

known by some or other knowing subjects like medical experts of several varieties-epidemiologists, virologists, health professionals and the like. Until the paranoia of pandemic exists, there got to be obligatory servitude to take care of oneself and others. But now, servitude becomes an obligatory part of ethics. The way we see ourselves as governed subjects is being remoulded and demodulated. Ethical, because you can be a bearer of the virus and transmit it to others.

This 'thing' can have an ambiguous 'origin', yet the originary point can be a target in inter-identity and international dispute/hatred. Identification of the Origin of this thing can be a matter of scoring. In any case, the idea of Origin had been a locus of contestation in metaphysics and quasi-theology (social sciences). Though the idea of Origin is no more credulous, yet, in the present geo-politics it is strategically invested by the United States. Pointing the index figure at the Origin is one of the surest ways for any metamorphosing identity to mask its ethical decay. Pinpointing the place of Origin is an attack levelled at a particular opponent. Such pointing is born out of desperate servitude.

Servitudes are divided into real, personal and mixed. Servitude means one is answerable to a master; then it is involuntary servitude. The placing and positioning of a slave or someone completely controlled by another are against the instinct for the liberty of any animate being. But then, if there is voluntary servitude, then it is a different matter altogether. If one is free-spirited, there is no state of being in servitude. I would like to scribble about voluntary servitude not for liberty but to prolong this-worldly human life, to be in this *phenomenal* world. In a world of 'despotism of the thing' there need not be any servility to the

'thing'. Still, there is servility to its effects. There is human striving not to get affected by the 'thing'.

A long long time ago, Man and Nature were divided but they were not radically separated. With the 'thing effect' (or effective thing) becoming global, this separation becomes all the more conspicuous or glaring. The rift among human beings or individuals becomes all the more so with the spread of the Corona virus at epidemic proportions. Individuals have become palpably insular, conjecturally or otherwise. Individuals are more like the elements in an unbounded set, proximate and prone to the Covis-19 virus. On and above, the affected are bearers of this virus. The spread effect of this virus is unbounded. It is at the same time effective and affective. The fragility of the individual and social body is made more apparent to the human mind with the spread effect of this virus. The attitude of human beings that the master of everything natural is human beings got the severest jolt with the corona effect. The kind of humanism, which arrogantly sidelined the conditional nature of the rational individual, received a blow from the coronavirus. The arrogance of humans got an unexpected knock from the invisible virus Devil. It is dribbling the corona ball all alone in the World Stadium with the already diseased and the potential recipients seated on the unstable gallery seats as fearful spectators. At any moment, the ball can be there at the gallery from the playground. No one has to teach even a mediocre that probability, uncertainty and unpredictability are natural. It became doubtlessly clear now that the 'probabilistic science' is more revealing than 'deterministic' science.

In the previous paragraph, we mentioned that Man-Nature separation has taken place in the modern period. To put this idea

differently, Man-Nature divide had been in existence, but one of the characteristic features of the modern period has been Man-Nature separation. Eventually, nature may be taking a toll on our deeds towards it before it redeems us. The idea of waging war against this virus is the height of preposterousness. The idea of breaking the chain and conquest of the coronavirus is a satire in contemporary discourse. Amid the rapid spread of corona and solitude, wailings are heard all over. The pray is to 'leave me alone', 'spare me from coronavirus infection'. Escape from the corona effect has become the overwhelming preoccupation of the population. Redemption chants reverberate all over. This virus accepts no reparations/oblations. There are welcome gestures to a new age devoid of corona effects. A hard-pressed need is felt to naturalise/acclimatise ourselves to be with corona effects. This need is understandable.

During covid times, the concepts such as surveillance, control, obedience, confinement, isolation, quarantine and servitude gain new significance. The surveillance combines self-surveillance and general surveillance; adherence to the medical rationality becomes automatic obedience; servitude becomes voluntary servitude. Self-quarantine and self-disciplining/control are taken for granted as the only solution. Confinement is within the walls and also without them. Covid time combines disciplinary technologies and control mechanisms.

These new significations may be fleeting and flouting. Let me touch upon these changeovers and associated terms of references. We are familiar with the establishment of confinement institutions which locked up people who were deemed to be socially unproductive or disruptive. The 'Great Confinement' in Europe during the seventeenth century onwards is well known. Now, what is important is the combination of

locking up and self-confinement. Corona's effects, turns one's daily routine upside down. Before corona, healthy people were expected to come out of their houses and engage in productive activity which involves congregation or convergence of people at the sites of labour, work and action—three human activities. With the corona effect spreading far and wide, without any boundaries, people are expected to confine themselves within their houses or rooms or covid wards in hospitals (with several boundaries). What is expected from the nation's subjects is not to come out of their homes and engage in productive activities, but the dictum is to remain within their homes and if possible, work from home. Public gatherings are looked down upon.

The line between voluntary and involuntary is hazy as it is shaded by the concepts of Self and individual rational Will. The individual will have to be downplayed. Corona effect has already traumatised the rock logic implicit in the conceptions of the Self and free Will of the master individual. The corona wind has withered them into nothing. In this short note, self-servitude is preferred, and voluntary-involuntary servitude is only contextual. Surveillance, as much as consensus, is a prerequisite to perpetuate servitude. The neologism of the Panopticon is no more an icon of the modern disciplinary institutions. The panopticonism of the contemporary variety is not confined to penal institutions alone. It is within most of us. The congregation is complimented with dispersal. Let me repeat, Panopticon is all over there and right inside us. It is an effective metaphor. Panopticonism is an analogical model of internal and external surveillance; it is a design. Like god, everyone is watched but they cannot know whether or not they are being watched. Now, as panoptical function is everywhere, there is only a

general panopticon without any physical structure as in modern penal and disciplinary institutions. It is a cognitive panopticon. Institutional surveillance in conjunction with self-surveillance leads to what can be called as general surveillance or Generalised Surveillance. It is operational in full swing. Both of the surveillances become omnipresent; they are here and there, inside and outside individuals and communities. They have become normalised practices of the obedient and the deviant social beings. They are operationalised in and through governmental apparatuses as well. The concept *dispositif*, a euphemism used by Michel Foucault, seems to help us unravel the current pandemic situation. The politics of pandemics has become a preoccupation of the sensitive. This concept conceives various institutional, physical and administrative mechanisms and knowledge systems, which recast and maintain the exercise of power within the social body. Obedience is no more a sign of the weak and the subjected. Obedience to medical rationality is not confined to the sick. Automatic obedience or restraint is the key term of covid times. Priority is more for restraint than restriction. Both are in operation. Obedience to rules and regulations (promulgated from 'above') has become the obligation of even a re-individualising of individuals. Re-individualising individuals are not those overwhelmed with the idea of 'renouncing' but someone who keeps quiet and medicalised. A patient recipient of the medical protocols. Or someone who is at the same time speaks out at times and be a mum. Obedience to medical reason and reasons of the state prevail over reasons of individual freedom and liberty. I am aware of protests against state protocols by several people in different countries in different ways. But this aspect is not touched in this note. The restriction has become a synonym of

restraint; before controlling others, one has to control oneself. Ethical persons following covid protocols have become the normal/ideal and free-moving person a deviant. With corona, new deviants are born. The inoperative society has become 'something of the past' in the times of the corona effect.

Corona effects are unbounded. Corona spread is beyond boundaries and social or community strata. People in this world prefer to be in enclosures, whereas coronavirus is free-floating to find the human body for its survival, multiplication and mutation. For the first time in our life, something has become globalised. Globalisation and its associated Liberalisation were the previous century's deferred goals. No more it is so.

Most importantly, boundaries also multiply both at macro and micro levels (from the global, national, community, administrative units to a room in the house); boundaries at the universal, particular and the individual or sub-individual levels co-exist. At the same time, the spread of this virus is unbounded and the attempts to diminish the spread are replete with marking boundaries at all imaginable spaces and conceivable levels. Marking such minute contours is part and parcel of new forms of governance. What is puzzling is the co-existence of unboundedness in the case of the mobility of the virus and boundedness of the patient and the fearful of becoming a patient. But for people, there are micro-boundaries (boundaries everywhere). Right now, the edges of the pre-corona time are returning, but the spread of the paranoia is slowing down.

A question addressed since the previous century is related to subjectivity. Of course, the question of subjectivity has a much longer

history. What sort of subjectivity is involved when people obediently adhering to their assigned tasks and conduct themselves in prescribed ways? What kind of relation they have to themselves and to their self-images? What types of reasons governments offer them for doing what they are told? The reasons are medical, ethical, social, economic and so on. It is not that we become inert objects when our behaviours are controlled, managed, directed or conducted for these reasons. We become responsive and ethically responsible. The subjective identifications get affirmed. But there are limits for refusal of the state's directives and medical science, which have gained social consensus. Identity is a function of ethics and power relations. The directives function within the political ties and thus within relations between forces or power relations.

I would like to deviate from the question concerned with subjectivity and relations of power for a short while. Here caution has to be taken to view politics in contradistinction to the institution called 'party'. Parties unqualify themselves as political. Such disingenuous presentation of the self may be born out of ignorance, tactical manipulation or habit. Let me stretch the point to its logical extreme. For one to be political, one has to distance oneself from party activism. Refusal of a party is a prerequisite for one to be political. Party activism is counter-politics. In India, the distinction between 'party' and 'politics' has been erased to the extent that people unhesitatingly utter them and addressees receive them as if they are one and the same. Terms such as politics and party are interchangeably used when attacks are levelled at particular opponents. For example, we hear statements such as 'do not bring in politics' while taking care of the coronavirus spread. In fact, one has to bring into the discourse on covid politics but not 'party' interests.

It is only one of the examples from thousands of such statements. I state this contradistinction because of the spread of corona and preempting it take place in political, medical and social fields. While talking about the corona, it is imperative to call upon the concepts such as biopolitics and biopower in their relation to what has been well known as governmentality (conduct of conduct). Biopolitics is political rationality that administers life and population. Politics is imperative to place life in order. Politics of covid effects cannot be bypassed; party interests should be kept at bay. But that is not happening in India. Covid is a boom for party interests to be realised. Biopower refers to the way biopolitics is set to work in society. It involves the innovative transformation of technologies of power and mechanisms of control.

Juridico-political government in existence is already legitimised itself in terms of the consensus of the people who do not recognise the glaring difference between party and politics. When it conducts and moulds the conduct or activity (activity meant to shape, guide, or affect the conduct of people) of the people, there is willing participation of the governed with the will of the reasons of science/state. There is a standing invitation by the general public to get moulded under their corona effects. Thereby, legitimisation can be easily sidestepped, and if not, it can be considered as irrelevant. Exercise of power (mixture of persuasion and coercion) from above is already legitimised as the fear of fatality, paranoia and anticipated risk which overwhelms one's existence. State and corporate business institutions ensure and insure one's life and probable fatality due to corona. Any form of exercise of power is normalised and internalised by all. Amid the global corona, the reason of the state apparatus can be pitilessly coercive as if it is for the benefit of