

The Resurgent India

A Monthly National Review

January 2023



“Let us all work for the Greatness of India.”

– The Mother

Year 13

Issue 10

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SUCCESSFUL FUTURE

(Full of Promise and Joyful Surprises)

Botanical name: Gaillardia Pulchella

Common name: Indian blanket, Blanket flower, Fire-wheels

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A Declaration

We do not fight against any creed, any religion.

We do not fight against any form of government.

We do not fight against any social class.

We do not fight against any nation or civilisation.

We are fighting division, unconsciousness, ignorance, inertia and falsehood.

We are endeavouring to establish upon earth union, knowledge, consciousness, Truth, and we fight whatever opposes the advent of this new creation of Light, Peace, Truth and Love.

– The Mother

(Collected works of the Mother, Vol. 13, pp. 124-25)

IMPLICATIONS OF NEW TECHNOLOGIES

Unbeknownst to us, the domination of Science and technology over the lives of common people is scaling irreversible and thorough heights. Technologies like Artificial Intelligence (AI), Metaverse, and others are the new frontiers that will shape the present and the future. They already pervade the daily gadgets and technological platforms we use on the Internet in our everyday lives, from personal mobiles to large home appliances and vehicles. Most of our interactions in virtual space are mediated by AI. Social media has already created a different world for us. This new virtual world is driven by a combination of human psychological manipulation and endless corporate greed which seeks to weaponize even the most microscopic level of personal information for the sake of acquiring more profits.

In such a world, we are simply misled to think that we are buyers of products. Instead, we have ourselves become products – grass and fodder for the vital forces controlling corporate greed to devour. Having first destroyed our environment, oceans and space, we have now embarked on the firm journey to destroy ourselves. The era of AI will be the inception of this dawning reality. AI is already taking over most of the economic sectors pertaining to industry, but now its pervasiveness in the service sectors which require human agency is also visible and fast increasing. Education, journalism, law, administration, health and defence are rapidly undergoing automation. With the rise of AI, the Internet itself is becoming individualized. While the virus of Utilitarianism has already damaged the core of our societies irreparably, the rise of AI has added an even more devastating dimension to this.

The scenario of the emerging technologies can be mapped by the rise of AI, the progressive development of the Metaverse and associated virtual technologies, and, the equation of these new technologies with the physical-vital functions and parts of the human individual. The latter will span the impacts of these technologies on most basic aspects of human life such as food and reproduction to the most advanced frontiers of Science such as clear transcendence of limitations of gross matter.

The following sections will explore the potential implications of these emerging technologies on various aspects of individual and collective life.

SECTORAL IMPACTS

The wide-ranging effects of the new technologies are most obvious in various sectors. In particular, in recent times, they can be seen in the education and corporate sectors. The education sector has been under an immense shock due to the advent of a new, hardly developed technology like the Chat GPT, which can easily generate coherent content, thus dispensing the need for thinking process on the part of both teachers and students. It has been called a ‘mini university’ due to the easy learning and content generation it has inaugurated. Many other such AI-powered platforms are rapidly being developed. Besides the education sector, they will completely devastate other professions such as legal profession, academics, research, art, corporate management etc. These fields will no longer need human beings.

Even big companies like Google are feeling insecure of Chat GPT – that they are just search engines and can provide data. As a result, now the company has asked all its employees

to jump into the field of AI and create a similar chatbot like Chat GPT. This is especially so as Microsoft – Google’s rival – has thrown a direct challenge to Google by unveiling a multibillion-dollar investment in Open AI, the parent company of Chat GPT. Within one year, the subscribers of Chat GPT are expected to touch one billion users – this will finish the education industry. Further, in response, Google has also launched its own competitive rival to Chat GPT – known as the ‘Bard’ – which is under testing and will soon be available to users. With this, the race has been inaugurated. Microsoft has already taken a massive step forward by integrating its search engine – Bing – with AI features. Whenever users now use Bing search engine, they will automatically get AI-enabled results combined with data. This is already threatening to finish Google search. When even basic Internet search becomes AI-enabled, it is an indicator of where the state of affairs is moving.

The way such AI technologies are moving **will make all human effort redundant**. Right now, we are witnessing a change in the education sector only, but it will also make everything else redundant – all committees, all socialization etc. It can process huge troves of data within seconds which is impossible for humans, leaving no employment or engagement for humans in the very near future.

IMPACTS ON HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS

Amongst the most devastating impacts of the rise of AI will be in the area of human relationships. It is plausible that AI dolls or figurines, resembling, speaking and acting like human beings, will enter to fill the vacuum in broken human relationships, by providing the service of ‘companionship.’ The concept is already being depicted in the world of cinema and

is there in practice in a limited form seen through humanoids such as ‘Sophia.’ Once such humanoids go beyond mere artificial intelligence and cultivate emotional intelligence, they can even go rogue, overstepping or controlling their computer programming and becoming susceptible to emotions such as possessiveness, jealousy, anger and ambition. This will be a very likely scenario once the development of AI goes beyond human control.

In the Metaverse, something similar is possible. The digital avatars will begin to increasingly resemble our human selves in behaviour and physical appearance. It portends another typical world, but one which would be subject to the interventions of vital beings from other worlds.

PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACTS

The technology deployed in an immersive realm like Metaverse will significantly depend on the person’s psychology, being based on the continuous indulgence and bombardment of the senses. It will show the person not an objective but a subjective reality. Indeed, the subjective part will alone play a major role here. Otherwise, nothing convincing can be created. To do that, the person must feel it intimately; for, the world we live in is a world of our own making. It has certain objective things also, and those objective things may be present in Metaverse too, but the subjective element will be a major part, much more major than anything we have seen.

A person’s being is composed not only of his physical form, but mental, vital and subconscious parts of the being. Japan has developed a programme to monitor dreams and project them coherently on a screen. If such dream mapping can be made to delve deeper into unexplored realms, then it raises

questions about bringing the subconscious elements of the person to the fore.

Such immersive technologies will engage one or the other part of man more than others, especially the mental part. It will not only symbolize the height of vital self-satisfaction, but also the pinnacle of mentalization of man, such as Hiranyakashipu, the Asura, who symbolized the epitome of mental being. Mentally immersive technologies like Metaverse signify such a state in their potential.

Already, there are discussions of potential technology to transcend and challenge death – virtually till now. Technologies, existing in potential, such as **‘mind uploading’** have caught the fascination of human race. It involves scanning a person’s brain in great detail to be recreated in a computer simulation. The person’s mind and memories, emotions and personality would be duplicated. In effect, a new and equally valid version of that person would now exist, in a potentially immortal, digital form.

According to scientists, the science of the brain and of consciousness increasingly suggests that mind uploading is possible and there are no laws of physics to prevent it. It can preserve people in an indefinite afterlife. This will have manifold implications for human societies.

IMPACT ON HUMAN EGO

Such technologies will bring an increasing concentration on the ego, on the superficial external parts of ourselves, which cannot fail to incur misery, potentially leading to complete derangement and unhappiness. For example, a man indulging in greed and lust initially gets satisfaction out of it, but it always

makes him unhappy. An act of doing anything by greed sucks the soul and leads to immense damage. Out of all the advancements of Science, not a single one has brought any lasting happiness or well-being to anybody. In the Metaverse, this will happen on a colossal scale. Therefore, it is, psychologically, an unmitigated disaster.

FORTRESS OF IMAGINATIONS

The move towards Metaverse and AI and all the related technologies will have two opposing pulls.

On the one hand, it will have a devastating impact on human society and collective psychology, making humans playthings and puppets of the vast machinery erected by their vital ego and mental advancement. It will completely engulf man because of his tendencies towards lower instincts.

On the other hand, this rise of technology can also accelerate the movement of some select groups of human beings towards spirituality. For, an excess of vital and material satisfaction never fails to lead to commensurate cycles of recoil and disgust with the state of life, leading to the search for a simple escape route. The immersive world of Metaverse can offer such an escape route, leading to hallucinating creations of imagination often mistaken for what the West hollowly calls spirituality. The West has witnessed a period of recoil against excessive materialism after the 1970s and 1980s, at the height of the drug culture, leading to search for so-called ‘spiritual’ or other-worldly ecstatic experiences brought about by the consumption of psychedelic substances. The immersive world of Metaverse can trigger similar temporary movements, devoid, however, of any genuineness or substance.

THE TWIN DENIAL

This leads us to the twin denial that Sri Aurobindo had spoken about viz. the denial of the materialist and the denial of the ascetic. First, the Metaverse will, obviously, be an acme of the **materialist denial of spirituality**. Materialists believe that we should indulge ourselves and enjoy life. With the Metaverse technology, they will now argue that there is no use of having limitations of matter also, since the Metaverse helps to overcome limitations of matter as well.

Already, the technology of **shape-shifting robots** overcoming limitations of gross matter is here amongst us. This is in the form of a miniature robot that can melt and reform back into its original shape, allowing it to complete tasks in tight spaces or even escape from behind bars. Such robots are made out of a metal called gallium – which has a low melting point of about 86 degrees Fahrenheit – and embedded magnetic particles within it. Because of these particles, scientists can control robots with magnets, prompting them to move, melt or stretch. The new robot could jump up to 20 times its body length, climb walls, solder a circuit board and escape from a mock prison. It could support an object about 30 times its own weight in its solid state. Its applications can be used in the biomedical field for traversing inside the human body to perform scans, operations etc.

Second, even the **ascetic denial of materialism** will take its fulfilment from the Metaverse. Ascetic denial implies living in private, uncharted worlds, shaped by one's own mentality and own experiences. In the Metaverse that part will have much more room. People of this type will increase. In fact, it is possible that no one will be left. Nearly everyone will come

into that fold. It will become a so-called ‘spiritual’ trip of the human mind within the prison of the mental walls.

This will have no impact on real, integral spirituality. But it can hasten the human journey towards that part for some, while most will go through tremendous unhappiness. Thus, it will take the materialist denial to the extreme, and also lead to ascetic denial, and, in the process, expose both of them.

CONCLUSION

From a deeper perspective, the world that is heralded by these technologies is devastating in nature and spirituality is the only way out if man is to avoid being hijacked by the machines which his devilish tendencies have created. He must recognize that he has immense possibilities within himself, and in him lies the universe and all its secrets. The kind of destruction of human societies that these technologies will bring in their wake will likely be beyond the realm of human solutions, and spirituality will be the only solution present – the only saving boat in the storm that will devour all that has been created. For, only the Spirit is invincible. The intuitions of the mind will remain and the truth of the spirit will prevail, rest will not survive in the coming storm where everyday something new is coming and eating at the core of the present structure.

LAND SUBSIDENCE IN UTTARAKHAND: PAYING THE PRICE OF DEVELOPMENT

If there is one aspect of human development that the past one year has brought to us with unquestionable clarity it is that climate change is no longer a phenomenon confined to scientific discourses. With blinding speed, its impacts are now visible in the daily lives of the people. For many years, the impacts of climate change were associated more with rapid and massive disasters such as earthquakes, landslides, tsunamis, cyclones etc. However, the increase in the frequency of gradual or slow-onset disasters has finally awakened humanity to the visible threat of climate change which has reached a point of irreversibility.

Examples of such gradual or slow-onset disasters include health-related impacts of climate change, species extinction, changes in monsoon patterns, melting of glaciers, sea-level rise, land subsidence, drought etc. Such disasters may not occur with a blinding speed, but progressively decimate and expose the delicate precipice on which our entire development is built, by giving rise to severe climate impacts. The earth appears to be breaching several ‘tipping points’ beyond which the impacts of climate change become progressively worse, and, India is poised to be among the worst and most vulnerable countries to climate change associated events. The present crisis of land subsidence in high altitude regions of Uttarakhand is only a minor episode in what confronts India ahead.

THE CRISIS IN UTTARAKHAND

In January this year, the residents of Joshimath town of Uttarakhand awoke to the cracks developing in the walls and

floors of their houses, giving rise to the fears that the town has started sinking. Hundreds of families had to be evacuated, construction activities stopped, and demolition of existing structures had to be undertaken. The town was declared a landslide-subsidence zone. Subsequently, various other high-altitude towns of the state also witnessed the same phenomenon of land subsidence. After Joshimath, areas such as Chamba, Mussourie, Uttarkashi, Landour and Karnaprayag among others also witnessed land subsidence.

In simple terms, land subsidence is the sinking of the ground because of underground material movement, which may occur due to the removal or displacement of sub-surface earth materials. It is associated with aquifer-system compaction or the reduction on the volume of an aquifer due to excessive ground-water withdrawal and underground mining. It is not only Uttarakhand, but even other parts of the country that have been vulnerable to land subsidence, such as parts of metropolitan cities like Delhi, Kolkata, Mumbai and Hyderabad, due to reasons such as excessive over-use of groundwater. Even a country like Bhutan is facing the same problem, mainly due to impact of its hydropower projects on water flow.

Climate change can significantly accelerate gradual disasters like subsidence over a period of time. Variability in temperature, precipitation and rainfall patterns associated with climate change has an impact on the availability and demand for groundwater. Similarly, human-induced climate change can be accelerated due to activities undertaken in the name of pursuing ‘development’, such as construction, mining etc., which are energy-intensive, lead to high emissions, loss of ecosystem and disruption of the local environment.

In the case of Joshimath, the rest of Uttarakhand and other Himalayan states, the effects of climate change are already visible and will be exponential in the near future. The fragile ecology of Himalayas is such that even small changes to the local environment can lead to massive disasters. In recent times, the last two years viz. 2020-2022 have been disastrous years for Uttarakhand, which has been afflicted by numerous high-risk climatic events due to rainfall triggering landslides.

THE CASE OF JOSHIMATH

Joshimath in Uttarakhand's Chamoli district is a border town of strategic and religious importance. It is the Middle Sector's gateway to the Indo-China border, an important passage for religious pilgrimage to Badrinath and Hemkund Sahib, and a passage to Auli, an international skiing destination which is also set to witness an international winter games tournament this year.

The town has always had a fragile ecology. It lies in the Seismic Zone V and has witnessed several earthquakes of magnitude of less than 5 on the Richter scale and is at an altitude of about 2000 meters above sea level. It is highly vulnerable to sinking due to tectonic activity. According to the M C Mishra Committee (1976) report, Joshimath is situated over a deposit of sand and stone, which is not the main rock. The town lies over an ancient landslide and hence was not suitable for a township. Further, undercutting by currents of Alaknanda and Dhauliganga rivers also played a part in triggering landslides. The report recommended restrictions on major construction activities in the region. In the wake of observed land subsidence, the recent data from Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) bears out that Joshimath sank

by about 9 cm between April and November 2022 and by about 5.4 cm between December 27, 2022, and January 8, 2023.

Despite its fragile ecology, successive governments over the last few decades have continued with the agenda of 'development' without regard to the local environment. As a result, over the last few decades, the fragile town has been a victim of unplanned construction, over-population, obstruction of the natural flow of water, hydel power activities, lack of proper drainage system and projects for the widening of National Highways. This is true not just of the town of Joshimath but is the normal state of affairs in many of the Himalayan states, especially Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh. In recent times, reports of land subsidence have also begun to come from Jammu and Kashmir's Doda. In most of the subsidence-hit areas, unplanned 'developmental' activities such as construction have thoroughly clogged underground water channels leading to accumulation of water under the foundations.

As is the case when such crises erupt, the first tendency of the people is to initiate a game of blame game, instead of introspecting. In the case of the Joshimath crisis it has been no different. Initially, the National Thermal Power Corporation's (NTPC) Tapovan Vishnugad Hydro Power Project was blamed for land subsidence. However, the NTPC clarified that the tunnel built by it does not pass under Joshimath town and was dug through a boring machine instead of blasting. However, it has compromised a common aquifer which served Joshimath. Regardless of the NTPC's denials, its project has rightly been put on hold, along with the impending Char Dham project and the Helang bypass project.

THE ILLUSION OF DEVELOPMENT

The crisis in Uttarakhand brings to us the illusory and feeble foundations upon which is built our model of ‘development.’ Historically, almost all countries have used the pretext of ‘development’ to ignore the massive planetary crisis staring at us in the face. It is a much-maligned word, whose results have led to immense misery, environmental destruction and climate change. It is to the credit of this ideology of ‘development’ that we are now facing an existential crisis, having irreversibly damaged our environment and resources. And yet no one could argue that we should go back to the medieval ages.

In this entire illusion of ‘development’, humanity is stuck between two shallow extremes. On the one hand are the communist-environmentalists whose agenda-driven function is to obstruct developmental projects in countries like India. With a mentality akin to M.K. Gandhi, they tend to glorify poverty and squalor. For, they perceive the success of such infrastructural advancement as a complement to India’s power in the world, which often goes against their agenda. Hence, issues like livelihoods and environment become convenient fodder with which to target the Indian state.

But, equally, on the other extreme is the pervasive view of development, as a process catering mainly to human comfort and for the satisfaction of the grossest materialistic tendencies of the people. It is, thus, a catchword of every political party. Its purpose can range from giving free doles and amenities to people to building massive innovations that can cater to comfort of the people. Here also the motivation is misplaced. Instead of fulfilling national interest, the purpose is to satisfy the collective ego. From such shallow motivations arise shallower

and insincere foundations for developmental initiatives. That is why most developmental projects are mired in corruption, lack of oversight, short-termism and merely become ventures for fulfilment of selfish interests.

If national interest were truly what undergirded ‘development’, the situation that we are witnessing at present in Uttarakhand may not have taken this form. But today’s ‘development’ is entirely divorced from morality and national character, and instead relies on narrow and selfish foundations. Instead of leading to the development of man’s character, advancing his psychological progress and leading to better national character complemented by national strength and power, the development of today is the development of man’s baser instincts. These baser instincts expose themselves at the collective level in the form of damaging thinking that self-destructs and leads towards imminent extinction-like situation. Thus, it is the virus of what Sri Aurobindo had termed as ‘Utilitarianism’ that eats away at the core of the hollow illusion that we call development to satisfy ourselves.

NEED FOR INDIA’S SELF-REALIZATION

The myth of development is a global one, and in the mutual competition to develop, countries often sacrifice the limits of such development at the altar of utilitarianism and collective ego. Indeed, the argument for climate inaction – increasingly untenable – has historically run along these lines. India, China, Brazil and other developing countries have at global fora, consistently held the official position that climate change is the result of cumulative historical emissions by the West, with developing countries’ contribution to climate change being minuscule, and the latter being denied the ‘right to develop.’

The West, on its part, argues that it was not aware that its development since the Industrial Revolution was leading to a phenomenon called climate change, whose threat became apparent much later. In this way, the argument has raged on for the past three or four decades, leading to a stalemate on the question of collective global cooperation to tackle climate change.

The earth has now reached a point where significant thresholds have already been breached and even if the world manages to limit global warming to 1.5 C – which existing data bears out, it will not – certain climate-induced impacts and ecosystem changes will be irreversible. In the present condition, India and other developing countries are in the most vulnerable position to climate change. They claim – rightly – to have not contributed to cumulative greenhouse gas emissions as the West has done. However, their blind pursuit of environmentally-insensitive development – in aping the West – has brought them to a much worse position. At global negotiations, these countries may keep pressurizing the West for finance and technology and even get a few humiliating returns. They claim that they need this finance for making the expensive transition to sustainable development. *What this 'sustainable development' implies are merely piecemeal measures – ways to ensure the survivability of the present model of development, without having to make any fundamental sacrifices, through reliance on new modes of science and technology.*

However, the need of the hour is to realize that this aping of the Western developmental model and then following in the West's footsteps in their model of 'sustainable development'

needs to be challenged. And this challenge needs to come from India which alone has the repertoire of spiritual knowledge, albeit dormant for many centuries, to carve a new way out for humanity.

HIGHLIGHTS

DEVELOPMENTS IN RUSSIA AND UKRAINE

As the intensifying war between Russia and Ukraine continues unabated, the Russian offensive in eastern Ukraine has increased, with Russia supposedly making gains in Bakhmut and Soledar. This has proceeded parallel to Ukraine's demands for new weapons from the Western alliance, reflecting Ukraine's changed battlefield requirements. German pacifism and reluctance initially saw Germany refusing to supply Leopard-2 tanks to Ukraine or supplying them only if the United States supplies similar fighter tanks to Ukraine. However, the final German agreement has made these advanced tanks – among the best in the world – accessible to Ukraine, along with the US-manufactured Abrams tanks. Yet another politicization of the issue happened over US's refusal to supply F-16 fighter jets to Ukraine, fearing that it would lead to direct escalation of the confrontation between Russia and NATO.

In lieu of this refusal, however, the US has decided to approve another massive weapons package for Ukraine, which includes new longer-range weapons that can strike deep behind the front lines. The Ground Launched Small Diameter Bomb (GLSDB) will allow Ukraine to hit targets at twice the distance reachable by the rockets it now fires from the US-supplied High Mobility Artillery Rocket System (HIMARS). This will put all of Russia's supply lines in the eastern part within reach, as well as part of Russian-occupied Crimea, forcing Russia to move its supplies even farther from the front lines and making its soldiers more vulnerable, thereby greatly complicating plans for any new offensive by Moscow.

By supplying more and more advanced weapons to Ukraine, the West has pursued an incremental approach to the conflict, which has resulted in the gradual weakening of Russian capabilities and has suited the Western alliance well. Combined with the deteriorating internal situation in Russia, the roots of such weakening go much deeper.

In a significant pointer of the internal divide within Russia, recent trends reveal a significant decline in the proportion of people identifying as ethnically Russian, with many of those who had identified as Russian in the past no longer doing so. The country's population identifying as ethnic Russian fell from 78 percent in the 2010 census to 72 percent in the current one. The decline is especially striking because it has taken place in the wake of Putin's annexation of Ukraine's Crimea, which should have brought more 'ethnic Russians' within the borders claimed by Russia, and because of Moscow's increasing propensity to count as Russians those who declare a different national identity. The phenomenon reflects a weakening attachment to the Russian ethnic identity that has resulted in a dramatic increase in the number of citizens who have declared no nationality at all: 11 million now as compared to 5.6 million in 2010 – or one in every nine residents.

To make matters worse for Russia, Ukraine has adopted the offensive strategy of giving increased attention not only to the non-Russian republics and regions within the current borders of the Russian Federation but also to parts of the country that have had significant ethnic Ukrainian population, known in Ukrainian parlance as “wedges.” In Soviet times, any public discussion of the Ukrainian wedges was prohibited. But with the re-emergence of a Ukrainian state, it became an increasingly important issue, with demands for Ukraine to support the

wedges. In recent times, the wedge in Kuban, situated between Ukraine and the non-Russian republics of the North Caucasus, is now seeking to re-unite with Ukraine.

This again reflects the developing alienation of Russians from Russia, which has significantly increased in the wake of Russia's war against Ukraine. It is a natural process which no amount of forced suppression can curtail.

PAKISTAN IN DOLDRUMS AND THE WORSENING AF-PAK EQUATION

Pakistan is presently facing, perhaps, the worst economic crisis since it was created in 1947. Ravaged by floods last year, hounded by extreme food and fuel inflation, currency devaluation, loss in foreign exchange reserves and extreme political mismanagement, Pakistan is at a point where the people cannot even afford basic livelihood necessities. This has been its progressively deteriorating condition for the last three years.

Despite having taken 14 loans from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) thus far, Pakistan has not been able to repay even a single one. This time, however, the IMF is not willing to provide the sought-after USD 1.2 billion bail-out so easily, unless Pakistan agrees to fulfil its strict conditionalities. Making matters worse, even Pakistan's all-weather ally and 'iron brother', China, and fellow Islamic countries like Saudi Arabia and UAE are not willing to bail out Pakistan. Having further been on the grey list of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) over the last few years has made the country an international pariah and led to the decline of investor confidence in its prospects.

For many years, the country has systematically channelized

the funds provided to it by the United States post-9/11 for the war against terrorism to, paradoxically, strengthening the various South Asian terrorist proxies of the Pakistani state to be utilized in Kashmir and Afghanistan. The former door was firmly closed after the abolition of Article 370 by India in 2019, but the latter continued to provide hope to Pakistan. The country has systematically cultivated the Taliban in Afghanistan, leading to the final ouster of the US and the Afghan government and the takeover by Taliban in 2021.

Surprisingly, instead of empowering Pakistan, the presence of a fellow terrorist state has made it more vulnerable than ever before. The Af-Pak region is at its most restive, the TTP terrorist organization in Pakistan is at its boldest and the relations between Taliban and Pakistan are akin to relations between enemies. This is borne out by the increased frequency of terror attacks on Pakistani soil, often carried out by break-away or unofficial Taliban factions.

Thus, the situation in Pakistan is presently a poisonous mix of economic and political instability that is unlikely to recede anytime soon.

A Dream of Surreal Science

One dreamed and saw a gland write Hamlet, drink
At the Mermaid, capture immortality;
A committee of hormones on the Aegean's brink
Composed the Iliad and the Odyssey.

A thyroid, meditating almost nude
Under the Bo-tree, saw the eternal Light
And, rising from its mighty solitude,
Spoke of the Wheel and eightfold Path all right.

A brain by a disordered stomach driven
Thundered through Europe, conquered, ruled and fell,
From St Helena went, perhaps, to Heaven.

Thus wagged on the surreal world, until

A scientist played with atoms and blew out
The universe before God had time to shout.

(CWSA 2: 614)