

Organisation
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Opening: January 26, 7-9pm

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Contingency means the arbitrariness, randomness, and unpredictability of all things. Everything could have been the other way around at any point in time. Knowledge of contingent facts differs from the certainty of necessary truths – such as those of mathematics, for example.

The world is an abundance of possibilities, whose probabilities or necessities only God, as the only non-contingent entity, can be certain of. The instance of God and the unpredictability of all things have long represented the natural limits of human knowledge and agency. The world is indeed an abundance of possibilities, but it remains a finite world for finite humans because their knowledge of these possibilities is limited.

The limits of knowledge, however, have been buckling since the structure of the world began to transform with the triumphant advance of the natural sciences in the modern era: the possibilities which once transcended the human mode of existence are becoming necessities immanent to an increasingly controllable nature. If one can comprehend the world mathematically, it emerges in a contingency-free form. Infinite possibilities must become finite necessities; the invisible must become manageable; and the future must become the present.

This setting of a controllable contingency is the presupposition of any modern economy that aims to govern the distribution of people, goods, or information in space and time. There thus emerges a layer of reality primarily based on the imprecision of statistics and probabilistic calculations, which yet, for those very same reasons, speculate on the containment of contingency as the total present.

Text: Nisaar Ulama