

## PRECIS

There is a persistent illusion in modern thought that knowledge steadily accumulates like inert matter: neat volumes of fact piled one upon another until the total weight of what we know outstrips the darkness of what we do not. This image, comforting to many, imagines human intellect as an expanding repository, immune to erosion except by the slow attrition of time. Yet the metaphysics of knowledge is not merely an inventory problem; it is an existential predicament. Knowledge, conceived narrowly as the possession of propositions that correspond to an external reality, neglects the more hazardous truth that understanding is conditional upon a living structure of meaning — a structure continually under threat from the very instruments by which we extend our knowing. We live in an era that prizes verification and measurement while eliding the conditions that make verification meaningful: shared practices, interpretive vocabularies, and moral and imaginative commitments. When those conditions attenuate, the edifice of knowledge becomes a palace of mirrors: internally dazzling but externally opaque.

Consider first the relation between truth and authority. In classical models, truth tended to accrue authority through institutions — the academy, the law, religious traditions — that embedded claims within communal rites and narratives. The authority was not a coercive fiat but a consecration: claims gained traction because they resonated with practices that had proven life-sustaining. Modernity, in its liberation from inherited certainties, rightly exposed many ossified credos to suspicion. Yet in disembedding propositions from their practices, it introduced a novel fragility. Detached truths float free of habits that once gave them human meaning and are now judged by instruments that excel at precision but lack the moral grammar to decide which questions matter. A statistical trend can be impeccably correct and profoundly empty if unmoored from a telos — a human end — that explains why the trend should concern us at all. Thus, the modern exaltation of method risks turning truths into curiosities, and curiosities into distractions.

Second, freedom and responsibility are entangled in the same epistemic knot. Freedom without an account of responsibility yields a radical autonomy that degenerates into caprice. Conversely, responsibility without freedom devolves into obedience. Our contemporary predicament is that technology amplifies both the reach of freedom and the dispersal of responsibility. The networked individual can speak into a million ears, rearrange markets with a keystroke, and remap public sentiment with a viral image. Yet the social mechanisms that once allocated responsibility — face-to-face accountability, shared labor, localized consequences — have attenuated. When actions scale without proportional accountability, moral deserts become unrecognizable: outcomes that would once have carried communal opprobrium are anonymized into statistical externalities. The ethical imagination required to steward freedom prudently is therefore anachronistic in many of our institutions, and absent where it is most needed. We possess capacities that outstrip the maturity of the institutions entrusted with their governance.

Third, there is the question of ends. Modern political and economic thought often assumes that ends are either given by individual preferences or emergent from impersonal market equilibria. But this assumption overlooks an older insight: ends are enacted through practices that cultivate the human soul. The liberal impulse to respect preference and choice becomes hollow if preferences are themselves

the products of manipulative environments that remodel desires to fit commodified logics. If technologies can nudge, nuzzle, and program our appetites with micro-targeted incentives, then the freedom to choose is attenuated by the invisible architecture of persuasion. The erosion is not merely empirical; it is normative: it calls into question whether choices made under such conditions retain the dignity and authenticity required for moral agency. A person who chooses from within a curated menu of desires is not necessarily free in the thick sense that presupposes reflective endorsement and capacity for moral struggle.

Fourth, the problem of meaning persists even where factual information proliferates. Information multiplies at a dizzying pace, yet meaning — the capacity to weld facts into a narrative that orients life — does not scale automatically. Meaning requires synthesis: a willingness to place individual facts into a story that telescopes time, links causes to ends, and situates oneself within a community of interpreters. Where fragmentation reigns, facts are parceled into self-referential silos, each generating its own hermetic logic. The result is epistemic tribes: groups for whom a set of propositions function as identity markers rather than tools of inquiry. In such contexts, facts are not merely contested; they are weaponized. The vocation of the public intellectual or educator becomes perilous: to persuade is to navigate a landscape where persuasion is resisted by mechanisms that translate information into identity.

Fifth, we must confront the metaphysics of progress. Progress is often narrated linearly — a telescoping arc from ignorance to enlightenment. Yet history suggests a more complicated topology: regress and advance, illumination and eclipse, alternating rhythms that resist teleological simplification. Moral progress is neither guaranteed nor self-propelling; it requires continued cultivation of virtues and forms that sustain them. While science can expand capacities, it cannot by itself confer wisdom about ends. Wisdom remains a practical art that must be cultivated in civic spaces: families, schools, public forums, religious congregations — places where argument is practiced, not merely consumed. The democratization of knowledge without democratized civic dispositions risks producing clever societies lacking prudence.

Finally, the moral imagination must be reconstituted to fit our technical powers. Technical mastery without moral formation is an unstable equilibrium: capacities without temper are liable to become instruments of domination rather than liberation. The ethical task is not merely to legislate behavior but to cultivate sensibilities that perceive the human face of abstract problems. It is to re-inhabit institutions with practices that re-anchor knowledge to ends — practices that teach how to deliberate, how to listen, how to bear witness. If modernity taught us how to pry open questions, the next moral task is to learn how to close them again responsibly — not with authoritarian finality but with a communal discernment that recognizes the finite character of human goods.

These reflections do not valorize tradition for its own sake, nor do they reject technological innovation. Rather, they plead for a recalibration: an intellectual humility that recognizes the limits of technics, an ethical vigor that insists on responsibility as the correlate of freedom, and a civic pedagogy that restores to knowledge its teleological moorings. The future will not be fashioned by facts alone but by how we choose to interpret and embed those facts within the practices that form persons and polis. If we are to

avert the pall of cynicism that follows knowledge divorced from virtue, we must recover forms of communal life that not only disseminate information but also cultivate the virtues that make information intelligible and useful. In a world where the capacities of the human intellect have been magnified beyond historical precedent, the final question is not whether we can know more, but whether we know wisely enough to live well.

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There is consistent diffusion that knowledge accumulates slowly. It is often considered as neat volume of facts piling upon one another. It expends human intellect and makes it immune to erosion. Knowledge obtained through basic concept of external reality is hazardous. We live in an era where more importance is given to verification and measurement. It neglects the conditions which lead to verification and measurements. Reflecting on the relation between truth and authority, truth often gain authority through various institutions. Certain truths gain attention because they proved sustainable to life. Modernity exposed many of these truths and left them flouting freely without meaning. Similar is the relation between freedom and responsibility. Freedom without responsibility produce degenerate results. Responsibility without freedom is only obedience. Social mechanism that allocated responsibility

has also changed. Modern political and economic thought often assume that ends are either individual preference or product of market condition. This assumption ignores the outlook that ends are enacted through practices that cultivate human soul. Choices made from a set menu of desires only degenerate freedom. In addition to that, it is difficult to provide meaning to rapidly multiplying information. As a result different elements/groups reign, each generating their own meaning. Progress is often observed as a linear phenomena. However, it has much complex topology. Moral progress requires continued cultivation of virtues that sustain it. Our scientific knowledge can expand virtue capacity, it cannot provide wisdom. It is conferred at places where argument is practiced. Finally moral imagination must be reconstituted to fit our technical powers. Technical mastery without moral formation is unstable. It is an instrument of domination instead of liberation. The future depends on how we interpret these facts. We must discover a way to cultivate virtues and make information useful.

Title:- Reflection On Past Illusions

## COMPREHENSION

There is a persistent error in how we imagine the growth of human understanding: we picture knowledge as a steadily accreting stock, inert parcels of truth stacked like ledger entries until the sum of what we know overwhelms the unknown. This image comforts, because it suggests mastery by aggregation — accumulate enough facts and ignorance must give way. Yet such an account mistakes quantity for quality. Knowing more propositions does not necessarily deepen wisdom; it may only complicate the map that guides action. Knowledge divorced from criteria of significance becomes an inventory without purpose. What counts as knowledge worth having depends upon interpretive frameworks that answer the question: knowledge for what end? Treat facts as if their mere accumulation were an ethical or practical good, and you risk converting human life into a problem of logistics rather than meaning.

The modern age has prized precision and method, and with reason: instruments that sharpen prediction and techniques that control outcomes have liberated us from many curious superstitions. But methods themselves carry metaphysical commitments. A method that reduces phenomena to measurable parameters presupposes that what matters is measurable. This presumption is not neutral. It shapes research agendas, institutional priorities, and public discourse. Entire realms of human concern — grief, loyalty, reverence, duty — shrink in the light of a metric that cannot capture them. To insist that only what is quantifiable deserves policy attention is to flatten the moral landscape into a calculus that misses contour and character. We must therefore ask not only what our instruments deliver but what they obscure.

Authority and truth maintain a subtle interdependence. Once, authoritative claims were embedded in practices — rituals, apprenticeship, communal deliberation — that conferred credibility through lived verification. Authority was not mere coercion but a settlement of trust produced by social competence. The modern aspiration to democratize epistemic authority sought to correct abuses bound up with inherited hierarchies. Yet the disaggregation of claims from practice produces a new instability: assertions float in an information atmosphere without stable anchors. In such a milieu, credibility is purchased not by demonstrated competence but by access to channels of amplification. A claim's reach can outstrip its warrant; pace and volume substitute for depth. The consequence is a public sphere where spectacle often substitutes for reasoned certification, and where the social calibration that once disciplined expertise has frayed.

Closely allied is the problem of freedom. Freedom, conceived as capacity, is incomplete unless tethered to responsibility. The more technological power magnifies individual agency, the more acute the need for norms that shape its exercise. Networks enable individuals to influence markets, shape tastes, and alter political discourse; they enable a kind of lateral power that bypasses traditional institutions. Yet the traditional loci of accountability — neighborhood

reciprocity, long-term relationship, face-to-face reputation — operate poorly across globalized, ephemeral interactions. The tragic possibility is that freedom will expand faster than the moral imagination required to steward it. When actions scale without proportionate structures of responsibility, the world becomes strewn with consequences for which no one feels the full weight. The ethical task is to invent or recover practices that attach responsibility to novel capacities.

Moreover, our preferences are no longer simply expressions of prior selves; they are now artifacts shaped by architectures of influence. Markets and algorithms do not merely respond to desires; they design environments that channel, magnify, or suppress certain appetites. This undermines a foundational liberal assumption: that choice reliably reveals authentic ends. If choices are engineered by persuasive infrastructures, autonomy risks becoming an illusion. Authentic agency presupposes the ability to reflect upon desires and to endorse or reject them. But reflection is time-consuming, communal, and often costly; it depends on education, slow conversation, and moments of withdrawal from incessant stimulation. Societies that valorize instantaneous choice and streamline attention into commodified units make reflective endorsement difficult. Thus the cultivation of self-conscious capacities — the habits of thought that enable second-order preferences — becomes a civic priority.

Equally worrying is the fragmentation of meaning in an age saturated with information. Facts proliferate, but the narratives that integrate facts into intelligible life-shaping stories wither. Meaning demands synthesis: it asks us to situate particulars within broader temporal and moral arcs. Without synthesis, facts function as atoms without chemical bonds; they collide chaotically and produce volatile reactions. The social consequence is the rise of epistemic tribes — communities for whom certain propositions are badges of belonging. When belief becomes identity, inquiry is displaced by loyalty. Disputes are no longer disagreements about evidence; they become contests of membership. Education, properly understood, is not merely the transmission of data but the cultivation of habits of interpretation that make possible cross-tribal conversation. The capacity to listen, to quarrel in good faith, to revise one's stance when warranted — these are the civic skills of a plural polity.

There is also a recurrent temptation to imagine progress as a unilinear march toward improvement. We tell ourselves that technological mastery ensures moral betterment in due course. History is messier. Knowledge can yield capacities that amplify both beneficence and harm. The teleology of inevitable improvement is not an empirical generalization but a wishful narrative. Prudence would have us treat achievements as instruments whose moral valence depends on context, governance, and character. A society that multiplies capacities without simultaneously cultivating wisdom and restraint places itself in the path of its own surplus

power. The stewardship of inventions is a moral arts-and-crafts project: one must design institutions, practices, and pedagogies that orient capacities toward legitimate goods.

Finally, there is the inner moral work that resists measurement yet determines the health of public life: cultivating attention, tempering appetite, and practicing belonging. Technologies can distribute information, but they cannot by themselves instantiate the virtues that make communities resilient: patience, fidelity, humility, and the capacity to bear shared burdens. The recovery of public virtues does not require a return to premodern forms, nor does it require legislative coercion; it requires imaginative reembedding of practices that instantiate those virtues in new contexts. This might mean reinventing local deliberative forums, redesigning educational curricula to emphasize argumentative temper as much as transferable skills, or creating civic rituals that mark responsibility as well as rights. Such experiments are not ornamental; they are central to the question of whether expanded knowledge will be a blessing or a bewilderment.

These reflections do not reject scientific method or technological innovation. Rather, they argue for a recalibration: an intellectual humility that acknowledges limits, an ethical vigor that insists on coupling freedom with responsibility, and a civic pedagogy that restores interpretive practices to public life. Information without judgment is noise; capacity without character is brittle. If we are to flourish under the unprecedented reach of our tools, we must recommit to forms of life that render knowledge meaningful: institutions that teach deliberation, communities that model loyalty to truth, and norms that make responsibility sensible. The ultimate inquiry is not merely about how much we can know or do but about what we ought to seek and how our knowing should be ordered toward a life worth living.

#### Questions

1. Explain, in your own words, the author's central critique of the contemporary relation between knowledge and method. In your answer refer to two specific consequences the author attributes to overreliance on measurement.

The author criticize the contemporary relation between knowledge and method asserting that knowledge is like inert parcels stacked over each other. Methods carry metaphysical recommitments that reduce truth to measurable quantities. It also shapes research agendas and public discourse. By over reliance on measurement, entire realms of human concern shrink in light of metric systems that cannot capture them.

2. The passage asserts that "freedom without responsibility" and "responsibility without freedom" each have problematic outcomes. Illustrate these two problems using examples or scenarios that reflect the author's concerns about technology, networks, or markets.

The passage asserts freedom without responsibility. It means that freedom is incomplete without responsibility. For example when technology magnifies the power of individual agency, there is acute need of norms to shape its exercise. Similarly, responsibility without freedom means the world would operate poorly across globalized ~~ephemeral~~ interactions.

3. What does the author mean by "epistemic tribes"? Discuss how the phenomenon of epistemic tribes affects public discourse and education according to the passage.

By epistemic tribes the author means communities for whom certain propositions are basis of belonging. In the public discourse inquiry is displaced by loyalty due to epistemic tribes. Similarly, in education capacity to listen, a quarrel in good faith, and revise one's stance when wanted are absent due to epistemic tribes.

4. The author challenges the idea of inevitable moral progress. Summarize the reasons given for this challenge, and propose one institutional reform (briefly justified) that would help align technological capacity with moral prudence.

The author challenges the idea of inevitable moral progress. Author persists that technological mastery ensuring moral betterment, knowledge can yield capacities that imply both benefit and harm. A society that increases its wisdom without cultivating wisdom cannot achieve power. Institutions should orient their capacity towards legal goods.

5. Pick the phrase "information without judgment is noise; capacity without character is brittle." Explain its meaning in the context of the passage, then evaluate its implications for someone designing educational curricula for the twenty-first century.

The phrase information without noise judgment is noise and capacity without character is brittle means that technologies can distribute information but it cannot provide virtue. It is equivalent to noise only. It cannot provide capacities of fidelity, patient etc. without their capacity their character is brittle. Educational curricula should emphasize transferable skills or creating civic virtues that marks responsibility well.

#### PUNCTUATION

The progress of human civilization is neither linear nor inevitable for every advance in knowledge there arises a corresponding challenge in wisdom and for every expansion of power there is an equal demand for restraint yet modern societies often conflate the possession of information with the possession of understanding they celebrate the speed of communication without pausing to consider whether the content being transmitted is worthy of such haste they measure success by the quantity of data processed rather than the clarity of purpose achieved in this way the very tools that could enlighten can also bewilder if they are unaccompanied by

moral discernment imagine a physician armed with the most precise instruments yet uncertain about the meaning of health or a legislator with detailed statistics but no coherent vision of justice in both cases the technical capacity exists but the guiding principle is absent thus the essential task of our age is not simply to know more but to know wisely and this requires humility patience and the courage to resist the seductions of mere novelty for the greatest danger is not ignorance but the illusion of knowledge which blinds us to the necessity of reflection

The progress of human civilization is neither linear nor linearly inevitable. For every advance in knowledge there arises a corresponding challenge in wisdom, and for every expansion of power, there is an equal demand for restraint. Yet, modern societies often conflate the possession of information with the possession of understanding. They celebrate the speed of communication without pausing to consider whether the content being transmitted is worthy of such haste. They measure success by the quantity of data processed, rather than the clarity of purpose achieved. In this way, the very tool that could enlighten can also bewilder, if they are accompanied by moral discernment. Imagine a physician armed with the most precise instruments, yet uncertain about the meaning of health or a legislator with detailed statistics but no coherent vision of justice. In both cases the technological capacity exists but the

guiding principle is absent. Thus, the essential task of our age is not simply to know more but to know wisely, and this requires humility, patience, and the courage to resist the seductions of mere novelty. For the greatest knowledge is not ignorance but the illusion of knowledge, which binds us to the necessity of reflection.

#### SENTENCE CORRECTION

1. Despite the committee having reached a unanimous decision to postpone the project until further funding are secured, several members insist that preliminary work should continue so as to not lose the momentum that has been building for the last six months.

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2. The economic report, which was compiled after interviewing dozens of small business owners across rural districts, reveal that although profits had declined steadily over the past year, many entrepreneurs remains optimistic due to government incentives that they believe will soon be announced.

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3. Having been delayed repeatedly by technical glitches, poor coordination among departments, and because the contractors failed to meet deadlines, the minister declared the new digital registration system was not only behind schedule but also needed to be redesigned entirely.

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4. The novel's protagonist, whose moral dilemmas are explored through a fragmented narrative and shifting perspectives, were intended by the author to represent the struggles of a generation who feels alienated by both tradition and modernity.

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5. After considering the proposal carefully and discussing it with stakeholders, it was decided by the board that the merger, which promises to expand market share and

increase profitability, should be postponed until the legal issues surrounding its acquisition are not resolved.

After considering the proposal carefully and discussing it with stakeholders, it was decided by the board that the merger, which promised to expand market share and increase profitability, should be postponed until the legal issues surrounding its acquisition are not resolved.

6. Although the conference was intended to foster collaboration between researchers from various disciplines, the rigid schedule, insufficient networking opportunities, and because many key speakers canceled at the last minute, made it difficult to achieve the original objectives.

Although the conference was intended to foster collaboration between researchers from various disciplines, the rigid schedule, insufficient networking opportunities, and because many key speakers canceled at the last minute, made it difficult to achieve the original objectives.

7. The newly constructed bridge, which spans over a mile and has been designed to withstand earthquakes and high winds, have already shown signs of structural

weaknesses, raising concerns among engineers and the public alike about the safety of such ambitious infrastructure projects.

The newly constructed bridge, which spans over a mile and has been designed to withstand earthquakes and high winds, have already shown signs of structural weakness, raising concerns among engineers and the public alike about the safety of such ambitious infrastructure projects.

8. By the time the final votes were counted and the results announced, it was clear to both analysts and the public that the candidate's promise to reform education, reduce unemployment, and improving healthcare had resonated strongly with the electorate.

By the time the final votes were counted and results announced, it was clear to both analysts and the public that the candidate's promise to reform education, reduce unemployment and improving mental healthcare had resonated strongly with the electorate.

9. While the documentary attempted to present an objective view of the political crisis, its selective use of footage, emotional narration, and because it omitted several key events, led many critics to accuse it of bias.

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Selective use of footage, emotional narrative and because it omitted certain key events led many critics to accuse it of biasness.

10. The company's failure to adapt to technological changes, address customer complaints in a timely manner, and because it ignored market research, have resulted in a steady decline in sales and a loss of investor confidence over the last two years.

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#### TRANSLATION

انسان کی اصل کائنات کی وسعتوں میں نہیں بلکہ اس کے اپنے باطن میں پوشیدہ ہے۔ وہ جتنا کائنات کو سمجھنے کی کوشش کرتا ہے، اتنا ہی اپنے آپ کو سمجھنے کے قریب پہنچتا ہے، مگر حیرت انگیز طور پر یہ قرب، دوری میں بدل جاتا ہے۔ عقل اسے راستہ دکھاتی ہے، مگر یہ راستہ کبھی سیدھا نہیں ہوتا۔ یہ بل کھاتا ہے، مرتا ہے، اور اکثر ایسے مقام پر لے جاتا ہے جہاں سوالات تو بڑھ جاتے ہیں مگر جوابات کم ہو جاتے ہیں۔ انسان کی زندگی کا سب سے بڑا المیہ یہ ہے کہ وہ یقین کی تلاش میں نکلتا ہے مگر ہر موڑ پر شک اس کا استقبال کرتا ہے۔ شاید یہی شک اس کے سفر کو جاری رکھتا ہے، اور یہی سفر اس کی حقیقت کو تراشتا ہے۔

مگر سوال یہ ہے کہ کیا حقیقت کوئی جامد اور ایل شے ہے یا یہ مسلسل بدلتی رہتی ہے؟ ایک لمحہ جو ہمیں حقیقت محسوس ہوتا ہے، اگلے لمحے محض ایک وہم بن جاتا ہے۔ انسان اپنے تجربات اور یادوں کو حقیقت کا معیار سمجھتا ہے مگر یہ یادیں خود وقت کی دھنڈ میں لپٹی ہوتی ہیں۔ وقت، جو نظر نہ آن والا مگر سب پر غالب ہے، نہ صرف ہمارے جسم کو بلکہ ہمارے احساسات، نظریات اور یقین کو بھی بدلتا ہے۔ شاید اسی لیے بڑے فلاسفیوں نے کہا کہ انسان کو حقیقت کے بجائے تلاش حقیقت میں سکون ڈھونڈنا چاہیے، کیونکہ منزل ایک سراب ہو سکتی ہے، مگر سفر خود زندگی کا جو پر ہے۔

The reality of human lies not in the vastness of universe but it is hidden within his own consciousness.

The more he tries to understand the universe, the closer he gets to understanding himself. However, surprisingly, this closeness is often changed into distance. Wisdom shows the path but it never shows the right path. It wobbles, bents and often takes us to places where questions keep on increasing but the answers are less. The biggest tragedy of human life is that he sets out in search of belief but on every turn, he is welcomed by doubt. Maybe this doubt continues his journey, and this journey polishes his reality. But the question is whether this reality is collective and persistent or does it keeps on changing. A moment which feels like reality, in the next moment becomes a doubt. Human consider his experience and memories equivalent to reality, however these memories themselves are wrapped in fog. Time

which cannot be seen but dominates everything, not only changes our body, it also alters our feelings, vision, and belief. Maybe that is why prominent philosophers have said that human should find peace in pursuit of reality, rather than in reality, because destination might be less attractive but journey itself is a jewel of life.