

Analytical Essay #1

TREMBLE

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Let me introduce you to the winds, that crushed the Mongolian fleet, and volcanoes that devoured entire cities in an instant; such is the power of Nature. We live on a sphere of mysterious origin in an endless universe. Sphere, that had stored immense amounts of energy and matter throughout the billions of years. Influenced by powers even greater of itself: the stars, black holes and asteroids crush — the primordial crucible of the universe. Elements, one can mistake for Gods, have filled the cradle of our civilization with vast amounts of resources and made life possible itself.

Our nature, as humankind, is a constant adaptation to the environment. Learn how to access more resources and how to use them in a more efficient fashion. What was once used to make simple glass, now is used to make the microchips, fueling such bizarre technologies as Artificial Intelligence. But as all planets and systems are unalike in the galaxy, so is inconsistent our societal nature.

We are driven by pressure — we assume our resources to be finite. Our naked eye sees resources being infinite akin to the sand in the desert. Yet we discovered that resources infinity always have a limit. It is unavoidable that one day we will run out of sand.

We, the people, righteously or not, take our fate in our own hands. We are the Architects of our existence. We crumble the mountains with our quarries and stop the water from flowing with our dams. We can only aspire for more, to capture the sun in a Dyson sphere and break the laws of physics and our universe. The only thing that doesn't know the limit is our ambition to secure

more resources. How far are we willing to go for that objective we will know only when we fail in our pursuit.

We possess this unspoken hunger for sinful desires: to control life and death, to govern the galaxy, and even to transcend to gods. As every living being, we want to live and prosper. We want to die with fat on our bellies, rather than with bare bones of hunger. We make our life more comfortable, and command the environment according to our will. The better we live, the more we have, the more we want to preserve existing status-quo. Safety and comfort we build expands the horizons of our minds. Slowly we start to turn our gaze on ourselves, in a reflection, what is it to be a human.

The question is, as Dostoevsky stated in his Magnum Opus, Crime and Punishment: “I wanted to find out then and quickly whether I was a louse like everybody else or a man. Whether I can step over barriers or not, whether I dare stoop to pick up or not, whether I am a trembling creature or whether I have the right...” (Dostoevsky).

Do we have the right to hold the stirrups of Nature? Can we even have the moral right to be responsible for our self agency? Is our consciousness strong enough to be responsible for our own actions? Or is it all just a farce where we all pretend like we have a choice, maybe nature had decided all of it for us long before we ever were born.

To answer those questions I want to consider what our nature converges into on its own. After all, we will be gone one day, our planet will be gone too. No one seems to me more fit to talk about nothingness and nature's epic death than Lord Byron in his *Darkness*. If Earth is ultimately temporary, shouldn't we elude her fate or try to save the place that nurtured us for so long? Or maybe we all are nothing but fools, and the might of Nature as described in Mont Blanc, turn us all into lifeless ashes like it had done to people of Pompeii without any chance of overcoming her.

But if we can save our cradle, do we have the power for such divine levels of agency? Considering how our capability to use these powers to shape our society alone is questionable. The history of humankind is brimming with hypocrisy and cruelty of turning our powers against our own kin. Might of progress were and will be abused to inflict tremendous suffering to our society. How can we govern something as the Earth, if we cannot govern ourselves? Wollstonecraft in her Vindications captures both how we create the society of tyranny and its

profound consequences. But this darkness is not without light of the righteous rebellion against the human condition led by people like Thomas Jefferson.

At last, we will compare those viewpoints and will be a step closer to understanding our place in this world. Do we have a choice and do we have the right to actually make it?

Nature is finite. As I stated before, the Earth is doomed to an end, it is natural for everything that lives to eventually die. For a myriad of reasons, there are myriads of scenarios for us to suddenly disappear. We live our lives with a minuscule, but non-zero, chance of being evaporated by a stranding asteroid as it happened 66 million years ago, eliminating the majority of life forms. We are aware of another constraint of life, our solar system star, Sun – slowly decays. Stars have life cycles, they change, grow and shrink. One day the sun will stop shining, Sol's gravity pull will be altered and our entire solar system will collapse in the most fundamental way. Not burned in fires, but forever lost in lifeless cold. However, a swift blow of an asteroid is rather unlikely and creeping exhaustion of the Sun is infinitely far away on the scale of our lives. Now let's return to a more grounded level.

What one can argue today, we witness a slow decay of nature. Humankind from certain perspectives, can be viewed as a blade of rot on the face of the Earth. We are accused of a long list of sins against our Mother. We don't adapt, we destroy the delicate balance of nature, shaped by millions of years of evolution and natural adaptation. We burn the habitats, pierce the skies, poison the air, and lacerate the mountains. We are growing toward an exhausted planet, stripped of all beauty and green. A world,— where a child will never see a living being except another human. No bird song to be heard, the only opportunity to see an animal,— is in the book or in a form of carcass on the butcher's table. Nor trees, nor flowers are to be seen in the wild, only cold and lifeless, paved concrete all around. Is this a City upon a Hill, or is it the deepest level of hell we are erupting with our hands?

Lord Byron has depicted the order of life I am struggling to describe myself. More than 200 years ago in his *Darkness* he created this image of the earth, where everything is gone. The lights are out, nature is dead and only humans are miserably clinging to life. Our planet is morphed into the “lump of death” (Byron). We live, and yet we are in such disgrace. We die from looking at each other in disgust. Left with nothing else to consume except our own flesh, “with a piteous and perpetual moan, and a quick desolate cry, licking the hand” (*ibid*). Cold and cruel, dead world living in the darkness. We consumed all the energy we could. I believe that is why the deepest level of hell in Dante’s Inferno was in the ice. All the worst had been left there and frozen in darkness forever.

On the other hand, aren’t we humans? The ones who have the power to resist our nature? Aren’t we the same people who refuse to “submit themselves to the absolute slaves of his sovereign will” (Jefferson)? When faced with tyranny of any nature, we rebel and fight. We fight for life and freedom, for the Natural Rights we were given “Life, Liberty and pursuit of Happiness” (Fathers). Even if Nature is destined to fail one day, we are aware and preparing. We are trying to resist our nature, trying to revert the damage we have done. As much as we want to destroy, we desire forgiveness.

There are only so few people who desire to pursue malicious intentions. To our human nature it is more common to take the risk of potential harm in pursuit of a noble cause. When our evil is unchecked, we rebel. We seek justice, slowly, but relentlessly. Abuse of power, like a tyranny, unavoidably spawns the resistance. The resistance of the brightest and the most human mind, the one that cares about fellow people more than about itself. It starts with timid whispers, always

aging into the loud thunder of rebellion. An example of fighting against human flaw is the American Revolution in the mid 18th century. A country that was born in the spirit of independence was usurped by the very same tyranny their ancestors were escaping.

The Rights of British America by Thomas Jefferson, who was a key player in the revolution, shows the most humane whisper of our discontent. Puts the best of our nature, for an attempt of peaceful resolution. Avoiding careless feeding of the ever-hungry crucible of War with noble, sacrificial souls. Jefferson with surgical sharpness of human mind explains the reasons for unrest, defining the injustice of the Stamp Act and clearly abusive practices. Though he knew that he had serious grassroot support behind him, he repeatedly insisted on America being called “British America”(Jefferson) to avoid conflict. Faced with potential war, he wanted to give his people full access to the Natural rights. He replaced property with pursuit of happiness, making it “Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness” in *The Declaration of Independence*. This is a great manifestation of human goodwill, to put the Pursuit of Happiness as “endowed by their Creator”.

We have many other people who rebel against unsustainable and unethical human nature, rebel against burning coal and reckless deforestation. *The Darkness* by Lord Byron is not an unavoidable prophecy, a cautionary tale to grab public attention to the potential consequences of our chosen path. We have seen many martyrs being murdered in an existential fight against abusive human nature like Dian Fossey, Ken Saro-Wiwa, Chico Mendes to name a few. Chico Mendes was murdered for his efforts to preserve the Amazon rainforest. The point is,— when natural order is existentially threatened, there is no one except us to save it. We rally under the

noble cause. Brightest minds will fill the legions against the tyranny of human nature. Willing to fight for their mother to the last breath.

The issue— how I dare to justify all the sins we had and continue to inflict on our kin and Nature. We are nothing short of the stock for the few, who have the actual power needed for a change. We have seen oppression persist for centuries. Whether it be black people in chains, or half of the entire population being reduced to cattle,— the Woman. When we speak about Thomas Jefferson, we never talk about Martha Jefferson. Did Martha have had a chance to experience “Life, Liberty and Pursuit of Happiness”? Most likely not, it was done exclusively for wealthy white men. A woman exercising Natural Rights was rare. As rare as women exercising Natural Rights, a woman who wields power was and continues to be exceptionally rare. As well as Jefferson articulating Just rebellion, Wollstonecraft dissects how inadequate and shortsighted is to deprive half of humanity the right to be a human.

Wollstonecraft is reflecting on an ancient, traditional, order. Establishing women as a human that is governed by their senses instead of reason (Wollstonecraft, p234). Separate human beings in unequal domains of the human mind, between reasoning and sensationalism, based on their gender. Convince women of their incapability to reason and render male reasoning superior to “tender” sensational thinking. Not only this separation of deeply intertwined mind to reasoning and sensuality is naturally nonsensical, artificial. It was rooted in the idea of raising one person by sacrificing another. Wollstonecraft claims such division was reducing a woman to a child, incapable of being useful to the society except the birthgiving or decorative role. Contrary, Wollstonecraft describes how compelling is the marriage of two equal individuals. By virtue of reinforcing each other, instead of cultivating societal dead weight. (ibid, p226)

We only start to bear the fruit of giving women equal access to their Natural Rights. We see how significant their contributions can be to our common goals of progress and prosperity. It is impossible to count how many brilliant female minds were suppressed under gender oppression. How much unrealised gains were forever lost for humanity by the sheer scale of discriminatory society we had built over many centuries. Too many. Wollstonecraft points to the soft spot of our hypocritical and selfish mind. We found the most empowering and the most discriminating factor governing the individual, education. By default, we live in a world of assumption, judge on a glance, attribute better qualities to the noble and worst characteristics for the commoners without any critical evaluation of the individuals. “[If] they have any sense, it is a kind of instinctive glance, that catches propositions, and decides with respect to manners; but fails when arguments are to be pursued below the surface, or opinions analyzed” (*ibid*, p221). Human nature encourages ignorance in an individual. We had witnessed the greatest ignorants to achieve the greatest powers. Recently we have seen a great deal of ignorance in Communist regimes, be it Mao or Stalin, both are famous for causing colossal famines by careless decision making. Most historical figures show that power, cunning and greed appear to be essential to obtain power. With superiority of negative characteristics over humane, consequently we have suffered from famines and senseless wars. What Wollstonecraft could say is that “that they both acquire manners before morals, and a knowledge of life before they have, from reflection, any acquaintance with the grand ideal outline of human nature” (*ibid*, p221).

Given that we cannot govern ourselves as was described above, how can we put any claims on governing the world or even the Earth? Percy Shelley can righteously point out that our attempts to overcome our human nature is Sisyphean labour, or to put it more bluntly,— ridiculous.

Argument is rather compelling, as Nature gifted to us our mind,— “The source of human thought its tribute brings” (Shelley). Overcoming Nature implies overcoming our own mind, and our mind is not a philosopher’s stone, it is limited by its own nature. It can develop and evolve, but it cannot turn itself into something better, beyond natural limits. Otherwise, it wouldn’t be our mind at all, we wouldn’t be humans anymore. An essential attribute for human beings,— to have a mind.

Suppose we can augment our mind with some advanced technologies, implant a microchip, merge with a machine. But such an artificial change would just alienate us from the Nature. We would render ourselves deaf to “The wilderness [~~has-a~~] mysterious tongue // Which teaches awful doubt, or faith so mild” (*ibid*). Nature is our primary source of observation and discovery, if it stops from speaking to us, how can we progress any further? Sure we can research things in our minds, but this implies rather optimisation of existing ideas rather than development of new theories. Merging our mind with the machines would push the limit of understanding closer to us, instead of pushing our limit of understanding closer to all-seeing Nature. It is a dead end for any civilization.

One who still believes in our capability to tame something that “[h]olds every future leaf and flower;” (*ibid*). To avoid Byron’s *Darkness* by virtue of human power; might say that our technology is a part of Nature and so it doesn’t infringe on our connection with Her. This is a valid point, to which Shelley agrees by saying: “The works and ways of man, their death and birth, // And that of him and all that his may be;” (*ibid*). Even if technology is natural, that proves the point further — nothing natural can escape natural limits. If we even transcend the limitations

of the Earth, reach space beyond our galaxy. There always will be Nature with even greater force. Completely bizarre and unlike anything we have seen before, undisputedly maintaining Her absolute power over our lives. The last limit is to suppose there is something above nature, it must be God, the father of Nature. If we reach the heavens without an invitation, would God tolerate the intruder who had scourged so much of his creation? Wouldn't He be forced to stop his child from tilting the delicate balance of his creation even further? Or is He indifferent to our ambitions, as Nature is? Then what was the point of pursuing transcendence?

In conclusion, we know what the end is looking like, the end of the world to Byron looks like the deepest level of Dante's inferno. But we have the power to resist our fatal nature in the form of Jeffersonian rebels. Even after Wollstonecraft points out how ineffective and blunt we can be with what we earn by our hard labour. We simply cannot transcend ourselves according to Shelley.

Poising a question as “do we have the right” (Dostoevsky) is nonsensical. It is an artifact of our dangerous ignorance born in the light of hope and fears. We comfort ourselves that we can be like Thomas Jefferson, disobey primordial nature. But Nature simply doesn't care about our rights or ambition, even worse if it cares, it would simply clean herself of our existence as some sort of cancer.

But I daresay resist in Jeffersonian manner, if we are doomed so be it. Giving up under the pressure of an if statement is melancholic and boring. If we know that we cannot stop the Nature, then how much sense does it make to fear we can harm it? We should proceed with any kind of exploration we can, unveil as many of her mysteries as we can, there is nothing more that we can do. I must only warn to be cautious of being too reckless, to avoid shortening our lives with our own hands in a nuclear wasteland. After all, isn't Nature beautiful? Its infinite limits harbor infinitely many mysteries. It appears to be charmingly organized in its extreme levels, one can find the deepest joy in connecting to Her. From the agile spinning of electrons to monumental compression of black holes. Brutal forces shaping such intricate designs as our planet, the Earth. Only on the Earth do we hear it breathe in the form of winds. Her trembles in an earthquake,

spitting lava on our little settlements. Let our minds communicate with nature, to observe her glory and decipher her infinite puzzles.

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From nature we had

We justified ignorance of human needs and happiness by the wall of impossibility of universal abundance.

Civilization growth may be assumed to be linear as we look at bigger and bigger scales.

Nature Has Vast Potential, Kardashev and Barrows scale is the limit of civilization potential.

What if we never leave the earth and use the resources inefficiently? Collapse scenario of Byron's Darkness.

We grew from infancy and chaos to organized structures and reflected on ourselves.

Fueled by world of abundance (industrialization allowed us to consistently have enough food, tho distribution remained an issue)

Solving the production bottleneck redirected focus to society, if we can do enough, why do people still suffer so much?

For example: Once America became economically significant it provoked people like Jefferson to step up and naturally point out the hypocrisy.

NICE CITATIONS:

World in Panopticon (Jeremy Bentham 1791 idea of perfect prison)

Michel Foucault outlined its major effect, which was "to induce in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power."

Everything so far appears to be finite, every infinity has its limit. We, the humankind, are living on the planet we cannot yet leave. So we are enjoying the perceived infinity of resources we are lucky to have around. We are well aware of the limits of our planet, and so we are reaching beyond our little cradle to a bigger infinity.

Kardashev scale of human progress.

Marcus Aurelius, one of the most successful Roman Emperors and an incredibly sharp mind. Foundational to stoicism in his letters to his son wanted to prepare a great successor, and his son, Commodus Aurelius became one of the most ignorant and notorious emperors of Rome on par with Caligula leading to the end of Roman Golden Age.

But without it we ultimately just cannot exist.

We can never win if we treat it as a competition.

SCRAPED SECTION OF KARDASHEV SCALE AND NIETZSCHE

A little intermezzo that never happened :(

Can be added in the final version.

We continue with Nietzsche who said “Life itself is essentially appropriation, injury, overpowering of what is alien and weaker; suppression, hardness, imposition of one’s own forms, incorporation and at least, at its mildest, exploitation....”(REF) allegedly had his final breakdown from seeing a horse being flogged. He tried to save the horse and fell ill, soon after dying.

Kardashev had proposed in 1964 a scale to categorize civilizations based on their ability to utilize and harness energy.