

Reflections on **HIND SWARAJ**



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FOREWORD

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India's epochal experiment in reconciling individual freedom with social justice and in treasuring diversity for the sake of unity is history's most significant and portentous application and demonstration of human compassion, intelligence, imagination, faith, sacrifice, and service.

Appropriately enough, India has been at the center of the ancient, continuing world conversation that is civilization: the conversation about what is desirable and what is possible for human beings and our social structures.

Countless conversations have characterized—sometimes paralyzed, sometimes catalyzed—India's leading role in examining and testing the essential ideas and values with which humankind has been struggling.

Two ostensibly unconnected conversations that have taken place in India within the past two years reflect and project vastly divergent perspectives, premises, and policies that concern the condition and direction of India—and therefore the humanly conditioned fate of humanity and global society.

The Hind Swaraj Centenary Seminar

There was no more appropriate place in the world for the first Conversation, the *Hind Swaraj* Centenary

Seminar [HSCS], than the Institute of Gandhian Studies at Wardha in the heart of India. Meeting November 20-22, 2009, in commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the publication of Gandhi's most significant and consequential work, the HSCS was jointly organized by the Institute of Gandhian Studies; the Gandhi Peace Foundation, New Delhi; and the Association- Gandhi International, France, in collaboration with individuals, organizations, movements in India and throughout the world. The Seminar's objectives were: (1) to understand the emerging global scenario in the light of *Hind Swaraj*, (2) to critically evaluate Gandhi's criticism of modern civilization and its institutions; (3) to assess the significance of an alternative society and world order depicted in *Hind Swaraj*; (4) to draw action plans on various fronts in the light of the discussions in the Seminar.

This book is intended to share and shine that light onto an ever-wider arena. It presents ideas, visions, and proposals of the intellectually engaged and tirelessly active workers for *Hind Swaraj* and "Global Swaraj" who met at Wardha. I add "Global Swaraj," because I believe the India of 1909, as diagnosed and evaluated by Gandhi in *Hind Swaraj*, was a prophetic and paradigmatic microcosm of our world in the 21st Century.

Gandhi's message in *Hind Swaraj* was twofold. First, in keeping with his life-long commitment to nursing and healing, Gandhi diagnosed the spreading malignancy brought on by a privileged, Western-Occidentated elite

being blinded to the deleterious impact of unbridled Industrialization – Urbanization – Materialism – Militarism – Environmental Degradation – Cultural Desecration – Individual and National Moral Corruption. Surely, Gandhi today would point out that the pathology in 1909 India has spread throughout the globe and now is a metaphor for the struggles within nations between the rich and powerful and the poor, illiterate, undernourished and diseased and between the world's rich nations and poor nations. About Gandhi's diagnosis there is no dispute. However, the second part of Gandhi's 1909 message, his proposed cure for the "disease of modern civilization," *Purna Swaraj* [Village Swaraj], continues to provoke disagreement and, indeed, controversy.

The Wall Street Journal's Virtual Conversation

The other, ostensibly unconnected, compelling Conversation of the past two years was suggested reportorially in a front-page article by Paul Beckett in the March 30, 2011 issue of the *Wall Street Journal* (a conservative publication not often considered appreciative of Gandhi's theory and practice of Nonviolence and Social Justice).

Quoting leaders of some of India's major private enterprises and interests, and citing statistics pointing to the growing gap between especially the elite and the middle class, on the one hand, and the vast majority of the poor, on the other [re income, caloric intake, health and medical services, quantity and quality of education,

employment and employability, housing, electricity, sanitation, potable water], the article headlines “Doubts gather over Rising Giant’s Course.” It notes a recent television appearance of Azim Premji, chairman of software-services giant Wipro Ltd., during which he describes the situation as a “national calamity.” “Even some of India’s richest people have begun to complain that things are seriously amiss,” Mr. Beckett reports. “No one is disputing that the boom has created huge wealth for the business elite and much better lives for hundreds of millions of people. But the benefits of growth still haven’t spread widely among India’s 1.2 billion residents. And a string of corrupting scandals has exposed an embarrassing lack of effective governance.”

Ravi Venkatesan, ex-chairman of Microsoft’s India arm, is quoted as saying that his nation is at a crossroads. “We could end up with a rather unstable society, as aspirations are increasing and those left behind are no longer content to live out their lives. You already see anger and expressions of it,” he says. “I strongly have a sense we’re at a tipping point. There is incredible opportunity but also dark forces. What we do as an elite and as a country in the next couple of years will be very decisive.” Mr. Venkatesan then asks a provocatively multivalent question, “What has globalization and industrialization done for India? About 400 million people have seen the benefits and 800 million haven’t.”

Perhaps a January, 2011 Open Letter, cited in the article, to “Our leaders” from Mr. Premji and 13 other business leaders, retired Supreme Court justices, and former governors of India’s central bank epitomizes the murky admixture of pragmatism and humanism troubling Privileged India: “It is widely acknowledged that the benefits of growth are not reaching the poor and marginalized sections adequately due to impediments to economic development,” they wrote.

The *Wall Street Journal* article broadcasts the anxious voice of an India Power Elite. The hopeful task of the *Hind Swaraj Centenary Seminar* was to reach and teach the hearts, heads, and hands of ordinary people in India and throughout our City-dominated Global Village. While today’s India is best seen through the prophetic and prescient prism of Gandhi’s *Hind Swaraj*, the historic conversation between Gandhi and Nehru in the form of an exchange of letters in October, 1945, is the foundational conversation that dramatizes and defines fundamental but not irreconcilable differences between Gandhi’s vision of *Hind Swaraj* and Nehru’s plans for a Modern India—and fundamental but not irreconcilable differences between the WSJ’s virtual Conversation and the HS Centenary Seminar.

An Historic Exchange of Letters between Gandhi and Nehru

“The first thing I want to write about,” began Gandhi in his letter of 5 Oct. 1945, “is the difference of

outlook between us. If the difference is fundamental then I feel the public should also be made aware of it. ... I am convinced that if India is to attain true freedom and through India the world also, then sooner or later the fact must be recognized that people will have to live in villages, not towns, in huts, not in palaces. ... We can realize truth and non-violence only in the simplicity of village life and this simplicity can best be found in the *Charkha* and all that the *Charkha* connotes.”

However, in the next paragraph, Gandhi states, “You must not imagine that I am envisaging our village life as it is today. The village of my dreams ... will contain intelligent human beings. They will not live in dirt and darkness as animals. ... There will be neither plague, nor cholera nor smallpox, no one will be idle, no one will wallow in luxury. Everyone will have to contribute his quota of manual labor. I do not want to draw a large scale picture in detail. It is possible to envisage railways, post and telegraph offices etc. For me it is material to obtain *the real article* [my emphasis] and the rest will fit into the picture afterwards. If I let go *the real thing* [my emphasis], all else goes.”

Nehru’s reply of October 9, 1945 is often taken as being oppositional instead of dialectical. Nehru wrote: “I do not understand why a village should necessarily embody truth and non-violence. A village, normally speaking, is backward intellectually and culturally and no progress can be made from a backward environment.

Narrow-minded people are much more likely to be untruthful and violent.

“Then again we have to put down certain objectives like sufficiency of food, clothing, housing, education, sanitation, etc. which should be the minimum requirements for the country and for everyone. It is with these objectives in view that we must find out specifically how to attain them speedily.” Nehru then points to the necessity of “modern means of transport as well as other modern developments ...” He sees the inevitability of “a measure of heavy industry,” and raises the question, “How far will that fit in with a purely village society?” He answers his own question: “Personally I hope that heavy or light industries should all be decentralized as far as possible and this is feasible now because of the development of electric power.” Then he says – with premature dichotomous finality: “If two types of economy exist in the country there should be either conflict between the two or one will overwhelm the other.”

Nehru comes close to grasping Gandhi’s *real article* and *real thing* when he agrees that, “Many of the present cities have developed evils which are deplorable.” But he forecloses his [our] options when he concludes that, “Probably we have to discourage this overgrowth and at the same time encourage the village to approximate more the culture of the town.”

Nehru concludes his ambivalent letter with a clear-eyed view of the changes in the world since 1909: “The world has changed since then, possibly in a wrong direction. In any event any consideration of these questions must keep present facts, forces and the human material we have today in view, otherwise it will be divorced from reality. You are right in saying that the world, or a large part of it, appears to be bent on committing suicide. That may be an inevitable development of an evil seed in civilization that has grown. I think it is so. How to get rid of this evil, and yet how to keep the good in the present as in the past is our problem. Obviously there is good too in the present.”¹

I believe that (1) Nehru did not fully appreciate the inclusivity and flexibility of Gandhi’s vision and its potential implementation; and (2) Nehru’s essential humanistic values but ambiguous ideas and binary way of thinking have been blurred by too much political and industrial pollution over the past half century.

There are two statements by Nehru in the above quotations that I wish to focus on: (1) When Nehru states, with the sterile logic of the excluded middle, “If two types of economy exist in the country there should be either conflict between the two or one will overwhelm

1 Quotes are from Gandhi-Nehru Exchange of Letters in: Anthony J. Parel, ed., *Gandhi—Hind Swaraj and Other Writings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp 149—56, *passim*.

the other,” he forecasts a dreary and devastating future for India and the World. Isn’t he painting a picture of either continuous, mutually-deleterious conflict between the Cities and the Villages [between the Rich Nations and the Poor Nations] or the domination [the colonization-globalization] of the Villages [the Poor Nations] by the Cities [the Rich Nations]? (2) When he asserts, “Probably we have to discourage the overgrowth [“of the present cities”] and at the same time encourage the villages to approximate more the culture of the town,” Nehru reflects an urban-cultural bias and, tragically, projects an implicit blueprint for the developmental policies and priorities of the past 64 years.

An Included Middle Path

But, of course, there is an Included Middle Path. And that Middle Path is a two-way road. I believe that there must be a functional correlation between Rural-Village [Poor Nations] Development and Urban [Rich Nations] Development. I think, on both ethical and pragmatic grounds, there must be a complementarity and interdependence of what Nehru called the “two types of economy.” I believe there are some hopeful signs that the Government of India is seriously addressing the urgency of redressing the perennial imbalance of human and material resources between the rural sector and the urban sector.

I was heartened to read the statement of the Hon. Minister of Human Resource Development, Shri Arjun

Singh, in his Inaugural Address at the March, 2008 National Seminar: “Gandhiji regarded his scheme of education as spearheading the silent social revolution and expected it to provide a healthy relationship between the city and the village...”

I would also call to your attention the National Seminar Valedictory Speech by Smt. D. Purandeshwari, Hon. Minister of State, HRD: “... there should be a paradigm shift in attaining higher quality of life and in bridging, rather quickly, the urban and rural divide.” Shortly before we won Independence Gandhi wrote in *Harijan* (1946): ‘the blood of the villages is the cement with which the edifice of the cities is built. I want the blood that is today inflating the arteries of the cities to run once again in the blood vessels of the villages.’

I have taken the liberty – or maybe fulfilled my duty – of extending Gandhi’s metaphor. I would propose that in teaching Gandhi’s Truth to Urban India, Village India can help unplug the clogged moral arteries of India’s exploding and explosive cities.

A Forward Look

Economic development without heart is neither just nor practical. Moral development without coming to terms with the necessity of fulfilling human needs and possibilities is neither practical nor just.

I look forward from this Foreword to the next Conversation at the Institute of Gandhian Studies at Wardha in the heart of India. It should bring together the signatories of the *Wall Street Journal*-cited Open Letter and the participants in the *Hind Swaraj Centenary Seminar*. The simple purpose of this next Conversation will be to break the ice [glacial?] heretofore separating the two sets of human beings, so that all parties may move from polarization to communication to cooperation to collaboration.

This book you are about to read, this Conversation you are about to join, is a sure step toward serving that purpose.

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PREFACE

Hind Swaraj or Indian Home Rule is one of the most thought provoking works of Gandhi which he wrote originally in Gujarati on the deck of a ship in November 1909, while returning from London to Cape Town in South Africa. Though Gandhi wrote this book keeping in mind the Indians, the views presented in this work are not confined to India alone. The values presented in this booklet are eternal and transcend geographical boundaries. In fact, this book constitutes the foundation of Gandhi's philosophy and presents a vision of an alternative way of life based on human values, ethics and spirituality. This book is a severe condemnation of modern civilization and also the dangers inherent in the institutions associated with it. The drastic changes that have taken place in the society during the last few decades show that the fears that were anticipated and depicted by Gandhi in the *Hind Swaraj* have come true. The contemporary relevance of thoughts expressed in the book has increased greatly in the context of humanity facing the evils of mechanisation, globalization, uncontrolled growth of capitalism, weapons of mass destruction, consumerism, materialistic development, corruption, the growing menace of terrorism, environmental degradation and so on. It was in this context that on the occasion of the completion of the centenary year of *Hind Swaraj*, the Institute of Gandhian Studies in collaboration with Gandhi Peace Foundation, New Delhi and Gandhi International, France organized the Hind Swaraj Centenary Seminar in Sevagram/Wardha from 20-22 November 2009. The major objective of the Seminar was to discuss and evaluate *Hind Swaraj Perspectives* and its relevance in the 21st Century. This volume is a collection of selected papers presented at the Hind Swaraj Centenary Seminar.

The first article by Chandrasekhar Dharmadhikari introduces Gandhi's *Hind Swaraj* and its significance in the context of contemporary challenges. *Hind Swaraj* shows the direction in which humanity should move forward to achieve the goal of *Swaraj*. It helps us in getting out of present human predicament. The author concludes by stating that the ideal of *swaraj* Gandhi

placed in *Hind Swaraj* will promote the culture of peace and non-violence in the world.

Renu Bhal's article examines text and context of *Hind Swaraj*. She argues that *Hind Swaraj* can rightly be regarded as a classic. It was written in response to violent, militant revolutionary methods adopted by a group of Indian nationalists. Gandhi was apprehensive that emerging new leaders of the anti-imperialist movement would legitimize the use of violence. The British colonial government had treated rigid *Shastric* injunctions and traditions of Indians, at par with British law, and judged them on grounds of rationality. The British also used the "civilization" debate, to legitimize their rule in India. It was in this context that Gandhi resolved to reconstruct the rich cultural heritage and traditions of India in *Hind Swaraj*.

Ramdas Bhatkal in his paper on *Reinterpreting Hind Swaraj* observes that Gandhi emphasized self-control as the most important aspect of *Swaraj* and insisted on the need for self-control in all aspects of life. The current scene not just in India but the world over, is full of instances that vitiate the quality of self-control that Gandhi advocated.

Sathish K. Jain argues that a significant part of *Hind Swaraj*, containing definitive and foundational formulations of Gandhi's thinking on questions of civilizational import, pertains to institutions and technology. The views regarding institutions and technology emanate from a unitary idea or insight; and therefore are organically linked with each other. It is also contended in the paper that the Gandhian position on technology has largely been misunderstood. The main reason behind Gandhi's rejection of modern civilization in its entirety, inclusive of institutions and technology was based on his deep conviction that such a civilization was not conducive to uphold higher ethical principles and he even doubted whether such a civilization was sustainable in the long-run.

Anand Gokani's article examines *Hind Swaraj* with special reference to the Medical care. The need of the hour is to extrapolate the *Hind Swaraj* perspectives of medical care into the modern medical scenario. This would require the re-structuring the entire medical system in our country and re-evaluation of the undue emphasis placed on the study of allopathic medicine. Emphasis should be placed on prevention of disease. Finally, the

medical care should be available to every member of the community at a reasonable price.

In his short essay *Violence, Civilization, Language, Sin – In What Order Would You Put Them?* Louis Campana draws our attention to newer and more subtle forms of colonization today, particularly intellectual colonization. Shaking off this intellectual colonization is a colossal task, and essentially a spiritual labour.

Antonino Drago's article examines Gandhi's reform in three fields' viz. religious tradition, ethics and politics. It aims at creating a new civilization by improving upon ancient Indian civilization. He says that Gandhi illustrated his political reform in the booklet *Hind Swaraj*. However, his opposition to Western civilization was more in ethical than in political terms. Fifty years later, Gandhi's only Western disciple, Lanza del Vasto, clarified the achievements of Gandhi's reforms by suggesting more adequate analyses of social organisations and a profound criticism of modern science and technology.

G. Vijayam in his article *Relevance of Gandhi's Critique of Modern Civilization* asserts that what is required today is a re-interpretation of Gandhi's thought in the light of the changed circumstances. When all systems collapse due to unbridled corruption, it is the individual initiative that would bring about a sea change. The *Hind Swaraj* centenary is yet another opportunity to think in terms of alternatives to the present system.

J. M. Kaul argues that Gandhi's vision outlined in *Hind Swaraj* is a blueprint for the future which needs to be studied and acted upon, not as a sacred text or a *shastra*, but as a guide to the work out of a new model of development based on present-day realities in a world that has changed considerably in the last one hundred years.

Nishikant Kolge and N. Sreekumar in their article entitled, *Towards a Comprehensive Understanding of Gandhi's Concept of Swaraj – Some Critical Thoughts on Parel's Reading of Swaraj* – try to redefine the different aspects of Gandhi's concept of *Swaraj*, keeping in mind their relationship to each other, in order to grasp a comprehensive understanding of it. Gandhi understood *Swaraj* as pursuit of an individual or nation for self-purification, and collective participation in socio-economic-political activities by performance of duty, for the greatest good of all.

Siby K. Joseph in his paper *Swaraj and Governance* recalls that in the Gandhian scheme of governance, politics and office are to be seen as a form of service and not as symbols of prestige or power. In it, we have a scenario of people trusting their representatives, and the representatives in turn, governing on the basis of trust, and being made continuously accountable to the people. However, since Gandhi's vision of governance has been altogether ignored in independent India, the task before us is to revitalise democratic institutions like the *Gram Sabha* which has been given constitutional sanctity by the 73rd Constitutional Amendment of 1993, and gradually move forward towards Gandhi's concept of *swaraj*.

Ramachandra Pradhan's article examines the various perspectives in which Gandhi's critique of modernity has been appraised and reappraised by different scholars. He argues that the varied scholarly interpretations are not a sign of contradictory nature of Gandhi's thinking. On the contrary, they only reveal the perennial nature of Gandhian ideas and that is why they continue to echo and re-echo in different historical contexts as well as in different intellectual traditions.

Etienne Godinot laments that the economic crisis and, to a greater degree, the ecological crisis demonstrate the pertinence of Gandhi's analysis and highlight the dangers and the pitfalls of the civilisation. Gandhi is particularly significant today because he has united ethical insight and political efficiency. What is fascinating about Gandhi is his pragmatic approach. It is important to look at Gandhi's thought and action more closely, and to ask how we can take inspiration from them and apply them to the current situation.

This volume contains thirteen articles of scholars and activists of repute and a foreword by an expert in the field. It is noteworthy that the contributors are from three continents viz. America, Europe and Asia signifying the contemporary significance of Gandhi and his seminal work *Hind Swaraj*. It is a joint effort of the Institute of Gandhian Studies and Gandhi International to disseminate the message of Gandhi's *Hind Swaraj* in the contemporary world. It is hoped that this volume will help readers to gain fresh insights on *Hind Swaraj* and its practical application.

We are indebted to many in the execution of the Hind Swaraj Centenary Seminar and the publication of the volume. We are

highly indebted to Chandrashkhar Dharmadhikari, Chairman, Institute of Gandhian Studies, Wardha; Radhaben Bhatt, Chairperson, Gandhi Peace Foundation, New Delhi and Louis Campana, President, Gandhi International, France, for their initiative and institutional support needed for this venture. We are beholden to M.J. Lunine of California State University, San Francisco, for agreeing to write a brief foreword for the volume. We are grateful to M.P. Mathai, Professor, Gujarat Vidyapith, Ahmedabad, for his support and valuable suggestions. We acknowledge our debt to John Moolakattu, Professor, Dept. of Humanities and Social Sciences, Indian Institute of Technology, Madras, for his constant encouragement and useful insights in the editing work. Arunima Maitra also spared enough time to assist us with the editing of the volume. Shrikant Kulkarni of the Institute deserves special mention for his help and assistance. Last but not least, our thanks are due to Manohar Mahajan of the Institute for the word processing of the manuscript.

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Hind Swaraj: A Brief Introduction

C. S. Dharmadhikari

Today we have assembled here in the *Sevagram Ashram* on a historic occasion to commemorate the centenary of *Hind Swaraj* and to discuss the significance of *Hind Swaraj* perspectives in the 21st Century. It was exactly one hundred years ago, Gandhi scribbled down his thoughts on the true meaning of *Swaraj* on the deck of a ship. That was the birth of the seminal work, a term used by Mahadev Desai, personal secretary of Gandhi to describe Gandhi's *Hind Swaraj or Indian Home Rule*. Gandhi wrote this tract of thirty thousand words in a period of ten days. The voyage in the *Kildonan castle* was an illuminating one. And he was in a haste to finish the work. Gandhi used his both hands to prepare the manuscript of the book which is 275 pages out of which about 40 pages were written using the left hand. It is to be noted that this book was written after disappointing or abortive mission for the cause of Indians in South Africa. After completion of this remarkable work, he himself felt that he had created an 'original work'.

The original text of this book was written in Gujarati during his return journey from London to Cape Town. It was first serialized in the columns of the Gujarati edition of the *Indian Opinion*. He used the unique rhetoric of dialogue to convince the impatient reader i.e. the

anarchist school of young Indians whom he encountered in London, who believed in violence and justified the violent act for a patriotic cause. The editor wanted to denounce the cult of violence and place before them a vision of true *Swaraj* based on non-violence and love.

It is an irony that a book which proclaimed the efficacy of non-violence was proscribed in India as a seditious material. Gandhi countered the proscription by an English rendering of it. This is the only text which Gandhi himself translated.

The publication of *Hind Swaraj* produced mixed response, both appreciation and criticism. This is perhaps the only book of Gandhi which has been widely discussed and debated for last hundred years. I don't want to call this book a manifesto of Gandhi because Gandhi was growing in his ideas till his last breath. He was continuously perfecting his ideas and he was never worried about the consistency in his statements on the same subject. But one who scrutinizes Gandhi's work can see an underlying connecting thread in his arguments. In fact this book was written during the formative stage of his life in South Africa. Therefore it is better to say that this book serves as a foundation upon which Gandhi's philosophy of life is built. In *Hind Swaraj* Gandhi initiated a thinking process on a counter culture as a response to the modern industrial civilization. In this booklet, we may not get ready-made formulae or solutions to solve the problems which we are confronting today. Perhaps this is

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true in the case of all writings of Gandhi. Many challenges that we face today were not present when Gandhi was alive. It shows the direction in which humanity should move forward to achieve the goal of *Swaraj*. It helps us in getting out of present human predicament.

Hind Swaraj is basically a condemnation of modern civilization. Gandhi was aware of the evil effects of the institutions associated with the satanic civilization. Gandhi was not ready to change the basic argument placed in this book. It is true that the ideas underwent necessary evolution in the course of time. But he strongly stood by the ideals presented in the book.

Gandhi's mission was not only to remove the British Rule but also to remove the institutions that supported and facilitated the British rule. He realised that even if the Britishers leave this country and the institutions like parliament, education, medical care and so on remain, we will be having an *Englishtan* and not *Hindustan*. What is required for the true *Swaraj* is self rule or self control. As a result of the freedom struggle in India we got political independence but we miserably failed to achieve the goal of *Swaraj* or Home Rule.

Initially when the Indian Constitution was enacted the words 'Socialist and Secular' were not there, though it was proclaimed that India will be a Sovereign Democratic Republic. The words 'socialist' and 'secular' were inserted by the 42nd Amendment Act of 1976. While defining the

meaning of the word 'Socialist Republic' the bill proposed that it means 'a republic in which there is freedom from all forms of exploitation: social, political and economic'. But the said definition clause was rejected by *Rajyasabha*, though it was passed by *Loksabha*. It is inexplicable why it was rejected. But according to Gandhi, freedom from all forms of exploitation means '*swaraj* and non-violence'. Today, there is no definition of word 'socialist' in our Constitution but if we want to understand its true source and meaning '*Hind Swaraj*' can help us. It also helps us to understand the meaning of the word freedom i.e. *swaraj*

The challenge before us is to work for the true *Swaraj* Gandhi dreamt. It will be a befitting tribute to Gandhi in the centenary year of *Hind Swaraj* to reflect and analyze the significance of this very text in the 21st century. Twentieth century was one of the most violent periods in human history. The experience of the 20th century gives us an opportunity for introspection. The choice before us is either existence or total annihilation. There has been a rethinking about the futility of violent methods to settle the differences. Gandhi's *Hind Swaraj* is basically a text of non violence and love. It is a counter culture against terrorism and violence. It was through this text that Gandhi first proclaimed to the world the efficacy of the unique weapon of *satyagraha*. Gandhi says – '*Hind Swaraj* teaches the "gospel of love in the place of hate. It replaces violence with the self sacrifice. It pits soul force against brute force". Tolstoy after reading this text pointed out that the passive resistance or *Satyagraha* was the

question of the greatest importance not only for India but for whole humanity. Gandhi wrote this book basically keeping Indians in mind but the message is universal and it transcends geographical boundaries.

I am not discussing the specific issues dealt in the *Hind Swaraj*. But I want to remind that Gandhi was not against doctors, lawyers, judicial system or railways. These professions and associated institutions were brought to India by Britishers as means of exploitation and according to Gandhi any type of exploitation is violence. That is why Gandhi rejected these professions and institutions. These professions are only means of extracting money from the miseries of people and not to serve them. In any case in the opinion of Gandhi these professions at the best could be described as necessary evils. But unfortunately we are treating them as absolutely necessary, forgetting the word evil.

Some thinkers feel that Gandhi has become irrelevant, so also *Hind Swaraj* in this modern age. Martin Luther King said "There is nothing in our glittering technology which can raise a man to new heights because material growth in itself has been made an end. In the absence of moral purpose man himself becomes smaller as the work of man becomes bigger". Obviously because of so called modernity, which is the latest orthodoxy, we are forgetting the fact that ultimately 'man is the measure' of everything.

We should start with our own life because Gandhi said, 'My life is my message'. They are inseparable. Greed and need cannot co-exist. How I will control myself is that what one has to introspect. Can this small community who has assembled here really bring control over their lives? Then only the purpose of the seminar will be served. It is the duty of a person who attains self-control to persuade others to follow the path. Therefore it is not merely an individual act. It can bring silent revolution in the society.

The global economic meltdown has created serious doubts about the existing systems of governance. The basic question before us is whether the ideas presented in the *Hind Swaraj* help us to overcome the crises that we are facing in different facets of human life. We have to understand the theory of life depicted in this book. The values presented in this book are eternal. That is why the Institute of Gandhian Studies, along with Gandhi Peace Foundation and Gandhi International, France took the initiatives to organize this seminar. This conference has attracted the attention of academics, activists, spiritual personalities, scientists and so on. We should not end up this seminar with mere academic deliberations. It should come with specific action plans to change the institutions which are inherently violent into non-violent ones. This is the real challenge. I am sure that this august audience will take up this challenge.

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The deliberations after the inaugural session will discuss threadbare the problems humanity is facing and what is the significance of *Hind Swaraj* perspectives in the 21st century. I wish you meaningful deliberations on pertinent issues. Gandhi was against any kind of ism in his name. Gandhian Thought is not an ism. It is an ongoing process, it doesn't stagnate. The deliberations here will further strengthen the thought of Gandhi. The deliberations will bear fruits when Gandhian thinking becomes our own thinking and it is reflected in our daily life.

Gandhi placed the whole humanity on trial, a century ago and we have not made conscious and deliberate efforts to come out from this trial. This seminar should come out with a blue print for a true *swaraj* in order to emerge victorious from this everlasting trial and to overcome the forces of violence. The ideal of *swaraj* Gandhi placed in *Hind Swaraj* will promote the culture of peace and non-violence in the world. I consider Sevagram as a broadcasting station. From Sevagram we will declare to the world that nonviolence is the only solution left before humanity. I am sure that the soul of Mahatma will give us the strength to spread the message of non-violence from this small village.

Text and Context of Hind Swaraj

Renu Bahl

Introduction

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi has attained an iconic status in the world and in history is undisputable. About a hundred volumes of his collected works have been published by the Government of India, more than three thousand five hundred books have been written on Gandhi, and his symbols and words continue to inspire and encourage. As we celebrate a hundred years of his acknowledged magnum opus *Hind Swaraj*, it is time to reflect on the importance of both the text and the context of this renowned work. *Hind Swaraj* is a seminal and a foundational work, and it is widely seen as the bible of non-violent revolutions as well as providing the blue print of all kinds of revolutions. Though Gandhi wrote extensively, *Hind Swaraj* was his earliest text, in which he questioned the accepted myths and the truths of his times. The text is not only a tract on political methodology, philosophy or political movements; it is a statement of faith. Therefore, its relevance goes much beyond the time frame in which it was written.

Gandhi wrote this short tract in 1909 originally in Gujarati on a return voyage from London to South Africa.

He completed the work in short period of ten days, and when his right hand was tired he wrote with his left hand. It appears that the ideas in the book were written in a state of frenzy, and that these ideas formulated faster than his words. The text consists of twenty short chapters, cast in the form of a dialogue between Gandhi who is called the 'editor' and his interlocutor known as the "reader." The style is similar to the Socrates dialogue in Plato's Republic and the *Upanishads*. Writing 275 pages, Gandhi struck down his original words only ten times. Such was the vision and passion with which he wrote this text.

Despite the fact that the work is shot through with complex philosophical ideals, arguments, and values, doctrines of action, and notions of self rule or *swaraj*, *Hind Swaraj* is an easy book to read, because it contains neither theories, nor jargons. In fact, Gandhi thought of *Hind Swaraj* as a book that could be "put into the hands of a child.

Hind Swaraj was serialized in two installments in December 1909 in the Gujarati Edition of *Indian Opinion*, the weekly published by Gandhi in South Africa. In January 1910, it was published as a booklet in Gujarati. In March 1910, the British Government proscribed it along with other publications on the plea that these writings contained seditious literature. Gandhi then translated the booklet into English. In fact this is the only text which he

himself translated. In this paper I wish to reflect both on the issue of the context as well as the text of HS.

II

What is a Classic and How do we Read it?

Hind Swaraj can rightly be regarded as a classic; a unique testimony of a man who tried to translate his vision for human freedom into mass action. But then the question arises, what is a classic and what is its value? There are roughly two sorts of answers to this question. Hegel held that classics embody the spirit of their age. On the other hand, Quentin Skinner argues that a classic is a work that goes against the spirit of its age. Howsoever we define a classic, we know a classic when we see one, for the richness of its ideas, the lucidity of its prose, and the continuing relevance of its ideas. We read classics for pure intellectual satisfaction, and because we are seekers of knowledge. But more importantly, we read classics because we know that all good political thinking has to have knowledge of the past. We read classics to understand where we come from, how we have reached where we are at the present, and what were the roads taken and the roads not taken. In sum, classics not only tell us how we should live, but also illumine our path with their wisdom, and thereby provide solutions for our current predicament. For our knowledge of the past helps us to come to terms with ourselves. As the philosopher Santayana was to comment insightfully, “those who condemn history are bound to repeat it”. The past then is not another country; it is part of the present. For instance

the 'present' of Indian society is the product of our past, i.e., colonialism. Our language, our ideas our vocabularies, our texts and our critical thinking have been constituted by colonialism.

But we also know that it is impossible to reconstruct the past because we approach history from the vantage point of the present, what is called a 'presentist' conception of history. Moreover, our interpretation of the past is determined by our current concerns. For instance how many of us go back to the nineteenth century because we grapple with problems of imperialism, casteism, gender imbalances or poverty? We read history and classics from the point of view of our current concerns, worries, preoccupations, and our desire to understand ourselves. Above all we read classics to save ourselves from getting lost. This does not mean that we do not understand history as it was, but to be conscious that we often understand the past from the vantage point of the present.

Of course there are different ways of understanding history through narratives, travelogues, events, novels and studies of processes. Political theorists, for example, understand the history of ideas through classics, not only because they condense the spirit of their age, but because they raise normative and ethical questions that remain relevant for us till today. Classics like *Hind Swaraj* not only tell us of the ethical and normative issues that marked that time, not only do they

address the crisis of their age, they ask deep questions about the spirit of those times.

Now, the eminent historian Quentin Skinner is of the view that classics are time bound, and that we should read them keeping in mind that they address specific historical needs. Skinner has been associated with a group of philosophers who have had a shared link with Cambridge and are known as the Cambridge school. They chose not to emphasise a particular text, but to focus on the intellectual political and ideological contexts within which these texts were written, and the languages that both shaped the context of their writing, as well as those that were shaped by these contexts.

On the other hand, the textual approach adopted by the political theorist Terence Ball is concerned with reading a theory out of the text, and reconstructing it for our purpose. The autonomy of the text, holds Ball, is the necessary key to its meaning. The idea of reading a classic is to recover timeless elements or dateless wisdom that has universal application and continuing relevance. Broadly speaking an emphasis on the social context cancels out timelessness, and the textual approach emphasizes texts that answer questions which are timeless, universal, and transhistorical.

There is however another way of reading a text. The answers given to the central questions may be time bound-what is justice, what is freedom, what is the

nature of imperialism? But the questions are relevant and transhistorical, therefore, classics are relevant. Secondly classics help us to provide a critique of our present understanding, because they question, probe and challenge existing systems of power, legitimacy, and ways of being. That is why leading political philosophers have been persecuted, even executed for their ideas like Socrates and Gandhi. Their ideas were threats to existing ways of understanding the world. Philosophers like Rousseau and Voltaire did not create the revolution. But they expressed the discontent and the tensions underlying society. They understood that dispriveleged classes were making claims on society that could not be fulfilled unless society was changed.

When we come to *Hind Swaraj*, we realize that it is a classic. Not only a saga of hope and loss; *Hind Swaraj* embodies a struggle over competing ideas. This struggle over ideas acts as a whetstone to sharpen our understanding, helps us raise new questions, and also aids us in drafting out the answers. Like all political philosophy, *Hind Swaraj* is public spirited for three reasons: one, it critiques social and political arrangements, secondly it searches for what is right and the good, and, thirdly it makes us aware of the fact that individual wellbeing is dependent on social wellbeing. Simply put *Hind Swaraj* gives us an alternative way of understanding how and why we think of ourselves and of society in a particular way. Like other classics *Hind Swaraj* condenses the spirit of its time both through documentation

and critique. At the same time, it reaches beyond its age, stimulates minds of later generations, and provokes them to ask questions.

III

What was Gandhi trying to do in *Hind Swaraj*?

Having given a brief theoretical background to what constitutes the text and the context of *Hind Swaraj* this paper seeks to find answers to the following questions that are in the main inspired by Skinner.

- A) What was Gandhi doing in writing a text in relation to other available texts? The answer to this question will define the ideological context of *Hind Swaraj*. HS was a text written in response to violent, militant, revolutionary methods adopted by a group of Indian nationalists. Gandhi advocated non-violent methods rooted in the ethical-moral advocacy of politics. The political philosophy of Aurobindo, Raja Rammohun Roy, Vivekananda, Ravindranath Tagore and other thinkers of the time had addressed issues such as colonial subjugation, nature of civilization, and the perennial search of human beings to live nurtured and fulfilled lives. *Hind Swaraj* as a reappraisal of theories of the nature of Indian civilization and as an ethical-moral response to political issues provided an alternative way to thinking about politics compared to existing theories and philosophies.

B) Why was it written and for whose benefit? Gandhi was apprehensive that an emerging new leadership of the anti-imperialist movement would legitimize the use of violence. This had become painfully obvious during the partition of Bengal in 1905 and the communal riots that followed. Seeking to counter the cult of violence present in some sections of the nationalist movements as well as in the practices of the colonial power, *Hind Swaraj* teaches the gospel of love in place of that of hate, and replaces violence with self-sacrifice. It pits as Gandhi said, “the soul force against brute force.” (p.15) *Hind Swaraj* embodied Gandhi’s blueprint of an ideal society and the state. And towards this end he in *Hind Swaraj* addressed his own countrymen as well as the British colonial power.

C) What was its practical context? The British colonial government had treated rigid *Shastric* injunctions and traditions of Indians, at par with British law, and judged them on grounds of rationality. The British also used the “civilization” debate, to legitimize their rule in India. It was in this precise context that Gandhi resolved to reconstruct the rich cultural heritage and the traditions of his country. This he did in *Hind Swaraj*. His ultimate objective was to emancipate his people both from (a) obsolete traditions and (b) unquestioning imitation of modern civilization. The linguistic vocabulary of that period defined his ideology in *Hind Swaraj* as *Swaraj*. *Swaraj* was a concept extensively used by Gandhi’s contemporaries such as Aurobindo, Tilak and Tagore. *Hind Swaraj* permeated this ideology with a theory of

political action. *Swaraj* thus acquired a unique meaning in Gandhi's philosophy.

IV

The Objective of Hind Swaraj

Let us now come to the crux of the argument; that is the relevance of the classic. Classics like *Hind Swaraj* can be understood in terms of its context as well as in terms of the perennial relevance of its arguments and insights. The core ingredients of *Hind Swaraj* are constituted by deep philosophical reflections on *Swaraj*. *Swaraj* is an Upanishadic word found in the *Rigveda* where 'Swa' is self and 'raj' means to be able to shine on its own. In other words the concept stands for mastery over oneself through control of one's senses or 'indriyas'. In short, *Swaraj* denotes the internal governance of oneself, or more precisely of one's being. The concept sensitizes the reader on how to humanize and govern oneself before humanizing and governing the society. Gandhi argues in this text that the self governing society is best suited for liberated individuals who master self-restraint. If needs match possessions and there is no greed, there will be no need for a police state.

Some of the main arguments of the text of *Hind Swaraj* are as follows:

A) Political life has the potential of becoming the highest form of active life, if it is practiced within the framework of updated *Dharma*, making it suitable for modern times.

B) Civilization can help or hinder progress and a nation's rejuvenation will depend on its ethical orientation.

C) *Swaraj* is rule of *praja* (subjects) viz. self-rule within appropriate political community of a nation state. Gandhi sought to resolve Hindu-Muslim hostilities on this basis.

D) Self government requires transformation of the self, which includes not only the refusal to use violence and coercion but also adopting virtues like temperance, justice, charity, truthfulness, courage, fearlessness and freedom from greed, which would reinforce political ethics.

E) Gandhi differentiates between religion as formal organization and religion as ethics and spirituality, which teaches unconditional love for the neighbour. Within these arguments Gandhi gives reasons to support tolerance which later culminated into *Sarvadharmā Samabhava* as a state of human consciousness.

F) A modern state without *Swaraj* will replace British Raj with Indian Raj. In *Hind Swaraj* Gandhi refers metaphorically to all modern states as tiger. He wrote, "you want the tiger's nature, but not the tiger; that is to say, you would make India English. And when it becomes English, it will be called not Hindustan but Englistan." (p. 26) His argument is that all tigers seek prey and there is no difference between the white tiger and the brown tiger in the absence of *Swaraj*.

G) Lasting lesson of *Hind Swaraj* is non-violence where Gandhi relates Non-violence to the debate on ends and means and points out a) that violence destroys life, b) violence comes from intention to harm and violence is better than cowardice. He discusses the relative moral superiority of Non-violence in terms of Love, Truth, Compassion, Suffering, Justice and triumph of soul force over brute force. Soul exercises these naturally if mind can control passion. Therefore, the success of Non-violence depends on the state of soul and mind.

H) This also requires an appropriate system of education and technology. Gandhi pointed out that fascination of India for modern western civilization arises from uncritical attitude of Indians towards modern education and machinery. (Later in 1921 and 1928 he modified his opinions on these issues).

I) Science, Technology and machinery that meet the needs of Indian masses is not condemned by Gandhi but science, technology and machine which reward the skilled and the powerful and marginalizes the poor and the weak is what he discards. He wanted appropriate technology and machines which improved material welfare for all, not only the rich and educated. Hence the debate was on the kind of technology, science and machines that were required for human survival. He accordingly supported technology if it is linked to human good. Though an ascetic himself, he does not glorify poverty, instead he wanted well clothed, well-groomed, well read people

living decent lives and if science can help us to achieve this, it is to be welcomed.

Lastly Gandhi's agenda was to establish a link between the local and universal. One cannot enjoy the comfort of air conditioned rooms and support agitation against the Tehri dam and become a silent spectator to the destruction of eco-systems and fauna and flora. Secondly, for Gandhi human being is not only body but also a spirit and the two have to be harmonised. However, this does not at the same time mean that the body is negated or denied. Gandhi also emphasized that unbridled individualism will lead to consumerist culture where the greed will replace need. Gandhi's talisman is his ultimate agenda because when in doubt, Gandhi advises that one must recall the poorest and the weakest man one knows and ask oneself, if the action is going to be good for him and if it would restore dignity to the hungry and spiritually starving man.

V

To conclude I will leave you with few ideas to reflect upon. The text of *Hind Swaraj* is constituted both by colonialism as well as by the practices of the nationalists. In deriving a response to the current debates, Gandhi engaged in philosophical reflection on not only political choices but also the morality of politics, the end of political practices, the good life and how it can be achieved and the development of human beings as moral beings.

In writing *Hind Swaraj* he drew upon the notions and the concepts used by his contemporaries and gave them a new meaning, mainly by making these the source of political action. Politics itself he did not see as divorced from ethics.

At the same time the text of *Hind Swaraj* is concerned with the connection between the personal self and political self. For him spiritual quest meant social responsibility and not a retreat into otherworldliness. Thus the *Hind Swaraj* cannot be understood without reference to both text and context.

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Re-Interpreting Hind Swaraj

Ramdas Bhatkal

Need for a New Marathi Translation

Hind Swaraj is the key to understand Gandhi's thoughts on several issues. Its Marathi translation was first published 36 years after its publication in Gujarati and English. Now, in the centenary year of *Hind Swaraj*, there is need for a fresh look at this work. While working on an annotated edition of *Hind Swaraj* in Marathi, I felt that a new translation in Marathi was needed as well. For this purpose, I was rereading the text in Gujarati and English, both by Gandhi. The Marathi translation by Pandurang Ganesh Deshpande was first published by Navajivan Press in 1946, and a second translation is recently published by Datta Shinde in 2006. One of the problems I faced was the varying shades of meaning of some key words in the two Gandhi versions. Even if we look at some of the chapter headings, we can identify the problem.

Chapter VI '*Sudharo*' in Gujarati is 'Civilization' in English; Chapter XIII '*Kharo Sudharo Shun?*' is 'What is true Civilisation?'; Chapter XVI '*Darugolo*' is 'Brute Force'; Chapter XVII '*Satyagraha—Atmabal*' is 'Passive Resistance'; and Chapter XIX '*Sanchakam*' in Gujarati is 'Machinery' in English. There is subtle difference in the shades of meaning between the Gujarati and English terminology.

Since both the versions are by Gandhi, one has to explain the difference in emphasis in the two versions before arriving at Gandhi's intended implication. No doubt Gujarati dictionaries give the meaning of 'Civilization' as '*Sudharo*' and vice versa.¹ Yet, there is considerable difference between the connotations of the two terms as of today. Also 'Brute Force' and '*Darugolo*' do not exactly connote the same thing,

There are several possible explanations. First, though the English translation was dictated by Gandhi himself, it was written down by his friend Herman Kallenbach.² Gandhi, later, referred to his discussions with Dr. Pranjivan Mehta in England, prior to the writing of 'Hind Swaraj' during his journey back to South Africa.³ On his return, he had the benefit of further discussions with Kallenbach. This did not change the main thrust of his arguments, but since a major part of the discussion on Gandhi's ideas over the last hundred years has been based on *Indian Home Rule* with 'Civilization' as the key word, the use of this word assumes special significance.⁴ The Marathi translation of the word as '*Sudharana*'⁵ based on Gujarati '*Sudharo*' seems altogether misleading. A recent Marathi translation⁶ published by Datta Shinde in 2006 has replaced the word with '*Sabhyata*'. That is another story. I will need to tackle this issue while attempting a new Marathi translation.

The other possibility is that the author realized that he was preparing "not a literal translation ...but a faithful

rendering of the original.”⁷ This was for an altogether different audience. Gujarati *Hind Swaraj* was primarily for the readers of the *Indian Opinion*, mostly in South Africa. The Gujarati book was banned in Bombay Presidency in March 1910. As a counter, the English edition was hastily published on March 20, 1910. The English version was essentially for readership in England and a few senior sympathisers, such as Leo Tolstoy and Gopal Krishna Gokhale, to whom Gandhi made it a point to send copies.

Originally, I was planning to compare both Gujarati and English versions before preparing a new Marathi version. But, at this stage, translating strictly from the English version appears to be a better option.

II

Interpreting ‘Civilization’

This brings forth the need to reinterpret Gandhi’s intention as revealed in his dual approach. It is necessary to pinpoint what exactly Gandhi could have meant by the term ‘civilization’. Civilization is a very broad-based term that has connotations—far and wide. *The Oxford English Mini Dictionary* defines the word as “an advanced stage of social development; the process of achieving this; a civilized nation or area”—all having a positive progressive connotation.

Ironically, Gandhi refers to Edward Carpenter’s definition of ‘civilization’ as a ‘disease’. He was critical of the criterion —‘the bodily welfare [as] the object of life’.

He also rued the fact that this civilization took “note neither of morality nor of religion”. His more strident criticism against this civilization was: “Its votaries calmly state that their business is not to teach religion; some even consider it to be a superstitious growth. Others put on the cloak of religion and prate about morality. But after twenty years experience, I have come to the conclusion that immorality is often taught in the name of morality.”⁸

Gandhi’s insistence on morality as the basis of civilization is the key to understanding of his detailed discourse on civilization.

Notwithstanding Gandhi’s insistence on ethical base required for ‘Civilization’, it is necessary to examine the concept further. Gandhi has taken up some specific examples to illustrate what he meant by ‘Modern Civilization’ and devoted individual chapters to these. Most of the commentators on *Hind Swaraj* have treated Gandhi’s criticism of ‘Modern Civilization’ as the focal point of Gandhi’s arguments. Gandhi’s identifying ‘Doctors, Lawyers and Railways as symbols of ‘Modern civilization’ were found shocking even by several of Gandhi’s colleagues and followers.⁹ Many of them have focused their attention on each individual chapter and tried to expose the limitations of Gandhi’s arguments against the doctors, the lawyers and the Railways. Harshest criticism has been reserved for Gandhi’s views on ‘Machinery’.

In the first decade of twenty-first century, all these examples seem to be out of tune with contemporary way of life, as 'this' same civilization has become an essential part of our daily life and is supposed to indicate progress in human affairs. We need to answer two questions: What was the significance of choosing these examples then? Does the main argument of *Hind Swaraj* revolve round these examples or is there some principle involved that is not dependent on the applicability of these examples a hundred years later?

Before replying to these questions we need to go to another chapter in *Hind Swaraj*. (Chapter IV). Apart from 'Civilization', another significant concept discussed by Gandhi was that of 'Swaraj'. The Reader in *Hind Swaraj* and, in fact, most students of history would equate Swaraj with independence from foreign rulers---the British in India's case---as the only significant aspect of Swaraj.

To quote the Editor from *Hind Swaraj*: "To drive the English out of India is a thought heard from many mouths, but it does not seem that many have properly considered why it should be so?"

".. in effect it means this: that you want English rule without the Englishman. You want the Tiger's nature but not the tiger, that is to say you would make India English and when it becomes English, it will be called not

Hindustan but Englistan. This is not the Swaraj that I want.”

Gandhi, instead, chose to emphasise self-control as the most important aspect of Swaraj and further insisted on the need for self-control in all aspects of life. In the very first paragraph of Chapter XX ‘Conclusion’, Gandhi states: “Real Home rule is self-rule or self-control”

If these two important aspects of *Hind Swaraj* are brought together, it is much easier to see the significance of the choice of these examples.

III

Railways

While describing how the British have impoverished the country¹⁰ (he means India, though he has been dwelling in South Africa) he has picked on ‘Railways’, in the first instance. The arguments he advances to show how the evil things rather than the ‘Good’ find the speedy locomotion more attractive. One may be tempted to relate Gandhi’s connection with railways (the humiliating train incident at Pietermaritzburg, early during his South Africa stay); or the irony in Gandhi’s extensive use of the railways during the Indian Freedom Struggle (1915-1947). But, we have to correlate the argument to the emphasis on ‘self control’ at all levels. The railways upset the community life norms. Easy and speedy communication enabled break up of the self-reliant village communities in India and Gandhi was

witness to the impact of newly constructed Railways in South Africa, particularly agricultural Transvaal. Gandhi had seen during his visit to India the spread of Plague from Rajkot to Bombay.¹¹ Later, just as he was settling down in Johannesburg he was able to spot cases of Plague.

But, the crux of his argument can be connected with the theory of concentric oceanic circles, that he was to hypothesize much later. The basis of this theory, that he developed towards the end of his life in 1946, was the importance of villages as the core community that inculcates 'self- control' at various levels. Railways ran counter to any close association within local communities. Railways encouraged the market economy, facilitating the transport of food, other goods and people to more lucrative locations than to let these relate to their natural habitat.

IV

Lawyers

Gandhi was a lawyer with a very successful practice, first in Durban (1894-1901) and then in Johannesburg (1903-1909). From his first case as an assistant to Advocate A.W. Baker, in handling the case of his mentor Dada Abdullah against his own cousin Tyeb Sheth, Barrister Gandhi charted a new path. He realised that all legal cases rested on 'facts' and did not need the long drawn legal arguments that would benefit only the lawyers. He persuaded the two litigants to go for arbitration; and once the facts were ascertained,

convinced them to go for a friendly settlement that would benefit not only the two litigants but also the entire Muslim trading community in South Africa. Thus, he gave a moral and human basis for what started as a purely legal case.¹² His legal career in South Africa was marked by this strict adherence to 'morality'. He would take up cases only of those clients who were willing to make a frank and faithful admission. The case of his close friend and political supporter Parsi Rustomjee needs to be noted. Rustomjee, in the course of business, had been guilty of evading some customs duties. When he was found out, he wanted Gandhi to take up his case and find out a legal defense. Gandhi agreed to represent him only if he would make a clean confession and pay all the dues. As a lawyer, Gandhi would then seek relief for Rustomjee from prosecution that could lead to imprisonment. Gandhi gave a new dimension to legal practice. The British legal system is largely based on an assumption that both the litigants have a case and it is for their lawyers, as officers of the Court, to help the Court in determining the facts and in arriving at the Truth.

Yet, Barrister Gandhi had been witness to a large number of cases to note that the profession teaches immorality. In the legal system, as followed by the British law courts, 'it was the duty of the lawyers to side with their clients and to find out ways and arguments in favour of their clients to which they are often strangers. The lawyers therefore will, as a rule, advance quarrel instead

of repressing them... it is within my knowledge that they are glad when men have disputes.”¹³

Gandhi had one more problem with this profession. He asks why lawyers are paid more, reminding us of what he learnt from Ruskin's *Unto this Last*. This book had a tremendous impact on Gandhi and one of the important principles that he had derived from this book was that “a lawyer's work has the same value as a barber's, inasmuch as all have the same right of earning their livelihood from their work”. He is also upset at the role the lawyers play in inventing disputes, particularly between Hindu and Muslim communities. He is also aware that the legal system or the law courts is one of the instruments by which the British retained their power over the colonies.

What Gandhi has not said in *Hind Swaraj*, but can be derived from his emphasis on ‘self-control as the essence of *Swaraj*’, is his disapproval of people creating disputes and then seeking the intervention of lawyers and courts in solving these. The technique of *Satyagraha*, which he was developing since 1906 to resolve political dispute of Indians in the Transvaal, was based on a dialogue with the opponent, sincere long-drawn attempt to convince the opponent of the justness of one's cause, at the same time being sensitive to the opponent's position, willingness to suffer for one's convictions and showing preparedness to compromise on details for achieving the main objectives. The final decision, in a *Satyagraha* struggle, was to be taken jointly with the

opponent. Finally, there was to be no victor and no vanquished; and 'if one had to conquer the enemy, it was with love'. The institution of lawyers belied Gandhi's concept of arriving at Truth, whether in individual cases or in political disputes. .

The prolonged struggle in the Transvaal can be related to the Abdullah – Tyeb arbitration case, if we interpolate Gandhi's ideas of *Swaraj* and *Satyagraha* developing in the mean time. If a mass struggle of a self-exiled community could be carried on this basis, why could not family or business disputes be settled on the basis of love rather than legal jugglery? What was more consistent with self-control?

V

Doctors

While Gandhi was trained as a lawyer, he had a running love affair with medicine. "I was at one time a great lover of the medical profession. It was my intention to become a doctor for the sake of the country." But Gandhi hastens to add, "I no longer hold that opinion."¹⁴

While discussing the role of the doctors, Gandhi is more specifically on the point of self-control. "How do these diseases arise?" he asks. His answer may not satisfy all the cases of illnesses around us, yet he is not off the mark when he says, "Surely by our negligence or indulgence."¹⁵ He gives simple direct examples of overeating, indigestion or a disease contracted by vice.

“These are cured by the doctors with their pills and leads the patient to repeat the mistake.”

Gandhi had conducted experiments based on Nature Cure while treating members of his family and *Ashram* inmates. Nature Cure depends largely on what came to be known as ‘Preventive Medicine’. It was based on an intrinsic faith that human body tends to recover if aided by ‘self control’. Thus, Gandhi’s tirade against Modern medicine was not based on prejudice but actual practice.

Gandhi asserts that had the doctor not intervened, “nature would have done its work and I would have acquired mastery over myself, would have been freed from vice and would have become happy.”

Gandhi’s wrath against hospitals (he refers to them as institutions for propagating sin) is based on his opposition to vivisection (killing of animals for experimentation), use of animal fat or spirituous liquors in medicines, and such other considerations that may seem strange today; but his main argument is very clear. “The fact remains that the doctors induce us to indulge, and the result is that we have become deprived of self-control and have become effeminate.”

Like the Legal profession, the Medical profession is condemned by Gandhi because of the exorbitant fees that they charge and consequently their services are restricted

to only the rich. But, even more important, is the argument that it works against 'self-control'.

VI

Machinery

However, the main point of this Paper is not to justify the choice of examples given by Gandhi, but to fathom the reasons for his choice. His views on 'Machinery' once again show that his opposition to machinery is based on a perception that indiscriminate use of machinery cuts at the root of 'self-control'. Arguments against 'Machinery' have many complex implications. This debate was continued for decades and Gandhi gave many explanations and modifications while sticking to his main position that Man should not be dominated by technology. He was always conscious of the distinction between a scientific attitude and surrender to technology. He believed in 'Bread labour' and his main concern was that human creativity and ingenuity must be preserved.

VII

Education

The importance of self-control is more significant when Gandhi discusses education. Gandhi quotes. Thomas Huxley on Education. "That man I think has had a liberal education who has been so trained in youth that his body is the ready servant of his will and does with ease and pleasure all the work that as a mechanism it is capable of, whose intellect is clear cold logic engine with all its parts of equal strength and in smooth working

order... whose mind is stored with a knowledge of the fundamental truths of nature. Whose passions are trained to come to heel by a vigorous will, the servant of a tender conscience ...who has learnt to hate all vileness and to respect others as himself. Such a one and no other, I conceive, has had a liberal education, for he is in harmony with nature. He will make the best of her and she of him."

As against this, Gandhi is worried that with greater dependence on technology, man will be a slave ignoring what he himself is capable of. "Men will not need the use of their hands and feet. They will press a button and they will have their clothing by their side. They will press another button and they will have their newspaper... Everything will be done by machinery."¹⁶

The emphasis Gandhi wants to lay is on ethical values and self- control. His insistence on the importance of mother tongue emphasises the importance of both these factors. There are some biographical details of Gandhi's life in South Africa that establish his position better. Initially, he found that the Indians settled in Pretoria neglected learning English and thus received prejudicial treatment in this foreign land. He went to the extent of personally teaching those willing to learn the English language. Later, at the Phoenix Settlement, he insisted on teaching every child in its own mother tongue and he learnt some languages to make this possible.

Conclusion

All these examples of 'self-control' have been stated for a very different purpose. Any discussion of the message of *Hind Swaraj* must be based not on the specific examples mentioned by Gandhi. A lot of verbiage has been wasted on Gandhi's criticism of 'Machinery', for example, misinterpreting it as Gandhi's non-scientific attitude. While studying *Hind Swaraj* there can be a feeling of datedness on Gandhi's views on some of the examples cited. Their significance can vary with the times. It is important to take into account the fundamental principle underlying these examples. The examples need to be replaced to suit the present times. Yet, the main thrust of *Hind Swaraj* will still demand attention.

The current scene, not just in India but the world over, is full of instances that vitiate against the quality of 'self-control' that Gandhi is advocating. To understand the main argument of *Hind Swaraj* all that is needed is to replace some of the details with more contemporary references.¹⁷

'Globalization', the new *Mantra* needs to be scrutinized to make sure it does not spell the hegemony of New 'Modern Civilization' based on an acquisitive society.

Notes and References

- 1 . Oza Shantilal Sarabhai and Bhatt Ramanbhai G., *The Student's Little Dictionary English into English and Gujarati*, First Published 1940, Revised 1974 and Oza Shantilal Sarabhai, *The Student's Little Dictionary Gujarati into English and Gujarati*, , First Published in 1950 and Revised in 1974. (Ahmedabad : R.R.Sheth & Co.)
- 2 . See Gandhi's Preface to the English Edition.
- 3 . "I wrote '*Hind Swaraj*' for my dear friend Dr. Pranjivan Mehta. All the argument in the book is reproduced almost as it took place with him." *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi* (CWMG), Vol. 71, p.238.
- 4 . In 1911, in response to a question as to whether it would not have been more accurate to write "The Gujarati equivalent for Civilization is good conduct (*sudharo*)" instead of "The Gujarati equivalent for civilization means 'good conduct'", Gandhi wrote the following reply: "If 'is' were to be used, the meaning would change. 'Is' is implied in 'equivalent'...the Gujarati word generally used for civilization means a good way of life'. That is what I had meant to say. The sentence "The Gujarati equivalent for civilization is '*sudharo*' is quite correct. But it is not what I intended to say. The Gujarati equivalent of civilization is 'Good Conduct', according to the rules of grammar; 'good conduct' will have to be taken as a Gujarati phrase." (CWMG, Vol. 11, p. 153) Quoted by Anthony J. Parel, in a footnote in his edition of *Hind Swaraj and Other Writings* (New Delhi: Cambridge University Press,1997)
- 5 . Gandhi Mohandas Karamchand—Translated by Deshpande Pandurang Ganesh: *Hind Swaraj*(Ahmedabad :Navajivan Press,1946)
- 6 . Gandhiji—Translator's name not mentioned: *Hind Swarajya*, First Published (Kolhapur :Datta Shinde,2006)
- 7 . Gandhi's Preface to the English Edition.
- 8 . Chapter VI of *Hind Swaraj*.
- 9 . Gandhi wrote to Nehru in 1945 pointing out the difference in their conceptions. Reasserting his positions in *Hind Swaraj*, he said: "The essence of what I have said is that man should rest content with what are his real needs and become self-sufficient. If he does not have this control, he cannot save himself." Nehru's reply (9th December 1945) was unambiguous. "Even when I read it [*Hind Swaraj*, 20 or more years ago], it seemed to me completely unreal." Further, "I should imagine that a body like the Congress should not lose itself to arguments over such matters which can produce only great confusion in peoples' mind resulting in inability to act in the present". Nehru Jawaharlal, *A Bunch of Old Letters*, Edited by D. G. Tendulkar (Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1958).
- 10 . Gandhi is following Dadabhai Naoroji's 'Drain Theory' and the analysis by R. C. Dutt.
- 11 . At first, Gandhi's criticism of Railways as carrier of disease seemed far-fetched. But the recent example of Airways becoming prime culprits in the spread of swine flu across over a hundred

countries should make us rethink.

12 . Pyarelal: *Mahatma Gandhi The Early Phase*, Vol.1, (Ahmedabad : Navjivan Press,1965) p. 314.

13 . *Hind Swaraj*, Chapter XI.

14 . *Hind Swaraj*, Chapter XII.

15 . In present-day India, advertisements on the television openly encourage overeating since the advertiser's product claims to set right the stomach; or the pill that takes care of unwanted pregnancy even if there indiscretions. These are examples of this 'professional' or commercial approach of modern medicine. Henrik Ibsen's *An Enemy of the People* written a few years earlier to *Hind Swaraj* in far away Norway, brings out the conflict between moral and commercial aspects of life, even in such vital issues as health.

When in Indian jail following his arrest after the Non Cooperation Movement in 1922, he was afflicted by Appendicitis, which is not a result of indulgence or negligence and he did allow the Doctors to help him out. Gandhi did modify his position in later life. Such incidents have hardly any relevance to his main argument.

16 . *Hind Swaraj* ,Chapter VI.

17 . In response to my first draft of this paper, Prof. Madhav Datar, an economist, says; there could be other ways of reinterpretation... It would not question the need for Gandhi's stance in the specific historical context...But reinterpretation in this context would mean doing a mental experiment which would involve either imagining how Gandhi would write *Hind Swaraj* today, or how do we understand it in 2009.

On Hind Swaraj Discourse on Institutions and Technology

Satish K. Jain

A significant part of Gandhi's seminal work *Hind Swaraj*¹, containing definitive and foundational formulations of his thinking on questions of civilizational import, pertains to institutions and technology. Gandhi's views on technology were much discussed in his life-time; and mostly critically. Even among his close followers they did not find much support. Because of the unprecedented ecological and environmental crisis that the modernity has given rise to, in recent years among some non-mainstream groups there has been some kindling of interest in the Gandhian view of technology. The Gandhian viewpoint regarding institutions articulated in *Hind Swaraj* did not, however, at any stage receive the commensurate attention. It will be argued in this paper that the *Hind Swaraj* viewpoints regarding institutions and technology emanate from a unitary idea or insight; and therefore are organically linked with each other. It is also contended in the paper that the Gandhian position on technology has largely been misunderstood.

The modern institutions which have been discussed in considerable detail in *Hind Swaraj* and scathingly criticized are the legal and parliamentary ones. The institution of market is also disparagingly mentioned.² A careful reading of the relevant chapters makes it clear that Gandhi is making an extremely non-trivial point regarding institutions. When an individual acts within the framework of an institution, his behaviour gets moulded by it. Failure to adapt his behaviour in accordance with the requirements of the institution can be quite problematic for the individual concerned. The legal system is so structured that every lawyer is expected to advance arguments in furtherance of his client's interests, regardless of the merits of the case. If a lawyer fails to act in a manner expected of him because of, say, his adherence to some higher principle like truth or justice, then such behaviour in all likelihood will earn him disapprobation from his peers.³ The failure to do one's utmost for one's clients will of course result in loss of practice. Thus any lawyer who does not conform to the behavioural pattern as required by the legal institutions is likely to end up as a failure in his profession.

What is true of legal institutions is true of many other institutions. When individuals function within the framework of an institution, their behaviour gets moulded in the light of the rules, regulations and mores of that institution. This naturally will have implications of a normative character. If an individual feels drawn towards a particular ethical principle, and acting in

accordance with that principle is not conducive for success within the framework of an institution, then the individual must either forsake the ethical principle or must resign himself to not succeeding in that institutional context. Advancing a client's interests is often not consistent with upholding of justice. Adoption of the aim of becoming successful as a lawyer is likely in general to result in relegation of the objective of upholding of justice to a lower level, if not in its abandonment altogether. In this connection, it is important to note that what Gandhi is talking about in relation to lawyers is the incompatibility of an individual acting as a lawyer is supposed to and at the same time upholding certain ethical principles; and not what a lawyer will opt to do in this or that specific instance. He readily acknowledges the possibility of individuals who happen to be lawyers acting in ethically appropriate ways but asserts that such actions must be attributed to these individuals qua individuals and not qua lawyers.⁴

Gandhi's criticism of modern social institutions, whether legal or some other institutions, is essentially based on this idea that the requirements of these institutions are such that they are incompatible with the upholding of certain fundamental ethical principles. In this connection, it is important to note the following two points. One, it is never the case that the nature of the individuals comprising the society and the nature of their actions are irrelevant for determining the character of social institutions. What is being discussed here are the

implications of social institutions for the behavior of a given set of individuals. Two, the incompatibility that Gandhi is talking about should not be confused with imperfections. In the context of discourses on institutions it is taken for granted that no institution can be expected to work in practice in its idealized form; and that a certain degree of imperfection in the functioning of any institution is to be expected as a matter of course. What Gandhi is drawing attention to are the structural characteristics of modern institutions which have implications with respect to certain ethical principles. In Gandhi's view the inimical implications of modern institutions for upholding of certain cherished values are not incidental; but inherent in their very nature.

Gandhi's viewpoint regarding modern institutions can be divided into two parts. One, the implicit assertion that the choices with respect to institutions are in general normatively significant. One reason for this, namely the possible incompatibility of behaviour in accordance with the requirements of the institution in question and certain desirable values, has already been discussed above. Another reason for the normative significance arises from the possibility of behaviour in accordance with the institutional requirements giving rise to certain undesirable values and consequences. This aspect has also been discussed by Gandhi. In connection with the profession of lawyers he discusses how, while social discord is in lawyers' interests, social harmony is not.⁵ It is immediate that the assertion of institutional choices

being normatively significant is both valid and applicable to all institutions, whether modern or not. The second part of the viewpoint pertains to the assertion of modern institutions being evil. While Gandhi does present a detailed argument showing how legal institutions can be expected to lead to, from an ethical perspective, undesirable consequences, and a similar, though less detailed, demonstration regarding parliamentary institutions; there is no general demonstration regarding all modern institutions. It will clearly be correct to argue that even if it can be shown that some modern institutions have a tendency to give rise to ethically undesirable situations, it will not imply that all modern institutions have this characteristic. In order to show that all modern institutions are undesirable either one has to provide a general argument to that effect; or make such a demonstration for each modern institution. Although from a literal reading of *Hind Swaraj* one might conclude that Gandhi does neither, it will be argued in the sequel that once Gandhi's views regarding institutions and technology are considered in the light of the Gandhian discourse on civilization, a general argument does appear to be implicit.

Gandhi's almost total opposition to modern technology also stemmed from normative considerations. Introduction of new technology of any kind in general can be expected to impact on various social structures including institutions. Even if it is granted that a particular technology can coexist with several different kinds of

social structures, there can be no question of any non-trivial technology being such that it can coexist with any kind of social structures. Once it is accepted that technologies in general have implications for social structures in the sense that adoption of a particular technology will imply that in due course of time all those social structures incompatible with the adopted technology will either cease to exist or alternatively will get modified in such manner as to be no longer incompatible with the adopted technology, it immediately follows, in view of the discussion relating to the normative significance of institutional choices, that no non-trivial technology can be expected to be normatively neutral.

From the above it follows that the Gandhian viewpoint on technology, as was the case with the Gandhian viewpoint on institutions, can be divided in two assertions. One, technological choices in general are normatively significant; two, modern technology is inimical to desirable values and conducive to undesirable values. As was the case with similar assertions with respect to institutions, the first assertion is immediate; it is the second one which will require demonstration. The Gandhian position on technology can be legitimately criticized: (i) By pointing out that no demonstration has been constructed to establish the second assertion; or (ii) By showing that the modern technology, or at least a significant part of it, does not have the alleged character. But if we look at the criticisms of the Gandhian position,

one finds that they were not made on these grounds; rather they were almost invariably made by putting forward arguments which were essentially tantamount to saying that the assertion of non-neutrality of technology is a false one. Some of the criticisms of the Gandhian position on modern technology contained in the articles published in the *Hind Swaraj* Special Number of *Aryan Path*⁶ and reprinted in a compilation by National Gandhi Museum⁷ provide excellent examples of it. Consider for instance criticisms by Rathbone, Fausset, Murray and Burns:

‘There are views held by this great man and teacher - with regard, for instance, to machinery, with regard to bodily chastity - which many of us find distorted and fantastic. Machinery *need* not be the curse Gandhi declares it is; in a world where the money-changers had been rendered powerless it would be used for the release of man, not, as now, for his degradation.’⁸

Machinery, we may admit, represents a great sin, is in fact the outward embodiment of the split in man's being, which at present it deepens, tending everywhere to deaden his creative spirit. Yet the machine, if once it ceases to be an instrument of private power and greed, might, one imagines, be employed to liberate man in some ways from a merely creative servitude to matter for creative service and expression on a more spiritual plane.’¹⁹

‘And another more obvious distinction is that, whereas Gandhi has made up his mind that the technical ‘civilization’ of Europe is altogether evil and is to be wholly rejected, the European Christian thinker is compelled to ask himself whether it is not absolutely necessary to preserve some basic elements of the mechanical technique: first, ... ; and secondly, because the same spiritual imagination which can conceive as a reality a society based on Love (which is Gandhi's real *Swaraj*) can also conceive that such a society could just as well make true and humane use of the machine. For although the machine - or power production - has so disastrously become the master instead of the slave of European ‘civilisation’, it does nevertheless offer an immense and universal liberation from human drudgery. Simply to reject it, as Gandhi, following Tolstoy, does, is to declare that mankind is inherently incapable of using the most tremendous and therefore the most ambiguous gift of God except to its own damnation. ... To put it otherwise, does not Gandhi's own belief in ‘the gospel of love’ compel him also to believe that Love can control even the Machine to the purposes of love?’¹⁰

‘Another mistake in Gandhi's teaching is his condemnation of machinery as evil. ... But Gandhi goes so far as to say that railways spread epidemic disease, and that ‘railways can become a disturbing agency for the evil one only.’ Presumably aeroplanes, radio and cinemas and other mechanisms that are yet to come, would be thought by Gandhi to be still worse. This is a fundamental

philosophical error. It implies that we are to regard as morally evil any instrument which may be misused. ... Any mechanism may be misused; but if it is, the moral evil is in the man who misuses it, not in the mechanism.¹¹

There is a common thread in all the four criticisms, namely, that it is erroneous to think that it is impossible to make use of machines and at the same time remain faithful to the higher ethical principles. Whether machines are going to be used for good or evil depends on human beings; directly or indirectly. Machines are merely empowering; whether for good or evil depends on those who are empowered by them. Now, it is certainly true that, as in the case of institutions, the nature of the individuals comprising the society and the nature of the uses to which technology is put can never be irrelevant for the consequences which flow from the use of technology. Furthermore, the various facets of the social organization, including property relations, are also relevant from the perspective of the nature of the consequences which flow from the use of technology. The difficulty arises when it is claimed that the entire variation in consequences of technology is explainable in these terms. In view of the earlier discussion regarding the interconnections between institutions and values, and between technology and social structures, it is clear that the assertions regarding value-neutrality of technology cannot really be maintained. If a particular technology is polluting, it is not clear how its polluting character is going to be affected either by changing the

property relations or by the character of those controlling and making use of it. In fact, using Gandhian insights regarding technology in the context of this example, one can say that the values which assign rights to non-human life-forms cannot be sustained if such a technology is adopted.

In this context, Gandhi's discourse on medicine is rather instructive. He says that if a person suffers because of overindulgence then in the absence of medicine he will learn not to overindulge; but if there exists medicine through use of which he can escape the consequences of overindulgence without giving up overindulgence itself then the lesson of self-discipline is unlikely to be learnt.¹² In the context of this example the critics of the Gandhian viewpoint might say that whether the medicine is going to be used for facilitating indulgence or for curing afflictions which occur in spite of discipline entirely depends on the persons concerned. Simply because something can be misused cannot be an argument for giving up the thing altogether because almost anything that one can think of, not just medicine, can be misused. In order to evaluate this kind of argument against the Gandhian position it would be helpful to consider the point made in connection with medicine under different scenarios. To begin with, two polar cases can be considered. First consider the case when a particular affliction is caused only by overindulgence. In this case it is immediate that the only possible use of medicine is going to be as facilitator of overindulgence. It is of course

true that if everyone in the society is highly disciplined then no one will be using the medicine for the indulgence purpose. But then, whether the medicine exists or not is a matter of complete indifference and irrelevance. On the other hand, if not everyone is highly disciplined, then the existence of medicine can only lead to a state of sustainable overindulgence for those lacking the required discipline. If we consider the other polar case of the affliction being entirely a random phenomenon and having nothing to do with indulgence then it is clear that the existence of medicine is not going to have any adverse implications with respect to self-discipline trait of the individuals. It may have implications for other aspects depending on how the medical system is organized in the society. As diseases in general have multiple causes and any normal society consists of individuals differing in various traits, existence of medicine is bound to have multifarious implications including that of encouraging indulgence. Regardless of whether on balance the existence of medicine turns out to be beneficial or harmful, there can be no doubt that any normal society will have greater indulgence with medicine than without it; and consequently the normative significance of medicine is not in doubt.

To sum up, with respect to both institutions and technology the correct position is that the values which materialize through them partly depend on their nature and partly on the individuals comprising the society. Consequently choices which are made with respect to

institutions and technology have normative significance. For determining whether a particular choice of institutional structure or technology can be expected to have desirable or undesirable consequences normally a theoretical or empirical investigation will be necessary; unless one is thinking in civilizational terms. If one takes it as an axiom that the spirit of a civilization is of the essence and that it is bound to be reflected in social structures as well as in technology, and also finds fault with the spirit of the civilization in question on ethical grounds; then one will be justified in rejecting the institutions and technology associated with that civilization on the ground that their adoption can only be inimical to the ethical principles because of which one finds fault with the very spirit of that civilization. This is essentially the approach that Gandhi adopted in *Hind Swaraj*. Although he does analyze the nature of some modern institutions and their normative implications, as has already been discussed in this paper, the main reason why he rejects modern civilization in its entirety, inclusive of institutions and technology, is because of his conviction that a civilization which makes the attainment of material pleasures as one of the central objects of life and sanctions extreme violence against nature, non-human life-forms and sections of humanity for achieving material ends is not a civilization which can be conducive for the upholding of higher ethical principles.¹³ Indeed, he even doubted whether such a civilization was sustainable in the long-run.¹⁴

One very important implication of the Gandhian position is that the social structures and technology developed by a civilization, if adopted by another civilization without any modifications, in general can be expected to create distortions in the recipient society and undermine its core ideas.

Notes and References

- . M. K. Gandhi, *Hind Swaraj* or *Indian Home Rule* (Ahmedabad :Navajivan Publishing House, 1938); Translation of '*Hind Swaraj*', published in the Gujarat columns of Indian Opinion, 11th and 18th December, 1909; Published by Yann FORGET on 20th July 2003, with LATEX 2ε (Hereinafter referred to as *Hind Swaraj*).
- . 'They wish to convert the whole world into a vast market for their goods. That they cannot do so is true, but the blame will not be theirs. They will leave no stone unturned to reach the goal.' *Hind Swaraj*, p. 32.
- . The latter's duty is to side with their clients and to find out ways and arguments in favour of the clients to which they (the clients) are often strangers. If they do not do so they will be considered to have degraded their profession. *Hind Swaraj*, p. 41.
- . 'Whenever instances of lawyers having done good can be brought forward, it will be found that the good is due to them as men rather than as lawyers.' *Hind Swaraj*, p. 41.
- . 'It is within my knowledge that they are glad when men have disputes. Petty pleaders actually manufacture them. Their touts, like so many leeches, suck the blood of the poor people.' *Hind Swaraj*, p. 41.
- . *Aryan Path Special Number* No. 9, Vol. 9, September 1938 (Hereinafter referred to as Aryan Path Special Number).
- . *Gandhiji on Hind Swaraj and Select Views of Others*, National Gandhi Museum, New Delhi, 2009 (Hereinafter referred to as Gandhi Museum Compilation).
- . Irene Rathbone, 'What about the Children?', *Aryan Path Special Number*. See pp. 297-298 of Gandhi Museum Compilation.
- . Hugh I'A. Fausset, 'A Revolutionary Message: One of the Best Handbooks', *Aryan Path Special Number*. See pp. 281-282 of Gandhi Museum Compilation.
- . John Middleton Murray, 'A Spiritual Classic', *Aryan Path Special Number*. See pp. 271-272 of Gandhi Museum Compilation.
- . C. Delisle Burns, 'The Teaching of Gandhi', *Aryan Path Special Number*. See pp. 267-268 of Gandhi Museum Compilation.
- . I overeat, I have indigestion. I go to a doctor, he gives me medicine, I am cured. I overeat again, I take his pills again. Had I not taken the pills in the first instance, I would have suffered the punishments deserved by me and I would not have overeaten again. The doctor intervened and helped me to indulge myself. My body thereby certainly felt more at ease; but my mind became weakened. A continuance of a course of medicine must, therefore, result in loss of control over the mind. *Hind Swaraj*, p. 43.
- . 'Its true test lies in the fact that people living in it make bodily welfare the object of life.' *Hind Swaraj* p. 29.
'By Western civilization I mean the ideals which people in the West have embraced in modern times and the pursuits based on these ideals. The supremacy of brute force, worshipping money as God, spending most of one's time in seeking worldly happiness, breath-taking risks in pursuit of worldly enjoyments of all kinds, the expenditure of limitless mental energy on efforts to multiply the power of machinery, the expenditure of crores on the invention of means of destruction, the moral

righteousness which looks down upon people outside Europe, - this civilization, in my view, deserves to be altogether rejected.' Letter to the Learned Narasinhrao dated 29-12-1920, *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi* [Electronic Book] (New Delhi: Publications Division, Government of India, 1999) 98 volumes, volume 22, p. 158.(Hereinafter referred to as *CWMG-Electronic Book*)

In response to Wybergh's statement that 'While I recognise that the highest ideals of India (and Europe too) are in advance of this civilisation, yet I think also, with all modesty, that the bulk of the Indian population require to be roused by the lash of competition and the other material and sensuous as well as intellectual stimuli which 'civilisation' supplies.' (W.J. Wybergh's Letter to Gandhi, May 3, 1910, *CWMG-Electronic Book*, Vol. 11, p. 468.), Gandhi wrote:

'I have ventured utterly to condemn modern civilisation because I hold that the spirit of it is evil. It is possible to show that some of its incidents are good, but I have examined its tendency in the scale of ethics. I distinguish between the ideals of individuals who have risen superior to their environment, as also between Christianity and modern civilisation. ... I claim to have tested the life which modern civilisation has to give, as also that of the ancient civilisation, and I cannot help most strongly contesting the idea that the Indian population requires to be roused by 'the lash of competition and the other material and sensuous, as well as intellectual, stimuli'; I cannot admit that these will add a single inch to its moral stature. Letter to W.J. Wybergh dated May 10, 1910, *CWMG-Electronic Book*, Vol. 11, pp. 38-39.

¹⁴ . 'This civilization is such that one has only to be patient and it will be self- destroyed.' *Hind Swaraj*, p. 30.

5

Hind Swaraj with Special Reference to Medical Care

Anand Gokani

The literal meaning of Hind Swaraj is Indian Self-Rule or Home-Rule. The connotations of self-rule can have both superficial and deep implications. In the superficial sense, home-rule applies to political home-rule, meaning governance by the people, of the people, for the people; but in the deep sense of the word, swaraj or home-rule is a kind of spiritual independence applicable at the individual level. In this paper we will confine ourselves to the discussion of home-rule at a societal level where a collective group of people are governed by laws and customs which are for their common good. The smallest collection of people in this sense would be a village, and many villages together would constitute a state, and many states constitute a country. Large towns and cities would not necessarily fall into the purview of this concept as the cultural norms, customs and needs of these groups are significantly different from a village.

To begin with let me try and define a village. A village is a collection of people with a common identity who live together in a spirit of co-operation, mutual trust and a spirit of brotherhood. There maybe a hierarchy that governs the village social structure but each would be for the progress of the state and each would be important in his/her place. The laws and customs would likewise be for the welfare of the people and for the ultimate prosperity of all. Under these circumstances the unit of a village would prosper and be happy. The distance between the rich and the poor would be small and the basic needs of the entire community would be more than adequately served. Extending this definition to a state and then to a country would only vary in magnitude keeping the general principles the same.

The nation is an entity which is culturally, socially and geographically typical. The constituents of the nation have aims, objectives, needs and problems unique to themselves and hence only they can be responsible for fulfilling or solving them.

Keeping this in mind, every law in the country, every business and every activity should be to

- a) Cater to the needs of the community at large,
- b) Fulfill the needs of the community,
- c) Be beneficial to all without harming any constituents,
- d) Should be easily available to the common man.

Towards this end, self-rule or home-rule would probably be far superior to any other form of governance.

Nobody can understand the problems and needs of the community better than its constituents themselves.

Home/self-rule cannot be made uniform throughout the world. It's not a 'one-size-fits-all' system. Every community has specialized individual needs and can vary immensely from the needs of another community. For instance, a person in the tropics, near the equator, in a semi-developed country, may differ in constitution and needs from another who lives in the Arctic Circle, in a developed nation. They cannot both be governed by the same systems. Hence every country needs home-rule for itself. This is the only common law all over the world, that every community needs its own *Home Rule*.

When societies were arranged in communities, and they all fended for themselves, there was a general sense of well-being amongst the people. But wars, greed, avarice, transigrations, conquests and explorations lead to a massive intermingling and, in so doing, there was a domination of the physically or economically strong society over the lessor endowed society.

The 'rule' or 'control' thereafter was for '*Profit*' and not '*Welfare*'. When the final aim of all rulers was profit for a few but with no attention to the welfare of

the majority, the societies began to crumble, the social structure disintegrated, the 'one-man-help-the-other' ceased to happen, and each was to his own.

The 'profit motive' of 'rule' or 'control' became the trend the world over and, whenever it happened, there was exploitation, disharmony, conflict and suffering. One such victim of a changing, profit-based scenario is the medical profession.

Ayurveda, naturopathy, homoepathy, unani and other alternative, indigenous means of therapy were rooted in this country, and with their use the users were all benefited. The cost of medications was minimal, indigenously grown herbs and medicines prevailed and the cost of medical care was reasonably within the reach of the large majority. This was home-rule in the field of medicine. Home-rule related to the practice of medicine was aimed for the common good of the society. The people looked up to the medical practitioner who endeavoured to take his knowledge to the masses and would work both in prevention and cure. The society/community, in turn, looked after the medical practitioner/physician and his family. Medical care in that scenario was affordable, reasonable and accessible to all. The society had a more wholistic attitude to health.

Winds of change swept the world and with frequency of international travel, burgeoning economies, technological advances and dedicated work in the field of science – a new form of medicine was evolving --

allopathic medicine. This science was precise, based on clinical signs and symptoms, supported by laboratory investigations, and thereafter, treatable by sophisticated medicines and machines. This genre of medicine proliferated on the one hand and on the other hand society became globalized.

Globalization broke all barriers in the fields of business and travel and soon the world was one, big, motley, inhomogeneous, global village.

Back-tracking to *Hind Swaraj* as Gandhiji professed it. He promoted Indian home-rule because of the same principles enunciated above; the 'common good' being the theme of all action in any field. Likewise, his opposition to machinery, chemicals, expensive means to mediocre ends, all stemmed from the fact that they were all for profit and not for the general usefulness of the community. India being a country that had a large population - one of the largest in the world - and a significant section of the population being illiterate, made it mandatory to help save them from economic exploitation.

Globalization has made material goods available all over the world and the main objective of making anything universally available is to magnify the profits by reaching more people. This principle was then applied to every field of endeavour – food, clothing, machines, cars,

electronic goods etc. In medicine too – this principle is employed.

It was quoted by Fritjof Capra in the Turning Point that the world's greatest maladies have arisen largely from the petrochemicals and pharmaceutical industries. Whilst both these industries have revolutionized lives of Mankind all over the world they have also eaten into the fabric of our being. From global-warming, wars, death, destruction and ecological damage to widespread suffering from exotic and chronic diseases, all have been linked veritably to these two industries.

Based on these observations, if the concepts of *Hind Swaraj* were to be extrapolated to fit the modern medical scenario, one would have to restructure the entire medical system in our country. From the laying of undue emphasis on the study of allopathic medicine along with the extreme sophistication of machines and medications to the building of huge hospitals at great national expense to treat exotic and degenerative disease, everything would have to be re-evaluated.

The medicine our country needs is a mix of both modern and traditional. Our medical practitioners need education in the *concepts* of *Ayurveda*, Homeopathy, Nature Cure and other sciences as much as they have to know allopathic medicine. As much emphasis should be placed on *prevention of disease* as is placed on *cure*. Medical care should be available to every constituent of

the community at a reasonable price and not just to the privileged few who can afford the exorbitant costs.

Hind Swaraj, vis-à-vis medicine in India, means taking the science to the masses and benefiting one and all.

Current medicine is concentrated in the cities with rural areas totally bereft of basic care. Whilst in rural areas people are dying of starvation and malnutrition the rich in the cities spend lakhs in treating diseases of overnutrition. This is because there is no control and hence there is a free-for-all exploitation of the people by the medical industry. A large, illiterate population with limited money to spend, and few who have grown richer in monetary wealth, characterize the Indian population and hence it becomes a fertile ground to promote any business, from the sale of junk food to the promotion of the use of sophisticated and largely toxic and expensive drugs to treat even more exotic diseases.

Home-rule would mitigate this trend and would have a more holistic approach to medicine. A more organized and ‘from- each-according-to-their-ability-to-each- according-to-their-need’ kind of approach would take the place of the current ill-balanced medical care distribution. The arrangement of the medical care in the form of a holistically-driven, prevention-based, primary care center followed by a secondary care center for more

sophisticated therapy, finally leading to the tertiary care centre for the delivery of state-of-the-art medicine

This step-ladder-system of delivering medical care would help everyone receive basic care and at an affordable cost. There would be a co-operation between the various health sciences in order to give the patient the best possible care. Those needing more advanced therapy would avail of the same in the secondary and tertiary centers. In this way the medical care system would not be over-burdened and neither would the patient be denied treatment appropriate to the disease.

Medical education need not then be structured according to an international pattern. It could be effectively layered such that medical doctors could be trained for the different levels of medical care. This layered system would ensure that each one had access to basic medical care which was inexpensive and approachable and when it exceeded the ability of that level of medical care then the patient could be referred to a higher center for more expert care. This would shift the focus from disease- centric medical practice to patient-centric medical practice and most of the country's health problems would be dealt with efficiently and with a minimal expenditure.

Furthermore, if the focus and emphasis is on prevention, then diseases due to poor hygiene, malnutrition, illiteracy, ignorance, apathy, overcrowding

and abuse of substances like alcohol and tobacco could all be prevented thereby saving millions of rupees in man-hours lost in sickness-absenteeism and ill-health, and reduce needless expenditure in the use of medications for complicated diseases.

India, being a country yet trying to find it's roots and bearings can least afford to have it's population spending large chunks of their savings in health care to no useful avail. In India there is a crying need for the implementation of preventive measures for a large number of diseases in order to save people the need to spend both time and money in regaining lost health.

If the recommendations of home-rule are implemented, the medical care in our country would be structured to suit our people and not the employment of a standard western model of health-care. Western patterns are good for countries where the population is educated, pro-active, discerning and yet the payment of health care is by a 'third party'. In India the western model seems grossly irrelevant, unsuitable and horribly expensive for the large majority of health care consumers who have to pay their own medical bills. India, therefore, needs a different model of health care which caters to the needs of it's population at large.

Home rule would score in yet another area of medical care, viz. the influence of the pharmaceutical industry on the consumer through the auspices of the

physician. Diseases where new drugs are effective are being publicised and patients' fears and anxieties are exploited for monetary gains by the corporate medical world. Research is funded by the same organizations that would benefit from positive findings in the research. Primary interests and ulterior motives influence strongly the outcome of research projects which mislead the less discerning and less initiated physician resulting in the unwitting promotion of needless polypharmacy. Never before have the sale of drugs, investigations and equipments been as lucrative as it is now and has been the cause of the commercialisation of medical care.

If home rule were to prevail as envisioned by Mahatma Gandhi, but modified slightly to adapt to the needs of the current population, the health care of the nation would be 'welfare' based and would actually benefit its population and not be the cause of anguish, agony and loss for anybody.

Home rule, as related to the medical care scene could be exemplified picturesquely by Henry David Thoreau's oft-repeated exhortation – Simplify, simplify, simplify!

A simplification of our existing system with the view of benefiting the large majority and being focused on 'welfare' rather than 'profit' would usher in an utopian era in medical care in India. This truly, would be the

realization of Mahatma Gandhi's dream concept of *Hind Swaraj*.

6

Violence, Civilisation, Language, Sin; In what Order Would You Put Them?

Louis Campana

Introduction

During my first visit to India, I noticed in the home of one of the Gandhian activists two satirical drawings which illustrate everything about the adventure of modern India.

The first pictured Gandhi, holding a paper with the word “Independence” written on it and kicking (in a non-violent way) the backside of a man in a top hat, showing colonialism the way out.

The second picture represented ultra-liberalism, in the form of a sales rep, holding a paper with the words “market forces” written on it and kicking a loincloth-clad disciple of Gandhi, showing a new colonialism the way back in to India.

These two caricatures on the wall of one of the Gandhians in Bombay expressed their hopelessness and a certain irony in the face of impending catastrophe. They

were not short of humour, very black humour, and they had that desperate zeal which grips people who know that their ideas are close to extinction, people to whom no one wants to listen any more.

Already at that time, in 1999, I was aware of disenchantment. That brief stop at the “Gandhi Book Center” in Bombay felt like late evening in any bar or café back home: a handful of people trying to build a new world out of impossible dreams.

That was ten years ago.

Today, the disaster that was looming then has arrived, and not only in India.

Do we need to draw up an inventory? We can and, in no particular order, here it is:

Inventory

Climate change,
Late monsoon,
Enormous temperature variations,
Ever more destructive cyclones.

“Nonsense,” some of the scientists say, “all that is due to the planet’s usual cycles of change.”

“Our infallible knowledge gives us the means to solve these problems. We just have to take the necessary measures,” say others.

“It’s no big deal; we’ll just apply economic directives, increase taxes, work harder and get rich, trust

in the survival of the fittest!" recite our cleverest modern magicians.

But let us go on with the inventory:
A billion people suffering from malnutrition,
Four billion living in poverty,
An emir buys an Airbus 800 with an onboard swimming pool,
Coca Cola, Nestle, Danone monopolise fresh water supplies.

"You can't make an omelette without breaking eggs; to make the world viable for all, to create work for all and ensure consumer goods for all, sacrifices must be made."

"Leave the resources to those who know how to manage them; never mind the others who are incapable of exploiting the little they have."

"Only private enterprise can put a stop to poverty and make vital resources available to everyone, everyone who can pay for them."

An eco-friendly billionaire buys glaciers and virgin forests in the Andes,

In Peru, indigenous people are driven off the land to make way for tourism and oil prospecting,
25000 landless farmers march on Delhi,
NGOs take up the defence of poor minorities.
Two Guarani villages are burnt down in Brazil,

China “buys” 1 million hectares of land in the Congo,

India “finds” 14 million hectares for growing biofuels,

160 houses in Paraguay burnt down by paramilitaries.

Do we need to go on with this list?

Today, our grandfathers’ style of colony is finished, outlawed, condemned.

The new colonialism is here.

Pressured by the *World Bank* and the IMF, protected by their political base in the G20, Western multinationals are taking possession of all the planet’s resources and, in doing so, are making poor people worldwide destitute and depriving them of their precarious autonomy, which was nevertheless real and precious. These companies are organising a dependent world under their control.

The poorest people have no means of claiming the slightest power over their own lives.

Crowded into slums or favelas, forced to live by their wits and so vulnerable to organized crime and the ruinous escapism of drugs and prostitution, these people are condemned to violence, revolt or massacre. Some try to live in the forests, or stay in their villages waiting to die, trying to survive against the odds, but without hope.

The little cartoon sales rep with his little briefcase, his carnivorous smile and his international business English is colonising the whole world on behalf of private companies, who make free with natural reserves and establish themselves everywhere unhampered by ethical considerations. All that counts is to capture new markets, even if it means the implosion of humanity into predictable resource wars.

Deprivation of Thought

A primary form of colonisation, unnoticed, insidious, progressive, is the imposition of a language.

International business and technical English is evolving into a series of basic sign-words reflecting a lifestyle where there is no space to express alternative ways of thinking. We end up chasing some single illusory norm, dehumanised, robotic; everything that does not conform to it is scorned, discarded and suppressed.

Communicating is becoming limited to an acceptance of this logic. Beyond this, any other ideas meet with incomprehension; indeed, they are incomprehensible. The training given to our social elites is so much standardised that, for example, when we try to talk to young embassy officials about the concept of a non-violent economy, we feel as if we have arrived from a different planet. "How can the global economy be violent, since it has proved to be the only economic system so far which allows western civilisation to thrive?" There is no

way to cast any doubt on that reality! And emerging nations, who are all taking the same route, accepting the same blueprint, will find themselves suffering the same disappointments in years to come.

A uniform language structure makes for uniform thinking; this is the point we have reached. I have had the opportunity, via translation, to experience the complexity of an ancient language like Sinhala. The structure of this language was a revelation to me. There is apparently no specific answer to a question; the response given depends on a state of affairs: the person receiving the response, his own story and his family history. This makes the language the antithesis of international business and technical English, where only immediate results and immediate gains have any authority, nothing more elaborate.

In its Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the UN recognises the use of a native language as one of the indispensable conditions of a people's survival. Colonisers understand this well; their aim is to change the way that colonised populations live by imposing a new language, then a government, then taxes and all the rest.

In Concrete Terms

We are looking at a new and subtle form of colonisation with far-reaching effects, hitting colonised peoples even in their justified search for autonomy. A

particular example is the tendency among deprived populations in slums and favelas to turn to activities involving salvage and reclamation of waste.

Spontaneously, neo-urban communities have sprung up around a new form of autonomy and solidarity: they retrieve the refuse from towns and develop economic activities based on its transformation. Should we really be encouraging the expansion of these activities? Are there not alternative solutions which could emancipate these ambiguous communities, who find themselves, by necessity, in an alliance with the consumer society? In Europe, for example, we have the Emmaus communities! But I have seen the same thing in Burkina or in Bombay.

I have also noticed that these new forms of autonomy and solidarity tend to be of religious inspiration and are associated with mystical approaches to coping with suffering, destitution and hunger. These are analgesic measures: they calm the anguish of poverty and they transcend it, but they do not tackle the underlying injustice. It is difficult to know what attitude to adopt, without destroying all the hope undeniably engendered among indigenous peoples and those living in the slums and favelas.

I consider these questions to be fundamental.

It is facile to invoke development to justify this latest economic war, which is being fought right down to

the last vital resources of people trapped in poverty, but who, nevertheless, constantly find the energy to ensure tomorrow's bread.

At this point, I should like to quote what Adolfo Peres Esquivel said about development. He was talking with indigenous people in South America and asking them how they understood the term.

They gave him an object lesson.

"The word development does not exist in our language".

So he asked, "What word can we use to understand each other?"

"We have the word 'Balance'. We live in balance with the universe, with the environment, with our mother Earth, in balance with others, with our own selves, with God. And this balance is Life."

"And when the balance is upset, that is when violence begins, along with all its consequences."

Is our Western civilisation balanced?

Is it not systematically violent - Structural violence, violence of domination and of profit? Is it not this that all our religious traditions call 'sin'?

Decolonisation

A few days ago, I was at the Carcassonne job centre recruiting people to work for Gandhi International.

Shocked by the importance accorded exclusively to the market value of the jobs on offer, I consider the encounter as a clear indication of the intellectual colonisation perpetrated by this market-orientated culture.

The man and the woman to whom I spoke had no conception that another view of life, of economics, of relationships between people at work was possible. The only sense in my employing people was so that they could be directed, after a temporary job with me, towards the commercial sector.

I see another sure sign of intellectual colonisation when people tell me that capitalism can be transformed. The system is based on profit and that cannot be changed. I will not say that capitalism is immoral. That would be simplistic and incorrect. Capitalism is absolutely amoral. Morality is not its alpha and its omega.

When someone's head is filled with the drive to win, to be efficient, to snatch markets from others and make profit by any means, his outlook is blinkered and conditioned. There is no place in his thinking for another approach to life, for another interpretation of relationships with family, neighbours, colleagues, or even with God, whom he can only envisage in the same terms.

This being the case, shaking off this intellectual colonisation is a colossal task, and essentially a spiritual

labour, beginning with an enlightenment event, a divine gift which transcends the individual.

Hind Swaraj: The Birth of A New Model of Development

Antonino Drago

1. Gandhi's Criticism of Western Civilisation in Hind Swaraj

While in South Africa, Gandhi's personal experiments with Truth were confirmed by the people's enthusiasm in following him in even the most fearless experiments with the Truth; and also by the great influence his teaching of non-violence exerted upon his Western partners.

Only after the corroboration given by the social and political struggle in South Africa, Gandhi had the courage to address a radical criticism of Western civilisation as a whole. He did it in a short span of time, i.e. the time of his return voyage (1909) from London, the most representative centre of country of Western civilisation at that time, to Cape Town in South Africa.

Ironically, in his time it was Western civilisation that claimed to have an ethical obligation to teach to primitive peoples to abandon the old, primitive

civilisations and move onto the magnificent, new civilisation, which, according to Western culture, was the only one possible both historically and ethically, because it was enlightened by the highest rationality possible, i.e. the rationality producing the modern State, modern science and innumerable machines.

It was a little Indian man, although educated in Western law, who dared to assault Western civilisation as a whole; to belittle the importance of those mythical advances that in the eyes of the Western colonialists surpassed all other advances in any other period of history. Through *Hind Swaraj* Gandhi attacked the roots of the most authoritative civilisation of all times. Even more unbelievably this Indian lawyer supported arguments for negatively judging the whole of modernity from a point of view supported by an ethics which to Western people seemed a purely backward one. Gandhi illustrated the idea that Western civilisation is evil in so far as “it takes note neither of morality nor of religion...”¹.

In *Hind Swaraj* Gandhi applied his ethics to a crucial political case, i.e. the liberation of India from the British Empire. At the same time he applied it to the renewal of traditional Indian civilisation, on one hand, by purging it of its slag and, on the other, by developing its traditional basic features in a universal manner.

We observe that in *Hind Swaraj* he often depicted his political disagreement with Western civilisation as

simply opposition to evil.² It seems that Gandhi dared to challenge the whole of history as well as the prestigious intellectual world of Western civilisation, by radicalising his ethical viewpoint so as to set up a clear-cut ideological divide. Of course his attitude left his critics little space for understanding the new dimensions of his ethics as applied to important social problems. Most of Gandhi's followers also disliked this sharp opposition to Western civilisation. We also recognise this divide to be inappropriate to the culture of the non-violence. In this sense, one is justified in thinking that *Hind Swaraj* is the least non-violent writing of Gandhi. Moreover, after national independence had been won, India's government promoted a different development from the one Gandhi had imagined. At this time, and later also, his programme seemed merely utopian.

Was *Hind Swaraj* an utopia, or was it a prophecy that was too far ahead of his time?

2. Rolland's Vision of the Tide of the Spirit in Mankind's History

To find the right answer one has first of all to recall what the historian Romain Rolland, the first European biographer of Gandhi, wrote in 1924. Lanza del Vasto (LdV)³ recalls it in these terms: "I saw, as Romain Rolland puts it in the preface to *Jeune Inde* on Gandhi 's life, this tide which is rising from the depth of the East, which will not fall back until it has covered the entire World".⁴

In fact, the revolutionary nature of Gandhi's innovations in politics has been proved by great unprecedented events, which in 1959 LdV summarized as follows:

... the three miracles which constitute the essence of his life:

A liberation without spilling blood.

A social revolution without revolt.

The end [at least for a short time] of a war [between Hindus and Muslims].⁵

Moreover, one has to add that in the last century the influence of his non-violent teaching on the peoples of the World was so great that numerous peoples carried through non-violent revolutions, even against the most oppressive dictatorships. For instance, before 1989 none of the governments in the World hoped that the East-West confrontation could be ended without a nuclear war in Europe and also in the World; yet in 1989 a series of marvellous non-violent revolutions, carried out by the peoples of Eastern Europe, avoided this nuclear catastrophe; in addition, they succeeded in putting an end to the subjection, established in 1945 at Yalta, of the peoples of the World.

More in general, a recent statistical analysis of the 323 revolutions that occurred between 1900 and 2006 throughout the World shows that 53% of the non-violent revolutions - around a hundred - were successful, whereas no more than the 26% of the violent revolutions

were successful.⁶ This proves that most peoples of the World have received Gandhi's message, because, when they had to face the military powers equipped with the most destructive weapons, they chose non-violent means rather than violent. No more authoritative historical demonstration of the political power of Gandhi's non-violence could be offered. Surely, Gandhi caused almost unbelievable changes in the political history of mankind. We have to conclude that in present time the tide raised by Gandhi around one century ago has already covered the entire World.

These facts lead us to the discussion of whether and how *Hind Swaraj* was essentially a prophecy.

3. The Three Basic Motivations of the Non-violent Teachers

Of course, Gandhi was not the only teacher of non-violence. For instance, Tolstoy preceded him and moreover inspired him. But Gandhi not only developed a much more accurate notion of non-violence than the suggestions that Tolstoy derived from Orthodox Christianity; but he applied it to the everyday life of the people by means of mass actions aimed at solving the main political problems of his time.

Gandhi then was succeeded by several non-violent teachers throughout World. They all taught the same novelty, but with different motivations. I suggest a moment of reflection, through the following Table,⁷ which support my opinion: Gandhi's tide of the Spirit includes

three historical reforms, variously shared by the motivations of most teachers of non-violence; a religious reform (first column), a reform of ethics (second column) and a political reform (last two columns).

Table 1: The Ideological development of Non- violence through the Motivations of the Major Teachers in Modern times

Reform of religious traditions	Reform of ethics	Change of the kind of civilisation	New Model of development
<u>L. Tolstoy</u> (Orthodox) <u>M.K. Gandhi</u> (Hinduism) <u>A. Capitini</u> (reform of religion) <u>Lanza del Vasto</u> (Catholic) G. La Pira (Catholic) <u>M.L. King</u> (Baptist) <u>Tich Nat Hahn</u> (Buddhist) J. Galtung (Cosmology) Bishop A. Bello (Catholic) Dalai Lama (Buddhist)	M.K. Gandhi (Capitini) D. Dolci Lanza del Vasto Vinoba D. Milani J.M. Muller	Gandhi (Capitini) Lanza del Vasto J. M. Muller	(Gandhi) Lanza del Vasto Galtung

Legenda: Pointwise underlined: the first teacher in his religion or confession. In round brackets (): incomplete reform.

My invitation is to explore whether and in what way Gandhi promoted the above three reforms and then how they are continued by his followers.

4. Gandhi's Reform of his Religious Tradition

Gandhi received a religious education in Hindu religion and always remained faithful to it⁸. The attention to a personal religious development is precisely the opposite of what in last century motivated the majority of Western people, i.e. the attention to develop themselves in their own interest.

On the matter of faith, he was free from any institutional discipline. He was free because first of all, at that time, there was no Indian State, which, as all Western States, would certainly have signed an agreement with the national religion, in order to have a mutual exchange of benefits; such a State would have offered religion both protection and organisation, but at the same time it would have tied the believer to certain civic behaviours and principles.⁹ Moreover, as a Hindu, Gandhi did not have spiritual authorities outside the gurus he eventually chose. Hence, in Gandhi there existed no obedience to an outside spiritual authority, upon which to support his own faith, but only to his own free will¹⁰. His total religious freedom allowed him to characterise his life as a full witness to his search for

Truth ("My life is my message"¹¹) with the aim of self-realisation along a path of self-purification, which puts Gandhi in direct relation to God and God alone. Hence, no limits to his search of self-realisation.

When he was a young student in London, the most representative centre of Western civilisation in his time, he was deeply impressed by the high degree of this civilisation; so that he experienced some wavering in his religious life and faith (for instance, his choice of vegetarianism). In the end, he perceived that the main problem of a religious life in his times was *to respond to the modern world of Western civilisation*. All religions, even in the Western countries, made reference to a traditional life in promoting the development of the individual man or at most small communities, whereas modern social life has produced a highly complex society through seemingly unlimited progress. It was Western reason that had achieved such monumental progress in social life, whereas religious faiths appeared backward in their incessantly reiteration of traditional rituals. Although some Western religions, by either anticipating or imitating the way Western civilisation has developed, have also built their great institutions of a formal kind (hierarchical churches, authoritarian roles, canon law, etc.), the extraordinary, innumerable social institutions offered by modern reason to people showed that reason had surpassed Western religions, which to the people of his time appeared to be slowly decaying. It was not only Gandhi who had to react through his personal faith, but

also religions in general, given that they were in danger of disappearing.

Instead of reacting in a backward way by either ignoring modernity or accommodating his spirituality merely to enable it to survive, he accepted part of this modernity. Gandhi wanted to be a lawyer; he assimilated into the depth of his soul Western law, which may be considered a fully rational conception of social relationships. Subsequently, as a lawyer, he applied British law to fighting the injustices suffered by Indian people in South Africa. He thus verified that Western rational law may be joined to traditional Hindu religiosity¹².

As a result, he planned to re-think his entire religious tradition from its foundations, in such a way as *to lead his religious life according to reason*: "I reject any religious doctrine that does not appeal to reason or is in conflict with morality"¹³. But in this work he followed not Western rationality as an abstract truth formalised in several autonomous systems; rather, he followed reason which is an instrument for conducting his own life in the best way possible under God's light¹⁴; that is in agreement with the way his "*silent little voice*" suggested he should discipline his personal conduct. In Western terms, he followed his conscience enlightened by reason. This personal work was addressed to the Truth, rather than to an eternal image of God. Therefore he discovered that rather than saying, in accordance with a teaching

common to all religions, “God is Truth”, he had to say “The [search for the] Truth is God”.¹⁵

He confirmed his religious views by an assiduous reading of ancient Holy texts; so assiduous that he interpreted a Hindu Sacred Text in a new way¹⁶. He tried also to circumscribe the essence of the Hindu religion. In a celebrated speech he claimed that he had been successful; for him this essence is represented by the following mantra: “All we see in this Universe is pervaded by God. Renounce it and enjoy it. Do not long for wealth or others’ goods”.¹⁷ The first part may be summarised as: “God is in the organization of the entire reality” (notice, this does not mean “God is the reality”; not pantheism); the second part as: “Detach (convert) yourself from a false development of accumulating goods and rather develop your life according to the aim of self-purification.”; this constitutes also the basic teaching of the *Bagavad Gita*, the sacred text most loved by Gandhi. These guide-lines are summarised in a typical teaching of Hinduism, i.e. the two chords of the heart, *unity and infinity*¹⁸; unity, because to a spiritual man the organisation of the reality appears as a unity, expressed first of all by God; and infinity, because the little voice, inhabiting the deepest part of the heart, directs a man to the maximum heights.

Moreover, from an early age, and above all when he was living in London, he learnt, in the name of the unity, to overcome all the *a priori* divisions among

different races, different sexes, and different religions. His life constituted an enlightening example of agreement with the believers of whatsoever religion (and with atheists too). He discovered that *the breath of a religion may be of a universal nature*. He saw that this aim of universality had still not been achieved by any one known religion¹⁹. He planned to improve the inclusive nature of Hinduism to achieve this target. In fact, he called his religion that "which transcends Hinduism, which changes one's very nature, binds one indissolubly to the truth within and ever purifies."

In conclusion, *he promoted a religious reform according to two guide-lines, i.e. unity and infinity, and in accordance with the aim of the universality.*

This Gandhi's religious reform was not, as in the past, a discovery or an invention of a new religion; nor it was a separation from past tradition in order to found a new religion; it was rather a re-shaping of the religious tradition giving a primary role to what was secondary in the traditional religious system. It was conservative in nature, although suggesting something entirely new in the history of mankind²⁰; in other words, it was a reform that reconciled revolution with continuity²¹.

5. Gandhi's Reform of Ethics

In Western civilisation *a list of precepts was drawn directly from God's will* (Decalogue) or in more modest terms from a supposed universal 'natural law'; i.e. the

laws of behaviour have all been organised into deductive systems detailing even single acts.

Traditional Hindu ethics, and also Gandhi's, was quite different. Being free of institutional participation, Gandhi attributed the greatest importance to interpersonal relationships. He was persuaded that religion plays a positive role for a person to the extent that it leads him to behave positively towards others. Hence, *a religion is mainly an ethical system* aimed at universal brotherhood. He thus reversed the traditional relationship (existing mainly in Western countries) between religion and ethics; i.e. he supported a religion instructed by ethics, rather than ethics drawn from a religion²².

From traditional *Hindu* ethics Gandhi retained only those duties that were suggested by his little voice informed by the reason. In particular, he retained what his mother and the Hindu tradition suggested to him, i.e. an infinite respect for life. Then Gandhi elaborated the old teaching of *ahimsa* so as to promote it to the basic principle of his ethics.

In the history of ethics inspired by non-violence, Gandhi's qualification of the notion of non-violence constituted a decisive advance with respect to Tolstoy's ethical principle "Do not resist evil" (actually a Gospel's teaching, Mt 5, 39), which suggests a merely passive attitude (since the three previous words, 'not', 'resist',

‘evil’, taken together, are equivalent to a simply negative word, e.g. “resistance”); rather, Gandhi understood the word “non-violence” as suggesting that a reaction to evil may be good and fruitful, provided that one pays attention to the mode of the reaction.

Actually, at present we know that the very expression ‘non-violence’ suggested Gandhi’s attitude, because the word “non-violence” is a double negation (notice that the word “violence” is also a negative word²³). Since this word lacks an equivalent positive word,²⁴ it does not mean an object, or an order, or an authoritative law, or an abstract idea; rather, it is a research principle for discovering how to solve a conflict by avoiding violence against an opponent; or, more in general, how to conduct conflicts in the best (spiritual) way. It cannot be assumed as an absolute principle, but only as a suggestion for avoiding absurdities – or, in ethical terms, evils. Hence, *non-violence is not an a priori principle from which all ethical laws are drawn hierarchically* so as to obtain precepts concerning single acts; rather, it introduces *a persistent search for the solution of problems*, in particular, for reconciling adversaries in any conflict.

Gandhi’s genius was to shape an entire ethical system through a lot of “experiments with the Truth”, i.e. as *a continuous search for solving problems* in the light of a methodological principle, i.e. non-violence. The scrupulous attention to the violent consequences of his

actions led him to overcome the characteristic bound of the ethics in all traditional civilisations, i.e. to be short-range. By questioning all his own acts in terms of their constructive and destructive consequences even in distant space and time and by assessing all events occurring in modern society on the basis of the violence resulting on all men, Gandhi enlarged his awareness on the social implications of his behaviour. This capacity of Gandhi to link the most intimate inspiration of his soul to the major problems of mankind was the most notable characteristic feature of Gandhi's life. Owing to this attitude, Indian people rightly qualified him as a true *Mahatma* (great soul). In general terms, we can say that he focussed his attention on the spiritual invariants, i.e. the invariants of his own life (the self), the invariants of all the relationships among all people (brotherhood) and the invariants even between two (institutional too) adversaries (respect for life).²⁵ As a result, he achieved a complete re-founding of the traditional ethics of Hinduism.

This searching attitude, supported by an operative method for overcoming the differences in the experiences and viewpoints of others, led his ethics to an extremely important goal; rather than the Western goal of identifying himself with God through obedience to a hierarchical system of obligations (sanctity), the goal to accumulate so many ethical experiences *as to be universal* in the three following respects, i.e. *all men, all*

different religions and all social structures in society, including the intellectual ones.

Let us analyse the first kind of universality (all men). When Gandhi studied law in London, he learnt from Western civilisation that it is possible to conceive social laws so that they apply to all men irrespectively of their faith, their sex, their social rank, their race, their nation, or their political belief. Hence, he was motivated to conceive ethical obligations as *universal for all the men and universal towards all men*, in the same way as legal obligations.

Gandhi's heroism was to apply them to changing the violent customs of ancient India, although they were structured in an apparently unreformable way; not only widow sacrifice, but also the strict separation of people into subordinate castes into which human beings re-incarnate: "God did not create men with the badge of superiority or inferiority; no scripture which labels a human being an inferior or untouchable because of his or her birth can command our allegiance. It would be a denial of God and Truth which is God".²⁶ It is very meaningful that he called *Harijan* (God's sons) the *pariahs* and for a long time it was the name he gave his newspaper.

Gandhi discovered also the *universal validity* of the old notion of non-violence *potentially for all religions*, so that he conceived all great religions as being almost

unified by a common social practice of teaching mankind the best way of dealing with both interpersonal conflicts and the great social problems of mankind²⁷. He received confirmation for this universality also from the religion of the West through Tolstoy's religious attitude addressed to solving social problems²⁸.

On the other hand, he learnt, mainly in London, that to manifest his own religion to others does not at all mean to discuss the different tenets of the different religions with believers of various faiths, nor to fight the religions of others. He rather invited a believer in a different religion to share the same breath of universality he attributed to Hinduism.

His personal example was so convincing that in the Indian struggle for independence the Mohammedans not only wanted to collaborate with Hindus but also to refrain from enmity towards English Christians. His was the best teaching for overcoming the long tradition of religious wars, so atrocious in Western countries. Indeed, to have suggested and practised the guide-lines for achieving the universal nature of all religions, and hence to have anticipated the modern *inter-religious movement*, constitutes a glorious merit of Gandhi.

Thus, he was the first to create an ethics of a universal nature, also in the particular sense that his ethics concerns interpersonal relationships within *the whole of society*.

6. Gandhi's Reform of Politics

Owing to the social universality of his new ethical viewpoint, Gandhi was persuaded that it had to renew all social institutions, even those presented by Western civilisation as a part of inevitable progress; first of all the Western political tradition, which may be characterised as follows:

1) *Separation of political life from ethics*: Ethical dictates are considered by Western political people to be separate from the political life, which requires that the citizen conform his behaviour to the political institutions regardless his inner life. Machiavelli taught that the political leader has to deal with men by considering them “beasts”, given that they are essentially inclined to the selfishness,²⁹ and Hume stated that “All men are wolves towards other men”. In this Western context, even the historical experience, over one century and half, of the Catholic Parties (called Christian Democracy) in both Europe and South America did not escape *the Machiavellian tradition*; only a small number of isolated men did not practice high level politics in a Machiavellian way: Erasmus of Rotterdam, Thomas More, Giorgio La Pira, et al.

2) *The progressive organisation of social life through institutions*: Western history represents a colossal effort

to organise human life through an *ever greater number of gigantic social institutions, each imposing specific normative behaviours*. Such was the resulting complexity of social life, that further institutions were necessary in order to manage it. The grandiose result was a gigantic world in which the individual behaves like a mere cog in an immense machine. No alternative was planned to this grandiose organisation, also because Western people believed in the superiority of their way of life over all others. Even the alternative political movement that arose in Western society, i.e. the Workers' movement, has accepted this kind of growth. Since Marx and Engels broke with the anarchist Bakunin in the First Socialist International, the Workers' movement has built its specific social institutions (trade unions, parliamentary parties, etc.), so as both to allow the leadership within the organisation of the movement to be taken not by the workers, but by professional intellectuals, and to justify that, after the victorious revolutions, the entire population was ruled through a totalitarian society.

3) *An infinite growth in social power*: The West believed it a great historical mission to fulfil and that the only obstacle was the backwardness of primitive peoples. This attitude was supported by a long juridical progression in history, originating in the Roman Empire and then in modern times developing through an increasing development of the State. This progression was also supported by an entire philosophical trend; Hegel saw in European civilisation dominating the World

the infinite growth of the Absolute Spirit, occurring even at the cost of eliminating the decadent peoples. Even the Workers' movement, although originating in powerless people, was directed, *via* Marx, by Hegel's historical perspective. It also believed that infinite Western progress was a historical necessity³⁰. In particular, the Workers' movement mocked the worker Ludd who invited his comrades to fight against the machines introduced into the factories by the owners. Moreover, when the politics of Worker's movement led to successful political revolutions, the result was the creation of very dictatorships which mystified the people by appeals to the interests of the proletarian class.

4) *Scientific development as the highest institution*: Only Western civilisation developed modern *science*, whose results have been more magnificent than even those imagined by the ancient magicians. In a few centuries, the resulting technological advances in human welfare (for example, freedom from labour, from suffering, from disease, in general from all natural limits) transformed the life of people throughout the World. No alternative was considered possible. Most Western people considered *scientific research and its technological applications to be the highest values of their civilisation, "sacred" enterprises*³¹. The Workers' movement too held that it was not possible to change this kind of science. At the beginning of last Century the leadership of the Second Workers International severed science into two distinct parts; in the social sciences it

considered Marxism an effective alternative to the bourgeois scientific viewpoint, while it considered the natural sciences to be independent of social relationships, which therefore have to be considered the same for all social classes, objective in nature. As a historical result, within Western civilisation Science and Technology have not been contested by any social movement³², but only by backward religions.

According to Gandhi's ethics, on the other hand, politics had to conform to both religious spirituality and ethics, according to the three following points, which were revolutionary in nature with respect to the Western political tradition illustrated above:

1) *The joining together of political life and ethics*: First of all, for Gandhi it was not true that politics is a "No ethics land". He believed that, while politics can liberate primitive instincts in a man, it is also true that all men are always perfectible; hence the central issue of all political questions is constituted by the involved men, that can be enlightened by the best possible ethical practices; ethical issues may be effective not only in small groups, but also in the wide society provided that a man performing them maintains them irrespectively of the sacrifices they require. By pitting the soul's force against the body's force, Gandhi *extended ethics to include the whole of politics*. No greater surprise for Western politicians was possible than seeing someone achieving his political aims through personal witness, i.e. without compromises and

mediations, even though his adversaries were incomparably more powerful than he was.

2) *Grass roots movements for Indian self-rule:* Although Gandhi looked for and obtained support from the Congress Party, he always acted to promote a grass roots movement; moreover he, as the leader of this movement, always appealed to people's motivations and he made himself the servant of the common will of the people³³. He understood politics as political action from below only and never imposed authoritarian rules on others; when the political circumstances made this grassroots attitude impossible (e.g. in the late '30s), he accepted being isolated in his continuing to bear witness to the political aims he supported. Moreover, Gandhi's political aim was to achieve Home Rule, i.e. the end of the British Empire in India; however, his idea of an Indian government was such that he added the *Swaraj*, i.e. *the method of self-reliant organisations*. In fact, his entire political life was faithful to these principles.

3) *Alternative Social Development:* According to (Tolstoy and) Gandhi, Western progress is a false development, if for no other reason than that it promotes first of all the arms race, which develops the potentialities of destructive weapons; instead the aim of non-violence is *to develop the potentialities of human relationships*, with oneself and with others. Hence, he promoted the village development on a communitarian basis, the *Nai Talim* in education, the crafts instead of machine work,

parallel trade, the capability of mobilizing the population, etc. .

About the above fourth issue of Western politics, i.e. the social institution of Science, Gandhi was distrustful, but he was unable to achieve a well-founded viewpoint for analysing his social role.

7. The Reform of Religious Tradition in the West

His reforms have been scarcely noticed because they were brought about in a peripheral country of the World by a simple layman, acting from the bottom of the pyramid of social power. Even less, at a first glance, is a historical continuation of Gandhi's three reforms in Western countries apparent. Let us investigate in more closely.

After Gandhi, a Western person choosing non-violence as his own basic rule, had to conform his behaviour to several practices of non-violence (e.g. vegetarianism, respect for all lives, empathy with all other human beings, rejection of violent behaviour in society, refusal to serve in the Army, etc.) which were quite unprecedented for Western people. His choice also implied a conception of a benevolent God in contrast with the severe, judging God of the authoritarian Western Churches. These several implications obliged a Western non-violent man to devote his life to testifying his own persuasion almost like a monk; most people considered him to belong to a new religion with respect to his

traditional religion, whose authorities ignored or even opposed his “eastern” innovations. No surprise if very few exceptional personalities were capable of a similar dedication³⁴.

In fact, already before Gandhi, Tolstoy chose a non-violent attitude; to which he was so devoted that he suggested a reform of his own religion, Orthodox Christianity.³⁵ Unfortunately, this reform remained limited to a small group of followers scattered around the World. Instead Gandhi’s experience of religious reform achieved considerable attention throughout the World.

We saw in Table 1 that a similar programme of reform in accordance with the principle of non-violence, was implicitly developed by most Western teachers of non-violence (except for some atheist teachers; e.g. Danilo Dolci, who was the first leader of mass non-violent demonstrations in Europe). Within the Baptist Church of the USA, Rev. M.L. King Jr. suggested a partial reform of Christian ethics, i.e. non-violence meaning Christian love.³⁶ Similar partial reforms have been proposed by two Italian priests, Don Milani and Mons. Bello.³⁷ Today the Dalai Lama is bringing about a radical renewal of Buddhism, by inviting Buddhists to join in his own personal *nirvana* with non-violent social revolution.

Remarkably, by following Gandhi, the first European non-violent activist, the Italian Capitini,³⁸ dedicated himself to achieving what he called a “reform

of religion” (“*riforma di religione*”) in order to achieve a new universal religion, founded on the notion of non-violence.³⁹ His effort was, in my opinion, only partially successful.⁴⁰ However, Gandhi’s Western disciple, LdV, was the most successful in effecting this programme of reform of his religious tradition.

He achieved a radical reform of the way the Christian Catholic religion is lived, by means of both a total devotion of his life to the cause of non-violence⁴¹ and an unprecedented intellectual effort to provide a theoretical basis for the notion of non-violence, which Gandhi, on the other hand, had received as a basic notion from an ancient religious tradition.

By following Gandhi’s universal attitude with respect to all religions, LdV appealed to the sacred Texts of all the great religions⁴²; in the light of them, he revisited those of the West. He was able to suggest new interpretations of three of their texts; a sacred Jewish Text (Original sin; i.e. the coming into being of the inclination to evil in each person) and two Christian Texts (Apocalypse 13, i.e. the evil organising a society as a totalitarian power structure; and the Sermon on the Mount, i.e. the conversion-liberation from both personal and social evils).

These three sacred texts were considered by LdV to be universal in nature. In fact, the first Text is shared by three great religions (Judaism, Christianity and Islam, all

sharing the story of the Bible before Abraham, who is their common father). In general terms, we can say that original sin is the evil of organising one's life in one's own interest, going beyond any (ethical) constraint. The teaching of this text is basic for inviting a man to abandon his attachment to egoistic aims and to convert himself to a relationship of love with both others and with God⁴³. This teaching corresponds to the Hindu teaching of escaping from Ignorance (*Avidya*). Indeed, LdV interpreted Original Sin in the same way previously Gandhi had understood the notion of *avidya*: "God endowed man with intellect that he might know his Maker. Man abused it so that he might forget his Maker."⁴⁴ This conversion is called by LdV non-violence provided that the converted man also takes in account the social contents described by the following texts.

The second text is an instance of a teaching that at present each great religion should take up in order to prevent religious persecution (such as persecution of all religions under the USSR regime, and, in our times, the persecution suffered by Buddhists both in Tibet and Myanmar). In fact, Hinduism suggests the corresponding teaching of the *Kali Yuga*. Gandhi recalled that "According to the teaching of Mohammed this [Western civilisation] would be considered a Satanic Civilization. Hinduism calls it the Black Age."⁴⁵

Evil consists in having collectively built an entire society on misleading aims, a society that, through

unavoidable social institutions, oppresses all men within it. The teaching of the second text is to convert oneself from the basic motivation supporting evil in society.

The third sacred text suggests, when intended in universal terms, that believers in a religion go out or even fight all negative structures, including the social ones (i.e., the economic structures that maintain inequality, the structures of oppression, the structures of war, etc.). In fact, this text was considered by LdV, and by Gandhi too, to be a 'manifesto' of non-violence.⁴⁶

The guide-lines obtained from such sacred texts are universal with respect to all men, because each man wants to discover the better life that is achieved by converting himself and others from the influence of negative social institutions. They are universal also with respect to all the great religions to the extent that a believer in whatsoever religion can focus his religious attitude in the light similar teachings to those of the above texts.

In short, LdV achieved a religiosity relying upon new foundations, since *to a personal conversion is added the conversion from even social institutions*, with the aim of constructively establishing 'God's kingdom' in contemporary society; this new religiosity leads a man to both the work for knowledge of himself and to escape from the social evil in order to build the social good.

It is very relevant that LdV's reform of religion in the name of non-violence was the first to be accomplished (without, however, offending any basic truth of Christianity) in terms of a formal theology, i.e. the highest intellectual institution of Western religious culture; so that LdV, among Gandhi's followers, succeeded in providing a well-established theological foundation for the notion of non-violence; and among the Western teachers of non-violence, he was the only one who developed a specific *theory* of the relationship between non-violence and religion.

Maybe by following a Gandhi's hint, he suggested "*a Common Ground of all great religions*". Examination of LdV's writings allows us to consider it as constituted by the following issues:

- 1) The opposition between Good and Evil.
- 2) The everlasting conversion from evil through both work on oneself and the acceptance of "necessary suffering" for achieving the good.
- 3) Universal brotherhood (or no man excluded, or unto this last).
- 4) To the above three issues, both Gandhi and LdV added non-violence, meant not only as peaceful interpersonal relationships, but also as an answer to negative social institutions, i.e. as practiced by Gandhi with regard to social life. Actually, many religions, at their beginnings, included non-violence in their teachings; but, owing to a long history of violent conflicts, which were religious,

political and even military in nature, it is at present ignored by them. But when in the future religions convert themselves from their negative histories, they will surely not only be at peace with one another without cancelling out the respective differences in their principles, but also follow the practice of non-violence in opposition to negative social institutions. One may see the lives of both Gandhi and LdV as aimed at the promotion of just this crucial addition to their religions in order to make apparent this common ground of all great religions.

Notice that the above four points are enough to distinguish this common ground from materialism, rationalism and relativism, since they include a 'minimal' ethics. Remarkably, this ethics can answer the basic questions pertaining to the notion of non-violence: Why do people not follow good spontaneously and why does non-violence not arise in each man in all circumstances? Why is non-violence necessary? Why does evil persist in the World?⁴⁷ All these questions are answered by LdV through the above-mentioned interpretations of the sacred Texts.

On the other hand, the above four issues are not enough to constitute a complete religion. Indeed, LdV proposed non-violence not as a religion, nor as a sub-religion, nor as a super-religion⁴⁸, but as a pre-religious attitude, possibly preparing a more profound religious

attitude in whatsoever religion, i.e. the peaceful attitude in the inter-religious relationships.

By conceiving non-violence in universal terms with respect to all social institutions, LdV took into account also modern science, that social institution which has changed all social traditions through the “modernity imperative”. According to LdV, the role played by science in modern society is represented in Apocalypse 13 through the first Beast. The proved historical link between the rise of modern science and mass atheism substantiates this identification. By means of this interpretation LdV’s intellectual foundation of non-violence overcame the most authoritative of intellectual institutions of all times, the science of Western civilisation.

He thus decisively promoted a social interpretation of all Sacred Texts, to the extent that his interpretation, for the first time, adding to religious traditions a theologically well-defined view of the social phenomena, even the worst ones of modern and contemporary times. Moreover, LdV’s ability to interpret the spiritual nature of modern science through such a text suggests how all religions should respond with wisdom to the spiritual problems determined by modern science.

Let us remark that owing to the political and intellectual hierarchy of countries in the rest of World, Gandhi’s reform of Hindu tradition would have remained

a local event if LdV's reform had not echoed it within a Western religion. Furthermore, LdV's reform, since it concerned the most powerful religion in Western civilisation, was decisive in the historical prosecution of Gandhi's reform.

For these reasons I think that LdV gave the highest contribution to Gandhi's revolutionary programme for a reform of all religious traditions in the World.⁴⁹ His achievement improved Gandhi's non-violent teaching so decisively that it enlightened also the reforms of the other main aspects of Western civilisation, as we will see in the following two sections.

8. Reform of Ethics in Western Countries

To several Western teachers of non-violence it was apparent that the notion of non-violence might suggest a deeper interpretation of Christian teachings⁵⁰. Indeed, it can join together God's commandment "Thou shall not kill", belonging to the Hebrew tradition, with Christ's invitation, "Love thine enemies". But since both Hebrew and the Christian traditions were far from having applied these teachings, non-violence was actually a novelty in Christian countries; indeed, its acceptance implies the rejection of war so often conducted by Western societies— and even preparations for war. Even at the present time Western society partly accepts non-violence within interpersonal relationships, but not within social institutions, and even less in national defence.

Let us return to Table 1 and consider those Western non-violent teachers who sought religious reforms. Their common attitude may be characterized in the following way. While in the past a religion exhorted men to love above all God in order to achieve a transcendental life, non-violent teachers maintained that a religion concerns equally inner life and active participation in social life, including the struggle against the social institutions when then negatively influence spiritual life; in short, they attribute more importance to ethics than to intellectual adhesion to the tenets of religions.⁵¹ This re-orientation was not specific to a particular religion (moreover, it can even be shared by those who do not believe in God, provided that they believe in the infinite potentialities of all men; also for this reason non-violence pertains to a pre-religious world).

In this respect LdV's contribution, inspired by the philosophy of non-violence, played a decisive role. By means of the first two above-mentioned sacred texts on evil, LdV renewed Gandhi's ethical criticism of the main aspects of Western civilisation.

In particular, LdV's analysis supports Gandhi's basic criticism illustrated in *Hind Swaraj*; i.e., in its main activities Western civilisation subordinated ethics to progress that was pursued in quantitative terms only. LdV added that this progress was supported and incessantly implemented by modern science⁵². As a result of this

analysis, LdV, in following a new ethics, originating in Eastern countries, i.e. Gandhian non-violence, reversed the relationship between science and ethics established by Western civilisation; no longer science first, then ethics; but the reverse.

Moreover, LdV criticised the Western organisation of social life through a multitude of institutions, including the most important one, that social institution which gives both reason and justification to all other Western institutions; i.e. modern science.⁵³ Since science was developed according to a seemingly unique paradigm, it claimed absolute truth with respect to humanistic values, so that it dominated both intellectual and spiritual life. The enthusiasm for scientific improvements (whose consequent threats were forgotten) led people to attribute to science the society's highest value; and hence it constitutes the highest obstacle to achieve a spiritual wisdom on Western life.

According to LdV, the text of Apocalypse 13 suggests that Science is the most representative contemporary Evil, in as much as, through unassailable scientific doctrines and the seemingly incessant spawning of technological goods, it leads mankind to confound welfare with spiritual slavery and finally to slip in spiritual death. LdV vividly illustrates such ultimate consequences by emphasising what he considered the main achievement of modern Science, i.e. the creation of the nuclear Bomb, which means the ability to destroy even

the material life of the whole of mankind, i.e. a most terrible collective suicide.

By means of his interpretations of the above texts, LdV succeeded in redefining in a structural sense some ethical notions which religious traditions meant subjectively only. The notion of “sin” was extended to the notion of “structural sin” - i.e. a sin implied by belonging to a negative social structure⁵⁴ - and the notion of “conversion” was extended to the notion of “structural conversion” – i.e. the conversion from the negative social structures; moreover, the notion of “love” to the notion of “converted love”, i.e. converted also from structural evils. In fact, these three notions together define the ethical attitude of non-violence at both the personal and the social level.

As a result, the two main features of LdV’s reform of ethics are the following: instead of the unlimited expansion of the material capabilities of a person, through the accumulation of more and more goods, made possible by modern science and technology (this is the meaning attributed by LdV to the celebrated “666” at the end of Apocalypse 13), the conversion to the work on personal relationships, i.e. on both himself and interpersonal relationships, with love of even one’s enemy (non-violence); the ultimate goal is, instead of the misdirected effort to create ever larger power institutions (being in the period of the Cold War he saw them as culminating in the two great Blocks, USA and USSR,

dominating the entire World), a communitarian, self-reliant organisation aimed at solving human problems within and outside the community; hence he founded the Ark communities.

In conclusion, LdV's reform developed Gandhi's ethical opposition to Western civilisation, by making it a structural opposition. He based his reform upon a new ethical interpretation of Western sacred texts, which he applied to obtain a new critical analysis of all social structures, including the social institution of modern Science. This new opposition to Western civilisation can no longer be accused of being backward and ignoring the nature of the modern times; rather, it represents an attitude which envisages a new spiritual and social life which has learnt to emancipate itself from the social domination of modern science.⁵⁵

9. Political Reform in Western Countries

Among the non-violent reformers, LdV was important because his reform decisively confirmed Tolstoy's and Gandhi's radical reforms of religious traditions by linking together the work on oneself to the search for God's kingdom on Earth. According to them, a religion is converted into a creative effort to realize as far as possible *the kingdom of God* in present society; or even, in layman terms, *a free, peaceful and just society*. According to this new attitude, a religion is addressed to a mainly ethical commitment to improving the life not only of a small neighbourhood - through new social

organisations on a communitarian scale in place of the large, oppressive social institutions of Western civilisation - but of ever larger social groups, finally embracing the whole of mankind. In other words, the religious traditions reformed by making non-violence an essential part of them, constitute the basic motivation for the people promoting a new politics in society. Indeed, Gandhi founded communities and moreover devoted his social life to giving freedom to the Indian people, through a new politics taught worldwide.

While Gandhi's political aims were to free India from the British Empire and to promote a renewal of Indian civilisation, LdV's political aims were both to introduce into Western society seeds of Gandhian politics⁵⁶ and to decisively improve Gandhi's teachings in theoretical politics.

About the latter issue, LdV succeeded to give a political answer to the fourth point of the list in section 6, i.e. the political role played by Western science.

In the light of his interpretation of the above sacred texts, LdV was able to analyse in spiritual and ethical terms all the political institutions of Western society. In his most important book, LdV demonstrated in detail the relationship between Western science and all Western social institutions, which in Western civilisation are in fact informed by the scientific rationality⁵⁷. He devoted one out of five chapters to illustrating the

Western economic system, which is motivated to organise the life of society not for mutual solidarity, but for mutual exploitation, although covered by formal rules governed by “scientific” laws. Moreover, he devoted a long chapter to Western political institutions, rooted in Western man by the motivation to increase social power, although covered by the rationality of the balance of the resulting social powers.

He concluded that science informs all other institutions, even the most negative ones, according to a “scientific rationality”, which has however in fact changed several times in the past. Being its intellectual nature highly sophisticated, its active governing of mankind’s life is incomprehensible to people, who rather, owing to its rational nature, do not doubt its ethical innocence. In conclusion, the above-mentioned book proves that Science is the most powerful political institution of Western civilisation since it dominates both people and Western institutions⁵⁸.

By rising up to a the general context of the entire history of mankind, LdV reviewed all the political structures experienced so far; in particular, from Gandhi’s general category of a civilisation he moved to “sovereignty”, in the sense of a more specific political category, i.e. the dominant political institution in a given society. He discussed all possible kinds of sovereignty, of which there are four, “the religious Sect, the Nation, the Faction or political Party” and that political institution

which facilitates the exercise of non-violence, the tribe, or the community, or the Gandhian village⁵⁹.

In this way LdV extended Gandhi's analysis of the politics of the British Rule in India to the analysis of the politics of all the social institutions, even the politics of the nuclear confrontation between the two Blocks, East/West; they dominated the World, thanks to the Science, which generated and supported such a confrontation. To avoid which, he suggested a third political way through the development of Gandhian communities, capable of promoting - even through social struggles – among the people the issues for changing society.

In a recent paper⁶⁰ I pointed out the equivalence of LdV's notion of four sovereignties and Galtung's later notion of four models of development⁶¹, which the latter one defined by crossing the social values of two dichotomic options. Provided that one defines these two options more adequately, i.e. through the corresponding social institutions, one obtains the two options which we made use of in the previous analysis of all the three reforms; i.e. the option of two kinds of development and the option of two kinds of organisation.

From the four models of development so re-defined we obtain a general political theory of non-violence which is essentially a pluralist theory of political life. This theory only provides an explanation of the

contemporary overturning of political traditions, starting in 1989, when the green (Gandhian) model of development burst onto the stage of history with those non-violent revolutions which collapsed the red model of development in Eastern countries; while the yellow model of development of the Islamic countries became very important for World politics and appeared to the blue model of development (USA) to be the only enemy on the horizon.

Within this political framework we recognise that all that both Gandhi and LdV did in political terms shaped: 1) the essential divisions among the different models of development – Gandhi between the green and the blue, LdV between the green and both the red and blue –; 2) hence, a substantial anticipation of the new theoretical political framework; 3) the basic features of the green model of development, including religious motivations, ethic system, as well as its typical institutions, of which the fundamental one is the self-reliant community.

Conclusions

The previous analysis suggests a complete characterisation of Gandhi's legacy through the improvements that the Western disciple LdV added to it. Gandhi was the first to achieve a complete reform of his religious tradition in universal terms with respect to all the great religious traditions. Later, by lucidly changing the Western religion's basic attitude into an ethical attitude, LdV achieved a theoretical basis of non-violence

and, as a consequence, a new ethics which is universal in terms of the social and political structures of modern society, even the highest ones, i.e. Science and Technology. In this way LdV brought Gandhi's three reforms up to a structural level, i.e. the level of the theorisation of social structures, a level of theorisation which Gandhi explored only on one occasion (*Hind Swaraj*) and moreover in a not profound way.

From the more advanced viewpoint of the non-violent political theory, which is characterised by the basic notion of the four models of development, we can evaluate in retrospect the radical attitude of both Gandhi in *Hind Swaraj* and LdV in *Les Quatre Fléaux*.

Surely, both Gandhi and LdV dealt with degenerated models of development (respectively, a harsh colonialism and two political Blocks - a liberal one and a socialist one, together dominating the peoples of the World). Facing these extreme forms of models of development, these teachers emphasised their own choices as clear-cut ethical rejections of the extreme politics of the other models of development. Therefore, rather to developing political arguments in a systematic way, they depicted their choices as the only good choices, and the opposite choices as evil; moreover, they invited their readers to accept what they qualified as nothing more than good as against evil.

We know very well that the non-violent attitude itself is pluralist; thus, even when a non-violent man fights a different model of development, he does it through non-violence, including intellectual non-violence. Yet when he wrote *Hind Swaraj*, Gandhi denounced the magnificent, but “immoral”, Western civilisation in rough terms; in my opinion, he looked at it with the same ethical radicalism of a child. This appraisal is supported by what Gandhi wrote about his book *Hind Swaraj*: an “... incredibly simple book,...”⁶². “In my opinion, it is a book which can be put in the hands of a child”.⁶³ Indeed, at this time Gandhi was a child in theoretical terms, since he was at the beginnings of founding the non-violent theory of the models of development. What in previous times had been a traditional state of nature, *Hind Swaraj* qualified for the first time as a new social plan for an entirely new model of development, the green one, to be chosen by abandoning the dominant model(s) of development. *Hind Swaraj* was the seminal work founding the new green model of the development, a notion to which Gandhi was essentially referring when he wrote his work, although he never conceived it in formal terms⁶⁴.

Admittedly, Gandhi's illustration of the new political theory was incomplete. Since at the beginning of his development of a non-violent political theory, he was able to recognise the co-existence of religions, but failed to intellectually recognise in politics the co-existence of the (four) models of development. Hence, he considered

positively his own model of development only; he did not foresee how non-violence would be applied politically in an independent India when the government deviates from his model; nor did he consider political pluralism, which in particular includes a different Islamic model of development. In this light Gandhi's "bankruptcy"⁶⁵ of the separation of Pakistan was caused not by his non-violent inspiration, but rather by his ignoring the essentially different model of development followed by the Islamic people. (Moreover one may say that just through this act of separation, the yellow model of development started to differentiate itself both from the just rising green model of Gandhi and also from the blue model of development which the new State of India adhered to). Hence, Gandhi's dream of preserving the unity of Muslims and Hindu beyond independence was based upon religious convictions, but not upon cogent political arguments.

After Gandhi, LdV introduced a notion (sovereignty) which is almost the equivalent of a model of development; moreover he stressed that in any society all the four models of development usually co-exist⁶⁶ and that the co-existence of the four models also implies the co-existence of four different kinds of ethics. By living LdV through the Cold War, he lucidly recognised in the political actors of his times three out of the four models of development, i.e. his own and the two corresponding to the two Blocks. In this framework, he saw as a first task to give a political answer to the dramatic confrontation of

the two models of development represented by the USA and the USSR, which dominated the entire political theatre; hence his effort was focussed on proposing the full validity of a third political way, that of the green model of development, in the form of the Gandhian communities. Hence, he did not reflect on the pluralist political scenario of the four models of development which he merely foresaw and which in fact manifested themselves in the World in 1989, eight years after his death.

These shortcomings led both teachers of non-violence to present their proposals of a new model of development as an appeal to join an exclusive society, instead of joining a group aimed to solve through non-violence the inevitable political conflicts among the four models of development, and hence to preserve the pluralist character of the whole of society.

Finally, what are the prospects for today's world suggested by the above analysis, first of all the religious prospects?

Let us consider the most powerful religious institution in the World, i.e. the Catholic Church. It received little of the ethical reform illustrated above, although LdV attempted directly to change its attitude to peace and non-violence. In 1963 LdV fasted forty days to ask the Pope for four innovations, in particular the condemnation of nuclear weapons; at the end of this fast,

some days before the official emission, he received an undersigned copy of the Pope's Encyclical letter *Pacem in Terris* which answered LdV's demands, but partially only⁶⁷.

The main obstacle was his condemnation of modern science and technology. During the years in which it was being proposed, the Church abruptly changed its attitude towards science and technology; while in the past the Church had tenaciously resisted them in every possible way, after Vatican Council II it fully accepted them (except for their inhumane consequences, such as artificial abortion, artificial human reproduction, euthanasia, etc.). Thus, it accepted without reason precisely that science and technology which the Catholic LdV, following both Gandhi and his new interpretation of Christian texts, accused of being pervasive spiritual evils.

Moreover, all the Christian Protestant confessions, apart some minority ones, had for some centuries already accepted "modernity" as a motivation for promoting a new religiosity. In conclusion, all Christian confessions disregarded the essential issue of LdV's reform of ethics, i.e. criticism of Science. It is for just this political reason that the non-violent reform of the Western religious tradition seems ineffective within the institutions whose motivations are closest to the basic motivation of non-violence.

But one has to consider that at present all Christian confessions pay a high price for ignoring a radical criticism of science. In the Catholic Church most people, considering the positive influence of Vatican II exhausted, invoke a new Council, i.e. a new religious reform. More in general, Christian people are abandoning their faiths and embracing either Eastern religiosity or atheism.

Only in the more general context of all the religions in the World can one see a positive influence of Gandhi's reform. In fact the great religious traditions are developing a new attitude, precisely in the direction of the non-violent reform indicated by him; first of all as an ethics for a better World. Even the UN in 2008 succeeded in promoting a Conference of all religions for cooperation in solving the World's political problems.

Let us now consider the present influence of Gandhi's political reform.

The present political perspective is at present dominated by the blue model, stressing the need to fight terrorism, the new enemy, both at home and abroad. Through this politics, the blue model actually wants to divert the people's attention from the other need, i.e. to change the present oppressive political situation of 2,000 ethnic groups contained in only 200 States. All these social groups want to achieve more representative political institutions, which surely have to go beyond the States of the Western kind in order to choose self-reliant

political organisations. Indeed, even the red model in the past built dictatorships with precisely the ultimate aim of abolishing the historical form of the Western State. At present the Islamic populations and more in general the Eastern countries are experimenting with new political structures, in order to change the traditional State radically.

Even more radical is the political programme of the green model; it lacks a representative State, because at present no one State is recognised as fulfilling its political aims⁶⁸. We well know that, after Indian independence, Gandhi, after inaugurating the Indian Parliament with a speech, refused any political office in the new State. Moreover, one day before his assassination he wrote a radical Constitution reducing all social institutions to a minimum in number and size⁶⁹. Hence, the main challenge to non-violent politics is how to develop small communities into large-scale aggregations, functionally interrelated, of a large number of people. The year 1989 confirmed this failure of the green model of development; in the World the several non-violent struggles for political independence, although victorious, did not give rise to a single non-violent government.

All this amounts to recognising that, although Gandhi's tide (of revolutionary reforms) covered the World's shores, his long-term prophecy of historical change in the World is still awaiting full realization, no longer to be accomplished by a few isolated, exceptional

personalities, but by entire populations; that have to discover, not only how to carry out non-violent mass revolutions, but also how to transform institutions linked to ordinary social life non-violently.

Appendix:

Interpretation of Hind Swaraj by Means of the Two Options

I call the previously illustrated interpretation of Gandhi's legacy a 'structural' interpretation because it depends on two precise social categories, i.e. the two above-mentioned options. As a verification of this structural interpretation, I will now show that these categories are inherent in Gandhi's political thought. Let us analyse by means of them Gandhi's *Hind Swaraj*, which is the most representative of Gandhi's writings on political theory.⁷⁰

Let us first consider Gandhi's definition of the main category of his political thinking, i.e. "civilisation": "Civilisation is that mode of conduct which points out to man the path of duty. Performance of duty and observance of morality are convertible terms. To observe morality is to attain mastery over our mind and our passions. So doing, we know ourselves. The Gujarati equivalent for civilisation means "good conduct"."⁷¹

This definition essentially includes the two key expressions: “mode of conduct” which refers to a personal *organisation* of the acts performed by a man; and “duty”, which refers to the *personal increase* that a man wants to achieve in his (social) life. Here we have the subjective version of the two guide-lines of a civilisation.

A reading of the entire text shows that these guide-lines are expressed also in terms of social structures. According to Gandhi there exist two kinds of social *organisations*; i.e. an organisation drawn from *a priori* tenets (AO), like those authoritatively imposed by British Rule on different peoples according to English civilisation; and a self-reliant organisation aimed at solving a basic problem (PO), such as the problem of the political independence, i.e. what Gandhi expressly calls self-rule, or *Swaraj*, wanted by the Indian people. Moreover, there exist two kinds of social *increase or development*; i.e. Western progress, which is aimed at reaching targets which are *absolute* with respect to human life, i.e. the unlimited growth in the number and the quality of machines (AI); and the development of *personal* relationships with himself, with all humans and with all beings (PI). Gandhi calls it *Swadeshi*⁷².

For a short verification, let us scrutinise the titles of the 20 chapters of the text of *Hind Swaraj* through the above two guide-lines.

Table 2: Interpretation of the titles of Hind Swaraj's chapters by means of the two options

No.	Original title	Interpretation through the two options
1	The Congress and its officials	To obtain Home Rule (PO): Gandhi's new meaning of it is 'without seeing Englishmen as enemies' (PI)
2	The partition of Bengal	Indian awakening: The historical beginnings of Home Rule from the below (PO); and the historical beginnings of the <i>Swadeshi</i> movement (PI)
3	Discontent and unrest	Present uncertainty about Home Rule (OP)
4	What is <i>Swaraj</i> ?	<i>Swaraj</i> (PO) does not mean merely to drive out the British occupants
5	The condition of England	The English civilisation; An analysis of its highest

		political representative institution i.e. the Parliament (AO); it is evil
6	Civilization	English civilisation promotes a merely individual expansion towards the possession of an unlimited number of goods (AI); it is evil
7	Why was India lost?	Indians allowed British Companies to control India (AO) since they were attracted by Western goods (AI) and have been unable to solve their inner conflicts (not PI)
8	The condition of India	English British Rule (AO) led Indians to lose even religious motivation (PI) [to achieve <i>Swaraj</i> (PO)]
9	Continued: Railways	An instance of Western civilisation is given by the development of the

		Railways (AI), which are evil; in their absence, the traditional life (PI and PO) is good
10	Continued: The Hindus and the Mohammedans	To tolerate the differences in religions is not an evil, but is a development of human relationships (PI)
11	Continued: Lawyers	An instance of Western civilisation is given by lawyers; they are living in an authoritarian, hence negative system (AO) and they frame their praises (AI)
12	Continued: Doctors	A further instance of Western civilisation; doctors are in a negative system (AO) and are motivated to discard morality (AI)
13	What is true civilization?	Its definition is given by means of the two options (see in the above of this App.). Positive civilisation

		and negative civilisation illustrated by means of some instances
14	How can India became free?	By choosing <i>Swaraj</i> (PO), starting from oneself
15	Italy and India	To choose non-violence (PI) hence, neither arms, nor killing (AI)
16	Brute force	Against violence (AI)
17	Passive resistance	Pro passive resistance (PI)
18	Education	Good and evil development in education (PI vs. AI)
19	Machinery	Against the machine as the most representative instance of the English civilisation (AI and AO)
20	Conclusion	A summary of all the above; it is addressed to various political actors; various practical teachings at an individual level concerning both the fight against the evils

		of Western civilisation (AI and AO) and the need for a personal development (PI) in order to achieve Swaraj (PO).
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The entire text is aimed at solving a crucial *problem*; how to motivate Indians to attain *Swaraj*. Hence, the organisation of the text is a PO, as a reader easily understands reading the text. In a text organised according to a PO, the reasoning is not deductive, obtaining positive assertions from *a priori* principles (AO), but it is inductive, aimed at developing a new method for solving the problem at issue. Actually, Gandhi wanted to lead the Reader to discovering the new method for correctly solving the problem of independence.

In fact, his inductive reasoning is correctly characterised by Gandhi's use of doubly negated sentences which are not equivalent to the corresponding positive ones due to the lack of evidence for the latter ones. The studies in mathematical logic of the last century showed that the very borderline between classical logic and (almost all kinds of) non-classical logic is constituted rather by the logical law of the excluded middle, the logical law of double negation; hence, when a text includes doubly negated statements which do not satisfy the latter law, the reader is introduced into a non-classical logical world; i.e. the world of an inductive

search, rather than to the world of deduced certainties by means of classical logic.

In the following I will show that in *Hind Swaraj* Gandhi's argument is essentially constituted by statements of the above kind. Because of lack of space I will quote a few of the large number of doubly negated statements (In the following I will emphasise the negations to make them clear to the reader).⁷³

First of all, let us recall that the expression "non-violence" is a double negation since the word "violence" is a clear negation. Unfortunately, Gandhi did not see this fact, because he noticed the first negation only; hence for a long time he tried to substitute this word with different words, such as *satyagraha* and, as in the text of *Hind Swaraj*, "passive resistance"; but neither expressions reiterate the double negation of the word "non-violence" as well as its introduction into a new kind of organisation, i.e. a PO; indeed, *satyagraha* being a positive word, and "passive resistance" being a negation only (being 'passive' a mere improved qualification of the already negative word 'resistance'), they cannot introduce in a PO.

However, Gandhi had in mind the expression "non-violence" as a double negation also when he defined "passive resistance" in the following words: "...it is the reverse of resistance by arms. When I refuse to do a thing which is repugnant to my conscience, I use soul-force."

(p. 69) This fact proves that he effectively argued by means of doubly negated sentences.

Let us consider those in chapter 1. At first glance one sees some sentences of this kind:

“This opinion [in this context, this word is negative in nature, because it means “...the Congress is an instrument for perpetuating British Rule”] is not justified.” (p. 17)

“The fact that you have checked me and you do not want to hear about the well-wishers of India shows that, for you at any rate, Home Rule is yet far away. If we had many like you [= impatient] we would never make any advance.” (p. 18)

“It is a mark of wisdom not to kick away the very step from which we have risen higher.” (p. 19)

“What does it matter if he cannot run with us?” [implicit answer: Nothing] (p. 19)

“It is a bad habit to say that another man’s thoughts are bad and ours only are good and that those holding different views from ours are the enemies of the country.” (p. 20)

“I can never subscribe to the statement that all Englishmen are bad.” (p. 20)

“Sir William does not wish ill to India.” (p. 20)

“You will see, too, that if we shun every Englishman as an enemy, Home Rule will be delayed.” (p. 20)

“It is my duty patiently to try to remove your prejudice.” (p. 21)

Many more doubly negated sentences may be recognised in the following chapter, mainly where Gandhi argues about the crucial points of his booklet, i.e. ch. 4 (“What is *Swaraj*?”), ch. 14 (“How can India become free?”) and ch. 17 (“Passive resistance”).

In addition, the novelty of the entire text may be summarised by means of a change of the same word as given by adding negations. At first, the majority of Indians saw their advancement by supporting the English; then by opposing the English; Gandhi’s *Hind Swaraj* preached their advancement without going against Englishmen. This latter addition of a negation played a crucial role in introducing Indians to arguing in a new logical way.

Unfortunately, Gandhi was unable to define his two guide-lines accurately, in particular the meanings of the two words *Swaraj* and *Swadeshi*. According to what has been said above, they need to be better defined by means of double negations. *Swaraj* = non-dependence, which is the same of “in-dependence”, although the latter word obscures its nature of a double negation; *Swadeshi*

= developing relationships with beings not far from usual life.

One may ask how an argument relying upon doubly negated sentences ends. It is only an *ad absurdum* proof that can conclude this kind of reasoning not relying on certitudes; in fact, here the only certitude is the negation of an absurdity.

Actually, Gandhi several times makes use of this logical figure. Let us consider for instance, ch. 17. He stresses that “You cannot expect silver ore in a tin [= not silver] mine” (p. 67)

“If the story of the universe had commenced with wars, not a man would have been found alive today.” (p. 67)

“Those that take the sword shall perish by the sword.” (p. 68)

“No man can claim that he is absolutely [= not relatively] in the right...” (p. 69)

“If the Government were to ask us to go about without any clothing, should we do so? [Implicit answer: No].” (p. 70)

“If among a band of robbers a knowledge of robbing is obligatory, is a pious man to accept the obligation? [Implicit answer: No]” (p. 70)

“Do you believe that a coward can ever disobey a law that he dislikes? [implicit answer: No]” (p. 71)

“Believe me that a man devoid of courage and manhood can never be a passive resister.” (p. 71), and several more similar arguments that I omit for lack of space.

In other words, *Hind Swaraj* is organised in the alternative way to the dominant intellectual thinking in Western society. The text of *Hind Swaraj*, far from being indeterminate in its logical reasoning, proceeds with conviction in a formally logical way, because it is lucidly organised according to a PO, by posing a crucial problem and then by looking for a new method for solving it by means of reasoning through doubly negated sentences, which close the arguments by means of *ad absurdum* proofs.

In conclusion, *Hind Swaraj* performed an almost complete paradigm-shift in the common argument about India's independence, beyond its religious and ethical tradition.

Acknowledgment

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Notes and References

- ¹ . M.K. Gandhi: *Hind Swaraj*, (Amhedabad: Navajivan P. House, 2000) p.32.
- ² . It is well-known that this radical criticism did not prevent the most celebrated scientist of his time, A. Einstein, from feeling unlimited admiration for him, which shows that an intelligent reader of Gandhi's writings could extract the essence of Gandhi's teachings. The most balanced appraisal of Gandhi's *Hind Swaraj* is in my opinion, Lanza del Vasto's, recently translated in English language. See *Gandhi Marg*, Vol. No. 31 (July-Sept. 2009) pp.261-276.
- ³ . Lanza del Vasto (1901-1981) was the only Western disciple of Gandhi (in the years 1937-1938), called by him *Shantidas* (Servant of Peace). He came back to Europe in order to found communities in Gandhian-style (Ark communities); and spent his life teaching non-violence in the World. Together with his followers he performed several social actions (against the French war in Algeria, to obtain a law recognising conscientious objection to the compulsory military service, to introduce a condemnation of nuclear bombs in the resolutions of the Catholic Church's Council Vatican II as well as a promotion of non-violence, against French nuclear weapons and nuclear plants etc.).
- ⁴ . Lanza del Vasto: *Les Quatre Fléaux* (orig. 1959), (Monaco : du Rocher, 1992) p.293. More exactly, Rolland's words are as follows (my translation into English): "As a professional historian, being accustomed to seeing the ebb and flow of the Spirit's great tides, I illustrate this tide which is rising, from the depth of the East. It will not fall back until it has covered Europe's shores". R. Rolland: "Preface" to M.K. Gandhi: *La Jeune Inde (1919-1922)*, (Paris : Stock, 1924) p. xxi. Notice that LdV emphasised Rolland's prophecy by substituting World's shores for Europe's shores.
- ⁵ . Lanza del Vasto: *Les Quatre Fléaux*, op. cit., ch. V, sect. 46. These events, occurring fifty years ago, disprove S. Huntington's thesis in: *The Clash of civilizations, and the Remaking of World Order*, (New York :Free Press, 1996). Truly, the first clash of civilisations was between India and British Empire; but, thanks to Gandhi, it ended without a military conflict. The real problem of Huntington's study is what he selects from the events of past history in order to learn their lessons.
- ⁶ . M.J. Stephan and E. Chenoweth: "Why Civil Resistance Works", *International Security*, 33, 1/2008, 7-44. Similar results have been obtained by a previous analysis on the 67 revolutions that occurred between 1975 and 2002: P. Ackerman e A. Karatnycky: *How Freedom is Won. From Civic Resistance to Durable Democracy*, (Washington: Freedom House, 2005). According to this study, during this shorter and more recent period of time than the above, 47 out of 67, that is 70% of the revolutions were either non-violent or mostly non-violent revolutions. Moreover the percentage of successful revolutions was 60% for the non-violent ones, and 22% for the violent ones!
- ⁷ . Table 1 omits some teachers of non-violence that are popular in Western countries, such as G. Sharp, since they are not concerned with a comprehensive meaning of the notion of non-violence, in the sense of its relationship with Western civilization and the Western model of development.
- ⁸ . Da SikhiWiki, Encyclopedia of Sikh: "... Modern thinkers such as... Mahatma Gandhi have emphasized the universal and unitary character of Hinduism. For a long time, a true Hindu was one who accepted the authority of the *Vedas*, revered the *Brahmin* and the cow and performed his caste duties. But the Hindu reformers of modern times have rejected caste distinctions. Yet they remained within the Hindu tradition. For example Mahatma Gandhi called himself *sanatani Hindu* (orthodox) on his own terms. He wrote- "I call myself a sanatani Hindu because (i) I believe in the *Vedas*, the *Upanishads*, the *puranas* and all that goes by the name of Hindu scriptures; (ii) I believe in the *varnashramadharma* in a sense in my opinion, strictly *Vedic* but not in its present popular and crude sense; (iii) I believe in the protection of the cow in its much larger sense than the popular and (iv) I do not disbelieve in idol-worship." (See *Young India*, 10 June, 1921).
- ⁹ . Let us remember that, after persecuting the Christians for three centuries, the Roman Empire changed its attitude when, in 313 AD the Emperor Constantine, on the eve of a battle, dreamed of winning because his military banners bore the Christian cross. After effectively winning, he officially recognised Christianity which in return recognised the Roman Empire. In the subsequent centuries a

similar agreement between the State and the Christian churches has always been reached, also in the Christian Protestant countries. Moreover, in 1648 the Peace of Westphalia put an end to the European religious wars by linking religion to the sovereignty of each European State. A religious pluralism was recognised by all European States not before some decades ago.

- ¹⁰ . *Harijan*, 20 Sept. 1928, p. 319; 19 Dec. 1936, p. 369. Owing to my lack of the English version of Gandhi's texts, I translate into English from the Italian translation.
- ¹¹ . M.K. Gandhi: "Interview" to Denton J. Brooks, *The Hindu*, 16 May 1945.
- ¹² . M.K. Gandhi: *An Autobiography, or The Story of My Experiments with Truth*, (Ahmedabad: Navajivan, 1926) p. 97, p. 269.
- ¹³ . *Young India*, 7 May 1925, p. 164.
- ¹⁴ . In the Appendix it will be shown how one can follow reason in an alternative way to the formalist reason imposing strict obligations.
- ¹⁵ . M.K. Gandhi: *Young India*, 31 Dec. 1931, p. 428.
- ¹⁶ . M.K. Gandhi: *Gandhi interprets the Bagavad Gita*, (Ahmedabad: Navajivan, 1946) See J.I. Bakker: "Gandhi and the *Gita*: Sanskrit and Satyagraha", *Gandhi Marg*, Vol. 14 (1993) pp.39-61.
- ¹⁷ . M.K. Gandhi in *Harijan*, 30 Jan. 1937, 33-37; see also *ibidem*, 26 Dec. 1936 p. 363.
- ¹⁸ . Quoted in Lanza del Vasto: *Le Grand Retour* (1954), (Monaco : du Rocher, 1993) p. 18. That compares well with what wrote J.I. Bakker: "Gandhi and the *Gita*: Sanskrit and Satyagraha", *op. cit.*, p. 43: "The essence of the message that Gandhi got from the *Gita* was detachment and selfless action (*anasaktiyoga*) for the welfare of all (*lokasamgraha*).
- ¹⁹ . In past centuries such a universality was claimed by Catholicism (the Greek word *katholikòs* means precisely "universal"). But its historical development was in fact linked to specific features; it represented a Roman church, a theological view (Thomism), a philosophical view (Aristotelism and, more in general, Greek philosophy), a political party in the World (the politics of the Southern European States).
- ²⁰ . In the Western Christian tradition a similar reform was carried out by St. Francis in 13th Century, but with few social consequences, even within the Church's institutions.
- ²¹ . LdV summarizes Gandhi's reform in the following way: "Veneration in Gandhi for the most ancient religious tradition, the most authentic one, the most *universal* one and the rejection of both diversions and superstitions commonly allowed by his co-religionists. Everyday ritual purified and simplified, recitation of sacred Texts and song of *Ramayana*. Equally motivated by his religious conviction and his political aim to achieve Indian unity, he tried to approach both Islam and Christianity, by appealing to *the common ground of all religions*, to their essences and their common aims, although maintaining the admirable diversity of their forms and he joined faith and broadness of perspective, fervour and openness." In "De quel droit nous appelons-nous Gandhiens?" (By what right do we call ourselves Gandhians?), (orig. 1975) in Lanza del Vasto: *Pages d'Enseignement*, (Monaco : du Rocher, 1993) 185-192, p. 189; emphasis added.
- ²² . M.K. Gandhi: *All Men are Brothers*, *op. cit.*, cp. 1, sect. 29.
- ²³ . L.R. Horn: *The Natural History of Negation*, (Chicago: U. Chicago P., 1989) p. 84, takes in consideration just the word *ahimsa* as an example of a double negation.
- ²⁴ . In vain Gandhi tried to substitute for it the positive word *satyagraha*; the former word only was retained by the people in the World. The attention to double negations is very fruitful for an in-depth

study of a text. As an instance of this kind of study the Appendix will examine the text of *Hind Swaraj*. This study will show this word is able to lead the mind towards an entirely different way of arguing.

²⁵ . This global approach was emphasised by Leibniz (“Our mind looks for invariants”, *Essay*, 1698, MS VI, p. 215) in contrast to Newton’s analytical attitude, describing the detailed behaviour of bodies. Notice that since half a century theoretical physics has chosen to use the new mathematical method of looking for invariant quantities, in opposition to the old method of describing the detailed trajectories of bodies.

²⁶ . Often he reiterated similar condemnations of his contemporary caste system; e.g. *Young India*, 29 Dec. 1920, p. 2; 17 Nov. 1927, p. 384; 24 Nov. 1927, p. 390; 4 June 1931, p. 129; *Harijan*, 11 Feb. 1933, p. 2; 28 Sept. 1934, p. 260; 16 Nov. 1935, p. 316; 20 June 1936, p. 148.

²⁷ . For centuries Catholic Church believed the notion of “natural law”, from which it developed its ethical system, to be a universal and certain notion for all times. Since this notion was of a static nature, in modern times some scholars (Marx, Freud, Nietzsche, etc.) found it easy to criticize it. In present times the ethical attitude of this Church is changing. The last specific document of this Church: International Theological Commission: “The Search for Universal Ethics: A New Look at Natural Law”, Dec. 2008.

(<http://www.pathsoflove.com/universal-ethics-natural-law.html>) admits that the notion of natural law has to be relativized, because it has to be considered as a merely philosophical notion; hence, not as a certain principle for guaranteeing a universal ethics. The document stresses the relevance of obtaining such an ethics and then invites all great religions to contribute to achieving such a target (but, alas, in its conclusion the Document naively links this desired universal ethics to the UN Declaration of Human Rights).

²⁸ . And also the Christian teaching of *the Sermon on the Mount*. In this sense he said: “I like Christ but I dislike [the behaviour of] Christians” dominating the World. E.g., *Harijan*, 17 Nov. 1946, p. 405; *ibidem*, 20 Avr. 1947, p. 116; *ibidem*, 7 Sept. 1947, p. 315.

²⁹ . S. Panter-Brick: *Gandhi contre Machiavelli*, (Paris: Denoel, 1964) (post face by Lanza di Vasto; Engl. tr.: *Gandhi against Machiavellism, Non-Violence in Politics*, (Bombay: Asia P. House, 1966).

³⁰ . The First International accepted WWI because it feared above all an invasion of Europe by the then “barbarous” Russia; which would have reversed the historical progress of Workers’ movement. Previously, Marx had on the other hand been cautious about the Western progress; he left unresolved the question whether the primitive economies, like the Indian or Russian economies of his time, could directly achieve communism without passing through the historical phase of the bourgeois economy.

³¹ . See, for instance, R. Merton’s conception of the science as inspired by the Puritan religion. *Science, Technology and Society in Seventeenth-Century England*, (New York: Fertig, 1970).

³² . In the 60’s, i.e. when science had already transformed the entire World, including the political World, the student movement dared to cry “Science is not neutral”. However, this movement was unable to recognise an alternative to the dominant science.

³³ . “... more often God is found in the most humble creatures... Thus my passion for serving the oppressed classes... Hence, I am not a master, but a combative, fallible, humble servant of India, and through it, the mankind.” M.K. Gandhi: *All Men are Brothers-Life and Thoughts of Mahatma Gandhi as Told in His Own Words*, (Lausanne: UNESCO, 1958) ch. 2, sect. 81.

³⁴ . For example, LdV recalls that: “Since its beginnings, the Ark [his community], in a Christian country, followed the same attitude [as Gandhi’s], not without arousing the suspicion of his co-religionists and

in addition charges of “syncretism”, “pantheism”, indifferentism” and other “isms”. “De quell droit ...”, op. cit., p. 189.

- ³⁵ . L.N. Tolstoy: *A Confession*, 1882; *The Kingdom of God is within You*, 1894; *The Gospel in Brief*, 1896.
- ³⁶ . M.L. King jr.: “Letter from a Birmingham jail”, 1963; see for instance: http://www.africa.upenn.edu/Articles_Gen/Letter_Birmingham.html. Notice his motto: “Christ gave us the goals and Mahatma Gandhi the tactics.”
- ³⁷ . Unfortunately, I do not know of English translations of Don L. Milani: *L’obbedienza non è più una virtù* (The [Social] Obedience is no longer a Virtue), (Florence: LEF, 1969); A. Bello: *Sui sentieri di Isaia* (On the Paths of Isaiah), (Molfetta: La Meridiana, 1989); *Nelle vene della storia* (In the Veins of the History), (Molfetta: La Meridiana, 1990).
- ³⁸ . Aldo Capitini (1901-1968) was inspired by Gandhi’s visiting Italy on his return from England in 1931. On his life and thinking see N. Bobbio: “Religion and Politics in Aldo Capitini”, Apr.-Jun., *Gandhi Marg* (2003) Vol. 5, p. 26; R. Altieri: *The Non-violent Revolution: The Italian who Embraced Gandhi’s Satyagraha to Oppose Fascism and War, An Intellectual Biography of Aldo Capitini*, (Translated by G. Blaylock), (Madurai: Vijaya Press, 2008).
- ³⁹ . He was outlining a new religion which, by avoiding the notion of God, attributes the greatest possible importance to relationships with others, both living and dead, and also to animals, following the two guide-lines, i.e. the “infinite-you” and the “you-all”, or “chorality”.
- ⁴⁰ . See my paper: “Aldo Capitini, riformatore religioso-politico”, in M. Soccio (ed.): *Convertirsi alla nonviolenza?*, (Verona: Il Segno dei Gabrielli, 2003) pp.125-139.
- ⁴¹ . “As Gandhi, we do not see the salvation outside the mastery of ourselves, the purification and the gift of ourselves, the voluntary poverty, the hand-work of both the craftsman and the farm worker – i.e. the duty of all – the simplification of the tools and the clarification of the aims, the simplification of the exchanges the business and the structures, the attention to ear both God’s will and conscience voice.”, in Lanza del Vasto: “De quell droit...”, op. cit., p. 188. By re-evaluating St. Augustine’s motto: *Noverim me, noverim Te* (“By knowing myself, I will know You”) LdV made work on himself the primary religious practice, in a similar way to the basic Hindu teaching of the incessantly search of the Himself.
- ⁴² . Lanza del Vasto: *Les Quatre Fléaux* (1959), fourth edition (Monaco: Rocher, 1993) chapters 1 and 5 (excerpts in *Make Straight the Way of the Lord. An Anthology of the Philosophical Writings*, (New York: Knopf, 1974); a short summary is given in the text of three conferences at Gujarat Vidyapith: www.forget-me.net/Science_NV).
- ⁴³ . I briefly illustrated this interpretation in my paper: “A Gandhian criticism of modern science”, *Gandhi Marg*, Vol.31 (2009) pp.231-259.
- ⁴⁴ . M.K. Gandhi: *Hind Swaraj*, op. cit., p. 42. Lanza del Vasto: *Approches à la Vie Intérieure*, du Rocher, Monaco, 1992, p. 30 and 32 explicitly links the original sin to the *avidya*.
- ⁴⁵ . M.K. Gandhi: *Hind Swaraj*, op. cit, end of ch. 6.
- ⁴⁶ . By paraphrasing the Sermon on the Mount (Mt 5, 1-10), LdV composed “A Christian Prayer for Gandhi” (*L’Arche avait pour Voilure une Vigne*, (Paris: Denoel, 1978) pp. 242-243). Recently the Pope lucidly reiterated the basic notions of the interpersonal non-violence by illustrating this Sermon (“Angelus” Feb. 18th 2007): “Rightly this page of the Gospel is considered the *magna carta* of Christian non-violence, which does not imply– according to a false interpretation of the “turn the other cheek” (cfr Lc 6,29) – surrendering to evil, but in answering evil with good (cfr Rm 12,17-21), so as to break the chain of the injustice.”

- ⁴⁷ . Notice that several Western teachers of non-violence did not answer these questions, also because most of them, having assumed a merely pragmatic attitude, conceive non-violence without reference to a religion or even a specific ethics.
- ⁴⁸ . A.J. Toynbee's books: *A Study of History*, (Oxford: OUP, 1934) and *Civilization on Trial*, (Oxford: OUP, 1948), forecast that all religions would progress to a super-religion. Gandhi distrusted this historical perspective: *All Men are Brothers*, op. cit. ch 2, sect. 105.
- ⁴⁹ . During Vatican Council II (1962-65) LdV, together with some other non-violent men and women, asked that the notion of non-violence be introduced into the Council's resolutions. This suggestion was taken up in modest words inserted in the resolution *Gaudium et Spes*, No. 80.
- ⁵⁰ . His first definition of non-violence was: "... [non-violence] is a Christian virtue which does not at all differ from charity [unlimited love or converted love]", Lanza del Vasto: *Le Pèlerinage aux Sources* (1943), (Monaco: Le Rocher, 1993) Chapter iv, No. 16 p. 152 (Engl. tr. *Pilgrimage to Source*, (Ahmedabad: Peace Research Centre, Gujarat, Vidyapith). Subsequently he gave a triple definition of non-violence; the force of justice, conflict resolution, and lever for conversion; *Téchnique de la Non-violence*, op. cit., pt. 1.
- ⁵¹ . Within the Catholic Church, the most powerful Church in Western countries, a similar renewal in the same ethical direction (the "pastoral" attitude) partially occurred, just some years after LdV's proposals, through an unexpected Council (Vatican II, 1962-1965).
- ⁵² . "A long and deep reflection led the wise [Gandhi] to discard our civilisation which is centralised, urbanised, mechanised. / About this point we follow him faithfully and even in *Les Quatre Fléaux* we extend the criticism of the social system relying upon on profit and competition, on the prostitution of science to technique. [so that] We take up again his so much ridiculed philosophy of the spinning-wheel...", Lanza del Vasto: "De quel droit...", op. cit., p. 188.
- ⁵³ . Among the legion of interpretations of Apocalypse 13, LdV's is an essentially modern one for two reasons; first, he does not see in the two Beasts historical men, but social institutions, such as those created in modern times only; second, because LdV sees in the "666", put at the end of the text, a notion which pertains to modern mathematics only, i.e. an infinite series "666...". This series provides the key to modern civilisation, which offers an unlimited expansion of human capabilities (recall that 6 is the number of a man), but without allowing the achievement of 7, which is the number of spiritual man. In short, as a proof of his mastery of the modern social phenomena, the sacred text, according to LdV, made use of modern mathematics to reveal a crucial teaching concerning spiritual life in modern society.
- ⁵⁴ . Unfortunately, the present theological debate on Christian ethics ignores the notion of "structural sin" (i.e. the evil structured as a social institution), a notion which in 1959 LdV identified with both Original sin and with negative social institutions, above all Science and Technology. Thirty years after him, the Catholic Church mentioned it, but only once (Encyclical letter *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, 1987) and subsequently it was forgotten. Hence, at present this Church still accepts wars, the arms race and Machiavellian politics. I suggested a new view of ethics, as a development of LdV's basic teaching, in: "Una etica biblica da eta' matura del mondo", *Rivista di Teologia Morale*, No. 164 (2009) pp.595-605.
- ⁵⁵ . The words "Emancipation from the Western science" have been suggested by R. Panikkar.
- ⁵⁶ . "The great difference [between our doctrine and practice of non-violence and Gandhi's] is that Gandhi, and even M.L. King and Cesar Chavez, did not choose their struggles, they chose their arms... The aim of our groups and our communities [is], before doing something, to be men... It is after seven years of communitarian life that we ventured into the first civic action.... Our civic actions were

attempts, experiences, exercises... The aim of the civic actions... is that of constituting such a human community that if it is widened worldwide, war, rebellion, misery and servitude would disappear.” Lanza del Vasto: “De quel droit...”, op. cit., pp. 185-186.

- ⁵⁷ . Lanza del Vasto: *Les Quatre Fléaux*, op. cit..
- ⁵⁸ . Notice that this condemnation was reiterated by other teachers of non-violence in very mild terms. The closest to LdV is Galtung, who stresses the notion of “cultural violence”, which in his definition is that culture that supports structural violence. But in this way culture is not qualified in scientific terms and moreover does not play an autonomous role in political terms, so that one may doubt that it is actually a third form of violence beyond structural and direct violence. By following LdV, I maintain that science can play an autonomous political role by monopolizing the truth. Moreover, through an historical analysis I showed how science does it and I suggested that there is a scientific alternative to this monopoly within Western science itself; see “A Gandhian criticism to Western Science”, op. cit..
- ⁵⁹ . Lanza del Vasto: *Les Quatre Fléaux*, op. cit., ch. iv, no. 60, p. 240.
- ⁶⁰ . A. Drago: “The birth of non-violence as a political theory”, *Gandhi Marg*, Vol. 29 No. (3 Oct.-Nov. 2007) pp.275-295.
- ⁶¹ . J. Galtung: *Ideology and Methodology*, (Copenhagen: Eijlers, 1976), section I, 2. *There are Alternatives!*, (London: Pluto, 1986).
- ⁶² . *CWMG*, Vol. 70, p. 242.
- ⁶³ . D.G. Tendulkar: *Mahatma*, (New Delhi: Govt. of India, Publications Division, 1969) Vol I, p. 109.
- ⁶⁴ . In my opinion, it is the merit of LdV to have emphasised this attitude of Gandhi's in “Preface to the French edition (1957) of *Hind Swaraj*”, *Gandhi Marg*, Vol. 31, No. 2 (July-Sept. 2009) pp.261-275.
- ⁶⁵ . *Harijan*, 29 Jun. 1947.
- ⁶⁶ . Lanza del Vasto: *Les Quatre Fléaux*, op. cit., chapter -iv, No. 60, p. 240.
- ⁶⁷ . See Lanza del Vasto: *Technique de la Non-violence* (1971), (Paris: Gallimard, 1988), part. II, section 5.
- ⁶⁸ . It is meaningful that the World summits called “Porto Alegre” (from the municipality that hosted them) ended when Evo Morales, as the chief of a State, offered to host the next one.
- ⁶⁹ . *Harijan*, 15 Feb. 1948.
- ⁷⁰ . I have already previously analysed, by means of the two options, some texts concerning strategy, psychoanalysis, theology as well as science (physics, chemistry, mathematics and logic). See the bibliography in “Non-violence as a science of conflict resolution”, *Anuvibha Reporter*, 5, Dec. 2000, 11-116. In particular, I performed this kind of analysis on Lanza del Vasto's texts: “La filosofia di Dio di Lanza del Vasto. Studio mediante un nuovo metodo di analisi logica”, in A. Drago and P. Trianni (eds.): *La Filosofia di Lanza del Vasto. Un Ponte tra Occidente e Oriente* (The Philosophy of Lanza del Vasto. A Bridge between East and West), Il grande vetro (Milano: Jaca book, 2009) pp. 185-222.
- ⁷¹ . M.K. Gandhi: *Hind Swaraj*, op. cit., 53.
- ⁷² . I admit that my identification of *Swadeshi* with the increase of the personal relationships is somewhat problematic. On the other hand, it is evenly problematic to recognise an accurate, short-worded definition among the several Gandhi's ones (for instance the long illustration in *Young India* 12 March 1925, p. 88 as well as in *Speeches and Writings of Mahatma Gandhi* (iv ed.) pp. 336-344,

presenting meanings not at all mutually consonant). In my opinion it was these inaccurate definitions which prevented Gandhi's thinking from achieving a higher level of theorisation.

⁷³ . I illustrated the method of recognising the doubly negated sentences in a text by the paper: "The discriminating role played by the double negation in linking language to the world", Comm. to L. Wittgenstein Symp. *Language and World*, Kirchberg, 2009.

Relevance of Gandhi's Critique of Modern Civilization

G. Vijayam

Introduction

We are meeting here in the Institute of Gandhian Studies on a historic occasion. Exactly one hundred years ago, Gandhi penned down his thoughts on the real meaning of *Swaraj* for India. Many people ignored this book; some opposed without reading it; and some others disagreed with Gandhi and ridiculed it. Some others considered that Gandhi was a representative of the bygone ages. Even some of the close followers of Gandhi like Jawaharlal Nehru did not agree with him. Gandhi's "political Guru" Gokhale felt that Gandhi would revise his thoughts over the years. The Communist leaders like Dange and M.N. Roy were critical of Gandhi from the Marxian angle of class struggle.

Thus the book of *Hind Swaraj* was either criticized or ignored. Many people did not have access to the book as it was banned by the Government, the moment it was published in Gujarati and the ban was finally lifted only in 1938 during the Congress rule. During the freedom movement the copies of *Hind Swaraj* were sold defying the Government ban.

The book received somewhat warm reception only in America for its novelty. The American edition of *Hind Swaraj* was published with the title "*Sermon on the Sea*", reminding the readers the "*Sermon on the Mount*" centuries ago. The reaction in England was cautious. The book was translated into some Indian languages.

Congress and the Gandhian Model of Economic Development

On the whole, the book suffered benign neglect within the Congress circles. The Congress was primarily

subscribed to the political and social agitations of Gandhi, but not to Gandhi's plan of national reconstruction. The differences came to the fore on many occasions. The correspondence between Jawaharlal Nehru and Mahatma Gandhi in early 1930s on economic development of Post-Independent India was published in a book entitled "*A Bunch of Letters*." It clearly revealed that the Congress and, in particular Jawaharlal Nehru, whom Gandhi considered as his political heir, was forthright in condemning Gandhian approach of economic development. Jawaharlal Nehru said that the future development of India was intricately interconnected with the Western Industrial and political model. Nehru did not mince matters and he was forthright in condemning Gandhian prescription for national reconstruction after Independence.

On the eve of political Independence, the differences between Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru came to the fore once again on the issue of which was the road to social revolution and in particular, economic development. Even while framing the Indian Constitution the Constituent Assembly did not consider the Gandhian option. The Constitution makers opted for Western democratic model. When the Draft Constitution was prepared it was pointed out by some critics. Reacting to the criticism, Rajendra Prasad, Chairman of the Constituent Assembly, urged B.N. Rau, the Constitutional Adviser to remodel the Constitution on the lines of Democratic decentralization. But B.N. Rau politely

declined to do so and reaffirmed his faith in the Western model. Thus the Congress never even considered seriously Gandhian model of economic development. It is to be remembered that Srimannarain prepared and published the *Gandhian Constitution*.

Gandhi's Critique of Modern Civilization

In Hind Swaraj Gandhi addressed some basic issues that were confronting the contemporary society, in particular the rising trend of violence and terrorism. Some of the Indians abroad were also attracted towards violence and they advocated violent revolution in India.

But Gandhi was firmly opposed to the growing trend of terrorism and violence. Gandhi was in search of a higher alternative to violence and terrorism. He firmly believed that India's future was intricately interconnected with peaceful social change.

By that time the British were firmly rooted in the Indian soil and they were spreading their tentacles in all aspects of life. The Introduction of railways, legal system, medicine and education began to change the nature of Indian society.

Gandhi examined the nature of British Colonialism. He went into the root of the problem. In the process he realized that the real problem lies in the modern civilization itself. He considered that Modern civilization is much more inimical than the colonialism. He considered

that root of the troubles in India lay in the adoption of modern civilization itself.

He juxtaposed modern civilization with the ethical living. He strongly felt that the strength of India and the Orient lies in its ethical living. Preserving and enhancing the moral character of its people and the institutions was of paramount importance for him. But how we convince people about the evils of the modern civilization? Even the educated started believing in the modern civilization!

He felt that India was degrading and destroying itself by accepting and emulating the Western institutions.

Gandhi firmly believed that the Western civilization and the rise of violence were inseparable. He strongly felt that nonviolence and factory civilization were incompatible and they cannot co-exist.

In order to convey his message, in *Hind Swaraj* he adopted the method of a dialogue between a Reader (of a magazine) and the Editor. It is significant to note that Gandhi did not adopt the traditional model of conversation between a *Guru* and *Sishya*. Gandhi thus avoided the hierarchical problem and the feeling of preaching to some one. The dialogue was between two equal partners for exchange of views on problems that confront the contemporary society. He explored how to arrive at an amicable solution so that India would regain its pre-eminent position in the comity of nations. He was

firmly convinced that the real strength is not in its military might. India's greatness is closely linked with its ethical behaviour. Gandhi clearly realized that politics have an important place in resolving people's problems in a nation. But his conception of politics was of service and not aimed at domination over the people.

Gandhi believed in nationalism and he also realized its strength in solving its problems. But his conception of nationalism was not a hindrance to the development of International peace and amity.

He wanted to clarify the meaning of *Swaraj*. For Gandhi *Swaraj* was the quest for self improvement. *Hind Swaraj* means "rule of dharma" in an ideal state. In it, simplicity was the crux of the matter. Without simplicity there cannot be any ethical living and fellow feeling. Gandhi clearly felt that the modern civilization destroys ethical living as it is built on the acquisition of material wealth. The mad rush for wealth destroyed the moral fibre of the people. The acquisitive nature will retard the development of the personality of the individuals. Ethical living and morality cements and brings cohesion in society. Gandhi felt that these qualities are missing in the modern Western Civilization as it harps on acquisition of wealth by any means. Gandhi wanted that people should rediscover their ethical and moral moorings for a quality of life.

Poverty is the bane of India's progress. All are born equal and hence they should live equal. He stressed that only through simple living and fellow feeling as well as equal distribution that poverty can be reduced. If there is no poverty, there will be no suffering and peace and tranquillity will prevail. In an acquisitive society poverty cannot be eliminated and the gap between the rich and the poor would be further widened. *Gandhi's life mission was to rehumanise the dehumanised society.* In one word, Gandhi wanted culture, but not civilization as it is the root cause of all evils in the modern society. Every one's basic needs must be met. No one should go hungry, or without shelter.

Evils of Factory Civilization

Gandhi realized that the factory civilization which is the hallmark of modern civilization, in fact, reduces the value of the human being. Gandhi, thus, had a fundamental objection to industrialization as it widens the gap between the rich and the poor and industrialization breeds hatred and alienation. Gandhi and Marx, both were concerned with the problem of alienation. Marx thought that class struggle would end alienation and it would ultimately lead to harmony in society. On the other hand, Gandhi was well aware that class struggle would lead to violence and confrontation as well as hatred. It would further perpetuate alienation in one form or the other. Gandhi firmly believed in the process of reconciliation of conflicts in a peaceful way.

Gandhi was also well aware of the evils of centralization—centralization of power and positions leading to acquisition of power by a few at the expense of the teeming millions of people.

Gandhi was also opposed to industrialization as it would contribute the growth of cities and destruction of the harmonious life in the rural surroundings. In the cities slums and shanties are inevitable. In cities and towns the inequalities are much more glaring and the exploitation would go unabated.

We should not forget that Gandhi was well aware of positive contribution of the Western civilization, such as rule of law and constitutionalism. Civil liberty, equality, and rights were some of its positive gains. But Gandhi realized that modern civilization is based on competition and acquisition of wealth and concentration of power. Hence, the positive gains are small, compared to the evils it perpetuates.

Gandhi wanted to combine rights with duties, empirical knowledge with moral right, economic development with spiritual progress, religious toleration with freedom of, or from, religious belief and women's liberation with a broader conception of humanity.

Quality of Life

In the modern civilization man is becoming a slave of the machines. Machines overtake men. The West equates "Civilization" with the progress of

industrialization. The West divides the world as “Civilized and non-civilized,”—the haves and have-nots. But Gandhi’s yardstick for progress was quite different.

Gandhi’s Conception of civilization is not rights based, but duty based. “Civilization is that mode of conduct which points out to man the path of duty.” Gandhi was concerned with the improvement of quality of life rather than quantitative development.

Colonialism and Capitalism

Gandhi felt that modern civilization is at the root of the colonial problem. While Lenin connected colonialism to capitalism, Gandhi linked colonialism to modernity. Gandhi came to the conclusion that the Western Civilization was based on brute force. Gandhi opined that even for West, modernization is an evil, and in the case of India and the Orient, it is worse. Gandhi saw colonialism as the fruit of modern civilization. This truth must be grasped by all.

Gandhi was also clear on one point. Morality is far superior to any constitution or positive law.

Eradication of Poverty

Gandhi was opposed to poverty. How to eradicate poverty was his main concern. He realized that the Indian middle class was aping the West and clamouring to develop India on the Western industrial model. They wanted to ape England and Japan or Italy. Hence, Gandhi

examined in his books the conditions of life in those countries and came to the conclusion that their model is unsuited to Indian conditions. Gandhi also analyzed the historical causes and consequences of British rule in India.

Hind Swaraj is divided into 20 short chapters.—11 chapters deal with historical reflection and 9 with philosophical thought. In his philosophical reflections Gandhi dealt at length about the Nature of *Swaraj* and of civilization. He highlighted the futility of violent revolutions and harped on nonviolent social change which he considered as sound means to attain Independence. He was very much concerned about the youth and highlighted the need for educational reforms.

He appealed to Indians to adopt technology appropriate to Indian needs and he vehemently opposed industrialization on the Western Industrial model. Gandhi also gave a series of practical proposals to moderates, extremists, the new middle class and the English. He was of the firm opinion that innovated and renovated Indian civilization alone can attain *Swaraj*. Gandhi also made a clear distinction between *Swaraj* as a self rule and *Swaraj* as self government or home rule.

Many of the philosophical and practical concepts which he enunciated in an embryonic form in *Hind Swaraj*, were later elaborated during his struggles and also in developing the Constructive Programme. Gandhi was ever receptive to new ideas in his life time. But what

strikes most is the consistency with which he advocated the key concepts in his life.

After one hundred years when we look back into the concepts and contents of *Hind Swaraj*, we find its remarkable relevance. Gandhi was well aware of the fact that understanding grows of misunderstanding. He was not afraid to be in the minority of one. What matters most to him is truth. Truth shall prevail: truth and nothing but truth, that was important for him. For him truth is not abstract, but a concrete reality. Adherence to truth, that matters. What he felt right, he had no hesitation to propagate the same.

Unbridled Exploitation in the Post-Colonial World

In this post-colonial period, people see and feel some of the stark realities of the Capitalist system. In the modern Industrial world, the disparities between the rich and the poor have grown. On many fronts man or woman is dispensable. Profit is the god of modern capitalism. Consumerism is all pervasive. Unbridled exploitation of nature is resulting in the environmental changes and even leading to climate change. With the collapse of the socialist system, capitalism in its stark naked form is exploiting the people. The multinationals rule the roost. Nation states lost their real sovereignty. They have to play to the tune of the capitalist giants. People started feeling the pinch of the modern civilization as development is at the expense of the millions of human beings. Modern civilization is affecting the value systems of the people. The people in the less developed world are aping the Western

Industrial model and in the process they have become the internal colonies of the Western capitalist system.

Culture and agriculture should go together. When the farms are mechanized and produce only commercial crops where is the autonomy of the peasant? The invisible hands dictate the terms. The Marxist model of the development based on class struggle lost its luster. Capitalism turns into a monolith god—all pervasive and affecting the values and morals of the people at large. Corruption and dishonesty rule the roost.

Restoration of Moral Values

In such a dismal situation Gandhi appears to be a beacon light even to some people in the West. Gandhi provided an alternate model of development. His method of *Satyagraha* appears to be a most potent force as it gives enormous scope for individual action as well as non-cooperation with evil. Gandhi harped on restoration of moral values and he made human being as the measure of development. His emphasis on purity of ends and means and openness of methods is gaining importance. The rights based approach has reached a dead-end. If not today, in the years to come people will look to Gandhi as the answer as he emphasized on duties and human values.

When Gandhi described the European civilization as a seven-day wonder, many thought that it was a hyperbole. Gandhi was dubbed by some as the representative of the by-gone ages. But now, after hundred years, people have started listening to the lone voice of Gandhi as sane and sensible.

Gandhi's greatness lay in the fact that he placed alternatives before humanity. He was never content with mere criticism or condemnation. For him human is the measure of all things. *Sarvodaya* or the welfare of all is not merely a dream, but a blue print for future action.

What Gandhi requires today is reinterpretation of his thought in the light of changed circumstances. The world is slowly, but steadily marching towards a post religious society. Morality is not divinely ordained, it is a social necessity. It is not blind faith but adherence to secular values, that would solve many problems in the world. Individual freedom seasoned with social responsibility will lead to collective action. When all systems collapse due to unbridled corruption, it is the individual initiative that would bring a sea change in the situation. The centenary of *Hind Swaraj* is yet another opportunity to think in terms of alternatives to the present system which would enable to develop full personality of the individuals.

Hind Swaraj: Hundred Years After How Relevant is it Today?

J. M. Kaul

Introduction

Hind Swaraj, in a sense Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi's Manifesto, was written between November 13 and November 22 on board the ship *Kildonan Castle* on his return trip from England to South Africa in 1909. It is considered as Gandhi's seminal work, the theoretical basis of his life's mission. Although he has said in his own foreword to the English translation:

‘These views are mine because I hope to act according to them. They are almost a part of my being... But yet they are not mine, because I lay no claim to any originality. They have been formed after reading several books. That which I dimly felt received support from them’

However, there is no denying that *Hind Swaraj* puts forth some very original ideas and created a sensation when it appeared. The Government promptly banned it. Even in India it was considered impractical. Both from the Left and the Right it was castigated and even Gokhale who held Gandhi in great esteem felt that Gandhi had written in haste and would on reflection revise the book's philosophy.

It is true that the book was written in haste. In the course of the ten days that he wrote the book he worked at a feverish pace. When his right hand got tired he started writing with his left. It was as if he was inspired and had to put down in writing what was almost some kind of a revelation. It is in this light that the book has to be read and understood: *the vision of a prophet who was looking far into the future and wrote not just for the immediate present but for the generations to come and for the environment that he could visualize enfolding as*

human society evolved and the ecology of the planet underwent changes.

His own heir, Jawaharlal Nehru, quietly buried it when in his correspondence with the Mahatma as late as 1945 he declared: “Briefly put my view is that the question is not of truth versus untruth or non-violence versus violence.....I do not understand why a village should necessarily embody truth and non-violence. A village, normally speaking, is backward intellectually and culturally and no progress can be made from a backward environment”.

But Nehru himself realised in the closing years of his life that the path of development that he had adopted was not benefiting millions of the poor in the country. Reiterating that he was in favour of modern machinery he nevertheless felt that he needed to hark back to the words of the Mahatma who had pleaded for a very different model of development.

Today hundred years after the publication of this work one finds that the centenary of the book is being celebrated not only in India but in other parts of the world. The ideas contained in the book are being seriously debated by social activists, intellectuals, philosophers and political leaders. Is it just a form of worshipping an icon or is there something truly relevant in the ideas put forth in *Hind Swaraj*?

Truth and Non-violence

After two world wars since the book was written, after the discovery of the ultimate weapon of destruction that destroyed Hiroshima and Nagasaki killing millions in seconds, after the violence that is a growing feature of life in the sprawling metropolises and cities of today, surely we need to realize that the question before us is, indeed, one of non-violence versus violence.

In 1909 when Gandhi wrote about non-violence the two world wars had not taken place, nor had the Bolshevik November Revolution of 1917 in Russia. Many of the earlier wars fought by small armies on battlefields far away from the main cities had hardly affected the mass of the population of the countries that fought the wars. Wars tended to be glorified and were considered as inevitable in the march of countries for “progress” and “development”.

Capitalism was in its heyday. The developed capitalist countries turned imperialist had colonized the industrially undeveloped world and divided it among themselves. Socialist ideas were already in the air and even though Marx had written that “the spectre of communism is haunting Europe” he had in his Manifesto in passages of almost lyrical prose waxed eloquent on the enormous power of Capital to harness the productive forces. Says Marx in the *Communist Manifesto*:

“the bourgeoisie during its rule of scarce hundred years has created more massive and more colossal

productive forces then have all the preceding generations together. Subjection of nature's forces to man, machinery, application of chemistry to industry and agriculture, steam navigation, railways, electric telegraphs, clearing of whole continents for cultivation, canalization of rivers, whole populations conjured out of the ground. - what earlier century had even a presentiment that such productive forces slumbered in the lap of social labour”.

The Changing Face of Capital

The harnessing of productive forces continues today but not for clearing whole continents for cultivation or for the manufacture of consumption goods but for the preparations of weapons of mass destruction and since it is no longer necessary to physically colonize the less industrially developed parts of the world to try to colonize space, the moon and the planets. Meanwhile Capital has discovered the means of increasing itself without going into the process of production at all. The development of the stock markets has made it possible for capital to multiply itself by sheer manipulation of the stock markets. It has thus become a kind of parasitic capitalism mostly delinked from production of goods. Perhaps the term “casino capitalism” best describes present day capitalism.

Meanwhile it is interesting to note that the London Times quoting the Vatican newspaper *L'Osservatore Romano*, seems to suggest a reappraisal by the Catholic Church of Marx. The Vatican paper said Marx's early critiques of capitalism highlighted the “social alienation”

felt by large part of humanity” that remained excluded from economic and political decision making”. The Times Report goes on to refer to George Sans a professor of contemporary philosophy at the pontifical Gregorian University who argues that Marx’s work remains specially relevant today as mankind was seeking “a new harmony” between its needs and the natural environment.

The recent recession, considered by many economists to be even worse than the crisis of 1929-1933 has led to many getting disillusioned with present day Capitalism and seeking alternative paths of development.

The latest UN Report points to nearly one and a half billion people in the world who go to bed hungry. Even Hillary Clinton admits that “for one billion people around the world, the daily effort to grow, buy or sell food is the defining struggle of their lives”.

It is in this background that the dream of those who felt that modern civilization represented by liberal democratic capitalism such as that which prevails in the United States and most countries in Europe has turned sour and in the process of rethinking that has started Gandhi’s ideas are being seriously considered and studied.

Changing Mindsets

As the competition for the world’s resources gathers momentum with these resources growing scarce day by day the link between the present model of development and violence and wars becomes clearer.

Attitudes have changed gradually as more and more people are realising that wars do not provide any solution to problems and that it is no longer possible to hold on to conquests even after victories in wars. As for class war and revolutionary wars the failure of the Russian revolution and its inability to bring about the liberation of the masses that was promised or to end the inequality between the privileged minority and the rest of the population has disillusioned those who had believed in such wars.

Many of these conflicts have dragged on for decades with no prospect of a successful conclusion. The experience of the prolonged Arab-Israel conflict has resulted in making it clear that an attempt to resolve the conflict through violence is not likely to lead to a solution. In theory at least it is accepted by both sides that ultimately it is through peace talks that a solution can possibly emerge. In Nepal the Maoists after having gained control of more than half the country finally surrendered arms and accepted the path of parliamentary democracy. The IRA and the Ulster conflict after decades of bloody clashes has now yielded place to a ceasefire and some sort of an agreement though tensions continue and the future is perhaps still uncertain.

The failure of the United States, the most powerful state in the world, to subdue by military means the Vietnamese people, the revulsion in the whole world to

the Bush government's war against the Iraqi people has resulted in the unprecedented election for the first time of Barack Obama, a black African-American pledged to withdraw American troops from Iraq within months.

The experience of the last hundred years is indeed beginning to change mindsets. The perception that violence is not the ultimate weapon to achieve one's ends is beginning to permeate the minds of at least that section of humanity that is able to think for itself and to draw the right lessons from the experience gained over the last few decades. For the first time since the nuclear bomb was developed the new American President has seriously suggested that disarmament and a world free of nuclear weapons was an important part of his agenda. Non-violence and *Satyagraha* are increasingly being used as the preferred weapons of struggle rather than the gun and the bomb. The human psyche cannot be expected to change overnight but the evolutionary clock is ticking away and the dream of humanity for a peaceful world and a peaceful society could indeed come true in the not too distant future.

After the corruption that has become a part of the prevailing globalised world and has infected every core of our society it cannot be denied that the question truly is of truth versus untruth.

Now hundred years after *Hind Swaraj* the urban dream as a symbol of modern civilization has turned into

a nightmare. Gandhi's prophetic words that cities would turn into centres of violence and untruth have come true surely it is time to realize that we need to turn to the ideas that were spelt out in *Hind Swaraj*.

Modern/ Western Civilization

Among the most controversial of Gandhi's remarks in *Hind Swaraj* were those on modern civilization. A few words on this aspect of Gandhi's ideas may not be out of place here.

First of all it is necessary to appreciate that modern civilization against which Gandhi hits out refers to the civilization that developed as a result of the industrial revolution. Starting in Britain in the 18th century with the discovery of steam power based on coal it led to the mechanization of various industries and to the manufacture of machines. It gradually spread to Europe and by the 20th century with the colonization of practically the whole globe it had spread throughout the world. It gave rise to its own culture its own economics and its own living styles.

It is thus only about three hundred years old. When talking of civilization there is often a tendency to forget this and to believe that science and civilization arose only in the modern era three hundred years ago. The reality is that the earliest civilizations started some eight or nine thousand years ago and some of the most important scientific discoveries arose in the pre-industrial

revolution era. Beginning from the ancient civilizations of Mesopotamia, Egypt, India, China, Greece, Rome right up to medieval Europe history is replete with scientific discoveries that laid the foundations of modern western civilization. Compared to all that was achieved in the past eight or nine thousand years, the developments of the recent three hundred years is important as they are pale into insignificance.

To give a few examples: The Indus Valley civilization in India is credited with many important scientific achievements. Among them is irrigation for agriculture as early as 4500 BC. What was probably the World's first dock was constructed in 2400 BC. The drainage and sewerage system of the Indus Valley system was in advance of many other early civilizations.

The earliest Indian astronomical text dates to 1200 BC. Zinc was being mined in Zawar in Rajasthan in 400 B.C.

And then perhaps the crowning achievement of early India was the decimal number system and the use of Zero. The trigonometric functions of Sine and Versine from which Cosine was derived were developed by the famous Indian mathematicians Aryabhata and Bhaskar. These names are well known but there were many others whose contribution to science is now only gradually being studied.

The pyramids of Egypt, one of the most massive and complex structures, are still regarded as one of the wonders of the world.

The names of Socrates, Plato and Aristotle as well as Archimedes are well known. There are many others who contributed to the development of science. The Greeks are credited with having been the first to develop the science of botany. Eratosthenes of Alexandria is credited with being the first to measure the world's circumference.

The renaissance in Europe, 14th to 16th century, is known to have been the result of the discovery of Greek and Roman classical literature which started a new era in European history following the middle ages. The renaissance also witnessed the discovery of continents, the Ptolemaic system of astronomy and such powerful innovations as paper, printing, the Mariner's Compass and gunpowder, the last believed to have been first developed in China.

In the 17th century, Isaac Newton (1643 to 1727) physicist, mathematician, astronomer, natural philosopher who is considered one of the most influential men in history described universal gravitation and the three laws of motion which dominated the scientific view of the physical universe for the next three centuries. Note that this is also prior to the industrial revolution and the gradual introduction of machinery which became larger and larger and more sophisticated over the years.

The point in going into all of this is to show that some of the greatest achievements of modern science took place even prior to the industrial revolution. Those who decry the Gandhian vision of machinery that the masses can use as against machinery for mass production that deprives the masses of employment need to keep these facts in mind.

A civilization that is based on greed, in which mammon has replaced God, which measures progress in terms of profits, which puts corporate health and the stock market above human health and well-being can hardly be called a civilization.

A civilization that has destroyed the environment and threatens the very existence of the planet can surely not be considered progressive.

Perhaps the most baleful effects of western civilization have been its influence on the culture and ethos of the different peoples of the world. Globalization having brought the whole world in its net, it is trying to wipe out all the indigenous cultures and philosophies developed over the centuries.

The philosophy implicit in modern/western civilization is the hedonistic philosophy of maximizing pleasure and minimizing pain. However, the economic system that is the basis of western civilization enables only a few to maximise their pleasure while condemning

the vast mass of others to a life that consists of hunger, pain and deprivation. And in their effort to maximise their pleasure they discover that pleasure and happiness is not the same.

Clearly as long as this continues to be the dominant outlook of the people the possibility of building the kind of society that is outlined by Gandhi in *Hind Swaraj* will not be possible. To expect any change in this outlook in the very near future would be unrealistic and one therefore has to be patient and continue to work tirelessly towards a better society.

The Next stage of Evolution

All that one can say is that there are a number of factors that seem to be leading slowly but steadily towards change.

It is difficult to foresee how the drama of human evolution will unfold in the coming years. But the Force or the Cosmic Energy that enabled the amoeba to develop into the fishes, and the birds and the reptiles and the mammals and then into Homo Sapiens will undoubtedly continue to act and bring about major changes in human consciousness. Persons with such higher levels of consciousness have already appeared and will continue to appear in larger numbers. Gandhi was one of them. He was no God or an Incarnation of the Supreme Deity, but was just an ordinary human being whose experience in South Africa and whose intense

spiritual inclinations enabled him to play a seemingly super-human role on the world stage. Gandhi's life and work cannot be understood except in the light of the spiritual side of him.

A number of contradictions in the present phase of history, the three hundred years known as western/modern civilization, are appearing that will lead to the end of this "civilization" perhaps sooner than we think. Let us not forget how the seemingly invincible Soviet Union with a nuclear arsenal that could have destroyed the planet many times over, collapsed within a few months under the weight of its own contradictions.

The widening gap between the many billions living in poverty, many of them in hunger and the few millionaires and billionaires is one such contradiction that is growing sharper every day. The social and political tension that it is causing is already leading to a rethinking on the need for a more humane social system.

Modern/western civilization has been built entirely on fossil fuels-coal in the early stages and now oil. These are being rapidly exhausted and may not last more than a few decades. What will be the shape of things when this happens? Certainly very different from what it is today. Will it be possible to sustain the life styles that the rich are leading today?

Nuclear energy is being tried as a replacement for oil. If some countries wish to replace it for oil, surely every

country will wish to do so and cannot be denied the right to do it. Should that happen and knowing that the dividing line between nuclear energy and the nuclear bomb is very thin will we be able to stop the proliferation of nuclear weapons. And when that happens will we not face the prospect of a nuclear holocaust? Already the perception is there that only the complete elimination of nuclear weapons from the world can prevent nuclear proliferation.

The destruction of the environment leading to global warming, poisoning of the rivers and even the oceans is another threat that is looming large. Urbanization expected to embrace 50 per cent of the world's population by 2020 will as Gandhi correctly foresaw lead to violence and crime and trafficking in drugs on a huge scale.

Many western scientists are already expressing their fears of the world not surviving beyond the end of this century. Whether that will happen or the human instinct for survival lead to the leap in evolution that will bring into being beings with a higher and more spiritual consciousness remains to be seen. Certainly those of us who think that an intelligent cosmic Being is guiding the process of evolution have the conviction that the world will survive and we will gradually move towards a period of a more humane and just civilization.

Gandhi's vision outlined in *Hind Swaraj* is a blue print for the future which needs to be studied and acted upon not as a sacred text or a *shastra* but as a guide to the working out of a new model of development based on present day realities in a world that has changed considerably in the last hundred years.

Towards a Comprehensive Understanding of Gandhi's Concept of Swaraj: Some Critical Thoughts on Parel's Reading of Swaraj

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Introduction

Gandhi associates very diverse meanings with the concept of *swaraj*. Sometimes he uses it to refer to the national independence and on some other occasions he relates it with the spiritual freedom of the individual. He uses it as synonym to liberty, autonomy, political freedom of individual, nation's economic freedom, individual's freedom from poverty, self-realization, self-rule, freedom from alien rule and so on. For the purpose of analysis, Anthony J. Parel in his essay "Gandhian Freedoms and Self-rule" groups these various meanings under four headings; national independence, political freedom of the individual, economic freedom of the individual, and individual's spiritual freedom or self-rule. Though these divisions are very helpful in understanding different aspects of Gandhi's concept of *swaraj*, they generate the following confusions. First, since Parel focuses on the different dimensions of meaning of the concept of *swaraj*, he misses its comprehensiveness. Second, Parel not only

groups Gandhi's notion of *swaraj* into four but also distinguishes the first three from the last one. The title of his paper—"Gandhian Freedoms and Self-Rule"—itself points to such a distinction. In another paper he affirms that out of the four *purusharthas* of the orthodox Indian tradition—*dharma*, *artha*, *kama* and *moksha*—only the first three, according to Gandhi, belong to the province of politics and political philosophy, while *moksha* lies outside. Though for Gandhi politics *per se* is not the pursuit of *moksha* both politics and political philosophy ought to recognise it as the final end of all human striving¹.

This paper tries to argue that such distinction may not do justice to Gandhi's philosophical position because he did not believe in any boundaries between different aspects of human life and as Parel himself observes, in Gujarati Gandhi used the same word, *swaraj*, in order to express all the four aspects of freedom². Therefore this paper attempts to find out a common definition of *swaraj* which can explain all the four aspects which Parel describes. It also argues that, Parel distinguishes between self-rule and other three aspects of *swaraj* owing to his belief that self-rule or *moksha* for Gandhi lies outside the domain of politics. On the contrary this paper affirms that, although Gandhi speaks of the metaphysical or transcendental idea of *moksha*, it has a predominantly pragmatic value in his philosophy and for him the best possible self-rule or *moksha* consists in the ability to act well in every sphere of human life. This paper tries to

elaborate this with four sections, each trying to define one aspect of Gandhi's idea of *swaraj* keeping its inseparable relation with others intact.

National Independence

According to Parel, Gandhi understood *swaraj* for the nation as the 'collective freedom from alien rule'. He observes that there is nothing original in understanding *swaraj* in terms of 'a collective freedom from alien rule'. Nor there is anything novel in the idea of fighting for its attainment. He believes that Gandhi's originality lies in his use of non-violence as a powerful method in attaining *swaraj*. Parel observes that according to Gandhi, independence is necessary but not sufficient for full human flourishing, whether at the national or at the individual level. For Gandhi, argues Parel, independence is negative freedom while self-rule is positive freedom. Parel adds that the latter requires 'self-restraint' or 'disciplined rule from within'. And for Gandhi *swaraj*, different from the word 'independence' which is a modern concept, is a 'sacred' or 'Vedic' word coming from the very origins of Indian civilization. While independence does not require any 'disciplined rule from within', *swaraj* is essentially self-rule³.

It is obvious from the above that Parel very clearly draws a line between independence and self-rule and considers the latter as relatively more important. Hence his analysis reduces the possibility of initiating a search for a common definition to Gandhi's concept of *swaraj*,

encompassing all its different aspects. On the other hand it also minimizes the possibility of considering Gandhi as a serious political thinker who has something more to say about the concept of *swaraj* for the nation than merely as 'a collective freedom from alien rule'.

This paper argues that for Gandhi *swaraj* for the nation does not mean a mere collective freedom from the alien rule. He was proposing a more comprehensive idea, which will comfortably and harmoniously reconcile all other aspects of *swaraj* with the idea of individual-spiritual freedom or self-rule. It is obvious that since 1920 Gandhi's political activities predominantly aimed at 'a collective freedom from alien rule'. But it is evident that for him *swaraj* meant more than this. In an article titled "A Word on Explanation", published on 26th January 1921, Gandhi explains his current position about *Hind Swaraj*, which he has written in 1909. This was used as the foreword for the next edition of *Hind Swaraj*. Gandhi writes:

"But I would warn the reader against thinking that I am today aiming at the *Swaraj* described therein. I know that India is not ripe for it. It may seem an impertinent to say so. But such is my conviction. I am individually working for the self-rule pictured therein. But today my corporate activity is undoubtedly devoted to the attainment of Parliamentary *Swaraj*, in accordance with the wishes of the people of India".⁴

Here Gandhi, very explicitly, says that, though his corporate activities are devoted to attain a collective freedom from alien rule which he calls 'Parliamentary *Swaraj*', his conception of *swaraj* for the nation which he has articulated in the *Hind Swaraj* does not exhaust with it. In *Hind Swaraj*, Gandhi very vigorously rejects the idea which equates *swaraj* for the nation merely with the overthrowing of the British. He conveys this idea on many occasions and in many ways. On another occasion Gandhi affirms that by patriotism he means the welfare of the whole people, and if he could secure it at the hands of the English, he should bow down his head to them.⁵

Indeed Gandhi's analysis and understanding of *swaraj* for the nation is much deeper than as it is usually understood. From the very beginning of his active political career, he understood that it cannot be attained just by throwing the British out of India. He knew very well that tyranny of any Indian ruler can be just as much as that of the British. He writes that his patriotism does not teach him that he can allow people to be crushed under the heel of Indian Princes.⁶ He was also equally aware of the fact that imperialism and colonialism not only dehumanized the colonized but also brutalized the colonizers.

The programme of *Satyagraha*, which Gandhi designed in order to attain *Swaraj*, in no way aims at physically throwing out the British or any opponent. It is a very unique method which seeks to change the heart of

the opponent by personal suffering. He believes that human suffering has the power to melt even the stoniest heart. He has shown great faith for it. He asserts that a change of heart is possible, otherwise non-co-operation (*Satyagraha*) is of no use.⁷ His *Satyagraha* did not aim at the change of the heart of the British people alone but it also sought the change of the heart of Indians as well. Non-co-operation or *Satyagraha*, says Gandhi, is a plea for a change of heart, not merely in the English but equally in ourselves and he expects the change first in the Indians and then as a matter of course in the English.⁸ The key to understand Gandhi's concept of *swaraj* for the nation lies in understanding what he means by the change of the heart for English and for us as well.

The change of the heart of the British, according to Gandhi, does not simply consist in them realizing that their holding to India is unjust so they must leave it. As Ashis Nandy observes, in all his life, Gandhi sought to free the British rather than the Indians from the clutches of imperialism and the Brahmins rather than the untouchables from the caste system.⁹ He was not aiming at a mere overthrowing of the British imperial or colonial rule by non-violent methods. Rather he aims at an overcoming of imperialism and colonialism by changing the hearts of people. For him the change of heart of the British means making them realize by personal suffering how imperialism dehumanizes them and hence how it is equally important for the British too to overcome it.

When he was talking about the change of heart of the Indians, he was urging the Indian people to become capable of living together as a nation—a legitimate political community by adopting *swadeshi*, removal of untouchability and establishing inter and intra religious unity. This is how he defines his idea of *swaraj* or independence for the nation, which is a collective capacity to live together in peace and harmony. He writes in *Hind Swaraj* that it is *swaraj* when we learn to rule ourselves and it is, therefore, in the palm of our hands.¹⁰ We will see in a following section of this paper on self-rule that, for Gandhi spiritual freedom of the individual or *moksha* is not something different from this. It will argue that being a *karmayogi* Gandhi believes that *moksha* or self- rule does not lie in an other-worldly metaphysical realm, but instead it lies in the nurturing capacity of the individual and the nation (*praja*) to organize their lives.

We find that he goes on to define *swaraj* in many ways according to different contexts but he keeps referring to this seminal idea of *swaraj* for the nation in different ways till the end of his life. For instance, on one occasion he affirms that we cannot have *swaraj* until we have made ourselves fit for it¹¹ and on another occasion he observes that the key to *swaraj* lies in self-help.¹² He further asserts the individual dimension of *swaraj* by stating that it has to be 'experienced by each one for himself.'¹³ Therefore, for Gandhi *swaraj* cannot be imposed on the people from above either by alien rule or

natives. He believed that independence or *swaraj* must begin at the bottom. Fred Dallmayr argues that, for Gandhi *swaraj* must first be nurtured, through education on the local or village level and then is to be encouraged to spread out into larger communities and the world through a series of oceanic circles.¹⁴ To sum up, for Gandhi *swaraj* for nation does not simply means 'a collective freedom from alien rule' but it means a collective capacity of any people to live together in harmony. According to him, to attain independence for the nation also means to nurture and strengthen this capacity in the individual to live together in peace and prosperity. Gandhi's understanding for *swaraj* for the nation is based on the assumption that he rejects to understand national independence in terms of who is holding the government. For him since people constitute the nation, its independence must also be defined in terms of people's condition. He writes in *Hind Swaraj*:

I believe that you want the millions of India to be happy, not that you want the reins of Government in your hands. If that be so, we have to consider only one thing: how can the millions obtain self-rule?¹⁵

Political Freedom of the Individual

For Parel the second aspect of Gandhi's notion of *swaraj* is political freedom of the individual. He argues that the individual political freedom is often defined in terms of 'rights' in the context of western modern politics and Gandhi too does the same. But Parel also believes that

this does not make Gandhi a rights theorist in the western sense of the term. He says that Gandhi's defence of freedoms and rights is based on his view of human nature, which he borrows from Indian sources.¹⁶ He further adds that Gandhi has introduced two significant modifications into the theory of rights. First, he asserted that, however beneficial and necessary rights were to such well-being, they needed to be complemented by duty or dharma. Second, Gandhi made the process of securing rights in a less violent and more peaceful manner. Parel observes that this is what *satyagraha* is all about.¹⁷

Gandhi's contributions to the theory of rights by introducing the above mentioned modifications are well acknowledged by many scholars like Arvind Sharma,¹⁸ Beverley Birch and Michael Nicholson¹⁹. But the more relevant question here is whether Gandhi really understood political freedom of the individual in terms of rights? Gandhi has not only articulated his idea of political freedom of *swaraj* for the individual on the basis of his views of human nature, which he has borrowed from the traditional Indian sources but also has rejected some basic assumptions of the western theory of rights. In this context, is it reasonable to argue that he has understood political freedom of the individual in terms of rights?

Many of the modern political liberal philosophers from Hobbes to Rawls assume that human beings are fundamentally brutal and destructive to one another in

the state of the nature. They hold that human coexistence is possible on the basis of implicit unstated contracts that define human relations and interactions. Therefore, for them rights are the most important means by which one defends one's individual interests from other's illegitimate interference. On the contrary, Gandhi's understanding of individual political freedom is based on the assumption that man is not born to live in isolation but is essentially a social animal, independent and interdependent.²⁰ Unlike the social-contract theorists he also believes that man's nature is not essentially evil and he firmly believes in 'the essential unity of men'. Here Gandhi largely depends upon the *Advaita* philosophy for his understanding of man and his place in the world in which the transcendental and metaphysical unity of human being is assumed. Since Gandhi's understanding fundamentally defers from one of the basic assumptions of modern political philosophy that 'humans by nature are brutal' and 'mankind is joined together by manmade contact', it is difficult to accept that he understood that rights are the primary source of an individual's political freedom. For Gandhi the true source of political freedom of the individual is duty, and not rights, because he believes that if we all discharge our duties, individual political freedom will not be far to seek.²¹ Along with the above mentioned conviction regarding human nature, Gandhi also believes that the individual is born with a set of indebtedness to the world and he becomes man only by recognizing his duty to others. Therefore, he sees duty as a binding factor of mankind and makes it the basis for

understanding political freedom of the individual as well as to develop his conception of good society.

Nevertheless, this does not mean that Gandhi has nothing to say about the idea of rights. Gandhi does acknowledge the importance of individual's rights in modern politics and he also introduces a unique method, which is characterised by uncompromising nonviolence in order to secure them. He however did not believe that they are the basic sources of individual's political freedom. Indeed for Gandhi rights are just a licence to political freedom of the individual. Political freedom does not consist in a state of merely being free from some external obstacles in order to make choices in the situation in which the individual finds himself/herself. For him liberty is one thing, and licence is another. Gandhi acknowledges that many a time we confuse licence for liberty and lose the latter. License, according to him, leads one to selfishness whereas liberty guides one to supreme good.²² For him political freedom of the individual is more than just the absence of some external obstacles or barriers; it also requires the presence of something like self-determination and self-mastery. For Gandhi, it has to be necessarily achieved collectively. According to him individual political freedom can be best achieved through the participation in the process whereby one's community exercises collective control over its own affairs to attain greatest good for all. By participating in the process whereby one's community exercises collective control over itself does not mean that

the individual can achieve his/her political freedom by having right to vote to elect representative or having right to be elected as a representative. Here participation means 'performing duty' and therefore the individual can attain his/her political freedom only by performing his or her duties towards others. Therefore, for him *swaraj* as political freedom of the individual means participating in the process, by performing his/ her duty, whereby one's community exercises collective control over its own affairs to attain greatest good for all.

Economic Freedom of the Individual

The third aspect of Gandhi's notion of *swaraj*, according to Parel, is the economic freedom of the individual and it means freedom from poverty. Parel accepts that poverty is a relative phenomenon but he believes that Gandhi had his own criteria to judge whether a given society suffered from freedom-denying poverty. On Parel's account, Gandhi's criteria are as follows; first, the availability of the necessities of life (decent food, clothing, and dwelling), second the ability to enjoy the fruits of one's toils, and third the opportunity for growth of the individual. He also believes that there is no essential contradiction between Gandhi's acceptance of voluntary poverty and his attack on it because 'it was not an approval, much less a glorification of involuntary poverty.'²³ There is no doubt that for Gandhi poverty is 'a product of an unjust social order' and is a great hindrance in the path to achieve freedom. He says that unless poverty and unemployment are wiped out from India, he

would not agree that we have attained freedom.²⁴ It is also very easy to find many references from Gandhi's writings to argue that his voluntary poverty cannot be seen as an approval of poverty. In his lecture titled "Does Economic Progress clash with Real Progress?" Gandhi himself has stated that "no one has ever suggested that grinding pauperism can lead to anything else than moral degradation."²⁵

On the other hand, it is also a matter of serious consideration that, till his death he firmly believed that if India is to attain true freedom and through India the world also, then sooner or later the fact must be recognized that people will have to live in villages, not in towns, in huts and not in palaces.²⁶ Once, while explaining what is one of the important aims of writing *Hind Swaraj* he explains that, it was an attempt to see beauty in voluntary simplicity, voluntary poverty and slowness.²⁷ This understanding of Gandhi about poverty is based on his belief that poverty is man's natural condition. It means that, though Gandhi attacked the socially constructed poverty, yet he did not understand economic freedom of an individual or a nation merely a freedom from poverty. He was rather suggesting an overcoming of poverty, by adopting voluntary poverty, which consists in detachment and renunciation. We can see that Gandhi was obviously influenced here by the traditional Indian values of *asteya* (non-stealing) and *aparigraha* (non-possession)

Even if we look at his conception of economics, which is based on decentralized agrarian practices, human skills and trusteeship, we find that they neither aim at meeting certain economic conditions as a sign of economic development of the individual nor at abolishing economic inequalities among people. Parel also observed that if the above mentioned economic criteria are satisfied Gandhi was ready to tolerate 'the existence of excessive differences between the rich and the poor'.²⁸ Indeed Gandhi's all economic reforms simply aim at making individual and community self-sufficient and self-contented. He was very critical about the modern western understanding of individual's economic freedom in terms of meeting certain economic conditions and their belief that it can be achieved through more production and equal distribution. He strongly believed as observed by Ronald J. Terchek, that the problems cannot be overcome with more goods or even a more equitable distribution of goods.²⁹ Therefore it is one thing to say that he attacks the socially constructed poverty to assure that every individual's minimum economic needs have to be fulfilled and he had certain criteria to judge whether a given society provides conducive atmosphere to meet such needs, and another thing to say that he defines economic freedom of the individual or nation on the basis of certain economic conditions. He was concerned about the minimum economic requirements of individuals because he believes that these essential needs are not only the primary requirements for biological survival, but

also essential for man's moral and spiritual development. A starving man, asserts Gandhi, cannot think of God.³⁰

Although Gandhi accepts that an individual's minimum economic needs have to be met for his/her holistic development, he was not interested in defining economic freedom of the individual in terms of certain external economic conditions. Like any other aspect of his conception of *swaraj*, the defining feature of Gandhi's concept of economic freedom of the individual or nation is 'man' and not certain economic conditions. However for Gandhi the fulfilment of the minimum economic needs of an individual remains the prerequisite for defining economic freedom of an individual or a nation. Gandhi would prefer to define it for the individual or the nation in the way in which Ruskin has articulated it in his book *Unto This Last*. The influence of Ruskin and his work on Gandhi is well known. In the chapter titled *The Magic Spell of a Book* of his autobiography, he writes that "of these books, the one that brought about an instantaneous and practical transformation in my life was *Unto This Last*." In his paraphrasing of *Unto This Last* Gandhi writes

Therefore THERE IS NO WEALTH BUT LIFE. That country is the richest which nourishes the greatest number of noble and happy human beings; that man is richest who, having perfected the functions of his own life to the utmost, has also the widest

helpful influence, both personal and by means of his possessions, over the lives of others.³¹

Similarly Gandhi would argue that economic freedom of an individual cannot be understood by establishing external standards that stipulate how much an individual should consume in order to attain economic freedom. On the contrary Gandhi would say that it makes an individual dependent on others. For Gandhi, therefore economic freedom of an individual means the ability to minimize one's needs in order to be independent and to participate in economic activities of a community to make it self-sufficient and self-contained.

Self-Rule

On Parel's account, the fourth and the most important aspect of Gandhi's concept of *swaraj* is self-rule and it consists in the removal of the internal obstacles to freedom which is nothing but spiritual freedom. He further argues that, Gandhi derived the idea of spiritual freedom or self-rule from the Indian tradition, especially from the *Bhagavad Gita*, along with introducing a major conceptual change in it. Parel observes that though the notion of spiritual freedom in the Indian tradition was supposed to be an apolitical and an asocial state of affairs, requiring withdrawal from the socio-political world, Gandhi reinterpreted self-rule in such a way that he gave it not only a spiritual form, but also a social, political and economic profile. Though Parel acknowledges that all the four aspects of *swaraj* are

harmoniously interconnected, his analysis distinguishes the first three from self-rule or spiritual freedom. He says that, the first three, in some respects, are negative in character, but freedom as self-rule, in contrast, is positive in character. Parel maintains such a distinction largely due to his belief that for Gandhi the idea of self-rule lies outside the realm of politics. He argues that, self-rule presupposes the agency of the spirit (individual *atman*) and observes that politics and political philosophy ought to recognise *moksha* or spiritual emancipation as the final end of all human striving, though politics *per se* is not the pursuit of *moksha*.

Gandhi obviously defines the idea of self-rule or *moksha* in religious and metaphysical terms and he says that what he wants to achieve is self-realization, to see God face to face, to see the universal and all-pervading Spirit of Truth face to face and to attain *moksha*.³² But as Bhikhu Parekh and Arne Naess have observed, there is good amount of pragmatism in Gandhi's ideas about God, soul, *moksha* and many other metaphysical concepts. Parekh observes that Gandhi's arguments for believing in the existence of the cosmic power contain a powerful pragmatic element, which too is characteristic of Hindu religious tradition."³³ Naess³⁴ too elaborates Gandhi's pragmatic approach in his essay, *The Metaphysics of Satyagraha*. It is also evident from Gandhi's commentary on *Gita* that there is a pragmatic element in his idea of *moksha*; described in the metaphysical and religious vocabulary. In his *Gita* commentary he says that "there is

violence even in the act of thinking, and so long as that is so man cannot attain a state of perfect self-realization, his mind cannot even comprehend such a state.”³⁵ *Gita* is not the only place where he accepted this ‘terrible truth’, as there are other numerous occasions where he accepts that, being a finite human being, man cannot understand infinity. In *Gita*, Gandhi draws a parallel between his above mentioned concept of *moksha* with Euclid’s straight line. About the latter he says that “Euclid has defined a straight line as having no breadth, but no one has yet succeeded in drawing such a line and no one ever will. Still we can progress in geometry only by postulating such a line.”³⁶ Therefore in Gandhi’s philosophy the concept of *moksha* as described in metaphysical and religious vocabulary has strong pragmatic value; it is a source of inspiration for individual to live a disciplined and virtuous life for performing his duty (*Nishkamakarma*) for the welfare of all.

Nevertheless, in Gandhi’s philosophy the value of the concept of *moksha*/spiritual freedom (self-rule) is not confined to its pragmatic aspects. Gandhi, being a man of action, had a more profound understanding of *moksha* that can be practiced. His life testifies that he was neither an escapist nor a pessimist. In his interpretation of *Gita* he explains that man cannot attain complete self-realization in the sense of being one with God in his life, but this does not mean that man should voluntarily renounce activity and sit at home quietly, or commit suicide. On the contrary, Gandhi defines his concept of

moksha in very active terms. Gandhi writes in his commentary that, if we agree that man cannot attain *moksha* as it is defined above, we need not spend much thought or indulge in intellectual exercises over this problem. He added that we should rather concentrate on the means; if they are right, the end is as good as attained.³⁷ Therefore, for Gandhi *moksha* is not an end that everyone can achieve. For him it is extremely important for us to adopt the means by which we pursue it – the continuous effort to live a complete non-violent life. He says that *swaraj* (*moksha*) consists in our effort to win it.³⁸

Two things are essential for putting efforts to live a complete non-violent life. The first is self-purification, understood as controlling the senses or removing the internal obstacles or living virtues and disciplined life. Gandhi would argue that creating a sense of detachment by controlling senses and by living a disciplined and virtuous life is not enough to live a complete non-violent life because the very existence of the body depends on *karma* (action) and every action without exception involves violence. Now the question is; how to escape from all karmas in order to live a complete non-violent life? Gandhi says that, there is no escape from karma. For him body means *karma* and *karma* means body and both are violent without any exception. But he says that an action done with the spirit of *yajna*—for the benefit of others—is ahimsa or non-violent act. Then the second essential thing to lead a complete non-violent life,

according to Gandhi, is performing selfless action with the sole intention of serving others; Gandhi called it *Niskamakarma*. It simply means Gandhi's concept of *moksha* or self-rule is the inevitable link with the socio-political activities and its sense cannot be grasped by segregating them. As Gandhi explains, "if a man seeks *moksha* and still believes that he is independent, he will utterly fail in his aspiration. One who seeks *moksha* behaves as society's servant."³⁹ Thus there can be no divorce between Gandhi's first three aspects of *swaraj* and self-rule. In other words for Gandhi self-rule or *moksha* does not lie outside the realm of politics but is the very ability to act well in the socio-economic-political arena.

Concluding Remarks

Though we have critically engaged with Anthony J. Parel's essay "Gandhian freedoms and self-rule", our primary purpose was to show the integrity of Gandhi's idea of *Swaraj*. We tried to demonstrate this by two ways. First, by rejecting the distinction made by Parel between the first three aspect of *swaraj* and self-rule. We have seen that, within Gandhi's framework, such a distinction is not possible as for him *moksha* or self-rule does not lie in the metaphysical realm. For Gandhi self-rule consists in the ability to act well in the socio-economic-political arena. Secondly, we have seen that though Gandhi uses different expressions like independence of nation, political freedom of individual, economic freedom of individual and self-rule to communicate his idea of *swaraj*

in different contexts, for him they are fundamentally not different from each other. We may rather see that all these four aspects of Gandhi's idea of *swaraj* are the different ways in which one can express Gandhi's fundamental notion of *swaraj*, which can be broadly understood as a capacity of self- organising/regulating life/lives, which is equally applicable to the individual and to the nation.

Acknowledgment

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Swaraj and Governance

Siby K. Joseph

The concept of governance is as old as human civilization. Some form of governance existed even in primitive societies. The term governance has been widely discussed in development discourses. The worldwide economic recession has exposed a crisis of global governance that calls for radical reforms in the systems of governance. The present models of governance all over the world have failed to fulfill the aspirations of the people. There has been a growing realisation that the present systems of governance have to be replaced by a more humane and participatory form of governance. The key elements of good governance have been identified by international organisations like UN^[1] and other institutions. The United Nations has identified eight major characteristics of good governance. Governance should be participatory, consensus oriented, accountable, transparent, responsive, effective and efficient, equitable and inclusive and should follow the rule of law. Ideally, it should ensure elimination of corruption or at least minimisation of corruption, the views of minorities should be taken into account and that the voices of the most vulnerable in society should be heard. It should also be responsive to the present and future needs of society.^[2] International donor agencies are advocating corrective mechanisms in existing institutions of governance to check corruption, wastage and exploitation. There are experts who argue that the failure to achieve humane global governance is primarily due to the

exclusion of religious and spiritual dimensions of human experience from the study and practice of government.[3] Gandhi visualised a humane and decentralised form of governance that would assure the key elements of good governance. Gandhi placed his ideas on governance against the evils of the systems of governance prevailing at that time.

Gandhi's critique of governance in his work Hind Swaraj or Indian Home Rule has a special significance in the context of grave crisis that has surfaced in the field of governance. Gandhi was highly critical of the parliamentary form of government[4] and he realised this would not be suitable for a country like India. He advocated 'swaraj' or self-rule, by which he meant internal governance. He pleaded the need for internal governance (swaraj) in his noted booklet Hind Swaraj or Indian Home Rule, which he wrote in 1909. During the centenary year of this publication, it is appropriate to analyse his concept of swaraj and governance. Gandhi defined his concept of swaraj in this work as "self rule" or "self control." [5] Each individual has to attain mastery over his senses and emotions and one cannot think about swaraj without self rule or self control. For Gandhi swaraj was not a utopia, a dream or an abstract idea. It was basically a moral and ethical principle. It is something one has to experience internally. It calls for an internal transformation of the individual. Once such a transformation is achieved by an individual, it is the responsibility of that individual to persuade others also to experience it.[6] We can achieve

swaraj or home rule only when we learn to rule ourselves. Therefore Gandhi argues that one needs to seek swaraj inside. That is why Gandhi said 'It is in the palm of your hand'. In the Gandhian perspective of governance there is close correlation between internal and external dimensions of governance. Gandhi wanted the cultivation of internal governance to reduce the necessity of external form of governance. He believed that the best form of governance is that which governs the least. It was a sort of enlightened anarchy.

The popular conception was that India can attain swaraj by overthrowing the British rule. But for Gandhi British rule was not the major obstacle in the path of realisation of true swaraj. He strongly believed that the western civilization and institutions associated with that civilisation constitute the major obstacle in the attainment of swaraj. Gandhi was convinced that just expulsion of Britishers from India would not bring swaraj. According to Gandhi, English rule without English man would be called not Hindustan but Englishstan.

Even though Gandhi was individually working for the ideal of self-rule pictured in Hind Swaraj, he frankly admitted the fact that his corporate activity was devoted to the attainment of parliamentary swaraj in accordance with wishes of the people of India. It was mainly due to the fact that the imperialist rule along with its system of education has colonised the minds of Indians and they would not be able to take up the responsibility of having internal swaraj. It

is true that his notion of swaraj underwent 'necessary evolution'[7] in the course of time, but he remained strongly committed to the basic ideals he expressed in his work Hind Swaraj in 1909.[8] In his letter to Jawaharlal Nehru in October 1945, Gandhi reaffirmed his faith in system of government envisaged in Hind Swaraj.[9]

Gandhi's concept of swaraj is not merely a form of governance. It is an all comprehensive concept encompassing all spheres of life. At the individual level it means self-refinement or purification for higher goals of life. Politically, swaraj is the sovereignty of the people based on pure moral authority. Economically, swaraj means self reliant and self sufficient economy. And in the ultimate sense, it is self-rule or self-restraint aimed at moksha or salvation. In the Gandhian conception swaraj is freedom from all forms of control. Gandhi explained the political, economic, social and moral dimensions of swaraj in his concept of square of swaraj. [\[10\]](#)

Gandhi envisaged attaining the ideal of self rule through self sufficient and self reliant village republics. Gandhi realized the unique stature of village communities which were described by Sir Charles Metcalfe as 'little republics'. Enunciating the concept of village swaraj Gandhi wrote in Harijan in 1942. "My idea of village Swaraj is that it is a complete republic, independent of its neighbours for its vital wants, and yet interdependent for many others in which dependence is a necessity. Thus every village's first concern will be to grow its own food crops and cotton for its cloth.... As far as possible every activity will be conducted on the co-

operative basis. There will be no castes such as we have today with their graded untouchability. Non-violence with its technique of Satyagraha and non-co-operation will be the sanction of the village community.... The government of the village will be conducted by the Panchayat of five persons annually elected by the adult villagers, male and female, possessing minimum prescribed qualifications. Since there will no system of punishment in the accepted sense, this Panchayat will be the legislature, judiciary and executive combined to operate for its year of office. Here there is perfect democracy based upon individual freedom. The individual is the architect of his own government. The law of non-violence rules him and his government. He and his village are able to defy the might of a world.”[\[11\]](#) In his letter to Nehru, a reference to this letter has been already made in the earlier paragraph, Gandhi stated clearly that to attain true freedom for India and the world, the fact must be recognized that people will have to live in villages and not in towns, thereby reinforcing the importance of villages in the attainment of swaraj. In this letter, he admired modern science and envisaged the possibility of railways, post and telegraph offices etc. in his ideal village of enlightened citizens.

In one of his interviews in 1946, Gandhi further outlined his vision of village swaraj by introducing the concept of oceanic circle in opposition to pyramidal structure of society, placing individual at the centre of the society.[\[12\]](#) Gandhi considered direct democracy as the best

form of governance. He believed that “true democracy cannot be worked by twenty men sitting at the centre .It has to be worked from below by the people of every village”.[\[13\]](#) The touchstone of swaraj is the capacity of the people to regulate and control the authority. To quote Gandhi “Real Swaraj will come, not by the acquisition of authority by a few, but by the acquisition of the capacity by all to resist authority when it is abused.”[\[14\]](#) It needs the education of masses and constant vigilance on authority. He visualized a decentralized polity where decision making process is a collective effort predominantly from the bottom. Gandhi looked upon the increase of the state power with fear because it destroys individuality. He stated that the state “represents violence in a concentrated and organised form” and called the state as a “soulless machine”. In the ideal situation there is no political power as there is no state. But he admits that the realization of this ideal is a far distant possibility. Some form of governance is necessary to control human affairs and in practical terms, Gandhi defended a limited liberal state.[\[15\]](#) He even visualised a disciplined, intelligent and non-violent police force that would keep law and order.[\[16\]](#)

Gandhi’s weapon of satyagraha serves as a corrective mechanism of the state. His method of satyagraha is not merely a means of combat. In fact, it is a way of life based on the principles of truth and non-violence or love. The way to swaraj is largely dependent upon the observance of path of non-violence in day to day life. Gandhi wrote in Young India

in January 1921 that the Hind Swaraj teaches the gospel of love in the place of hate.[\[17\]](#) Gandhi admitted that Hind Swaraj was a true measure of his faith in the weapon of Satyagraha.[\[18\]](#) While summarizing the main points in the concluding chapter of Hind Swaraj, Gandhi reinforces his argument that way to swaraj is satyagraha [\[19\]](#), that is soul force or love force. Gandhi's Constructive Programme[\[20\]](#) which is complementary to satyagraha aims at reconstruction of society through voluntary and participatory social action. In a sense the constructive work plays the role of civil society/NGOs in governance by the involvement of the people and thereby ensuring diffusion of power. Gandhi looked upon Constructive Programme as a 'truthful and nonviolent way of winning Poorna Swaraj' .

In the Gandhian scheme, governance has to have a focus on the most disadvantaged, and its objective was presented graphically by Gandhi in his famous talisman- aimed at Sarvodaya and Antyodaya. "Whenever you are in doubt, or when the self becomes too much with you, apply the following test. Recall the face of the poorest and the weakest man whom you may have seen, and ask yourself, if the step you contemplate is going to be of any use to him. Will he gain anything by it? Will it restore him to a control over his own life and destiny? In other words, will it lead to Swaraj for the hungry and spiritually starving millions? Then you will find your doubt and yourself melting away."[\[21\]](#) Gandhi attached much importance to ethics in governance. His concept of swaraj put dharma, i.e. religion in the highest

sense of the term as a means to achieve good life. For Gandhi, dharma includes Hinduism, Christianity, Islam etc., but it is superior to them all. Dharma in governance helps an individual to aspire for higher values in life and achieve the highest potential inherent in human beings.

In the Gandhian scheme of governance politics and office are seen as form of service and not seen as prestige or power – the fruit of which is ultimately virtue. In it we have a scenario of people trusting their representatives, representatives in return governing on the basis of trust and being made continuously accountable to the people. In it hiatus between people and their representatives would be reduced to the minimum. The representatives are expected to be worthy of the trust taking upon themselves the task of governing keeping in view the common good and leaving aside the self interest. In other words, Gandhi had envisaged the possibility of service minded, panchayat (five) encapsulating the mind of the people even allowing space for their removal and replacement, if they do not rise to the occasion. Since governance implies a sort of dispersal of power from the government to various other organizations like NGOs, it could be seen as reducing the monopoly of the state and in this way contributing to the involvement of several groups in the tasks associated with governance which fits in some way with Gandhian project of decentralization. In it, there is positive correlation between civil society and state where the state becoming responsive to the needs of the people. Devolution of powers on Gandhian lines of

governance is perhaps the only way to curb the menace of corruption, which is one of the greatest threats to existing forms of governance.

Gandhi's model of governance was altogether ignored in the independent India. Gandhi wanted to revitalise village panchayats that would ensure direct democracy at the grassroots level. But in the Constitution of independent India revitalisation of village panchayat is primarily a matter of State Policy and it was mentioned only in the Directive Principles of State Policy (Article 40).[\[22\]](#) After four decades of independence, Gandhi's vision was partly incorporated by recognising local self government as the third stratum of Government through the 73rd and 74th Amendment of Constitution of India. The 73rd Amendment Act 1992, which came into effect on April 24, 1993, is a watershed in the decentralisation process. Article 243 (G) of the Constitution authorises the state governments to make appropriate legislation regarding devolution of powers and authority to the panchayats which will enable them to function as institutions of self government.[\[23\]](#) The most significant aspect of this amendment is that it bestowed constitutional sanction to institution of Gram Sabha[\[24\]](#). The Gram Sabha consisting of all voters in a village is the only body which ensures direct participation of people in decision making process and thereby making local governance more in tune with the needs and aspirations of the people. This body can be effectively used as a stepping stone for attainment of gram swaraj or local self governance visualized by Gandhi.

The task before us is to strengthen and revitalise this institution and gradually move forward towards the Gandhi's concept of swaraj.

Notes and References

[1]. The key elements of good governance identified by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) are participation, rule of law, transparency, responsiveness, consensus orientation, equity, effectiveness and efficiency, accountability, strategic vision, legitimacy, resource prudence, ecological soundness, empowerment of all societal actors, partnership and community rooted in spatial terms. See The Global Research Framework of the Decentralised Governance Programme (New York: UNDP, 1997)

[2] <http://www.unescap.org/pdd/prs/ProjectActivities/Ongoing/gg/governance.asp>

[3]. Richard Falk, Religion and Humane Global Governance (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001)

[4]. Gandhi wrote "The Mother of Parliament is like a sterile woman and a prostitute. Both these are harsh terms, but exactly fit the case. The parliament has not yet, of its own accord ,done a single good thing .Hence I have compared it to a sterile woman. The natural condition of the Parliament is such that, without outside pressure, it can do nothing. It is like a prostitute because it is under the control of ministers who change from time to time." He further stated "Parliament is without a real master. Under the Prime Minister, its movement is not steady but is buffeted about like a prostitute. The Prime Minister is more concerned about his power than about the welfare of Parliament. His energy is concentrated upon securing the success of his party." M. K. Gandhi, Hind Swaraj or Indian Home Rule (Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House, 2004), pp. 27-29.

[5]. Ibid., p. 90

[6]. Gandhi defines Swaraj as “It is Swaraj when we learn to rule ourselves. ...The Swaraj that I wish to picture is such that, after we have once realized it, we shall endeavour to the end of our life-time to persuade others to do likewise. But such Swaraj has to be experienced, by each one for himself.” *ibid.*, p. 56

[7]. An expression used by Mahadev Desai, Secretary of Gandhi in the brief note to the preface of the new edition of *Hind Swaraj* on 11th December, 1938.*ibid.*, p. 5

[8]. In a message to the *Hind Swaraj* Special Number of the *Aryan Path* published in September 1938 Gandhi wrote “I might change the language here and there, if I had to rewrite the booklet. But after the stormy thirty years through which I have since passed, I have seen nothing to make me alter the views expounded in it”. *Ibid.*, p. 14 .

[9]. For the full text of the letter, see M. K. Gandhi, *Hind Swaraj and Other Writings* edited by Anthony J. Parel (New Delhi: Cambridge University Press ,1997) ,p.149.

[10]. Let there be no mistake about my conception of Swaraj. It is complete independence of alien control and complete economic independence. So at one end you have political independence, at the other the economic. It has two other ends. One of them is moral and social, the corresponding end is Dharma, i.e. religion in the highest sense of the term. It includes Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, etc., but is superior to them all. ...Let us call this the square of Swaraj, which will be out of shape if any of its angles is untrue. M. K. Gandhi, *India of My Dreams* (Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House, 1962), p.10.

[11]. M. K. Gandhi,, *Village Swaraj* (Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House, 1963), pp. 31-32.

[12]. "In this structure composed of innumerable villages, there will be ever widening, never ascending circles. Life will not be a pyramid with the apex sustained by the bottom. But it will be an oceanic circle whose centre will be the individual always ready to perish for the circle of villages, till at last the whole becomes one life composed of individuals, never aggressive in their arrogance but ever humble, sharing the majesty of the oceanic circle of which they are integral units." See M. K. Gandhi, *Hind Swaraj and Other Writings* edited by Anthony J. Parel, op.cit., p.189

[13]. M..K. Gandhi, *Village Swaraj* , op.cit., p. xiii.

[14]. R.K. Prabhu, U. R. Rao (eds.) *The Mind of Mahatma Gandhi* (Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House, 1996), p. 317.

[15]. Anthony J. Parel *Gandhi's Philosophy and the Quest of Harmony* (New Delhi: Cambridge University Press, 2007) ,p.55.

[16]. Even in a nonviolent State a police force may be necessary. This, I admit, is a sign of my imperfect ahimsa. I have not the courage to declare that we can carry on without a police force, as I have in respect of an army. Of course, I can and do envisage a State where the police will not be necessary; but whether we shall succeed in realizing it the future alone will show. The police of my conception will, however, be of a wholly different pattern from the present-day force. Its ranks will be composed of believers in nonviolence. They will be servants, not masters, of the people. The people will instinctively render them every help, and through mutual co-operation they will easily deal with the ever-decreasing disturbances. The police force will have some kind of arms, but they will be rarely used, if at all. In fact the policemen will be reformers. Their police work will be confined primarily to robbers and dacoits. Quarrels between labour and capital and strikes will be few and far between in a nonviolent State, because the influence of the nonviolent majority will be so great as to command the respect of the principal elements in society. Similarly there will be no room for communal disturbances. R.K. Prabhu, U. R. Rao (eds.) *The Mind of Mahatma Gandhi* op.cit., p. 159.

[17]. "In my opinion it is a book which can be put into the hands of a child. It teaches the gospel of love in the place of that of hate. It replaces violence with self-sacrifice. It pits soul force against brute force." M. K. Gandhi, Hind Swaraj or Indian Home Rule op.cit., p. 15

[18]. "Hind Swaraj was written in order to demonstrate the sublimity of Satyagraha and that book is a true measure of my faith in its efficacy" See M. K. Gandhi, Satyagraha in South Africa (Ahmedabad: Navjivan Publishing House, 1993), p. 212.

[19]. Gandhi used the word passive resistance instead of satyagraha in his English translation of his booklet Hind Swaraj .But in Gujarati he used Satyagraha-Atmabal

[20]. The Constructive Programme of Gandhi includes the following: Communal unity, Removal of untouchability, Prohibition, Khadi, Other village industries, village sanitation, New or basic education, Adult education, Women, Education in health and hygiene, Provincial languages, National language, Economic equality, Kisans (peasantry), Labour, Adivasis (aboriginals), Lepers and Students.

[21]. Pyarelal, Mahatma Gandhi: The Last Phase (Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House,1997) Part-2, Vol. x, P. 65. See also Anthony J. Parel Gandhi, Freedom, and Self-rule (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2000) p.15

[22]. The Article says "The state shall take steps to organise Village Panchayats and endow them with such powers and authority as may be necessary to enable them to function as units of self -government"

[23]. Article 243(G) of the Constitution of India reads as: "Subject to the provisions of the Constitution, the legislature of a state may, by law, endow the Panchayats with such powers and authority as may be necessary to enable them to function as institutions of self government and such law may contain provisions for the devolution of powers and

responsibilities upon Panchayats at the appropriate level, subject to-a) the preparation of plans for economic development and social justice; and b) the implementation of such schemes for economic development and social justice as may be entrusted to them including those in relation to the matters listed in the Eleventh Schedule". The Eleventh Schedule contains a list of 29 subjects, inter alia agriculture, land reforms, education, health and family welfare, poverty alleviation programmes, welfare of weaker sections etc.

[\[24\]](#). Article 243 (B) of the Constitution of India defines Gram Sabha as follows Gram Sabha means a body consisting of persons registered in the electoral role relating to village comprised within the area of panchayats at the village level." Article 243 (A) defines its role, "A Gram Sabha may exercise such powers and perform such functions at the village level as the legislature of a state may, by law, provide".

Gandhi: A Proponent of Pre-Modernity, Modernity or Post-Modernity?

Ram Chandra Pradhan

This paper primarily seeks to examine the various perspectives (ranging from pre-modernity to post-modernity) in which Gandhi's critique of modernity has been appraised and reappraised by different scholars. To that end, I start my discussion by explaining three basic terms viz., pre-modernity, modernity and post-modernity which would frequently occur in the paper. This is followed by a summarized version of Gandhi's critique of modernity as enunciated in 'Hind Swaraj'. All this provides the intellectual backdrop from the scholarly interpretations that follow. In the process, I offer my own views on the issues involved in the debate. Towards the end, I underline the perennial nature of the Gandhi's critique of modernity which alone could explain its continued relevance.

In plain language, the term 'tradition/pre-modernity is used to indicate the way of life (and the world-view underpinning it) of any people/group institution/association which goes on from generation to generation without being marked by any radical change.

Hence, the emphasis is more on continuity rather than on any radical change, though natural and gradual change is taken to be subsumed in the process. However, as a more spatial-temporal specific term, it is used to underline the state of social order/system/customs/beliefs which prevailed in pre-modern European society before it was overtaken by three major intellectual revolutions viz. the renaissance, the reformation and the enlightenment. In historical terms, it refers to the European society as it existed prior to 16th/17th century.

Similarly, the simple meaning of modernity is taken to be the recent developments as against they existed in the past. Herein the emphasis is on the radical change rather than on continuity in terms of values, world view, customs and technology etc. To put it more succinctly, it symbolises the changed and new way the people think, live and act. Once again, in historical terms, it refers to the transition of the European society from medieval times to the modern times that occurred from the seventeenth century onwards. Essentially, modernity came to be associated with the rise of concepts like secularism (this worldliness as against the other worldliness), instrumental rationality and its concomitants, scientific and technological revolutions, democracy with its emphasis on life, liberty and fraternity of the people, the instillation of the state as the final arbiter of human affairs, and the egocentric concept of man with primary emphasis on his self-interest. The entire process started in the wake of the renaissance

around 14th /16th century. Some of the important figures were Pietarch, Dante, Raphael, Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo and others. Renaissance was marked by a process of revival of art, music and literature based on classical pattern of Roman and Greek tradition. The process was refined and strengthened by other two revolutions of Reformation and Enlightenment. Reformation was related to a movement led by Martin Luther for radical reform in the Roman Catholic Church. It led to the emergence of the Protestant sect within Christianity. Enlightenment refers to a new intellectual movement in 17th /18th century Europe, which underlined the centrality of human reason, scientific knowledge, individualism and firm faith in the concept of continuous progress and rejection of traditional belief-system. It had its intellectual roots in writings of Descartes, Locke and Newton and its prominent exponents included Kant, Goethe, Voltaire, Rousseau and Adam Smith.

Post-modernity/post-modernism refers to another intellectual movement, which has come up in the later part of the 20th century. Basically, it marks a point of distinct departure from the modernist project both in terms of their intellectual foundation and institutional set-up. Post modernist thinkers have their own views on art, literature, architecture and criticism including literary criticism; its prominent proponents are Robert Venturi, Jean Baudrillard, Jean Francois Lyotard, Jacques Derrida, Jean Bernard Leon Foucault, J. Habermas and others. They are greatly distrustful of the grand narratives/grand

theories/ideologies. Besides, these thinkers assert that the modernist's project of raising intellectual and institutional set-up have, despite their contrary claims, only resulted in reinforcing inequality, inequity, exploitation and domination of the common people. They also view the power of human rationality and its concomitant scientific and technological revolution with lot of suspicion. They equally question the epistemological tool of the proponents of modernity. Consequently, they challenge the modernist assertion that only scientific thinking could yield objective knowledge and universal truth. Instead they repose their faith in the contingent, contextual and situational nature of truth. They also challenge the modernist's claim of 'the continuous progress' through scientific and technological revolution. On a still deeper philosophical level they are wary of continuous improvement in the material condition as a desirable goal. They also challenge the pivotal role being assigned to the institution of the State and its being treated as the final arbiter of human affairs. In contrast to such a perspective, they stand for a more pluralistic vision of human society in which local communities would play a major role. The post-modernist thinkers have their own views on hermeneutics and they believe that there is no fixed meaning in a text. Hence, reading a text is more like tracing the 'process of constant flickering rather than counting the beads in a necklace'. This is so because meaning in any text is not fixed and as such it could not be nailed down.

For a detailed interpretation of Gandhi's critique of modernity, we present below its summarized version. They are:

- (i) Modern civilization is basically materialistic. Hence, it is ever engaged in investigating the resources and laws of the material world with a view to meet its ever spiraling 'hunger for wealth, and worldly pleasures'. Such a relentless pursuit of material progress results in cut-throat competition from individual level to international level. In the process, it breeds only violence and culture of oppression, exploitation and domination. As a result, it leads to colonialism and imperialism in the attempt to find market for finished goods and search for cheap raw materials for its factories.
- (ii) At the individual level, it promotes a concept of egocentric man ever engaged in the task of finding new avenues for enhancing his possessions and pleasures. Such a naked pursuit of self-interest makes all talks of religion and morality irrelevant. And which is why modern civilization becomes devoid of religion, morality and spirituality. Besides, it also promotes extreme individualism leading to the emergence of atomised individuals deprived of the warmth of his community life.
- (iii) The much celebrated scientific and technological revolution has resulted in the rape of nature

posing a serious threat to the very existence of humankind. Only a handful of the rich and the powerful have mostly benefited and millions have been marginalised in the process. The means of rapid transportation and communications have uprooted a large number of people from their original habitats, depriving them of warmth and safety from their own community. Man is ever willing to go to the end of the earth to seek new avenues for the satisfaction of his animal appetites and passions which have hardly left him with any chance for higher aspirations.

- (iv) Modern civilization has resulted in the emergence of an elite group which is only interested in self-promotion. Medicine, law, politics, commerce and in fact all these walks of human activities have degenerated and the elite from all these groups are only interested in enslaving the common people to serve their interests.
- (v) The institutions of political representation have turned into instruments for the self-promotion of their members. It is for this reason that in *Hind Swaraj*, Gandhi described the British Parliament as a 'sterile woman' and like a 'prostitute'. Like a sterile woman, the British parliament could hardly produce anything on its own. What is worse, like a prostitute it goes on changing its masters frequently. In such a system of representation, the Parliament is dominated by the political

parties and they in turn are controlled by their leaders. People have hardly much role to play in the entire process except occasionally casting their votes at the time of periodic elections.

- (vi) But that is not the end of the story. Even the claim of modern civilization of providing physical comforts to the people has turned into nothing but a mirage. Millions are marginalised on account of the iniquitous nature of the system as they are left with no other choice than to work for a pittance. Only a handful of the elite groups succeed in grabbing the fruits of development. But millions keep on chasing their ever receding hope for the better days. And which is why Gandhi compares modern civilization like a 'mouse gnawing' while it keeps on soothing us. But according to him, it is nothing less than a Upas Tree which destroys everything around it. This is the broad summary of Gandhi's critique of modern civilization. Now let us see where Gandhi could be located on the scale ranging from pre-modernity to modernity.

Gandhi: Was he a pre-modernist?

There are many scholars and others who believe that his critiques of modernity and the alternatives he offered were nothing but an attempt to take back the human society to medieval times. Hence, he could be

taken as a thinker of pre-modernist sensibilities. Their arguments run on the following lines:

- (i) Gandhi's critique of modern civilization is total as he does not hardly find much positive elements in it. He debunks science and technology, casts grave aspersions on representative institutions, attacks industrialism and undermines the role of instrumental rationality in human affairs. Such biased and strong criticism of modern civilization only proves his determination to push the clock of human history backward.
- (ii) This becomes all the more obvious if one looks at the kind of alternatives he suggests as against modernity. His lifelong obsession with rural life, a life-style based on limited needs, his preference of the minimal state and trusteeship constitute some of the major components of his alternative vision. According to the critics of Gandhi, this is nothing but an idealised version of an idyllic rural life which hardly existed anywhere else apart from Gandhi's own imagination.
- (iii) He keeps on talking of *Ramrajya* as an ideal social order and also pinned his unstinted faith in the efficacy of *Ramnam*. This was nothing but bringing religion into politics with all its irrationality and blind faith. This was also an attempt to push back the human society to the medieval times when there was free intermingling of religion and politics.

- (iv) His theory of *brahmacharya* is another proof of his unscientific outlook. He not only practiced it himself, but even subjected young women like Manu Gandhi as an instrument of his experiment. Not only that, he even recommended it to some of his young married followers like Prabhavati, wife of Jayaprakash Narayan and Sucheta, wife of Acharya Kripalani and to a host of his other followers. All this is against the modern, scientific theories of human sexuality. This is also a standing proof of his being a man of pre-modernist sensibilities.
- (v) He lived in his *ashrams* based on the old pattern of hermitage. His rejection of law courts, modern medicine, modern education, his preference for naturopathy only goes to prove that he was totally in the grip of pre-modernist mentality. It was on all these counts that most of his ideas were rejected even by his close followers like Nehru and Patel in their schemata for the post-independent era. That only goes to prove that he was not taken as a proponent of modernity/modernization even by his close followers, not to talk of his critics like M.N. Roy, R. P. Dutt, EMS Namboodiripad, who raised some of the critical points as mentioned above.

Let us examine some of these points in larger perspective of Gandhi's life and work. However, one initial point needs to be clarified. It needs to be

underlined that relationship between tradition and modernity is much more complex than it is usually understood. In a particular society, there could be 'modernity of tradition' or tradition of modernity inherent in the very nature of tradition. There could be tradition of the periodic renewal of the traditional pattern of life. There are many scholars like Rudolphs who believe that Indian society is counted as being one of them. In such a society age-old cultural symbols, myths and folklores get deeply rooted in the racial memories of the people. They have all the potentials to work as great emotive symbols. If handled with ingenuity and creative application, they could work as the powerful instruments of change.

It is in the above perspective, the question of Gandhi being a man of pre-modernist its sensibilities could be dealt with. A close study of Indian national movement and Gandhi's role in it would go a long way to prove that his radical critique of modern civilization was not a call to push back the clock of human history. It was an attempt to anticipate and apprehend the disastrous consequences flowing from the modern civilization not only for India but also for the entire humankind. His critique of modern civilization arose in the context of the plea of the Indian elite to put the Indian society on the British pattern including the use of violence for her freedom. His critique was a part of his advocacy for Indians taking to a different path which was nearer to the genius and tradition of our people. Besides, he played a

role of a great moderniser both in political and religious field. As a political leader he played a crucial role in making the Congress a modern and vibrant organization, raised an army of freedom-fighters, provided them with a new goal of independence and a new weapon of national struggle viz. *satyagraha*. As a socio-religious reformer, his contribution to time-management, hygiene-both private and public, hard and systematic work ethics, punctuality in private and public life, his attempt to raise a number of single aim organization like *Harijan Sevak Sangh* only go to prove that his was the single most biggest attempt to modernise every walk of our national life. In the religious field his fight against untouchability and his work for communal harmony are too well-known to be discussed here. They only underline his role of a moderniser of the Indian society. The reasons for his alternative vision of social order being rejected is not far to seek. His people oriented modernising programmes could have adversely affected the vested interests of the Indian elite as they are to be started from below and not from the top. Hence their rejection was inevitable.

His *brahmacharya* was an integral part of faith in his inner *swaraj* or 'self-rule'. He firmly held the opinion that a perfect *brahmachari* could release immense moral force to affect his environment. So much so that violence and other human weaknesses could not be sustained in his presence. In his case, it could not be taken as a fad, in no case as a fraud, as he demonstrated its efficacy in Noakhali, Calcutta and Delhi even in the worst days of

partition riots prompting Lord Mountbatten to describe him as 'one man boundary force'. The critics, who take *brahmacharya* as being unscientific, forget that even Sigmund Freud in his book 'Civilization and Discontent' had underlined the fact of sublimation of sexual instincts. If we look at the problems of our times viz. climatic change and other ecological imbalances, marginalisation of the millions of the people, violence overtaking every walk of human life, breaking of families and communities resulting in the emergence of atomised individuals etc., we could have better appreciation of his critique of modernity as well as the modernising nature of his alternatives. This is what Hardiman calls Gandhi's 'alternative modernity'. In any case, his was not even the remotest attempt at revivalism.

Parekh's Views on Gandhi's Critique of Modernity

Bhikhu Parekh in his scholarly work, 'Gandhi's Political Philosophy' devotes a major chapter on an in-depth analysis of Gandhi's critique on modernity. He looks at it in a new perspective and makes several novel submissions. In the first place, he argues that Gandhi's critique substantially differs from its other European critics like Ruskin, Thoreau, Tolstoy, Karl Marx and others. This difference is two fold. One, unlike those European critics, Gandhi and the Indian people were the direct victims of modern civilization represented by the British colonial rule. Hence, he could see its darker side more closely and clearly than they could ever do. Secondly, as an heir to the Indian civilization, a rich and ancient

civilization, he could bring a deep and complete intellectual perspective and sensibility which was denied to them. Not only that, he stood at a vantage point even compared to his preceding compatriots like S.N. Banerjee, Dadabhai Naoroji, Tilak, Lajpat Rai and others on account of being younger to them. On top of it, he had gained direct experience from his South African struggle. All this enabled him to see the problems of Indian Home Rule in a better perspective. Besides, his prolonged and detailed dialogue with Indian revolutionaries living in London convinced him to find new ways and means for the Indian Home-Rule. In the process, he rejected the political lines and methods advocated by the Moderates, the Militants and the Indian armed revolutionaries as he found that all of them were working within the basic intellectual framework evolved by the colonial administration. It was from such a vantage point that he was able to offer a complex, original and nuanced critique of modern civilization. Unlike some of his contemporaries he did not see it as a confrontation between the East and the West, rather as a struggle between the ancient and the modern civilization. Such a perspective enabled him to join hands with its European critics as he could establish a parallel between ancient European civilization and Indian civilization. In the process, he presented the Indian people as missionaries of a universalistic civilization as against the British's claim of being the missionaries of modern civilization. That necessarily puts India on the high moral ground. He tried to put them on the defensive by describing the modern civilization as body-centric

violence-breeding with its excessive and irrational faith in instrumental rationality. Besides, human greed has become its driving force and industrialism its gospel's truth. Modern man has become excessively aggressive, ambitious and also suffers from other human frailties. Even the professions of law and medicine are being abused for the promotion of the selfish ends of the elite. And the institution of the State has been turned into an instrument of violence and oppression. Broadly speaking, this is how Parekh sums up Gandhi's critiques of modern civilization.

The distinctiveness of Parekh's views on Gandhi's critiques lies in the fact that he succeeds in making a very nuanced and balanced appreciation of it. According to Parekh, Gandhi does not hesitate to underline three major positive sides of modern civilization (a) its spirit of inquiry and its restless search for truth, (b) its attempt to bring the natural order within human control, and (c) a more organised social life. But while accepting these positive contributions, Gandhi does not forget to underline the fact that on all these counts it has failed to maintain a sense of proportion. In fact, it has gone to the extreme in all these counts. For instance, in the process of emphasising the utility of human rationality it has made 'fetish' of it. Similarly, scientific technological revolution which had given man better control over natural environment have ultimately come to dominate human life. Consequently, they have been turned into being evil, - doing more harm than good to human life. The same is

the case of the organizational side of modern civilization. Its excesses have only succeeded in robbing the man of his finer aspect including his moral, ethical and spiritual sides. In short, according to Parekh, Gandhi was willing to accept some of the major positive contributions of modern civilization. But he was equally keen to point out their limitations and excesses. In the process, Gandhi's observation on modern civilization was far more perceptive than its European critics like Ruskin, Tolstoy, Thoreau and even Karl Max.

However, Parekh hastens to point out three major limitations of Gandhi's critique of modern civilization. One, he concentrated more on its darker side than on its positive contribution like non-hierarchical social order, its stress on the autonomy and liberty of individuals and its basic faith in human rationality. He also fails to see that despite its rationalistic nature, modern civilization does have its own spiritual depth and dimensions. Secondly, Gandhi, so does Parekh observe, failed to see that industrialism need not be necessarily accompanied by colonialism and imperialism. Therefore, he could not provide any intellectually viable theory of imperialism. Nor did he succeed in offering any viable alternative for meeting the material aspirations of the Indian people. Thirdly, Gandhi looked at the positive side of the modern civilization as being accidental rather than being its integral and inalienable part. And his attempt to appropriate some of its positive side, while rejecting its

intellectual foundation and institutional set-up put him in the pitfalls of contradiction.

Parekh's critiques of Gandhi's perception of modern civilization could be faulted on a number of counts. In the first place, while underlining complex and intricate character of modern civilization, Parekh ignores its fundamental and essential character (as perceived by Gandhi), which it has not succeeded in shedding out despite the best efforts of its proponents. Secondly, Parekh also fails to see that Gandhi was looking at the whole problem from the vantage point of *daridranarayan*, who till today remains at the margin of the modern civilization. Thirdly, viewed from the perspective of the 'wretched of the earth', Gandhian alternative does not appear as non-viable as Parekh thinks. Today, Gandhian alternative is being appreciated more than Parekh is willing to accept.

Hardiman on Gandhi's Critique of Modernity

Hardiman is another scholar who has gone into a detailed investigation of Gandhi's critique of modernity. In his book *Gandhi: in his time and ours*, he has proposed a thesis that Gandhi through his critique has offered a vision of an alternative modernity. His basic argument is that there is no fundamental dichotomy between the value-system of modern civilization and that of Gandhi's. Gandhi was in tune with many aspects of modernist's vision—namely, human rights, fundamental equality between man and man, the basic principle of

representation and universal franchise, democratic dialogue and persuasion, rather than command and coercion. In fact, his basic grievance was that the metropolitan powers have failed to live up to some of these principles, particularly in respect to their colonies. Hence, his relationship with modernity was dialogic rather than antagonistic. Hardiman is critical of Parekh's evaluation of Gandhi's critique of modernity as he (Parekh) fails to see that while critiquing modern civilization, Gandhi was actually offering a model of 'alternative modernity'. He advances a number of arguments in support of his contention. One, that Gandhi was only against the 'evils' of modern civilization and was not totally against it *per se*. Hardiman quotes the statement of Gandhi made in 1926 that Indians could assimilate many ideas from the West and his opposition was only to its 'indiscriminate thought' imitation. Two, Hardiman advises the modernist critics of *Hind Swaraj* not to take some of its formulations in the literal sense. According to Hardiman, through *Hind Swaraj*, Gandhi was primarily arguing with the Indian political elite who, irrespective of their ideological positions, appeared to be too enamoured of the Western ways including its fascination for the use of violent means. Hence, his 'excess statements' were made to dissuade the Indian elite from falling into the pitfalls of the modern civilization. And it is not for nothing that it opened a new path for India in the subsequent years. Thirdly, this could be also supported by the fact that in subsequent years, Gandhi moderated his views first ventilated in *Hind*

Swaraj on many issues including machinery and *Swaraj*. Towards the end of his life (1945) he made it clear that the use of railways, hospitals and law courts could not be avoided and all that one could do was to make their use minimal. It is clear from the above that he was not making a 'fetish' of his own critique of modern civilization. Thus, Gandhi has a 'selective' rather than 'totalistic' approach to modern civilization. Fourthly, Hardiman argues to say that Gandhi was not against scientific and technological innovations. He was willing to support them with two conditions. One, that they should be engaged for the promotion of scientific knowledge and were not to be used for the material gains. His support to Gora, one of his atheist followers, for the dissection of frogs in the *ashram* premises as a part of his scientific experiments speaks volumes for it. Two, he wanted all these innovations to be used in the interests of the poor and the dispossessed and not for those of the rich and the powerful.

In fact, Hardiman makes a very novel argument when he says that Gandhi's critiques of materialistic and imperialistic use of science and technology very well fits into the great debate between the proponents of imperialistic science and the Arcadian sensibility. While the former group was not willing to look at science more than a mere 'quantitative and mechanistic ploy' to be used for meeting the physical needs and pleasures, the latter group's emphasis was on man's need for

harmonious co-existence with nature and his search for the ultimate purpose of life.

But Hardiman rightly observes that Gandhi went beyond Acardian sensibility. In support, he refers to Gandhi's use of Gujarati/Sanskrit lexicon *prakriti* as against the English term Nature. In Gujarati/Sanskrit lexicon, *Prakriti* stands for 'personified will of the Supreme' in the creation, which is considered as being identical with Supreme Being. In such a pantheistic view, the world is taken as the manifestation of Divine/God. It was this spiritual perspective which prompted Gandhi to approach Nature with humility. It also inspired him to underline the fact that one should not take from Nature more than what was essential for his needs. And that was true meaning when he said that 'the earth provides enough to satisfy every man's need but not for every man's greed'. It was such a world view which inspired him to lead a life of secular *sanyasi* instead of a world renouncing traditional recluse with full commitment to love and serve even the meanest creature of the world. Such service, time and again he asserted, was nothing short of loving and serving God. He set up a number of organisations covering various aspects of our national life and prompted them to work out appropriate scientific and technological innovations to improve the life condition of the poor and the dispossessed. It is on the basis of all these facts and arguments that Hardiman comes to the conclusion that Gandhi should be taken as a proponent of 'alternative modernity'.

A close perusal of Hardiman's line of arguments reveals that he is still arguing within the broad framework of modernity. He is not totally disillusioned with the modernist projects. He fails to realize that if Gandhi's arguments and vision are taken to their logical conclusions, they would yield nothing but a broad outline of a new civilization based on counter-cultural values.

Roy's Interpretation of Gandhi's Critique of Modernity

It is in the above perspective that Ramashray Roy's views on Gandhi's perception of modernity become relevant. Roy in his two books on Gandhi (*Self and Society* and *Gandhi: Soundings in Political Philosophy*) makes very perceptive observations on the issues involved. He is one of the most trenchant Indian critiques of modernity and dives deep in modern European tradition to prove his basic formulations. He makes a basic point that Gandhi's critique of modernity is entirely different in tone and tenor from the other critiques presented in this regard. For him the real distinctiveness of Gandhi's critique lies in the fact that it is based on a world view in which self knowledge is the ultimate purpose. Besides, unlike many other critics, Gandhi rejects the very idea of 'progress' which has been the motive force of modern civilization. Hence, his critique is both radical and total. For him real progress lies in self-discovery. Roy asserts that the villain of the piece is a new philosophical shift that took place during the seventeenth century in Europe. The real significance of such paradigmatic shift lies in the fact that

it started treating man as autonomous, self-defining subject instead of taking him to be the part of larger order. Consequently, man was left with his own devices to apprehend truth and also his own grounds for action. In the process, man emerged as 'self-defining and' self-sufficient subject taking society as one of the means for realising his own purposes. Thus, social order, man-made institutions as well as natural order was to be subdued and made to serve his purpose. In the process, social engineering became the most prominent human endeavour and rationality was assigned an instrumental role as an aid to human purpose. But reason could not control myriad forms of human passions. State could not perform this role either. In the process, religion and morality were pushed to the background. As a result of all this, outer world was left only with instrumental values for the fulfilment of purposes which man sought to pursue.

For a fuller understanding of Gandhi's rejection of modern civilization, Roy makes a critical survey of the philosophical foundation of modern civilization. The new world view which emerged during seventeenth century Europe was rooted in the rejection of the transcendental origins of norms and values to which man was supposed to conform. Consequently, new man came to be regarded, what Roy, calls, 'self-defining and self-sufficient' subject and the material world came to be viewed as devoid of any spiritual significance/value/meaning. In the process, man had the

freedom to manage and manipulate the material world entirely to his advantage. Thus, the promotion of 'self-interest' became the guiding norm from individual to national level. It was such a world view which provided foundation for modern civilization and it was its rejection which lies behind Gandhi's critiques of modern civilization.

Roy lists three main characteristics of Gandhi's critiques of modernity. One, he has the foresight to locate violence in the very womb of modern civilization. Two, his critiques should be taken more as his moral response to the evils of modern civilization and not so as scholarly examination of the entire spectrum of the issues involved. Three, his critique was total and penetrating rather than being moderate. In fact, unlike many of its critics, he chose to challenge the very central organising principle of modern civilization. What was more, he even presented an alternative vision of a true civilization and which is why his rejection sounds total and final.

According to Roy, Gandhi locates the basic malaise of modern civilization in its insatiable hunger for wealth and worldly pleasures. And that leads to a situation of deprivation and domination from individuals to the cosmic level. He characterised it as 'satanic civilization'. Unlike Parekh and Hardiman, Roy finds Gandhi's rejection of modern civilization as total as he rejects both its tenets as well as its institutional set-up and other manifestations. Hence, it must go lock, stock and barrel.

According to Roy, Gandhi's critiques could be taken as a prelude to his presentation of the contours of an alternative and desirable society. And his vision was rooted in his own world view. The essence of that world view was his assertion that man, despite being rooted in the animal world, was capable of rising over it and a being engaged in ethico-religious pursuits. In the process, Gandhi pins his hope in human endeavour towards perfectibility. However, in Gandhi's world view, the phenomenal world is not to be rejected in the name of finding transcendental centre for man. In fact, one has to engage in the challenging task of transforming it in accord with the transcendental centre. Another dimension of Gandhi's world view was that man could only apprehend relative truth and not the absolute truth. Such a position could lead one to the sensible path of non-violence. A fourth dimension of Gandhi's world is that human society is essentially 'organic' in its nature and structure and as such it could be based on mutual co-operation and respect free from domination and exploitation. This would be possible as man in Gandhi's world view is not egocentric rather with endowed with an 'extended self'. Hence the interests and aspirations of man and the society are not mutually exclusive. Man, by his very nature and locale could always reach out to the 'other'. Such a perspective of 'self and society' hardly leaves any scope for separating morality from religion. According to Roy, Gandhi's critique of modern civilization could be fully understood only in such a perspective.

The real strength of Roy's interpretation of Gandhi's critique of modernity lies in the fact that he provides a sound philosophical background for its full understanding. His conclusions are based on his in-depth study of European philosophy which lies at the root of modern civilization. Similarly, he delves deep also in Indian philosophical tradition to locate the real roots of Gandhi's alternative vision.

Gandhi and Post-modernism: Rudolphs' Interpretation

In the beginning of the paper we have briefly delineated the basic contours of post-modernism. Recently, Rudolphs-Lloyd and Susanne, have produced a new book, *Post-modern Gandhi*, which also partly includes their earlier work *The Modernity of Tradition*. They pick a number of strands from post-modern thought and put forward the main thesis that Gandhi could very well fit the bill of being a post-modern thinker both in epistemological and historical terms. According to Rudolphs, Gandhi was one of the earliest thinkers to challenge the modernist central tenet of 'progress' which has been rejected by the post-modern thinkers. Gandhi's critique of modernity in *Hind Swaraj* and his subsequent writings could be read as post-modernist treatise. Thus, in historical terms he could be taken as one of the earliest proponent of post-modernism. Not only that, he also challenged modernist thinkers that it is through their epistemological tools that one could arrive at universal and objective knowledge and grand, master narratives.

Rudolphs recall that it was around seventeenth century that the proponents of modernity started arguing that their scientific thinking alone could yield objective knowledge and universal truth. Such a view could be primarily located in Newtonian physics, Cartesian philosophy and Hobbesian liberalism. Subsequently, a number of scientific thinkers and writers joined them. Their work and methods claimed to produce knowledge which was taken to be exact and positive. They also asserted that every phenomenon could be explained on the basis of hypothesis, observation and experimentation. Such view of certainty in respect of knowledge has been challenged by a number of post modern thinkers who assert that nature of truth is contingent and contextual. Rudolphs recall that Gandhi's concept of relative truth is of the same genre and fully fits in the post-modernist perspective of situational, contingent and contextual truth. In this respect he is nearer to post-modernist hermeneutics.

Gandhi not only rejected modernist view of objective and universal truth, but also the universalism of revealed, sacred and scriptural truth as claimed by the religious texts. Rudolphs refer to Gandhi's deliberate choice of vegetarianism or freedom which he displayed in presenting his own interpretation of the *Bhagavad Gita* to support the viewpoint. Gandhi refuses to accept a literal meaning of the *Gita* and offered his own interpretations. That is very near to post-modernist hermeneutics. Gandhi also made religion and morality as

a major theme of the discourse on human affairs. Thus, he not only exploded modernist triumphal progressivism but also its erasure of religion morality and myth.

Rudolphs are not willing to accept *Hind Swaraj* just as a mere nationalist tract which was merely meant to reject the British colonial rule. In fact, it rejected the entire spectrum of modernity and not just the British Empire. It also offers a vision of alternative social order with its emphasis on minimal state, strong and vibrant society, minority right, decentralized system of production etc. — all of which are quite close to the post-modernist vision.

Rudolphs make a very novel and bold formulation when they argue that if Gandhi's vision of Dominion Status enunciated by him in 1929 (which was replaced by the demand for *Purna Swaraj* at Lahore Congress) was accepted by the Congress, the tragedy of partition could have been averted. This is so because with Gandhi's preference for shared sovereignty with Muslims could have encouraged Muslims not to insist on a separate homeland. But the Congress under Nehru's inspiration backed out from shared sovereignty and opted for individual rights and citizenship. In sharp contrast to that, Gandhi's concept of inclusive nationalism and pluralist view of sovereignty could have saved the day for India. It was also very near to the post-modernist thinking on social order. On all these counts, Rudolphs argue that

Gandhi could be taken as being very near to post-modernist vision of truth, history and social thinking.

One need not necessarily agree with Rudolphs views that the roots of partition lay in Nehru's vision of modernity. Perhaps, Muslims' leadership was too conscious of their ex-ruler complex and too scared of Hindu domination, that their demand and insistence on partition was inevitable. Besides, one could take cudgels with Rudolphs attempt to put Gandhi in the post-modernist club. The fundamental flaw in Rudolphs formulation lies in their attempt to find a parallel between Gandhi's relative truth and post-modernist view of contingent and contextual truth. In the process, Rudolphs forget two basic Gandhian principles. One, Gandhi, unlike the post-modernist thinkers never believed in moral relativism. Gandhi's views on religion and morality could hardly come nearer to post-modernist malevolent attitude towards religion and morality. Two, he always found a close relationship between relative truth and absolute truth. He did work out his action on the basis of his relative truth, but his life long *sadhana* was for realizing the absolute truth. And that is far away from the post-modernist view of contingent truth.

To sum up, Gandhi's critique of modernity has been viewed differently by different scholars. As we have seen in the preceding pages, its interpretation ranges from pre-modernist to the post-modernist perspectives. Many scholars might locate such varied scholarly

interpretations in the contradictory nature of Gandhi's thinking. They only reveal the perennial nature of Gandhian ideas; and which is why they continue to echo and re-echo in different historical contexts as well as in different intellectual traditions. That alone could explain their continuing persistence and relevance.

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