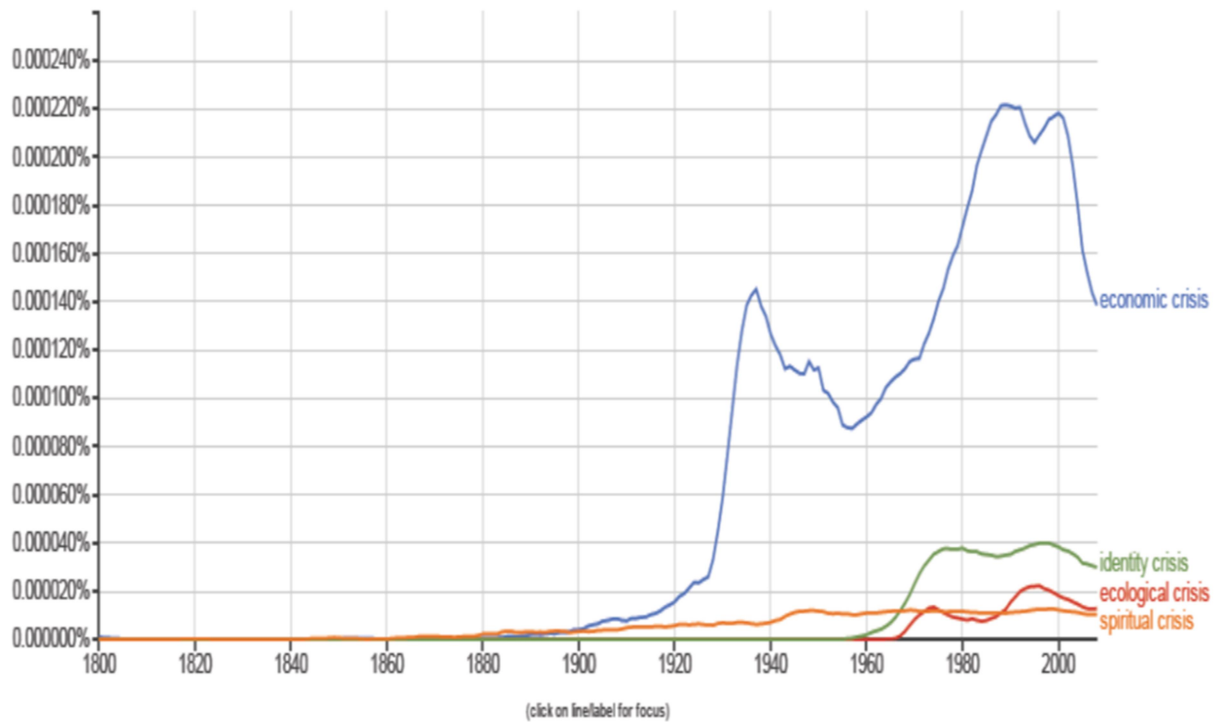
1.1 The age of crisis.

Sometimes looking at the usage of a particular word over a period of time can give an unexpected handhold for starting an inquiry. This act of historicizing a word does not necessarily mean discovering the essence or true meaning of that word. Historicization reveals the unfolding of trajectories through which a word or a thing finds existence in different spheres of life. The word crisis has a Greek origin from the word 'krinein' which means, to decide, and dates back to late 14th century and early 15th century (Serres 2013). Over the years, it acquired a sense in legal and medical fields; denoting, to judge in the former and a turning point in the latter (Serres 2013). The general sense of the word crisis, throughout its usage in diverse fields over time, as Michel Serres aptly described, denotes a critical situation where it becomes an imperative to take a decision or to make a judgment (Serres 2013). Crisis denotes a decisive point where the quality of judgment would ensure whether the existence is furthered in time or it ends up in chaos and death (Serres 2013). A crisis symbolizes a crossroads where we have to choose one path over another and the entire existence may depend on that choice of path.

But something has changed over the years, especially after 19th century, in the way this word has been deployed, from being used specifically inside different fields to one of generality, from denoting a particular situation to describing the general condition (Deleuze 1992). Is it just a coincidence that in the same period, the earth's geography was changed beyond recognition by human action (Turner II et.al, 1990)? And we could no longer consider the resources of the earth as renewable and infinite (Serres 1995, Diamond 2005). Or that we are discussing about climate change and threat to the life on earth (Latour 1993).

The history of a word, apart from its meaning, could also be measured from the frequency of its usage, and the intensity with which it is referred to. If we search for the word 'crisis' using the tool developed by Google, *Google books Ngram viewer* that relies on a huge database of digitized books, we get some interesting results in the form

of a graph, plotted with 1500 as base year up to 2008¹. The advantage of this tool over other tools, such as *Google scholar* is that we can visualize the fluctuating trajectories of the word over a specified period of time, as the results appear in the form of graph with frequency variations over time as well as do comparative study of different words in the same graph². The drawback with this viewer is that it searches only digitized books for references, hence its database is still minimal and therefore could only be seen as giving a rough sketch of something.



(Source: Google books NGRAM viewer.)

When we would search the word crisis with different variants, the graph is generally flat and non-continuous until the middle of the 19th century. After that period, the curve picks up momentum in terms of frequency and regularity in upward direction. The curve shows an overall increase in the mentions, which is progressively increasing with the passage of time. What does this graph tell us and how to make sense of its curve? What accounts for its gradual increase after 19th century? If we search for few commonly used

¹ <https://books.google.com/ngrams/info>

² <https://www.aje.com/en/arc/using-google-scholar-vs-ngram-viewer-determine-field/>

phrases such economic, ecological, spiritual, identity, we can get a rough idea of how they have varied over time and their approximate inflection time. The results could be seen in the graph above³.

One general observation that could be made from the above graph is that there has been a sudden spike in the crisis of different types in the last 100 years; more so in the second half of the 20th century. Michel Serres has described this proliferation of crisis in different forms, after the post war period, Europe in particular as '*The Times of Crisis*'; presenting unprecedented situation that demand for something more than a simple judgment. Ecological and identity crisis have almost no presence or mentions before the 1950s on this graph but make a simultaneous appearance with substantial frequencies from the beginning. As mentioned earlier, the life of word, apart from its literal meaning also includes frequency of its use and intensity. The intensity of a word can be inferred from this simple graph by looking at the variations of frequency over time and the periods of high amplitudes. Before doing this, we should know what it means by an intensity of a word? In linguistic terms, it can be understood as the stress or the load or the urgency which a word evokes or holds. Sahlins (1978) has used the term *semantic load* to gauge the extent of coding with which a word has been endowed; words with higher semantic load occupy important places in scheme of things and evoke a much stronger reaction. The response a word evokes or the disturbance it induces in the system when touched with, is one of the ways to measure the intensity of the word (Pike 1954).

When we hear someone saying that the economy is in bad condition and a crisis can set in any time, or the boom bubble will burst in the near future, the looming tremor generates a reaction in the form of a mild tremor about the anticipated event and the consequences. One of the most visible immediate reactions is the volatility in the exchanges worldwide. However, almost after 100 years of economic socialization in crisis and bubbles bursting, people and economists have become habituated with it. In fact, prosperity and depression have become part and parcel of rational economic thinking (Cassidy 2013, Krugman 2008, Wolf 2014). Though the economic paradigm has changed over the years, from industrial to financial; yet the idea of crisis or depression

³ This graph was plotted in September 2015 and could have undergone slight changes in all these years.

remains its constant factor. So once an idea gets institutionalized in the framework, it ceases to have a shock value. The question which now bothers the markets is not why the crisis is setting in but when they are setting in (Minsky 2016)?

Another event of the late 50s was the nuclear crisis where superpowers were standing face to face with their nuclear arms targeting each other. The experience of Hiroshima and Nagasaki had taught a harsh lesson that the entire earth and their inhabitants can be destroyed in seconds with a bomb. Now that can be frightening, that a bomb could erase everything including the earth whose existence nobody questioned. The earth, that is the base of all action could perish just like that, was something really dreaded. The shock value of nuclear catastrophe is so immense that it in itself has become a big deterrent (Delpech 2012). The importance of nuclear crisis was that it brought to light the fragility and the perishability of the earth and the life on it. Till then earth was perishable only in the cosmological time scale but now, even earth was made part of human time scale. The understanding that in the nuclear standoff between two countries, there are no winners, explains the alacrity with which the world comes a mediator for truce (Cohen 2017). After all, immediate survival is rational over immediate annihilation.

However, what would happen if our rationality falls short of breath? What if rationality shows signs of an imminent death, along with all the humanity that was placed under its guardianship? What if the same bomb like situation arises, not as an accident but by the conscious rational thinking and action? Then we are sure that it's not like any crisis hit before and cannot be resolved in the same way as before. If the whole framework which guides human action and thinking results in producing the catastrophic event, the two world wars and the nuclear bombings being the prime example, then it is paramount to reexamine the framework for its faultiness. There's no question of getting habituated or inured to this crisis situation because it reflects not an isolated event but rather a fault in the overall design of the framework on which existence is dependent and that faulty framework would reiterate the crisis situation in different forms. The ecological crisis, we talked about is yet another manifestation of the impact of human activity guided by economic and scientific framework.

What we have here is something we can describe as a purely objective situation encountered in the modern human history ever since objectivity was discovered few centuries back. With the changing attributes of crisis, we can say that something is at fault in the way the world is imagined in prominent western worldviews. In order to know, what's ailing western worldviews and why they are creating crisis situations of one kind or the other, we have to look at the recent and most talked about crisis of times, known as ecological crisis. Ecological crisis has revealed to us clearly, that it is the culmination of all the crises situations and final articulation of what all the different crises wanted to say because it finally made us to question the worldviews of their faultiness.

1.2 What ecological crisis revealed

As noted above, with ecological crisis, we encountered the purely objective condition (Latour 1993, Serres 2013). The crisis is objective in the literal sense because the objects, that were considered till now to be mute, passive and infinite showed their opposite nature. All of a sudden we realized that they are not replenishable, are very fragile and showing signs of stress. It was objective because it was a rebellion by the objects for subject-hood. Ecological crisis is the protest of simple benign entities of air, water, land, earth and habitat (Diamond 2005). Realization can be an appropriate word, a bitter one in that. Realization that comes in the middle of a struggle, that you can't wage it any longer because your logistics are running out, your stock of life supports is exhausted; the ground beneath your feet is sliding (Serres 1995). When you look at your combatant, you find him in the same position as you are, that you both are drawing from the same source which has been dried up. What will happen next? Either ceasefire will be called keeping in with the larger wisdom or one would win the war but eventually both have to die. And this is whole crux of the ecological crisis.

If there's any difficulty in visualizing this argument, you just have to read the opening pages of Michel Serres's '*The natural contract*' to know what it's all about. All the struggles were fought, west versus east, left versus right, male versus female on some constants, on bases assumed to be permanent and suddenly the base has given away, constant has become a variable. It turns out to be made of quicksand (Serres 1995, pp.1-2). And this fragile nature of earth has finally forced all the combatants to take this into

account, to make it one of the concerned parties of the debate. This inclusion of earth as a participant in the combat is not environmental determinism but an extension of the list of subjects involved in a particular activity. Tarde (1903) alludes this fact when he pointed the defeat of Napoleon against Russians; that we cannot exclude Russian winters in deciding the fate of the Napoleonic war.

With the onset of ecological crisis, there has been a reconfiguration of relation between humans and the earth. The entire modern discourse was based on the finitude of the humans and the infinitude of a mechanized, impersonal earth. Earth's limit has been reached and as Michel Serres says that the infinite human potential has finally encountered the finitude of the earth (Serres, 2013). The mute impersonal earth operating under strict physical laws turned out to be fragile, sensitive and perishable. Sometimes we have to face an existential crisis, not in the philosophical sense but in the ordinary way of air, water, food and habitat to understand that things should not be taken for granted. It's neither possible nor my intention to reproduce the vast corpus of debates on ecological crisis. I can try doing so only at the risk of being repetitive and straying away from my task. The focus of this chapter would be on the question of agency, who acts and who is being acted upon; the role of attachments, whether they obstruct an action or enable it; and the authenticity of positions, where subjects end and objects start? Or where nature ends and culture takes up the baton? For doing so, we would make use of literature that has tried to deal with question of ecological crisis from the perspective of worldviews. In order to deal with crisis, we have to deal with worldviews that generate them frequently.

Like everything else, nature could also be historicized (Latour 2004, Tazi 2005). This statement is now accepted, at least in academic engagements about nature. How can something have a history, which is itself outside history, which is eternal and *sui generis*? Only humans are considered to have a history because they produce history out of conscious action. Even all humans cannot have a claim to that prerogative. Thinking subjects possessing consciousness having an intentionality qualified as living in history. Thanks to the ethnographic research and anthropology, we have come to know that history unfolds differently in different parts of the world and there are multiple ways in

which humans deal with their past and transmit it to the subsequent generations. In a way, there's no privileged method of living in history and certainly not of doing history. There are court histories and to counter that, there's people's history or subaltern history with their own sub fields. From archives to folktales, all form part of the inquiry.

This had to happen, going by the events and the logic that made history and historiography one of the pillars of modern knowledge. As it was the prerogative of the humans, it was only a matter of time before it is extended to everybody. Extension and inclusion are modes through which everything aspires to be universal. But this method of envisaging history, history of the humans, history for the humans, and history by the humans was itself the result of a process of purification acutely manifested in the post-enlightenment Europe, which was also the period of beginning of modernity (Latour 1993). We all know the story of enlightenment, heard so many times from so many different angles. We will come back to it after sometime. For the time being, let us return to the nature and the history of nature. It was around this time, in post-enlightenment Europe that nature was introduced as a repository of everything, which could not fit in the human history, entities which were considered to be outside history, ahistorical and eternal as compared to humans and societies of humans, historical subjects with power of action and will. And as if this idea of historical nature was not enough, science studies have shown that it has a history in the plural. There was nature in natural sciences; an impersonal entity operating under strict laws to deciphered using observation and experimentation.

Then there was nature of economics and politics, beastly nature having blood on its claws, a nature of fierce competition, survival and a war of all against all (Latour 2004). There was also a pristine and sublime nature, a nature of innocence pitted against the fallen culture, degradation and ugliness of daily life, a nature of romantics, humanities and nowadays of travelers and go green groups (Latour 2004). In this last aspect, anthropology tops the list for its claims of studying pure and innocent natives living close to nature, tinged with feelings of mourning for their decay.

This appeal to nature, or different natures was always on account of settling the debate raging among the humans, was a way of justification or more rightly what Bruno Latour

described as a way of short circuiting politics (Latour, 2004). Nature and its counterpart, culture can only exist in a world that is composed of dichotomies or permanent dualities like the ones we are already aware of, subject- object, mind-matter, and most importantly of idealism-materialism. All this classification can be broadly understood as a differentiation between humans and non-humans into two different groups. It is to this classification that the sudden eruption of ecological crisis gave a bewildered and questioning look.

And it's strange that if you look at the ethnographic works amassed by the anthropology, you will find yourself facing a very peculiar difficulty. You will see that although the anthropologists have used the standard categories of nature-culture or subject-object, yet the entities are constantly jumping from one block to another, are performing activities that are generally associated with the definitions of other block. In this respect, all anthropological documents are pre-modern in nature, a document which cannot keep up with the bifurcation, without the knowledge of the anthropologists who have written it. So in theory, all anthropologists operated on that dictum of bifurcation for looking at the world, but in practice were carrying out something totally different. They were listening to the non-humans speech, were tracking their movements in and out of categories or containers, where sometimes two different humans were placed in two different containers of subject and object while placing idols and ghosts along with an animal in the container labeled as subjects.

This way of classification can indeed give headache to any person trained in modern form of rationality, which reserves the privilege of articulation to humans only, and has not accorded the proper place to different beings other than human beings in the scheme of things. The question then arises is that how come something so clearly visible in the ethnographies, this way of classification could not change the theories used to explain the practice itself? A cursory glance at the history of anthropological thought would suffice for an answer. It always had a safety valve attached to prevent the spilling over of practice in to theory. First and foremost was the idea of evolution, of progress considered as an escape from primitivism and irrationality. The effects of result were neutralized

before the fieldwork actually began. Societies were already placed on the successive steps of ladder of civilization.

Secondly and it has to do with the method of rationality usually accepted in order to reach the truth, the principle reason behind any phenomenon. One of the assumptions of rational inquiry, rationalism which developed in the last 3 to 4 centuries in Europe, that truth can only be reached by removing the dense undergrowth hiding the reality. Appearance cannot be trusted for their deceptive nature; they have to be peeled layer after layer to discover the true essence, the undiluted core which then becomes the defining feature, the principle reason or base in some cases, of the phenomena.

This logic of justification for the data amassed, this way of theorizing about the practice recorded prevented the different worlds from entering with full force in to the discourse. Anthropologists managed to maintain this lack of alignment with a sleight of hand, by temporarily opening the privilege of speech to multiple beings encountered in the field, willingly following the informant through their cosmological topography but closing it the moment they thought they have found the principle reason, the defining criteria, the essence of the social world, which in most cases was already chalked out before. From economic reason of Malinowski to sexuality of Mead, from unconscious structures of Levi Strauss to metaphysics of Castaneda, from peasant innocence of Redfield to the power of Leach, Anthropologists had to deal, in most cases rather uncomfortably with the cumbersome task of locating the essence, the undiluted core of all human action. The task of filling the pores of society with something essential, something fundamental is not the problem of anthropology alone.

In fact anthropology had to grapple with this perplexing requirement with more difficulty as compared to other disciplines which did not have to deal directly with the supposed other and therefore could enthusiastically participate in the task of rationality, looking for reasons and essences. Anthropology only extended the range of the substances which were being used in the rational inquiry in the modern west, to fill the pores of the society, substances which could explain everything and could serve as a pole in the end to end sequential series. If this appears to be an exaggeration of the importance associated with essences, then we just have look around to see ourselves the role nowadays being played

by the idea of 'power' in explaining everything. Power is the new substance employed as filler for filling the pores of society; all actions begin with it and end in it (Sahlins 2002).

Ethnography along with other forms of historiography contributed in making a plea for the inclusion of other societies in history on humanitarian basis. Speaking in philosophical terms, it added to epistemology but could not make a serious dent in ontology. Maybe because its subject matter, exotic people were already demarcated as having nothing to do with truth or more specifically with ontology. Anthropology needed a strong lawyer to put up its case before the tribunal. The events that provided this opportunity were all related to health of the earth itself and questions of fragile ecosystem. It is the interventions of a new field of science-studies following these eruptions that finally brought to light the other aspect, the most important one contained in the ethnographic documents produced out of a fieldwork tradition. Science-studies articulated this point more rigorously because it concentrated on one of the most powerful paradigms of modern world, science and scientific knowledge. And what is the best way to study science other than to focus at the points where this scientific knowledge itself is being produced. The habitat of science, laboratories, for the first time became the field of study along with its inhabitants, the practitioners of science (Latour 1986, 2003).

It's no surprise that the results which came out of it were having similar contours as that of the ethnographic texts of primitive societies (Cetina 2003; Latour 1986, 2003; Pickering 1995). The non-humans (microbes, particles, equations) that were under investigation or discovered seemed to have a continuous interaction with their discoverer, articulating themselves through signals and mutations. The question of agency in these case were never defined permanently and both, the investigator and investigated seemed to guide each other. Science-studies showed the difficulty of groupings and classifications encountered earlier. But this time it was different. It was different because we were dealing with something having an ontological status, not just any colorful epistemological tale of the world. Therefore it produced the ripples which anthropology couldn't produce.

1.3 The question of the world: the monotheistic gaze

One of the main features of most of the worldviews; theological, philosophical and scientific, is the search for unity. In fact, they all posit some kind of driving force in an ideal, an ideal, which can provide a unifying force inherently. The question of truth was related to that ideal posited at the beginning and the world was a stage or background for the enactment of that project. Taking a cue from what Alfred Whitehead said that all western philosophy could be described as a footnote to Plato (Whitehead 1979), we can possibly say that the single ideal has been the driving force of all the worldviews, which otherwise deal with the world in a different way. Just like nature, a unifying ideal of the world has been thought of repetitively for different in different forms (James 1909, 1978). I must acknowledge my incompetence beforehand in dealing with such a vast and deep western philosophical tradition. The aim of this chapter is show the importance of an ideal in different worldviews which have dominated the history. In order to focus on the question of ideal, truth and unity contained in different worldviews, a brief analysis of their composition has to take place.

Contrary to the notion of disjuncture between science and religion, a totally different historiography of sciences has proposed that modern science which originated in west and Christian theology are not only similar but one is continuation of the other (Stengers 1984). The renaissance period paved the way for the supremacy of science over religion in society. But something was preserved in the transfer of power from religion to science, something which was common to both in terms of the way the world was perceived. There was discontinuity at one plane only to compensate at the other plane by continuity. We know that same entities, elements, ideas gain different meanings when employed in different fields. World entered the cosmos of Christian theology in a different way from the world encountered in the scientific cosmos. Both the worlds differed and resembled each other in lot of ways giving the impression of discontinuity as well as continuity. It is the continuous aspect on which we will focus, to situate it on a particular trajectory of history.

It's common to find the reference of some Greek mythology on the opening pages of books in social sciences before moving on to the subject of the book. These mythical

stories about Greek gods and heroes are somehow made to serve as a starting point for issues involved, for providing a gesture in the intended direction. These stories provide the template for the discussion. Whatever be the author's intention, one thing is sure that these mythic tales open up an avenue through which another world could be seen, where stories proliferate in proportion with the number and set of actors participating in it, a world where everything happens for real outside the parenthesis of epistemology. The Greek cosmology, now redundant, has made its reappearance in the form of mythology while its gods and heroes decorate the museums and city squares. But what was it all about that it still forces the people to come back to it. The place it occupies in scholarly culture is on par with what Harry Potter and Disneyland occupy in popular culture. In a way nobody is free from the charms of these fantastic worlds, charms which present cosmologies, scientific or theological are lacking in comparison.

We are focusing primarily on Greek cosmology in order to restrict ourselves to the alterations and transformations registered over time in that part of the world. From Greek cosmology to Christian theology and then to scientific knowledge, the sequence has to be kept in mind and every mention of theology or cosmology should be referred back to the sequence. We know that the world of ancient Greeks was a world of living gods and goddess (Assmann 2008). They had characteristic features, identifiable habitat, and wide range of behavioral possibilities and were involved in constant transactions with the people. The world above, the world below and the underworld were joined together with multiple connecting threads facilitating the traffic between them. The earthly landscapes were saturated with *key points* on the canvas of ground, to use a phrase of Simondon (1958), through which the vast spaces formed a kind of grid. These *key points* made action and movement possible by acting as a landmark, as a marker to illustrate the specificity of a particular space and the type of action suitable for each space (Simondon 1958). It is not difficult to visualize the image drawn here, of how the world must have looked like. The landscape carved out in Simondonian categories, is still flourishing in different parts of the world and forms the bedrock of Indian civilization.

Ancient western philosophies about forms, ideals, truth flourished in a world already populated with concrete forms, idols and relations, each occupying a prominent place in

the scheme of things. All entities present were neither representation nor projection of something but had come to existence out of something. In that world the distinction between epistemology and ontology could only be a niche method of inquiry inside the branches of philosophy whose boundaries are outlined in the beginning only. Philosophy looks at the world with its own sets of felicity and infelicity conditions (felicity and infelicity conditions are conditions required for judging the truth or falsity of a statement, elaborated by J.L Austin in linguistics and which has been brilliantly extended by Bruno Latour (2013) to various modes of existence). In the type of arrangement discussed above, a form of truth can only aspire for universalism without being universal in any way, limited from the beginning by the presence of multiple concrete forms enjoying their own ontological status. Plato's philosophy must have been an interesting take on the world, or at most a rebellious one without being the only true idea about the world. The trial of Socrates in the platonic dialogues before the tribunal of reason testifies to this state of affairs. Neither ontology nor epistemology could house the Greek pantheon as the current definitions of these two terms imply.

It is also interesting to note that Plato's philosophy about ideal forms coincided more or less, with the decline of Greek and Roman cultures. Was it a response to the decline or a rejection of the culture whose decline could be sensed in the air or it contributed to the decline? It was around this time that Christianity came into existence and whose desire for universalism succeeded when large parts of the world adopted Christianity. Though Christianity considered itself the true successor of Judaic prophesy, yet the Christian conception of other worldly single god had less compatibility issues with idea of ideal forms of Plato's philosophy (Ridley 2015, Sloterdijk 2013). According to Eric Voegelin, who was writing both as a practicing Christian and a proponent of platonic ideals in social sciences; with the coming of Christianity, there happened a de-divinization of the world (Voegelin 1952). What de-divinization means is that the world no longer is inhabited by gods and goddesses and therefore has become other worldly, belonging to the realm of the transcendental.

This was a transition from polytheism to monotheism and the pantheon was merged into supreme ideal of god. With this merger, the magnitude of key points, privileged spaces

and time, idols and concrete forms reduced significantly. There was a gradual flattening of the earthly landscape which was erstwhile populated with so many characters and markers. There were still connections between the heavenly and the terrestrial but they were fewer in number, maintained through religious institutions and sustained through faith only. As far as earthly existence was concerned, there were prescriptions and codes for ethics and conduct, of piety and brotherhood but one thing was for certain, that this world was shrouded in darkness and the message has to be propagated to bring the light of the day. Plato's allegory of the cave has similar assumptions about truth and knowledge. Whether it was the cave inhabited by chaotic unruly mass or the world surrounded in darkness, the power of truth in the singular was acknowledged and the legitimacy to preside over the world was granted. It is in these slight differentiations that the story of ontology and epistemology could be located. It's better to clarify that this is not a comparative analysis of different religions or to judge the quality of religious experience in a particular religion.

Viewing it successively, it is true that the Christian world is more flat and less mediated in terms of landscapes and therefore action along with movement could be increased considerably from the previous standpoint. Action could slightly liberate itself as the numbers of obstacles encountered are reduced and it is less tied to the world on which it is acting. It is not strictly against idolatry, except idols of god, but it has nothing substantial to say about the idols, about their truth and falsity. After some point in time, the pragmatics of worldly living initiates a new kind of vegetation to take root and fill the landscapes. New connections are made, different set of key points are located, and mediations are installed which result in the stabilization of action and movement on the same lines. They may be fewer in number and more demanding in terms of implementation as compared with the previous one. But they do testify to the fact that worldly existence cannot do without taking the world into account in the form of markings, although this time it was more on the side of morality and less about the existents of the world.

The stress on morality resulted in the excess of codification on the virtues of action which in turn makes the action itself impossible. And this is exactly what happened with

Catholicism in history. Any mode of existence (a phrase used by Bruno Latour to describe different aspects of life, religious, political, scientific, legal and which should be approached with their unique felicity and infelicity conditions so as to avoid the imperialism of any particular mode) that takes upon itself to be the arbiter of everything without recognizing the legitimacy of other modes runs the risk of losing its own legitimacy. The aspiration of any mode for universalism, universalism understood as the covering of the universe with a single feature, leads to the breaking of that mode from the inside. It spreads but at the same time loses hold and cracks up at different points.

The period when Christianity or Catholicism reigned supreme in terms of power and jurisdiction was also the period when it cracked up from the inside. The process that gave birth to Christianity, the act of flattening of landscape sets into motion inside Catholicism also, giving birth to newer sects that were more flat than the preceding one. The process defined by Voegelin as '*immanentization*' resulted in the internal differentiations within Christianity, producing new sects like Protestantism which went further to reject the role of religious institutions like church, rituals and saint traditions as an unnecessary mediation between man and god. All the external mediations, whether of church or rituals, were merged into the authority of the sacred book. Biblical exegesis was recognized as the only substantial mediation between the god and the man. What these new sects achieved was a state of higher level of transcendence and immanence. There was a transition through which God became somewhat more transcendental for the world and more immanent for the believer as he/she doesn't have to seek him outside of itself. The presence of institutions out in the open, outside of individuals, occupying a fixed space, was transformed from mediators into impediments. As far as landscape was concerned, more free space was created out of this act, space that had smooth terrain, very few obstacles and less mediation to be negotiated. An ideal landscape where action could liberate itself some more from the world and movement could be accelerated tremendously.

There must have been reasons for this rupture, reasons that have initiated this immanentization of Christianity, particularly Catholicism in the reverse direction, to the source of the truth, to the unmediated ideal, to the message contained in the book. The

reasons are well documented in the medieval history of Europe till the coming of modernity or capitalism or scientific revolution, anything you may call it depending upon the way one approaches it. We can't step in the same river twice, a simple wisdom of geography and we can't go in the reverse direction to reach same state again, a rule of entropy. The return to the source, of true meaning, of truth and ideal when there is a gap of more than a millennium between the source and the present can be remarkable in many ways. The deposition that must have resulted in the formation of new concrete features has to be flattened again to reveal the source hidden behind. The same pair of ontology-epistemology appears whenever there is a question of truth and non-truth and a repositioning of the world along with its existents into the scheme of things. This repositioning posits an eternal truth with an increasingly immanent positioning in the world; a world full of beings, devoid of truth. The world must have changed beyond recognition in these long years, new forces must have become powerful, new events must have taken place and new aspirations for universalism must have found their time of recognition. It is *gnostic revolutions*⁴ in the form of different Christian sects like Protestantism that set the stage for coming of a period known as modernity.

One of the main founders of sociology, Max Weber has found resonances between the protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism while doing a comparative study of all the religions of the world (Weber 2003). He has located the spirit of capitalism, the driving force of capitalistic enterprise, if there is any, inside the tenets of Protestantism with its codes of conduct and views about the world. Keeping in with Weberian analysis, we accept that there must be something conducive inside these ethics for capitalistic enterprise(innovation, invention, discovery, production, capital) but what he has called as spirit of capitalism is nothing but action somewhat more liberated and movement accelerated. We have already discussed about the process of immanentization in the form of '*Gnostic revolutions*' that were changing the landscapes inherited from Christianity. It was not a two party struggle about truth and ideal but waged from many sides with shifting alliances. The overall result of the contest was the weakening of the religious proponents of truth and whose custody was then taken over by the Science.

⁴ A term used by Eric Voegelin (1952) to describe various offshoots of Christianity.

The works of Isabelle Stengers (1984), a philosopher and historian of science, have highlighted this passing on of the baton from one athlete to the other athlete. Questions of truth, unity and god remained pertinent questions thereafter also, contrary to what has been believed to be a radical rupture with the advent of science from the previous model. There was indeed a discontinuity between the two sequences of history but that discontinuity has to do with the temporary halt in the transfer of baton, of authority and power, a ‘*shifting out*’⁵, to use a Latourian term, from one curve to the other curve, and a change in the tools and methods of inquiry. No doubt, it is through these kinds of discontinuities, that continuity is ensured in history, a carrying forward is achieved from the past to the present. Focusing the discontinuities ignores the difficult task of maintaining inheritance, of preserving the lineage, of carrying forward in time which makes continuity possible. History is neither unbroken, seamless with continuous paths nor discontinuous, isolated blocks forming an island. Science carried forward these eternal questions contained in platonic philosophy, Christian theology and its offshoots along with the same process of immanentization of the world, i.e. to place that ideal, that truth, that God in an increasingly particular and specific location, everywhere yet not locatable anywhere. Just as their predecessors spread the light in the dark world of ignorance through message, Science spread it by showing the grand design. It made the message even more immanent; truth was made to shed its extra weight and encapsulated into a general equation of laws of nature.

It dealt with nature and made its responsibility to fill the pores of nature with that supreme truth and ideal, nature that could embrace that truth contained in a particular equation. The task was to give a general equation of the world that could shelter the grand design, the truth, the ideal and ultimately even the God. Isabelle Stengers has shown this aspiration of Science for universalism, illuminating the classical Science starting with Newtonian science (Stengers 1984). To device an equation that would explain everything in the universe, the universal equation that would cover the entire landscape, both earthly and heavenly, was and still is the dream of Science with a capital

⁵ Shifting out is being used by Bruno Latour (2013) to refer to the process of movement and mobility from one level to another level.

S. And it should be noted that most of the practitioners of classical science were firm believers in God.

From Newton to Pascal, Laplace to Leibniz, doing science never posed any threat to their idea of ideal (Stengers 1984). In fact, it was in perfect correspondence with the idea of a single universal truth that was immanent at the same time. However, in terms of landscapes, perhaps this was the flattest that was achieved till now. Removal of remaining key points from the world that earlier cosmologies had preserved, no scope for the tentative presence and intervention of God with certain attributes into the world and an abstraction of truth into few ideal equations freed the action from any superficial resemblance to connections whatsoever. Action and movement, which are our prime concerns has the capacity of increasing geometrically in such type of terrain. The lighter the weight you carry on a road with obstacles, the faster you can travel and freer your actions can be.

There has been a general agreement that apart from new arrangements taking place, what happened in capitalism or modernity was the tremendous increase in the volume and the speed with which novelties (inventions and productions) were produced (Illich 1974, Latour 1993), the magnitude which didn't give the people enough time to accommodate and adjust to the changes taking place. And it is this change of speed that made all the difference with modernity (Illich 1974). Using the terminologies of a curve plotted on the graph, we can say that the numerical values of its parameters increased enormously. If we approach the question of capitalism or modernity this way, wanting to posit its genesis or spirit in a particular source, then classical science could be considered as the driving force of modernity which itself dealt with the problem of locating the eternal truth, as posed within the theological realm.

In retrospect, some kind of correspondence could be established between the present reality and its alleged source full of potential but that would be only a convenient method of bringing past into the present for the purpose of justification, of making some kind of idea as the driving force of history. Protestant ethic might have compatibilities with the capitalistic enterprise but it would have no power of its own without the scientific inventions taking place at that time. Steven Shapin has made us aware that Hobbes's

leviathan would have remained a fairy tale and Boyle's air pump (Shapin 1985) a mere artifact on its own without their coming together to provide an impetus for a new arrangement of the state. Or Adam Smith's economics wouldn't have created the wealth of nations without boarding James Watt's steam engine.

1.4 The bifurcation of the world: ontology and epistemology

We discussed the progressive *immanentization* of the world with each successive series in the long history along with the subsequent dominance of the world with a particular of truth and ideal. If we could localize these ideals evolved through centuries, we would find that the space covered in the external world has been constantly shrinking and the mediators necessary for reaching that ideal are almost reduced to zero. External relations and mediating links facilitating the search for truth were replaced with a completely different set of relations having an emotive or intuitive link with the truth, either through heart or mind. The repository of activity is Heart, when the truth is approached by theology, and mind when it has to do with science. Action and movement on the ground increased in proportion with the flatness of the terrain. Articulation of the truth, clearing of the space, extending the reach of the truth, ensuring the ease of mobility, acting at a distance from a fixed point and finally, to be universal without moving an inch, were the different ways through which people were engaged with the world. Flatness of terrain can be understood in this way: an idol and the place inhabiting it demand certain codes of behavior and movement in and around its vicinity from an idolater. Idolater, idol, the place and specific codes, together form a landscape that has an uneven surface or key points. But if that idol becomes a mere stone, then it cannot demand the same type of behavior around its vicinity. At most it can only be discretionary depending strictly on political arrangement between humans only. This type of terrain is smoother compared with the other terrain. Going along this way, even landscapes can be measured for the quantity of world taken into account.

Two kinds of trends could be visible in these rough outlines of the world shaped in history. On one hand, the world has been progressively filled with new entities, new lands, with objects of invention, exploration and production. But on the other hand, ideas about the world i.e. about truth, reality, god, objects and actions have been increasingly

confined within the shrinking spaces and having a gradual reduction in their truth value. They are present in the world but absent from the idea of world. In terms of vectorial representation, these two trends have exactly opposite directions, one moving from being less populated to more populated, while the other from being more populated to less populated. Even the diversity of demography (which includes both humans and non-humans) has same directionality (see **figure 1**)

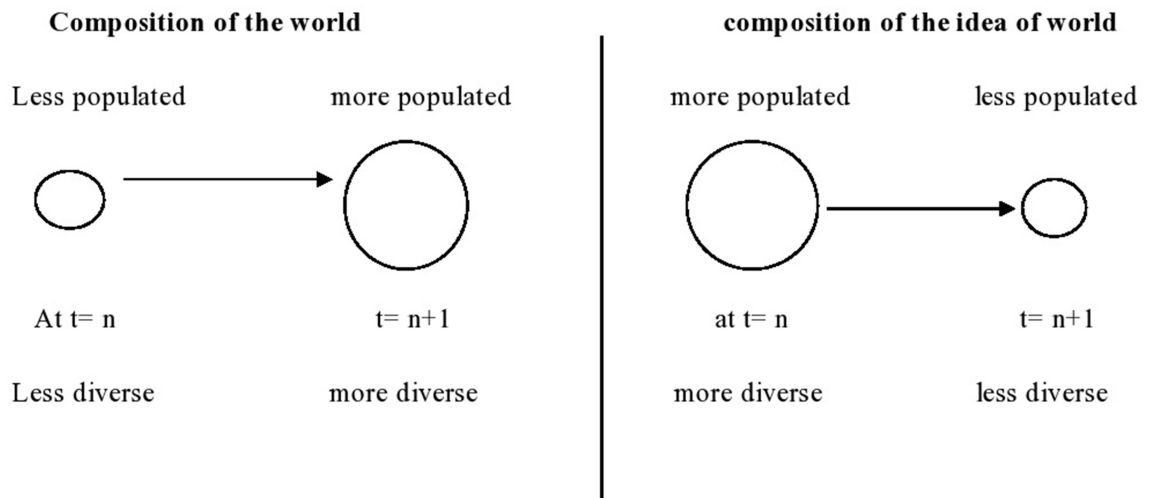


Fig.1 successive composition of the world and the associated idea of the world.

We can see from fig.1 the totally opposite directions of the composition of world and the idea about that world. Increase in presence in the world didn't ensure a position in the ideal of the world. The things were denied the ontological status, the truth value of their existence and therefore lacked the proper codification essential for situating them inside relations and mediations. At best, they could be jumbled together inside epistemology, which doesn't deal with truths but only their representation and projections. There has been a bifurcation of the world in the form of ontology and epistemology but more precisely in the form of one and many.

The relation between one and many that existed in history has been that of one against the many or one against the rest. One was the not the outcome of unity achieved by many but a denial by One among the others, of the validity and truth value of the rest beforehand. The unity of world in universalism was achieved through constant devaluation of the world, whereby reality was stripped of its truth value and only a specific ideal of the world, which was both highly transcendental and purely immanent, was made the only truth to be known. Everything else was just an illusion, or an outgrowth hiding access to it. What had to be achieved as an epilogue, i.e. the unity of the world was done in the prologue itself, before going out into the world.

What we are witnessing nowadays in the form of ecological crisis can be summarized from all the discussions we had: our inability to take control of the things produced by human action. The things which were deemed incapable of posing any kind of perplexity before, of actions whose masters we were supposed to be, are now making us realize that these actions are plunging us ahead for destruction (Latour 1993, Serres 2013). This realization becomes even more poignant considering the fact that it was humans themselves, in their enthusiasm for new truths have repeatedly taken recourse to destroying everything that restricted their actions and movements. As a result of this destruction, they are having difficulty in both locating themselves and distinguishing good actions from bad actions. We will come back to the discussions about ideal, truth and unity again in the succeeding chapters when we will discuss individuals and their emancipation. But before that, we should focus on another approach to the world, a world which supposedly resides in epistemology, where ‘savage minds’ of Claude Levis Strauss are at work.

1.5 The world of savage mind

The world that we have described above was moving in one opposite direction while the idea of the world in opposite direction. It was progressively being emptied of its constitutive elements, into two separate containers lying at the extreme ends of very long chains connecting, mediating and containing these constitutive elements. This process of *immanentization* (to use Voegelin’s phrase) or acts of purification (to use Latour’s phrase) created extreme categories by initiating first, horizontal differentiations between

the worlds (above and below) and then vertical differentiations inside this world (the world below). The horizontal differentiations created planes of transcendence and immanence and after that initiated a series of vertical differentiations dividing this world of below into realms of ontology and epistemology. Both the horizontal differentiations and the vertical differentiations resulted in the winnowing of the composite world between humans and non-humans.

These groupings or regroupings form the basis of all classificatory schemes deployed so far in the course of history we have covered but more specifically in modernity. The classificatory schemes of nature-culture and subject-object are few examples of such acts of winnowing and purification through which humans and non-humans were packed into different worlds with clear demarcations. Sciences, natural and thereafter social proceeded into the world with these kinds of classificatory schemes and dualities. The natural sciences dealing with truth, ontology while social sciences concerning itself with meanings and interpretations, epistemology.

Bruno Latour's book '*we have never been modern*' has shown the various dimensions of this second act of purification that creates contrasting dualities in this world. In fact, the chief argument of the book has been that what we have come to know as modernity is nothing but this long and sustained series of purifications by which this increasingly complex world has been bifurcated in to combinations of two with clear defined boundaries (Latour 1993). But before proceeding further, we should glimpse for a brief moment to a different type of world as documented by anthropology and what it has revealed to us. By looking at the ways and classificatory schemes of that world, we get a sense of how the complex reality has been taken in to account. Then only we will be in a better position to understand the continuities as well as discontinuities, the completely opposite directions of theory and practice, the reasons for the spurt in crisis of different forms.

An entire different world opens up with the opening of any ethnographic document. First and the foremost are the range of new words that we come across in the description of different aspects of that life. Most of us would have heard generic terms like totems, taboos, fetishes, shamans only as accusatory remarks or to define someone's obscure and

outdated beliefs. But once we shift to the anthropological genre, the entire landscape seems to change with these words and the things they specify.

Claude Levi Strauss (1962) has outlined the basic philosophical themes and differences of these worlds, where savage minds live and think. Whenever we think of the primitive or the pre-modern world in comparison with the modern world, we give in to the sweeping generalizations that in the world of pre-moderns, everything has been saturated with religiosity and this forms the defining principle of life. This line of argument is an extrapolated version of the type which defines modern world as the absence of religiosity and saturated with economic principle. This type of reasoning, of defining principles and core essences of society and the world stems from the course of western history where particular ideas from time to time were given complete reign without qualification and jurisdiction. And upon encountering the world of pre-modern other, the same type of reasoning persisted giving free reign to unqualified universals. Mostly it was in the form of nostalgic reflection for the loss of Christian values and faith through which the distant 'other' was perceived. This facilitated the sequencing of societies and cosmologies in the order of progress but what it did primarily was the devaluing of the multiplicity of that world, and making one aspect the unqualified universal of the world. History has proved this to be an impossible task. The universal agent cracks up in the process of universalization. Church, State, Science have taken up this impossible task in different ways and reformation, modernity and post modernity are the stories of their attempts and subsequent exhaustion.

In fact what anthropology taught us, especially after Claude Levi Strauss' structuralism has been on exactly opposite lines. Instead of devaluation of the world, savage mind indulges in the externalization of relations in concrete forms into the world. Instead of placing immanence and transcendence at diametrically extreme ends, it creates objective links, through multiple beings and entities present in the world, having truth value to join these ends. He argued that structures pose the world in binary opposites where the opposites or poles are two analytical categories and everything occurs and resides in between these polar coordinates (Levi Strauss 1962, 2008). These polar coordinates are meaningless in themselves with no specific qualities of their own but in the classificatory

scheme, they form an axis through which entities are linked and placed in terms of priority with each other. The synthetic world lies in between these poles and these poles are just transitory boundaries created in the process of following the trajectory of that synthetic world (Levi Strauss 1962). In the savage world, nothing remains outside of that classificatory grid, and certainly remains outside of the world. The world, the spirits, the objects, the psyches and gods have to be present in the objective world.

“The dialectics of superstructures, like the language, consists in setting up constitutive units (which, for this purpose have to be defined unequivocally, that is by contrasting them in pairs) so as to be able by means of them to elaborate a system which plays the part of a synthesizing operator between ideas and facts, thereby turning the latter into signs (Levi Strauss 1962, pp.131)”.

The problem arises when instead of placing in between the poles; the poles themselves are used as containing vessels for placing everything that is out there. The entire nature of the universe changes with that slight change in the perception towards the poles. The middle ground, with its connecting links and successive mediations, extending in both directions creating new dimensions of the extremities are removed at once, are deemed without purpose and considered unnecessary meanderings between the poles or extremities. The extremes give rise to the perception that there has been a relation of direct correspondence between the two ends and could either be referred directly or posed in opposition to each other on their own without these mediating links. The world loses its externality and subsequently it's objectivity, both understood in the sense that the tangible objects stand not only in lieu of or symbolic of an idea but as an idea concretized, an irreplaceable link in the long chains of mediations without which we run the risk of losing path. For if the poles are containers defined in opposition to each other, then there is no way that something can be clearly called to belong to a particular container. For the fulfillment of this specified purpose, the dissection of the world has to be done in terms of infinite number of dual categories. But the separation of pure from the impure heap of mass proved to be an impossible task and the people who were supposed to do this were just like that mythical swan which can separate the milk from the water. Nobody has seen that swan till now. While hybrids are proliferating (Latour

1993), analysis is bent on segregating them in order to put them in containers with inbuilt leakages.

This is where the difference between the savage mind and the modern mind lies and this is precisely the point made in his book '*The savage mind*'. The book deals with two important aspects, one with the task of classification and the other with the questions of time and history. But throughout the book an attempt has been made to dissolve the dualities of nature and culture, event and structure, synchrony and diachrony and finally between subject and object and to articulate a synthetic theory for the synthetic world.

For the savage mind, truth and meaning are not two distinct categories, one following the other, truth coming from one side with imperious coating and meaning, from the other side. Truth and meaning of an object are enmeshed into each other to be placed in a certain class of distinction using a classificatory scheme employed by a particular culture. Truth of an object classified in a scheme is not an intrinsic property because of its objective parameters but something which is appropriated by the culture to put it in an order already constituted (Latour 2004, Levi Strauss 1962). In fact, an object is already a culturally constituted entity, a thing which has been coded with meaning using classificatory schemes and simultaneously differentiated with other objects (Sahlins 1978). This way of looking at culture and the world is totally opposite of the functional utilitarian model dominant in anthropology.

Cultures are not economically determined but determiners of the mode of production (Sahlins 1978). Surroundings may have a limiting value but there is a whole world between the limits for which we live. Humans are presented with a set of conditions and raw materials that have no meaning outside the relational scheme. These conditions may set the limiting criteria but are never the defining criteria of a particular structure (Latour 2004; Levi Strauss 1962, 2008). So a structure can be said to be the realization of the possibilities presented by the conditions but is never the only one possible out of that condition (Levi Strauss 2008). But focusing on the given conditions or the raw materials in analyzing the structure would give only an incomplete knowledge about the structure. It would never tell us about the way it operates when presented with a certain novelty. In

short, it would not describe its dynamism thereby risking the analysis to fall back upon the old distinction between historical societies and ahistorical societies.

The sensitivity to record the exterior world in its multiplicity is one of the features of the savage mind in order to classify and introduce distinctions between things. That distinction is not entirely dependent on the objective properties of the ‘thing in itself’ but an outcome of a classificatory process which includes resemblance, corollary, homology, differences and finally opposition at the extreme end (Levi Strauss 1962).

“One may readily conclude that animals and plants are not known as a result of their usefulness; they are deemed to be useful or interesting because they are first of all known (Levi Strauss 1962, chap.1)”.

Harold Conklin’s description of Hanunoo color categories testify to this way of doing things (Levi Strauss 1962). In cultural classification, any point taken always invokes the relations and associations through which it is connected to other points in the scheme. The intensity of turbulence produced may differ from point to point. At one place he says about the position of woodpecker with other elements in the scheme that:

“The real question is not whether the touch of woodpecker’s beak does in fact cure toothache. It is rather whether there is a point of view from which a woodpecker’s beak and a man’s tooth can be seen as going together (Levi Strauss 1962, pp.9)”.

An important question arises that how do savage minds or pre-modern world link or connect two or more disparate entities into relation with each other? What has been the method of composing a synthetic world? Are the relations between them arbitrary and products of wild thought? Starting with dual categories of nature-culture and subject-object would lead to the same problem of exact location of entities along with the question of passage from one sphere to another. Straussian structuralism differed from its predecessors by recognizing the role of Totems as mediators rather than as religious objects or as an institution. As emblems, totems ensure the coming together of humans and non-humans as an aggregate and provide a provisional unity to these groupings. Totemism as a system of classification in savage thought ensures transformation from one sphere to other sphere. Contrary to the views of earlier anthropologists who treated Totemism as a separate institution representing a primitive form of religion, he argues

that Totemism is an operator through which there happens transformation, substitution, and transference of the natural and social world into each other (Levi Strauss 1962). The idea of Totemism ensures that nature-culture and subject-object do not remain isolated spheres, one standing in opposition or subordination of other.

“The mediation between nature and culture which is one of the distinctive function of the totemic operator, enables us to sift out what may be true from what is partial and distorted in Durkheim’s and Malinowski’s accounts. They each attempted to immerse Totemism in one or the other of these two domains (1962, pp.91)”.

The totemic operator conveys message both ways, through universalization and particularization at the general and the individual level (Levi Strauss 1962). It ensures integration as well as differentiation between groups, objects, humans, and species. In this sense it is differential as well as integral operator in classificatory function. It is a system of transformation to ensure passage from one nodal point to another, whether in the case of individuals through prohibitions and prescriptions and at the structural level by integrating disparate entities through equivalence and homologies (Levi Strauss 1962). The best example of this process is the myths where instances of humanized nature as well as naturalized humans are found in abundance. But there are limits to classification below which at level of individual proper names and above which at the level of extension and branching out, things become unclear and increasingly lose their meaning (Levi Strauss 1962). Meaning remains only within the grid of classificatory schemes because only within the grid, they appear in a relational mode and their associations can be traced out. Relations imply that you give meaning and get meaning in return.

In every system, therefore proper names represent the quanta of signification below which one no longer does anything but points (Levi Strauss 1962, chap.7).

Words, ideas, objects, bodies, and individuals all stand in relation to each other at the level of structure where one signifier is other’s signified.

“The exceptional features of this mind which we call savage and which Comte described as spontaneous relate principally to the extensive nature of the ends it assigns itself. It claims at once to analyze and to synthesize, to go to its furthest limits in both directions while at the same time

remaining capable of mediating between the two poles (Levi Strauss 1962, pp.219)”.

In this sense, ideas of individuality and free choice are nothing but the imperialist demands of a particular cultural scheme directed against other cultural schemes to take their constituents out of the grid without making its own logic known. A primitive always talks about its own culture while liberated individuals always talk about somebody else’s culture. Gabriel Tarde rightly said that if religiosity is slumber, enlightenment is deep slumber (1903).

The second part of the book deals with the idea of time and history in the chapters ‘*time regained*’ and ‘*history and dialectics*’ and how to account for the alleged ahistoricity of structures. To solve this problem of accounting the historicity of a given society, Levi Strauss makes the distinction between ‘*structure*’ and ‘*event*’ as two analytical categories. And through the interplay between structure and event, he explains the process of history taking place in the alleged ahistorical societies. In modern societies, events have the capacity to change the structure in a totally unprecedented way. Events can negate the structures where they are presented with the possibility. That is why; the trajectory of historical societies can be understood or viewed as the sum total of all the historical events. Here events take precedence over structure and therefore structured events have come to be known as history (Levi Strauss 1962). The situation is different in ahistorical societies. In this case, the events are domesticated by the structure. It becomes part of the structure only when they have been stuffed with the meaning, meaning embodied in the structure. And once domesticated, the event loses its peculiarity, its source of origin, leaves no trail behind and is subsumed in the already existing structure. Here the structure takes precedence over the event (Levi Strauss 1962).

It is not always mandatory that event has to be included in the already existing scheme of things. Sometimes it is rejected on account of its incompatibility with the elements present in the structure and sometimes it is included even with its incompatibilities which bring certain amount of contradiction in the structure (Latour 2004, Levi Strauss 1962). In any case, the event has to lose its trail, its source of origin, its intended meaning once the decision has been taken with regard to its integration or rejection. The alleged

ahistoricity of these non-modern societies comes from this effacing of the trails of the event. The persistence of the structure comes from its flexibility even when the event introduces slight contradiction in to it. Levi Strauss while stressing on this persistence says that even when an event or more precisely, a catastrophe totally dismantles the structure from that place, after some point of time, it comes back again at the same place in the same form (Levi Strauss 1962).

There is the risk of confusing this persistence of structure with Durkheimian concept of ‘*social fact*’ and *Sui generis*’, where society with its eternal nature imposes norms on the individual with a force which leaves no room for individuality (Durkheim 1997). But this definition of ‘social structure’ doesn’t fall in the place with Levi Straussian which argues about the ‘*generative capacity*’ (a term used in Chomskian linguistics to account for the dynamics of the language) of the structure by continuously producing combinations to make sense of the new situations and conditions. The individual inhabiting the Straussian structure is not a trapped individual, at war with its social world but a ‘Bricoleur’. He briefly defines Bricoleur in the first chapter in these words:

“The “Bricoleur” is adept at performing a large number of diverse tasks but unlike the engineer, he does not subordinate each of them to the availability of raw materials and tools conceived and procured for the purpose of project. His universe of instruments is closed and the rules of his game are always to make do with ‘whatever is at hand’, that is to say with a set of tools and materials which is always finite and is also heterogeneous because what is contained bears no relation to the current project or indeed to particular project, but is the contingent result of all the occasion there has been to renew or enrich the stock or to maintain it with the remains of previous construction or deconstruction (Levi Strauss 1962, chap1)”.

The above definition clearly shows that the *Bricoleur* is not a passive individual receiving and following norms of the social structure; neither his/her existence is meant for the satisfaction of biological needs, nor she/he is driven by economic rationality as understood in the anthropology before Levi Strauss came to the fore. The individual in a Straussian structure is a creator, a planner for the future and is continuously engaged in making sense of the world through the structure of which he/she is the constructor. The individual owns the structure instead of being trapped by the structure.

In this sense, the theoretical underpinnings of Claude Levi Strauss's works explained through '*Bricoleur*' and *Savage mind*' are much more diverse and take reality into account instead of reducing the entire world in to a bad copy of anthropologist's social world. the theoretical underpinnings of the book *The Savage Mind* provide a methodology that allows the researcher to make sense of the structure where the mechanisms of history are not similar to those of the modern world. In this way it allows us to move away from the distinctions of the categories which are dominant in the discipline, namely the distinction between historical and ahistorical, dynamic and static and many other similar categories.

Ever since the arrival of Foucault, the task of classification is considered as an activity serving the state in its bio politics of power. According to this logic, the state classifies and puts in order its citizen in order to extend its control or more specifically for 'discipline and punish' (Foucault 1995). The main point in the Foucauldian analysis was the distinction between the modern state and the pre-modern state and power associated with the act of classification. The pre-modern state presided over the death of individuals while the modern state administers life (Deleuze 1992). The classificatory scheme was and still is the tool in the administration of life. But it only represents the last and the final moment of a historical process in which the task of classification was taken away from the hands of individuals and communities and transferred to the experts and society of experts. The political philosophies of nineteenth century onwards absolutely placed state at the epicenter of existence and the active citizenry enthusiastically participated in this project. The form of the state that Foucault talked about, the disciplinary state, only succeeded after the triumph of science and the forms of knowledge production associated with it. It is these forms of knowledge that were actively classifying and differentiating the world, later to be transferred to the social world inhabited by humans, with the claim of truth and reality. The allegory of the cave has been fully exploited to silence the voice of the social world and to short circuit the political process (Latour 2004). Devoid of any access to truth and reality (ontology), the moderns couldn't form an appropriate meaning of the world they are immersed in (epistemology). The act of classification is a practical moment of the cosmology and in the new cosmology devoid of divinity; moderns abide either by remaining faithful or by being rebellious within the classificatory schemes.

By looking at the classificatory schemes employed in the savage world, it can be said that the question of taking everything into account and making sense of it defines the peculiarity of savage mind and keeping them out in the open and into the world describes the savage world. It is by reinstating the *Bricoleur* having a savage mind with all its rights and duties, rights of classification and duty of taking everything in account that we can make the worldviews truly inclusive and sustainable. The *times of crisis* gives us the opportunity to look at world again from the perspective of the savage mind so as to avoid the mistake of anthropocentrism of modernity. As Bruno Latour has said that we have never been modern (1993), we can extend that argument to say that we never ceased to savage; only too embarrassed to admit it.

1.6 Scientific revolutions and the pursuit of the grand design

The presence of a streak of continuous line in history, as discussed in preceding sections was not meant to suggest that there's nothing new or different happening in this world over time. Continuity understood as an antonym of discontinuity would not explain the simple fact of maintaining existence without remaining same, for the question that how things are carried over to the next generation and yet remain different from their previous state. If we go by the Latourian sense of these terms, discontinuities would then become the building blocks for maintaining continuities (Latour 2013). In other words, continuities or continuous trails are nothing but discontinuities negotiated and habituated with time and experience. The past is inherited, without any doubt and gives itself to new players and changed circumstances shaping the present and transforming itself in the process. The resultant specific arrangement than becomes the qualifying principle through which things are approached and explained. With a substantial change in the quantity of parameters of something, there happens a transformation in quality which is irreducible to the quantity itself (Deleuze 1983). There is something akin to this when we use different labels to understand process or a phenomenon historically.

Luis Buñuel quoted somebody in his autobiography 'that anything that doesn't come from tradition is plagiarism'. At first this may seem a paradoxical statement that brings plagiarism along with originality and novelty together. But I think it brilliantly highlights the relation between continuity and discontinuity which we are trying to ascertain in our

brief history of the world taken above. Originality doesn't mean a complete rupture with the inheritance but what you make of it and what it becomes in your hand. How pertinent questions, questions which are bequeathed upon by history, are tackled and what answers are given defines the specificity and the originality of the response. The questions that were posed following the dissolution of Greek cosmology were about the exact location and habitat of god and of truth and ideal. The world and the idea about the world were continually reconfigured to shelter the new found truths and ideals which were progressively immanentized with passage of time along with the challenge of fixing the number of key points on the landscapes which in every case were smaller in number from their previous arrangement.

The period before scientific revolution was the period of theological responses to these questions. The history of Christianity can give a testimony to types of responses given, from Catholicism to Protestantism where the question of truth and the necessary mediations required have changed form, from being highly mediated Catholicism of early Christianity to the less mediated Protestantism of late Christianity, the transformation as well as immanentization is clearly seen. The claims of universalism of almost every new found truth and an elaboration of their methods result increasingly in their acceptance as a valid mode of inquiry in all spheres of life. At some point of time in its career, it becomes the only mode of inquiry, knowledge or truth and this is the time when the initial enthusiasm sustaining it peters out.

The act which liberated the action initially starts constricting it as it universalizes. This phenomenon of universalization adds layers upon layers, in due course of time, on the initial truth, that it starts resembling the previous truth that it negated in its jubilant rebellion. And this initiates a counter movement to reform the institution, to return to the source, to the pristine and undiluted truth. With Protestantism, the other worldly god of Christianity remained as it is but the mediations required to achieve unity with god, as laid down in Catholicism were drastically reduced. From churches, priests, piety and rituals of the former to biblical exegesis of the latter, the path became more narrow and the connection more fragile.

It is when the debate between the two versions or modes of reaching truth were carried out and whether the world should be included in the scheme of things or not, and if yes, how much of it should go into the composition, that science brought a new dimension in the debate. It brought the entire world again in to the discussion about truth and god but with a slight twist. The world which returned was a passive world. In earlier versions, the world didn't occupy any privilege position in terms of reality or truth value except very few key points and mediators but it was nevertheless, a moving world with all the charms of a corrupting place. The world that returned, now had to carry the weight of the truth, delivered by the other worldly God which was hitherto contained in the sacred book. And therefore, it had to lose its dynamism and its unpredictability by becoming the repository of eternal truth, truth that was first revealed in the form of message and now in the form of Grand Design (Stengers 1984) manifested by nature.

This event or more specifically, this way of approaching the world could be regarded as the advent of a new period in history which we know by the generic term of modernity. This has to be the first phase of modernity, the period of classical science, when the world itself became an object of inquiry looking for the revelation of God in its creation. In this phase, it was neither against the idea of God nor was its worldview fundamentally in opposition to the religious worldview, as it is widely understood whenever there is any talk of religion and science (Stengers 1984).

Science inherited from its predecessors the same eternal questions; it carried forward the debate with its contemporaneous worldviews, sometimes as an ally and sometimes as a common enemy and it transformed itself and the others in the process. In normal Latourian sense, no transportation, no carrying forward is possible without mutation and transformation (Latour 1999). The shift brought about by classical science with reference to the truth and the position of world was at once a leap, a discontinuity from the previous worldviews but at the same time, this leap ensured the continuity of the past on the trajectory on which western society embarked upon with the collapse of Greek pantheon and their expulsion in to the other worldly.

With classical science, distance separating the two worlds became so extreme that the other worldly, the transcendental god simply vanished from the workings of this world as

well as from any consideration that it could be evoked or joined in with, through any mediating link. With the snapping of last ties and mediating links with this world, the transcendental became infinitely distant so as to leave no possibility of any transaction with it. And what could be more transcendental than an impersonal god residing in the frigid and immutable laws of nature. We have earlier mentioned the works of Isabelle Stengers where she has shown the transition taking place in the nature of transcendental God and its re-entry in the form of Nature (Stengers 1984).

The development of God-equation was the primary task every scientist undertook after Newton so as to reveal the grand design behind the creation of the universe. The aim was to develop an equation which would be valid everywhere and every time so as to leave nothing out of its reach, just like an omnipotent, omnipresent and omniscient God (Stengers 1984). Nature became the new book of revelation replacing the old book of the religion. The message was very much there but now it was dispersed into the world and which could be known by meticulous observation and experimentation just as meditation and biblical exegesis were requisites for the religious mode of truth. In common scientific parlance, the nature was indeed referred to as book of nature. The pious, in this scheme of things could only rely on the ethics of social action or more specifically on protestant ethic, for a moral framework to negotiate his/her temporary existence in this world and on scientific inquiry of nature as a form of meditation to grasp the manifestation and revelation of the transcendental God. The world was emptied of its constituents and had no dynamic reality on its own but only a representation of that preordained truth contained in the eternal laws of nature and universe.

In terms of landscapes, what we witnessed was the flattening of the terrain. There were no key points left to guide the movement, no mediators allowed to establish the relation between two entities and for the first time, there was established a direct correspondence between the word and the world without the aid of supporting chains and links. It was that kind of world in which it was possible for Descartes to posit a direct relation between a knowing mind and the known world without the obstacles presented by the intermediaries (Latour 1999). The intermediaries were there, as always in the world, but now their status was completely changed, from having partial reality and corrupting

novelty of the previous model to the mere representation of the reality already inscribed in the grand design and therefore having no value on their own in the new scientific model. With classical Science, we entered the landscapes of the desert with no key points, no mediators. A perfectly flat terrain ever made in human history with a highly transcendental god which was at the same time, the most emaciated one, just hovering above the heads like a satellite, whose all connections with the world have been snapped.

It was at this point of time that the old debate between ontology and epistemology were raged again with new vigor and new tools at hand, primarily in the form of debate between mind and matter (Latour 1999). This distinction between mind and matter and the task of choosing anyone of them as the starting point of analysis forms the bedrock of most of the schools of thought prominent in modernity and the debates that ensued, especially between Idealism and Materialism (James 1978). Earlier it was divine truth and the rest of the world as two opposing entities which later became scientific truth and the rest of the world. The opposite became more stark, the world more divided and the truth more subtle.

All this happened on the terrestrial world without any recourse to the transcendental world, which in any case was made redundant scientific method of inquiry as it didn't approve of any mediating links. Now we had two highly purified categories of Mind and Matter, which served as the containers for putting everything that existed in the world thereafter. One was residing in the inner recesses of brain and the other was transcendental to the maximum, itself residing inside the pores of the nature.

Before we go further, a graphical depiction of the successive models of the world prevalent in the particular epoch would, starting from the Greeks would simplify our task of understanding the point we are trying to make and would help us in better locating the problem at hand.

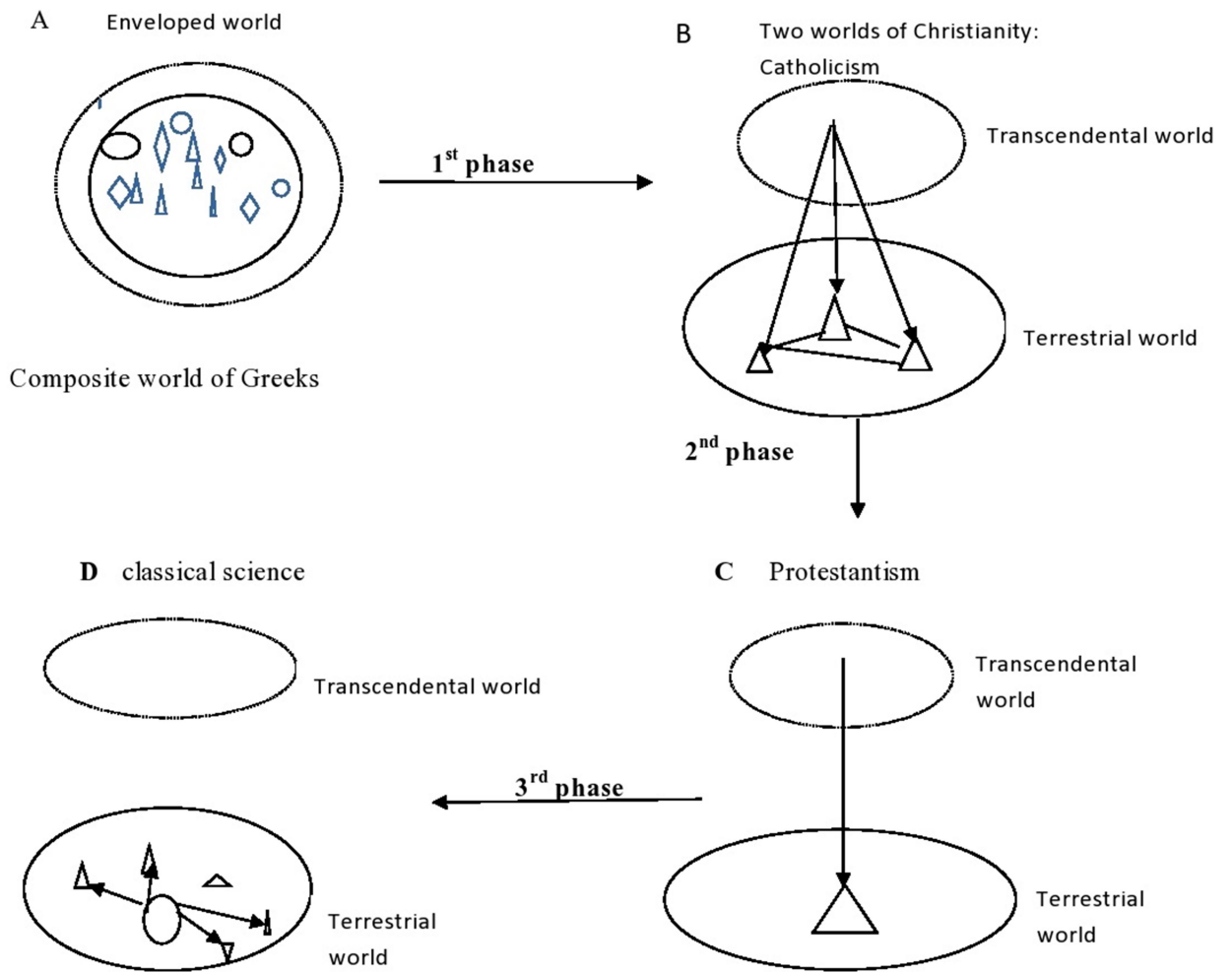
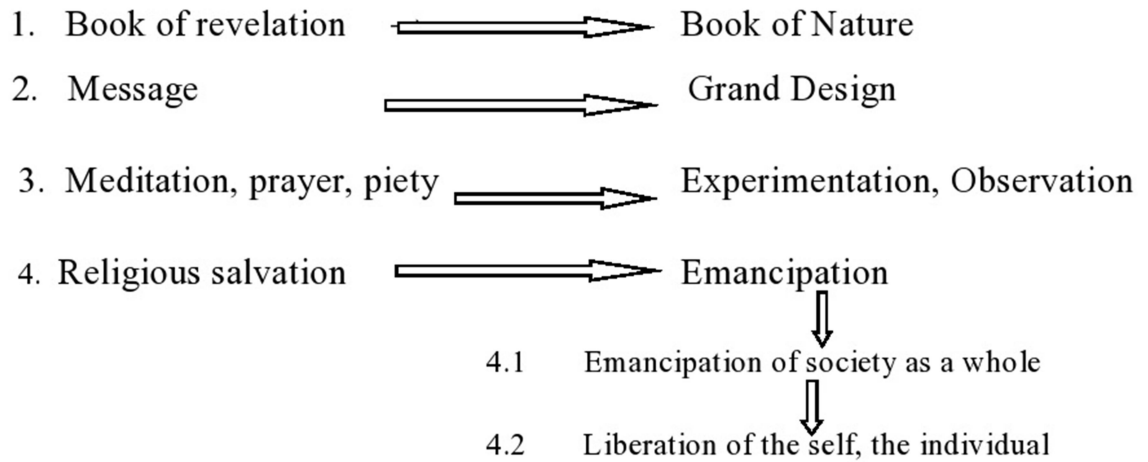


Fig.2. Successive phases of the immanentization of the world and the corresponding world views.

The transition from C to D, with the coming of classical science, has been regarded as the period of advent of modernity. As we can see, the transcendental realm remains intact but the connecting links have been snapped. It hangs there, with no jurisdiction and no

intervening powers. This new worldview had two distinguished features, namely the birth of the thinking man and the total redundancy of God. It was not a value less cosmology but that the task of maintaining it was now entirely the responsibility of the truth, as discovered by science in the eternal laws. In its initial enthusiasm, the search for truth was the primary goal and that truth would take care of everything else. At this stage in the life of the world, when the entire landscape has flattened, action and movement no longer depended on the terrain, a terrain which has no obstacles, no rough patches. It could be accelerated enormously as such never witnessed in human history. The last impediments to action were presented by the code of ethics and conduct inherited from the religious sphere and which still had something of the past world order in it which in many ways was not compatible with the new scheme of the world. The doing away with that code of ethics and conduct marks the beginning of full-fledged modernization, where the claims of science for universalism become unquestionable. We will discuss that part in the next chapter, but for now, we can show roughly, in depicting the transition from state C to state D, how the third phase of immanentization reconfigured the world and its inhabitants.

From state C to state D



In the discussions above, while roughly glancing at the history of the west till the coming of modern science, we have figured out three different phases of the world and particularly in the third phase, from state C to state D, certain transitory traits were pinpointed which marked the arrival of modernity and modern science. The compatibility issues of modern science with the code of ethics and conduct inherited from religious doctrines, and the impediments presented to it in terms of invention and innovation gave rise to a new wave, a wave which swept the entire Europe in its wake, to substitute the old doctrine with a more conducive and compatible code of action and ethics. The fourth trait in the transitory period points in that direction, of replacement of inherited doctrine and the formation of a new code and the trajectory of that code. This period known as nihilism has been discussed in the next chapter. Nihilism also marks the beginning of full throttle modernization associated with youthful rashness, where it confidently takes on the world on its own terms.

In the next chapter, we would discuss the act of iconoclasm which has resulted in the transition of western history towards nihilism. Up to now, we discussed the preoccupation of different worldviews with an absolute ideal; in the next chapter we would analyze the act of iconoclasm which made it possible; to achieve a state of absolute unity.

Chapter 1: Iconoclasm¹ and the construction of ‘self’ in history

“One day, a day lost in ancient memory, but from which all our history has subsequently developed, the more intelligent of our desert dwelling ancestors became tired of having to carry heavy statues of the myriad gods around in the desert – the golden calves, the hollow plaster goats. They decided to drop these pieces of marble and metal which obliged them to pursue the localized life styles of sedentary population. They decided to travel light...

Their bodies were suddenly freed of shackles; they had free hands, unladen shoulders and all at once it seemed to them as if they were flying, across the plain, beneath the vast empty spaces of sky- which their newly raised heads could now see for the first time- and they say, because all they had left was words and music.....(Serres 1995, pp.35)”.

Michel Serres in *Angels: a modern myth*.

“When the Inquisitor has finished speaking, he waits for some time for the prisoner's reply. His silence distresses him. He sees that the prisoner has been listening intently to him all the time, looking gently into his face and evidently not wishing to say anything in reply. The old man would like him to say something, however bitter and terrible. But he suddenly approaches the old man and kisses him gently on his bloodless, aged lips. That is his entire answer. The old man gives a start. There is an imperceptible movement at the corners of his mouth; he goes to the door, opens it and says to him: 'Go, and come no more—don't come at all — never, never!' And he lets him out into 'the dark streets and lanes of the city.' The prisoner goes away (Dostoyevsky 2008)”.

‘The grand inquisitor’ in *The Brothers Karamazov*.

2.1 The fall of antiquity and the death of God: The tale of two events

History has been interpreted in many ways in the past and will continue to be done so in the future. From logical play of spirits to a series of negations; from evolutionary stages to revolutionary struggles; from court histories to subaltern histories; we have seen it all. In spite of so many variations, they all revel in some kind of eschatological aims, with or without god. The purpose is not to add another logical interpretation of history. This chapter would look into the theme of iconoclasm which has constantly made its

¹ Iconoclasm refers to the belief in the act of destroying idols and icons as part of religious practices, mostly in Abrahamic religions.

appearance in all historical epochs and form a narrative of continuity without confusing that continuity with the logic and rule of history. We have also tried to show how the act of iconoclasm has resulted in the construction of an 'idea of self' that has iconoclastic gesture as its important characteristic.

The first quote talks about the abandonment of myriad gods for the one God in antiquity, while the second talks about the banishment of God from the world, in the late 19th century. If the two quotes could be considered as two marking points in the landscapes of western history, separated by almost two millennia, then it suggests that something has happened between them, something has flown between these two points and that these marking points give this historical flow, from myriad gods to single God to no god; its peculiarity and specificity..

If the 'allegory of cave' distinguished between knowledge and ignorance, then for our purpose we have to use something like the 'allegory of dams' on rivers. If we visualize these two marking points as two dams, then the history that unfolded could be understood as flow of the river, with the difference that this river has flown from past to present. The turbulent, chaotic and diverse set of flows are interrupted in the passage by a controller, by a big dam, which then puts a brake in the movement and channelizes it in a controlled way to a series of dams built on the course of a river. What the dams located downstream receive depends on what and how much the upstream dam releases. Each dam acts as a link in the chain of flows, dependent on its antecedent and subsequently deciding for the consequent. This allegory of dam enables us to visualize the things we were discussing in the previous chapter about the course of history: the successive worldviews, and the historical events in terms of dams and interrupted flows, of carrying forward to the next level of the things received at the previous level.

The transition from polytheism to monotheism ensured that only one type of truth remains valid and multiplicities that could hinder the emergence of that single truth must be weeded out. When we talk about flows in history, we mostly talk about the worldviews and idea that are sole claimants to status of truth. The multiplicities do survive but they mostly remain as undercurrents or side currents to the mainstream and occasionally cause turbulence in the mainstream.

Keeping this in view, the two passages maybe thought of as narrating two historical events, the two acts that have decided to a large extent, between themselves, the course taken by the history. The first act, 'Death of gods' for the sake of God, which catapulted an entire civilization on a new trajectory was very much same as the construction of the first big controller, a dam on the natural course of the river and everything ensues thereafter. The second act, 'Death of God' symbolized the construction of the second big dam separated by a stretch of almost two thousand years. The second cannot come without the first but also didn't come directly after the first. The second marking point was preceded by a whole lot of cascading series of dams linking it to the first and what appeared at the channel gates of the second one was the flow that had been dammed innumerable times. Between these two events, unfolded an entire history, a history documented to the last detail, explained minutely from every angle; social, economic, political, spiritual, technological; ordered into various stages of growth; savagery, feudalism, capitalism, communism; labeled into periods of dark ages, renaissance, reformation, revolution, modernity, and post-modernity. Yet it seems that when it comes to the question of why it happened, the way it happened and not the other way, there are no answers.

Friedrich Nietzsche (1974a, 1974b), the physician who formally announced the 'Death of god', the God who was lying on his death bed for a long time, knew that the created (God) won't survive the creator (Man). After all it was the God himself who was created by the first historical act, mass murders of living gods, at the hands of the man. With that first act was born an all-powerful God usurping the powers hitherto distributed, and with the second theocidal act was killed a highly emaciated God usurped of all its powers by the creator himself (Nietzsche 1974). And the story of whole history, the purpose of all revolutions has been the gradual usurpation of the territory and the powers granted in the beginning to the 'created being' that is God. The cascading effect of check-dams, understood as all the revolutions and counter revolutions that have taken place, has been the progressive emaciation of the created being in the history (Stengers 1984, Voegelin 1952). It was Nietzsche himself who saw the affinity between the two events when he declared, while pronouncing the death of Christian God that Nihilism itself was the

product of western history, which started with the first theocidal act (Deleuze 1983, Nietzsche 1974).

Historically, the first theocidal act was then the original sin of western humanity, out of which they have never recovered and the later generations, in numerous revolutions and counter revolutions have successively paid their obeisance to this act by constantly repeating it, in thought and action. In theologies and cosmologies, this act has been allotted a very strategic role; a role when duly performed would reveal the unrevealed, manifest the hidden (Latour 2010, 2013). The first act, the original sin revealed omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent God in all its glory, hidden till now in the crowded pantheon, whose message was interrupted by the noise of the cacophonous gods. What it also recovered were the eternal qualities of Truth, Unity, Beauty which could now belong exclusively to the rightful candidate, to the most deserved one, the Absolute in all the senses of the term, to the God. The living worldly gods with their corruptions and human like fantasies were not suitable candidates for these sublime qualities. So they had to make way for the grand and magnificent God, without any human like frailties, who could rightfully own what belongs to him.

And more importantly, what this act furnished, may be for the first time, was the democratization or universalization of an ideal which hitherto belonged to philosophical circles and was the domain of a very limited number of people (Ridley 2016, Sloterdijk 2013). Worldly gods for worldly affairs were replaced by impersonal, other worldly God for worldly affairs. With the advent and spread of Christianity, this became a common possibility for large number of people (Sloterdijk 2013). The unqualified universalization of an ideal in the form of God, irrespective of the world and its inhabitants, marks the initial or first phases of history, after the first theocidal act, on a trajectory that we know by the name of western history. It was the first world order of its time which was truly based on an ideal, a ruling idea. It was strikingly different from previous orders which were mostly about kings and territories, and conquests. These older orders rarely dabbled with the worldviews of the conquered people, were hardly motivated by any ideal other than the personal motives of the ambitious kings and tyrants. What gave the new world order its peculiarity and its driving force was this shift from the personal motives to an

impersonal ideal with its own dreams of universalization. V.S Naipaul (1981), while discussing about the Arab conquest of Sind in his travelogue, also mentioned this shift in the nature of conquest, from personal motives to an impersonal ideal.

Briefly, what this act furnished at one stroke were three things; firstly, the expulsion of worldly gods for worldly affairs; secondly, retrieval of an impersonal God in the singular along with its eternal qualities; and thirdly, which was also the political one, the unqualified universalization of an ideal with a quest for becoming world power. The construction of this first big dam diverted the multiplicity of the streams along this trajectory with three identifiable features mentioned above and everything that has flown in this direction, everything that has happened of significance has carried these ineluctable marks on its design and operations.

If we generalize the three outcomes in philosophical terms so as to formulate a general principle, a common philosophy of history, it would be something like this; the search for truth has to start with the unraveling of the multiplicity, then discovery of an immutable spirit of ideal and finally prioritizing this ideal over everything else. Uncover, Discover and Inhere. Catholicism, Protestantism, Renaissance, Scientism, all are heir of the kingdom founded on that Original sin, the first theocidal act.

2.2 Iconoclastic gesture as the force behind history.

In the previous chapter we discussed about capitalism being a period where speed of action and the extent of movement increased enormously with respect to its predecessors. This happened because the mediating links, mediators and marking points in the world reduced considerably. The action became less mediated and the things became mere objects, devoid of their ontological value. Under these circumstances, innovation and invention truly proliferated, more and more objects were being produced and the social life of objects reduced. The present ecological crisis for example, is the outcome of this type of landscape formation, the secular one; for it chokes the earth by producing superfluity of forms and dumping them casually. It doesn't mean that the architects of former landscape, the religious one, the landscape of desert are out of work in modern age. They resume their work of destroying forms wherever they get a chance to do so. The destruction of the ruins of Palmyra and benign antique artifacts even when they have

lost their status as temples and gods shows this tendency even today. The spectacular phenomenon of suicide bombings in our times testifies this aversion to forms in its final form, where even the human body is sacrificed at the altar of iconoclasm. Do these two superficially different phenomenon, ecological crisis and terrorism; share the same founding principles, the inability to make peace with forms? One doesn't care about forms, other cannot tolerate forms. Is it this restlessness with forms that is the basis of what we have understood as iconoclasm? It must be enlightening to know how it operates so as to produce two seemingly discrete phenomena out times.

We discussed about the first historic act of killing of gods, but in what way this act was committed? Were the gods killed literally in flesh and blood? And if not, then how was it done. In fact, the cosmologies that became prominent after the fall of the pantheon also serve as a historical record, for the accomplishment of this act. The tales of a son accusing his father and his people of naiveté and destroying the idol-shop of his father are at the origins of these cosmologies (Assmann 2008). Though the originary tales appear to be trivial, just an accusation, yet it produced ripples that traveled far and wide. Before that, nobody thought of the idols in the way the prodigious son thought; before that, nobody asked questions from idols which were asked by the son. Actual breaking of idols are always preceded or accompanied by asking set questions which were not asked before (Latour 1998). Were the people who housed the idols didn't know what they were doing? Were they really naïve when they didn't bother to ask questions which were asked by the son? Was it really a revelation, a profound knowledge when the prodigious son said that the idols were made of stone and it couldn't speak, think or move? The people who owned the idol shop, who were making idols with their own hands must have known as a matter of fact that they were making it with stones and these stone idols didn't speak, think or move (Latour 2010). So what purpose was served by stating of the obvious by the son? At face value, the only intended purpose was to publicly embarrass the icon holders by showing the incapacity and inability of idols to move things. And it did so by directing questions to idols which hitherto were not asked or considered worthy enough to ask.

Bruno Latour, while discussing the history and nature of iconoclasm in Abrahamic religions, says that the iconoclasts start with a wrong premises; the idea of Belief (Latour 2010). The iconoclasts start by accusing the people of naiveté and believing in the power of false images and stone idols. And he does that by instituting a public trial of idols and showcasing their defenselessness in the face of incessant queries. Was the father and his people were really embarrassed by this public trial? Were they thankful to this prodigious son who dispelled their ignorance and naiveté? What the father said, “Why do you mock me? Do these idols know anything (to speak and move)”, shows that the allegations of belief and ignorance were unfounded. The belief was there but, as Latour argues, it was the son and not the father who possessed it. The son was the true believer who believed that people naively believe in things and idols (Latour 2010). The father knew, it seems from his answer, that the idols were not supposed to reply to the questions asked by the son, not because they were incapable of answering it, but because they were the wrong questions. The idols were not designed to answer those questions (Latour 1998, 2010) and they did the right thing by not answering those questions. The questioner, in a hurry to scandalize the idols and idol owners didn’t frame the right kind of questions.

To get a glimpse of what those hasty questions were, we just have to go through the repetition of that Abrahamic trial, in an imaginary dialogue between a theist and an idolater, composed by Raja Ram Mohan Roy in a book in early 19th century (Hay 1963), where the same sort of accusations and justifications are at play which were present at the beginning. Although it is interesting to note that the same answers, given by the idolater in his defense, which were rejected in the rage and enthusiasm of new found ideal, are again making their way into the scheme of things, albeit through a different route.

The Ideas of mediation, translation, inheritance, transference, agency, instruments, and articulations are again making our vocabulary rich to enable us to talk about our world in a dynamic way. In the eternal Abrahamic trial, it is the time itself that has now become the attorney of idols.

We never experience the world directly, for we need properly coded and historically recorded ideas and behaviors to arrive at an experiential relation with the world. We never experience the God directly. This was the simple message of all the icons and idols

of this world. The idols, the images, the gods and their dwelling places were the key points in the landscapes, which not only marked them but also connected in multiple ways. They facilitated as well as guided the movement, established the relations, mediated the transformation from one form to another, were part of the classificatory schemes of world composition. They were neither false projections nor inert matter, but active totemic operators designed to navigate the different worlds easily and smoothly. To use a current denotation given by Michel Serres, they were Interchangers, meant for extending and switching networks:

“Every interchanger permits one to change between spaces, levels and orders which may be heterogeneous among themselves and to construct a oneness of the universe while at the same time maintaining local differences (Serres 1995, pp.170)”.

In the absence of interchangers, the task of connecting to a network, the task of connecting to the world, the task of universalizing would lack the necessary operational resources. The cosmologies which came after this original sin had very little to do with the world and therefore the amount of interchangers required for their realization were consequently very less. Doing away with concrete idols and key points, dotting the landscapes, each with its own requirements and peculiarities, as something false and obstructionists, the new cosmologies replaced them with a set of interchangers that were very few and highly centralized in nature. As far as the world was concerned, they had very few things to say about it other than that it had to pass through or connect to these interchangers in order to have a qualified existence.

Iconoclasm which played a very pivotal part in the formation and consolidation of the cosmologies owing their existence to that original sin, occupies an important place in the new scheme of things. Iconoclasm is a powerful expression which makes its presence felt repeatedly, returning with a vengeance to clear the mess that grows over time. From the beginning of the history, it has returned again and again to repeat the task furnished at the origin of time. If something like this is built into the founding principles of any competing theory, ideology, or theology, as an aid in search for truth, it is unlikely that it would stop after its first successful execution or would become redundant after the triumph of that particular theory whose obedient foot soldier it was.

There is an inheritance in iconoclasm also; even iconoclasts have lineages and progenies. Iconoclasts act in the present but at the same time create something for the future generations of iconoclasts to destroy. By destroying in the present, it uncovers something which acts as a raw material for next round for destruction. If we start making an inventory and chronology of things destroyed and replaced over two millennia, we would arrive at a truly materialist conception of history. A history narrated and documented specifically from the life cycles of the things, from their coming into being as things to their subsequent death as objects. A good number of object centric histories have been written, especially by those who engage in social studies of science but they are mostly of the secular kind; that is they trace the histories of scientific objects in their social contexts (Bijker 1995, Daston 2000, Simondon 1958). They have clearly shown how scientific objects and inventions have defined and redefine social relations (Bijker 1995, Diamond 1997). If a historiography showing the progressive secularization/devaluation of the world by focusing on the gradual devaluation of the things and their status in the world is being carried out, it could reveal the continuous presence or workings of the iconoclastic principle.

The first wave of iconoclasm destroyed the idols of different gods and replaced them with icons and images of the son of God (Assmann 2008). The second wave of iconoclasm destroyed the icons of son of God himself and replaced it with only words and messages (Voegelin 1952). The third wave of iconoclasm did away with even these words inscribed in a book and replaced it with divine will and design (Stengers 1984). The fourth wave of iconoclasm removed the divine will and design of the God and ultimately put the God to rest in peace (Nietzsche 1974). This last wave resulted in the second theocidal act which was being referred to in the initial pages of this chapter and which initiated the period known as Nihilism in history. It was after this act that God was finally removed from the scheme of things and from this point on man came to occupy his throne. If the first act created an abstract absolute God in place of concrete and differentiated gods, this second act created an abstract Man in place of an abstract God. This second theocidal act was therefore the second dam erected on the flow of history from where it was reoriented into another direction. This dam again, while receiving its flows from its antecedents, intercepted, controlled, checked and diverted the different

streams accumulated over period of time into one single stream which from now onwards would qualify as the real flow of history.

For our purpose we have followed a rough classification of western history into three stages; prehistory covering the period up to the first theocidal act; then the God stage, covering the period between the two theocidal acts in which God is thought upon with varying power and jurisdiction; and finally the Man stage starting more or less after the second theocidal act, whereupon theologies are replaced with human-centric ideologies. Throughout the God stage, process of immanentization (Voegelin 1952), and the acts of iconoclasm (Latour 2010) resulted in the transformation of God from being an absolute monarch to an emaciated divine will hidden in the design.

In our discussion, we have used two different categories of waves and stages to talk about the history of western civilization. We have referred to different forms of iconoclasm that have made their appearance in history as ‘waves’, to signify the overall importance of a specific iconoclastic gesture affecting a particular epoch. It is these iconoclastic gestures affecting a particular epoch in history that have resulted in the transition of the society from one stage to the other stage. The historical stages are the culmination point for the particular iconoclastic waves affecting a particular epoch; the stages represent a temporary halt before the waves resume their work with new potency.

Since immanentization and iconoclasm as operating principles are rooted in this philosophy of history, they were not abandoned with the termination of God, in whose genesis they acted as midwives, but are carried forward into the next stage, the *Man-stage*. It is the result of these processes continually at work that upon entering the world in the Man-stage, the world was completely empty of non-human and material beings. Just as knowledge extends by adding mediators and successive connecting links, so does iconoclasm by dismantling successive mediators and connecting links. Dismantling of mediators by iconoclasm means the denial of their truth value. Each wave of iconoclasm, in the renewed enthusiasm for search of truth peels off layers from the composite body and come upon a new body of truth that is more fragile in nature, and which is both, highly immanent as well as highly transcendent in location. Destruction of golden calves, Greek temples, idols of gods and goddesses, destruction of statutes and images of Jesus

Christ, Virgin Mary, defacement of Catholic churches, rejection of the book and the message and the death of God form the sum total of acts propelling the history in its forward march.

Looking at this history, it seems that for the proponents of truth, truth and visibility are irreconcilable. If something is visible, then there is a definite form, has to be well grounded, and it doesn't qualify for being true. The visibility and definite form of an entity gives access to anybody and everybody, to manipulate, mold, employ and possess, thereby making that entity very malleable. It gives in to the multiplicity of the world. The entity lacks the rigidity and the absolute eternal nature, deemed as essential qualification of truth. Since it doesn't have much use of the 'allegory of cave' and the enlightened souls, therefore it attracts the wrath of almost all truth seekers and prophets who believe in the absolute nature of truth. The urge to destroy the visible forms springs from that idea of truth, which is invisible as only invisibility can protect its pristine sublimity from the dangers of mutations and degradation. In this respect, iconoclasm has to be an everyday exercise; the iconoclasts should always be ready with their hammers to strike at the first signs of visibility and form-ation (Latour 1999, 2002; Serres 2015).

While seeing can make one witness the transformation taking place, induce vulnerability to the enchanting forms, can make one possessed by them, believing in unseen has no such temptations. It can maintain its eternal nature in spite of anything happening around its vicinity and in the world. Believing protects one from being enamored by the world. It never loses sight of that eternal truth, and always has its hammer ready to give deathly blows to anything capable of disturbing its tranquility. Believing cannot succeed in a world that has multiple reference points and sources of truth; where non humans have definite and concrete existences and compete for priorities. The prerequisite for believing is desertification and to desertify, iconoclasts are commissioned with their hammers. Believing creates a desert and the more one firmly believes, the more desertification happens, and the more violent the urge to destroy the forms become.

We discussed in the last chapter about the desertification of landscapes and subsequent increase in speed and mobility leading to what has been called as the era of capitalism, the era of unbridled expansion and production. We can now understand the genesis of

capitalism in these acts of believing. In the sacred tradition of believing, the foundation for capitalist expansion was laid (Weber 2003). It should not be confused that everywhere, the act of believing would lead to the type of expansion and proliferation associated with capitalism. Believing, which comes inbuilt with iconoclasm, opens up at least two possibilities, one moves outward in the direction of proliferation and the other inward in the direction of purification. One proliferate the landscapes with objects, non-existing existents, present but not true; the other expurgate and purify landscapes of non-existent existents.

In the religious domain, belief tends inward, to the source and indulges in destruction of everything that has been created having sacred value. All the gnostic revolutions testify to this directionality. In the secular domains, it moves forward in a proliferating way, abandoning and dumping the things it has created to create more and more new things, only to be abandoned like the old ones, thereby choking the landscape. The evolution of modernity through stages from the religious sphere and the excess of production points to the direction of proliferation. If one leaves you lost in the immense desert, the other leaves you choked in a lethal jam. In one landscape, you can go anywhere you want but don't know where to go, in the other you know where to go but cannot go anywhere. This only shows that the question of agency is also a question of how we design our landscape so as to avoid both the situations.

Up to now, we discussed the operating principles of the act of iconoclasm and how it forms an important component in the design of worldviews that have made their presence in the western history. Powerful iconoclastic gestures made their appearance in different epochs of history to undone the growth that had taken place hiding the source from view. All these waves tried to resurrect the source of the truth and waged and relentless war against things, either completely destroying them or turning them into objects. The last wave of iconoclasm that catapulted the world through nihilism into the modernity however had to change its character from being an overtly violent act, destroying concrete forms, to one of critique and verbal gestures. These verbal gestures and critiques now form the essence of iconoclasm in the *Man-age*

2.3 Into the *Man-age* and mutations of Iconoclasm

While studying about History, few great minds of 19th century such as Hegel, Marx, and Nietzsche, had clearly sensed the logic and driving force powering the motor of history. In their theses about history that says that ‘all history hitherto is the history of class struggle’ or that it unfolds in the spirit of negation and negation of negation, and importantly about nihilism as the logical product of the way it unfolded. Of these the last one about nihilism was more specific because it saw in the origin the seeds of nihilism sown in. The first two are also in the right with only a slight defect; they were generalized too hastily. ‘All history’ in these statements was over generalizations. By limiting their scope to only western history, we not only understand it more precisely but could also give voice to other ‘ways of history’ in order to bring to light the multiplicity of history, not only with regard to actors but also in terms of process.

As far as the acts of iconoclasm are concerned, they are not in the least peaceful and deliberative. Mere dialogues and questioning wouldn’t suffice for the purpose. One needs a hammer and an enthusiastic individual wielding that hammer. And everything follows after that. History as a site of struggle and conflict between theses and antitheses boils down to these practical acts. One group advancing to destroy and replace other groups idols, images, totems, books and the other group trying to protect their symbols or two groups fighting it out for the supremacy of their symbols, preparing the ground for next generation of iconoclasts with new images or nothing at all. That is also a way of understanding the Hegelian thesis of “*negation of negation*”. One comes into the existence by negating the existence of its predecessor which in turn is negated by its successor. It is only ironical to find that all the negators, after their term, occupy adjacent positions in museums, which in their life times were not ready to concede to others. It is through a series of negations, that we come upon the *Age of Man* in its pristine glory, a man totally distinct from the humans inhabiting the world, occupying the position of God.

This coming of age was the result of the changing nature of Science, following certain discoveries in the 19th century, which reframed its ontological assumptions. The

pragmatic philosopher William James highlighted this shift while talking about new challenges presented to the idealist conception of Truth by these new sciences:

“Up to 1850, almost everyone believed that sciences expressed truths that were exact copies of a definite code of non-human realities. But the enormously rapid multiplication of theories in these latter days has well-nigh upset the notion of any one of them being a more literally objective kind of thing than another. There are so many geometries, so many logics, so many physical and chemical hypotheses, so many classifications, each one of them good for so much and yet not good for everything that the notion that even the truest formulae may be a human device and not a literal transcript has dawned upon us (James 1978, pp.206)”.

In the idealist framework of Science, the conception of truth was that of a grand design and divine will inscribed in the laws of nature. The God was just a loose presence in the transcendental realm with no active powers in the world (Stengers 1984). This type of world had its corresponding set of ethics in theological doctrines and both science and theology fed into each other, ideas about truth and purpose. The proliferation of the scientific activity, as described by William James jeopardized the old notion of design, contained in few laws (James 1978). The increasing number of laws and scientific disciplines made it very difficult to arrange them in coherent set of design speaking the same language and ultimately the suspicion that whether there has been any design or designer at all. Therefore for all practical purposes, the God was abandoned by the world. Is it possible that before Nietzsche proclaimed the death of God, the God was probably dead long ago? Can we say that it was not a case of violent execution but of extreme negligence, leaving one to die on its own?

Just as in first act, before the hammer of iconoclasts striking down the idols, there was a public trial to embarrass and humiliate them; so was in this case. There was a prolonged public trial happening just at the time when he was abandoned for all practical purposes and which has gone down in history as a period of nihilism. In principle, nihilism was an advanced form of iconoclasm. It was advanced in the sense that it didn't have to deal with concrete things, but with ideas that were part of immanence/transcendence dichotomy lying at the far end position, along the trajectory initiated by iconoclasm. It

was a period of churning, leap, shift and jump wherein new *plugins*² were searched to fit in to the new scheme of things without God. It was when the code of ethics imported from theology was proving incompatible with the new system requirements, which instead of facilitating the expansion and proliferation of new scientific activity, was cramping it with its older requirements of morality.

The readers of pre-revolutionary Russian literature are familiar with the anxieties and churnings of that period, when old orders based on morality and ethics were challenged by a new scientific milieu, still in a nascent state but powerful enough to cause embarrassment. We just have to go through the novels of Fyodor Dostoyevsky, especially ‘The brothers Karamazov’, ‘Crime and punishment’ and ‘The possessed’ or Turgenev’s *Fathers and sons* to get a glimpse of that conflict. The protagonists in these novels inhabited something like no man’s land; they occupied a place in the society which could be described as anything but comforting. The heroes of these novels; Ivan, Raskolnikov, Stavrogin, or Bazarov were not heroes in the strictest sense of the term. They were tormented personalities, but no one to blame for their predicament except themselves. They were enthusiasts of the new sciences and its revelations but didn’t know what to do with these truths in the existing world, were unable to codify them as sources of meaningful action.

In a society where an individual’s life, from explicitly social to the highly intimate sphere, was elaborated to the last detail in codes sanctioned by divinity, any threat to the idea of divinity itself would be shattering. If an idea loses persistence, what happens to the life that is totally dependent on that idea for its own existence? Without the active presence of God, the morality derived from that God becomes a dead weight on the shoulders of an individual and society as a whole, crushing their vitality. The nihilists were the first ones to sense the crushing effect of that dead mass of morality and assisted by the energies of new truths, threw them at once to live without their succor. But they had a whole society to fight, society in which old habits die hard and people carry on with their lives without much concern about new truths and old paradoxes. People who were neither too religious, when its reign was supreme, nor enthusiasts about new truths given

² A word used by Bruno Latour to signify the process of updating and synchronizing social theories. See *Reassembling the social* (2005), AIME (2013) for detailed description.

by science, people who never put all their stakes in one thing and therefore were not disturbed when it was shaken. These were the type of people who always fail any ideal or any ideology. Driven by despair and desperation, these individuals threw themselves, in a fit of rage and vengeance against morality and society; doing everything that was proscribed and sinful. Since nothing concrete and objective, in the form of objects, were left to destroy, they chose the only thing left to destroy; morality.

Motivated and armed by the newly found truths and in defiance of morality, they committed what was considered as the gravest sin, homicide. Some killed others, some committed suicide. In death as in life, they remained truthful to their truths. A truth, whose time of recognition had come but which needed few martyrs before its claim for the throne would be recognized as such. Nihilism was the transient period from Theism to Humanism. It was the liminal phase between the dying world of theism and an unborn world of humanism, with man as the center of universe. The theory of Man and its associated milieu has been termed as Humanism.

While nihilism was busy demolishing the artifice of religious morality, there were simultaneous attempts going on to replace this old and tattered worldview with a new and coherent worldview. A homocentric worldview along with the new set of commands and codes to reorient an individual's life in particular and society in general. These worldviews belong to the realms that are known by the name of ideologies, and which accompany the nihilistic phase in history. One was doing away with the old one, and the other was creating a new one. Humanism, Marxism, anarchism, and socialism are variations of ideology which tried to formulate coherent set of principles to qualify as convincing and sufficient teleology. Genesis and a sense of purpose were rearticulated in secular and historical terms, borrowing heavily from the findings of science about life and evolution, and the individual was reinserted into the new scheme of things with a different role, place and destiny in history and in the world. Mercea Eliade in his work on religious ideas has convincingly shown the Judeo-Christian legacies of these ideologies of 19th century (Eliade 1975). Instead of waiting for the kingdom of god, the individual was assigned the task of creating the kingdom of god in this world only, aided by scientific facts and driven by the force of history and self-reflexive consciousness.

Though the wave of iconoclasm, aided by the new found truths of science, helped in transition of society into purely humanistic age, yet it lacked the coherence of a worldview. The full concretization of a particular age happens only when it has been codified with its ideas of truth and its cherished values. And it was not long before the diverse currents affecting that age were taken into account in coherent worldviews, known as ideologies in this period. The truths of science were finally capable of guiding the movement of society and defining the teleological destinies of individuals. We would now discuss how that these ideological configurations took place.

2.4 Configuration of worldviews in a Post-theocratic world

In 19th century Germany, Wilhelm von Humboldt, a natural scientist and an educationist, came up with an education model which proposed the union of teaching and research in search of truth. It envisaged a unity of life based on the scientific principles and truths. The result was the establishment of Berlin University in 1810 to advance knowledge through original and critical investigations and its dissemination through teaching. As Lyotard (1984) has rightly assessed that the idea of Humboldtian education was based on the conviction that truth would take care of everything else, it alone could provide the desired unity in life. A life based on the principles of scientific truth and scientific attitude would provide a solid foundation for the society in which moral, aesthetic and all other aspects could be woven into one whole. It was sufficient to direct all our attention and receptivity to the truths generated by the scientific practice and everything else would fall in place; as only those practices sanctioned by truth are capable of giving a complete and satisfying existence. In one sense it was a departure from previous worldviews since it talked about truth in the plural as compared to the absolute truth of earlier versions. But overall it inherited the legacy of its predecessors in claiming the absolute status for its version. Only one realm, one sphere had the legitimacy and the validity to pronounce truths and everything else has to be designed taking this into account.

Truth meant for the world cannot do without pedagogy. The idea of university serving both these purposes was not new in the history. Before the Humboldt University founded on the principle of scientific pedagogy, there were universities like Oxford and Cambridge founded for religious pedagogy and controlling heresies (Rider-Symoens

[ed.].1992). After religious institutions, the universities have played a prominent role in the propagation of truth, whatever they may be. They reorient an individual's sensitivity to start perceiving the world in a certain way deemed to be the truthful. Is it any surprise that the proponent of one of the most powerful theories about society in modern times, Karl Marx, was the product of Humboldtian model of education?

Apart from the proliferation in number of natural sciences disciplines, dedicated to the objective study of nature, there emerged a number disciplines within social sciences, that is scientific study of society and individual using the methods and tools of natural sciences. Disciplines like sociology, anthropology, history were concerned with the objective explanation of society so as to establish a certain principle akin to natural laws working behind the foundations of society. In fact, a considerable portion of what we understand as society has been described by these disciplines using the parameters of established science and that is why they were referred as scientific study of society. Marxism with its classifications of base and superstructure posited an operating principle that guides societal composition and functions, and on proper analysis could be shown behind every sphere of life.

The dialectical materialism as the philosophy of history and of life was deeply imbued with the tenets of positivistic science that it questioned and rejected everything as false consciousness, which did not stand its scrutiny. As usual, just like in previous models, the parameters and standards of one realm were used to judge the validity and truth value of other realms. Though science was producing increasing number of truths of nature but it never abandoned the hope and task of finding an idea, grand theory that would subsume all these truths in to one ideal and it gradually became the universal principle whereby all reality would merge one day (James 1978, Tarde 2012). And that would be the end of history. All the ideologies of that time combined this scientific rationality in their ideas about society and the role of individuals in producing that desired destiny; that realized unity. The classical sociological theories of Marx, Weber and Durkheim, informed by the scientific truths of their time, laid out in detail the different states of societies and the individuals inhabiting it (Giddens 1971). But these definitions of society were not homogeneous in any sense. Some were propelled by history and consciousness towards

the realization of revolution bringing the end of history; others were trapped and statist in their own inertia and needed the push; internal as well as external. The subject matter of anthropology was statist societies. So in one of them, a rational man was marching ahead; in others, a potential rational man was trapped inside a *sui generis* system by the unchanging iron laws. The phenomenon of 'Doubles' in the late nineteenth century novels of Europe have pointed that the attributes considered to scientific and rational belonged to the heroes assigned with a task, as compared to the clownish nature of their close associates (Nandy2005)

The ideal personality came with a serious scientific rationality as portrayed by the detectives in crime novels, the most famous of them being Sherlock Holmes.

As we have seen earlier, the birth and the consequent rise to the level of universalism, of previous truths, inevitably led to their breaking up and fall. The story continues with the universalism of scientific truth; after covering the entire landscape with its dictums, having a worldview in compatibility with its needs, accelerating movement and innovation to magnificent levels, its after affects begin to show, in terms of physical destruction as well as the poverty of its worldview in producing a desired unity of moral, spiritual and aesthetic realms. But this time the breaking up of scientific grand narrative and the loss of innocence that followed didn't led to the enthusiastic coming of another universalism. A kind of exhaustion and melancholia had crept in at the continuous failings one truth after another. The new man trained on principles of rationality and reason must have found it hard to adjust to the challenges ushered in the period of scientific worldviews, exemplified by ideologies. Countless imperial wars, violent ideological battles, bloody revolutions and world wars were waged for realizing the human destiny of attaining the unity of life.

Peter Sloterdijk (2001) in his book has approached the history of west through the repetitive manifestation of cynical impulses. He has used the term kynicism to differentiate it with cynicism. Kynicism has an element of playfulness, an affirmation of life and a self-embodiment of impulses; it mostly has a resistive nature and comes from below against the coldness and formality of the rule (Sloterdijk 2001). Cynicism on the other hand is what becomes of kynicism when it occupies the throne; it results in self-

splitting and self-repression (Sloterdijk 2001). What is referred as kynical impulses could be understood as something similar to the enthusiastic and innocent reception of truths in their nascent state, as we have discussed in the above sections. The kynical impulses have given in history the much needed respite from overarching truth requirements which became suffocating after some time. According to Sloterdijk:

“Through all the changes in world history—decline of the western roman empire, the Christianization of the occident, the rise of feudalism, the age of chivalry, the reformation, the renaissance, absolutism, the rise of the bourgeoisie— the kynical impulse has continued in the most varied refraction and disguises (Sloterdijk 2001, pp. 175)”.

Manifestation of kynical impulses always showed the possibility of recovery of lost or marginalized values, values which always mixed wisdom with childlike playfulness and cheekiness against the gloomy nature of high morality, as portrayed by Diogenes in ancient Greece (Sloterdijk 2001). The phase of romanticism was also an exercise in the recovery of life affirming values denied by the moral world of Christianity and scientism. What characterized the late modern world, which has seen its trust broken and hopes shattered by the exaggerated promises of scientific rationality, according to Sloterdijk (2001), is the permeation of cynicism to the general level, of it becoming a common possibility. The transition from kynicism to cynicism at mass level is what has plagued the modern world. It is no longer limited to the world of rulers or coming from above but at once has removed the distinctions.

Unlike kynicism, cynicism cannot recover any lost or marginalized values since it doesn't recognize the existence of any such values other than values it has inherited. Cynicism is never a rebellion against inherited truth and values; it never questions their validity in theory but only realizes its impossibility in practice, to use a Sloterdijkian phrase, *'bogged down by reality'* (Sloterdijk 2001). Before moving on to cynicism as an outcome of the impossibility of applying a theory to practice, we have to discuss the Marxian attempts to apply theory to practice and the results that ensued from that attempts.

Marxism was an inverted form of Hegel's idealism. As it is famously said that Marx simply brought a theory, which was standing on its head, back on its feet. The dialectics

in Marxism happened between concrete things and real forces, moving positively on their way towards the realization of the ideal of classless society and new man. But with the visible incapacity of the science as the luminous force in the impending unity, the Marxian dialectics based on the principles of scientific rationality came under suspicion. The events of Russian revolution and the reign of violence that ensued thereafter forced many to challenge the vision and the values advocated by it.

This led to another inversion within the traditions of Marxism, this time by Theodore Adorno and his critical theory school. To see the fate of dialectics as an instrument of power and imperialism in the hands of rulers and victors, it reacted by totally inverting the ideas considered to be essential for the progress. In the words of Sloterdijk:

“The conviction that the real is written in the hand of suffering, coldness and hardness determines the way critical theory approaches the world. Although it scarcely believed in a change for the better, it did not give in to the temptations to desensitize itself or to get used to the given order of things. To remain sensitive was, as it were, a utopian stance- to keep the senses sharpened for a happiness that will not come, a stance that nevertheless, by being prepared for happiness, protects us from the worst kind of brutalization (Sloterdijk 2001, pp. xxxiv)”.

Furthermore he states that for critical theory, to oppose everything that reeks of power became the *modus operandi* of existence:

“Politically and in its nerve endings, this aesthetic, this sensitive theory, is based on a reproachful attitude, composed of suffering, contempt and rage against everything that has power. It makes itself into a mirror of the evil in the world, of bourgeois coldness, of the principle of domination, of dirty business and its profit motive. It is the masculine world that it categorically rejects. It is inspired by an archaic NO to the world (Sloterdijk 2001, pp. xxxiv)”.

Against the positive dialectics of classical Marxism, Adorno proposed the idea of negative dialectics, which simply distrusted the ideas advocated by the victors and rulers; it shifted its attention from the ideology of emancipation of society and individual to a higher lever to that of the liberation of individual from the society through heightened sensitivity. Negative dialectics, in the words of Sloterdijk:

“Openly gives up the attempt to compulsorily be in the right and to celebrate the force of the victor as a higher synthesis. Critical theory was the attempt to come

into the inheritance of dialectics without spinning victor's fantasies. It is the legacy of those who have been violated gains experience (Sloterdijk 2001, pp. 375)".

Critical theory never doubted the truths generated by scientific enterprise but it realized very soon that it accounted for nothing on its own and the supposed unity, which it was ordained to fulfill was simply polemics ingrained in the principles of positive dialectics. Critical theory finally dispelled with the cherished idea that truth alone is sufficient to integrate the life on a higher level; that it alone could take care of everything else.

In this sense, it enacted the age old drama repeated many times in history, an idea acting as a hammer striking down the idol placed at that time at the altar of history. Lyotard in his description of postmodern condition also makes similar comments about critical theory that it was the outcome of the legitimation crisis of grand narrative of science (Lyotard 1984). Critical theory tried to save the subject, the individual from this crisis of legitimation by producing a new charter of individual emancipation. It is clear that it did not place any great expectation on some future ideal; it also didn't recover any convivial values or kynical impulses but only had oppositional characteristics which later paved the way of cynicism and bad faith. It sought the unity only in an individual's self through a heightened sensitivity, which would integrate the moral, aesthetic and the spiritual dimensions of life. It left the society as a whole out of its ambit and therefore it could be said that it reduced the domain of ideology to its bare minimum, the individual and its emancipation. The motto of critical theory could best be summarized by one of the quotes from the founder Adorno that "when everything is bad, it is better to know the worst (Adorno 2005)".

This desire to know the worst has informed most of the scholarships that has happened in social sciences, especially in the genre of cultural studies, which speak for the people, the subaltern, with vocabularies of power, oppression and emancipation. The inability to take anything at face value or to acknowledge the appearances of any construction, be it cultural or political; to look for hidden and ulterior motives behind every articulation; to suspect power and domination lurking behind everything; the critical theory becomes, in the words of Bruno Latour, "one of the most powerful iconoclastic gestures of our times (Latour 1998)". Unlike the dialectics of classical Marxism, which apart from debunking

irrationality, had a positive vision of truth that had to be realized by the society and the individual in the future, the power of critical theory comes from its power of negativity ingrained its construction. The positive truth had to be abandoned, for right reasons though, for the truth of individual self whose truthfulness consisted in its denial of any eschatological truth coming from the world.

2.5 The Postmodern condition and the predicament of self

The postmodern condition was the phrase used by Jean François Lyotard to describe the contours of post-war Europe; the new alignments that were taking place there and the prevalent mood across sections of European society. It would be apt to give a description of the prevailing mood of post-war Europe by highlighting the events; because a lot of what is known as the postmodern condition has to do with the general mood of the public. The post-war Europe emerged, as the adjective suggests from two deadly world wars, Jewish holocaust, with ghosts of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, bloody Red revolution in the name of people, and end of direct colonial enterprises. It also emerged with the bitter realization of the failed project of science, mistrust in the slogans of the modern state, welfare or socialist alike, with standard economic predicament that follows and to top it all, the general mood of utter despondency and disillusionment. Lyotard diagnosed it as the outcome of the failure of grand narratives and the subsequent loss of hope in their stated project. He stated:

“What is new in all of this is that the old poles of attraction represented by nation-states, parties, professions, institutions, and historical traditions are losing their attraction. And it does not look as though they will be replaced, at least not on their former scale; The Trilateral Commission is not a popular pole of attraction. “Identifying” with the great names, the heroes of contemporary history, is becoming more and more difficult (Lyotard 1984, pp. 14)”.

The words like ‘attraction’ and ‘identifying’ used above indicate something more than the decline of the cherished poles of attraction. It is not that the cherished poles of attraction, the universal project of a truth have declined and failed for the first time. In fact, we have seen that the whole history of west has been the story of coming and going of a deemed universal truth, a truth in which all the hopes of a civilization had been invested time and again, only to be replaced by a newer and more immanent version of that truth. Even the

period of nihilism, was not without possession of a truth with its own claims of universalism. And it is this truth that gave the nihilist their share of hope and innocent enthusiasm about future. The nihilist period was not without its poles of attraction and there were enough people ready to identify themselves with these poles of attraction.

But in the post-war Europe, there comes a kind of exhaustion from the repeated failures and broken promises that it no longer promulgates a new truth and new mission. This was slightly evident earlier in the way critical theory formulated its principles and plan of action (Lyotard 1984, Sloterdijk 2001). There was already a feeling of distrust towards grand narratives and a common future of humanity in general. Another peculiar feature of this period was the disappearance of cynical impulses as an alternative and the democratization of cynicism, where the validity of truth is not questioned but only the stubbornness of the world is recognized in its implementation (Sloterdijk 2011). This leads to a kind of non-interference and withdrawal from the public sphere and politics among individuals. Political ideologues, when mellowed down, show these traits. And the most common symptom encountered is the total rejection of the ideals and claims of universal truths. Everything becomes a fiction, even the truths produced by scientific enterprises (Clifford 1990). Nothing can claim for itself a privileged position in terms of truth value. It is the reaction of the erstwhile most ardent advocates of science after it becomes discredited. With this, we enter a world of illusions and fictions, where it is not worthwhile to hold onto anything because it is just like everything else. These in general are the mood patterns and reactions found in the world described as the postmodern world.

None of these attitudes envisage a prospective contender for the universal truth to replace the discredited and failed ones. This inability to think a new ideal also stems from the fact that all the previous versions of truth had successively debunked the different constructions of the world as false constructions. They had increasingly denied the ontological status to the existents which were part of that construction and always came up with a highly immanent form of truth as compared to their predecessors. There was always a progressive depreciation in the composition of the truth that there came a time when there was nothing left to debunk and to fall upon as a recourse. There was nothing

left to negate and therefore no truth can be born because it had to follow the logic of negation of negation. But these are only preliminary introductions to the postmodern condition which became dominant in the post war Europe. The loss of attracting power of the poles like nation-state have their own history, just like scientific professions, and follows after the long spell of complete identification with the idea of nation state itself.

In spite of the differences in the ideological formations regarding the nature of state; whether as a manifestation of proletarian rule or as a promoter and protector of freedom and rights; we find that nation states and citizens completely identified with each other projects. Nation states were ordained to facilitate the forward march of citizens. Logically it was an ally of science and therefore there were no reason to suspect the slogans of freedom, protection and welfare associated with it. The citizens in their enthusiastic fervor for the nation-state supported it to such an extent that ultimately they got entangled into its imperialistic ambitions resulting in the death and destruction of millions of people. The protector and guarantor of freedom and rights transformed itself into cannibal devouring its own children. May be that is why the postmodern condition is also the harbinger of post nation- state fantasies in the west? We will discuss this aspect of the changing nature of nation states and citizens in the next chapter when we will focus on the rise of managerial culture in this period.

The symptomatic description given by Lyotard after the decline of grand narratives could be summarized broadly into three attitudes and it is these attitudes that are shaping the discourse on politics and scholarships in our times. First is the technique of sensitization provided by the critical theory, which realigns an individual into an oppositional mode to the world (Adorno 2005 Sloterdijk 2001). The power of negativity drives it to suspect power and hegemony behind everything, where an individual and the surrounding world become two opposing classes. The self in this dialectics becomes a highly immanent proletarian in opposition to the highly transcendental society serving as the bourgeoisie. Second is the pervasiveness of cynicism where enlightenment truth withdraws itself from the world and confines itself within an individual with no desire of intervention in the world which it considers marred by falsity (Sloterdijk 2001). And finally the gloom and hopelessness of a virtual world, where everything goes and nothing can hold the ground

against anything. A world where reference chain is broken, distinction blurred and the judgment deferred permanently. In the realm of culture, in the absence of distinction between good and the bad, the value judgments are rendered useless and the individuals are tossed in the sea of experiences with other individuals without any resource to communicate or common ground to stand upon, which in its celebratory mode appears in the form of multiculturalism and relativism (Bauman 1997, 2004; Zizek 1997).

Lyotard, in his book 'The postmodern condition', has gone on to highlight the changes and alignments that were taking place with respect to the questions of self and ideas of agency, especially after the legitimation crisis of sciences and knowledge that rested on that legitimation. One important hypothesis he puts forward is the change in the relation between knowledge and reality; from having a predictive value in relation to reality to having a strategic value in relation to the question raised (Lyotard 1984). Following the legitimation crises of grand narratives, there has been a shift in the nature of knowledge and more so in the highly computerized societies. They had to give up their speculative and emancipative characteristics for a more performative and operational character.

This emphasis on the performative character of knowledge also reflected the churnings in the erstwhile constitution of society in terms of social bonds, that is, the logic that binds individuals together in well knit, well-structured entities called society. The grand narratives, encoded in the speculative and emancipative knowledge, provided these social bonds with strength, logic and purpose. The breaking of grand narratives also signified the weakening of that social bond. Lyotard makes this distinction in the nature of social bond when he differentiates between the modern and the postmodern condition. The postmodern social bond would enact itself in 'language games', unlike the 'social games' of the modern world. According to Lyotard:

"This breaking up of the grand Narratives leads to what some authors analyze in terms of the dissolution of the social bond and the disintegration of social aggregates into a mass of individual atoms thrown into the absurdity of Brownian motion. Nothing of the kind is happening: this point of view, it seems to me, is haunted by the paradisiac representation of a lost "organic" society. A self does not amount to much, but no self is an island; each exists in a fabric of relations that is now more complex and mobile than ever before. Young or old, man or woman, rich or poor, a person is always located at "nodal points" of specific

communication circuits, however tiny these may be. Or better: one is always located at a post through which various kinds of messages pass. No one, not even the least privileged among us, is ever entirely powerless over the messages that traverse and position him at the post of sender, addressee, or referent (Lyotard 1984, pp. 15)''.

Those who were trained in the grandeur and splendor of 'self' by the grand narratives find this above passage very disappointing because it punctures that grandeur of 'self', tasked with a historical function. The arguments like, 'a self does not amount to much', or that it is located at the nodal points in the communication network, or it is not determined by old class relations, are sufficient to create controversy. If this is the situation, then the knowledge most suitable for it would be the one that talks about performativity and optimization of the networks and messages rather than speculation and emancipation. You cannot emancipate a network; you can only optimize it with better and efficient interchangers at the nodal points.

From high pole of consciousness to message bearing entities in a network, determined not by class relations but by nodal points; the tragedy of moderns is the predicament of self in postmodern condition. One who has lived a high life for centuries would not be comfortable with this less than modest description of its present state; which explains much of the anger, frustration and disappointment it invokes. The answer generally given academically to this formulation involves these emotive reactions in reactive, regressive and progressive forms. It ranges between identifying it as new ideology of late capitalism, suitable for the world ruled by MNCs, to perpetuate itself in new conditions; to that of reverting to paradisiac world of organic unity; or taking it literally at face value thereby giving up all hopes for a common and sustainable future, which is not marred by the violence and exploitation of modernity.

Apart from these options presented above, this modest description of the 'self' and the world in terms of messages, networks and nodal points also offers a possibility of thinking anew about the world, the individual and where it has gone wrong. The philosophy which started with putting humans at the center of the universe and as the best creation in world ended up ironically, after a long period of adventurism, by putting them

in communication networks, at nodal points, as mere message bearing entities. If the rise was magnificent, the fall is simply spectacular. But when the spell is over and the feet is finally on the ground, we could perhaps better understand what messages these message bearing entities placed in a network are giving us about the 'self' and the 'world'. By listening to these message bearing angels, we could perhaps reclaim what we had abandoned long ago, the idea of a modest yet very durable 'self'.

What we have found from this brief incursion in history is the appearance of Iconoclasm which forms the subtext, the undercurrent, the propelling fire which has kindled the forward march of societies (mostly western) in history. From Judeo-Christian injunctions about the world to the postmodern cynicism, iconoclasm forms the leitmotif of every historical adventure. We have to be careful, not to confuse this leitmotif with the logic of history. We are not proposing any logical explanation of historical epochs, but rather an unwarranted modus operandi palpable in all the cosmological-ideological formulations dealing with the world and the construction of self in these formulations. It is this modus operandi, the act of iconoclasm which we have identified as 'original sin' in history. Just as theological- mythological 'original sin' of Adam resulted in the 'fall of man' in the world; the historical original sin committed by Abraham (breaking the idols of his people) forced this western civilization into history.

In the end, we can say by rephrasing Marx that all history has been a history of struggle against forms. It is this struggle against forms, by eternally returning and negating the negators gives the world history a semblance of forward march and it is this gesture that has been internalized in the 'selves' that emerged out of that struggles. In the next chapter we would discuss about the contours of that self that have emerged from these historical acts and in what ways it differs from that 'idea of self' that doesn't have the same historical lineages. It would be a comparative exposition of two different selves, having different genealogies.

Chapter 3: Two sources of ‘self’ and their two modes of existence

In the previous chapter, we discussed about the act of iconoclasm and how it is one of the leitmotifs of history. All the cosmologies that came after the fall of the antiquity had iconoclasm as one of their defining features and it was reflected in the ‘ideas of self’ that emerged from this cosmologies. In this chapter we would assemble all the things which we have articulated about the world previously to form a coherent ‘idea of self’ that could summarize all the acts and processes regarding the constitution of the world and the individuals in its ambit. We would try to present an elaborate idea of self, by tracing its sources and its mode of existence and linking them to the questions of multiplicity and unity. This chapter has tried to develop an elaborate theory of self and its variations.

This chapter has three aims. Firstly, to elaborate the distinction made by Gabriel Tarde between ‘to have’ and ‘to be’ as philosophy of being (Tarde 2012). In doing so, the concept of possession which forms an essential part of this distinction, would be enriched from the insights of recent anthropological literature, especially anthropology of science. The distinction would be examined using the concepts of ambulatory and salutatory relations (James 1978) so as to enable the understanding of the processes through which relations are forged and networks are extended, and to see more clearly the fundamental differences between ‘to have’ and ‘to be’. Once these differences are established, the second aim of the article is to locate the various modes of existence of these two formulations. In what ways, one can encounter and identify them in the world. For this purpose, we rely on the description of collectives (Latour 2004, 2005, 2013) and crowds (Canetti 1978). Third aim is to engage with the question of multiplicity and unity, keeping the idea of self as a reference point, to find out a way for integrating both. The task is to articulate a position where the self is not tossed between the extremes of multiplicity and unity, where one leads to the other and vice versa, so that we could refer the self in terms of fulfillment and not predicament.

3.1 The two sources of self: 'to have 'and 'to be'

*Rishi Durvasa*¹ was famous for his anger and he was not the only one known for this. There is a whole plethora of Rishis one can find in ancient texts who had a very fragile temper, or to say more accurately, were always in a state of anger without reason. Even the name Durvasa is an adjective, which suggests a person, whom one has difficulty staying with. These Rishis contradict the popular image of rishis as peaceful and tranquil personalities. So what makes these ancient figures full of anger, full of rage? One of the plausible explanations generally given associates these rageful manifestations of the rishis to the state of '*Tapas*'. *Tapas* as understood in the spiritual traditions, is a highly intense form of energy state and the person who embodies it is a manifestation of that sheer intensity. Pure rage, pure anger, without any reason or cause, without directed against anybody, has been one of the modes of existence of that sheer intensity of energy and the people, who sometimes come in the field of that intensity become unwarranted victims of this high energy. The self, possessing this energy in turn was possessed by this energy and the possibility of differentiating between the two, as possessor and the possessed simply cease to exist. It is the possession itself that gives the particular personality its individuality. Without this possession, the individual loses a part of its individuality.

Consider another example of this intense possession in the Homeric tales of ancient Greece. The Greek epic Iliad starts with the rage of Achilles and Homer sings the verses of appeal to the higher gods and goddesses before the epic battle. And when the prayer is successful, the warrior hero becomes possessed with an intense energy, unleashing its fury in the battle everywhere and against everybody. Peter Sloterdijk, while analyzing this epic fury in terms of intensity, says:

“In Homeric world it is not the human beings who have their passion but rather it is the passions that have their human beings. The accusative is still untamable. Given these circumstances, the one God remains of course absent. Theoretical monotheism can only gain power once the philosophers seriously postulate the propositional subject as the world

¹ Rishi Durvasa was an ancient sage, famous for his anger and ancient Hindu texts are full of stories about his short temper.

principle. Then the subjects are supposed to have their passions a well. Then the subjects are allowed to postulate themselves as the masters and owners of these passions, which can now be controlled. Until then, spontaneous pluralism reigns, a pluralism in which subjects and objects constantly exchange each other (Sloterdijk 2010, pp. 9) ”.

In the above passages, one thing that comes out clearly is the expression of energy using bodies as vessels, in their varied forms, from being a permanent state in the Rishis to a sudden outburst in the warrior. And till the time they possess the individual, they define its individuality. This conception of the individual as the collecting vessel, of the things outside of it, opens up the individual to the world in the process of creating its individuality anew and fresh. The world in this conception is active part of the individuating process since the things, which possess the individual exist outside of it, in the world. In this sense, the question about the world is also a question about the individual and the processes involved in the composition of the world are also responsible for the composition of the self.

At the macro level, if the worldview is to the world; the self is to the individual at the micro level. The same interchangers (Serres 1995) and totemic operators (Levi Strauss 1962) used in carving out and relating the entities in the world also carve out the self at the individual level. This idea about the self which considers the individual human being lying at the intersection of multiple forces and as the vessel of quanta of energies is not totally new in the realm philosophical speculations. The world of anthropology abounds with examples where the universe and the individuals are considered in terms of energies and forces². The world of Achilles and *Durvasa* was built on that conception, a world in which what comes to possess you, defines you; where possession has totally different range and scope, totally different ontological status as compared to its present status of being subservient to its master; the subject.

In the history of world that started after the first theocidal act, as we discussed previously, was a continuous fight against that idea of possession, against its ontological weight because it did not go well with the world view which gained prominence after that act. The new worldview that overtook the world had very few things to say about the world,

² See the works of Carlos Castaneda to get a glimpse of the world of forces and energies.

that is, it had very limited investment in the worldly things and therefore the idea of self, which relied on possessions to get its individuality, simply became untenable. The idea of self cannot remain disjointed from a worldview that treats the worldly possessions with disdain. The first act of iconoclasm was in fact an attack on the idea of possession; by destroying the idols of gods, it sabotaged the possessions of the people which were part of their inheritance and self-definition.

At this point, it is better to elaborate on the idea of possession which forms the ‘idea of self’ which we have taken as a reference point to evaluate the other dominant version of self in vogue for almost two thousand years. Possession, first of all has a relational aspect to it; it relates the possessor and the possessed in a way that is unique to that particular relation and unites them into one. Without that relational value attached to it, what is possessed simply becomes object and the possessor becomes a subject or master as manifested in subject/object dichotomy. The sociologist Gabriel Tarde has given a philosophy of ‘being’ which depends on possessions for its realizations. According to Tarde:

“All philosophy hitherto has been based on the verb Be, the definition of which was the philosopher’s stone, which all sought to discover. We may affirm that, if it had been based on the verb Have, many sterile debates and fruitless intellectual exertions would have been avoided. From this principle, I am, all the subtlety in the world has not made it possible to deduce any existence other than my own: hence the negation of external reality. If however, the postulate I have is posited as the fundamental fact, both that which has and that which is had are given inseparably at once. If having seems to indicate being, being surely implies having. Being, that hollow abstraction is never conceived except as the property of something, of some other being, which is itself composed of properties and so on to infinity. At root, the whole content of being is exhausted by the concept of having. But the converse is not true: being is not the whole content of the idea of property (Tarde 2012, pp. 52)”.

This philosophy of being in having, acknowledges the progressive role of possessions in realizing the individuality of a being, instead of that philosophy which considers the individual to be already realized in the image of creator and in sync with a principle. The philosophy of having establishes a relation between entities, with two terminal points, having their corresponding ontological status; one ending in the individual and the other terminating in the world. It is exactly in the same way in which knowledge is considered

to advance in pragmatic or empiricist theories; knowledge advances by creating on one side a more concrete reality and on the other side, a more knowing consciousness (James 1978, Latour 2013). Once the relation is established more concretely between the two entities, between the possessor and the possessed, it becomes part of the self-definition of the individual; and any destruction meted out to that outside entity also damages the part of the self-definition of the individual. The immanentization process, as discussed in the first chapter, by interrupting the existing relations, makes the truth more transcendental to the world while at the same time, making the ‘self’ more immanent, thereby restricting it merely to consciousness and speculations. In the philosophy of ‘having, idea of self is same as that of the idea of world. In this philosophy, self is a subset of the cosmos and human beings are only a part of the universe populated by multiple beings of varying forms and different truth values.

Being as having, enables one, not only to recognize the existence of entities in the world but also to categorize them in terms of priority, hierarchy and ultimately of varying ontological status. In this scheme, truth and false are not used in absolute terms as designation of anything, but have only relative value in terms of existence (Latour 1999, 2013). Any particular relation is either loosely worked out and fails the test or more concretely worked out so as to stand the trial and testing of its validity (Latour 2013). There are stages of existences on the ontological weighing machine; the heavier ones are more truthful than the lighter ones. To put it more succinctly in the words of Tarde: “Between being and non-being there is no middle term, whereas one can have more or less (Tarde 2012, pp. 52)”.

From this philosophy, it becomes amply clear that why a large portion of the religions and ideologies that have come to dominate the world in two thousand years have the doctrine of iconoclasm built into it. By attacking the possessions of the people, material as well as non-material, the new faiths tried to alter the landscapes of the ‘self’ so as to create the possibilities of a new ‘self’ which derived its definition from a single truth. In this sense, there are no modern selves as oppose to the traditional selves, secular selves as opposed to the religious selves. The only difference lies in the packing and the composition of the selves; one invests in the world and is defined by the world, the other

creates an isolated island in the world and thinks about the world from that position. Every blow of the hammer struck simultaneously at two places, resulting at empty landscapes, both in the world and in the 'self' (Latour 2010, Serres 2015).

In spite of the devastating work done by iconoclasts over years, the desire to possess, to have, has not been completely banished from the domain of self-definition of the individuals; it speaks of its persistence and stubbornness and which has filled the world, from antics to technological goods. In the absence of any relational model to make the possessions part of its self-definition, the subjects look at the objects with bewilderment; enchanted by them, they follow them everywhere, take hold of them at any cost but ultimately failing to make them their own (Serres 1982). Idols may have been removed from the altar and declared blasphemous, but that hasn't ended their power. They had simply gone underground and facilitated by smuggling industry made their way into the drawing room of the believers. Arnold van Gennep (2004), in his book *Rites of Passage* has shown how things are made a part of life; how they are imparted with a social life. The thing before its incorporation into the life-world of the individual has to pass through prescribed rituals; its rites have to be performed so as to make its transition possible. All things and all relations have a ritualized existence.

In the examples of Achilles and Durvasa, possession had come in the form of energy levels and intensity. But that's only one attribute of possession where being is completely identified with the force and power associated with the energy, where the distinction between the possessor and the possessed is merged into one. Apart from that, there are multiple ways and entities of possession. Broadly speaking, possession comes in two ways; tradition and innovation. It is handed out to the individuals through inheritance, lineage, and pedigree; extended through innovations, acquisitions and creative expressions. Individuals not only inherit property; house, land, furniture, cattle, assets from their predecessors but also gods, goddesses, rituals, festivals, idols, books, legends, totems, taboos, ancestry, reputation, tools, techniques, knowledge and finally prejudices. The things we inherit, apart from constituting our life world, also depend on us for their continued survival and persistence over ages. In so far as inheritor needs inheritance for survival, the inheritance needs inheritor for its propagation. The ancient Greek temples,

full of life and glitter, turned in no quick time, into ruins, once entry into them was declared illegal by kings, driven by new faith. In case of innovations and acquisitions, a new entity is incorporated into the life, which is already composed of inherited entities and when the integration is complete, is passed on to the next generation in the form of inheritance itself. According to Tarde:

“Whatever form possession takes, be it physical, chemical, vital, mental, or social, we must first distinguish whether it is unilateral or reciprocal, and second, whether it is established between an element and one or more other elements considered individually, or between an element and an indistinct group of other elements (Tarde 2012, pp. 55)”.

Now the possession can be unilateral or reciprocal depending upon the stage and strength of the relation. A possession can be unilateral when either it is newly acquired or the stage of its integration is in nascent state or when an individual refuses to own up the inheritance.

When an individual constantly refuses to own up his/her history, fights against the inheritance or simply abandons it; then the inheritance which needs the inheritor for its survival, unilaterally possess the individual without being reciprocated equally, and which after a generation or two, is squandered away. Most of the time, they vanish from the world and from the memory but sometimes just manage to survive as a floating mass in the vastness of the ocean, unable to find the shore. The newly concretized Christian-self did not own up its inheritance, the great pan; the line of network joining the great pan to the individual was disrupted by this reorientation and both fell out of this network into the chaos of meaninglessness. As Bruno Latour says that a being is gathered by other beings (Latour 1986), the moment this gathering is denied, these beings lose their significance.

Reciprocal possession happens when there exists a durability in the relation and there's an owning up of the entities as part of the scheme of existence. The second point which Tarde raised highlights the plural nature of any entity entering into a particular relation with another entity. The same element possessed by one entity in a particular relation can also be possessed by another entity in a different relation and so on. What is unique in every possession is the specificity of the relation which is not shared by any other

relation. Entering into a particular relation never exhausts the possibilities of an entity for further relations of different types in different places. This way of approaching the idea of possession opens up the possibility of considering the heterogeneity of the relations that exist in the universe. In this scheme, it is not only the humans that enter into relations with one another but also non- humans with non-humans, humans with non-humans. The domain of non-humans includes almost everything in its ambit; from gods, idols, animals, tools, energies, stars, mountains, rivers, fire and so on. One just has to go through the diverse number of relations documented by Claude Levi Strauss in the book titled *The Savage Mind*.

3.2 'To have' is to collectivize

The collectives that emerge from this heterogeneity in relations are not anthropocentric in nature; humans do occupy an important position in this but not the central or the dominant one and even among the humans, it's not an unqualified status given to all for all time and in every place. The collective, emerging from differentiated relations form a network like structure, which in recent times has been described using the analogy of communication network in cybernetics (Castells 2010, Habermas 1999, Luhmann 1989). Analogous to the nodal points in networks, these collectives are filled with entities (humans and non-humans), which have entered into different relations with one another, and at the same time, act as interchangers in extending the relations and facilitate the switching from one network to another network, from one relation to another. One thing should be remembered that the relations between two elements can only be forged when there has been a possibility of communication between them. The collectives which have forged these heterogeneous relations must have in place the required techniques and sensitivities needed to acknowledge, receive and encode the messages emanating from various entities, before they form part of the network.

The communication networks which Lyotard (1978) alluded, in his description of postmodern condition are designed for sending, receiving and optimization of messages. For this, the circuit is loaded with equipment at different points to carry out designated tasks; sensitive receivers, optimizers to filter out the noise from message, amplifiers, adducers, transponders and a whole array of instruments to make the transmission

possible. If any point develops a snag, transmission becomes difficult and at times completely disrupted, highlighting the importance of each and every point on the network. If everything works fine and as desired, then what we receive at the end could be called as a high quality message. Between noise and message, there is a whole army of mediators doing their work at every step to ensure this transmission and keeping the communication channel open and working. In fact, the *Shannon-weaver* model of communication is precisely based on this idea of sender, encoder, transmitter, noise and message, and resembles Lyotard's description of postmodern condition.

The filtering out of message from noise is not only the feature of communication channels but has been the common practice in every form of network. Every sensible activity is continuously engaged in what is generally known as creating order out of disorder. Anthropologists of sciences like Stengers and Latour have shown how scientific activities and scientists are involved in this persistent chaffing of message from noise, of creating order out of disorder, of meaning out of chaos.

Information theorist Leon Brillouin has traced the trajectory through which a statement travels to become meaningful and factual. Excess of information contained in a statement is synonymous with noise and renders it meaningless. While doing the ethnography of scientific laboratories, Bruno Latour used Brillouin's ideas of information to make sense of the enormous data and statements generated in the laboratories. He summarized it as follows.

“For Brillouin, information is a relation of probability; the more a statement differs from what is expected, the more information it contains. It follows that the central question for any participant advocating a statement in the agnostic field is how many alternative statements are equally probable. If a large number can easily be thought of, the original statement will be taken as meaningless and hardly distinguishable from others. If the others seem less likely than the original statement, the latter will stand out and be taken as a meaningful contribution (Latour 1986, pp. 240)”.

If these descriptions are kept in mind, then all relations and associations forming the network, all existence hitherto becomes this sorting out of order from disorder. This way of composing the world doesn't take anything for granted, doesn't believe in the out there-ness of the reality, and doesn't start with predefined givens. Instead, it continuously

creates multiple realities by bringing different entities from that undifferentiated chaos and forging new relations with the existing ones in the network. Both network formation and extension follow the same process, which William James (1978) referred to as pragmatism.

The creation of order is a one-time process but its maintenance is an ongoing everyday activity, otherwise the disorder from which it emerged would swallow it again. As in communication channels, installation may have a one-time cost but maintenance needs constant investment just to get things moving in a routine way. What Lyotard described as the postmodern condition; individuals located at particular points in a fabric of relations, acting simultaneously as an addressee and a sender, having language games as their resource to deal with messages passing through the nodal points; and we would come to realize that there is nothing new in this condition. That it has always been like that, no matter how far back in history we go, is a fact that modernists would be embarrassed to admit. With Lyotard, the failure of modernity did not lead to postmodern melancholia but rather to recovery and rearticulation of the practice of actively composing the world from undifferentiated chaos, of networks designed to transmit the message, of entities sensitive enough to receive and filter the messages from the noise.

Even the Christian world was composed on the basis of messages transmitted from the high point and extended through networks designed to carry the messages to distant lands (Serres 1995). Churches, missionaries, soul harvesting, Sunday masses, confessions, inquisitions ensured that the Christian never falls out of the network, into the chaos of paganism from which they emerged in the first place. It is this constant fear of paganism that keeps all the world religions on their toes, always suspicious about anything resembling paganism amidst their followers. The fear of the deluge is something inherent in these religious formations which make them implode from within, periodically. All reform movements were in some ways internal implosions, against suspicious pagan usurpation, against iconophilia. To put it in one line: iconoclasm maintains the order when threatened from all sides by iconophilic disorder.

In order to talk about self in any possible way, it is very important to talk about the world which it inhabits. The composition of the self is not very different from the composition

of the world. In sketching the world history, our whole point was to show the existence of two sources of world formations; all cosmologies and worldviews continuously engaged in the composition of the world, were emerging out from these two sources. From one source emerged cosmologies which invested heavily in the world, where things were still not objects and beings were not only humans. All anthropological societies, all societies with worldly gods, proliferating beings and forms (icons, images, idols, and things) belonged to this first source.

From the second source came worldviews which disinvested from the world, where things increasingly lost their thingness to objects; the *epoch of anthropocene*. Starting from the world religions to secular ideologies, the transformation has remained truthful to the source. Now the two sources are not generically opposed to each other; in fact what we are referring to as the second source emanates from the first source as its provisional results. In the first source, the mediating links create the passage from the starting point to the end point, from propositions to results. In the second source, the end results are taken as existing beforehand and mediating links deemed useless. In the former, unity is established through multiplicity at the ultimate level. In the latter, unity exists as absolute and preceding multiplicities are falsified.

Both types of world formations employ message encrypting and deciphering techniques in establishing relations and extending networks. But in the first case, the message bearing entities are granted the status of beinghood which are encountered by other beings integrated in the networks while in the second, the being in the network discovers the message hidden in the darkness of the dead world. The wind that blows, the stars that shine, the water that flows, the fire that burns, the earth that feeds, the sky that envelops, the feelings that overwhelm are all message bearing entities with whom one has to establish a communication link to form a network. The only difference being that in the first formation, they articulate while in the second, they are discovered by the thinking being. The need to transmit messages from the God forced even the Christian authorities, who had done away with the multiplicity of beings, to establish communication channels between two worlds through ephemeral message bearing angels (Serres 1995).

While discussing about the ‘idea of self’ with its source in ‘to have’, we found that it establishes relations with the world in the form of possession. One can possess only when one has established a relation (unilateral or reciprocal) with an entity to be possessed. Establishing a relation employs all the techniques of information theory and has message bearing and receiving entities, interchangers to translate the signals, filtering message from noise; to create order out of disorder. The relational world weaved by being as having has been described as collective, resembling networks in cybernetics.

But in what ways, does the second source of self, ‘to be’, find expression and what is its mode of existence? We know that ‘To be’ starts with concretized essences, already framed beings, standing totally autonomous from any relation or mediating link having a role in its framing. Just as ‘to have’ collectivizes in order to exist; what does ‘to be’ accomplish to retain its character of an ideal state. ‘To be’ frames an already individualized entity having its share of free will, consciousness, autonomy, and agency. It doesn’t have any antecedents or consequents. It has a realized unity in the capital I, forever. But what happens to the multiplicity with which a being is entangled in the world and what is its status in the unity where ‘to be’ finds expression?

3.3 ‘To be’ is to belong to a crowd

Only in imperialistic designs, power is deemed as indivisible and cannot be shared. One which desires to speak for everyone without listening to them, even without considering them, may succeed in doing so, but that ‘One’ would not be termed as a unity. In its short moment of glory, it could appear as unity but it is destined to be overthrown from the seat of unity sooner or later. The tragedy of the west is that it has always been replaced by another ‘One’ speaking for everyone in the same tone and vanity. Elias Canetti (1978) in his book titled *Crowds and Power* recounts a story where a king was so obsessed with his power that he did not want to share power with his children also and killed each and every one of them just to possess it undivided. Perhaps he didn’t know that death would disrobe him of his power one day. Coming back to the question of unity, we can say that the history of all existing unities hitherto has been the history of zealotry towards power; Unities as and when proclaimed in history.

Since we have invoked Elias Canetti work on crowds and power, it is pertinent to ask why he talked about crowds and power together, or what is the link between crowds and power? Normal sociology tells us that the antonym of individual is society or collective. In their analysis, collectives and individuals are two antipodes within which the movements of forces, evolutionary or progressive take place. Traditional societies are collective in nature; modern societies are highly individualistic in nature. And it is precisely here that we want to differ from this description of societies and individuals.

The antonym of individual is not collective but crowd. In fact individual and collective are part of the same network, analogical to information network. It is in the crowds that the individual loses its individuality, its specificity, its uniqueness, and not in collectives. Reformulating the normal sociological division in anthropological terms, the traditional societies are collectives and modern societies are crowds. One of the peculiar features of crowds, as Elias Canetti puts it is that they are distinguished by equality. They are highly homogenous in nature and every shred of distinction is subsumed in the equalizing force of the crowd formation. As Canetti said:

“The most important occurrence within the crowd is the discharge. Before this the crowd does not actually exist, it is the discharge which creates it. This is the moment when all who belong to the crowd get rid of the differences and feel equal (Canetti 1978, pp.17)”.

Further, he adds, that:

“In the crowd the individual feels that he is transcending the limits of his person. He has a sense of relief, for the distances are removed which used to throw him back on himself and shut him in (Canetti 1978, pp. 20)”.

He made a distinction between open and closed crowds as well as temporary and permanent crowds. Open crowds are generally spontaneous creations and disburse after the discharge has taken place in the form of vandalism and sabotage (Canetti 1978). They are temporary in nature since they are automatically dissolved once the heightened emotions are cooled off after the act of vandalism had taken place. The effacement of the individual in the equalizing force of the discharge gives the crowd its enormous destructive powers. As far as closed crowds are concerned, they are more carefully constructed so as to have permanence and the entry of the individuals in that formation is

not open to all. It places a boundary to control the uncontrolled rapid swelling and also to prevent the crowd from easy dispersion (Canetti 1978).

According to Canetti (1978), the world religions have mastered the domestication of closed crowds in history. Discharge, which always threatens the crowd into sudden dispersion, has been tackled in world religions by postponing them in order to align them with theological and eschatological goals (Canetti 1978). The crowds are maintained in heightened state of emotions by differentiating them against external enemies i.e. pagans, non-believers and class enemies and internally directed against all symbols of differentiations. The eruption of the crowd, if it happens, is directed against both the internal and external forms of differentiations and hierarchies. The discharge of open crowds in the form of vandalism is transformed into iconoclasm of the closed crowds of world religions, removing any trace whatsoever in the path of equalizing forces. As he points out that “the destruction of representational images is the destruction of a hierarchy which is no longer recognized. In this act the discharge accomplishes itself (Canetti 1978, pp.19)”. It is no wonder that the idea of equality and brotherhood has not been shunned by modern secular ideologies even though they have very readily discarded the religions which professed it. The power it releases by transforming the differentiated individuals into a frenzied mob of equals is of such immense proportion that nothing could stand in front of its way. The entire crowd becomes one large ball of intense energy which may hold for a moment before discharging itself in extremely violent manifestations.

Equality, understood as a total absence of differentiation, hierarchy, and specificity can only be achieved inside a frenzied mob. Once it cools down, people again become unequal and return to their specificities. This power of equalizing forces has been recognized and domesticated in world religions and ideologies. The more the emphasis on equality is placed in any religious or secular sects, the greater is its rage capital and investments. Peter Sloterdijk has defined these world historical formations as *Rage banks* (Sloterdijk 2010), investing in the individuals with an aim of high returns just like venture capitalists. An assessment is done by conducting regular assemblies for preventing wasteful dissipation.

The ‘idea of self’ of an individual who belongs to the mob or the closed crowds is in contradistinction with the ‘idea of self’ of an individual before entering the crowd or after returning from the crowd. The first one is in the form of heightened energy; rage and frenzy destroys all the multiple existing relations and symbols of individuality to dissolve the individual into an undifferentiated mass with very few open channels to direct the surplus energy. The second one, as we have discussed above resembles something like information networks, possessing relations and symbols as part of its individuality. The first one exists as ‘to be’ while the second one exists as ‘to have’.

Going by this description of crowds and individuals, we can say that the state of western individual for a long time, at least for almost 2000 years is that it has always been forced to live inside closed crowds of different persuasions and order. And when people are dulled by equality and excitement of one particular crowd, they have join another crowd of much stronger egalitarian push and therefore of heightened intensity and excitement. All the revolutions and counter-revolutions have replaced one crowd with another crowd of higher intensity and force.

Karl Popper (1966) has written about open society and its enemies and has included Plato along with Hegel and Marx, almost separated by 2000 years of history. It is the same time span of 2000 years separated by Plato and Marx, which we are covering in our description of the history of the idea of self. What Popper missed to point out, is that the enemy had succeeded in closing the society through its successor, much before Hegel and Marx came on the scene. Christianity, the true platonic successor (Sloterdijk 2013), indeed transformed the open society and its inhabitants into a closed crowd of believers fired by faith and driven by an ideal of true God, in history. Sometimes that crowd is driven by emotionally powered unity of varying shades, sometimes it is driven by logically powered unity with its various shades. It is in these successions and succession struggles that historians saw logic, necessity, dialectics, evolution and stages of civilization. They never saw the movement of crowds fired by different rage regimes and driven by ill formed unities. As Canetti puts it more harshly:

“Power has never lacked eulogists and historians, who are professionally obsessed with it, can explain anything by the times or by necessity, which in their hands can assume any and every shape (Canetti 1978, pp. 434)”.

Perhaps what they did was to accord the different crowds, which were more powerful at different points of time by giving them the legitimacy through logic and necessity and making them at par with the previous crowds overpowered by them. Almost every crowd of whatever persuasion has got a place in the ladder of history, designed just for the sake of adjusting them. History in one sense is about justification of the crowds. And that same justificatory ladder became the yard stick for judging every society which successfully thwarted any crowd forming tendencies of the closed and permanent kind.

So what explains the postmodern condition or the predicament of the individual inhabiting the postmodern world? It can best be explained by the revulsions towards any claim of unities and the absence of any rage regimes driving those ill formed unities. Closed crowds can only be sustained as a dense mass of undifferentiated individuals if and only if it is fired by intense energy levels. Once that intensity and enthusiasm is dulled, disintegration and disorder can set in. Individuals in the postmodern age form what are known as *lonely crowds*. The absence of any teleological or eschatological goals and the insufficiency of the energy levels to fire up the cauldron into molding the individuals into a solid mass leave the individuals loosely packed and disoriented.

This state of affairs has resulted in formulations about society in terms of liquidity (Bauman 2000), lightness (Kundera 2005), multiculturalism (Zizek 1997), consumerism (Baudrillard 1998; Jameson 1988), where individual's sole motivations seem driven by pleasure principle; of instant self-gratification and looking for anything, that can bring about momentary blasts of excitement and adrenalin rush. Anything which is strange, queer, and new and which can guarantee a certain level of high, which can give relief from the codified mundane existence of everydayness, is sought after, which may not have any relation to use value or exchange value, the sacred principles of modernity. A new class of individuals have occupied the scene, of permanent travellers who continuously look out for exotic places, connoisseurs of food, music, and art; collectors of ethnic and tribal artifacts as well as of antics. Going by a rough estimate, the antic idols smuggling industry runs in hundreds of crores of rupees.

The idea of juxtaposition conveys this new cultural phenomenon, where shelves of these individuals are populated with totally bizarre collections. A Mayan craft could occupy an

adjacent position with a Picasso painting on the wall of a person who is totally unaware of the specific aesthetic sensibilities of both the worlds that produced these kinds of paintings. There has also been a proliferation in the use of different chemical drugs as well as of adventure sports having high risk factor. They both act as a substitute for the absence of any powerful emotional stimulus and intensity in life. The 'idea of self' designed for the pursuit of a unity with complete zealousness up to the modern period is now doomed to chase and collect the diversity, high on steroids. Both these positions have inbuilt construction lacunae because of their extremity. There is ephemerality in the nature of individual existence in every sphere of life nowadays. There is short-livedness in the things we possess and the relations we forge because of the desire to continuously explore the new and the varied. Milan Kundera's book '*The unbearable lightness of being*' is a profound statement on the present state of being: the hopeless desire of exploring the diversity through the limitations of physicality³. This desire automatically creates a firewall against any attempt towards durability. A unity constructed at the cost of multiplicities is imperialism and a relentless chasing of diversity through physicality can only lead to exhaustion without any sight of unification.

The only way out from this position of choosing either of the two, either multiplicity or unity, could be a reassessment of the whole idea of unity and multiplicity so as to bring out their conjugality and their compatibility. Then only we could see the thread which joins the multiplicity to unity in their path of realization.

3.4 The question of multiplicity and unity

A major problem of the social sciences has to do with its inability in dealing with the ideas of multiplicity and unity simultaneously. Perhaps genesis of social sciences as discipline explains part of its predicament. The inception of the discipline was amidst the raging wars between idealism and materialism of the late 19th century Europe, fought in the realm of individuals and societies. Both posited unity of some kind or the other, starting with spirit or with matter, at the level of humans. The question of multiplicity was simply abandoned as if it was not in the design of the world, a world which already had or moving to have a rational unity of all things. Philosophers like William James

³ The protagonist in the novel chases the diversity in the sexual realm of life.

were the only few who were sensitive to the questions of multiplicity of world without neglecting the ideas of unity. Instead of fighting it out by joining one of the camps, William James tried to resolve it by raising the pragmatic question: what difference does it make if the question is considered in one way rather than the other?

“What do you mean by matter? What practical difference can it make now that world should be run by matter or by spirit? I think that the problem takes with this a rather different character (James 1978, pp. 50)”.

Further he added:

“Thus if no future detail of experience or conduct is to be deduced from our hypothesis, the debate between materialism and theism becomes quite idle and insignificant” (James 1978, pp. 52).

Applying this pragmatic test on the debates between idealism and materialism, it turned out, after much historical evidence now and even then, that practically both talked about the same thing and in almost same vocabulary: the rational unity of all things in a premature way. Contrary to this, William James propounded the idea of pragmatistically unified and ameliorated world. According to this definition, pragmatistically unified world is not an already completed world, as in idealism but a diversified and plural world that may converge in the future into some kind of unity, which cannot be envisaged definitely in the present world (James 1978). Contrary to the absolute unity of rationalism, the coming unity would be ultimate in nature, where all the diverse realities would merge together without losing their specificities in the middle of the process (James 1978). The possible unity will not truncate and invalidate the multiplicity as false and superfluous.

Coming back to the social sciences, the preoccupation with the rationalistic unity has informed to a large extent its subject matter and methods employed for investigation. The subject matter, as we know was society and individuals and the method was scientific, as elaborated in late 19th century science. The Humboldtian model of education had created an example for the investigation and dissemination of scientific truth, a truth that would be sufficient enough to take care of everything else (Lyotard 1984). The methods paved the way for the scientific investigation of individuals and societies, to look out for hidden principles governing the life and behavior of individuals and societies. It comes as no

surprise that the theories of individuals and societies formulated in social sciences had same predilection for the premature unity as prevalent in sciences. The individual was already a unified being on the rational lines, a unity affected by certain principles inside the mind of the thinking being. On similar lines, society was also considered a unified entity 'sui generis' with their corresponding underlying features. Positivism, functionalism, structuralism, structural functionalism all had something underlying principles for the prematurely unified individual and society.

When the spell of unity based on scientific rationality was broken by the events of the 20th century, any talk of unity in any sense was enough to arouse horrors of the past. It started the age of another extreme, of multiplicity without unity, of relativity with no common ground. Tolerance and peace can become principal virtues only in a world from where unity has been shunned forever, where multitudes and relativities swarm with no hope for a grander claim of possible unification and universalism. Social sciences in its first stage rejected multiplicity as a superfluous obstruction toward realization of unity, and in the second stage, multiplicities were embraced in a new disdain for the unity. Its predicament was that it couldn't talk about multiplicity and unity in the same breath, and so were its predecessors.

In the first chapter we had seen the continuities between the pre- Christian platonic philosophy, Christian theology of middle ages and scientific rationality of modernity. Each inherited the same question of unity from its predecessors and answered it in its peculiar way. The ideal forms, the ideal God, the ideal laws were three different formulations carved out using specific templates present in the individual. All these unities were nothing but a premature proclamation to universalism of something written on a particular template with no consideration for other templates.

The Christian unity was written on the template of emotions and feelings and every other template was subordinated to the service of that absolute unity. That absolute unity was known as the God and every thought, instinct and intuition, even intellect and logical thinking had no other purpose other than the service of God. As G.I Gurdjieff had pointed out that at one point of time in scholasticism, the heated debate was about how many angels could come at the point of a needle (Ouspensky 1975). The scientific unity

emerging after the fall of the Christian unity, totally discarded the unity written on emotional template. Instead Science formulated its unity entirely on the intellectual template, leaving other templates unfit for writing the unity just like its predecessor. Humboldt's declaration that scientific truth would take care of everything else was an implicit acknowledgement of the superior quality of the truth written on the intellectual template.

The assumptions for this unity were that the thinking and the logical mind can never go wrong, unlike the pitfalls and entrapments of the unity coming from the subjective mind. The role which Christian scholastics played in the Middle Ages, i.e. using intellect in the service of the emotional God, the same role was taken over by ideologues in the scientific age but the other way round. The emotional template was put in the defense of logical unity. All the ideologies make use of the emotional template, invoking hope, fear, rage, love, empathy and hatred in a heady cocktail to make a case for the scientific understanding of society and paving the way for the emancipation and salvation of masses. The overall result was a sense of déjà vu in the modern period, a repetition of the same kinds of crimes as they happened in the Christian middle ages.

If the medieval Christian order couldn't tolerate any dissident on the emotional-logical order it had created; the modern revolutionary order couldn't tolerate any disagreement on the logical-emotional order they had created for the masses. The unenthusiastic was labeled as reactionary or class enemy and who most of the times had to be annihilated. From inquisitions to class war, the transfer of rage happened in the same way as the transference of unity from the emotional to the intellectual template. Peter Sloterdijk has very incisively labeled all these unity formulations i.e. Christianity, Islam, and Marxism as *Rage banks* (Sloterdijk 2010).

What is popularly known as the postmodern age is nothing but the discrediting even of the intellect also. May be that is why the most common symptoms of postmodern conditions are the withdrawing of the individual from the public sphere, melancholia and disenchantment with any high sounding formulations (Sloterdijk 2001). The idea of self as 'to be' simply lost its sheen and vitality because it itself sounded like a grand theory of emancipation and liberation and which couldn't be trusted after what they resulted in

their wake. It occurred to nobody (except few) to see the predominance of any particular template in the formulations of the hitherto exiting unities and grand theories, religious or scientific. Theories become grand not by proclaiming it from the grand towers with power but from the inclusions and exclusions they are making. Instead the qualifying criteria became whether it is subjective or objective.

The fight between subjectivity and objectivity, which has bogged down scholars in a never ending debate, turns out to be a fight for getting the exclusive rights for a particular template. World would have become a nice place and unwanted violence could have been avoided if all the templates were given their due share and scope in the formulation of theories and unities.

Different templates allow different access to realities which are not superior or inferior to one another as the world itself can be experienced in multiple ways and can have multiple realities. Inability to comprehend the multiplicity of experience of the world has resulted in movements and counter movements of extreme polarities. Emotional scenography was challenged by the intellectual rebellion. Cold and mechanical scientific scenography was challenged by the warm and individualistic romanticism of Germany. Hard and Positivistic social theories were challenged by the emasculation of the critical theories. God was pitted against man, emotions were pitted against logic, nature was pitted against culture, subjectivity was pitted against objectivity, and masculine was pitted against feminine.

We would now discuss the ideas of unity and multiplicity, as something complementing each other, in relation to the ideas of being as ‘to have’ and ‘to be’, by elaborating two examples, taken from the realms of metaphysics and spirituality simultaneously. The idea of being would remain incomplete, if we would not look in to the question of unity envisaged in spiritual traditions. The handling of the question of multiplicity and unity in spiritual traditions could give us a cue to frame our ‘idea of self’, in more extensive way.

3.5 Heidegger's *being* and Gurdjieff's *Obyvatel*

To elaborate more clearly on what do we mean by term 'to have', when we try to understand being in this way rather than the other, we have to look out for Heidegger's formulations of being. What it means to have? Insofar as we can make out, for Heidegger, being exists in dwelling. Dwelling is about experiencing the presence of the fourfold (earth, sky, divinities and mortals) in the things.

“Dwelling itself is always a staying with things. Dwelling, as preserving, keeps the fourfold in that with which mortals stay: in things. Staying with things, however, is not merely something attached to this fourfold preserving as a fifth something. On the contrary: staying with things is the only way in which the fourfold stay within the fourfold is accomplished at any time in simple unity. Dwelling preserves the fourfold by bringing the presencing of the fourfold into things. But things themselves secure the fourfold only when they themselves as things are let be in their presencing. How is this done? In this way, that mortals nurse and nurture the things that grow and specially construct things that do not grow. Cultivating and construction are building in the narrower sense. Dwelling, insofar as it keeps or secures the fourfold in things, is, as this keeping, a building (Heidegger 1975, pp.151)”.

The above mentioned passage clearly stated what it means to dwell. Dwelling happens with things but it is important to note that the things are not objects as we understand them today. How something becomes a thing? And how staying with the things as things is possible? This is made possible by dwelling whose fundamental character lies in *sparing and preserving*. He explained these two terms as following:

“The sparing itself consists not only in the fact that we do not harm the one we spare. Real sparing is something positive and takes place when we leave something beforehand in its own nature, when we return it specifically to its being, when we “free” it in the real sense of the word into a preserve of peace. To dwell, to be set at peace, means to remain at peace within the free, the preserve, the free sphere that safeguards each thing in its nature (Heidegger 1975, pp.149)”.

The thing, in Heideggerian terms, gathers the world, the fourfold into the onefold, into itself. A thing is not an object; it is about gathering the world into a single time-space. The plight of being in modernity lies, according to Heidegger, in its inability to think about dwelling as dwelling with things as thing. They are not learning to dwell with things; they are not sparing, preserving, gathering and presencing the world into a thing.

Science's knowledge, which is compelling within its own sphere, the sphere of objects, already had annihilated things as things long before the atom bomb exploded. The bomb's explosion is only the grossest of all gross confirmations of the long since accomplished annihilations of the thing: the confirmation that the thing as a thing remains nil (Heidegger 1975, pp.170).

There is no reason to disagree with the above formulation about science's annihilation of thing as thing with only a slight variation that in our hypothesis, this annihilation started long back in history, almost 2000 years back. Scientific knowledge was only the final nail in the coffin of thing as thing. As we have hinted earlier, the history of the world can also be attempted in the form of transition from the thing to the object. A particular point in history could be depicted in terms of relative population of things and objects, starting with all things and no objects and ending with all objects and no things.

It may be instructive to compare Heidegger's metaphysics of being with Gurdjieff's idea of Obyvatel. Gurdjieff was no philosopher; he was a mystic from Russia and one of the rare types to be found in modern western history of spiritualism and mysticism. He called himself a practitioner of esoteric Christianity, as narrated by his disciple P.D Ouspensky.

Individuality, for Gurdjieff, was not something inherent and default in the individual. Individuality is a kind of event which happens to an individual and most of them remain without it. Most of the individuals have personality but no individuality. The personality is an outcome of external factors, which he represents in the form of multiple small *i*^s. The individuality represented by big capital *I* is the outcome of the capacity of integrate these small *i*^s into a unified *I*, which most of the individuals are not capable of doing it.

“Man has no individual *I*. but there are, instead hundreds and thousands of separate small *i*^s, very often entirely unknown to one another, never coming into contact, or on the contrary, hostile to each other, mutually exclusive and incompatible. Each moment, each minute, man is saying or thinking *I*. And each time his *I* is different. Just now it was a thought, now it is a desire, now a sensation, now another thought and so on, endlessly. Man is plurality. Man's name is legion (Ouspensky 1975, pp.59)”.

Further he adds that:

“The alteration of *i*^s, their continual struggle for supremacy, is controlled by accidental external influences. There is nothing in man, able to control

this change of i^s , chiefly because man does not notice, or know of it; he lives always in the last I, some i^s , of course are stronger than others. But it is not their conscious strength; they have been created by the strength of accidents or mechanical external stimuli. Education, imitation, reading, the hypnotism of religion, caste, and traditions or the glamour of new slogans, create very strong I s in the man's personality, which dominate whole series of the weaker I s (Ouspensky 1975, pp. 59-60)".

Post-enlightenment Europe saw the emergence of modern man endowed with certain qualities to differentiate them from their predecessors, who were endowed with the God having same qualities. Lucid consciousness, free will, permanent ego or I, and the ability to do were the attributes of the modern man, which in reality could only be attributed to the individual who has attained individuality; the capita I. Individuals possessing multiple i^s with no possibility of mastering and unifying these multiplicities cannot claim to have these qualities. For Gurdjieff, there are only two ways of initiating and affecting that unification; one by turning inwards and second by becoming Obyvatel. Turning inwards means working on oneself and gaining mastery over the energy sources through practices best elaborated in yogic traditions. This has been referred to as mysticism in common parlance and therefore is not recognized in the social sciences as a method. The second method, of Obyvatel, talks about the world and resembles Heideggerian ideas of being and dwelling. Obyvatel is a Russian word which is loosely translated as an inhabitant. The Obyvatel *recognizes* the thingness of a thing, that is, he allows the things the space for articulation and understands their power.

"The Obyvatel perhaps may not know it in a philosophical way, that is to say, he is not able to formulate it, but he knows that things 'do themselves' simply through his own practical shrewdness, therefore, in his heart, he laughs at people who think or who want to assure him, that they signify anything, that anything depends on their decision, that they can change or in general do anything. This for him is not being serious. And an understanding of what is not serious can help him to value that which is serious (Ouspensky 1975, pp.365)".

The way Obyvatel inhabits is similar to the way in which being's dwell. One recognizes, other spares and preserves. In both these modes of existence, the world is taken into account, the thing as thing is spared and recognized and made to gather the multiplicity of the world to ensure dwelling and inhabitation. Both these ways of looking at the existence, one coming from philosophy and other from metaphysics, highlight the

similarities in approaching the world. To exist is to dwell, to have a relationship with the world, to have the presencing of the world in to the thing, to have the thing as a thing and to dwell with the thing. The vastness of the idea of 'to have' can subsume 'to be' in its entirety, where 'to be' occurs just as a moment in ever expanding trajectory of having.

The idea of self as having presents the individuals with possibility of realization, of attaining individuality and unification. Otherwise it cannot avoid the trauma of being dragged by the crowds towards an ill formed unity, doing grave injustice to itself and to the world. As we have seen in history, 'to be', pure and simple, without any sense of having can always lead to crowd formations, determined to flatten the worldly landscapes in their ferocity. It sometimes happen that the ideal, the idea of 'to be' is vanished leaving behind empty individuals in lonely crowds. Could it be the reason, the absence of the unifying ideal that has resulted disenchanting individuals and lonely crowds? We would take up this question in the next chapter when we would discuss the 20th century political landscapes in the west.

3.6 Unity as the ultimate destination of multiplicities

In order to talk about multiplicity and unity in the same breath without falling in the trap of two extremities, we first have to demolish the bifurcation between physics and metaphysics or between social and spiritual. The philosophies which have tried to tackle the question of both multiplicity and unity have been relegated to the domains of mysticism and spiritualism under the niche of perennial philosophy. The classification of something as perennial philosophy significantly truncates its power of intervention in the academic discussions. It loses its scholarly value in the domain of social sciences and is considered an esoteric time pass for few people trying to take a high moral ground with no practical relevance to social processes.

But we know that these are only superficial observations regarding the realm and content of mysticism, which has nothing to do with morality as such. In fact what is contrary is true, for we know that genesis of social sciences is steeped in Judeo-Christian morality. Social science has hitherto preached morality in the garb of scientific understanding of society. The division between spirit and matter forms the bedrock western idealism as well as materialism. It is this division that has informed the all the ideas about world,

society and individuals. It is one of the two sources of the idea of self which we described as 'to be' initially.

In most of the spiritual traditions, there is no such division between matter and spirit. Both matter and spirit are manifestations of different levels of energy consolidations. From matter to spirit, we move from coarser to subtler forms of energy consolidations. In this scheme of things, old divisions do not hold. One can traverse from the microcosm to macrocosm and vice versa, with help of proper tools and interchangers, who form part of that elongated network. Celestial bodies and earthly bodies are related in ways which are totally unimaginable when we start with bifurcations. They possess each other, they have each other. The journey from matter to spirit, in these traditions is a journey from form to formless. You don't have to be a believer to believe in the supremacy of the formless without any doubt, posing it against the multiple visible forms. We can simply avoid this illogical choice between forms and formless just by perceiving them as energy states. There comes a terminal point when energy of a particular intensity cannot be packed in to mass, where the limit of form is realized in holding that intense energy. Consolidation becomes impossible at this stage and it gives way to the formless. This forms the source of idea of self which we described as 'to have'.

We can use William James's formulations about salutatory and ambulatory truths (James 1978) to house this Gabriel Tarde's distinction between 'to have' and 'to be' to understand the nature of being. This conjunction enables us to understand the question of being in terms of larger questions of truths and unity. In other words, the question of being is no different from the question of truth, or the ideas of self are also about the ideas of the world. The self represents the cosmology in which it is placed.

Ambulatory truths are, according to James, relational, depending upon intermediaries and intervening experiences through determinate ambulation from one terminal to another terminal. Salutatory truths are obtained when the intermediaries are truncated as empty intervals and nothing remains between the two terminals. Going by this logic, 'to have' follows ambulatory mode of establishing truths and 'to be' is the outcome salutatory operations on the established truths. When 'to have' is truncated of all its intermediaries, sequences, possessions, and belongings, what we achieve in the end is a 'to be' version of

self, where everything is concretized, eternal and by default. Where becoming is not possible because being is already realized. There is no individuation, only individuality.

With this we come to the end of this chapter, that also forms the fulcrum of the overall study of the ‘idea of self’ and their different varieties. All historical as well as non-historical selves could be viewed and analyzed from this categorization of self into two sources and their two modes of existence. This comparative study of the self could help us to distill the outcomes of all the historical processes and events that shaped up the western history in the language of self and its destiny. In the next chapter, we would carry forward this discussion of mutations of self, by focusing on a particular type of self, *political self* that emerged in the 20th century that would help us in understanding the pots-war period in Europe and the rise of management discourse.

Chapter 4: The final frontier of self; modulation and the management discourse.

“It is said that the history of peoples who have a history is the history of class struggle. It might be said with at least as much truthfulness, that the history of peoples without history is a history of their struggle against the state (Clastres 1989, pp.218)”.

“It is harder to grasp why so many well intended schemes to improve the human condition have gone so tragically awry (Scott 1998, pp.4)”.

Following Nietzsche’s dictum of ‘death of god’; Modernism can be defined as the period when ideologies gained upper hand from the theological systems as legitimate organizing principles of society. This chapter has tried to look at the contours of the ‘idea of self’ which emerged in the late 19th and 20th century Europe. The chapter argues that the dominant character of the emerged ‘*idea of the self*’ was political in nature and it had ‘state’ as one of the important center of concretization. Further in the chapter, we would trace the impact of events in the post-war Europe, described as post-modern condition in the ideologies of self, especially the rise of management discourse in popular culture. The features of *political self* would be compared with features of self, emerging from the management discourse to see the changes in the theorization about self and its destiny.

4.1 The rise of the political self

Launching welfare schemes is not a new phenomenon, nor is it a pejorative of the state only. What James Scott (1998) discussed in his book was limited to the State or more specifically to high modernist states in the 20th century. A brief sojourn in history, at least with the advent of Christianity, would reveal that this has always been the case, at least for two millenniums in western societies (Sloterdijk 2001, 2010). The theological-spiritual schemes of Christianity were intended to emancipate and enlighten the individuals and societies from their heathen blindness (Balgangadhara 2005); or at least they claimed to do so; to achieve equality before god and among themselves. The machinery of church was entrusted with the delivery of benefits envisioned in the

schemes. When these schemes went awry, new schemes based on scientific rationality were commissioned to undo the injustices done by the first schemes and which we know by the name of renaissance and enlightenment.

In the last phase of enlightenment period, after the tenure of theological and scientific modes, there came another mode of existence, the '*political self*'. If the theological self was designed to wait for divine grace; the scientific self was designed to be rational, then this new '*political self*' had been designed to seek power and think power. And the repository of this new self, *the political self*, was none other than the seat of power, the State (Foucault 1995, 2001).

It is not that the institution of state was not there before or it was not powerful earlier. In fact in the previous modes of existence, state is one of the coercive powers to make their writ more powerful and efficient. State had always been in existence, at least as far as we can go back in history. Even when the papacy was ruling the lives of people, the institution of state was there with its full organizational machinery. When science was revolting against the old world order, trying to replace the reign of theological self with that of scientific self (Stengers 1984), the state with its well-oiled machinery was there as a coercive power enabling and extending the writ of science (Shapin and Schaffer 1985). The popular knowledge about the separation of state and church in the middle ages was nothing but a realignment of the coercive power of the state from papacy to keepers of science.

This realignment in state authority doesn't mean that the replaced mode is totally vanished from the picture; it simply ceases to be the deciding and defining mode. It exists but cannot decide, as we could see from the fate of religion in Europe. To take authority away from the previous mode of existence, the monarchical state fought a fierce battle, aided sometimes by gnostic sects (Voegelin 1952), sometimes by the science and freed itself from the clutches of papacy. It is only in the 19th century that the seat of power, the machinery of state blossomed as an arbiter of all the modes of existence.

This paved the way for its unbridled universalization as the only mode of existence. From then on, the state became the epicenter for the delivery and execution of welfare schemes

launched to improve the human condition. The emphasis on science education on the Humboldtian method in the middle of 19th century was the time when the attempt to understand the science and dynamics of societies gained prominence (Lyotard 1984). The endeavor to understand societies, their structures and operating principles in a post-theological framework informed all the ideologies that emerged at that time, the most prominent example being Marxism.

The most striking feature of all those theories was the centrality that was accorded to the institution of state, whether in support or in opposition to it. The explanation of society as an ensemble of class relations, one exploiting the other through the power of the state, a power that had to be captured to overturn the power relations, for the subsequent creation of a classless society without state was in a way a replication of the Christian theatrics enacted millenniums ago against the pagans of Europe. The need of state power to overthrow power, the redirection of rage against a group perceived as oppressor and creation of kingdom heaven were few similarities between them that could hardly be called coincidence. Pagan, non-believer, bourgeois, and class enemy; the terminology may be different but the style of politics is same

Coming back to the explanation of society rife from that point of time, the theories made distinctions between different types of societies based on the type of state formations they had (Clastres 1989). Based on the assumption of state as an all-powerful and all-embracing institution, societies were hierarchized; top occupied by modern western societies living within the state and bottom, by primitive societies having statelessness. Whatever reactions and justifications these categorizations evoke, they certainly set the paradigm of perceiving things in a particular way.

Thus an eternal theme recurs in the course of universals commissioned in western history. When it was Christianized, every other society became godless; when it was scientized, every other mode of thinking was deemed irrational; when it was secularized, everything about the other was seeped in religiosity; when there was statization, every other form of authority was merged in statelessness; when there was surplus of production, every other form of production became subsistence type. The concretization of state as the epicenter of society also saw a concomitant reshuffling happening in relation of individuals with

other individuals. Where state has been more prominent, individuals are more chiseled in terms of their individuality and autonomy within the group. At least this is what Durkheim (1997) in his distinction between organic solidarity and mechanical solidarity was referring to.

When the waves of iconoclasm gather momentum in history, they actualize a transition from one historical stage to another, from one universal to another. The concretization of that stage induces an abeyance in the iconoclastic gestures for the time being. But as happened with all universals in history, the weapons forged by them turned against them and no forward movement is possible unless that universal is dismantled by a new wave of iconoclasm.

Though the individual as an autonomous unit had entered the scene long back, but still there fate was linked to other fellow beings forming part of the society (Sloterdijk 2001, Lyotard 1984). The question of finding the true nature and full potential was interlinked with the fate of society; individuals could not be emancipated without the emancipation, first and foremost of the society (Sloterdijk, 2001, 2010). Doing away with almost all the entities in the world, emptying the world with concrete presences and devaluating all mediating relations as obfuscations (Voegelin 1952), the theological- scientific worldviews handed over to their successors, only an ensemble of human relations enmeshed in a larger societal complex. This ensemble of human relations was already fraught with tensions in a society that was divided on class lines thereby obstructing the realization of the utopian world.

Unlike the older welfare schemes, where the message was available to anybody who was ready to acknowledge and embrace the truth, this new political truth had limited accessibility. Not everybody, just by acknowledging and embracing the truth would hasten the kingdom of god on earth. The obstacles were ingrained in the objective relations of productions, relations of power and forms of consciousness and assembled together in the form of a class, which was also the ruling class.

4.2 Class as the cocoon of the *political self*

The '*political self*', had one important component as part of its self-definition; belonging to a class. Like a true believer, designed to receive divine grace, the *political-self* had to move from false consciousness to class consciousness; to understand its positionality in the ensemble of relations so as to initiate the change. It is around this pair, the state and the class, that much of the revolutionary politics was played out in the late 19th and early 20th century. One of the most interesting examples of power play has been the politics of anarchists, especially Mikhail Bakunin (2012) where his rhetoric also involved the church and god as part of the power play. From the sole arbiter on existence to a mere player in the power play, the fall of church had been complete. State becomes the lever, the fulcrum from where societies could be moved, improved, controlled and changed. It is assumed that through the machinery of revolutionary state the true political consciousness could be imparted in the individuals; shifting them from false consciousness to class consciousness.

This has not been the only strand in political philosophies in vogue at that point of time. Different schools had their variations in terms of envisaging the nature of the institution of the state and the relations between the classes but they share the common feature of ascribing the centrality to the state and the class relations. In this sense the political mode of existence was more immanent in terms of its composition as compared to other formulations in history. The theological-spiritual self, waged a war against the non-human's ontological status, made them redundant as powerful mediators and stripped them of their truth value (Latour 1999, 2004, 2013). What theological-spiritual self, achieved was a world of humans occupying the centrality of existence, carved out in the image of god and preparing for divine light. It made no other distinction between humans; other than that of believer and non-believer.

All succeeding worldviews simply purified the original version by zealously guarding any intrusion from the outside world claiming to represent any kind of truth. The competing sects may fight fiercely among each other for more audience and reach, but they were formulated in purely human terms (Voegelin 1952), and were best examples of a kind of social contract admitting only humans, without any differentiation. This was the

first bifurcation on the cosmological level, between humans and non-humans that started a series of reductions and devaluations.

The '*political self*' took on from where the death of God became a philosophical reality, and furthered itself by making the social contract involving all humans into a political contract with inbuilt divisions and cleavages into classes. There was no way of addressing the humanity without having recourse to vocabulary of classes. The unity of believers which Christianity had envisaged at the cost of the world was playing upon itself, when that unity itself was threatened by internal divisions initiated by political self. Though Christian worldviews glorified povertarian values and had an ill disposition towards superior passions (Sloterdijk 2010) of glory, pride, honor and prosperity; they ensured that the inner unity of society of believers remains strong, unthreatened by internal classifications. Even when someone was on the wrong side of glorified povertarian values, one could easily find atonement by rendering prescribed services.

We have come to understand from this brief history that once a process becomes part of the civilizatory mechanism and intrinsic to the way the world is perceived, than it is really difficult to think and act on different terms. For '*political self*', the old adage that truth would take care of everything else still holds true, but the truth it valued was slightly more emaciated and limited in scope. It can be discerned by moving from false consciousness to true historical consciousness of class and class relations. Unless the objective conditions do not change, the true nature character of individuals and societies would not emerge. From theological revelation, to scientific observation and experimentation to the emergence of idea of political revolution, methods of heralding the era of truth underwent fundamental changes. Hobsbawm (1964) has not without reason called this period as age of revolution.

In the earlier formulations, the 'allegory of cave' used to designate the human world had one particular similarity; they treated the cave as a homogeneous entity and the inhabitants were not classified or divided on fundamental lines. Everybody in the cave was living in the dark. The message of the messiah, the scientist, and the expert was for everyone. The rise of the political-self introduced certain modifications regarding the composition of the cave also. Political self, further reduced the scope of the truth and its

preferred habitation. The political mode of self was impossible without the concretization of the institution of state as the prime mover of the society divided on class lines. Engels (2010) most famous analysis on the origin of state, family, and private property were part and parcel of the universalizing tendency of one mode of existence over everything else; and how the idea of political power became the explanatory principle for everything that was hitherto outside its realm.

This was not the only way for the construction of political mode. Just like in previous modes where the enlightenment values generated a counter world of romanticism (Sloterdijk 2001), the political modes varied from mild liberalism to wild anarchism, which put different levels of judging constraint on other modes of existences. Some were more at ease with accepting the older explanations for the purpose of family, god, and societal relations while others placed them simply under the service of power relations in an exploitative class society.

Nineteenth century was primarily a period of strengthening of the state in the Europe, the modern nation-state that we have inherited and there was lot of churnings and debates happening around the nature of the state. But it was only in the twentieth century, when most of the debates were settled about the ideology of the state and most states were stabilized on certain ideological lines, that we really saw the emergence of a class of citizenry fully armed with rights and duties, having expectations from the state. James Scott (1998) has wonderfully narrated the story of what happened in the 20th century but only from the viewpoint of the state. Other viewpoints were absent in the scheme of things.

The Russian revolution left a deep impression on people's imagination across the world. The kind of state machinery it envisaged, backed by positivist science for the welfare of the people, for their final emancipation. The state's demand on the lives of the people and people's expectation from the state had been firmly sealed in that revolutionary pact. It is not that previous incarnations of state remained indifferent to the lives of the people, but it was not something that state could initiate at its own behest. Sloterdijk (2013) reminds us how in the Middle Ages, the population control techniques were discouraged by the church and were faithfully executed by the state in achieving that end. The famous

inquisitions of the middle ages where women were burnt alive for the suspicion of being witches (most of the women were midwives), which is a prime example of control on people's lives, were not the inquisitions of witches but rather inquisitions of midwives, who were obstacles in the expansion of Christianity and production of cheap labors for industry (Sloterdijk 2013).

The Foucauldian thesis that premodern states practiced '*let live and make die*' while modern states follow '*make live and let die*' doesn't hold if we follow the Sloterdijkian argument¹. In one sense Sloterdijk is right when he emphasizes the difference between states, classical and modern, as one of degree rather than of kind. The classical states were also making lives of the people in desired ways and there's nothing new in the way modern state dictates lives of the citizenry. But we if see the politics and political theories of last two centuries, the Foucauldian description also contains certain truth about changes taking place in the institution of the state.

Rise and consolidation of the political self and the universalization of political mode of existence has given the tone and tenor to the modern state. Modern states ushered in the era of death of god, usurpation of power from papacy, formulation of a new teleology on political lines trying to place the truth of history in perspective and a further shrinking of the space where truth could reside and find expression. A particular class becomes the bearer of historical truth in an objectively entrenched class relation, and aided by the revolutionary state would emancipate society to a point where it had been destined to reach from the beginning.

Keeping in view we can modify Foucauldian thesis by bringing in the people to complete the dyad of state-citizenry and say that the people wanted the state to '*make their lives and make their death*'. The state was hitherto involved in the lives of the people; what was new was that the people now wanted the state to do what it was doing till now but more efficiently and on a grander scale. The Foucauldian description of birth of prison houses, clinics, asylums and many other institutions as disciplining and punishing powers

¹Sloterdijk has shown how even premodern states were concerned with the way people were living and how they had attempted interventions frequently, in his book titled *You Must Change Your Live: On Anthropotechnics*.

of state; a state that wants to 'make live and let die' forgets to take note of the immense pressure on the state to manage the population, which had multiplied exponentially during industrial revolution. In fact this concern with the increasing population and burden on the resources was voiced by Thomas Robert Malthus in early 19th century. Sloterdijk (2013) has shown how Christians prohibited birth control which resulted in an explosion of population straining the lives of individuals from all sides. The increased pauperization of a surplus population made the society more vulnerable in terms of housing and feeding, and exposed the lives of many without having any inheritance and resources.

If we reverse the gaze, the standard descriptions of these institutions as panopticons and surveillance systems of state appear in a totally new light. It was a kind of shelter house for the abandoned, overused, dysfunctional, and criminalized section of a society; a society having surplus population and incapable to take care of everybody in the same way. The disciplining and training were part of an attempt to bring an order on to a society, threatened of an imminent collapse by the stress of the burgeoning population. This is the counter-intuitive argument posed from the perspective of the state, differing from the standard critical- Marxists arguments about state and its oppressive nature. The state in this argument appears to have an important role of maintenance of individuals abandoned by the society. It is in these concerns of population and their sustenance that we should look for the reasons as to why the state took it upon itself to make lives of the people, rather than relying on the explanation of power to answer the rise of modern state in its current form; as an all-embracing universal, cut out in the image of previous universals.

We can say that the modern state became the last repository of the values and ideals, which the western civilization had been trained to achieve in one form or the other in the last 2000 years since the advent of theological teleological framework. Modern state can also be viewed as a last supporting thread left at the disposal of the people, a final formulation in terms of authority outside of oneself, which can provide the necessary guidelines and directions for the task which they had inherited and tried to fulfill in their own failed ways. The institution of the state was the last point of authority for a society

which had become highly immanentized, highly emaciated through its own style of operation. The things that happened in the twentieth century in the lives of people, by the authoritarian states of different shades was the culmination of a dream into a nightmare, a dream in which people had overly invested.

What the long history of universalization had done was the discrediting of all the institutions that dealt with different aspects of life and the world. Once the truthfulness of an entity is severely compromised with the tools of iconoclasm, it is very difficult to recuperate that entity with the same weapons that were used in demolishing. By the time, the '*political self*' gained authority; nothing was left behind. The society of class relations had to create and invest in this last source of external authority before dissolving itself in the sea of individualism, having individuals as the sole judge, arbiter, and liberator of its own existence. Society and state were two last overarching formulations of the late 19th to mid-20th century before the giving way to post-nation states and post-societal formulations.

4.3 High-modernist state and the disciplinary society

James Scott (1998) has used the term high modernist to describe the states that were formed in the 20th century, mostly after successful Russian revolution. The Russian revolution had for the first time had realized the long standing dream of establishing a proletarian state, which would eventually end the class exploitation, ushering a new era of classless equality, without state. The state had only provisional role of achieving that end before withering away.

The Russian revolution did in fact establish a high modernist state for the first time in 20th century. Scott describes high modernist state as one backed by ideology, aided by science and technology, relying on coercive machinery of state to impose order and direction on society (1998).

High modernist states were not an aberration, but a longstanding realization of worldview which was revolved around the political mode of existence represented by the political self; a self which was a thorough construction for the purpose of power and depended on it for its articulation. If we would look at the examples enumerated by Scott as a modus

operandi of high modernist states, we would find a striking resemblance between its ways of seeing and its predecessors. The high modernist states had same aversion to multiplicity that characterized the earlier worldviews and a desire to filter out unnecessary things that prevented the truth from its meaningful ordering. The aim for order, purity and linearity and simplicity were its hallmarks, in every scheme that was launched to improve the human condition.

Whatever might be the intention of implementing different schemes, whether of taxation, control, or simply aesthetic considerations, the state had no taste for multiplicity, complexity and visual disorder (Scott 1998). High modernist state replicated what theological formulations had done with the world in their own ways. In their love for God and absolute truth, the theological formulations removed every mediating link as frivolous. Similarly the high modernist state in its imagination of space simply zoomed in at its target, ignoring the complex supporting systems that sustain and nourish that entity. The famous example of forest management in Germany (Scott 1998) illustrates this point convincingly. The schemes were launched into a highly objectivized world, achieved after millenniums of chaffing and purging the world of its multiplicity. High modernist states didn't bother about the feedback and supporting systems dynamism because they were the true inheritors of a tradition, which always believed in zooming in or to put it in Latourian terms, practiced the art of Double click².

The common understanding of state imposing its wills on the lives of the people as a one sided affair lacks weight since we know that the ideology which drove the state machinery also defined people's understanding of life. The enthusiasm cannot be discounted as mass hysteria just because at the end, it only produced debris. But this has been hitherto the history of western universals ever since they are having a free run. Only in the context of post-colonial societies, it could be considered to some extent an imposition and the replication of high modernist states in post-colonial societies indeed produced lots of suffering and dislocation because of the disjuncture in the worldviews of the state and the society. The authoritarian states in erstwhile colonies, driven on

² See Latour's idea of double click in his book AIME: An Anthropology of moderns, which is the urge or tendency to jump steps in order to reach the final conclusion or result.

imported ideologies and run by hired experts and planners couldn't bring themselves to see the basic difference in the ideology of modern state and the worldviews of the people trained in totally different milieu. Apart from that, there is no reason to believe that the powers amassed by the high modernist states were different from the investments made by the people of revolutionary epoch in the institution of the state in their nascent enthusiasm. High modernist states represent the summit of a long drawn process of state rationalization and legitimization as the new the repository of values meant for human destiny and which Foucault mistook it for disciplinary state.

Just as the monastic orders of Christianity were disciplining and regimenting centers for people interested in transcendence of the soul, so as to avoid the temptation and pitfalls of earthly existence (Sloterdijk 2013), the disciplining and punishing techniques employed by the state were intended to facilitate the movement of society for higher goals of productivity and efficiency and to prevent its dragging by the lumpen and abandoned elements. It should be noted that the Foucauldian description about state as a disciplinary mechanism for disciplinary society, driven mostly by the logic of power and bio-politics came mostly in the second half of the twentieth century when the state as an overarching institution had been discredited in post-war Europe.

This mode of viewing the state as something rallied against the individual was the result of a completely new paradigm, mostly developed after critical school which set itself against the positivistic values informing the modern state formation. State in this kind of theorizing represented the world of profiteers, legislators and hyper masculinity, driven cold scientific rationality and therefore had to be resisted by posing them against their counter values (Sloterdijk 2001). Since the legitimacy of that type of state came from the society which had invested in these values heavily, for a futuristic version society; the resistance also was directed against that society on which the state presided.

Disciplining and training were part of the milieu of late 19th century and early 20th century Europe, after the discrediting of the disciplinary regimes of monastical order. Sloterdijk has termed this last phase of European renaissance as *acrobatic renaissance* (Sloterdijk 2013). It is around this period only that the athleticism gained prominence; human body was trained for extreme sports and the culmination of all these in to the

revival of ancient Olympic games in Greece. After a long spell of monastical depreciation of the human body, the figure of ancient Greek athletes came to be looked upon as role models, followed by an extreme regime of physical fitness and training (Sloterdijk 2013).

If we would look into the overall mood and attitude towards human body, it changed to a considerable extent as compared to the earlier attitudes. When Foucault described this epoch as disciplinary society (Foucault 1995), society was indeed following strict regimes of training, and punishing was part of that training process; where the unfit and untrainable were either weeded out or abandoned by the society, to be looked after and administered by the state. It is no surprise that most of the social theories prevalent at that time talked about society in terms of organism; a good society had its metaphor in a healthy organism. Herbert Spencer articulated this attitude towards society and humans lucidly prevalent at that point of time. In retrospect, it is easier to reject such formulations as social Darwinism, or inspired by neo Marxism, reduce everything as bio politics of the state, which Foucault did; but it cannot be denied that this was the time when every stakeholder formulated their worldview based on this premises of healthy organism. The state was doing what everybody was trying to do in its own way, or more specifically, expected the state to do at a larger level.

This has been the peculiarity of the western society, at least in the post-Christian times; that it is operating in the reactive mode and in their attempt to recover their past, committing over generalization. From recovering true Christianity by gnostic revolutions (Voegelin 1952), to recovering antiquity by late acrobatic renaissance (Sloterdijk 2013), western society always sets up against the current formulations by pitching an extreme position. Rejecting the povertarian pity and depreciation of human body, it embraced the idea of survival of fittest along with the Greek idea of athlete informing the social imagination. Pursuit of happiness, wealth, productivity, and Herculean strength leaves no room for the weak, fragile, disabled, non-productive traits; and finally no takers for the povertarian view of the world.

The new found values were not wrong or immoral, but they were proclaimed on the debris of previous worldviews, which had totally made the world empty of any safety nets and moorings on which the lesser beings, the normal and ordinary values could find

a foothold. The new ideals were not a calling but a compulsion; it was all or nothing kind of environment. Social Darwinism, Spencerism, Durkheimism; all were providing a new cosmological variation with organism as metaphor; of which, disciplining, training and strength were desired techniques of self-formation. In that kind of milieu, it was bound to happen that Nietzsche's idea of superman would be taken literally by most of the people in the west, where they were getting trained in the disciplining regimes of physical super manhood.

The period of high modernist states, as described by Scott (1998), represent the time when the positivistic vision of society and individuals alike, entrusted in the seat of power were fully realized. The way of perceiving and functioning were in tune with its predecessors and met the same fate as its predecessors. The idea of state as sole arbiter cracked at its zenith because in its overreach, it was formulating codes and codifications on minute things of life, apart from the usual destruction it bought on lives of the people and nation. The collectivization in Russia, the villagization in Africa, large scale planning in the USA, commissioning new cities out of nowhere have been briefly analyzed by Scott (1998) to show the method of state planning of high modernist states. The two extremes of extreme legibility and illegibility bestowed on any historical formulation betray certain catholicity of psychic makeup; of division of world between good and evil, god and devil; where one is the desired goal of every action while other the desired target of every failure.

The state in the political mode of existence after getting promoted to level of god with similar jurisdiction was getting transformed into devil; this time with no distinction between proletarian state and bourgeois state; in a new kind of political atmosphere emerging in the post-war Europe. The post war period was no longer a time of disciplinary society but was changing to society of control, just at the time when Foucault was writing about it as disciplinary society and state as an institution for disciplining, punishing and surveillance (Deleuze 1992).

4.4 Society of control and the task of modulation

We have now arrived at what may be termed as the final frontier of the political self, or what could be referred to as last theorization about the self with some teleological motive. The theorizing about 'self' had to confront its ultimate predicament, the inability to define the destiny of self in future. The self-theorization had been left with very little credible resources for its usage; theorization could no longer rely on the theological, scientific, socio-political formulations as raw materials to create the edifice of self in a positive way. This is not to be confused that this is the only possible way of doing things or theorizing about things. There always had been and will be countercurrents, counter formulations, totally out of time and out of tune thinking³, some genuine recovery of lost world or a better vision of the futuristic world but most of the time they never define the epoch, the mood, the zeitgeist and the right approach to history and future (Sloterdijk 2001). Nietzsche's idea of superman, with an unparalleled rarity, simply recovered the antiquity from the debris of 2000 years of Christianity but couldn't define or reform the times; rather was interpreted by the times in terms of their level of understanding and with their own disciplining techniques. What could be more tragicomic than the idea of superman being reduced to the level of eugenics?

The political milieu that came after the period of high modernist states in the post-war Europe was marked by a loss of faith from the institution of the state that was a part of the grand narrative (Lyotard 1984). State as a haloed institution bequeathed with the historical task of emancipation of society and individual, with an overpowering stature and jurisdiction met the same fate as that of God and church. State along with the society, society for which and from which it derived its legitimacy and legibility, suffered a downfall in its position and a reversal of attitude. The transition from disciplinary society to society of control discredited the political formulations of both, the late 19th and early 20th century. The 'idea of self' devised in this political milieu of control was not linked with the state or society in any positive way.

³ Sloterdijk has defined this counter- currents and counter formulations as expressions of cynical impulses as opposed to the cynicism that defines the ruling ideas in western history.

The fate of individuals in this configuration of self was not directly linked with the fate of the society, and the state. In fact it posited the individual at the opposite end, the other end being occupied by the state and the society, having a conflict of interest. In a sense, the constituted self is sovereign in nature; it does not depend on any authority outside of itself for its betterment and emancipation. In this situation, the very idea of external authority on individuals, deciding on their behalf is inimical to the emancipation of the individuals. The prime vocabulary of political discourse shifted from the emancipation of society to the liberation of the individual from all constricting relations and formulations. An individual in this discourse started representing the standard Durkheimian definition of subject immersed in imposing relations of mechanical solidarity⁴ (Durkheim 1997). What till now was the fate of individuals in primitive societies in Durkheimian sociological imagination came to occupy a standard argumentative position in the political milieu of post-war Europe. The liberation of the individual was nothing but the liberation from the dictates and morals of the ever imposing societal rules. The critical apparatus developed for the analysis of the remnants of society, abstracted the individual as a separate entity from the rest of the society.

The abstraction of the individual as a sovereign entity also led to the redefinition of the idea of liberation; since society is based on positivistic, masculine values, the individual liberation consists in opposing these values (Sloterdijk 2001). However, liberation has been posed as a negative attitude towards society informed lot of theorizing on self and society, most notable among them being Marcuse (1964), and early works of Foucault (which mostly dealt with state) and Bourdieu (1990). In this new abstraction, whatever remaining in the outside world, as in terms of objective class relations were now rehabilitated in a more subtle form; inside the consciousness of the individual. Class relations or class consciousness was something part of everyday upbringing of an individual, and the most powerful formulation of this shift was the Bourdieu's concept of habitus: from objective relations of economy to its subtle presence in the workings of the mind (Bourdieu 1990). Commenting on Bourdieu, Sloterdijk described this effacement of

⁴ For Durkheim, Societies based on mechanical solidarity don't have a pronounced sense of individuality; the individuals are bounded by rules of society that are *sui generis*, whereas organic solidarity happens when conscious individuals with a pronounced sense of their individuality come together as a group in the society.

visible class relations in the concept of habitus as '*class within me*' (Sloterdijk 2013, pp.109). According to Sloterdijk, a bourgeois is a bourgeois not only because of occupying certain position in social and economic relations, but because of being reared as a bourgeois, with its imprints in the way it thinks (Sloterdijk 2013).

This new formulation is similar to what the Protestantism did to the Catholicism. Just as Protestantism decried all the relations established by Catholicism with the outside world, in its course of history as falsity and unnecessary and placed the message of god inside the heart of believer; neo-Marxism with the critical bent, shifted the objective class relations from the outside world into the mind of the individual inside the training ground of habitus. The journey of different historical formations, from God to Class; from the different places they occupy with differing jurisdiction, resemble one common feature; of progressively moving from the outside world to the inside world of heart and mind.

It is through these effacements of relations of individual from the larger entities of society and state that we have reached a point where Deleuze (1992) signaled the transition of society from disciplinary society to society of control. Society of control revealed the crisis of the older institutions which formed the basis of disciplinary society, meant to define individuals (Deleuze 1992). Deleuze while talking about society of control took it from Foucault the premises and the assumptions for viewing state. Society of control could only realize itself on the ruins of society as positive category, and operating as a controlling mechanism on the individual, newly abstracted from the mass of society, whose future is in direct confrontation with the overall future of the society.

He summarized the transition of society, from discipline to control as a crisis of institutions; institutions designed for and entrusted with the ideals of political self:

“We are in a generalized crisis in relation to all the environments of enclosure-prison, hospital, factory, school, family. The family is an "interior," in crisis like all other interiors-scholarly, professional, etc. The administrations in charge never cease announcing supposedly necessary reforms: to reform schools, to reform industries, hospitals, the armed forces, prisons. But everyone knows that these institutions are finished, whatever the length of their expiration periods. It's only a matter of administering their last rites and of keeping people employed until the installation of the new forces knocking at the door. These are the societies

of control, which are in the process of replacing the disciplinary societies (Deleuze 1992, pp.3, 4)”.

If disciplining defines the disciplinary societies accepted mechanism for individual training; where one is molded by enclosures, interiors or institutions; then modulation becomes the main technique in society of control:

“Enclosures are molds, distinct castings, but controls are a modulation, like a self-deforming cast that will continuously change from one moment to the other, or like a sieve whose mesh will transmute from time to time (Deleuze 1992, pp.4).”

The time of molding enclosures was over, the prime enclosure being that of society molding the individual as an active agent armed with a perfect teleology, aided by the state apparatus, in order to realize the historical destiny of humanity. Society of control has no place for this collective destiny merging with the individual destiny. Its inspiring ideal being that of liberation of the individual self, with or without the scaffolding of society. Unlike disciplining within enclosures, modulation is akin to the workings of information networks and cybernetics. Modulation refers to processes designed for compatibility, performativity and optimization of the networks and entities which resist such tasks risk falling out of the network. This is exactly the condition described by Lyotard (1984) as postmodern condition with its analogy of networks. Perhaps what society of control leads to or alluding to is another name for the postmodern condition; where an individual, instead of representing and referring back to some larger ideological construct; has another individual as its referential point placed in the network. As Deleuze put it:

“Perhaps it is money that expresses the distinction between the two societies best, since discipline always referred back to minted money that locks gold in as numerical standard, while control relates to floating rates of exchange, modulated according to a rate established by a set of standard currencies. The old monetary mole is the animal of the spaces of enclosure, but the serpent is that of the societies of control. We have passed from one animal to the other, from the mole to the serpent, in the system under which we live, but also in our manner of living and in our relations with others. The disciplinary man was a discontinuous producer of energy, but the man of control is undulatory, in orbit, in a continuous network. Everywhere surfing has already replaced the older sports (1992, pp.5)”.

If punishing was preferred for the untrainable in the disciplinary society, the society of control operates by making the incompatible, fall out of the network. And what about the state as an institution, its role and jurisdiction and the overall attitude towards it in the political milieu shaped in the society of control? To be precise, we know that the idea of society of control was based on the same premises and carried it forward, the assumptions on which the Foucauldian analysis of disciplinary society were based, since the time of formulation of both these ideas were almost same and inspired by neo-Marxian trends. The state, in this milieu, was viewed as extending its reach and power over the lives of the people in the transformed situation. It no longer encountered fixed enclosures, but rather a crisis of older enclosing institutions; giving way to network like configurations, where older techniques of control become redundant.

Deleuze (1992) points to what these new modulating techniques are; bonuses, incentives, stockholders, services, electronic cards, debt, biometric numbers, computers, and electronic collars replacing the older regimes of factories, productions, ownership, wages, signatures and prisons. These modulating techniques never enclose, nor restrict mobility; in fact they are designed to enhance mobility in an already fluid world. The method ensures that the individual is never out of the network, is not bounded to a fixed place with cumbersome referential units; rather it mobilizes the identification marks of the individual, along the network. But before imparting these modulating techniques with the logic of control, surveillance and power, on behalf of the state apparatus; it is necessary to know whether this is restricted only to the state or represents something that has preoccupied the society in all its aspects.

If we go by the Goffman's theory about *the presentation of self in everyday life* (1956), we can see the template on which the new project of 'self' has been written. The assumptions he made about the presentation of self and interaction of individuals with one another looked like strategic behavior, in which an individual is always on the lookout for messages from the other individual, and readjusts their behavior accordingly. Goffman's idea about self and its presentation is symptomatic of the general conditions of life, where an individual's behavior or attitude has another individual's behavior as its referential point in an network of interactions.

The ideas of self, which were a product of their cosmological- ideological milieu, always had a strong referential point through which they were judged and evaluated. Whether they were right or wrong referential points is another question, but they definitely had woven an axis or grid on which the self was presented or projected. ‘Goffmanian self’ did not have to rely on these strong referential points; of societal destiny, individual role, historical consciousness, and emancipatory politics. Rather it had created its self- serving ideology of self, freed from the burden of carrying teleological loads as its justification. The core of the self was missing in the Goffmanian self; and in that respect, it resembled the fate of money; from referring to the storehouse of values to that of pure speculative self- referentiality. Goffmanian self is self-referential; where meaning and purpose are derived from either one’s position or from someone else’s position in a self-referential network of relations. Synchronizing oneself to attributes of fashion, tastes and behaviors whose values are purely speculative, becomes the only positive way of imagining the self and its prime teleology.

A caricature of this synchronization, this modulation is Woody Allen’s movie *Zelig* (1983). The character Leonard Zelig is referred to in the movie as human chameleon. He had the involuntary habit of taking on the characteristics and appearances of personalities around him in order to be liked and fit in the company. There was always fear of being a misfit or non-desirable. Not only he resembled them, but he spoke like them, behaved like them. Without consciously knowing, he becomes democrat in the presence of democrats, a republican in the presence of republicans, a literary man in presence of literati. He related this chameleon like characteristics to one of his past experiences. How people laughed at him because he hadn’t read *Moby Dick* (Melville 2008), a popular novel in his time. How he was left out of discussions related to *Moby Dick*, being a misfit in the themes of congregation. The desire of inclusion in the public sphere; the fear of being excluded from the network with its own referential points can induce spontaneous modulation, whose long term impact is homogenization of differences. Polishing the edges, weeding out the differences and incompatibilities is the initiation rite through which one enters a network. Zelig simply became a chameleon; a human chameleon; with the times or ahead of it but never out of times.

No matter which description we follow; the society of control (Deleuze 1992) or the postmodern condition (Lyotard 1984), or the network society (Castells 2010), one thing clearly sticks out; the emphasis on the individual as sovereign entity with only other individuals as reference point. The individual has been abstracted from the society to be considered as an independent variable and a sufficient category to be theorized about in any mode; melancholic, euphoric, apocalyptic, or nostalgic. The most striking example of that theorization comes from the critical school and neo- Marxism, where resistance is formulated without the hope of revolution or without the idea of large scale societal transformation (Sloterdijk 2001). The zeitgeist conforms to the idea of serving oneself, one's fantasies, one's aborted political idealism, one's idea of rebellion and one's desire of being different; with much ado about everything.

Some theories are modest and practical in accepting the improbability of realization of all grand historical formulations or more specifically the project of modernity. Some are bent on repeating the mistakes of modernist project by changing the vocabularies of their discourse and incorporating the analogies and idioms of network society. The confusion in theorizing could be best summed up by a Sloterdijkian phrase: "Modernity is the time in which those humans who hear the call to change no longer know where they should start: with the world or with themselves-or with both at once (2013, pp.323)". Or more appropriately, the politics of this age confirms to the idea that "one does not save oneself by saving the world (2013, pp.402)"⁵

The dilemma over the course of action to be taken by the individual, whether to change the world or to change oneself; and an overall milieu of futility of larger than life goals and actions defines the spirit of these postmodern times. It is this spirit that has to be taken account of, whenever we use the phrase 'society of control', to impart the logic of

⁵ Sloterdijk makes reference to a character in Jean Luc Goddard's film *passion* (1982), where it utters the key sentiment of the time: "one does not save oneself by saving the world".

surveillance and control on the instrumentalities of modulation sanctioned and commissioned by the state. The crisis of every institution in disciplinary society was also the crisis of the state, which derived its overwhelming legislative authority from its political milieu of revolutions, transformations, and emancipation of society to a higher level.

In the times of crisis, mutations happening in every institution reflect the general tendency to align with the new arrangements taking place; and state is one among many institutions dealing with this transition. Production giving space to services, factories to corporation, hospitals to clinics, minted currency to speculative currency, wages to incentives, paternalistic family to family of individuals, pedigree to merit, inheritance to innovation, fixed location to mobility, national goals to individual targets and many others. Falling out of the network is not only a nightmare for the individuals, but also for the state with its heavy machinery. And if the state is interested in monitoring the lives of the individuals through its modulating techniques, for whatever reasons; is it also not true that the individuals in the form of active citizenry cannot live without the active gaze of the state, which alone can ensure their legal and contractual rights. When life from birth to death is a regime of legality, where every relation comes under juridical lens; it is naïve to think that it is only the state that is interested in the lives of the people and not the vice versa. Society of control as modulation could best be understood as a society where individuals simply cannot live or are incompetent to live without the state. Society of control is the equivalent of high modernist states with individual as a unit, getting its sanctions from the lives of the individual rather than focusing on the society as a whole.

One of the most important developments of post-war period, described above as society of control, has been the rise of management as a popular discipline .Deleuze (1992) talks about the rise of management discourse as part of the modulating techniques in the society of control. For Deleuze “The coils of a serpent are even more complex than the burrows of a molehill (Deleuze 1992, pp. 6)”. We cannot say what would be the future course of evolution of this relationship between state and the individual and in what way management discourse would form part of that dyad? But we can definitely look into the reasons for the rise of management discourse and how they are shaping up the individuals.

4.5 Management or the new the new spirit of capitalism?

The spectre of capitalism seems to have outlived the spectre of communism in its ability to haunt the societies more effectively and more durably. At least this is what the status of critique reveals to us; its inability to give up the ghost of capitalism in spite of exorcising itself from the ghost of communism. “Once you give up the ghost, everything follows with dead certainty (Miller 1961, pp.9)”, says Henry Miller in his semi-autobiographical novel ‘*The tropic of Capricorn* (1961). We can rephrase this wisdom to say that once you give up the dialectics of the ghosts, or rather once you remove the bets from the ghost of communism; everything follows with certainty. The certainty in this case implying capitalist conspiracy at every level, every sphere, and every activity; capitalism becomes the invisible hand moving everything and speculating every move and nullifying any countermove beforehand. The present status of critique resembles this certainty in terms of expectations and behaviors; there’s nothing new under the sun, just capitalist conspiracies, motives and spirits.

One of the most remarkable features of late 20th century has been the reconfiguration of ways in which economic activity is perceived and being carried out. The whole transformation has been well documented and extensively analyzed from all points of view in economics. The most important one being the rise of management discourse and entrepreneurial culture as the most suitable form of economic practice and thinking. This was clearly a change from earlier organizations of economic behavior, where production apart from fulfilling economic necessity was also aligned to achieve the greater national and societal objectives. The call to industrialization, and a new man based on the image of industrial man were part of the milieu in which high modernist states evolve. The motivations and inspirations to produce were in tune with desired goals of the society as a whole. The rise of managerial culture with its different sets of motivations and objectives were part of the post war period in Europe when older callings lost their power to motivate individuals. This period being referred as the postmodern condition by Lyotard (1984) was essentially a period when a new narrative about individuals and their callings were being developed.

Luc Boltanski (2005) has critically analyzed this reorientation and reconfiguration and termed it as a new spirit of capitalism. The main argument being that capitalist mode of production while riding on the back of nation-state and its ideologies cracked in the middle of the 20th century and therefore needed a new kind of spirit in its onward march of profit and accumulation. This new spirit was provided by the management discourse that engaged with individuals in the changed circumstances and provided the much needed motivation and inspiration to the erstwhile cadres in the production system. The author has insightfully recorded and analyzed the different phases in the management discourse, which reflect the changes brought about in the organization as well as in technology.

“Capitalist restructuring over the last two decades occurred around financial markets and merger acquisitions activities in a context of favorable government policies as regards taxation, social security and wages- was also accompanied by significant incentives to greatest labor flexibility....at the same time, the new communication technologies in the forefront have made it possible to handle orders in real time at a planetary level, providing for a hitherto unknown global capacity to work(Boltanski &Chiapello 2005, pp.xxxviii)”.

Further, Boltanski states that:

“In the 1960s, what concerned our authors was motivating cadres, whereas in the 1990s, knowing how to engage them is treated as only one particular instance of the problems involved in mobilizing all employees (Boltanski &Chiapello 2005, pp.62)”.

The contours of change, especially in the organization, after capitalist restructuring due to technological interventions resembles like that of the network society discussed previously. There is a striking similarity in all the approaches taken by scholars to describe post war period, be it the post-modern condition; the network society; society of control or the neo spirit of capitalism. According to Boltanski, a capitalist organization, the firm now operates with following characteristics:

“The lean, streamlined, slimmed down firm has lost most of its hierarchical grades, retaining between three and five only and consigning whole layers of hierarchy to unemployment. It has also parted with large number of operations and tasks by subcontracting anything that does not form part of its core business.....(2005, pp.73)”

And again:

“The standard image of the modern firm today is of a slim core surrounded by a conglomeration of suppliers, sub- contractors, service providers, temporary personnel making it possible to vary the workforce according to the level of business and allied firms. It is then said to operate as a network (2005, pp.74)”.

And finally, after differentiating the present day firm from the erstwhile corporates in terms of leanness and mobility, he goes on to demonstrate in a very precise manner, the ideal personality which inhabits these networks. It is the manager who rules the roost in this network because it is designed to have that leanness and mobility to traverse far and freely in that network. As Boltanski puts it:

“The manager is a network man. His special quality is his mobility, his ability to move around without letting himself be impeded by boundaries, whether geographical or derived from professional or cultural affiliations, by hierarchical distances, by differences of states, role, origin group and to establish personal contacts with other actors who are often far removed socially or spatially(Boltanski &Chiapello 2005, pp.79)”.

The attributes of the manager pointed by Boltanski shows that we have finally arrived at a personality which, is not impeded by even last shreds of locality and rootedness. In fact manager’s affectivity comes from the fact that it is at home everywhere, can negotiate all the cultural differences with ease because it is not attached with any place or culture with a sense of belonging. In manager we truly have a global citizen of the global village.

What started as the purification of the being from its surroundings; to devalue the possessions that form part of a being’s definition has resulted in what we are seeing in the image of a global citizen. And it’s not only in firms with their network like operations that the personality of manager fits in. We have seen previously that a particular kind of thinking, a particular way of looking at things becoming the standard operating procedure in a particular historical age. All the relations are expected to behave and satisfy the standard protocols and requirements of that period. Those relations which don’t optimize are deemed unnecessary and incompatible with new order. Boltanski alludes to this point when he says that:

“The search for maximum flexibility in firms chimed with a depreciation of the family as factor of temporal and geographical inflexibility. Similar ideological schemes are mobilized to justify adaptability in work relation and mobility in emotional life (Boltanski &Chiapello 2005, pp. xi)”.

Earlier configurations had advocated for some kind of rootedness and attachment to the family, the society and nation, which gave the individual their sense of belonging. This new scheme of things, whose principle characteristics are mobility and leanness, cannot care for the older attachments which needed some kind of stability to fructify.

“The requirement to be streamlined first of all assumes renouncing stability, rootedness, attachment to the local, the security of long standing ties. When it comes to links, to invest effort is to give up what one already has for an uncertain alternative; not to shut oneself away in pre-established links, so that one is available to try out new connections that might fail(Boltanski &Chiapello 2005, pp.123)”.

Boltanski & Chiapello (2005) cite the increasing number of divorce cases and low shelf life of marriages in French society to highlight the mutations happening in terms of mobility and flexibility in social relations. In the global order, you cannot afford to make permanent relations with your surroundings because that will hamper the swift movements essential for survival. Bauman refers this as a period of *liquid modernity* (2000); a period when movement is dependent on the weight you are carrying, the lighter you travel, the faster you travel.

It is this stage where things have finally lost all their value and have been transformed into objects of no ontological weight; when we encounter them as mementos, souvenirs, fetishes, as having use value and exchange value but not valuable as part of someone’s being. The idea of being as having possession of things and relations, loses its entire meaning and a new kind of being is being forged whose primary characteristics is that it cannot forge any identity on the idea of having, of possession and inheritance.

“According to the same principal of eliminating anything that might hinder mobility, the streamlined human being must not be attached to patrimony and should prefer to ownership other formulas that provide access to the enjoyment of objects, such as renting. In this instance distance with respect to ownership does not derive from some ascetic contempt for material goods, which it is perfectly licit to have at one’s disposal and to enjoy, but is simply the result of the need to streamline oneself so that one can move around easily(Boltanski &Chiapello 2005, pp.124)”.

Something similar happens with the fate of space from the perspective of this new class of individuals. For the individual moving in networks, the spatial composition loses its

peculiarity and distinctiveness, and is mostly inhabited by people and objects meant to be seen from the visitor's gaze. What we encounter nowadays is tourist places and most of us enter them as travellers and globetrotters. In the truly multicultural world, as described by Žižek (1997), difference loses its capacity to perplex and surprise, because there is almost no possibility of engagement and attachment with them, no possibility of forming them as part of one's own being.

The being in this multicultural world has smooth surfaces making it incapable of forging strong and durable relations with the world. The resultant being is the highly purified and smoothed version of being constituted till date. The only form of property and possession it recognizes is its own being, which enables it to maneuver in the network.

Boltanski summarized the notion of property prevalent in this new order as follows:

“Connexionist human beings are the owners of themselves- not by natural right, but by inasmuch as they are the products of a labor of self-fashioning... In this logic, property is dissociated from responsibility to others. It is now defined exclusively as a responsibility towards the self: in so far as they are the producers of themselves, everyone is responsible for their bodies, their image, their success, their destiny (Boltanski & Chiapello 2005, pp.154).”

Up to this point, Boltanski's analysis about the rise of management discourse and the capitalist restructuring, the description of the manager as the one best suited to traverse this new world order with ease and success; as its hero and ideal is precise. The necessity of streamlining and lightness is not limited to a particular group of people or in a particular sphere of activity; it is the general requirements of this particular age. It is only that the personality of manager represents the best and successful specimen of this new order. And any epoch is studied by taking into consideration only the best specimen that embodies the spirit of that age. The qualities attributed to the personality of manager are not restricted to it only but cut across class and ideological lines. It is only in the personality of manager that we can see positive adjustments to the requirements of the networked world, i.e. of streamlining and mobility. All other personalities, though functioning within the same parameters of network society, are still fighting the ghosts inherited from the project of modernity; ghosts of communism and capitalism and most probably representing the melancholia of postmodernism.

The overall pattern in Boltanski's analysis of manager and managerial culture is that it is within the framework of dialectics and resembles what we referred above as the dialectics of the ghosts. Even when his critical position has given up on the ghosts of communism, his presentation of management discourse is battling with the ghosts of capitalism. In this case, the mutations and transformations happening in the capitalist structure and corresponding rise of the management discourse represents a conscious restructuring of the ideological framework to fill in the vacuum left by previous ideology of capitalism. While the previous ideology being dependent on the narratives and motives of the high modernist states; the neo spirit of capitalism is customized to suit the individual. The problem with Boltanski's analysis of management discourse is that the author is implying full conscious and intentional restructuring by the capitalists in the form of management discourse without looking into the novelty of the idea. Though the changes mapped by Boltanski's critique are precise and valid; our brief sojourn into history of ideas tell us that there is more to look out for in the rise of management discourse than merely reading it in the light of spirit of capitalism.

4.6 The other side of management discourse

One of the critiques of management discourse has been that it promotes individualism (Eagleton-Pierce 2016) and every aspect of life and activity is transformed by individual's requirements of flexibility and mobility (Boltanski & Chiapello 2005). Individuals exist as a self-referential entity whose successes and failures are measured by their ability to enhance and extend their growth in the networked world. A fair idea can be drawn about individualism and the society by looking at how individuals are addressed to in different genres of self-help literatures. A whole array of self-help literatures, which form part of the management discourse, have developed which guide individuals on how to succeed in life (Kiyosaki 2000); how to manage the relations efficiently (Fensterheim 1978); the right attitudes and the right motivations (Hill 1944); spiritual rules of making it big in life (Chopra 1995). They are addressed to individuals for the benefit of individuals, to think and act as individuals for their aspirations and

goals in life. Unlike other previous ideologies of self, which attached the idea of the fate of the individual with the fate of something else, mostly society in its various guises (theological, scientific or political); the idea of self in the management discourse is entirely based on the individual's plan of action and its motivations.

Though the managerial self was the inheritor of the previous ideologies of self, which proceeded by continuously purging the being of its mediating links with the world and forming a very immanent idea of self and society; it nevertheless produced something positive from its inheritance of extreme nihilism. We are calling its inheritance as extreme nihilism because by the time it took on the baton, the only thing left credible for theorization was the individual, bereft of all its moorings and attachments. God, science, state, society, and revolution had outlived their shelf lives to witness their downfall in their own times. It was the time to formulate the idea of an individual's emancipation without linking its fate with simultaneous emancipation of society. Nietzsche said that nihilism symbolized the death of Christian worldview and the idea of man founded upon that worldview, and it is from the debris of nihilism that new man or the overman would emerge (Nietzsche 1974a, 1974b).

A man freed from the shackles of Christian morality and fully designed to rise to new heights of human developments. This rising of new man to new heights of human development, definitely had spiritual connotations, as it is clear from the book titled '*Thus spoke Zarathustra*', where Nietzsche had mentioned the idea of overman (Nietzsche 1978a). What this idea of overman did was to finally rescue the idea of individual from the domain of mob psychology; from the crowd into which Christianity had condemned it for ages. We have discussed above Canetti's (1978) idea of crowd and the role of historical religions in crowd formations, to know how individuals were robbed of their individuality in these crowds.

The rise of the management discourse and a new kind of self-theorization, which primarily focused on the individuals and treated it as a self-sufficient entity, fulfilled albeit vaguely and in an ill formed way, something which Nietzsche expected to come out from the womb of nihilism. The coming out of the individual, although bruised and limping from the massified schemes of history, was a landmark event in the history of

western society, although we rarely notice and acknowledge the significance of this event. That it emerged in the backdrop of the devastating world wars and bloody revolution of 20th century makes its arrival on the scene more poignant and it had nothing but nihilism as the final recourse for its survival. In order to better understand the rise of the managerial self, as documented by Boltanski, we have to look into other fields along with the economic restructuring of capitalism, where the rescue operations for the individual were happening.

It was around the time when the new 'idea of self' was germinating from the debris of grand narratives that the first epic for this survived individual was written in all its nihilistic glory, just like the Homeric tales about warrior-hero Achilles. A Russian expatriate in America, Ayn Rand, by creating a mythical hero John Galt in '*Atlas Shrugged*', renewed a tradition of epic writing where heroes do not operate in the moral world of Christianity and therefore had no place in the social order based on those lines. In that sense *Atlas Shrugged* could be considered as the precursor of all kinds of self-help manuals and literatures where paeans of individual glory and talent are sung in chorus. The words of fictional John Galt in the last pages of *Atlas Shrugged* would summarize what we mean by singing paeans to wake up the hero in the individual:

"In the name of the best within you, do not sacrifice this world to those who are its worst. In the name of the values that keep you alive, do not let your vision of man be distorted by the ugly, the cowardly, the mindless in those who have never achieved his title. Do not lose your knowledge that man's proper estate is an upright posture, an intransigent mind and a step that travels unlimited roads. Do not let your fire go out, spark by irreplaceable spark, in the hopeless swamps of the approximate, the not-quite, the not-yet, the not-at-all. Do not let the hero in your soul perish, in lonely frustration for the life you deserved, but have never been able to reach. Check your road and the nature of your battle. The world you desired can be won, it exists, it is real, it is possible, it's yours (Rand 1957, pp. 1069)."

The epic is an exhortation call to individuals to free themselves from the moral codes imposed by the society founded upon the idea of guilt and sacrifice. In order to accomplish that, it uses the hammer of nihilism, a refined form of iconoclasm, to break free the individual from remnants of moral codes remaining in the early 20th century. In

its methods and outlook, it resembles the several gnostic revolutions which have happened previously trying to rescue and recover something very immanent and fragile. Though the previous revolutions always had the fate of individual linked with the fate of something else; the individual was always a cog in the larger project of emancipation, earlier in the vertical direction and later in horizontal direction. It was the final push of nihilism on previous nihilistic enterprises that finally rescued the individual from the hubris of society. The assumptions about god, society and state were all borrowed from the previous ideologies which were mostly reactive and had to do with disillusionment with them. Inheritance was the bad word in this new epic of individuality, just like it had been in all previous ideologies.

The new addition in the Rand's epic of individuality was the abandonment of the idea of brotherhood based on the interdependence and of one individual with the other individual itself. It treated only those individuals with respect who have earned it with their merit and competence. No individual was the duty of the other individual merely on the idea of brotherhood and being good.

“For centuries, the battle of morality was fought between those who claimed that your life belongs to God and those who claimed that it belongs to your neighbors—between those who preached that the good is self-sacrifice for the sake of ghosts in heaven and those who preached that the good is self-sacrifice for the sake of incompetents on earth. And no one came to say that your life belongs to you and that the good is to live it” (Rand 1957, pp. 1011-1012).

The creed of this new individual was aptly summarized by these lines of John Galt: “I swear by my life and my love for it that I will never live for the sake of another man, nor ask another man to (Rand 1957, part iii, chap.1)”.

This new ‘idea of self’ had no place for guilt or sacrifice but rather cherished wealth, opulence, merit, a passion for success, of rising to new heights of human achievement, of taking pride in one's own success. It cherished everything labeled as sin and belonging to inferior qualities in Christian social order. In fact Ayn Rand in her later works has elaborated on the idea of virtue of selfishness and virtue of pride in what she calls her notion of objectivist ethics (Rand, 1964). She described virtue of pride as:

“The virtue of pride can best be described by the term ‘moral ambitiousness’. It means that one must earn the right to hold oneself as

one's own highest value by achieving one's own moral perfection, by never accepting and unearned guilt and never earning any, or if one has earned it, never leaving it uncorrected- by never resigning oneself passively to any flaws in one's own character- by never placing any concern, wish, fear, or mood of the moment above the reality of one's own self esteem (Rand 1964, pp.27)".

She has again tried to instill the pride and passion in the individual that was taken away from the self in the moral social order of Christianity, to make it upright and erect that refuses to bow down by any sense of guilt thrown for his acts of grandeur and pride. In fact the novel reiterates what has been a common theme in the ancient world of Greeks: the rage of the hero born out of his wounded pride. The rage of John Galt, in the moment of his wounded pride crippled the entire American system by causing a massive strike by sucking out the best minds from the system was akin to the rage of Achilles where gods had to come to pacify the raging hero. In that sense John Galt could be considered as the first epical hero of period known as the postmodern world whose wounded pride was enough to shake the world.

The novel came out in the year 1957 which was also the period when, according to Lyotard (1984), the grand narratives of western society were crumbling. Ideas about state, nation, science, revolution, history had lost their sheen and were not capable of inspiring the individuals. Many argue that it is the period when small, local, contextual things and ideas would flourish with no possibility or pretension of universalism and a kind of realism about things and their scope in the world would develop. The self would no longer be acting for the grander causes of history but would be playing out local power games and language games at the nodes of the network they are place in.

But what missed the eye of almost everyone was the coming of the grander and more magnificent 'self' in the form of hero; a rebirth of the ancient hero in the postmodern world of supposedly non-heroes. By creating a heroic self, Ayn Rand finally buried the 'historic self' created by history for its purpose and which was always subordinated to the ideas; sometimes grand, sometimes not so grand. The 'heroic self' proclaimed by Ayn Rand brought back the 'idea of self' on its feet, which was inverted when the world of heroes and gods was destroyed to replace with ideals and narratives. The historic-self

created out of that inversion was subservient to the master ideal; an ideal which determined the course of action and style of thinking of the individual.

The brief history of the 'idea of self' that we have covered highlights the journey of historic self through all its manifestations and transformations. One of the reasons why postmodernism has been associated with discontent and nostalgia at the failure of modernity has to do with the fate of historic self. The thesis about end of history (Fukuyama, 1992) and end of ideology (Bell, 1960) allude to the fact that historic self no longer has the possibility and the feasibility to carry on with its project. But it was Ayn Rand who finally recovered the heroic self by stating the obvious that it is the hero and its story that make the narrative grand; there's nothing grand in impersonalized ideas and ideals. The hero is like an anthropological totem around which a narrative revolves and becomes an epic, and not the other way round.

Scholars have asked the question that why it was only the classical period that has produced epics and what it takes to create an epic (Nandy 2005)? Perhaps the only answer to that question is that the classical period dealt with heroes and semi-gods abashedly in their glory; every other period dealt only with impersonalized ideals for they had no place for heroes and demi gods walking the earth in their scheme of things. They could only tolerate or sanction a timid 'idea of self', which can easily give itself into impersonal schemes about the world and mechanical movements of history (Popper 2002). Any narrative formed on these impersonalized ideals can never be grand; it can only have the impersonation of grandeur till another ideal comes and knock it off from its illusions.

The entire story about universalism reflects this impersonation of grandeur by ideals and their subsequent fall from the high seat of universalism; the impersonal God being the first in the series of impersonations. That is why when the fictional character of John Galt made its appearance on the world stage; it invoked strong reactions of all shades and from all sides. Some saw in it the abandonment of the humanism of modernism, some saw it as an epitome of nihilism and unbridled capitalism, for some it was the celebration of the individualism and meritocracy, and for most of the people, it came as a surprise. Maybe they were encountering that type of hero after a very long time, spanning

millennia. And that's the special character of epic heroes; no one can just ignore them and move forward.

The rise of the epic heroes was not an isolated event in the popular culture. In fact around that time, we also saw the emergence of management discourse as a popular discipline and a special genre of literature where the subject-matter revolved around the individuals and their destinies. The self-help literatures created an image of the individual, who when properly motivated and inspired could achieve it desired. In a way, self-help literatures were doing what Ayn Rand did in her novel; the creation of hero. We would now look into the style developed by self-help literatures and the way they dealt with question of self and its destiny.

4.7 The style of self-help literature

When we look into the reasons for the rise of management discourse, especially the genre and format of self-help literature and success manuals; we could find that alongside of economic restructuring happening in post war period; there was also a cultural restructuring taking place where the ideas about self and individuals were shedding their old historical burden and trying to assume something of an ahistorical character. When I examined the genre of self-help literature, there was a sense that the 'idea of self' emanating from the literature has an ahistorical nature. The sociological understanding has been that surrounding environment and events define the consciousness of the individual and very rarely the individual overcomes that conditioning. The whole sociological explanation of crime and criminals in jurisprudence alludes to this primacy of environment in individuals life trajectories.

The Marxian idea that *consciousness is the product of environment* has played vital role in shaping up of so many disciplines; from political economy to history to jurisprudence and most importantly in psychoanalysis. Any type of failure, success, regression, transgression and aberration in the individual has been explained by that idea, which forms the mainstay of these disciplines. Deleuze (2000) diagnosed this symptom in psychoanalysis when he said that it operates using the *oedipal triad of 'mommy', 'daddy' and 'me'*. It is these reductions using past histories that never allowed the individuals to

gain full autonomy over their lives and surrounding. Something was always there to explain the timidity, the failures and the successes of the 'historic self'. It was a truncated self which always remained subordinated to ideas, history, environment; it never blossomed out of its milieu to become its master.

The style of self-help literature has always been to reverse the hierarchy of consciousness and environment. The exhortation calls to the individuals ask them to forget the environment, the history, the ordinariness of their life to realize what remains latent in every individual; their becoming larger than life heroes. The individual has no choice of environment into which he or she is born, but it can never become their defining principle of their life which they have the power to shape. And it is this ability to rise above one's own milieu that these literatures focus upon. In that sense, these literatures operate in an ahistorical format thereby making us realize that heroes can never be crippled by the circumstances into which they were thrown into and that the ultimate goal is to rise beyond one's own limited conditions. They also make us remember that success or failure happens in spite of the conditions, rather than because of the conditions. The brief initial life histories of the successful people they narrate in terms of their poverty and their misfortune only add to the overall argument that they do not matter at all.

Of course there's always a good amount of fictional and mythical tales and anecdotes about the protagonist that go into making of these novels. Not everything can be checked and verified with facts and dates; a sense of mystery always surrounds the hero in the way narratives are built around them. But that's the way heroes operate; they always need a kind of fictional-mythical world in which they float and accomplish things. It is only in the mythical framework that the heroes could be found.

Every mode of existence has its felicity conditions (Latour 2013); the mode of hero has its felicity conditions only in the mythical world woven around them. The attribute of incredibility sometimes associated with these types of literature stems from this peculiarity of creating a mythical structure around the hero. It is for no other reason that the life stories of some of the most successful businessmen of our times acquire a stature of heroic-mythical proportions. The sheer number of zeroes in their wealth defies any

sense of proportion and finitude and appears to belong to that mythical world that surrounds these heroes of our times.

Talking of heroic-mythical world in the genre of management literature, our discussion would remain incomplete if we miss another event happening alongside of them. Just around the time when the epic hero of Ayn Rand was created, there had come another novel of epic proportions which literally dealt with the idea of good and evil in a dramatized mythical way. We are talking about the heroic mythical world created by J.R Tolkien in his magnum opus '*The Lord of The Rings*'. The mythical world created by Tolkien is a world of heroes and villains, engaged in the spectacular fight between good and the evil and assisted by mysterious forces for the final supremacy of the earth. Exile, treachery, fury, glory, revenge and the triumph of the hero makes this magnum opus into another modern day epic, just like the epic of antiquity. No other novels have influenced their period and their society than these two literary works which happened to appear in the same decade. Their impact could be gauged from the fact that people still talk about these two works simultaneously in one way or the other.

Academically and ideologically whatever be mood and reaction to the events in the post war period; the popular culture was definitely shaped by things which were rejected as childish fantasies and escapist activities. In fact the popularity of these two literary works and the amount of criticism they have received along with the rise of self-help literatures can give us a rare insight in the mood of the period. It was the period when lots of superheroes (Batman, Superman, Spiderman, Captain America,) were born in America in the literary-cinematic world and formed an indispensable part of the popular culture and still are. It is very convenient for social scientists to reject these characters as part of childish fantasies and infantile obsession of the large part of the society but that would not explain their enduring popularity and appeal.

As we have said that it was the period when the idea of hero was making a strong comeback after a long spell of grand narratives which never granted the individual their full autonomy. The individual in the 'historic self' was a product of its environment and a cog in the wheel of history. And therefore the world in which they moved was devoid of

any magical and esoteric forces; of mysterious and mythical beings but operated on purely mechanical causes and explainable reasons. J.R Tolkien's mythical world of esoteric beings and heroes reminds us of a very essential fact which is very easy to miss; that the heroes cannot operate in a mundane and disenchanted world where everything can be explained using impersonal laws and mechanical causes. Even in the realm of cinema, an important part of popular culture, the idea of hero as having a larger than life presence has found a prominent place. Hollywood, in our times is perhaps one such institution acting as a generator of powerful heroic-mythical tales of individuals. In India, which abounds with mythical heroes of past, the tendency to create new heroes can actively be seen in the pull which film stars exercise among the people; the striking examples coming from southern India in the film personalities of MG Ramchandran and NT Rama Rao and frenzy they generated among their fans..

The fall of the grand narratives and the coming of a grander 'idea of self' paved the way, maybe inadvertently, for the creation of mythical worlds in the societies highly sensitized by science and technology and which have no place for insensible and incredible things. The old Hegelian notion that *history repeats first as tragedy, than as farce* holds true in this context because the ancient world for all its incredibility was a lived world whereas this new world of comic superheroes and fantastic things remain at the fictional mythical level. But even at the fictional level, they testify to the fact that we cannot have full-fledged heroes if we continue to tie them with the chains of history and environment.

The style of self-help literatures pays tribute to this small point when it exhorts individuals to rise above their circumstances and handicaps to become masters of their own destiny. They can be accused, and they have been of hiding class inequalities, ignoring social hierarchies and systemic failures and giving false sense of hope to individuals about the possibilities in life. Boltanski has summarized all these accusations by labeling the management discourse as a neo spirit of capitalism and the task of critique as to remove the veil from this ideology (2005). But these literatures definitely keep up the prospect of rising above oneself open for the individuals at the time when all types of emancipatory ideologies have lost their credibility and are no more interested in that task. The tradition of critique which is the purified version of these ideologies harbors no such

illusions about the individual and the society and is content with removing the veils of all such exercises which offer the prospects of rising above oneself and one's environment. At this point, if we look at all the historical cosmologies that have shaped human destiny in any way, we would find that they were all concerned with the destinies of individuals; how to raise the individuals to a higher level. That higher level was the imagined ideal of that corresponding cosmology. Though subsequently, the highest ideal in successive cosmologies was gradually brought down in scope and extent; yet the preoccupation with an ideal has informed all the cosmologies. That ideal has been formulated and reformulated numerous times but has never been abandoned. So even after so many attempts at upliftment and emancipation, the quest for rising to heights has not been given up; could we say then, that it is not the desire to rise above that is at fault but the faulty and immature formulations about emancipation and growth. Though the subject matter of management literatures is very limited in scope confining itself to economic success and personality development, they nevertheless illustrate the point that emancipation, upliftment, and rising above oneself has always been an individual enterprise; thereby separating it from the schemes of mass emancipations of history.

4.8 Heroical-mythical world and the question of verticality

The resurgence of the heroical-mythical world, in a period marked by disenchantment with all the worldviews that promised any kind of ascension to higher levels, served as kind of new repository for the eternal idea of ascension. Every time when the historical project of ascension in its various guises did not bear the desired result, i.e. the collective rising above to the desired goal; each time it was reformulated to reduce the weight of collective so as to make the ascension easier. This reducing of the weight of the collective has happened through the acts of iconoclasm, and which involved a continuous devaluation of things on the ontological scale. The various modes of iconoclasm and their style of operations have been discussed previously, from the initial theocidal acts to the idea of critique in the present times. The division of the world between ontology and epistemology; subject and object; believers and non-believers, heathen and enlighten, resulted in filtering out of a single truth and this absolute truth served as the beacon for

ascension. The societies were designed and conditioned in ways so as to follow the only truth available to them for their vertical ascension. That ideal acted as their source of pull, their motivations, whose attainment was the lifelong obsession was the societies evolved and gathered around that ideal. Alfred Whitehead described the motive power of the ideal in following terms:

“That ideal is the attainment of some unifying concept which will set in assigned relationships within itself all that is there for knowledge, for feeling and for emotion. That far off ideal is the motive power of philosophic research; and claims allegiance even as you expel it. The philosophic pluralist is a strict logician: the Hegelian thrives on contradictions by the help of his absolutes, the Mohammedan divine bows before the creative will of the Allah; and the pragmatist will swallow anything so long as it works (Whitehead 2006, pp.1)”.

And it is the absence of an ideal, according to Whitehead, that leads to a lack of intrinsic interest in the subject. While he was talking specifically about the field of philosophy; the falling of the grand narratives and loss of poles of attraction, described as post-modern condition (Lyotard 1984) reflects this absence of ideal in the society. The post-modern discontent (Bauman 1997), the lack of interest in the future, it seems is result of the absence of an ideal, a unifying concept defining the teleological destiny of individuals. At this point it has to be stated that there is a slight difference between an ideal and an utopia and western civilization has conflated them.

Utopias are always an extrapolated and magnified version of mass psychology; an imagined world for collective migration from the present state of living (Mumford 1922). It is no surprise that most of the utopias turned into dystopias when they were sincerely executed primarily for the reason that no mass emancipation is possible; it remains hitherto an individual exercise. The spiritual-monastical order of Christianity, by creating a kingdom of heaven for the Christian brotherhood, conflated an individual calling with the socio-political utopias. It is on the path of these utopias, confused as an ideal that people have been travelling through successive cosmologies for over two millennia. When the spell of ill-formed utopias, misunderstood as ideal has been finally broken in the moment of extreme nihilism, that we have a chance to redeem the age old quest for vertical ascension from the hubris of socio-political utopias.

There are no direct routes to pure transcendences; it is only through mini transcendences and jumps that maximum transcendence is possible in the end (Latour 2013). The point is not to treat the steps as useless delay mechanisms in the quest for transcendence but as stepping stones ensuring our progressive ascension to the peak. It is only when we are prepared to go through smaller peaks and cliffs that we can encounter much higher peaks thereby increasing our horizon and appetite for ascension and it is these smaller peaks which facilitate our vertical movement through connecting passes. The analogy of peaks and trekking to summits can be useful in understanding the whole phenomenon of vertical ascension, which Sloterdijk has referred to as verticality. Just as the highest peak in a mountain range is always surrounded by peaks of varying heights, so as to make the range accessible for climbing; similarly, the highest ideal of the societies should always be complemented by a multiplicity of smaller ideals in different fields of life and activity. What Christianity did was to make the highest ideal of formless God mandatory for all the individuals without realizing individual competences and abilities. At the same time Christianity denigrated all the other spheres of human activity that could enable the individual to blossom its creativity and achieve perfection. It had no place for the creative passions and vitality of individuals in its idea of verticality, which was a generalization of the spiritual-monastical order. The theological world of Christianity founded the domain of transcendental truth but removed traces of connecting chains and steps leading up to that truth.

With the death of God, the domain of saltatory truth was shattered and the highest ideal for the societies was altered with much lower heights. In fact the idea of verticality was limited to the domain of utopias and became associated with the forward march history. Though the obsession with mass movements didn't go in these ideologies of progress, the height to be ascended had been drastically reduced to terrestrial levels. These ideologies were not bothered about scaling the highest summits; in fact they totally rejected the existence of such heights. Peter Sloterdijk has called these ideologies as the philosophy of the *basecamps* (2013); for they are happy remaining at the base with no fascination for the summit. It is only when the mob has been dispersed with the failure of the project of modernity that the individuals can finally be addressed as individuals and philosophies

could be devised with individuals as actors and heroes. It is only when the individual has been freed from the burden of history that it can finally heed to its individual calling and can give outlet to its creative impulses and vitality to scale the heights from the multiplicity of peaks.

The resurgence of the heroical-mythical world in the popular culture, marked by rise of fantastic novels and comic superheroes, testifies to the fact that we no longer have to deal with the linear progression of history and the idea of 'historic self'. Historical worldviews have no appetite for autonomous heroes defying the purpose of history; at best they can have a succession of prophets revealing the only truth to the masses and prescribing the course of action for them to follow.

The mythological world of the heroes has no such compulsions about history and its movement and therefore could have an evolved system of verticality; where creative impulses and vitality of individuals could be streamlined in different channels of perfection and ideals. It is not that these heroical-mythical worldviews are devoid of history and idea of posterity; they have different conception of time inbuilt in them and therefore never lose their timeless quality.

The structure of mythological worlds is such that they always work in the present; their invocation opens up a panorama of summits before the eyes of the individual in their efforts of vertical ascension. It prepares the ground for infinite verticality by inspiring individuals through examples of exemplary individuals who have achieved that feat in the past, and who have become part of legends themselves.

The comparison of self-help literatures with mythology is a bit premature in the sense that these self-help literatures are still trying to revive the first steps in the path of infinite verticality. The calling of individuals to give up the guilt and strive for success in different fields of life, to achieve excellence in whatever they do is but the baby steps of an infant hero trying to learn walking. Ayn Rand in imagining an epic hero in the form of John Galt, was trying to give a vague outline of what the hero could look like which was remodeled for vertical ascension, no matter how small the peak was. At least the question of verticality was not closed in this imagined world; it is only a matter of time when the bar would be raised to include new peaks and summits. Can we say that mountaineering as a serious activity became popular in the 20th century because any type

of indulgence with verticality was abandoned in the gloom of failed narratives? In the absence of any ideal of verticality, do the summits provide an alibi for the eternal quest of humans; to rise above oneself?

With this we come to the end of this chapter which dealt with the constitution of self in the political context and the predicament of the political self in the post-war Europe known as post- modern condition. While there are many reactions in terms of theoretical engagement with post-modern condition, we saw that it was the rise of management discourse in the popular culture that posed diametrically opposite solutions to the post-modern predicament of self and its destiny. Management discourse, by resurrecting the image of hero in the ancient sense tried to redirect the vector of self in the upward direction. By addressing individuals through the concepts of self-perfection and self-realization, it opened up the avenue of seeking individual liberation and emancipation in a positive way. In this quest, the management discourse is taking vocabularies from spiritual domains that have always talked about self-perfection and self-realization. In the next chapter, we would take the question of self-perfection and self-realization to the next level by discussing how individuals and their destinies are framed in the spiritual domains and what is the role of materiality in achieving self-perfection and self-realization.

Chapter 5: Verticality and unlocking of the domains of self-perfection

“You Europeans know nothing about America. Because we amass large fortunes you think we care for nothing but money. We are nothing for it; the moment we have it we spend it, sometimes well, sometimes ill, but we spend it. Money is nothing to us; it's merely the symbol of success. We are the greatest idealists in the world; I happen to think that we've set our ideal on the wrong objects; I happen to think that the greatest ideal man can set before himself is self-perfection (Maugham 2003, pp.73)”.

W. Somerset Maugham, *The Razor's Edge*.

“But, as always, it turns out that our bleakest adversities are also our most promising opportunities, and that the dark passage is only a passage leading to a greater light. Hence, with our backs against the wall, we are facing the last territory left for us to explore, the ultimate adventure: ourselves (Satprem 2000, pp.1)”.

Satprem, Sri Aurobindo or *The adventure of consciousness*.

5.1 Return of the spiritual

If there is one question that has eternally perplexed the best minds in every society; it is how to raise the individuals from their present state to a higher state of existence and perfection? The answers have been tried using different formulations in the arenas history, religious, scientific, and political. The common factor in all these formulations was that they were designed in opposition to each other, and therefore left many things unaccounted. Earlier, in previous chapters, I have elaborated the idea of ‘*verticality*’, propounded by Peter Sloterdijk for looking in to the domains of self-perfection and the stages of vertical ascension. The aim of this chapter is to explore the idea of self-perfection as a continuous streak of infinite vertical ascension. For doing this, I have taken a cue from the success of management discourse by reintroducing spirituality as a source of meaningful expression in its fold. Once the ‘vector of self’ has been reoriented in the vertical direction by the management discourse, it was inevitable that its limited idea of self-growth would be expanded by introducing certain fields within it that have much larger scope of self-growth and self-perfection.

The uniqueness of the idea of spirituality, as aspiring for larger meanings and values, that is being reintroduced through the management discourse lies in the fact that it includes

practical domains of life such as work and expertise as part of larger spiritual process. In this aspect it is different from the idea of transcendence imagined in religion, especially Christianity, which never allowed other practical and worldly domains as meaningful expressions of the same spiritual process leading up to God (Sloterdijk 2013). Scholars in the past have attempted this separation in the form of distillation of the idea of religiosity from religion, to demonstrate that religiosity reflects a quality of feeling (James 1917, Otto 1923, Smith 1979); a kind of *oceanic feeling* (James 1917). This quality of feeling, like spirituality, points to something aspirational in individuals of immense proportions. Moreover, the idea of spirituality detached from the religious doctrines makes it a truly individual exercise in self-realization and fulfillment, enabled by exemplariness, rather than by commands and dictums; which has always been the understanding in eastern traditions. The idea of Exemplariness described by Bilgrami is derived from morality (2002) and therefore is dependent on the same set of codes enshrined in theologies. Whereas the idea of exemplariness in spirituality has got nothing to do moral codes and values but on the individual's quest for rising above oneself. More than the act of believing, spirituality is an act of abstraction. Tools and techniques of self-perfection in different domains of life provide the logistics for that abstraction.

Although the import of spirituality in management discourse is limited in nature, focusing on synchronization between individuals and organizational goals and values of compassion and altruism; yet it has got its fundamentals right in terms of orientation and its method of focusing on exemplariness. The success of management as a field and its adoption of spirituality for specific purposes nevertheless have given us an opportunity to unshackle the idea of self-growth and self-perfection from the limitations imposed on it by religious and economic doctrines. The conditions are ripe for propounding an idea of self-perfection that is infinite in nature, boundless in existence and which takes the expertise in worldly domains as mediums and stepping stones to higher and higher levels of existence. Then only we could realize the full import of the idea of spirituality and spiritual process. And what could be more illuminating in understanding how that abstraction and perfection looks like than to understand the verticality of one of the most abstract and speculative entity of our times; Capital. This focus on the flight of capital in vertical direction can give us a handhold in understanding the overall dynamics of self-

perfection, the forces that express themselves, the obstructions it could encounter and the ecosystem that support its desire for verticality. Since spirituality has been mainstreamed by one of the most successful disciplines of our times, i.e. field of management; it's better to import it with full force for demonstrating the infinite nature of the idea of self-perfection.

5.2 The vertical nature of capital

It can be said that Marx was the metaphysician par excellence of 19th century and '*Das capital*' being a treatise on idealism because it was a detailed account of the subtle transformation of money, through accumulation and speculation into capital. Capital formation is one of the few domains in the modern history that has shown the capability for enormous vertical ascension; from being a tangible asset to highly speculative entity bordering on abstraction. What has been said about money, in the form of capital; that it circulates and accumulates itself is another way of saying that it rises above itself to gain new heights and new levels of abstraction. The debate between idealism and materialism loses its oppositional value, if we remove our attention from their respected areas of concern, spirit and matter, and focus instead on the things that were really rising to new levels of abstraction and idealism (Sri Aurobindo 2013). The entire transformation of money into capital through its various movements (Marx 1982) and its stages of abstraction through speculation reveals that idealism is nothing but a process of transformation of matter into spirit.

Probably one of the reasons why capitalism, as it is understood, has been endowed with ghostly characteristics by its critics, in terms of its presence and affects (Latour 2014) has to do with the nature of capital. It has dematerialized itself to such an extent that it seems near impossible to track its movements and bring it under regulation. From matter, it has metamorphosed into spirit in the course of its history and in the stages of its growth.

In eastern traditions, understanding about money is fuller and wider in scope, as succinctly put by Sri Aurobindo in his talks about money:

“Money is the visible sign of a universal force, and this force in its manifestation on earth works on the vital & physical planes and is

indispensable to the fullness of the outer life. In its origin and true action it belongs to the divine (1990, pp.11)”.

Considering money to be an expression of a universal force and indispensable to the fullness of the outer life does not have the shortcomings associated with the worldviews which limit it merely to use and exchange value while making a fetish out of it or those who have thrown it in the realm of sin. Viewing money as a manifestation of force necessary for the fulfillment life acknowledges the emancipatory role of money in the task of vertical ascension of individuals; it is one of the supporting peaks in the act of verticality. Just having value in economic terms cannot explain the enthusiasm, amazement and obsession of the people attached with the movement and transformation of money. A very minute and detailed observation about the nature of money, the best example being '*Das Capital*', entails something more than just economic forces at play. The uniqueness of *Das Capital* lies not in the fact that it claims to be a scientific study of capital and its processes, but rather its meticulous and detailed observation on the life stages of money. Whether the detailed analysis of capital transformations is scientific or not; or whether the rules elaborated in them really reflect the rules of economy is a different question altogether. Though it must be acknowledged that after a long spell of neglect and contempt, the processes of capital formation finally got the attention they deserved inherently, not because they have economic value but because they represent a vital force through which humanity finds its fulfillment. As Sri Aurobindo puts it:

“All wealth belongs to the Divine and those who hold it are trustees, not possessors. It is with them today, tomorrow it may be elsewhere. All depends on the way they discharge their trust while it is with them, in what spirit, with what consciousness in their use of it, to what purpose.

In your personal use of money look on all you have or get or bring as the Mother's. Make no demand but accept what you receive from her and use it for the purposes for which it is given to you. Be entirely selfless, entirely scrupulous, exact, careful in detail, a good trustee; always consider that it is her possessions and not your own that you are handling (1990, pp.12)”.

It is in the detail wherein lies the essence of money, which allows in fully appreciating and acknowledging the forces at play in capital formation; because the process of accumulation is same as the process of degeneration. It can go in the same way as it has come to an individual; it is a possession which gives the being its individuality. For each

success story, there are plenty of stories of failures; only a much hated capitalist knows how easy it is to lose everything and go bankrupt without an extra effort. A detailed inventory of forces and factors affecting the capital can definitely open up the horizon to both ends of the spectrum; of prosperity and bankruptcy. It is not only the devil that lies in the detail, but even the divine lies in the detail in spiritual traditions.

When something is shunned from the realm of fruitful human endeavors, than we completely lose track of its dynamicity as well as techniques of regulating its movement (Latour 1993). The exponential rise in the wealth of the European countries and processes of capital formation following the collapse of Christianity from the dominant position in society (Hobsbawm 1975, Sloterdijk 2013, Weber 2003) indicates that things proliferate immensely when due diligence is not observed in their detailing and meaning.

5.3 The insufficiency of the worldviews in pursuit of verticality

Capitalism is not a monster that societies have to fight tooth and nail ideologically; rather it is the manifestation of the unattended forces that have not been given proper hearing by the dominant worldviews. We don't have to go too far in the history to understand the volcanic surge of capital formation in Post-Christian European societies. In fact, the fall of the Soviet empire provides with illuminating examples of how a surge happens when most of the East European countries were hit by massive Ponzi schemes that promised to make people millionaires overnight (Sloterdijk 2010). People lost their entire savings in these Ponzi schemes while some countries went bankrupt by this sudden takeover of a force which was hitherto suppressed in the Soviet regime (Sloterdijk 2010). What we have come to understand as capitalism is this sudden takeover of societies by forces manifested in the form of capital, which were either unrecognized or disparaged in Christian-socialist social orders. The East European fiasco was a repetition of that historic takeover of societies on a smaller scale.

More than an ideological arrangement of power and class relations, capitalism represents a regime of vital human forces, which have largely become chaotic and relentlessly occupying the landscape in their newly attained freedom. It is no wonder that capitalism has received its most comprehensive treatment, in terms of characteristics, rules,

peculiarities, intentions from the ideologies that are designed to counter it. It is considered a mutant for its dynamic nature of adapting to every change and incorporating every obstacle that comes in its way (Boltanski 2005). Every possible gang formation has been employed against these vital forces manifested in wealth creation; God and its mercenaries, state and its machinery, party and the people. Yet it has resurfaced more vigorously every time for the simple reason that there is no well-defined and well-articulated enemy as imagined by its adversaries; it is merely a force reorienting itself time and again. The field of capital formation doesn't have an organized and close ended worldview like its religious and political adversaries which are close ended systems on their own. In the absence of a structured framework of capitalism against which the popular rage can be directed against; what becomes the target of rage are individuals who try to harness this vital force and make something out of it.

A capitalist is nothing but an idealist who seeks self-perfection and self-ascension while riding on the back of capital to new heights. Understanding the process of wealth creation and accumulation in economic terms of use value, exchange value and profit (Marx 1982) leaves a very fundamental aspect of wealth creation out of the picture and analysis. In fact, the sociological understanding about social status and classes are post factum explanations of the phenomenon of wealth creation and relies too heavily on the idea of society developed in the late 19th and 20th century¹. With the removal of transcendental field of God from the prospect of providing the vertical lift to the individuals, the erstwhile disparaged fields belonging to the realm of sins made their entry into the world with full force. The widespread Christian belief were that vital forces of life are handiworks of devil as they distract the humans from the path of God and therefore Christian theology came heavily upon human vitality by degrading them as sins (Sloterdijk 2001, 2010, 2013). Depreciation of the body; of the ego; of the wealth; of human valor and pride; of human enterprise and all avenues of pleasure were christened in the doctrine to prevent humans from slipping from the only true path towards God (Sloterdijk 2013, Nietzsche 1974). No other domain of fulfillment and realization was

¹ For the detailed description of the idea of society developed in 19th and 20th century, See Anthony Giddens (1971) *Capitalism and Modern Social Theory: An Analysis of the Writings of Marx, Durkheim and Max Weber*. Cambridge: Cambridge university press

open other than the divine realization based on the theological-monastical order of Christianity. To ensure that people don't fall for those sinful forces; poverty, meekness, submissiveness and sufferings in all its forms were eulogised for having a special grace of God (Nietzsche 1974a). Nietzsche (1974a, 1974b) summed it brilliantly when he said that Christian moral order directed its rage against everything healthy and beautiful.

The suspicion of the Christian social order against the vital human forces was less to do with the idea of sin and act of devil but rather an acknowledgement of the emancipatory power of these forces in giving a sense of fulfillment when progressively realized. It misjudged these progressive realizations of human vitality to be in contradiction with the supreme realization of the transcendental God, and therefore zealously tried to remove them from the scope of meaningful human endeavors. All monotheistic formulations suffer from this lack of sense of proportions, whereby they conflate the verticality gained in worldly pursuits to be of same magnitude and quality as that afforded by the transcendental idea of God. The central theme of monotheism that "There is no god but God" betrays this lack of sense of proportions and suspicion towards anything that gives vertical ascension in the form of perfection and fulfillment. It is equivalent of saying that there are no peaks but the highest peak, confusing the smaller peaks as standing against the highest peak in the range. A professional mountaineer would know that without the aid and support of the smaller peaks, the conquest of the highest peak would remain an incomprehensible task. It is because of these smaller peaks that the final *leap of faith* for the summit is materialized.

It is these contradictions that have been built in to the treatment of capital in Marxian analysis. Marxism while breaking away from the transcendental field of Christian God, or any God whatsoever, inherited heavily from the Christian social order based on emancipation and imagined kingdom of heaven (Eliade 1975) . Though it differed from its religious precursor in that it acknowledged the transitory and rising character of money into capital, it nevertheless directed its rage and contempt against the vertical nature of capital for inhibiting the realization of its desired social order. The superficial antagonisms of the ideologies (capitalism and communism) rest on the desired goals set for the individuals and societies while both acknowledge the verticality afforded by the

capital in its flight. Both ideologies are content with the verticality offered by capital and considered it the highest possible realm available; with the only difference that while one advocates individual journeys into that realm, the other wants to make it a mass movement towards that realm. The latter piously hopes that only by taking everybody for the flight would counter the sinful effects of capital on human nature and thereby helping in creating its imagined social order of kingdom of heaven on earth. While both these ideologies belong to the secular realm, popularly known as materialism; but if we judge these ideologies on the parameters of verticality, we find that both are content with very limited range of verticality offered by capital. This kind of materialism doesn't have scope for infinite verticality and remains at the level of what Sloterdijk refers to as '*basecamps*' (2013); at best they can be viewed as truncated materialism or truncated verticality.

On similar lines, the oppositional nature of idealism with materialism could be understood using the parameters of verticality. In case of idealism, the range of verticality is immense as it deals with spirit and transcendental God but it doesn't have provisions for aiding and abetting the vertical ascension through smaller peaks and smaller transcendences. Idealism has undermined the whole process of transformation from coarse to subtle levels by removing the connecting links and ladders and making the task of verticality a chimera. This type of idealism can be viewed as expunged idealism; an idealism without grounding and roots, offering verticality but without the means to have it. On the scale of verticality, both idealism and materialism seem to struggle to travel the full distance; starting from one extreme but unable to traverse the other extreme. It is this inability to allow for full transition that has made matter and spirit two antagonistic and insoluble entities in the fight between idealism and materialism (Aurobindo 2013). And it is this insolubility and incompatibility of the extremes that the greatest ideal of mankind; self-perfection is not being able to find its head or toe. It is grappling in the dark about the limits of its ascension and perfection; how much to aspire for, how much to content for, and how far one can go. Idealism couldn't cope with the concrete reality of the world and materialism was never made comfortable with the subtler aspects of existence; idealism never materialized itself whereas materialism never dematerialized itself. It is the incompleteness of this idea of self-perfection as inscribed in the theories about

materialism and idealism that has divided the world in to two large camps, each holding its version of truth dearer than anything else in the world.

In our discussion about money and its transformation into capital through different stages, we found an inherent tendency for vertical ascension. The flight of capital through accumulation, circulation and abstraction represents a vital force trying to find expression by constantly rising to new levels. The economic doctrines of use-value and exchange-value never captured this feature of capital formation; and this deficit was reflected at the larger level in the ideologies prominent in the modern period. This insufficiency in the worldview to take verticality of capital into account, as we have seen, had historical precursors in the form of theological worldviews associated with Christianity.

Now that we know that capital formation represents a force with upward trajectory and provides the individual with an important domain of self-realization; we have to unshackle the idea of self- perfection, trapped in limited verticality, by elaborating an idea of hero that has been specifically designed for infinite verticality.

5.4 Calling the Heroes on Centre stage: inspiring the individuals for verticality.

The period that saw the destruction of grand narratives (Lyotard 1984) and the simultaneous rise of the management discourse (Boltanski & Chiapello 2005), was also the period when the question of self-perfection was finally detached from being an appendage to the larger question of society and fate of mankind² (Lyotard 1984, Sloterdijk 2001). The nihilistic purging of the society from the scheme of meaningful questions in the postmodern condition finally made the questions about individuals and self, as the only questions left worth enquiring (Sloterdijk 2001, 2010, 2013). The negative framing of the idea of individual as against state, society and religion was inevitable following their overarching universalization³ (Bilgrami 2002) and their

² Much of the so called postmodernist discontent stems from the failure of the promised project of modernity of universalism, emancipation and rationality.

³ Akeel Bilgrami, while studying the history of western moral philosophy, finds universalization to be its recurrent theme , which he calls by the name of universalizability: to extend the scope of one's moral

subsequent cracking up from inside (Adorno 1974, Marcuse 1964, Sloterdijk 2001)). In fact, the negative framing of the idea of individual provided the much needed force to remove the hubris of the failed universals, and to retrieve the eternal question of individual and its destiny (Bell 1960, Camus 2005, Cioran 1975). This retrieval of the idea of self-perfection from the debris of nihilism made possible the reformulation of the idea of the hero and its destiny in the world (Rand 1957, 1964). This quest for self-perfection attached with the idea of hero, symbolized by Ayn Rand, saw the transition of idea of self from ‘historic self’ to ‘heroic self’. The templates of historic self were provided by eschatological and teleological destinies imagined in preceding worldviews. Ayn Rand has been celebrated as the proponent of unapologetic capitalism by her admirers as well as critics, but they failed to recognize in her someone who broke the yoke of history from the shoulders of individuals, which they were condemned to carry for at least two millennia.

The framing of the hero from being a product of history to someone who rises above history, an ahistorical hero who chooses its own destiny, who refuses to play by the rulebook of history and whose wrath knows no bounds when scorned, was the major philosophical revolution initiated by Rand in the period known to be inimical to the revolutions. According to science historian Isabelle Stengers (1984), we missed the novelty of Copernican revolution by focusing primarily on his heliocentric model of the universe while ignoring the major paradigm shift from circular to elliptical paths. It is in the discovery of elliptical paths, according to Stengers (1984), lies the greatness of Copernican revolution, which made the planetary system more dynamic and full of possibilities. An ellipse with its two centers has more possibilities than a circle or sphere with only one center. Circular paths with a fixed center were prominent in worldviews that were associated with grand design and perfection of creation. The idea of elliptical paths shattered that idea of perfect creation and introduced unevenness and fluctuations in the cosmologies. Similarly, the novelty in Ayn Rand’s works was akin to this revolution of elliptical paths, where heroes were not shaped by the logic of history but could themselves introduce turbulence and dynamism in the world. She created a hero, *John*

values to everybody else as a necessity. He therefore proposed the idea of ‘Exemplariness’, to become an example by embodying the moral values oneself rather than imposing them on others.

Galt in the tradition of the ancients, fully autonomous and master of its own destiny; just like the heroes of the antiquity. In the noise surrounding the fight between different ideologies, the profound shift happening in the characterization of the hero was missed.

The new hero was not someone who would force itself on the others through revelations, revolutions and task of history, rather it would try to conquer that last and only bastion left for exploration; self-perfection. It is only by mastering the art of self-perfection; through verticality that the individual would rise above oneself and others. In doing so, the individual would create poles of luminosity which would attract others to follow the same path and rise to those levels. It is always through imitation that things spread and become accepted. Gabriel Tarde (1903) has insightfully elaborated on how there are no general laws of society other than imitation. According to Tarde, an individual always sends and receives imitative rays in the society and it is always the powerful imitative rays that generally travel far and wide in to distant places and peoples (Tarde 1903).

Societies are based on the communication systems (Habermas 1999), established between different imitative rays emitted by ideas and individuals (Tarde 1903); which in recent times has been described using the analogy of cybernetics and network systems (Castells 2010, Levi Strauss 1963, Lyotard 1984). The power of an idea and the attraction of a personality depend on the strength of the imitative rays emitted from the source, in comparison with other imitative rays coming from the other sources (Tarde 1903). The rise and the fall of heroes, the waxing and the waning of the pull of an idea are directly depended on the strength and power of the imitative rays emitted from the source. When it loses the force of transmission, it is subsumed by other powerful rays coming from other sources; it either ceases to be a pole of luminosity or overshadowed by a larger and stronger pole of luminosity (Tarde 1903).

These poles of luminosity act like a totem around which individuals gather in the form of collectives and associations (Durkheim 1997, Latour 2004). It is not that everything emitting the imitative rays becomes a pole of luminosity for everybody else. Only few individuals and fewer ideas overpower all other competing rays to become a pole around which things happen and gather. And there is no definitive way of becoming a pole or a high point other than to rise above oneself and to rise above mundane and ordinary

existence. When someone rises above oneself through self-perfection, a gradient is introduced in the world that makes it possible for other individuals to follow along the differential gradient. Absence of gradient makes it almost impossible to maintain the upward movement of self-ascension and self-perfection. Only way to inspire people for verticality and to make them conscious that there still higher peaks in the life to ascend is by showing them through oneself that such peaks occur and can be ascended. Recently this idea of imitable and luminous individuals has found presence in certain fields of human enterprises in the form of leadership and managerial qualities (Fry 2005). Increasing numbers of researchers are acknowledging the fact that work and performance, apart from having a use value, also possess a spiritual value enabling self-fulfillment and self-perfection.

The rarity of individuals who achieve infinite verticality and the enormous number of people who fail in their endeavors does not mean that the idea of verticality has to be abandoned or substituted by more accessible peaks with visible results. The idea of high peaks and the examples of few individuals who have ascended to those levels serves one very important purpose; that is they make people and societies always conscious of the fact that there's more to life than what's visible to naked eyes. The desire for verticality should always be kept burning in the minds and hearts of the people so that when someone hears and follows the calling, there should be a proper ecosystem available to guide and train the individuals in their quest. The ecosystem designed to remind and assist people in verticality comprises out of many things, the inventories of people who have made it to the highest point of self-perfection, their life stories, and the markers they left behind. The active ecosystem would turn these markers into key points on the landscape (Simondon 1958) and part of the folklore to keep the memory of that act alive in the consciousness of the people.

Coming back to the shift in the idea of hero initiated by Ayn Rand through her novel *Atlas shrugged* (1957); the hero no longer attempted nor desired to attempt mass incursions along the road to self-perfection. The hero born out of the pangs of nihilism instead reinvigorated an older method of pedagogy: that is by becoming an example, a pole of luminosity for the rest of the people, by emitting stronger imitative rays that one

could inspire people to do things towards self-ascension and self-perfection. In fact one engaged in the task of self-perfection need not worry at all about people and their upliftment; one just has to introduce a gradient amidst people to make them see upwards. The whole idea of revolutions and forced decrees on the life of man has ended in disasters because they never allowed for the individual to evolve organically, through inspiration and self-perfection. Instead of highlighting the gradient necessary for elevation, they removed the realms of verticality from the scope of possible meaningful endeavors (Sloterdijk 2013). Religious as well as political revolutions ended up creating an undifferentiated chaos of equality and tried to guide this undifferentiated mass through rules and decrees (Canetti 1978).

Though the vision of this new hero was limited to excel in things hitherto disparaged or denied; mostly wealth and other worldly things (Rand 1957, 1964), yet the merit of this new vision was that it was aligned in the right direction and detached from mass psychology. There contained a wisdom most commonly found in spiritualistic traditions that it is only through fulfillment of material desires that the higher desire for spiritual fulfillment would awaken in individuals. The stages in the acts of verticality are also the stages in the process of individualization. The idea of being as becoming (Deleuze 2005) can best be understood as an evolutionary process in gaining individuality. The individuality of an individual is not given beforehand and is never settled once and for all (Simondon 1958). An individual always gains individuality through these acts of fulfillment and self-perfection. The whole point of infinite verticality reflects these stages in individualization. Once a smaller desire is fulfilled, a smaller peak is conquered; it always expands and points to higher peaks and higher desires. This process of expansion of the limits of human potential results in the realization and concretization of higher levels of individuality. Individuality is not the antonym of community or society, rather an act of establishing peculiarity through exemplariness. Though every individual is different and should be considered equal but that doesn't mean that every individual has individuality at par with others. Individuality can best be understood as the process of realization of higher levels; the more an individual ascends to higher levels of perfection, the more individuality is concretized in comparison to other individuals.

In fact the whole purpose of the idea of community and society is to create conditions for the flowering of individuality in individuals. The society should act as a cradle for providing the necessary ecosystem so as to develop the human potential in different fields of life, providing a meaningful outlet to the vital human energies and forces. By relegating vast array of fields to the domain of sin, the western society at least with the advent of Christianity has totally inverted its task. Instead of training individuals to discover their individuality, it completely destroyed the differential operators necessary for the process of individuation. It forced them into a chaos of undifferentiated mass (Canetti 1978) with no scope of differential gradient and therefore having no possibility of flowering of the individuality of individuals. According to Nietzsche, the purpose of culture is training and selection of individuals in order to make them masters, to endow them with master morality (Deleuze 1983). It is only the masters who can become the poles of luminosity, acting as a lamp post for other individuals in their desire to take over their destiny in their own hands and to realize their individuality.

The accusation of individuality against the hero of Ayn Rand does not hold ground if we have revised our idea of individuality as process of realizing our potentials and raising it to highest levels of perfection and in the process becoming a source of light for others. In fact, it has saved the idea of individuality by rescuing it from the clutches of a society designed to destroy any semblance of individuality in the chaos of crowd. Once the differential operator is introduced again in the process of individuation (Simondon 1958), it is just a matter of time when higher and higher levels of steps are added in sequence. Starting with the material success of the individuals, the desire would definitely grow for more transcendental realms and for spiritual success.

The shifts happening in management discourse over time suggests this growing desire for higher realms in the individuals. Whether people achieve that success or not is not the question; the main question is whether the scope and possibility of undertaking that journey is available or not. With the coming of material success, if other higher levels are not opened up for the individuals to explore, it can have a serious implication on the overall health of the individuals and societies that do not recognize the presence of higher fields.

5.5 Making sense of madness in a civilization: A view from outside.

The modern western civilization rests on the principle of equality, liberty and other such similar ideals apart from being characterized by economic rationality and scientific temper and material well-being (Habermas 1980). It has been argued by scholars that universal tendencies of modernity are all derived from its religious predecessor with the only difference being the practical approach to world in every human activity (Latour 1993, Nandy 2005 Sloterdijk 2001, 2010). It is for this practicality that battles have been fought against the theocratic order and whose fall finally opened up the vast array of fields hitherto denied and suppressed. And these newly opened up fields laid the foundation of modern western civilization. And herein lies the problem of the western civilization; the problem of cultural ordering of meaningful things and fields of activity. The task of the civilization is to allow movement from grosser to subtler levels of existence and assigning things and activity their rightful place in the cultural ordering. It cannot afford to exclude any activity or any plane of existence without coding and placing it in the deserved place (Latour 2004). The pre-modern period of western civilization was all about the transcendental field of divine as the highest point in cultural ordering with no intermediary levels (Sloterdijk 2013). And the modern period thrives in intermediary levels as its highest value with no further pointers for exploration (Nietzsche 1974). Reducing the idea of any civilization to the basics of equality, plurality, tolerance, rationality or pleasure is a gross misunderstanding and a short sightedness of imagination. At best, these are only the addendums or annexures at the end in the book of civilizations.

Counter this with any of the old world civilization that has maintained at least a minimum level of continuity in its organizing patterns and cultural ordering of things, we would find that they have always engaged in the progressive abstraction of things from cruder to subtler levels. The process of structuring decides the strength and durability of any arrangement (Levi Strauss 1962, 1963). To ensure strength it cannot afford to leave the things maintain its anonymity; it has to engage with all the properties of that thing which can affect the strength, in any way of the structure (Latour 2004, Levi Strauss 1962). The act of denying and suppressing the existence of things which can affect it in any way is not its prerogative (Latour 1993, 2004).

Older civilizations like the Indian civilization have mastered the art of verticality (Sloterdijk 2013), to raise an individual above oneself, to make a superhuman out of an individual, to raise individuals at the level of gods (Purani 1982). This civilization has neither limited itself to the domain of the divine nor to a single method of monastical order, as in the theological Christian order nor suppressed the vital creative energies of the humans. Indian civilization has allowed the vital forces in an individual to have a full play of their power, has integrated them in the higher domains of karma and dharma and raised it to the level of divine instead of degrading these forces to the level of sin (Purani 1982). It knows that suppression is not best way to deal with forces that are bound to manifest themselves in one way or the other. If allowed proper channels for its outlet, it can lead to flowering of individuals to their highest potential. Individuality is nothing but the concretization of these potentials in the humans at the highest levels.

The civilizational matrix has to provide the proper ecosystem necessary for making verticality a living reality for all its inhabitants. Even if few people achieve this infinite verticality, yet it has to make effort to make people remember that higher stages of life exist and one can take it if there's a calling for the infinite. Even if one cannot undertake that journey of self-ascension oneself, one should prepare the next generation of individuals by passing on to them the implicit and explicit knowledge of human perfection.

A civilization cannot sustain for long if it doesn't have mechanisms for raising humans to the level of superman; it cannot afford to lower the bar of perfection just because it cannot be achieved universally by all people of varying competencies. The moment one conquers the lower peaks or masters the domain of material things, one starts looking for higher and more fulfilling domains of experience. If that civilization doesn't take into account that stage of human longing and doesn't have provisions of expansion of human horizon from that point on, than it can have serious consequences for its own sustainability as well as that of the individuals. The total well-being of the individuals, from material well-being to mental well-being has to be provided for in the cultural ordering of the things and activities. Providing for the material as well as mental well-being by the civilization doesn't mean that civilizations have to behave like welfare states

in their treatment of individuals; they only have to acknowledge the vital human forces and their manifestations through various modes of existences and ordering them in the domain of verticality.

There is a risk of confusing this stress on exemplariness with the idea of Americanness which the success of America in the world order has popularized; that if you can't make it in America, you can't make it anywhere in the world. There's some truth in that idea of Americanness, but it represents only a fraction of what humans supposedly can make and achieve and the potentials they have. Economically there's no denying the fact it represents one of the most comprehensive systems of wealth creation through innovation and entrepreneurship. It has allowed the full play of the universal vital force manifested through money and shown remarkable capacity in raising it to higher abstract levels. It is no wonder that it is home to large number of capital-idealists in the world, with their wealth bordering on near abstraction level. Whether they have learnt to make sense of that verticality meaningfully is another question?

So what is the basic difference between narratives of western civilization with that of spiritual traditions, especially in the east? The basic difference is that Americanness or for that matter modernism, has not been designed for infinite verticality; after a brief spell of elevation, it results in vertigo. Therefore those who can't make it in America suffer from failure, and those who make it in America look for something more fulfilling everywhere. Alan Roland (1988) in his studies about different types of 'self' has pointed out that most patients undergoing psychiatric treatment in America have judged themselves on this parameter of American exceptionalism and found themselves wanting. Their mental distress comes from failing to live up to the standards of Americanness, which induces a low confidence in their personalities; if they can't make it in America, they can't make it anywhere in the world.

The difference between two civilizations is between vertiginous and verticality. That basic difference could be discerned from the lives of the individuals and the trajectories of life possibilities available to them. Nietzsche died as a mad man in Europe; in India he would have metamorphosed into a mystic; that sums up the difference. The presence of possibilities higher than the one which have been accomplished ensures that the flight of

verticality is not aborted abruptly leaving the individual completely lost in the wilderness. It is no wonder that the birth of psychoanalysis as a field of investigation of the deeper recesses of the human mind is almost the same period as that of the peak of modernity and the triumph of rationality in western civilization.

It would be inaccurate to argue that rationality gave birth to the problem of psychosis or that it is only a modern phenomenon with no history in the preceding years. But it is important to highlight that the shrinking horizon of self-perfection and self-ascension and the closing of different fields of human experience from the domain of legitimacy coincided with a spurt in the esoteric psychological disorders (Foucault 2001, Freud 1978, James 1917). The general explanation that with the onset of modernity, there led to destruction of community and family life, and a feeling of alienation in the individuals is true but only partially (Zizek 1997, Deleuze 2000). Inherent in the psychoanalytical theories is the assumption that the past experiences and life histories shape an individual's mental framework and mark them permanently (Deleuze 2000).

As per psychoanalytical theory, it is these experiences hidden in the dark recesses of the subconscious mind that manifest in the form of psychosis (Freud 1978, 1985). Even the higher realms of spirituality and mysticism were explained as manifestation of these repressed forces, especially sexual drives (Kakar 2007, Kripal 1995, Doniger 1981). But the fact remains that the modern framework did result in the proliferation in the investigation of the mental makeup of individuals on a large scale. The psychoanalytic tradition was fully immersed in modern worldview, as could be seen from its attempt to orient the 'vector of self' from the higher dimensions towards lower modes of existence; from genuine spiritual aspirations to repressed sexual drives.

Michel Foucault (2001) has brilliantly documented changing patterns in the way madness has been understood in the western society and the techniques employed to tackle it from confinement to asylum. According to Foucault, it is in modernity that the dialogue of reason with madness completely snapped. This snapping of dialogue represents a further contracting of the space in which the esoteric experiences could be legitimately utilized

as a tool for verticality; for vertical ascension. At least the presence of the transcendental realm in the reign of Christianity allowed for and nurtured many esoteric experiences of the mind in the service of divine and raising the consciousness of the individual. That doesn't mean that the presence of transcendental realm is an antidote to the phenomenon of madness; it can take care of only few experiences and raise it to the level of divine. In fact the Christian social order sent huge number of people on the guilt laden trip to madness because of its prohibition and denial of the vital human forces (Dubos 1968, Nietzsche 1974). One of the most common occurrences during middle ages along with witch hunting and inquisitions ordered by church of individuals who manifested those prohibited traits was hysteria (Illich 1976). The history of madness, as outlined by Foucault (2001), has been one of expansion and engulfment of most of the domains of the psychic behavior and esoteric experiences into the zone of madness and insanity.

The association of schizophrenia with capitalism (to borrow from Deleuze's book titled, *A Thousand Plateaus*), or for that matter with the larger project of modernity is not because of some drastic shift in the mental framework of the individuals trained in the milieu of scientific rationality. The association has largely to do with the gradual erosion and relegation of vast number of experiences as unscientific and illegitimate (Freud 1978, James 1917). Breaking of the traditional structures might account for the proliferation of the cases, but explaining away all the cases with the trope of community and past experiences never do justice with the multitude of experiences manifested in the defined zones of insanity and madness.

What has happened in modernity is that the bar of human excellence has been reduced considerably; the zones of verticality are shifted to lower levels of just material wellbeing after which there are just uncodified empty spaces. The economic prosperity brought about by capitalism raised many individuals to the level of affluence and left them there as the highest possible zone of attainment. The absence of the ecosystem to make sense of the higher realms of experience and prepare individuals for further escalation left many individuals stuck at the transitory zones of existence. This lack of further abstraction of life envisaged in the modern paradigm has resulted in the shift from search

of truth to that of meaning. The obsession with meaning of life and purpose of existence has developed into full-fledged philosophy of existentialism.

The development of existentialism as a powerful stream in modern philosophical thought shows the insufficiency of the modern worldviews. In a way, existentialism is trying to add to what has been missing from the modern teleology; the meaning and purpose of life once the smaller goals are achieved. In doing so, it risks of doing the same thing which has resulted in the truncated vision of life and aborted flight of verticality by its precursors. The search for meaning has led many to conclude the meaninglessness of life (Camus 2005). And it is this search for meaning that has inspired many people to look beyond their worlds and worldviews into different corners of the world. According to psychoanalyst and holocaust survivor, Viktor Frankl:

“Man’s search for meaning is the primary motivation in his life and not a secondary rationalization of instinctual drives. This meaning is unique and specific in that it must and can be fulfilled by him alone, only then it achieves a significance which will satisfy his own will to meaning (2004, pp.105)”.

He devised a new technique in mental healing called *Logotherapy*, according to which:

“This striving to find a meaning in one’s life is the primary motivational force in man (2004, pp.104)”. “It is will to meaning rather than pleasure principle or will to pleasure (2004, pp.104)”.

In his ideas about search for meaning, the author eludes to the point that mere peace won’t provide the meaning to life rather continuous striving to higher goals.

“I consider it a dangerous misconception of mental hygiene to assume that what man needs in the first place is equilibrium or as it is called in biology, “homeostasis”, i.e. a tensionless state. What man actually need is not a tensionless state, but rather the striving and struggling for a worthwhile goal, a freely chosen task (Frankl, 2004, pp.110)”.

Many have found that meaning and many are still in the process of finding that meaning that would open their horizons to new heights. The search of the hero, in Somerset Maugham’s novel ‘*Razor’s edge (2003)*’ for the meaning exemplifies all the searches taken in by individuals for life and its meaning. This search exemplified by the hero is part of the innumerable searches taken by individuals for ages and still being taken. The

recent wave of globetrotting individuals known as ‘*Hippies*’, was part of that eternal search for the meaning of life. It is in this context that we would look at the spiritual centers, especially Auroville which was initially inhabited by these *Hippies*, where most of the searches are culminated.

5.6 Auroville: A place imagined for the birth of Supermen.

Designing projects for the advent of a new era based on some kind of ideology or worldview has been one of the recurring themes in the modern period especially in the 20th century. The most important task these projects were designed for was the birth of new man based on those ideologies; the most famous being that of the revolutionary projects of the 20th century. James Scott (1998) has enumerated these projects based on their on their desired outcomes. Most of them had to do with the material and economic wellbeing of the individuals and the emancipation of the society as its consequences. It’s not that these utopian projects sanctioned by the state were started only in the last century having precursors and precedents. Lewis Mumford (1922) has detailed the history of utopian projects undertaken or imagined in western civilization in his book ‘*The story of utopias*’; the only difference being that of scaling and execution and in most cases of state sanction. But the common theme running in both these detailed history of utopias is the recurrent theme of imagining a new world order and a new being and trying to bring it into the world. This bringing down of the new being cannot be undertaken without preparing some kind of incubatory system to nurture and nourish the nascent idea in to full blown reality.

The need for the incubatory system for the realization of an idea is similar to the experimental setup arranged by the scientist in order to prove the proposed hypothesis. It is not necessary that the established experiment would lead to the desired outcome but nevertheless it proves the point that concretization of any idea or hypothesis is not possible without proper incubatory system. In our brief survey of western civilization we have found that it has acted as one large incubatory system where innumerable social experiments have been carried out, producing their own sets of social relations and new individuals. The insufficiency of the modern framework to provide for the vertical ascension of individuals to realms beyond the level of material and economic wellbeing

began to appear frequently in their search for meaning and purpose. One such experiment on the spiritual level happened in India as Auroville to provide incubation to the spiritual seed inside the individual. It was an experimental setup designed to bring to reality Sri Aurobindo's idea of supramental consciousness; to facilitate the descent of higher consciousness in individuals. The experimental city of Auroville known as the city of dawn was started in 1968 after the death of Sri Aurobindo in a village near Pondicherry by his spiritual companion known as 'The Mother'.

The Mother, a French woman, born as Mirra Alfassa, visualized about a city in her dream and narrated in 1954, where the two contradictions of individual and collective life would cease to exist and would act as a cradle for the descent of higher consciousness in individual. And it is this dream that laid the foundations of Auroville:

“There should be somewhere on earth a place which no nation could claim as its own, where all human beings of goodwill who have a sincere aspiration could live freely as citizens of the world and obey one single authority, that of the supreme Truth; a place of peace, concord and harmony where all the fighting instincts of man would be used exclusively to conquer the causes of his sufferings and miseries, to surmount his weaknesses and ignorance, to triumph over his limitations and incapacities; a place where the needs of the spirit and the concern for progress would take precedence over the satisfaction of desires and passions, the search for pleasure and material enjoyment⁴”.

Though the dream looks like a repetition of the utopian imagination we are so familiar with in the western history, its imagination about future, about relations with one another and pursuits of the individuals, but with a major difference in orientation. And the orientation of this experiment had to do with the descent of the *supramental consciousness*⁵; to raise the level of individuals at the level of superman. At first this would seem awkward that out of all places, this experiment had to be set up on a grand scale in India, a place which is itself the embodiment of the many living spiritual traditions where the raising of consciousness has been done through ages successfully. Peter Sloterdijk has called India and Indian spirituality *as*:

⁴ <https://www.auroville.org/contents/197>

⁵ Idea developed by Sri Aurobindo in his thesis of integral yoga.

“The planetary granary of narcissism- assuming one can free up this term coined by psychoanalysis but no longer monopolized, for a new description of spiritual self-relationships in general (Sloterdijk, 2013, pp.262)”.

“While narcissus, the egotechnically unenlightened youth leans over the water’s edge and seeks to embrace his delightful mirror image- causing him to lose his balance, topple forwards and drown. The Indian contemplator bends over their inner self and begins to ascend. They waste little time with the reflections looking back at them, rather being careful to open their field of consciousness for the presence of the transcendent witness (Sloterdijk, 2013, pp.262)”.

In a place full of spiritual key points, setting up of a new experiment with its component of community life designed on par with different religious social orders, to attain what has been tried by Christianity seems like a repetition of old experiment in a new setting. One of the aims of Auroville as distinct from the ashram tradition is the attempt towards collective realization of higher truths along with sustainable living. It wanted to amalgamate the demands of collective life and individual aspirations for ‘verticality’ and in doing so tried to achieve the much cherished idea of unity in diversity; the idea of unity practically realized in the world. In a sense, it shared its relationship with previous utopian projects that wanted to bring about a unity of multiplicity in a visible form and which were still rife when Auroville was first visualized in a dream.

“Auroville sees itself as a place of research and experimentation for humanity as whole not only into sustainable practice such as fields of agriculture and energy generation but more importantly into establishment for the first time on earth of a practical human unity in diversity applicable to all nations and all peoples”⁶.

In fact the time when Auroville was first conceived as city of future, a bigger experiment was being conducted at the political level in the form of a new idea of India ushering in industrial revolution and scientific planning. Sunil Khilnani (2003) has outlined the contours of that new idea of India experiment which was designed to propel India into 21st century leaving behind old social and mental structures. Part of this new India was the development of new planned city of Chandigarh by the architect Le Corbusier using

⁶ <http://auroville-international.org/auroville/why-auroville/>

linear and rectangular designs to show the order and symmetry of modern architecture. James Scott (1998) has discussed about the projects taken by Le Corbusier in different parts of the world as parts of high modernism and their viability. For reasons best described in his books, he has concluded these mega projects as unsustainable and failures. The chief architect of Auroville, Roger Anger went to see Chandigarh and came back with the desire to build a new city based on his ideas, as narrated by the mother. Although the purpose of this new city would be different from those sanctioned by high modernist states, the overall milieu of that time was conducive for these mega Greenfield projects and were received positively. If the idea of India represents a political project undertaken by the state, Auroville according to the official version

“Represents a real hope for the future of humanity, as the only place on earth where an ongoing non-political experiment in human unity is under way on behalf of all mankind⁷”.

The overall idea behind Auroville has three aspects: “*spiritual, social and ecological*” (Kapoor 2007). The spiritual aspect has to do with the realization of Sri Aurobindo’s idea of supramental consciousness; the social aspect had to do with community living and whose features are more or less similar to the imagined social order of Christianity. There is no concept of private property or ownership, no use of money for transactions, and no feeling of competition among fellow citizens, as described in the characteristics of a true Aurovilian⁸. On the ecological front, the ideas are mostly about sustainable agricultural practices, emphasis on renewable energy sources and conservation of habitat. Kapoor (2007) has made a detailed study in his paper about the overall infrastructure developed by Auroville and their working and administrative style, their successes and their shortcomings. The most notable achievement is the afforestation of the entire barren and eroded land in and around Auroville, in a matter of few decades (Kapoor 2007).

The first settlers in the Auroville, and who were responsible for doing most of the hard work required to raise the township from scratch were the foreign travellers, popularly known as the hippies. The hippies were a major phenomenon of the 1960s and roamed in

⁷ <https://aviuk.org/about/introduction-to-auroville/>

⁸ Kapoor (2007, 39, pp.639) has highlighted the main points describing the conditions of being an Aurovilian.

bands to different parts of the world with their own ideas about freedom and love. They represent one aspect of the search for meaning which the insufficiency of the modern framework has triggered on a large scale and which the hero of the Razor's edge typified. It is here that many of them gave up their wandering and settled for a cause; to realize the dawn of a new city based on the idea of human unity.

5.7 An incubatory ecosystem for spiritual goals.

The success of any project or any endeavor, if taken voluntarily by individuals should not be judged hastily by comparing what it promises and what it has achieved. Instead we should focus on how it has evolved over time, what it has become for the people who have participated in its inception? It is unlike those state sanctioned projects enforced through state machinery where the after affects are too obvious to ignore and which are not allowed to become anything other than what they intended for. The place where Auroville started was a cursed place in the popular folklore; its barrenness was the result of a curse by the rishi '*Kaduveli siddha*', who was mocked by the people of this region. The nearby *Irumbai temple*, known for its broken *Shivling*, has engravings on its wall depicting the entire episode of how that curse had fallen on the people of this land. When people tried to placate the yogi, he couldn't take back the curse, as it is the case with all the curses but a hope in the future was shown, when some foreigners would come and make the region green again. Aurovilians, those who live in Auroville, relate themselves with this local legend; they think that the Auroville has been established to undo the curse that had fallen on the people. In that sense, it is trying to territorialize itself and form a link with the past by relating itself with a curse, whose undoing had to be carried out by the foreigners who had come to realize the idea of Auroville.

Auroville was designed as a city of future with limited connections to the past and minimum interactions with the outside world to prevent their overpowering influences and yet in order to territorialize itself, it needed a myth. We discussed previously that myths and legends provide the necessary ecosystem to support the birth and rise of heroes; heroism needs an element of incredibility and mythology to sustain it and propagate it to subsequent generations. The association with the Irumbai legend gives it a sense of continuity with the past and allows it to become part of a larger folklore. As the

task of Auroville is to be the place where higher humanity is realized based on the ideas of Sri Aurobindo, the association with the local legend gives it an ecosystem where the future superman is not out of place.

As one enters Auroville, the first thing that strikes the visitor is the magnificent golden disc-shaped structure known as Matrimandir; and it acts as the locus or heart of Auroville. The township spreads outwards like the arcs of concentric circles from the Matrimandir. The inspiration and the design of Matrimandir were conceived by the Mother herself and it represents something like blossoming of the flower petals; much on the lines of yogic symbolism. Inside the temple, there are no presiding deities and no associated rituals as it is common in other temples. What we have inside is a crystal globe placed at the center of the chamber as the focal point of attention. The lighting arrangements are such that all the lights, either through sun or through bulbs are reflected at the globe making it glow. This shining crystal globe is the point of concentration for all those who come inside the chambers for meditation.

While going through the library in the Auroville, I found an interesting article in the old issue of their internal magazine called Auroville today. The author by the name of Gilbert had narrated an event that happened in ancient Egypt and tried to draw similarities between the present experiment of Auroville with the experiment that happened during the time of Nefertiti and Akhenaton.

According to the legend; the loyal couple Nefertiti and Akhenaton started a new state religion in the city of Amarna and this religion resembled more like monotheism, where the disc shaped sun was worshipped known as *Hor-Aten*. The city center had a new temple dedicated to the new religion centered around light. There were no pictures of any god inside the temple and no image of traditional worshipping.

“Big stelas were put around bearing the story of its foundation with inscription ‘here is the place which belongs to no prince, to no god, no one owns it, here is the place for all of us, the earth will find joy in it. Here the heart will be happy’ (Gilbert 1989, April, pp.2)”.

It went on for 22 years after which it was destroyed by *Horemheb* who restored the older temples and revived the old capital of Thebes. The author has only alluded to point

whether the Mother, being herself of Egyptian lineage, had something similar in mind while dreaming about the city of Auroville. But it cannot be a mere coincidence that the temple of Matrimandir and the idea of future humanity in Auroville bear a striking similarity to the Egyptian experimental setup in antiquity. But it just confirms our assumption that the past legends about heroes and their curses; kings and their adventures provide a strong foundation for something which wants to be a repository ground for future superheroes and supermen.

At the visitor center of the Auroville, one can find all the relevant information, from history of its inception to the present status of its infrastructure and the composition of its inhabitants, colloquially known as Aurovilians. It is here that one gets the glimpse of its ambitions, to be a center of amalgamation of all the world cultures and for that purpose different countries of the world have been called on to make their pavilions showcasing their diversity and differences. With few exceptions, most of the proposed pavilions are still nowhere to be seen. The most developed unity pavilion in terms of buildings was that of India but its largeness was not compensated by the presence of the people. When you would walk in to the Indian pavilion called Bharat Niwas, you hardly find anybody on the regular day other than few workers maintained to keep the premises clean. It wears a ghostly look and apart from occasional seminars and gatherings, there was hardly anything that showcased the unity or the diversity as such. It is here in the library of Bharat Niwas that I met Professor Anand Kumar who had just retired from the post of Head of the Reproductive Biology department of AIIMS in New Delhi.

He had just shifted to Auroville permanently after retirement and was living alone in one of the locality of Auroville called promise. The localities and farmlands in Auroville have this peculiar nomenclature borrowed from religious lexicon. Though he frequented this city every year for few days but was preparing for making it his post retirement resting place for a long time. When I met him in the library, he was the only one present there engaged in reading books of his interest, which mostly had to do with spirituality. The conversation took off casually about my purpose of visit and then he opened about his interests in writing poetry and hosting poets. Though doctor by profession, he had avid interests in hosting and attending cultural evenings at his residential bungalow in Delhi.

He liked to be referred as poet rather than doctor and being a connoisseur of art, liked to boast about his acquaintances in the literary world.

Doctor Anand made me aware about different study circles dedicated to reading some of the important works of Sri Aurobindo. He used to attend one such circle on Sundays dedicated to the reading of poem Savitri; the most definitive work of Sri Aurobindo composed during his last years. He also invited me attend on next Sunday and it is here that I came to know that Savitri is the longest poem in the world. The study circle was led by one of the first Aurovilians and early disciple of Mother, Shraddhavan near the statue of Sri Aurobindo in the Savitri bhawan. She was a French lady but became a disciple of Mother long time back and Mother gave her the new name of Shraddhavan. The walls of Savitri bhawan were adorned with the portraits of Sri Aurobindo depicting his evolution from a western educated man to the revolutionary freedom fighter and finally his spiritual ascent. It is just by looking at the pictures covering the walls that one can get the sense of what it means to achieve verticality; how different realms open up once your life becomes a series of evolutions to higher realms. The search for meaning is not a futile exercise if it manages to take you on the path of evolution towards self-perfection and self-ascension. Past events and histories may act as triggering point and they remain at best a triggering point, nothing more than that. In the absence of the higher realms and evolutionary series for individuals, the search for meaning can lead one to the viciousness of the exercise and to conclude that meaninglessness is the only truth, as concluded by Albert Camus (2005).

It is easy to reduce all the future aspirations and endeavors to past experiences but that would cut off the flow which makes evolution possible. The professor whom I met was a divorcee; his only son was studying in USA and the old age was starting to take its toll on his everyday life but his post retirement shifting to a completely new setting cannot merely be explained by the escape from loneliness. In fact what he did is not something very different from what people in this land have been doing for millennia; shifting to some religious place, most probably Varanasi, after fulfilling their worldly duties as required from them. To dedicate your old age in serving the divine, serving your gods and your guru is one of the oldest living dictums of this land and still practiced by many.

V.S Naipaul (1990) while touring India for writing his Indian trilogy narrates how the Anglicized Bengali, popularly known as Boxwallah in common parlance in their post-retirement years shifted to Shanti-Niketan established by Rabindranath Tagore. Shanti-Niketan was also one such experimental set up for the future humanity which would be truly global; where all the differences of race, ethnicity and color would efface and mankind would find their true nature of brotherhood, freedom and mutual respect. In terms of social imagination, it had no difference with Auroville with the only exception that Auroville included another aspect, that of spiritual development in its desired future for humanity. The foundations of Shanti-Niketan were entirely similar to those of western civilization with the advent of modernity, which made pluralism, tolerance and freedom its highest virtue and relegating other psychic experiences to the realm of subconscious.

5.8 Analyst and the Mystic: Difference of directionality.

To retire in the grace of the Guru is one of the methods of spiritual development, no matter what maybe the life history or the triggering point in life. It is a plunge in the future rather than an escape from the past; it is a rope for verticality and ascension rather than an anchor for stability. The psychoanalyst Sudhir Kakar in his study of psychic behaviors has tried to draw analogy between the analyst and the mystic (2007). But his study confined itself in drawing similarities between the tasks of healing done by the psychoanalysts and the living presence of guru in someone's life. The individual in both cases is assumed to be looking for the same thing, the search for an anchor to find stability in life marred by past experiences and the subconscious. In doing that comparison, Kakar has truncated the whole idea of verticality associated with mysticism and the presence of guru and made it equal to the practice of psychoanalysis which has no syntax for verticality encoded in it. The major point of difference between these two fields, which Kakar has missed completely in his study, is the direction of orientation. While one tries to look inside the psychic experiences as kind of neurosis with no directionality other than regression; mysticism makes use of the same experiences for verticality, for raising it to the level of divine.

While explaining experiences of the people, especially women who were in the ashram of J. Krishnamurti; Kakar inferred from the disclosures of the women that most of them did

not understand the discourses of the guru, had no idea about the things he was talking. Yet they found his presence very soothing, they lost their sense of self in the proximity of the guru (Kakar 2007). That they found a patriarchal figure in him whom they lacked in their own lives; one who could save them from the tyranny of thinking and could think on their behalf was the only possible inference made by the analyst. There's no denying the point made by the analyst on the socio-psychological predicament of the most individuals who come to these ashrams and yet how could we explain the convergence of all those different triggering points and socio-psychological make-up with just one explanation. According to this logic, the whole experimental setup of spiritual development and the different modes of training are nothing but a refuge for the distressed souls. In fact the variety of manifestations of the psychic behavior and triggering points itself are being denied the passage of evolution to higher planes and brushed aside as something to be in need of treatment.

The trope of the absence of fatherly figure never explains the spiritual ambitions of those who manifest it in the very young age. While visiting the Savitri bhawan for the study circle, I came across the weekly schedule of things happening in the bhawan. What interested me in that schedule was the biweekly workshop by an Aurovilian Ashes Joshi; I thought he shared some relationship with one of the main functionaries of the Auroville foundation by that same surname. So on Tuesday morning I arrived at the designated room in the Savitri bhawan for the workshop and also to get some information about his experiences. Later on I found that he shared no relationship with the senior functionary apart from the similarity in surname. He was rather a well-built man of considerable height with a pock marked face. He wore powerful spectacles and had continuous smile on his face. The smile had covered his entire face and it was the only thing visible, becoming somewhat like a permanent facial feature.

The workshop mainly revolved around the lessons of integral yoga of Aurobindo and how to open oneself for love and compassion. There was a calibrated tone and demeanor of effacement in the way he was conducting himself. Even the tasks and games that were designed by him for the workshop had this quality of effacing the individual in interaction with other individuals. The workshop went on for almost 2 hours and it

seemed to me that the instructor was trying to remove the inhibitions of the participants to express themselves freely bringing out their childlike playfulness. This implicit and sometimes explicit insistence on childlike playfulness is a common theme in most of spiritual talks and spiritual centers in India; the most famous example being the talks of Osho and his ashram in Pune. It seems and I can only assume from the talks, that the people who go there have a very strong sense of their personalities which inhibits a more casual or informal association with other people. The method of invoking childlike playfulness in individuals in spirituality ensures that curiosity and openness is reinstalled in the individuals for further moldings and calibrations.

I waited for everybody to leave so that I can talk to him personally to know about his own experiences. What I was expecting was some interesting triggering points in the life events which propelled him on the path of spirituality. But nothing of that sort happened; in fact what he said appeared to be an uninteresting and uneventful life. His journey in the spiritual development was something not born out of disaster but rather out of genuine interest. As per his account, he hailed from a middle class family in Gujarat. When he was still a teenager, he started looking for the meaning and purpose of life. Out of this genuine curiosity he started reading books on spiritualism by different people to get answers for his questions about purpose of life. It is then that he found the works of Sri Aurobindo which increased his appetite further. He delved more into it and one day at the age of 20, he decided to take sanyas and made it his lifelong pursuit. He shifted to Aurobindo ashram in Pondicherry as a young disciple of a guru who was no longer physically present but left his spiritual legacy behind for coming generations. His devotion to the guru could be seen from the changes in his facial expressions whenever he utters some anecdote about Sri Aurobindo. Though later he met her spiritual partner in Aurobindo ashram, a Russian woman who was also a seeker and they decided to marry. The confluence of the people from so diverse regions to a particular point to seek something meaningful and higher suggests that the search is a ubiquitous phenomenon and people always gather around something which serves as their glue. Since Aurobindo ashram doesn't have provisions for married people, they shifted to Auroville which was designed as a center for people who wanted to seek the higher truth but by living in the worldly arrangement.

During the entire conversation, there was no hint of remorse of the decision of renunciation he took at the age of 20, nor was there any mention of past experiences with bitterness, so I could not find out anything substantial to relate with the axioms of psychoanalysis. His life story was a simple case of an individual who developed interest in higher truths at a very young age and followed his calling with conviction. In fact the place from where he comes; Gujarat, has a long tradition of young people becoming monks, mostly Jains and therefore it was part of the milieu in which he grew up. In the first chapter, we discussed about the composition of the space and the peculiarity that comes from that composition. The whole idea of 'being as having' depends on the peculiarity of the space, from the things that go into the formation of that space. What to value for, what to aspire for, and whom to imitate, are influenced in the first place from the milieu one finds oneself. That the individual in question had spiritual leanings is not an accident or an aberration, but rather a well-defined realm of aspiration in the place where he came from. It was the milieu which had provisions for the act of verticality, and when he developed intense liking for the Sri Aurobindo as his Guru, it was inevitable that he shifting-out would take place to next level.

While comparing the profession of analyst with the mystic, the Indian psychoanalyst slightly lacked a sense of proportion; mystics and mysticism has to do with psychic experiences which the analysts do not take into account nor trained to consider it as having potential. Healing is only the byproduct or unintended consequence of spiritual experiment carried out by mystics; it's never its only objective.

Alan Roland (1988) while describing the contours of Indian self has listed the idea of 'spiritual self' as one of the most powerful modes of existence for the Indians. It is one such mode where they turn to, not only when there's a triggering point in the form of a personal disaster, but also for seeking further fulfillment in life. It remains one of powerful modes of self-expression, for the individuals whose civilization has gone through a tumultuous history and a continuous erosion of self-confidence, apart from the

genuine spiritual ambitions⁹. Psychoanalysis in the west was representative of modernity where vast number of psychic experiences was denied legitimate expression, whose potential to achieve something extraordinary were ignored. There is a reason why Foucault (2001) had to study the phenomenon of madness with the development of western civilization. When rationality becomes the only organizing principle of a civilization, it abounds in madness. Psychoanalysis has to fully open its boundaries when it tries to study mysticism and its modes of existence, especially in India which has not altered its fundamental nature in spite of a hiatus in the intellectual development; and that fundamental nature being the training of individuals for verticality.

In my visit to the experimental city of the Auroville, I came across several individuals that were living there just as part of their long globetrotting exercises, who had places in the north like Rishikesh, Varanasi or Malana in their list. There are people whose only aim has been to gather as many experiences of esoteric and different cultures as they could in their lifetime. There were those who came to India, especially Auroville because spiritualism and yoga have become a kind of fad in their countries and being true to the Goffmanian self, their aim was to make themselves presentable with things that have become fashion. In the African pavilion, which ironically represented the sorry state of African countries with its incompleteness and no sense of guardianship, I met an individual by the name of Bala, in his late thirties going by his looks, who was stretching himself on the yoga mat with expertise. Bala worked in a MNC in a European country for some years before returning to India. But instead of coming back to his home, he shifted to the nearby Auroville. When asked about the reason for doing that, he somewhat hinted that once you live abroad for some time, it becomes difficult to get adjusted to the rustic life with their own style of functioning and their share of difficulties. He found the nearby Auroville to be more conducive, more in line with the lifestyle that he had become used to. Bala had become an Aurovilian, a tag which comes after 2 or 3 years of staying in Auroville with its set of conditions and eligibility criteria. I encountered him few times in

⁹See Alan Roland's case studies of Indian personalities in his book 'In search of search in India and Japan', where he differed from Indian psychoanalyst Sudhir Kakar about the limits and possibilities of spiritualism in the Indian milieu.

the Auroville, and every time I found him enjoying the company of his foreign friends. In that sense he had truly global, a word frequently heard in Auroville.

At the beginning of this chapter, it was stated that Auroville was designed to synchronize the contradictions of individual and community life. As part of its plan, it had its social, ecological and spiritual roadmap ready to achieve that synchronization. The most visible aspect of Auroville has been the ecological transformation of the entire region in and around Auroville. By looking at the old pictures when it was started, we can only marvel at the success of Aurovilians in transforming the region from a semi-arid barren land to now a thriving ecosystem with wide variety of flora and fauna. The once forested land that was exploited during colonial rule for its flora and fauna is again coming back to life, step by step. In that sense, this afforestation did relieve the locals from the centuries old curse of *Kaduveli siddha* by making the place greener again. In order to understand how that step looks like, we have to visit the den of some militant ecologists in the nearby Sadhana forest; a forest which truly stands as the symbol of *Sadhana*¹⁰ by its caretakers. It is heartening to see how they nurture the tree, from being a sapling to a full grown tree with dedication which resembles nothing less than parenting.

The social experiment of forming a truly multicultural world where differences do not matter was not something unique to Auroville. Another living example is that of Shanti-Niketan near Kolkata. History and experience has shown us that how these kinds of ideas fare in the actual world when they are being tried and therefore the question remains open about the efficacy and validity of such projects centered on effacing the primordial differences of individuals.

The uniqueness of the idea of Auroville lies in accepting the realms of higher development as a legitimate mode of existence and powerful means of expression when the project of modernity had rejected it altogether. It rejected the modern paradigm, which is based itself on materiality as the final meaning of life and existence. Though it was designed in the period of high modernism, where utopian cities held a wide currency and acceptance; it raised the bar of planning by including a hitherto neglected domain in

¹⁰ The word Sadhana denotes intense practice, discipline and devotion towards a particular cause, more specifically in meditation and religious practices.

the modern paradigm. Whether it would achieve the descent of supramental consciousness or not, whether it would succeed in raising humans to the level of superman is still an open proposition. But it did create an ecosystem which was not inimical to the pursuit of individuals towards that realization. Auroville has its logistics in place to ensure verticality, a task which this civilization has mastered long time back. And it is this idea of verticality, along with a sustaining ecosystem, that can help us in expanding our horizon of self- development and self-realization to include genuine spiritual aspirations of the individual. It can also redefine the way in which spiritualism enters the psychoanalytic domains, from a healing technique to a full-fledged aspiration for individuals.

With this we come to the end of this chapter which dealt with the idea of verticality and preparing ecosystem to ensure that the act of verticality becomes a living reality for individuals. We can summarize this chapter by outlining few points which would serve as the findings of this chapter. Firstly, we could say that the idea of self-perfection is infinite in nature and the task of any worldview is to ensure that this infinite nature finds expression in their scheme of things. Relegating any sphere of activity which shows capacity of vertical ascension outside the ambit of meaningful endeavors obstructs the infinite expansions of self-perfection and self-realization. And secondly, we found that the whole idea of self-perfection is individual-centric and requires an incubatory system that nurtures the whole process of becoming something higher and exemplar. Spiritualism and spiritual centers should be seen in this light; as an incubatory system designed to ensure that the idea of self-perfection is not terminated midway and that higher points in life remain an active proposition for individuals who have achieved some kind of verticality in their life. Spirituality, through its insistence on childlike playfulness, opens up the individual for further becomings of the self in the upward direction.

5.9 Reinstating the ‘self’ on the Evolutionary¹¹ Ladder.

At last we have reached the final part of our journey which we started in order to investigate the changing patterns of the ‘ideas of self’. With the coming of ecological crisis, we were presented with what may be called as an ontological dilemma. How come something which has always been considered as an unchanging given fact could present itself as a fragile and non replenishable entity? The cracks in the ontological foundations were bound to send ripples across the cosmological edifices that were built on them in history. The recurring crisis and the attempts to overcome them have made the idea of sustainability and management more common nowadays. But these ideas would not address the problem unless they are ready to acknowledge the ontological faults inherent in the dominant cosmologies that have scorched the earth with their power. The question of sustainability should not limit itself to the tasks of conservatism, but should also look into the worldviews for their viability.

Crisis is just symptomatic of the larger problem of how we have arranged ourselves (human and non-humans) in the world. Do the worldviews that we perceive make ontological investments in the world or not? The overall argument has three aspects or parts to it; the first part has tried to do a brief survey of cosmologies which have occupied a prominent place in the western history, at least for 2 millennia with the fall of the antiquity. It has looked into the process by which these cosmologies have progressively bifurcated the world into subject-object relationship and then building upon it the edifice of ontology/epistemology divisions. What these divisions achieved was the constant devaluation of things into the realm of objects with no truth or ontological value. These bifurcations were informed by the search for the single and absolute truth and cosmologically manifested themselves in the form of monotheism. The mutation of monotheism from theology to ideology happened in the course of time and modernity became the true inheritor of that monotheistic gaze.

¹¹ Evolutionary in this study is limited to the idea of self and its trajectory of development and self-realization. The connotation of the word from other disciplines has been kept out of the purview in our study of the self and its trajectory.

The second part focused itself on the concomitant ideas of self which were emanating from these cosmologies and how they aligned the individuals to think and act accordingly. The continuous deposition of subject-hood, the agency and articulation, within individual resulted in transforming all the existents of the world in to mute and passive objects having no agency and no ability of articulation. And the act that has been the leitmotif of western civilization from the time of bifurcation which has made this deposition a continuous process is the act of iconoclasm. It is following this trail of iconoclasm that we reached the 'idea of self' dominant in the modern framework and the subsequent rise of management discourse which focused itself primarily around the cult of the individual. It is here that we analyzed the peculiarity and features of the self, emanating from the management discourse by comparing it with non-modern and non-western frameworks of individualism. And what are those parameters of those alternative frameworks of self?

Technically it could be called the 'Anthropological self' encountered in societies studied by Anthropology. Anthropological societies are the ones that use induction and abstraction as a tool for arranging things rather than bifurcation of the world into permanent categories. The process of abstraction creates a world of mediating links which varying ontological weight and statuses in the scheme of things. In order to theoretically develop the idea of anthropological self as found in the anthropological literature, we used the distinctions made by Gabriel Tarde in his ideas of being between 'to be' and 'to have', and synthesized it with the philosophical framework propounded by William James for identifying two categories of truth; that is saltatory truth and ambulatory truth. Saltatory truth doesn't have the trails of connecting links between knower and the known, whereas ambulatory truth proceeds in sequentially in an inductive manner to what is to be known.

Applying this on the idea of being as 'to be' and 'to have'; we found that being as 'to have' allows for the connection with the mediators and therefore presents us with an idea of self which has the possibility of becoming inherent in it. This becoming represents the gradual transformation of individuals from one level of existence to that of another level. The idea of self as 'to have' ensures that becoming remains a living possibility for the

individuals and that possibility remain open to the coming generations of individuals by making the trail of successive becomings durable and living. 'To be' doesn't have that robustness provided by trails which allow the passage of becomings, continuous and open.

We have tried to give directionality to this process of becoming of the self by attaching it with the idea of verticality; which is always about rising above oneself to greater heights of self-perfection and self-realization. Becoming is multi directional; it can range from *becoming animal to becoming body without organs*(Deleuze, 2005) but verticality aligns it in the upward direction of self- ascension and transcendence.

The third aspect deals with the vulnerability and the sustainability of the 'idea of the self' whose trails we have followed through history and reached up to the period of modernity known as post- modernism. Whether the prevalent 'ideas of self' allow for the process of becoming to traverse smoothly to higher realms through verticality? Does the modern framework allows for infinite verticality of the self or terminates abruptly in the passage leaving the process of becoming incomplete? What we found out that in our brief sojourn in history that after the fall of antiquity, the western civilization has continuously struggled to form a successive chain of different stages and different realms of self-perfection.

The gradual evolution of vital human impulses and forces into meaningful endeavors for self-realization and placing them on the evolutionary ladder is the task of every civilization that wants to act as an incubation center for producing stellar humans and heroes. If it fails to do that effectively, there's every chance that the increased entropy would throw that civilization in turbulence every now and then. The whole history of western civilization of revolutions and counter revolutions attest to the fact that those unaccounted vital forces seek release in one way or the other. And once they are released, what we witness is the tyranny of that force by concretizing itself in some kind of cosmological configuration.

The reign of idealism and theology followed by the reign of materialism and science did not alter the basic fault in their cosmological configuration; that is the inability to ensure

the continuous shifting and movements along the line of verticality. To leave the scope of evolution and perfection open to individuals without closing them abruptly is the task that they did not execute properly. Relegating different vital forces and their modes of existences to the realm of sin and degradation was the failure of the theological formations. Whereas asking individuals to content themselves only with their material well-being with no scope for further ascension and realization was the shortsightedness of the modern framework. In the absence of further escalation to higher realms, what remains for the individuals and the societies as a whole is to proliferate and multiply on the only horizon available to them. We discussed above that how the ideas of wealth creation and capital have come to occupy the central place in the arrangement of societies which lacked proper mechanisms to shift the human potential and ambition to higher peaks. In the absence of any further horizon, we are seeing a spilling over of human potential on the only realm available to them.

Conclusion: Abstracted Self as Sustainable Self

Sustainability is not to be understood as frugality or rationing or celebration of poverty or regulation; in fact it has got nothing to do with all these qualities. Sustainability can only mean, from our study, the task of ensuring mobility and shifting out to other levels and other nodes in the interminable chain of self-realization. The desire for the highest level becomes acute only when the higher level has been claimed by the individual. This shifting out to different levels and different nodes in the network ensures that a particular level or node is not stressed by excessive accumulation of forces. Sustainability of any idea or any worldview therefore has to be measured from this ability to continuously shift and link the forces at one level to another level. It is on this definition of sustainability that we have tried to test the historical worldviews and the corresponding 'idea of self' in our study. And it is this definition that has gone into our formulation of 'idea of self' as a series of interminable links of different levels and stages.

What started as an inquiry into the causes of crisis, especially ecological crisis has finally made us aware that it is symptomatic of a larger design of the western civilization, trained and imbued with the gaze of monotheism. Philosophical monotheism (Platonism), theological monotheism (Abrahamism) and more recently scientific monotheism (Modernism) have all shaped the course of history in their time of prominence. They posited a fundamental contradiction between 'One and Many', choosing One, instead of 'Many' without realizing that 'One' could be the ultimate destination where all the multiplicities and possibilities merge at the end, which is the fundamental principle of Vedanta. Vedantic monism allows for the flowering of all the multiplicities in the world before they are finally realized in the universal 'One'; while monotheism elevates one out of the many to the highest levels, eliminating the claim of every other entity. William James (1978) alludes to this difference in terms of engagement with multiplicities when he differentiated between two types of unities: the absolute and the ultimate. But he just alluded to and never developed this difference between unities any further.

And all types of monotheisms we discussed had that precise tool of iconoclasm at their disposal, to cut open the multiple layers of existences to find out the only absolute truth hidden behind them. The bifurcation that they achieved with their methodology always

resulted in some version of truth, which was increasingly immanent and slightly more truncated in its outlook. Since most of them came after triumphing over one another, they always rejected that part of the truth that was held by their predecessor, though the methodology remained same. This act of iconoclasm therefore formed an inalienable part of the self- definition of individuals that emerged from these historical formulations. Iconoclasm changed the configuration of the self from 'to have' to 'to be', and its relation with most of the concrete aspects of the existence.

The main reason for the vulnerability and unsustainability of these worldviews and the corresponding ideas of self was this truncated version of the truth and the world. Instead of weaving continuity, ensuring gradual shifting to next level, they regaled in renunciation and purification of the vast array of human experiences into legitimate and illegitimate domains. The most remarkable example of this renunciation and purification happened in the domain of tradition. By waging a relentless war on the tradition of the people, these monotheistic formulations snapped all ties of the individuals that connected them with the ways of their ancestors and making the transmission to the future generation almost impossible. The great chain of being, linking it with past, present, and future, was disrupted and a new self was created whose main characteristics remained renunciation of the past. Thus it was not just modernity and modern-self that indulged in purification and renunciation of the past, but even the religious selves that successively originated in history. This understanding of religious selves can help us in untangling the common confusion between religion and tradition. The Deleuzian argument that modernity was based on the negativities of all cultures and does not have its positive constitution could be extended to include all the historical religions in their ambit. Apart from designing a new ideal of self-perfection, the world religions directed most of their rage on the traditions that linked individual to the great chain of beings in different cultural orders.

It is these traditions, populating the everyday life in the form of rituals, festivals, totems, taboos, feasts, arts, sacrifices, songs that connect the being in three dimensions of time and form the base of the life structure of individuals and collectives together. The anthropological world with all its multiplicities forms the base that makes the further

abstraction of idea of self-perfection a concrete possibility by providing the necessary ecosystem. This world makes the task of verticality sustainable by providing shelter to the individuals who do not undertake that journey to the superstructure of the existence. We can visualize this process of abstraction of anthropological world and the anthropological self through the analogy of pyramids. The base is the concrete world of multiplicities and the top represents the highest realms of ideals and state of perfections to be attained by the individuals.

Sustainability is not the main logic of civilizational matrix but only its byproduct, when everything has been taken into account and classified in a dynamic sense to their respective places. Just as plurality or equality cannot be the organizing principle of any configuration; rather its consequence when the multiplicity of the world is successfully negotiated in order to reach a configuration of dynamic stability. A network is efficient if properly optimized, similarly a worldview is sustainable if it is carefully optimized. The optimization of worldviews refers to the presence of different levels of abstraction towards the fulfillment of the highest ideal imagined in it. Since most of the worldviews have dealt with the question of individual self-perfection and self-realization; abstraction in that sense would mean acknowledgement of different domains and differential levels of existence.

The anthropological understanding of the 'self as having' employs this technique of optimization so that the network which connects it with the three dimensions of time; past, present and future are properly maintained for the transference of the signals, knowledge and identities. The optimization also ensures that shifting of phases of existence takes place smoothly. The optimization and transference ensures that the ecosystem under which this 'anthropological self' thrives and grows is maintained. It is this ecosystem which acts as repository of all the human achievements and perfections in different realms and modes of existences. All the levels in the act of verticality are preserved in it so as to make sure that the knowledge about different levels in a series of abstractions remains intact.

In other words, the anthropological self is the one in which awareness about the higher and higher levels of abstraction along with the logistics required to achieve shifting of

levels is ingrained in it. Just as the formation of scientific fact includes in its domain the concrete samples and tools of experimentation to the highly abstracted state of equation or a statement; similarly the construction of self has to include the stages that are immersed in ritualized existence to that which are at ease with formless ideals. In this way, we can create an interminable chain of existence with infinite possibilities. The 'idea of self' built using the principles of abstraction have infinite possibilities of self-perfection and self-realization. Here the 'vector of self' is not terminated abruptly leaving the question of further escalation out of the ambit. This prevents the spilling over of the vital forces at a particular level resulting in the unfeasibility and unviability of the whole structure.

If the highest ideal in the society is material well-being and if most of the individuals accomplish that task, then the question becomes pertinent; what next? If the desire for verticality in that question is not addressed by further adding new goals and higher levels, then we cannot say that the network is rationally optimized. Excessive accumulation at a particular level or a particular node can create disturbance in the whole network, leading to its collapse. The Progressive abstraction of the 'idea of self' never obstructs the movement of becoming; the pressure can always be transmitted to the next level, thereby ensuring that whole configuration remains sustainable as well as durable. In the history of religious thought, we saw that the quest for self-perfection was made impossible by a wrong interpretation of sustainability as frugality and celebration of poverty.

The present times have presented us with situations which defy easy explanations and justifications. Two things that have caught the attention of the world with all its seriousness are the religious revivalisms and the rampant use of psychedelic drugs among youth all over the world. Religious revivalism with more violent and suicidal tendencies in the middle-east and the commitments of young minds towards these suicidal versions of religion like ISIS have been explained using tropes of economics and politics (Davis 2007) but none can account for the pull they have exerted on individuals. Similarly, the increasing cases of drug abuse in societies and the urge to remain in the state of intoxication cannot be explained by logic of family history and upbringing. Ideas that are producing hysterical states and reliance on drugs for permanent states of intoxication,

point to something other than socio-economic-political causes. What is it that has given them the pull to attract so many individuals in their fold, creating a crisis like situation is an open question for all to explore? Are they caricaturing the eternal quest of humans: to rise above oneself?

This study by formulating an 'idea of self' grounded in practical and ritualized existence, with its infinite capacity for verticality finally frees the 'idea of self' from the moral framework hitherto employed by western civilization. We can conclude this discussion with a quote from Sri Aurobindo which would sum up the entire ontology of self: "There is no more benumbing error than to mistake a stage for a goal or to linger too long in a resting place (Sri Aurobindo 1952, vol.16, pp.391-392)".

Epilogue

What started as a limited project to study the ‘idea of self’ emanating from the management discourse so popular in our times, how they are shaping, and reshaping individual’s configurations, had to be extended in history to look for precedents and continuity. The study had to be extended because the management discourse was only trying to give one response to the situation referred to as post-modern condition. When the spectrum was broadened to look for the different ‘ideas of self’ in history, it became clear that for at least 2000 years, the story of self has the same leitmotif. There has always been a struggle between two types of self, ‘to have’ and ‘to be’, each trying to engulf the other.

In my brief study of history and civilizations, one question that has caught my attention as well as fascination is why certain civilizations, in spite of having developed sophisticated monism, didn’t wage a war on the mediators and mediating links forged in the world, didn’t devalue things into objects and led to monotheism. And related to this is the difference in the conception of unity envisaged in these civilizations; unity as absolute and unity as ultimate, a difference which even William James alluded to while referring to Vedanta but never fully developed it. Being trained in anthropology, I can say that the societies which anthropology generally looks into have no place for objects in their scheme of things. In fact a rough inventory of things in any anthropological text would reveal zero objects; they only have mediators, agents, actors and actants but no pure subject or pure object. I think the first clue to the difference in the conception of unity resides in this: whether things exist as objects or as actors in the scheme of things.

These are the two broad themes (summarized in the two questions), which I would like to pursue, as an extension of the current study, in my further research endeavors. The question of the self would be elaborated and extended into the larger question of unity. So while the historical cosmologies constructed the ‘idea of self’ using a unity posed beforehand; the purpose of the study would be to construct an idea of unity based on the constructions of the self.

Glossary of Terms

Modulation: The word modulation is technical term which is generally meant as tuning or auto tuning to a particular frequency. We have used this word to signify the process of tuning or auto tuning of individuals to ideas of self. It is the act through which an individual is calibrated to larger set of ideals and goals contained in a particular 'idea of self'.

Key points: It is term defined by Gilbert Simondon to signify a marking on the flat landscape, referred to as Ground. These markings give the ground its peculiarity, its features and its meaning, and form a network like formation on the ground, thereby enabling the movement as well as action.

Ground: Ground forms the background where markings are engraved and connected to other markings in a network like structure. Both ground and key points derive their meaning from each other.

Immanence: A doctrine or theory that holds that the divine encompasses or is manifested in the material world. Immanence is usually applied to suggest that the spiritual world permeates the mundane. It is often contrasted with theories of transcendence, in which the divine is seen to be outside the material world.

Immanentization: It refers to the process of increasing immanence of the divine; i.e. the constant shrinkage of space available for the manifestation of the divine and its workings. It is through immanentization that immanence and transcendence become extreme categories with no mediating links between them.

Iconoclasm: Iconoclasm refers to the belief in the act of destroying idols and icons as part of religious practice, mostly in Abrahamic religions. It is the belief that all mediating links to divine, in the form of idols and icons are false and therefore have to be destroyed for direct access to the divine.

Verticality: It is term coined by Peter Sloterdijk to signify the act of rising above oneself to higher goals and levels of perfection. Verticality refers to the eternal quest of humans to rise above their present state of existence in every sphere of life.

Sustainability: Sustainability refers to the quality of an idea or a worldview to be stable as well durable without giving up its flexibility. It is ability of a network to continuously shift and transfer the accumulated force and weight to another level or node without jeopardizing its overall stability.

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