Fanon wrote, “A black man wants to be white.” Why? Because we, the ‘non-whites’, consider European civilization (?) as the finest of all, that race, the best of all and integrating everything European (from food to dress to language) with every aspect of our life as the sole way of promotion to modernity. If this was true during Fanon’s time, it is no different today, when we still feel the same way. We still feel that anything European is the best thing to emulate, be it food, dress or language. To us, Europe means a peaceful, disciplined society which is free of anarchy, where citizens are all law abiding. The Europeans themselves made unwise and illogical comparisons between their and the ‘other’ societies, which are just the reverse in character. Step outside Europe, and you would run the danger of landing in ‘hell.’ But today, Europe is no peaceful and her citizens are no less violent and lawless than the non-Europeans. This is a fact, ‘pure and simple.’

The two events that recently galvanised, not only Europe, but the whole world, are the massacre in Norway and the riots in United Kingdom. Without narrating those unfortunate events I will here emphasise on the immediate reactions which followed them. In case of Norway massacre, once the news spread (the explosion in Oslo was the first one to get public), most of the people around the world, jumped to the conclusion that it was the work of some Islamic terrorist group, as if only some fanatic Muslims can commit such atrocity (thanks to 9/11 and ‘war on terror’). So, when Anders Behring Breivik was arrested for perpetrating the Oslo bombing and gunning down 69 young unarmed Norwegians at a small island of Utoeya the very same day, Europe and the world took time to believe this, I am sure. This Norwegian shattered the belief, much to the displeasure of many, both Europeans and non-Europeans that we all have been nurturing with utmost care since 9/11. Why was this so shocking for us? Because after 9/11 we all have started to generalise that there is only one community in the world, who are blind with religious dogmas, backward in thinking, not reformed and not modern. And their main target today is Europe. Not only Europe believe this, we, outsiders also acquiesced this argument without pondering much. The shock over the arrest has its root in the colonial teaching, when, the ‘masters’ of the world brainwashed their ‘subjects’ about the racial superiority of Europe. The perception that everything in and from Europe is modern and therefore advanced, was so well imprinted in the minds of the colonized world that it still directs our thinking. That is why the rise of ultra-national and communal elements in current European political scene does not draw our attention. When it is now established that Breivik’s action was the product of this latest development, at least some (certainly very few in number, unfortunately) will be forced to think differently. The developments European society currently experiencing have shaken the concept of open society with its plural character, which Europe has been proudly championing world over as distinct European character, everyone should follow. Time has come when we all, Europeans and non-Europeans, should acknowledge that poison of communal hatred exists in the European society also. If the Muslim world has developed strong abhorrence for the westerners, the latter are
reciprocating, which are well articulated in their literature, politics and recent election results. So, Europe’s monopoly over modern thinking and her distinctiveness from east is at stake.

The recent mob violence on the streets of London and elsewhere in Britain (and in Greece) have proved that the Europeans are not ‘law-abiding by nature’ and they do react in the same violent way, as the angry people do in the streets of Africa or Asia. Their society is also crises ridden, like elsewhere. As Norway massacre, this incident in UK also triggered a shock wave as is evident from the immediate reactions. I only refer to one that came from His Holiness Dalai Lama who could not conceal his bewilderment while saying that he would not have been so startled if this had happened in Bangladesh or Pakistan, since Britain (unlike the formers) is a ‘matured and peace loving country’ (source: Anandabazar Patrika, 11 August 2011, p5). I bet His Holiness is no exception. We all believe that this incident is so ‘un-British’ and ‘un-European’. And, more than that, the riots have exposed the inefficiency and un-preparedness of the British government to tackle the situation like this skillfully (again, so ‘un-British’ and ‘un-European’). Let the scholars debate on the causes and the government vow to bring the culprits to justice, but to me, the scenes of such looting, stone pelting and torching houses were no different from what BBC or any other western news channel shows, happening in Asia or Africa.

Europe is exposed. She holds no reason to claim to be distinct from the rest of the world in any manner. Her society is crises-ridden like ours, her people also get unruly and violent, like ours (although in London we saw many young people, mostly European, from affluent backgrounds thieving latest electronic gadgets, who were anything but victim of economic inequality, unlike what we see in Asia and Africa where people look for food than gadgets), and her governments also fail in crisis time. These events have proved that violence and social crises are no unique characters of the eastern world. It has also shown that Europe, like rest of the world, is not a safe place. I do not know whether the Indian government expressed its concern officially amidst the riots in UK when our cricket team was traveling that country. The custom we have learned from Europe. Europe is exposed. And it is a fact, ‘pure and simple.’

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