Vedic Anarchism & the Decolonisation of the Spirit
An Analysis of the Spiritual Politics of Mohandas Gandhi

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Abstract

This work examines the historical struggle and political vision of Mohandas Gandhi in light of post-modern developments of the preceding four decades, and in particular the work of Michael Foucault. The study finds that not only does Foucault help us to better understand Gandhi, but also that Gandhi helps us to understand the practical implications of Foucault's theories. Taking both together, Foucauldian theory and Gandhian praxis not only has significant implications for the secular field of progressive politics, showing its profound affinity with the spiritual philosophy of the Vedas, but also points the way to a new type of politics that can deal with the challenges of the 21st century.

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Introduction

For the last number of decades the fields of the social sciences have been dealing with a series of epistemological ruptures arising from the disintegration of the European colonial empires and the end of the global hegemony of European knowledge. These ruptures stem from a critique of the modernist claims to be the sole (or at least the highest) arbitrators of what counts for truth and valid knowledge. During the colonial era, modern knowledge was said to be the only knowledge that was truly 'scientific' and therefore the only knowledge with a valid claim to truth. All other knowledge encountered by colonists on their travels were regarded as 'superstitious' or, at best, more rudimentary forms of the modern European sciences. And as *indigenous knowledge* was merely a more 'primitive' form of modern knowledge, it was thus not to be seriously engaged with for any reason other than anthropological analysis.

But such a simplistic and hierarchical view was tenable only when supported by the political and military hegemony of European powers across the globe. When the colonial empires started crumbling, so too did the colonial epistemic order. This work is best understood in light of these developments. If European knowledge and the fields of the social sciences are to continue to be regarded as generating useful knowledge in the 21st century, they must begin consciously working toward overcoming deep rooted Eurocentrism and engage seriously with knowledge that for a long time has been dismissed. To this end, this work will analyse the life and work of Mohandas Gandhi, one of the most important and prescient anti-colonial thinkers and activists of the 20th century.

While Gandhi is rightly remembered as a world historical figure, his presence within contemporary political discourse (outside of India) is almost non-existent. This is despite having been the leader of the largest non-violent political movement in known history, as well as having heavily influenced some of the 20th century's most important political leaders such as Martin Luther King and Nelson Mandela. This is in no small part due to the above mentioned colonial epistemic order. Winston Churchill, upon learning that Gandhi had been admitted to negotiate with the British representative in India, lamented that 'a half naked fakir' should be allowed to enter the sphere of acceptable politics. But, though the colonial powers were unable to prevent Gandhi the person from entering into the political sphere, they would not have to worry about his ideas for quite some time. In any given discursive field there are certain regulatory rules that define what it is, and what it is not, possible to say within its boundaries. In his own time, Gandhi's critique of modernity lay so far outside the field of acceptable political discourse, diverged so widely from the utterances that were possible within that discursive field, that they were effectively rendered unintelligible. Even in India, the vast majority of his fellow independence leaders (essentially all of whom were educated in England) thought Gandhi's politics, at best, 'eccentric'.

However, as the 20th century progressed our political understanding broadened as the aforementioned epistemological rupture changed the landscape of political discourse immensely. Following these ruptures Gandhi's programme is beginning to make sense in a language political theorists can understand. And so, the main aim of this work is to make the activism and theory of Mohandas Gandhi intelligible in the language of politics, while staying true to the spirit of those ideas. The point of endeavour is not merely historical but it will be to show the importance, and relevance, of Gandhi's critique of modern society today, as well as the usefulness of the political theories, concepts and strategies of resistance that he developed. This is not the first scholarly work to undertake such a venture; in the last number of decades a huge number of scholars, particularly from from India, has been working toward the same end. However, having studied much of this work, I believe the current study is sufficiently original to be considered a unique contribution. Yet achieving the goal of making Gandhi's thinking intelligible in the language of political theory is not a straightforward task, and would consist in a number of things. These are the sub-aims of the work, amounting to different elements of the main aim.

The first of these sub-aims is historical. To understand Gandhi's political vision, we must understand the historical context in which he was situated and the nature of the political struggle he was engaged in. Although Gandhi's non-violent struggle against the British empire is widely recognised (with commemorative days in India, the publication of many books, and even a box office British film) it is less widely understood. The reason for this is the ultimate failure of his political movement. Although his struggle against the British empire is hailed as a victory, the society that resulted from this 'victory' is the exact opposite of the one Gandhi was struggling for. For though he was the undisputed leader of the independence movement, his political vision was roundly ignored when independence was finally realised, and the newly created Indian Nation State set about creating exactly the industrial society that Gandhi spent his life struggling against. To Gandhi, colonialism comprised not just economic and political apparatuses, it was also a process of *epistemological domination*, with the British imposing their understanding of the world upon the colonised, transforming the everyday life of the people in India. Thus the process of decolonisation was not just about physically removing the colonisers from the colony; much more important it was to cast off the epistemological and normative structures that they brought with them.

While independence leaders were grateful to 'Gandhiji' for uniting the country against British rule, they were less enthused by his programme for upending the British institutions of power, particularly after inheriting those institutions from the British. So while Gandhi's face was being printed on all the legal tender, his political programme was quietly being swept under the rug. While Gandhi's campaign of non-violent resistance in pursuit of independence became part of the mythos of the Indian Nation State, his radical challenge to 'modern civilisation', for obvious reasons, did not. Thus, ironically, after working for most of his life in pursuit of the dissolution of centralised government and the establishment of a *panchayat raj* (rule of the village community), Gandhi became one of the most important symbols for the Indian Nation State, and the radical nature of his struggle became obfuscated. This work aims to rectify that injustice and elaborate Gandhi's struggle in a way that stays true to his understanding of the anti-colonial struggle.

The next of these sub-aims is methodological. To understand Gandhi's political vision in the way that he did (while remaining intelligible in the language of political science) we must engage two disparate discursive fields in a genuine dialectic encounter: that of the *Vedic tradition[1]* (through which Gandhi understood the world), and that of modern political science. This entails engaging, in a serious and self-reflective way, with a non-European field of knowledge on its own terms. This differs from the colonial method of interpretation; to view indigenous knowledge from a critical distance. The claims that indigenous knowledge made to truth were not considered worthy of investigation in itself; instead they were analysed in terms of what it expressed about the 'inner minds', or inter-personal relationships, of the indigenous people encountered. This meant that it was up to the European scientists to interpret the 'real' meaning of this knowledge, and that meaning was clearly something entirely different from what the bearers of that knowledge intended. Rather than a genuine dialectical encounter, European colonists effectively reduced indigenous knowledge to silence. The methodological aim of this work is therefore to take seriously the claims to truth of the Vedic tradition. Of course, this remains a work of modern political philosophy, and these claims will have to somehow fit within the discursive field of politics, but Gandhi is the perfect person to analyse in this regard, as he himself spent his life trying to reconcile these two fields.

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1 The Vedic tradition is an order of knowledge that traces its lineage back to the very earliest texts of the Indo-European languages, the Vedas, and is still immensely important in the world today, as the vast and widespread dispersion of Buddhists, Hindus, Sikhs and Jains can attest to.

Which brings us to the next, highly related, sub-aim, which is epistemological. In order to carry out the methodology aim, this work will have to expand the epistemological horizons of the field of political philosophy. Gandhi understood his own life and struggle in the terms of the knowledge inherited from the Vedic tradition, and so it is essential that this tradition is elaborated upon in a way that shows its relevance to the field of political philosophy. Concepts such as *dharma*, *ahimsa* or *satya*, essential elements of Gandhi's politics, will have to be integrated into the discursive field of which this work resides, in a way that stays true both to the meaning of the concepts themselves and to the discursive rules of political philosophy. This is no small task. For these concepts to find meaning within political discourse, one must entirely call into question the way we think about 'the political'. The Vedic tradition is built upon a radically different foundation to that of modern political philosophy. It has a different understanding of knowledge, a different understanding of the world around us, a different understanding of truth. Thus, this work will try and impart some the Vedic epistemology and ontology, and show in what way it challenges many of the presumptions that the field of modern politics is based upon. Yet modern political philosophy was literally built from the secular separation of the fields of 'politics' and 'religion', and Vedic knowledge is considered by many to be in the later category. If Vedic knowledge can be considered 'religious', then that means this sub-aim is essentially attempting to mend the schism, the foundational rupture, out of which the field of modern politics was born, and through which it still defines itself. This may seem like a monumental task, but it is precisely the one that Gandhi set out for himself, and so to understand Gandhi, this work must make some attempt to show the challenge that Gandhi made to the very field of knowledge that this work is situated in.

The next element in understanding Gandhi's politics is to see where is may fit within the contemporary field of political theory. It it is to answer the question: 'what are the theoretical contributions of this epistemological encounter to the field?' As has already been mentioned above, this work has been undertaken not from a purely historical interest, but also to see how Gandhi's political activism, the theoretical understanding and strategies he developed, could be useful in dealing with the political challenges we face today. Since the fall of the Soviet Union progressive politics has suffered from a lack of theoretical direction. This is despite human beings facing more challenges today than we ever have in our history. We live in a world that is being increasingly polarised between rich and poor; a world in which human beings are more alienated from the natural world, from each other, and from themselves than ever before; a world in which we face the existential threat of the destruction of the majority of living ecosystems. Despite this, there is no unifying theoretical understanding of the direction in which progressive forces should be moving in , at least not in the same way that the theoretical understanding of Marx unified much of the progressive forces in the 20th century. Movements like Occupy, the Indignados, and now the Gilet Jaune, show that the will and the energy to change is there, but that they lack a coherent vision of what kind of change should be enacted. It is the contention of this author that Gandhi's, while not providing every answer, was a political philosophy that is more relevant today than ever, and one that we need to immediately start taking serious note of.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, we will look at the strategies of political action and social transformation that Gandhi developed and utilized. Although throughout his life he was an avid writer (his collected writings add up to 100 volumes) he cannot really be described as a political theorist. He was first an foremost a person of action. Although he did, over the course of his life, develop a coherent explanation of social transformation, this explanation was always developed in close connection with praxis. In fact, to Gandhi, there wasn't really a difference between theory and praxis, because all of his ideas concerning social, political, economic, and ethical organisation he tested on the 'anvil of experience'. He not only talked about a radically different social organisation, he lived by it. He not only imagined the possibility of non-violent resistance, he organised it on

largest scale that the world had ever seen. And Gandhi's practical methods of social transformation are as applicable today as they were in his time. This work will conclude by looking at how these political strategies can be applied to our contemporary circumstances.

This work is broken up into three parts. The first part outlines the conceptual framework that will be used in analysing Gandhi, and unpacks the theories that are contained within these concepts. This framework will be built from the conceptual tools developed by French philosopher and historian Michel Foucault. The second part is divided into two chapters and deals with Gandhi's historical struggle, firstly by outlining the epistemological nature of colonialism, and then by showing Gandhi's resistance to this epistemological colonialism. The third is also divided into two chapters, the first will explore the field of Anarchism, in order to provide some theoretical context for the Gandhian paradigm. The second will delve into his theory and praxis.

Chapter I: Conceptual Framework

Vinay Lal wrote that 'the categories with which historians, anthropologists, and social scientists customarily work have little light to shed on the life, thought, and cultural practices of Gandhi' (Lal, 2007), and this work takes that criticism seriously. In assessing a figure who spent his life struggled against colonial forces, we must be aware of the key role that knowledge production played within the colonial apparatus. As we will see, Gandhi did not only resist the political and economic apparatuses of colonial Britain, he also challenged the new 'regime of truth' which Britain brought to the sub-continent.

A central element of the colonial 'regime of truth' were the social sciences. It was with the help of social scientists that colonial powers came to interpret, manage and subjugate the people that existed within the colonies. Worse than that; such knowledge was used to impose new ways of seeing upon the colonial subjects, taking away their ability to define their own experience. We must be aware of the difficulties that come with assessing an anti-colonial figure such as Gandhi, with a body of knowledge that traces its origins back to the colonial project. It is therefore essential that we build a epistemological framework that recognises this, and offers the conceptual tools for reflective critique.

To build such an epistemological framework we will employ the work of Michael Foucault. Foucault spent his life exploring the link between power and knowledge, as well as exploring the myriad of other ways in which power functions. While he wrote little about colonialism himself, the Foucaudian framework has been the foundation that many of the the most important anti-colonial scholars, such as Edward Said and Gayatri Spivak, have built upon.

While this section can be understood as an epistemological framework, it may just as fittingly be described as a problematisation of epistemology. Understanding Gandhi's politics requires problematising assumptions that have long existed, and still do exist, within the disciplines of the social sciences. As such, the concepts introduced here do not offer a precise scientific measurement, but will help us to qualitatively understand the anti-colonial and spiritual politics of Gandhi.

This section will be in four parts corresponding to the three thematics under which Foucault investigated power (knowledge, the body, the subject) as well a fourth section which will elaborate upon concepts that do not quite fit into this scheme.

Power & Knowledge

Episteme

The first concept important to our investigation is the *episteme* [2]. Foucault introduces it in his third work *The Order of Things,* and used it to refer to the structure of a body of knowledge in a given period. The episteme is not, however, a conscious framework of knowledge (such as the scientific method), but rather the 'unconscious' structures that shape the production of knowledge in a given time and place. Foucault's definition reads;

> '[The episteme is] the total set of relations that unite, at a given period, the discursive practices that give rise to epistemological figures, sciences, possibly formalized systems…. the group [ensemble] of relations that can be discovered, for a given period,

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2 In keeping with the usage of Foucault, the term 'episteme' will be used interchangeably with the term 'order of knowledge' throughout this work.

between the sciences when one analyses them at the level of discursive regularities.'(Foucault, 1972, p 191)

To bring out the particularities of the concept of the episteme, we can compare it to a very similar concept that also emerged in the 1960s and with which it is often compared, T. S. Kuhn's notion of the 'paradigm'. With his work *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions,* Kuhn challenged the understanding of science as 'development-by-accumulation', a purely progressive model of scientific knowledge. He argued that while there are periods in which science does broadly follow this model (periods of 'normal science'), the notion of the paradigm argues that this is not the whole story. Kuhn posited an episodic model of scientific development, in which periods of 'normal' science are interrupted by periods of 'revolutionary science': when established theories and epistemological figures are questioned anew, re-organised, and redistributed within a new epistemological arrangement. 'Anomalies' within a paradigm, lead to the development of a new paradigm in which scientists move beyond the mere 'puzzle-solving' of the previous paradigm, change the rules of the game and the 'map' directing new research. (Kuhn, 2012)

In many ways the episteme and the paradigm are very similar: both challenge the understanding of modern scientific knowledge as universal. Instead they put forward a view of knowledge as both as always historically and socially contingent, and always situated within a set of institutions and practices. There are, however, a number of differences. For instance, a scientific paradigm relates to one specific field of science (there are distinct paradigms for physics, chemistry, etc.) whereas the episteme refers to a wider ensemble. It is the relationship between all sciences, and even discourse that lies outside the scientific field. Kuhn is interested in the change within science, and between scientists, Foucault was interested in 'different kinds of changes' than those purely at the level of scientific discourse, 'changes that did not occur at the same level, proceed at the same pace, or obey the same laws'(Foucault, 2002, pg xiii), as occurred on the level of scientific theory. The episteme refers to the epistemological conditions prior to the actual scientific theories.

We can look to the concept of 'sexuality' as an example of the relation between categories of knowledge and the episteme. Here the episteme must not be understood as the sum of the scientific objects (e.g. the heterosexual, lesbian, etc.), nor as the set of theories relating to sexuality (e.g. theories about the balance of hormones, about environmental factors that influence ones sexuality, etc.). The episteme is rather the ensemble of relations between the huge variety of scientific fields (judicial, medicine, biological, sociological, psychological, etc.) that sustain the discourse on sexuality; relations which reinforce, sustain, and produce these objects and theories. What the totality of these relations add up to is a 'strategic apparatus which permits of separating out from among all the statements which are possible those that will be acceptable within, I won't say a scientific theory, but a field of scientific…. making possible the separation, not of the true from the false, but of what may from what may not be characterised as scientific.' (Foucault, 1980, pg 197)

The episteme is therefore an ensemble of relations rather than an ordering structure, characterised by regularities rather than rules. It is not the sum of the knowledge of a particular period, it is the 'condition of possibility of knowledge'; it 'is not a sort of grand underlying theory, it is a space of dispersion, it is an open and doubtless indefinitely describable field of relationships… The episteme is not a general developmental stage of reason, it is a complex relationship of successive displacements.' (Foucault et al., 2003, pg 55)

We can expand our understanding on the concept of the episteme with reference to a specific example: the 'modern' episteme. What are the particular characteristics of the modern episteme? One answer is that the modern episteme is characterised by a re-organisation of the way we

understand human beings, and with it our own subjectivity. Foucault argued that the most important feature that 'separate[s] us from Classical thought and constitute[s] our modernity' (Foucault, 2002, pg xxvi), is the designation of human experience as a valid domain of scientific objects, creating 'the strange figure of knowledge called man' (ibid), and allowing for the foundation of the *human sciences*. Foucault claims that modern Europe is the first civilisation to designate human experience as the object of science.

Rather than the ethical, teleological, or metaphysical, truths that characterise other epistemes, the way modern people express truth about themselves, their self-knowledge, is tied to mechanical processes that can be measured scientifically. The consciousness of the indivdual is understood as the culmination of a long series of biological, linguistic and productive processes; and thus the vehicle of an organism, a language, and a productive order, all working with an anterior logic that long pre-dates each individual and that will continue long after them. The creation of the human sciences subsumed the deepest reaches of consciousness, regions that consciousness itself cannot normally access (such as the 'sub-conscious'), into the domain of scientific objects. This effectively meant that the production of truth, even the production of truth about consciousness itself, was externalised.

The creation of *man* was the creation of a strange 'empirico-transcendental doublet' that acted as both the observer and the observed; the subject and object of knowledge. A subject whose 'truth' lies in its objects: the way 'he' speaks, lives and produces. A subject who understands the truth of himself according to an externalised scientific gaze; who constitutes himself as a subject in such a way as to make 'his body, his behaviour, his reason, and his consciousness the object of his study and a field to be controlled, regulated, trained, and coerced.' (Maclean, 1998) The modern subject is therefore, thoroughly the subject (and object) of the human sciences.

Archaeology/Genealogy

The next concept to be introduced relates to the connection between different epistemes. If different epistemes, different orders of knowledge, exist in various times and places around the world, ordering how people think, how is it that these different epistemes can cross the conceptual divide and make contact with each other? When our understanding of the world is necessarily ordered by our episteme, does that mean that all other ways of seeing and thinking are barred from our experience? The answer to these questions can be found in methodological tools that Foucault developed through the course of his career: *archaeology* and *genealogy*.

The archaeology is not a systematically laid out methodology, but rather a way of thinking about, and talking about, the past. Foucault uses the term 'archaeology' to distinguish his method of investigating, from the 'historical' investigation. The 'historical' investigation looks at the past as a set of events and 'facts' to be determined by the historian, and laid out in a steady, linear, and continuous narrative. The idea of continuity, of 'progress', has become so commonplace as to be almost taken for granted, but it is a relatively new way of relating to the past. It implies a particular system of values; values which are not only important in the European telling of history, but central to modern society as a whole.

One of the most important and influential expressions of this idea was the dialectic. First expounded by Georg Hegel, the dialectic was an understanding of history as a process of constant development, of lower forms being replaced by higher forms, less explanatory knowledge being replaced by more explanatory knowledge. According to this model 'primitive' knowledge would naturally be replaced with the more advanced Enlightenment science. History here is uni-linear and follows a hierarchical path. (Hegel, 1979)

Karl Marx expanded upon this by positing a material dialectic, in which it was not only knowledge that was hierarchical, but also human societies. (Marx, 1970) Those that had materially more complex modes of production (such as to be found in Europe) were more developed, and those that lived in accordance with more 'traditional' modes of production (such as those to be found in most other places in the world), were less developed. This historical narrative of continuity and progress, both of ideas and of material organisation, created a strict hierarchical division in which European societies and European knowledges were at the apex and all other societies and knowledges were inferior. This understanding of history coincided with a 200 year period in which European powers became the imperial masters of large parts of the earth.

But around the end of this brief imperial reign, in the decades following the second world war, some intellectuals began to develop a different understanding of the past. This was an understanding which did not see the world as a continuous movement of a universal and linear progression, but rather understood it as consisting of:

> 'rupture, difference and discontinuity, one which has several pasts, several forms of connexion, several hierarchies of importance, several networks of determination, several teleologies, for one and the same science, as its present undergoes change: thus historical descriptions are necessarily ordered by the present state of knowledge, they increase with every transformation and never cease, in turn, to break with themselves'. (Foucault, 1972, pg 3)

The European order of knowledge became aware of its own conditions of emergence, became aware of its own contingency, and the archaeological is one expression of this. It is a method posited on the idea that modern European knowledge is only one way of thinking about the world and it does not have any privileged access to truth. Discontinuity thus becomes as important a concept as continuity and progress, and the archaeology is one method of overcoming what we can call *epistemological discontinuity*.

Epistemological discontinuity is the point at which knowledge is transformed in such a way as to make it inaccessible to the people that come after. With the passage of time, words and concepts transform, change meaning, get layered with other concepts, and so are understood in different ways across different social contexts. Epistemological discontinuity is a concept that is founded on the idea that history is a tale, not only of changing concepts, but also of changing 'truth conditions'. The modern European tradition had long understood itself as the highest, most refined, and most 'true' form of knowledge. Europeans believed therefore that they understood the 'truth' of the past better than the people of the past themselves (and believed they understood the truth of other cultures, better than those cultures themselves). But if history is not a tale of continuity, but rather of discontinuity- not one of progress, but of difference – then modern European knowledge loses its privileged access to truth, and must contend with the idea that there are multiple truths, multiple ways of seeing and describing the same thing, and one is not necessarily better than any other, despite claims to 'objectivity'.

Traditional histories are concerned with events, the uncovering of 'facts'. It is the science of the past. Archaeology of knowledge is not trying to reconstruct the past, but instead to reconstruct the way people in the past understood the world. Archaeology is thus a heuristic method for building a bridge between two orders of knowledge. It does not aim to 'uncover the truth', but rather to explore the conditions under which statements attain the status of true. The archaeological investigation treats truth as 'a system of ordered procedures for the production, regulation,

distribution, circulation, and operation of statements' (Foucault and Rabinow, 2010, pg 72-73), and aims at retracing these moments of production, regulation, distribution, circulation, and operation to try and construct the skeleton of an order of knowledge. And while Foucault spoke of the archaeology as a purely historical method, there is no reason to limit its field of application to historical epistemes. We can also imagine its potential in bridging the divide between modern and extant non-modern epistemes.

It must be emphasised that central to the Foucauldian framework is the idea that knowledge cannot be understood according to a sliding scale of higher or lower, more or less rational. One episteme cannot meaningfully claim 'superiority' over another, and knowledge (the way we understand, describe and see the world) transforms, not because of some natural 'progress' of knowledge, but rather according to historically contingent factors.

What are these historically contingent features that effect the transformation of knowledge? According to what logic does knowledge emerge and attain the status of truth? At this point the work of Foucault becomes overtly political. The move from the archaeology to the genealogy was when Foucault started to explore the factors that influenced our procedures of truth, tracing a line between the emergence of the human sciences and the development of a modern State that became increasingly invested in creating certain type of individuals (ones that fit into expanding industrial and State apparatuses).

'Truth' Foucault writes 'is linked in a circular relation with systems of power which produce and sustain it, and to effects of power which it induces and which extends it: a "regime" of truth'. (ibid, pg. 74) Our knowledge, what we think of as 'true', is intrinsically linked to the structures of power in our society. What Foucault wanted to show was that there is no 'value neutral' science; that, while not disputing the idea that science produces empirical truths, the knowledge produced by these sciences could not be disentangled from the structures of power that produced them. Which takes us to our next section, and one of the central thematics in the Foucauldian framework – the link between power and knowledge.

Power/Knowledge

To understand what Foucault means when he says that truth and knowledge are always linked in a circular relationship with power, we must understand what he has in mind when he talks about power. He goes to great lengths to problematise the concept of power as it is traditionally understood. He says that traditional definitions of 'power' confine it to speaking about the State or other institutions that we normally think of as 'powerful'. These traditional theorisations thus treat power as a kind of quasi-object; to be 'seized', 'had', or 'used'. Foucault, in contrast, understands power as a set of relations. And, while the institutions traditionally associated with power are important, Foucault argues that 'relations of power, and hence the analysis that must be made of them, necessarily extend beyond the limits of the State.'(Foucault, 1979, pg 133)

To think of power solely in terms of the State is to limit the possibilities of analysis. Foucault argues that if we do not assume that power emanates from a single point, but instead see how individuals throughout the whole social body exercise power over each other, then a Pandora's box of analysis opens up, allowing one to explore the political ramifications of a whole series of phenomena that were previously thought of as politically unimportant. 'Between every point of a social body between a man and a woman, between the members of a family, between a master and his pupil, between every one who knows and every one who does not, there exist relations of power.' (Foucault, 1980, pg 187)

But for a concept to be analytically useful, it must refer to something specific. And while Foucault widened the scope of power so much as include essentially every social relation, making it 'coextensive with the social body', (ibid, pg 142) it still refers to one concrete and analysable element of these relations. Power is 'a mode of action which does not act directly and immediately on others. Instead, it acts upon their actions: an action upon an action, on existing actions or on those which may arise in the present or the future.' (Foucault, 1982, pg 789) So all interactions between people in which one person acts upon the action of others is a relation of power. This definition invites the question: *in what way* do people 'act upon the action of others?' - leading us to the next important element of Foucault's conceptualisation of power.

Power is not only repressive, it is also productive. Foucault argued that the 'repressive hypothesis', the idea that power is a purely repressive force, is inadequate, and it conceals the productive aspect of power. He says that 'in defining the effects of power as repression, one adopts a purely juridical conception of such power, one identifies power with a law which says no, power is taken above all as carrying the force of prohibition.' (Foucault, 1980, pg 119) To understand power as a purely prohibitive forces is to miss out on the full extend of its effects. Power not only forbids, but allows; not only represses, but produces; not only disrupts the flow of action, but also brings one into its own positive nexus.

> 'What makes power hold good, what makes it accepted, is simply the fact that it doesn't only weigh on us a force that says no, but it traverses and produces things, it induces pleasure, forms knowledge, produces discourse. It needs to be considered as a productive network which runs through the whole social body, much more than as a negative instance whose function is repression.' (ibid)

Which turns our considerations back to epistemology. To say that power is what 'forms knowledge [and] produces discourses' is to examine knowledge through a lens that is quite different from the usual European theorisations of knowledge. The philosophical field of epistemology, for example, considers knowledge as an abstract, unhistorical entity. The field of the 'history of science', to take another example, considers knowledge as the rational unfolding of a dialectic from lower to higher forms of knowledge. What Foucault's thematic of power does is insert relations of power into all considerations of knowledge. It challenges the idea that knowledge is ever value free; asserting, rather, it always exists within a certain social, political, economic and context.

To be clear, Foucault is not only claiming that power influences the course of how knowledge develops, or vice versa, he is making a larger claim: that knowledge and power are mutually constitutive of one another.

> 'We should not be content to say that power has a need for such-and-such a discovery, such-and-such a form of knowledge, but we should add that the exercise of power itself creates and causes to emerge new objects of knowledge and accumulates new bodies of information... The exercise of power perpetually creates knowledge and, conversely, knowledge constantly induces effects of power. ... It is not possible for power to be exercised without knowledge, it is impossible for knowledge not to engender power' (ibid, pg 52)

Power operates by creating a body of knowledge that orders the world in a certain way. Foucault maintains that the assertion of truth must always be understood as a practice (and often uses the terms *practices of truth)* that creates a *domain of objects,* and a set of *positivities.*

Foucault's argument here is reminiscent of the linguistic philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein. Wittgenstein argued that language is not some transcendental link with the meta-physical essence of reality, but rather a practice that produces certain effects, and follows certain rules and procedures (hence his use of the term *language games*). The point that Wittgenstein was making is that language is always embedded in practice and it cannot be understood without understanding the 'life world' in which it arose. In a similar vein, Foucault is arguing that we can never separate truth from practice; that, in the same way as language, truth is used to produce certain effects, and it follows certain rules and procedures (Foucault uses a similar term to refer to truth: *games of truth*).

Which is to say that, contrary to the universalist modern aspirations: there is no essential truth to the human condition. Truth is always constructed, always political, and always in mutually constitutive relation with a system of power. Foucault writes that;

> 'Truth is a thing of this world: it is produced only by virtue of multiple forms of constraint. And it induces regular effects of power. Each society has its regime of truth, its "general politics" of truth: that is, the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true; the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true and false statements, the means by which each is sanctioned; the techniques and procedures accorded value in the acquisition of truth; the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true.' (ibid, pg 131)

Truth cannot be considered abstracted from the social, political, economic and historical context from which it arose, and cannot be separated from the way it is put into practice (or *deployed*). He argued that just as there are regimes of power, there are also *regimes of truth*, which structure, support, maintain, and are essentially co-extensive with, regimes of power.

One implication of the idea that knowledge and power are essentially inseparable is that 'power… produces reality; it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth. The individual and the knowledge that may be gained of him belong to this production.' (Foucault, Rainbow, 2010, pg 194) Knowledge is our window into the world, it is the form of our understanding. To say that power produces this understanding is not only to say that our understanding of the world around us is a product of power relations, but also that our self-knowledge, the way we come to know ourselves, is formed in a nexus of power.

Beginning with Foucault, there has been a huge number of genealogical investigations into the historical constellations of power that were involved in creating many of the modern identities through which today we understand the world: identities of race, ethnicity, gender, nationality, religion; along with identities such as consumer, citizen, criminal. (Foucault et al., 2003) The genealogical work of Foucault, and the work of those who came after him, are based on the idea that there is nothing 'natural' about any of these identities. That they only became objects of knowledge, and thus became normalised ways of experience, within the complex configuration of power in modern society.

Subjugated Knowledges

One important implication of this understanding of power/knowledge is that, just as power is subject to *contestations,* so too is knowledge (that contestations of knowledge are contestations of power, and vice versa). And that these knowledge contestations, contestations of truth, are not always decided by rational debate, or scientific deliberation, but most often by structures of power. Our regime of truth is the result of a long history of contestations. Genealogical investigation reveals traces of *subjugated knowledges*. What Foucault argued is that these knowledges are not

necessarily disqualified because they are 'less rational' or 'less explanatory' but rather because they are not supported by institutions that would enable the dissemination of this knowledge. We can imagine an example from the field in which Foucault began his research - psychiatry.

Imagine you believed yourself to be the rightful Queen of England and acted accordingly. It is quite likely that after some time you would soon find yourself before a psychiatrist, who would then question you about your perception of the world. You might tell them about your divine right to rule, your duties to your subjects, and your little known family history that you have traced back to the Windsor's through using some obscure method. This is your genuine perception of the world, and you relate this knowledge to the psychiatrist. However, instead of the psychiatrist accepting this account as valid knowledge, they interpret it through a discourse that categorises non-normative thoughts. You receive a diagnosis of 'mentally ill', and are entered into an institution which attempts to 'correct' your misguided perceptions about the world. Your claim to truth is disqualified, your knowledge is subjugated and you are effectively reduced to silence.

The above example contains two instances of the mutually constitutive nature of power and knowledge. The first of which is the contrast between your knowledge of your identity as the Queen of England, and the knowledge of the actual Queen of England. Perhaps your knowledge is qualitatively very similar to the Queen's knowledge: both of you genuinely feel that you should rightfully hold the position of Queen, and you both perceive the world as such. The difference is thus not between the two knowledges, but rather the field of power that supports one of these knowledges. While you are a lone individual making these claims, Elizabeth II has a whole state apparatus built around her person, supporting and propagating her knowledge of herself as Queen.

The second example of the power/knowledge dynamic comes from the psychiatrist. Like the Queen's knowledge of herself, the psychiatrist's knowledge is backed up by a vast array of different social institutions: judicial institutions, the field of medicine, universities, etc. The reason the psychiatrist can impose their understanding of the patient's experience onto the patient themselves is not because of the inherent superiority of their explanation, but rather because of the institutions that support their way of seeing the world.

In this regard, Foucault talks about the figure of *unreason* that was so important during the 16th and 17th century as Enlightenment rationality was beginning to establish itself. (Foucault, 1995) Unreason is knowledge that doesn't fit into the domain of accepted rationality, it is the figure that defines the limits of reason. It can take the form of mental illness, as in the example above, but it is not limited to that. 'Stupidity', insanity's more benign family relation, is also a figure of unreason, and Foucault also traced the historical emergence of the figure of the 'dunce' during the same period. Other figures that fall under the categories of unreason, categories that will be important in our analysis of Gandhi, are the colonial categories of 'primitive' and 'superstitious' knowledge. These types of knowledge are most often dealt with using colonial discourses, such as anthropology, rather than the psychiatric, or pedagogic, discourses that are used to subjugate the 'insane' and 'stupid', although all of these discourses are highly linked.

Power & The Body

The first section looks at power in its connection with knowledge. But power is not only expressed in the form of knowledge, and clearly has important material effects on the world. This section will outline some of the effects that power has on the body. The concepts introduced here will be of particular importance in *Part III* of this work in considering Gandhi's spiritual anarchism.

Disciplines

Foucault uses the term *disciplinary power* to refer to a particular technique of power. It is a technique that characterises many important institutions in our society (such as schools, hospitals, factories, offices, or army barracks), allowing them to take firm hold of the body of individuals, right down to the very finest motor movements. The disciplines are a set of 'meticulous, often minute, techniques' that 'defined a certain mode of detailed political investment of the body, a "new micro-physics" of power'. (Foucault, 1977, pg. 139) They are a set of methods for regulating the actions of individuals; a way of creating *docile bodies* that act in line with a set of *norms* established by a disciplinary institution.

Foucault's work *Discipline and Punish* traces a huge re-organisation of Europe's *economy of power* that took place at the beginning of the modern era. With the advent of industrialisation, the mechanisms of wealth production changed, and with it the relationship between rich and poor. Whereas feudal Lords understood land as being the base of their wealth, industrial capitalists had to contend with a system of production in which labour power was at the centre. This created problems for the rising class of industrial capitalists. Large scale production and the division of labour meant that the urban poor now had to trusted with valuable capital. This resulted in the rise of popular crimes, such as the theft of goods or destruction of machinery. Further, labourers were often unwilling to co-operate with the new labour conditions set by industrial production. There was resistance to the long hours, the inhumane pacing of industrial machinery, and to the intensity of the physical labour. For both these reasons, the matter of 'worker discipline' became of the utmost importance.

Power could no longer operate at the level that it had up until that point. Power in feudal times was understood as being held by the Sovereign. The clearest way they exercised this power was in overawing displays of might, brutality torturing those who offended against the rights of the Sovereign. But, although these Sovereigns often claimed for themselves absolute power within their realm, their effective power was diffuse and irregular. Although common people may have had to give up part of their harvest to tax collectors, or occasionally fight for their local Lord, by and large their lives went by unseen and little affected by the Sovereign. The rise of industrial production changed this. Industrial elites not only sought to extract the product of the common people's labour (i.e. taxes), they wanted to extract labour power itself.

It was at this point that the extractive power of the Feudal Lord, turned into the productive power of modern society. No longer would power be merely an act of taking things from people, it now had to incite them to a huge array of complex action, in order to regiment them to a mechanised line of production. This meant it must act in a continuous manner, and must extend to the very finest motor movements of the body. It was at this point that the 'disciplines', a technique of power that already existed in the monastery and the army barracks, became 'general formulas of domination' and began to be utilised for these new economic circumstances. After it's success in the factory, the disciplines began to spread out to other important societal institutions: prisons, schools, workhouses, family homes, hospitals and asylums.

While the modern period is often seen as the era of increasing freedom and individual liberty, Foucault argues that the abstract judicial freedoms that emerged with the modern period were only made possible by the huge expansion of disciplinary power across society. He writes:

> 'Historically, the process by which the bourgeoisie became in the course of the
> eighteenth century the politically dominant class was masked by the establishment of an
> explicit, coded and formally egalitarian juridical framework, made possible by the

organization of a parliamentary, representative regime. But the development and generalization of disciplinary mechanisms constituted the other, dark side of these processes… although, in a formal way, the representative regime makes it possible, directly or indirectly, with or without relays, for the will of all to form the fundamental authority of sovereignty, the disciplines provide, at the base, a guarantee of the submission of forces and bodies. The real, corporal disciplines constituted the foundation of the formal, juridical liberties.' (Foucault, 1977, pg 222)

The disciplines became the basic mechanism of social control, and would be woven into the very fabric of society, making the previous, more brutal, techniques of power unnecessary.

Foucault distinguishes disciplinary power from the relations of power that had come before it: slavery, service, and vassalage. Like disciplinary power, these other relations of power were concerned with the body, with regulating, prohibiting and obliging bodies in various ways, but disciplinary power can be distinguished from these relations of power in three ways, distinctions which will help us to understand the exact nature of disciplinary power.

The first thing that is different about disciplinary power is its *scale.* Disciplinary power doesn't work on the body *en masse*, as if it were an indistinguishable unity, but instead treats every element of the body individually, 'exercising upon it a subtle coercion, of obtaining holds upon it at the level of the mechanism itself - movements, gestures, attitudes, rapidity: an infinitesimal power over the active body.'(ibid, pg 149) Disciplinary power operates on the microscopic as well as the gross level. The clearest expression of this is the army regiment performing drills, in which the tiniest movements of thousands of people are brought into line. It can also be seen in the factory worker performing a standardised set of precise operations, or the office worker who has to conform their movements, gestures, attitudes and rapidity of work to 'office standards'.

The *object of control* is also different. 'It was not or was no longer the signifying elements of behaviour or the language of the body, but the economy, the efficiency of movements, their internal organization; constraint bears upon the forces rather than upon the signs; the only truly important ceremony is that of exercise.' (ibid) In the Feudal era the signification of the body was of utmost importance in power relations. Power then was very visible, often showing itself through displays of deference. Disciplinary power doesn't act on the level of signification. It acts on the level of bodily forces, bringing them in line with a pre-defined continuum of movements.

Finally, the *modality* is different. Disciplinary power 'implies an uninterrupted, constant coercion, supervising the processes of the activity rather than its result and it is exercised according to a codification that partitions as closely as possible time, space, movement.' (ibid) Disciplinary power functions continuously, not simply operating on the level of output (e.g. a tax levied upon a serf), but ordering the entire process from start to finish (e.g. the organisation of a factory floor).

These three factors together help us to under the nature of disciplinary power; it operates in a more continuous manner, on a more microscopic level, and mainly upon the forces, rather than the signs, of the body. The end of the 18th century did not see the invention of this form of power - it had long existed in different forms and scattered locations - but it did see the spread of this form of power into many of the most important institutions in society: education, medicine, economy, psychiatry. All of this means that the beginning of the modern era saw the human body:

'entering a machinery of power that explores it, breaks it down and rearranges it. A "political anatomy", which was also a "mechanics of power", was being born; it defined

how one may have a hold over others' bodies, not only so that they may do what one wishes, but so that they may operate as one wishes, with the techniques, the speed and the efficiency that one determines. Thus discipline produces subjected and practised bodies, 'docile' bodies.'(ibid)

Foucault argues that modern societies did not become more 'humane' because of the lofty philosophical ideals of the Enlightenment, as is the conventional telling of history, but rather the new systems of surveillance and assessment no longer required the same level force or violence as people learned to discipline themselves and behave in expected ways. He argued that we can characterise modern society as a disciplinary society because 'since the seventeenth century… constantly reached out to ever broader domains, as if they tended to cover the entire social body.'(ibid, pg 139)

Bio-Politics

The next concept we can look at is *bio-politics*. Bio-politics is a form of power that can be understood as a correlative of the disciplines. Like the disciplines, bio-politics emerged with the re-organisation of economy of power that took place the beginning of the modern era. If the disciplines 'centred on the body as a machine; its disciplining, the optimization of its capabilities, the extortion of its forces, the parallel increase of its usefulness and its docility, its integration into systems of efficient and economic controls' (Foucault, 1978, pg 139), then bio-politics centres on the body as an organism; working on 'the species body, the body as the basis of the biological processes: propagation and longevity, with all the conditions that can cause these to vary. Their supervision was effected through an entire series of interventions and regulatory controls: a bio-politics of the population.'(ibid) If the disciplinary institutions aim to make the population useful, bio-politics endeavours to keep the population stable and healthy, often doing so under the sign of 'security' or 'public health'.

These 'interventions and regulatory controls' have become so extensive and pervasive that it is hard to imagine an area of our lives today into which they don't reach: education, health, birth, death, marriage, family relations, occupation, housing, and most other elements human life are now the jurisdiction of the State. State influence has become so all encompassing that we barely see it any more but this has not always been the case, the normalisation of an all pervading State apparatus is a very new development in human history. It is only in modern times that the State has taken such an active role in the life of its citizens. As we have seen in the previous chapter, before modern civilisation the usual form that power took was 'deduction'. It was 'a subtraction mechanism, a right to appropriate a portion of the wealth, a tax of products, goods and services, labour and blood, levied on the subjects. Power in this instance was essentially a right of seizure: of things, time, bodies, and ultimately life itself.' (ibid, pg 136)

However, beginning in the 18th century, governments began to perceive the necessity of intervening in the life of its citizens. Foucault points to the huge amount of literature that emerged in this period on the 'art of government' (Foucault et al., 2003). This literature was different from similar literature on the subject in the period preceding it. Advice to the prince literature, of which Machiavelli's *The Prince* is the most famous example, conceived of the relationship of power as between the sovereign and the territory over which they preside. With the 'art of government' literature a little time late, we see the emergence of a new conceptual figure, a figure which came to be understood as the proper object of government, this object was the *population*. The population was not a legal or political entity, but rather a biological one, 'that is characterized by its own processes and phenomena, such as birth and death rates, health status, life span, and the production of wealth and its circulation'. (Lemke et al., 2011, pg 37)

A nation State relies on its population to supply the military, labour force, tax revenues, bureaucracy, etc., 'hence there was an explosion of numerous and diverse techniques for achieving the subjugations of bodies and the control of populations.' (Foucault, 1978, pg 140) Modern society saw the advent of power as a 'life-administering' force, 'working to incite, reinforce, control, monitor, optimize, and organize the forces under it: a power bent on generating forces, making them grow, and ordering them, rather than one dedicated to impeding them, making them submit, or destroying them.' (ibid. pg 136) Bio-power deals with people, not as legal subjects or as disciplinary individuals, but as living beings. Foucault writes:

> 'For the first time in history, no doubt, biological existence was reflected in political existence; the fact of living was no longer an inaccessible substrate that only emerged from time to time, amid the randomness of death and its fatality; part of it passed into knowledge's field of control and power's sphere of intervention.' (ibid, pg 142)

Foucault's claim, his use of the term 'bio-politics', is based on the idea that since the modern politics has begun to effect even the biological processes of the individual. This is not to say that old legal forms of power are not present in our society, that the law has disappeared, but it does mean that 'the law operates more and more as a norm, and that the judicial institution is increasingly incorporated into a continuum of apparatuses (medical, administrative, and so on) whose functions are for the most part regulatory.' (ibid, pg 140) This 'continuum of apparatuses' has inserted itself into every stage of the life of the individual, establishing a huge structure of norms for the individual to live by, that they may be 'healthy' and 'productive' members of society, and indeed, 'a normalizing society is the historical outcome of a technology of power centred on life.' (ibid, pg 144)

What the considerations of this section amount to is the claim that power in the modern era is more interested in the body than it ever has been; and that a huge array of techniques have been developed to take hold of the human body in a more total, microscopic and continuous way than what had been possible previously.

Power & The Subject

This section will explore how power acts upon 'the subject'. The term 'subject' is used to refer to a unique consciousness that has a relationship with something outside of itself (an 'object'), and can in most cases be regarded as essentially analogues to the word 'consciousness'. 'Subject' and 'subjectivity' have been key terms in the European understanding of the mind and consciousness for the last few centuries. This section will outline how Foucault understood subjectivity and what were the political implications of this understanding.

The Subject

Much, perhaps most, of modern philosophy has been concerned with this figure of 'the subject', this strange point of existence that is inflected inwards, experiencing itself. Modern philosophy began with the Cartesian *cogito* - 'I think, therefore I am'. The implication of this well known couplet is that 'I' am a 'thinking thing', fundamentally grounding the subject in thought. Around 150 years later Immanuel Kant redrew the boundaries of subjectivity. Rather than working unquestioningly from the point of the impenetrable thought, Kant sought to define the precise nature of the 'transcendental subject', a subject limited by the structures imposed by human consciousness. Karl Marx grounded the subject in its materiality, claiming that the subject can be understood only through its 'objective' relationship with the world. While all these accounts differ about where to locate the essence of the subject, they are all in agreement that such an essence exists. They all work

on the assumption that the subject has a substantial existence, whether it resides in thought, the capacity to reason, or a material relation.

Foucault takes a different approach to the question of subjectivity. Re-iterating the Nietzschean claim that the idea of an 'essential' subject is a fiction that has long mystified Western philosophy, Foucault wrote: 'I do indeed believe that there is no sovereign, founding subject, a universal form of subject to be found everywhere. I am very sceptical of this view of the subject and very hostile to it.' (Foucault, Krietman, 1988b, pg 50) His epistemological framework of genealogy works from the idea that subjectivity is never a pure essence, that it is always situated within a particular historical and social context, that it is always 'a complex product rather than a pre-existing condition'. (Prado, 2000, pg 10)

He argued that the search for the universal essence of subjectivity, the 'pursuit of origin', a pursuit that shaped not only the course of modern philosophy, but the whole of the European philosophical tradition beginning with Plato, is founded on a misconception, and asks: 'why does Nietzsche challenge the pursuit of the origin (Ursprung), at least on those occasions when he is truly a geneologist?' He then answers;

> 'First, because it is an attempt to capture the exact essence of things, their purest possibilities, and their carefully protected identities; because this search assumes the existence of immobile forms that precede the external world of accident and succession. This search is directed to "that which was already there," the image of a primordial truth fully adequate to its nature, and it necessitates the removal of every mask to ultimately disclose an original identity.' (Foucault, Rainbow, 2010, pg 78)

But Nietzsche, like Foucault after him, claimed that the figure of 'that which was already there' is a phantom, that there is no essential origin, or possible point of 'return'. Part of the reason why Foucault is tricky to fit into the philosophical tradition is because he challenges the epistemological foundation of European philosophy, insisting on including what the meta-physicians would describe as 'contingent':

> 'if the genealogist refuses to extend his faith in metaphysics, if he listens to history, he finds that there is "something altogether different" behind things: not a timeless and essential secret, but the secret that they have no essence or that their essence was fabricated in a piecemeal fashion from alien forms.' (ibid)

Instead of searching for a universal origin, an eternal essence, Foucault claimed that the subject is constituted each moment anew, by an ever evolving constellation of *technologies*, and the attempt to see past these historically constituted technologies to something like ultimate truth is like trying to catch your shadow. The political implications of these philosophical claims can be elaborated upon using the conceptual toolbox we have already developed.

Technologies of Power

If the subject, consciousness, is a 'complex product', rather than a 'pre-existing condition', then from what is it produced? The whole corpus of Foucault's work can be seen as an attempt to answer this question. He described his work as an attempt 'to create a history of the different modes by which, in our culture, human beings are made subjects.' (Foucault, 1982, pg777) If we take Foucault's work only up until 1981 then it would appear that he paints a rather bleak picture of the formation of subjectivity: 'Power is not only prohibitive, rule-based and uniform, but first and foremost positive and productive; it is everywhere, omnipresent, dispersed all over the social body.

As such, power produces and creates the knowing subjects.' The subject, at least in this particular moment in history, is created by all the mechanisms already talked about (disciplines, bio-power, the subjugation of knowledges, etc.), meaning that the subject, our consciousness, is merely an effect of totalitarian forms of power.

Foucauldian analysis shows how the emergence of our framework for experience, both mental and physical, can be traced to tactics used in power battles, tactics which aimed at 'normalisation' for a specific purpose. He argued that power creates us as subjects, both in terms of the knowledge it produces, as well the material processes in which our bodies have become entangled – the human sciences, disciplinary institutions, processes of production, state bureaucracy, etc. The knowledge through which the subject interprets themselves and the world, the domain of objects that the subject sees, the material processes (productive, disciplinary, even biological) that the subject is a part of, cannot be disentangled from the social structures in which they emerged.

'Technology'[3] was an important concept in Foucault's conceptual repertoire. While we usually associate the concept with the material sciences, and with the physical objects we use to manipulate our environment, Foucault applied the concept to various methods of manipulating the conduct of individuals along with their subjective experience of the world. Consciousness does not arrive as a fixed and stable entity; rather it has been consciously (and also unconsciously) shaped by a vast array of practices, objects, discourses, etc. The tools used to shape our consciousness, to direct our thoughts and actions, he called *technologies of power*.

Foucault's work traced how the knowledge we have developed about ourselves, while being valid domains of knowledge containing empirical truths, are also technologies of power that structure relations of oppression and domination. The human sciences may well produce a body of true knowledge, but this truth must not be understood as some neutral description of an 'objective reality'. Truth does not only describe reality, it also creates it, and our truths have been created in a nexus of power that shapes our consciousness in the service of particulars ends. In this context, what is essential is 'not to accept this knowledge at face value but to analyse these so-called sciences as very specific "truth games" related to specific techniques that human beings use to understand themselves.' (Foucault et al., 1988a, pg. 18)

Thus far in our analysis, the Foucauldian understanding of the subject would seem to suggest that our scope for progressive action is quite limited. Our existence is formed by technologies of power that are produced above our heads. Derek Kerr is not the only one to have levelled the criticism that Foucault's work focuses too much on how mechanisms of power shape human beings while completely ignoring the individual's subjective experience and agency, giving the impression that 'that humanity can never escape from systems of power and governmentality.'(Kerr, 1999) When our every move is decided for us in advance by the force of power, then how can we ever resist? Foucault's focus on power would seem to go so far as to preclude the possibility of an individual. In place of the human being is a hollowed out figure, a puppet whose every movement can be accounted for by its strings being tugged by power.

Whether or not this is a fair criticism of his earlier work, toward the end of his career Foucault made a sharp break with examining 'practices of subjection', that is the creation and propagation of technologies of power by centralised institutions, and instead turned to 'practices of liberation, of liberty, as in Antiquity, on the basis, of course, of a number of rules, styles, inventions to be found in the cultural environment.' (Foucault, 1990, pg 50-51) It is to these 'practices of liberation' that we now turn.

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3 Foucault used the word interchangeable with the word 'technique', a practice followed in this work

Technologies of the Self

As we have just seen, for the better part of his career, Foucault wrote the 'history of the present', tracing the emergence of various technologies of power that constitute the modern subject. These technologies effect 'an objectivizing of the subject', and allow some individuals to 'determine the conduct of [other] individuals and submit them to certain ends or domination'. (Foucault et al., 1988a, pg. 18)

However, in the last years of his research, his histories became more focussed on the past. He began exploring the subjectivity of a bygone era, a subjectivity that we no longer have access to. During these explorations he decided that he needed to expand the concept of technology. Because, rather than only being tools in the service of domination and objectification, he saw that in ancient times an individual could also employ technologies to empower themselves, to deliberately shape their own subjectivity according to their own volition. These 'truth games' were not coercive practices that 'conducted the action of others', *technologies of the self* [4] 'permit[ed] individuals to effect by their own means or with the help of others a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality.' (ibid)

The concept of techniques of the self emerged from Foucault's historical investigations into the societies of ancient Greece and Rome. His original aim in journeying so far back into the past was to trace the emergence of the apparatus of 'sexuality', to follow the evolution of how Europeans assigned meaning and value to their desires, sensations and pleasures. However he realised that the methodological tools he had thus far developed could not explain the ways in which the ancients were made into subjects of sexuality.

Up to then he had studied truth games in 'their interplay with one another' (as in the relationship between different fields of science), or in 'their reactions with power relations'; but in order to understand ancient subjectivity what one had to 'study [was] the games of truth in the relationship of self with self and the forming of oneself as a subject.'(Foucault, 1990, pg 7) The ancients lived in a time long before the emergence of the technologies of power that characterise the modern era. There was no centralised power, such as a hegemonic Church or State, concerned with the government of individuals. Instead individuals were free to govern themselves, to create themselves, shape their own subjectivities through the use of various practices, various technologies. The term that the ancient Greeks designated to these technologies is *epimēlēsthai sautou* – which is translated as the '*care of oneself*'.

To care for oneself was at the core of the moral understanding of ancient Greece, Rome and early Christendom. Socrates held the care of oneself to be of the utmost concern, constantly imploring the citizens of Athens to take care of themselves. What Socrates meant in this context was not that one should care for oneself as most citizens of Athens did, by the 'acquisition of wealth and for reputation and honour.' (Plato, West, 1979, 29e) To care for oneself meant to concern oneself with 'wisdom, truth and the perfection of one's soul.' (ibid) The technique that Socrates was encouraging was self-examination, emphasizing that to care for oneself meant that one must constantly reflect upon the ethical underpinnings of one's actions.

And, although alive more than 400 years after Socrates, the ethical contemplations of stoic philosopher and Emperor Marcus Aurelius was still centred on the principle of 'caring for the self'. Aurelius maintained a constant practice of *epimēlēsthai sautou* throughout his life, even engaging in

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4 In keeping with the usage of Foucault, the term 'technology of the self' will be used interchangeably with the term 'practice of the self' and 'technique of the self' throughout this work.

such practices during long periods of warfare with German tribes on Rome's northern boarder. By the time of the Roman imperial era the vigilance one kept over their daily activities, moods and thoughts was heightened by the act of keeping a diary. This practice of the self involved writing down the smallest details of the day. By so doing, awareness of oneself is heightened, enabling one to keep the mind and body from falling under the sway of 'the passions'.

Another such Stoic technology was to engage in the practice of imagining the worst possible thing that could happen to you. Not only to imagine that it could happen, but to imagine that it had already happened, and to adjust one's subjectivity to this reality. This was not done in the Christian vein of the glorification of suffering, but rather to stoically harden oneself to external events. These are merely two examples: Foucault maintains that the care of the self was at the centre of many schools of ancient philosophy (Platonic, Cynic, Epicurean, and Stoic), as well as early Christian thinking, and encompassed a huge range of practices including confession, sexual practices, dietary regimes, and the interpretation of dreams.(Foucault et al., 1988a) Using these techniques the elites of the ancient world looked to sculpt themselves into something beautiful and noble. In the words of Epitectus; 'For as wood is the material of the carpenter, bronze that of the statuary, just so each man's life is the subject matter of the art of living'. (ibid)

Foucault himself understood his work to be a form of *ascetics,* of transforming the self through altering the 'games of truth' through which our reality is constituted. Each step of his research worked to reveal another layer of 'the self' that is historically contingent; a subject changing the rules of the game in order to refuse the forms of individualisation that modernity imposes. If the human sciences are 'games of truth' that seek to discover what we are then 'the target nowadays is not to discover what we are, but to refuse what we are.'(Foucault, 1982, pg 785) His *oeuvre* can be seen as the attempt to travel back through time, taking the hammer to each eras monuments of the self, revealing its historically contingent core, until everything has been torn down, leaving only a blank space, allowing the freedom to start anew.

But then we arrive at the most important question. If we accept the idea that the self is 'nothing else than the historical correlation of the technology built into our history', (ibid) and that these technologies should be changed, we are then we are faced;

> 'not only with the question of how one could go about doing such a thing but also with the question of what kind of technology, what kind of self, could replace it. In other words, how does one distance oneself and free oneself from oneself, and what kind of self could or should one then become?'(O'Leary, 2002, pg 13)

It is easy to say what one is against, but another thing entirely to say what one is for. If we want to 'refuse what we are', to what else can we turn? What self do we want to establish in place of the one that is produced by modern technologies of power?

Which brings our discussion of the Foucauldian subject to a close. The understanding of the subject outlined here, the fact that it is malleable, shaped by either external (technologies of power) or internal (technologies of the self) forces will be key to understanding Gandhi's politics of Vedic Anarchism.

Coda

This final section will be used to explore some additional elements of power that will be important in our analysis but did not fit into the sections above.

Power & Intentionality

The first is on the 'intentionality' of power. It must be noted that there is no claim here that power operates according to some master plan, that power is exercised by some secretive puppet master who is controlling all the strings. Those who attempt to improve the health of the population do not necessarily do so to bring society into line with a set of hegemonic norms. All developments of modern government are not necessarily ill-intentioned. What appears to us from the perspective of the Foucauldian analytic as repressive disciplinary strategies are often genuine attempts at humanitarian reform; they are responses to social problems, aimed at helping people to adjust to the societies they find themselves in.

However, the efforts of these humanitarian reformers exist in a wider network of contentious power relations. In this network various groups in society use a multitude of strategies and tactics in the reproduction or contestation of power, including using humanitarian programmes to maintain hierarchical power relations, thus making them important elements in a wider apparatus of power.

Power & Value

The final point to be made, one that is very important, is that power is not inherently negative (although perhaps given the general tenor of Foucault's work, one could be forgiven for such an assumption). When the definition of power ('a relation of force upon the action of others'), is read in conjunction with a genealogy of disciplinary institutions, it produces a rather sinister effect. But 'action upon the action of others' does not only include oppressive operations. We can think of many examples from our day to day life in which people direct the action of others in a positive way.

The act of parenting is one of an individual shaping the conduct of another; the relationship between a parent and child is a relation of power *par excellance.* But it does not follow that the parent/child relationship is oppressive, and that it should be met with resistance. A parent must teach a child how to exist in the world, and this is most often to the benefit of the child. '[P]ower relations are not something that are bad in itself, that we have to break free of. I do not think that a society can exist without power relations, if by that one means the strategies by which individuals try to direct and control the conduct of others.' (Foucault, Rainbow, 1997, p298) The social nature of human existence means that individuals will always influence the conduct of others, this is what Foucault means when he says that power is everywhere.

Late in his career Foucault conceded that 'I am not even sure if I made myself clear, or used the right words, when I first became interested in the problem of power. Now I have a clearer sense of the problem.'(ibid) What this 'clearer sense of the problem' amounts to is the distinction between power and domination. All human relations can be understood as including an element of power; strategic games in which we try and influence each others actions, values, dispositions. Inviting a friend out to dinner is a relation of power; as is talking to someone about the potential health benefits of to a vegetarian diet is a relation of power. Every interaction between human beings implies some relation of power. Every conversation necessitates knowledge, a way of seeing the world. This way of seeing then shapes our day to day interactions and influences the way we exist in the world. 'Power' in political discourse is most often considered a problem (the potential for tyranny, the question of legitimacy, etc.). However, Foucauldian power is more along the lines of a physical relation: a 'relation of force' in the same way as gravity is a relation of force, or electromagnetism is a relation of force; bodies acting upon other bodies (although in this case also minds acting upon other minds). This is a description of human interaction without value judgement.

Value judgement arises when these relations of power become 'fixed in such a way that they are perpetually asymmetrical and allow an extremely limited margin of freedom'. (ibid, pg 292) Some relations of power can become fixed, institutionalised, so that the ability of the person who is acted upon to do otherwise is greatly diminished.

We can look to the example of talking to a friend about the health benefits of a vegetarian diet. This constitutes a relation of power: you are attempting to direct the action of your friend by playing a particular truth game – if your friend accepts the proposition 'I will be more healthy if I follow a vegetarian diet', then they will be less likely to eat meat. However, in this strategic game my friend has many options: they can affirm an opposite truth, they can simply ignore me, they can decide that the enjoyment of eating meat is worth the adverse health affects, etc. But imagine a circumstance in which I tried to influence my friend in other ways: I threaten to lock them in their room for a week if they eat meat; I compel them to affirm that meat eaters are 'bad people'; I tell them that I would ensure they would lose their job and become homeless if they didn't follow a strict vegetarian diet. Now imagine there was an institutional framework in place that gave me the capacity to do all this. In this case, although my friend would still ultimately have the choice to eat meat, this capacity would be greatly diminished. The relation between myself and my friend would be too forceful; the 'strategic game' would be rigged and the relation of power would become a relation of domination.

We can look to the much criticised institution of pedagogy for another example. Foucault argued that he saw 'nothing wrong in the practice of a person who, knowing more than others in a specific game of truth, tells those others what to do, teaches them, and transmits knowledge and techniques to them.'(ibid, pg 298) This is a relation of power under the Foucauldian definition, but not a relation of domination. The teacher attempts to influence the conduct of the student by teaching them a skill that may have an empowering effect for the student. If the student decides that the teaching is of benefit, they may wilfully choose for their conduct to be directed in such a way. However;

> 'the problem in such practices where power - which is not in itself a bad thing- must inevitably come into play is knowing how to avoid the kind of domination effects where a kid is subjected to the arbitrary and unnecessary authority of a teacher, or a student put under the thumb of a professor who abuses his authority.' (ibid)

The issue is not that a teacher attempts to influence the conduct of a student; it is how and why the conduct of the student is directed.

Which finally brings us to our investigation into the politics of Mohandas Gandhi. Armed with this Foucauldian understanding of power, truth, knowledge, the body, and consciousness, we are in a much better position to interpret a political vision that is so foreign to what we are used to in the social sciences. This investigation into Gandhi will be done from two angles: the first is his anti-colonial activism, the next is his broader anarchist political vision.

Chapter II: Epistemological De-Colonisation

Colo-mentality
E be say you be colonial man
You don be slave man before

Them don release you now
But you never release yourself

-Fela Kuti

Epistemological Colonisation of India

'Colonialism' is one of those concepts that is spread over such a breath of phenomena, experiences, and transformations that it can often obscure, rather than illuminate, what it is referring to. It is perhaps most often thought of in terms of its political and economic effects. Politically, colonialism had a huge effect on the structure of government around the world. Old governmental structures were destroyed, new ones were established, or sometimes Europeans simply inserted themselves into already existing political structures. The 'decolonisation' movements of the 20th century dealt primarily with this aspect of colonisation, and we live in the so called 'post-colonial' era, because former colonial governments are now peopled by locals, rather than Europeans.

Economically, colonialism had a huge effect on the structure of production and markets around the world. As an example we can look to the commercialisation of agriculture. In colonial India British rulers put pressure on peasants to produce cash crops (such as cotton, indigo, sugar cane, rubber, tea and coffee) for international markets. Up until that point Indian farmers were largely self-sufficient, producing what they needed for their day to day lives. What they did not produce themselves they could procure from local markets, which were often based on barter rather than cash exchange. The commercialisation of agriculture meant that farmers were assimilated into, and became dependent on, national and international capitalist markets. (Washbrook, 1994)

But the effects of colonialism were much wider than this. European colonialism changed not only global markets and political structures, it also propagated a particular way of thinking, and a way of living, across the whole world. Knowledge is always linked in a circular and mutually constitutive relationship with power, and the expansion of colonial power came hand in hand with the expansion of colonial knowledge. We can refer to this phenomena, the propagation of the colonial episteme, as *epistemological colonialism*.

The number and diversity of methods employed in the process of epistemological colonialism are vast (calling forth the services of priests, doctors, soldiers, teachers, politicians, scientists, bureaucrats, and anthropologists, to name but a few) and its effects are profound. In some places, such as in America or Australia, it meant the almost total destruction of indigenous knowledge and indigenous ways of life. In others, indigenous knowledge had to adapt to the new colonial order. This section will outline one such epistemological encounter: that between the colonial episteme of Europe and the Vedic episteme of the Indian sub-continent. While colonialism in India had major political and economic dimensions, Vivek Dhareshwar is not the only scholar to note that 'the enslavement of Indians had a peculiar epistemic character: it taught them to ignore the kind of knowledge that organized the domains of practical life.'(Dhareshwar, 2012a, pg 259) It is this epistemic character of the colonisation of India that we will explore in this section.

While the process of epistemological colonisation can be charted in many regions of the world, India is a particularly fruitful area of investigation. Its non-modern order of knowledge (the Vedic tradition) is still relatively strong, and there is a long and well kept record of the arrival of the modern episteme on the sub-continent from both the colonisers and colonised. We will begin our investigation with the emergence of colonial knowledge in India in the early 19th century, looking at how Indian intellectuals and activists first attempted to come to grips with modern discourses of the

colonisers. Then we will follow its expansion throughout the 19th and early 20th century up to the Indian Independence movement, when Mohandas Gandhi steps onto the political stage. Using the Foucauldian understanding of the dynamic between power/knowledge, we look at some of the sites where the modern episteme took root, and see how the propagation of the modern order of knowledge often meant the subjugation of an episteme that had existed in India for over 3,500 years.

The First Modern Indian

An essential figure in understanding the penetration of the modern order of knowledge into India is Ram Mohan Roy. Born in Bengal in 1772 to a moderately wealthy landowning family, Roy received a lengthy education from Hindu, Persian, and Arabic teachers and during the course of his learning was also highly influenced by the European traditions of both Christianity and the Enlightenment. He is often described as the first 'modern Indian' as he was the first Indian thinker to deploy the modern discourses that the British colonists brought to the sub-continent, and is thus a good person to begin our history of epistemological colonisation.

People propagate knowledge as an attempt to enact change. Knowledge is deployed to affect how people think and act, and Roy deployed the recently arrived modernist discourses for a variety of reasons. The most famous, and the one most recounted in modernist historiography, was his successful campaign against the practice of *sati*. Sati was the practice of widows burning themselves on their husbands funeral pyre. Although the practice was rather uncommon, it held special significance for Roy after he watched his brother's widow perform sati when he was young. Deploying modern discourses, Roy railed against 'idolatrous' and 'superstitious' Hindu practices, writing powerful tracts against the sati and against the treatment of women in general by Bengali patriarchs.

Roy's campaigns of 'social improvement' would be held up by modernists as the light of Reason piercing into the dark malaise of 'tradition'. And there is no doubt that Roy deployed modernist discourses in order to combat patriarchal and generally inhuman practices. Aside from championing the cause of women, Roy also campaigned against other oppressive and exclusionary practices such as child marriage and untouchability. However, while there is no doubt that modern Enlightenment discourses can and have been used to combat exclusionary practices and inequalities, this does not mean it is inherently superior to other traditions, nor that discourses from non-modern traditions cannot also be used to combat oppression.

While recognising that Enlightenment discourses can be used to change things for the better, we must also be aware of the way modern narratives of 'progress' are deployed. The overwhelming focus on positive changes brought about by modernisation mask the many negative effects of its transformations: mass environmental destruction, severe exploitation of people in the global south, the growing feeling of alienation of those in industrial society. Based on sheer scale alone, modern society is orders of magnitude more violent and destructive than anything that has come before it. But while proponents of modernisation tend to conceal modern society's own systematic brutalities, they hold up the irregular violence of 'tradition', such as the cruel duty of sati, as typical of non-modern ways of acting. The genuinely positive narratives of Enlightenment rationality combating oppression become a tool to be deployed in the subjugation of non-modern ways of life. The claim that one must modernise in order to combat oppression and social inequalities must be understood within the dynamic of power/knowledge, and modernity's project of epistemological colonisation.

Another of Roy's important campaigns to modernise India was the promotion of 'English' (modern) education. Roy felt that the propagation of modern education was the best way to tackle the

'irrational' practices of the Hindus. In a letter to the Governor General of India, he appeals to the English Government to propagate modern education for the 'improvement of its Indian subjects'; 'such improvement' he writes:

> '[cannot] arise from such speculations as the following, which are the themes suggested by the Vedant:- In what manner is the soul absorbed into the deity? What relation does it bear to the divine essence? Nor will youths be fitted to be better members of society by the Vedantic doctrines, which teach them to believe that all visible things have no real existence; that as father, brother, etc., have no actual entity, they consequently deserve no real affection, and therefore the sooner we escape from them and leave the world the better.' (Guhu, 2011, pg 44)

While this may seem to be a benign appeal against a system of learning based on abstract meta-physical speculation, what he is here de-legitimizing are some of the core components of Vedic understanding. Part of the Vedic way of seeing is to understand our normal perception as conditioned by the human consciousness. This is the idea of *Maya*: the appearance of the world after it has been shaped by our limited senses, and our limited position in space and time. The most important of the four life goals (*purushartha*) within the Vedic tradition is *moksha.* One who achieves moksha sees beyond their conditioned experience to the underlying existence which is universal and unchanging (*Brahman*). Hindus believe that we spend many lifetimes experiencing the world as Maya, until we have done enough good work (karma) in this world, and we are absorbed into Brahman.

While this brief description may reduce these concepts to somewhat obtuse metaphysical propositions, they are concepts that shape how people at all levels of Indian society think, see and act. While the introduction of a modern education was put forward as part of programme of 'social improvement', we must also understand that it meant the subjugation of Vedic knowledge and thus the erasure of the Vedic way of existing in the world. Roy continues:

> 'In order to enable your Lordship to appreciate the utility of encouraging such imaginary learning as above characterized, I beg your Lordship will be pleased to compare the state of science and literature in Europe before the time of Lord Bacon, with the progress of knowledge made since he wrote. If it had been intended to keep the British nation in ignorance of real knowledge the Baconian philosophy would not have been allowed to displace the system of the schoolmen, which was the best calculated to perpetuate ignorance. In the same manner, the Sangscrit system of education would be best calculated to keep this country in darkness, if such had been the policy of the British Legislature. But as the improvement of the native population is the object of the Government, it will consequently promote a more liberal and enlightened system of instruction, embracing mathematics, natural philosophy, chemistry and anatomy, with other useful science[s]'. (ibid, pg 45)

Here we see the unmistakeable stamp of the modern episteme: intolerance for those 'imaginary learnings' that foster 'ignorance of real knowledge' and keep people in 'darkness', along with unashamed apotheosis of the 'light' of modernity, and its 'useful' 'liberal and enlightened system of instruction' (the 'use' of knowledge is, of course, defined on modernity's own terms).

We can recognise clearly here the Foucauldian mechanic of knowledge subjugation. In the same way that the discourse of the madman is reduced to silence, designated as 'unreason' by Enlightenment's totalitarian rationality; the validity of the Vedic way of seeing, thinking and acting

is de-legitimized by a modern discourse that puts forward its own epistemology, its own system of positivities, as the one truth. And just as the madman is reduced to silence by an apparatus of power that has the capacity to enforce its truth (the judiciary system, medical discourses, the disciplinary institution of the asylum, etc.), the subjugation of the Vedic order of knowledge is enabled by the expansion of colonial power. Although the physical presence of British people on the sub-continent was always going to remain marginal, as the 19th century progressed the political, economic and epistemological presence of the colonisers would grow exponentially, and would be felt first by those Indians closest to the new British colonisers, the indigenous elites.

Power/Knowledge & Modernity in India

As we have just seen, epistemological expansion is not only imposed from the state level on an unwilling population but can also be willingly adopted by people seeking to turn the new order of knowledge to their own advantage. Indigenous elites generally recognise the need to conform to the new order of knowledge if they are to retain, or even expand, their privileged positions in society. Roy, who was a very shrewd politician, remarked that 'the present system of Hindus is not well calculated to promote their political interests… It is necessary that some change should take place in their religion, at least for the sake of their political advantage and social comfort.' (Rammohun, Ghosh, 1901, pg 929-930) Thus it was the elite *Brahmins* (the priestly caste) in Indian society, such as Roy, who recognised the importance of adapting to the modern ways of seeing in order to ingratiate themselves with the colonisers. And because these indigenous elites already had a base of local power, they were able to set up schools, societies and newspapers from which the modern order of knowledge could be propagated (generally to other Brahmins or high-castes).

Here the link between power and knowledge is clear. Foreign power enters into the land and begins installing a new political, economic and epistemological order. Those seeking to capitalise on the political and economic orders must necessarily come to terms with the epistemological order, as one cannot be separated from the other. First it was the indigenous elites, the Brahmins, who sought to capitalise on this new order and reproduce their privileged place in Indian society through modern discourses. But it didn't take long for the growing Brahmin dominance to demonstrate the importance of modern education to other groups. Jatirao Phule was a champion of the lower castes and fierce critic of the brahmical social order. He saw that Brahmins were capitalising on the new constellation of power in India by monopolising access to modern education. He wrote to British officials that 'the present system of education, which, by providing ampler funds for higher education, tended to educate Brahmins and the higher classes only, and to leave the masses wallowing in ignorance and poverty.' (ibid, pg 79) He says that British officials have been fooled by the spurious Brahmin argument that if the British 'inspire… the love of knowledge in the minds of the superior classes', that they will 'spread among their own countrymen the intellectual blessings which they have received.'(ibid) Phule pointedly poses the question:

> 'what contribution have they made to [the] great work of regenerating their fellowmen? How have they begun to act upon the masses? Have any of them formed classes at their own homes or elsewhere, for the instruction of their less fortunate or less wise countrymen? Or have they kept their knowledge to themselves, as a personal gift, not to be soiled by contact with the ignorant [and] vulgar?' (ibid)

Part of the reason that the epistemological colonisations of India, the propagation of the modern regime of truth, was so successful was that it encountered an already deeply divided discursive field. Although this work has been referring to the 'Vedic tradition', this was not a harmonious and unified order of knowledge. Just as with the modern order of knowledge, the Vedic order of knowledge is enmeshed in a network of power, and is rife with contestation. The most obvious

example is the caste system, in which the upper-castes justified their positions of social hierarchy based on what they put forward as authoritative texts of the Vedic tradition such as the *Manu Smriti*.

Aside from these inter-caste contestations, inter-community contestations are an important reality in Indian society, particularly between Muslims and Hindus. While we do not have the space to discuss all of these divisions here, the arrival of modernity would play an important role in the development of these struggles over the proceeding two centuries (and beyond). With new colonial rulers entering with their own practices of truth, and the means to enforce those truths, it is quite natural that local groups began incorporating these practices as part of a wider strategy in the field of social contestation.

One thing that should be clear by now is that this work is not suggesting that we reverse the simplistic dichotomy of modernity/tradition, and assert that modernity is bad and the Vedic tradition is good. Such simple dichotomies only obfuscate complex dynamics. Vedic discourses can be deployed in oppressive ways, and modern discourses in progressive ones. Nor is this work suggesting that all those responsible for epistemological colonisation were consciously working with a colonial agenda in mind. Power circulates without a grand master puppeteer pulling all the strings, and often outside the conscious awareness of those people within the network of power. In the same way that prison reformers in 19th century Europe sincerely sought to improve people's lives by advocating for the new carceral system, activists like Phule sincerely wanted to improve the lives of the worst off by advocating that the State provide a modern education for 'the masses'. Like many others social reformers in India, he would see in modernity a new strategy to tackle pre-existing forms of domination. What he was probably less aware of was the new forms of domination that would result in the propagation of modernity's technologies of power around India.

The Civilising Mission

So far we have spoken of how different groups in India adopted for themselves the discourses of modernity as part of a set of tactics in local contestations for power, without at all mentioning the deliberate actions of the British government to 'civilise' India. Limitations of space mean that we can only briefly touch on some of these actions, but they are worth mentioning so as not to leave the impression that the processes of epistemological colonisation were entirely the result of Indians.

Although we have seen various groups in society petitioning the British for modern education, it is not as if the British were unforthcoming with their educational reform. The British couldn't govern India on their own. They needed Indian people on the ground who they could trust with the effective administration of their colonial regime, which meant impressing modern culture and the modern regime of truth upon certain groups of Indian people, thus creating a class that was, in the words of colonial pedagogue Thomas Macaulay, 'Indian in blood and colour, but English in tastes, in opinions, in morals and intellect.' (Barlas, 1995, pg 49) This was, however, only the first step. The ultimate aim of educating these indigenous elites was 'to render them by degrees fit vehicles for conveying knowledge to the great mass of the population'. (ibid) The ambitious endpoint of the the British civilising mission was the total replacement of indigenous culture and knowledge with that of the colonisers.

A second policy we can look to is the British codification of the legal system. In 1864 the British began working on judicial reform to make the complex web of Sanskrit law more comprehensible to the British colonialists. Although the British merely aimed at translating them into English, the codification of these laws, and the establishment of the authority of precedence, transformed Sanskrit law, if not in the letter (although that letter was now English), at least in spirit, and began

introducing modern forms of legality, social relations and conceptions of justice into the sub-continent. (Cohn, 1996, pg 65-71)

A further British effort toward epistemological colonisation, and one of central importance, was the introduction of private property by the British in 1793. Prior to this, land was held communally, although a percentage of the farmers' produce was often levied by the local power brokers. While we won't go into detail here, the disruption that the introduction of private property brought to the Indian way of life was immense. Private property alters modes of land tenure, social relations and, at the most fundamental level, people's relationship with the land, a relationship which is at the 'heart of Indian society'. (Barlas, 1995, pg 49) The introduction of private property also served the British colonial interests in a number of ways, primarily by creating a new landed class who could be relied on to collect taxes.

Legal and property reform may not appear at first to be as closely linked to epistemological colonisation as educational reform, but this is only if we think of knowledge as an abstract system somehow at a level above day to day life. The concepts we use to understand the world are derived from our relationships with the world and with each other. Disrupting those relationships means disrupting the order of knowledge that supports, and is supported by, them. While we can distinguish epistemological colonialism from other elements of colonialism (thus the political decolonisation of the 20th century did not put an end to economic colonialism - it simply re-directed it, creating new channels along which it flowed; nor did it put an end to epistemological colonisation - instead of toppling the regime of truth that the colonists had brought with them, it rather intensified its expansion), we can still say that these different elements are part of the same process. Epistemological colonialism, economic colonialism, and political colonialism are all part of the same web of power. Although we can emphasise one element or the other, we must keep in mind that many of these processes, although distinguishable, are overlapping and mutually constitutive of one another.

Modernity & Indian Independence

Before moving on to Gandhi, we can briefly look at a couple other important figures of the Indian independence movement and see their responses to the preceding century of epistemological colonisation. The first thing to note is that the leaders of the Indian independence movement (including Gandhi) are unrepresentative of the Indian population, as almost all went to England and were educated as lawyers. Immediately this separates them from the lived world of the overwhelming majority of their Indian compatriots. This fact alone goes a long to explaining their response to the huge transformation of knowledge that was brought upon the Indian sub-continent, a transformation that was turning a world understood through concepts of *karma, dharma, artha, and atman,* into one understood through concepts of science, law, economy, and history. Most of these leaders were leaders precisely because they were able to turn the British practices of truth against them; they were leaders because of the fact that they understood, and largely assented to, the modern regime of truth, and thus because they were alienated from the Vedic tradition of the people they purported to represent.

Two of the most important figures in the formation of Independent India are B.K. Ambedkar, *Dalit* leader and principle architect of the India's constitution, and Jawaharlal Nehru, the first and formative prime minister of India. Ambedker was very much a modern subject, arguing that India must reject its past and modernize. He represented the most oppressed group within the Vedic order of knowledge: the untouchables. For Ambedkar, the Vedas meant oppression and nothing short of their complete abandonment and the foundation of a new order in India based on the ideals of Liberalism would suffice to slay the beast of caste. Nehru, on the other hand, came from a wealthy

family and was sent to live in England from a young age. He was thus almost totally estranged from the epistemological world of his birth, and admitted to feeling like an 'outsider' in India. Nehru was not in a position to defend the Vedic order of knowledge because he himself didn't understand it. For Nehru, independence meant ending the political rule of the colonisers in India, but not their epistemological rule. He sincerely believed in the Enlightenment narrative of progress and the elevation of poverty through industrialisation and modern education. What these leaders intended for an independent India therefore was not resistance to colonial transformation but rather an intensification of it. What troubled people like Nehru and Ambedkar was not that colonial rule was transforming India according to the logic of modernity; it was rather that its transformations did not go far enough. However, not all leaders of the independence movement felt this way.

Gandhi's Epistemological Resistance

The preceding section has described the mechanisms by which the modern regime of truth began to circulate in India in accordance with the expansion of colonial power. Aside from the direct programmes of epistemological propagation by the British 'civilising' mission, we also saw that local groups would adopt the new colonial practices of truth as part of local power contestations. Finally, we briefly looked at how some of the most important leaders of the decolonisation movement did not challenge modernity's regime of truth but were in fact some its fiercest advocates. From this account it might seem that although British political colonialism was highly contested, the imposition of a new epistemological order was relatively seamless and that the 3,500 year old Vedic way of existing of the world would quietly fade into the background.

However, a fuller account of the propagation of modernity's regime of truth must include the innumerable epistemic contestations necessitated by the subjugation of an epistemological order. Indian people would not all act as Ram Mohan Roy did, joyously welcoming modernity's new regime. The vast majority continued to live a Vedic way of life, and challenged the ultimate and exclusive access to truth that the colonialist claimed for themselves. While this work cannot offer a full archaeological investigation into this (ongoing) subjugation of the Vedic episteme, outlining the life and politics of Mohandas Gandhi is a step towards that. Jawaharlal Nehru once said 'Gandhi is India' and if a single person could be said to best represent these innumerable epistemic contentions, that person could only be Gandhi.

In 1915 Gandhi returned to India after twenty years abroad. Although he had been politically engaged on behalf of Indian immigrants in South Africa, he was a relative unknown in his homeland. A mere five years after his return Gandhi was the undisputed leader of the Independence movement and had transformed the Congress party from a political society for elites into a mass organisation with the capacity to rally millions of people from all over India. How exactly Gandhi could achieve this remains one of the most debated points of modern Indian history, but what is clear was his capacity to communicate with the people of India on a deep level. While other independence leaders were struggling for an Indian nation State, Gandhi was mounting a sustained challenge to modernity's regime of truth, resisting the subjugation of Vedic knowledge, and speaking for, and with, the millions of voices that modernity was (and is) reducing to silence.

Contestation of Modern Education

We can begin by looking at an area that is central to the propagation of a regime of truth – education. As we saw in the previous section, modern education was of prime importance to all the various groups that sought to capitalise on the new colonial order. Knowledge is power and the ability to play the colonist's games of truth meant getting the upper hand within the network of local power struggles. After the local elite, the Brahmins, had proved that modern education was a key to securing positions of hierarchy, social reformers began calling for modern education on a mass

scale in order to combat the braminical order. All this played into the hands of the British, who began to see themselves as part of a historical mission to 'civilise' (i.e. modernise) the rest of the world. Thus the epistemological colonisation of India proceeded. Gandhi recognised this process: he saw how 'modern civilisation', as he called it, was propagating itself.

He recognised that modern education did not only knowledge of the material sciences, but also a whole set of values, and a way of life. He wrote: 'To give millions a knowledge of English is to enslave them. The foundation that Macaulay [an important colonial pedagogue] laid of education has enslaved us.' (Gandhi, 1938a, pg 84) The 'enslavement' that Gandhi is talking about here is not that of physical chains, but of a regime of truth that imposes a way of seeing on the colonial population. He also recognised the role of India's elites in propagating modernity's regime of truth and lamented: 'by receiving English education, we have enslaved the nation… Am I to blame the English for it or myself? It is we, the English-knowing Indians, that have enslaved India. The curse of the nation will rest not upon the English but upon us.'(ibid, pg 85)

Not only did Gandhi criticise the fact that modernity propagates its way of life through its system of education, he also questioned the value of an education based on what Rammohan Roy described as the 'useful sciences'. Unlike many other Indian elites that came into contact with modern education, Gandhi was sceptical as to its value. He wrote: 'I have learned Geography, Astronomy, Algebra, Geometry, etc. What of that? In what way have I benefited myself or those around me? Why have I learned these things ?' He maintained that for the vast majority of people in India, such learning is pointless, writing:

> 'A peasant earns his bread honestly. He has ordinary knowledge of the world. He knows fairly well how he should behave towards his parents, his wife, his children and his fellow villagers. He understands and observes the rules of morality but he cannot write his own name. What do you propose to do by giving him a knowledge of letters? Will you add an inch to his happiness? Do you wish to make him discontented with his cottage or his lot? And even if you want to do that, he will not need such an education. Carried away by the flood of western thought we came to the conclusion, without weighing pros and cons, that we should give this kind of education to the people.' (ibid, pg 82)

What is of note in this paragraph is the question: 'do you wish to make him discontented with his cottage or his lot?', alluding to the implicit developmentalist values that one learns during the course of a modern education: the modern way of life is the highest, while the life of a person in rural India is 'primitive' (or in today's parlance 'less developed').

In saying all this, he was not dogmatically against all forms of modern learning. He said: 'I have not run down a knowledge of letters in all circumstances. All I have now shown is that we must not make of it a fetish.' (ibid, pg 84) Automatically subjugating indigenous knowledge in favour of modern education turns modernity into a fetish. All things modern are seen as inherently good, and all things non-modern are 'primitive', 'superstitious' or 'irrational'.

However, modernity's often totalitarian implementation of a regime of truth does not necessarily mean that all modern knowledge is inherently colonial and should be resisted. Instead one must adopt a considered approach to modern knowledge (unlike the majority of Indian leaders, who were simply 'carried away by the flood of Western thought'). Gandhi did not argue against the fact that, '[i]n its place [modern knowledge] can be of use and it has its place' but, and this is essential, only 'when we have brought our senses under subjection and put our ethics on a firm foundation…'.

(ibid) Bringing the 'senses under subjection' and ethical understanding are two cornerstones of the Vedic education. So while modern knowledge was not to be wholly rejected, it should only augment, rather than replace, a Vedic education. 'It now follows that it is not necessary to make this education compulsory. Our ancient school system is enough. Character-building has the first place in it and that is primary education.' (ibid)

Contestation of Reason

We can continue our investigation with specific instances of Gandhi's epistemological contestations. One famous example took place following a devastating earthquake in the state of Bihar. Upon hearing of it Gandhi proclaimed that it was 'divine chastisement for the great sin we have committed against those whom we describe as Harijans [the untouchable caste]'. (Makarand, 2011) By connecting natural phenomena with human actions, Gandhi shocked many of his rationally minded independence leaders. Rabindranath Tagore, Nobel prize winning poet-laureate of India, lamented:

> 'We, who are immensely grateful to Mahatmaji [Gandhi] for inducing, by his wonder working inspiration, freedom from fear and feebleness in the minds of his countrymen, feel profoundly hurt when any words from his mouth may emphasize the elements of unreason in those very minds — unreason which is a source of all blind powers that drive us against freedom and self-respect'. (ibid)

Tagore's use of the figure of 'unreason', that childlike but dangerous figure lurking at the edges of civilisation, exactly parallels that traced by Foucault in his first work *Madness and Civilisation*. (Foucault, 1995) With his historical account of the changing relationship of European society to 'madness' in the modern period, Foucault traced how the Enlightenment's emerging rationality came to define itself through the radical exclusion of 'unreason'. By reducing everything outside of its own logic to 'unreason' or 'irrationality', Enlightenment thinking ensured for itself a monopoly on truth. It did so with the creation of discourses such as psychiatry (and I might here add anthropology) which would effectively reduce 'unreason' to silence. It is this same figure of 'unreason' that Tagore is here deploying against Gandhi.

Gandhi's reply to Tagore questioned the certainty with which modernity's regime of truth asserts itself. He wrote: '[w]e do not know all the laws of God nor their working… I believe literally that not a leaf moves but by His will. Every breath I take depends upon His sufferance …. what appears to us as catastrophes are so only because we do not know the universal laws sufficiently.' (Makarand, 2011) Modernity claims for itself a hegemony of truth. Within the modern episteme, the only valid practices of truth regarding events such as earthquakes are material explanations (i.e. the movement of tectonic plates). Other claims to truth are simply 'irrational'. But other orders of knowledge do not give sole legitimacy to material explanations. The Vedic tradition places a strong emphasis on ethical interpretation, and Gandhi is here defending this way of seeing. 'If my belief turns out to be ill-founded, it will still have done good to me and those who believe with me. For we shall have been spurred to more vigorous efforts towards self-purification…'(ibid)

Gandhi challenged modernity's insistence upon understanding scientific explanation as the only valid form of truth when he said 'even as I cannot help believing in God though I am unable to prove His existence to the sceptics, in like manner, I cannot prove the connection of the sin of untouchability with the Bihar visitation [the earthquake] even though the connection is instinctively felt by me.' (ibid) Although linking an earthquake to human activity may appear unacceptably unscientific to our modern minds, we must understand the wider context of power/knowledge with which Gandhi was engaging. By not bowing to the pressure to conform to modernity's regime of

truth, he was standing up for the ethically infused order of knowledge of the millions in India who had been reduced to silence. As Ashis Nandy put it: 'In a world where modern science has come to enjoy near total hegemony, certain forms of 'irrationality' could be a defence, against the encroachment of an oppressive, alienating and totalising culture.' (Nandy, 1981 ,pg 174)

Gandhi was not denying the validity of geological theories in explaining earthquakes. He was not anti-science or anti-reason. Foucault's description of his own work seems apt in explaining Gandhi's position: 'it [is not] sceptical or relativistic refusal of all verified truth. What is questioned is the way in which knowledge circulates and functions, its relations to power. In short, the regime *du savoir*.'(Foucault, 1982, pg 781) The Vedic order of knowledge has a pluralistic conception of truth, meaning that scientific and spiritual truths do not necessarily conflict one another. From this position, modernity's insistence on the 'irrationality' of all other ways of seeing appears totalitarian. In reply to an advocate of modern education Gandhi wrote that his correspondent has a 'word that holds him in its chains. It is the mighty word ''rationalism''. Well', he continues:

> 'I had a full dose of it. Experience has humbled me enough to let me realize the distinct limitations of reason. Just as matter misplaced becomes dirt, reason misused becomes lunacy... Rationalists are admirable beings, rationalism is a hideous monster when it claims for itself omnipotence… (Gandhi, 2001a, pg 401)

These encounters are just a few examples that show Gandhi was not afraid to stand up to modernity's campaign the subjugate indigenous knowledge. He refused to bow to modernity's totalitarian regime of truth. He did not do so by parochially asserting his own regional regime of truth against modernity's, but by asserting the plurality of truth (and, as we will see later, by locating *Truth* beyond particular linguistic practices).

Gandhi Contra Other Independence Leaders

Some more light can be shone on Gandhi's epistemic challenge by comparing him with other independence leaders. In his pamphlet *Hind Swaraj*, an extended meditation on the nature of colonialism and *swaraj* (literally translated as self-rule), he says: '[t]o 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.'(Gandhi, 1938a, pg 24) Many Indians were prepared to struggle and sacrifice for the cause of Indian independence, but they did not consider why it was they were struggling. Gandhi poses a number of questions to his fellow revolutionaries: What are the effects of colonisation? What exactly are you attempting to change with independence? What would it mean to be independent?

For the likes of Nehru and Ambedkar, the vision of swaraj was relatively straight forward: politically remove the British from India, set up an independent Indian nation state, begin to modernise and industrialise Indian society. In response to this vision Gandhi was unequivocal: 'what you call swaraj is not truly swaraj'(ibid). To say that the British should be removed from India in order for India to begin on its own path to modernity in effect 'means this: that we 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.' (ibid, pg 25) For Gandhi the ramifications of British colonisation were much greater than merely having a British monarch as head of State. Political colonialism was not even a major concern of Gandhi's, provocatively asserting that the British could remain in India if they would assist Indians in achieving swaraj. (ibid) For Gandhi, what was at stake was not merely the political status of India, but rather 'Indian civilisation'; a way of existence that has existed for thousands of years and was now under threat from the intoxicating force of 'modern civilisation'.

This is not to say that Gandhi was a traditionalist Hindu who wanted Indian society to remain static. He campaigned fiercely against the same social problems as the modern reformers. He led major campaigns against the caste system (by the end of his life Gandhi would attend only inter-caste marriages), the oppression of women, and worked tirelessly for the cause of religious freedom and tolerance. Where Gandhi differed from many of his peers was that he wanted to reform India from within the confines of the Indian tradition, whereas people such as Nehru sought to reform India by imposing modernity on Indian society. The likes of Roy and Ambedkar blamed the entire Vedic episteme for the social ills present within India, but Gandhi insisted that this was a 'mistake', writing that '[t]he defects that you have shown are defects. Nobody mistakes them for ancient civilization [meaning the Vedic tradition]. They remain in spite of it. Attempts have always been made and will be made to remove them.'(ibid, pg 58) While Gandhi recognised the problems within Indian society, he was not prepared to abandon 'Indian civilisation' because of them.

Gandhi understood the activity of politics differently than his peers. While most Indian elites engaged in politics within the terms set by British colonisers, Gandhi often appeared to be speaking a different language to those around him. This was not only because he would regularly insist on speaking his native Gujarati while most Indian politicians conducted their affairs in English, but also because he did not speak the language of politics. Discursive fields are ordered by a set of rules and procedures for what one can and cannot say within its boundaries. If a set of statements strays too far from those rules, then they will no longer be recognised within the field. For example, for a book to be considered a work of physics it has to follow certain rules; it has to talk about a set of concepts that are already accepted within the field: it cannot use concepts that are disallowed (such as magic or sorcery), and its theories must be expressible mathematically, etc.

In the same way, the discursive field of modern politics has a set of rules for what one can and cannot say. Modern politics is a discursive field that, like physics, has a clearly demarcated boundaries of the acceptability. Within the boundaries are a set of concepts and institutions (such as 'rights', 'citizen', 'property'), a field of application (such as the 'State', or the 'population'), and an underlying logic (often defined as 'realism' or 'pragmatism') that define the field of politics. Gandhi took no notice of this. He made no attempt to engage with political discourse on its own terms, rarely drawing on any of its concepts, theories, or literary forms. It is hard to identify any of his voluminous writings as strictly 'political' because it often appears both 'above' and 'below' politics: 'Above' because he would speak in a way that we would normally consider too spiritual and ethical for our Machiavellian field of politics; 'below' because he would often concern himself with the most ordinary of day to day concerns (such as dietary regime or hygienic standards).

Many criticised him for this, accusing him of lacking political savvy. And it cannot be denied that Gandhi's refusal to conform to something 'politically' comprehensible means he has remained a relatively marginal figure in mainstream political discourse. However, this refusal must be understood as part of his wider epistemological challenge. To conform to the colonisers concept of 'politics' is to conform to their regime of truth; it is to agree to the terms set by 'modern civilisation'. Gandhi's aim was not only a political revolution, but a revolution of 'the political'. As he declared before a large crowd in Calcutta: 'I am not ashamed to repeat before you that this is a religious battle... to revolutionize the political outlook... to spiritualize our politics.' (Skaria, 2002, pg 955)

Revolutionizing the Political Outlook

To describe one's political programme as a 'religious battle' is to call forth modern political discourse's most feared bogey man. Emerging from the chaos of Europe's post-reformation

religious wars, modern politics is firmly based on the principle of secularism, which affirms that religion and politics must remain separate from each other. Whereas 'religion' was prone to superstition and sectarian violence, 'politics' was to be conducted according to the 'neutral' secular logic of Enlightenment rationality. If this sounds familiar, it is perhaps because it echoes the above description of the British subjugation of the Vedic tradition. Just as modernity's regime of truth was established in colonial India, that same regime of truth was first established in Britain. Edward Royle's extensive history of secularism in Britain shows how secularism began as movement for epistemological, as much as political, reform. (Royle, 1974)

A political order always finds support from an epistemological order, defining what is and isn't acceptable to do and say politically. Modernity disqualifies the legitimacy of all knowledge systems it labels as 'religious' (i.e. most knowledge that lies outside the boundaries of Enlightenment thinking) as a basis for politics, thus disqualifying Vedic knowledge from the political field. Gandhi challenged this order, in a number of way.

Firstly, on the individual level. Perhaps the most frequently discussed question concerning the life of Gandhi is this: was he a saint or was he a politician? (Lal, 2013) This question arises not only because of his distinct style of dress (wearing a *dhoti*, a traditional Indian loincloth) but more generally because of his conduct and self-perceptions. In 1906, at the age of 38, Gandhi took a vow of *brahmacharya;* a spiritual vow taken by Vedic monks for many centuries. Brahmacharya is often erroneously simplified as 'celibacy' but its meaning is much deeper than this. Gandhi described it as the 'search for Brahma'. A vow of brahmacharya is a vow to strive for the 'control in thought, word and action, of all the senses at all times and all places', (Gandhi, 1924a, pg 186) to eliminate all desire, and to focus one's entire being on the attainment of moksha. Indeed, Gandhi proclaimed in his autobiography that '[w]hat I want to achieve – What I have been striving and pining to achieve these thirty years is – is self-realization, to see God face to face, to attain moksha. I live and move and have my being in pursuit of this goal. All that I do by way of speaking and writing, and all my ventures in the political field, are directed to this same end.' (Gandhi, 2016, pg xii)

Gandhi vow of brahmacharya places himself quite clearly in the realm of the spiritual. How is it then that he became one of the most important political leaders of the 20th century? The general understanding of the *brahamcharyi* is of someone who has chosen to retreat from the ordinary world of human affairs, someone who has renounced human society and lives a solitary life in the forest where they can focus solely on spiritual practice. Gandhi did none of those things. He did not renounce society, he did not live a solitary life in the forest, and he certainly did not renounce the ordinary world of human affairs. To understand how Gandhi was able to live a life as a brahmacharyi, while still engaged in that most profane of activities, politics, we must briefly reference the *Bhagavad Gita,* one of the most important texts in the Vedic tradition and a perceptual source of inspiration for Gandhi.

As two armies line up to face each other in battle, Arjuna, the commander of the Pandava army, sees friends and family within the enemy ranks and loses the will to fight. What follows is the counsel given to Arjuna by the deity Krishna, and one of humanity's most profound meditations on the nature of *karma* (action). While we cannot even begin to explore the philosophy of the Gita in its full depth, the essential argument is that everyone has a role to play in this life (a *dharma*). For some people, their dharma is to live the life of spiritual retreat. For others, such as Arjuna, it is to act. The Gita is seen as providing the answer to one of the most difficult problems within the Vedic tradition: if the highest goal is the attainment of moksha, then should we not all abandon the ordinary world of human affairs and focus solely on spiritual practice? Krishna's advice to Arjuna reveals a path to moksha through karma: if one engages in action in accordance with *dharma* (the

moral and cosmic order of the world), and purely because of a duty to act (as distinct from what one hopes the action will bring), then one can strive for moksha while engaged in the world of karma. The spiritual path of karma is k*arma yoga,* and Gandhi was as a *karma yogi*.

Gandhi's vow of brahmacharya meant that unlike other Indian elites he was not individually interpolated by the modern forces of normalisation that would make him 'a politician'. He wrote, 'The politician in me has never dominated a single decision of mine, and if I seem to take part in politics, it is only because politics encircle us today like the coil of a snake from which one cannot get out, no matter how much one tries.' (Gandhi, 1920, pg 2) It is clear that Gandhi identified himself first and foremost with the Vedic identity of the brahmacharyi, and refused to see the world through the eyes of a politician. This had a profound impact on the way he engaged 'the political', and led him to problematise how 'politics' is understood within 'modern civilisation'.

Gandhi went further than refusing the role of a politician. He went so far as to challenge the validity of 'politics' as a separate field of activity from any other area of human life. He argued:

> '[h]uman life being an undivided whole, no line can ever be drawn between its different compartments, not between ethics and politics…. One's everyday life is never capable of being separated from one's spiritual being. Both act and react upon one another.' (Gandhi, 1947, pg 85)

Since Machiavelli's *The Prince* the field of politics has operated according to its own logic, its own system of values. Before this time 'politics' was under the sign of ethics. What was ethically correct was politically correct, and vice versa. *The Prince,* however, made no attempt at ethical justification. Its explicit rationale was the survival of the Prince, along with his ability to pursue power and prestige. It is from this point that modern politics unfolds, operating according to its own 'pragmatic' logic of power reproduction rather than any underlying ethical ideals.

Gandhi was part of a tradition in which selfless action and the transcendence of the individual ego is the highest good. Thus he was highly critical of modernity for interpreting a huge area of human activity according to a logic of individual pursuit of gain. This perhaps helps to put into context Gandhi's labelling of modernity as 'immoral', or even 'Satanic'.(Gandhi, 1938a, pg 34) Gandhi rejected the very concept of 'politics' as it has emerged in the modern era. He insisted on the primacy of ethics in considering human action, and refused to allow any sphere of human activity to stray beyond its boundaries.

> 'The whole gamut of man's activities today constitutes an indivisible whole. You cannot divide social, economic, political and purely religious work into watertight compartments. I do not know any religion apart from human activity. It provides a moral basis to all other activities which they would otherwise lack, reducing life to a haze of "sound and fury signifying nothing".'(Gandhi, 1938b, pg 393)

Gandhi's refusal to afford special status to any area of life can be seen from the fact that during the tumultuous years of the independence struggle he would spend a considerable amount of his time advising the throngs of people who would come to him seeking counsel, not only on matters of revolutionary struggle, but often on more mundane affairs: a mother worried about a rebellious son, a student worrying about their preparations for exams, etc. To Gandhi it was all part of a single continuum, which he termed 'religion'.

Challenging the Secular Understanding of Religion

At this point the most pertinent question seems to be: what was Gandhi's religion? He admitted that '[m]any of my political friends despair of me because they say that even my politics are derived from religion. And they are right. My politics and all other activities of mine are derived from my religion.' (Gandhi, 1934, pg 23) But how are we to interpret this statement? He understood himself to be on a spiritual mission to infuse politics with religion. But what would this mean in practice?

It is worth noting that what most of us think of as 'religion' emerged as a concept only at the beginning of the modern era in Europe. There is no equivalent word in any Indian language. The closest concept is perhaps dharma, already introduced above, which does not correspond to the European concept of religion. Gandhi's use of the term 'religion' must always be understood in the context of this epistemological encounter. What Gandhi means by the word 'religion' must not be thought of as simply corresponding our modern understanding because the modern understanding of 'religion' is something which emerged and exists within a very particular context.

That context was the demarcation of State and Church that happened in Europe after the post-reformation religious wars. In this period a concept of 'religion' emerged that would have been unrecognisable to the people of Europe of the preceding centuries. And it is a concept that didn't capture people's experience in most regions of the world before the colonial spread of secularism. Ajay Skaria is just one anthropologist of many who makes the point that religion, as we understand it, is a European invention that loses effectiveness when applied to other regions:

> 'The continuity of religion as a name after its modern reworking should not be allowed to obscure the point that a new category had been created—religion within the limits of reason alone. Religion in this new sense was distinctive not only because it was now confined to the private sphere (as though all that had changed was its domain, as though this transformation could be described in terms of a constriction), but because of the new terms that described it. When it remained within this (private) sphere, it could, bereft of its absolute subjection, be defined only in terms of its domain of objects—the various scriptures, rituals, and institutions such as church, mosque, or temple.' (Skaria, 2002, pg 969-970)

What Skaria means with the phrase 'bereft of its absolute subjection' is that the 'subjectifing' effects of religion (the effects it has on one's consciousness) are diminished, as 'secular' forces start to act on individuals to create them differently. The modern concept of 'religion' transforms the phenomena that it signifies; turning what was a way of seeing, a way of existing in the world, into a domain of objects and symbols. In the words of Talal Assad:

> '...from being a concrete set of practical rules attached to specific processes of power and knowledge, religion has come to be abstracted and universalized. In this movement we have…. the mutation of a concept and a range of social practices which is itself part of a wider change in the modern landscape of power and knowledge. That change included a new kind of state, a new kind of science, a new kind of legal and moral subject.' (Assad, 1993, pg 122)

It is clear that Gandhi's understanding of 'religion' did not correspond to the modern secular concept. Which helps us distinguish Gandhi's religious politics from that other form of Indian religious politics – *Hindutva*. A political ideology that has become very important over the past few years with the rise of the Hindutva party – the BJP - the aim of the Hindutva movement is to establish a Hindu hegemony within India. But, ironically, this hegemony would not mean the

propagation of the Vedic order of knowledge (which is inherently pluralistic anyway), but rather the opposite.

Hindutva implicitly subscribes to the modern definition of religion as a set of symbols and objects (temples, scriptures, or holy relics, etc.) and so mainly concerns itself with symbolically charged issues such as cow slaughter or the destruction of buildings built by Muslim conquerors in India. 'In this sense' Skaria writes, 'Hindu nationalism, like all modern fundamentalisms, is profoundly secular. For rather than denying or questioning secular regimes of truth, it produces a Hinduism that is compatible with these regimes' meaning it can 'only claim absolutism without subjection: it could only seek to make absolute its new domain of objects.'(ibid) Hinduvta therefore does not stand up to the subjugation of Vedic knowledge by a colonising episteme; it tacitly consents to it, seeking instead to assert symbolic dominance of the domain of objects that the Vedic tradition has been reduced to.

Gandhi's understanding of the relationship between politics and religion was very different to the ideology of Hindutva (his murder by a Hindutva assassin can attest to this). Gandhi stood firmly opposed to this type of politicisation of religion, and to the Hindutva aim of symbolically glorifying Hinduism in general. Although he admits that as 'long as there are different religions, everyone of them may need some outward distinctive symbol', he argues that 'when the symbol is made into a fetish and an instrument of proving the superiority of one's religion over others, it is fit only to be discarded.'(Gandhi, 2016, pg 349)

We then see that Gandhi was not interested in propagating 'Hinduism' at all, as 'Hinduism' itself is a colonial construct that flattens a vast terrain of knowledge and practice in order that it may fit with the conceptual map of 'religion'. Gandhi was instead interested in the propagation of 'the religion which transcends Hinduism, which changes one's very nature, which binds one indissolubly to the truth within and which ever purifies. It is the permanent element in human nature... which leaves the soul utterly restless until it has found itself, known its Maker and appreciated the true correspondence between the Maker and itself.' (Gandhi, 1920, pg 3)

So now that we have a some idea of what Gandhi did not mean by the term religion, we can start to explore what he did mean by it.

Religious Politics of Truth and Non-Violence

Although Gandhi was a religious pluralist, it is clear that his spiritual understanding (including the religious pluralism) stems from the Vedic tradition. He exclaimed that 'Truth is my religion and *ahimsa* [non-violence] is the only way of its realization. Search for truth is search for God. Truth is God.' (Tendulkar, 1952, pg 50) But rather than holding Truth to be tied to a particular doctrine or revelation, as in the Christian tradition, the Vedic tradition holds Truth (*Satya*) as isomorphic with Reality (*Sat*). Nothing exists except for Truth, and everything that exists is a part of Truth. Truth is therefore both one (as the underlying unity pervading all of reality) and many, for there are many perspectives on Truth (the Sanskrit name for this is *anekantavada* – which translates as 'the many-sidedness of all phenomena'). A popular and oft recounting story in India depicts five blind people feeling different parts of an elephant. 'It's a tree' exclaims the first person holding on to the leg, 'it's a snake' retorts the second, holding onto the trunk, etc. While Truth may be one, we all have our own (partial) perspective on it. Rajiv Malhotra phrases it nicely when he says:

> '[u]nlike truth in the Western sense, Satya is not an intellectual proposition but a way of life which has to be actualized and embodied directly by each person. There is no place for the reification or codification of Satya, because truth is not held in some book or set

of laws; it lives in oneself, and cannot be separated from oneself. This philosophical distinction is at the heart of Gandhi's dharma.' (Malhotra, 2011)

The modern order of knowledge holds truth as a property of language, an abstract representation that corresponds to the world. The proposition 'I am holding an apple' is true if there is some external referents that correspond to 'I', 'holding' and 'apple'. Within the Vedic episteme, Truth has a much broader meaning than this; not only being something you say, but, more importantly, something you perceive, something you live. We will return to this distinction in greater detail later. For now, we can elaborate on Gandhi's politics/religion of Truth and non-violence.

Gandhi referred to his political actions as *satyagraha* campaigns. Satyagraha translates as 'truth-force'. 'Truth (Satya) implies love, and firmness (agraha) engenders and therefore serves as a synonym for force. I thus began to call the Indian movement 'Satyagraha', that is to say, the Force which is born of Truth and Love or Non-violence'. (Gandhi, 1928, pg 110) Gandhi's talk of Truth and love was not merely lofty ethical rhetoric; it was actually the basis for a practical set of political strategies and a guide of conduct for political activists. In 1915 Gandhi founded the Sabarmati Ashram in order to train *satyagrahi* activists. Becoming a satyagrahi was not only a decision to engage in a political campaign, it was a commitment to dedicate oneself to Truth. Satyagrahis chose to live their lives by a number of *yamas* (ethical observances). These principles included elements such as ahimsa, satya, *asteya* (non-stealing), and *aparigraha* (non-possession). This is in itself an important act of epistemological resistance. All of these concepts are highly important within the Vedic episteme. By creating spaces by which one would commit to living by, and propagating, this order of knowledge and to having one's actions guided by these practices of truth, Gandhi made an epistemological stand against the encroachment of modernity's regime of truth.

The ethical observances of the satyagrahis acted as guidance for the satyagraha campaigns. And none more so than that of ahimsa (non-violence). For Gandhi ahimsa was central not only to his political campaigns, but more generally to his whole understanding of the world, and right conduct.

> 'Ahimsa is a comprehensive principle. We are helpless mortals caught in the conflagration of *himsa* [violence]. The saying that life lives on life has a deep meaning in it. Man cannot for a moment live without consciously or unconsciously committing outward himsa. The very fact of his living - eating, drinking and moving about - necessarily involves some himsa, destruction of life, be it ever so minute. A votary of ahimsa therefore remains true to his faith if the spring of all his actions is compassion, if he shuns to the best of his ability the destruction of the tiniest creature, tries to save it, and thus incessantly strives to be free from the deadly coil of himsa. He will be constantly growing in self-restraint and compassion, but he can never become entirely free from outward himsa.' (Gandhi, 2016, pg 310)

Outward himsa is violent action. It is impossible to avoid when living in this world because eat step we take does damage to something, however minute. Inward himsa is the force within living beings that drives them toward egoistic action. It is the force that drives us to preserve ourselves as individuals, at the expense of other living beings. While we cannot overcome outward himsa, we can overcome inward himsa and live according to ahimsa, the opposite force, the force of selflessness and compassion.

For Gandhi, the force of ahimsa was as important as Truth. In fact the two are 'so intertwined that it is practically impossible to disentangle and separate them. They are like the two sides of a coin, or rather of a smooth unstamped metallic disk. Nevertheless, ahimsa is the means; Truth is the

end.'(Gandhi, 1958, pg 224-225) Truth is reality in its totality. We all have our own perspective on this reality but ahimsa is the method of attaining a greater perspective, a higher degree of Truth. Himsa (violence) prioritises a single mind and body at the expense of all others, and thus obscures the perspectives, the Truth, of other living beings. Himsa confines one's Truth to a single body, a single mind. Ahimsa is the force that expands Truth. Showing compassion and understanding necessitates transcending the perspective of the individual ego. By living in the world by the principal of ahimsa, Gandhi argues that one is expanding one's view of Truth.

We can therefore say that Gandhi's religion of Truth and ahimsa meant living a life of compassion. He wrote: 'of religion, pity, or love, is the root, as egotism of the body. Therefore, we should not abandon pity so long as we are alive.' This gets to the heart of Gandhi's ultimate criticism of the 'modern civilisation'. In contrast with what Gandhi called 'true religion' or 'true civilisation', 'modern civilisation' is based on a principle of egoism, of individual human beings working to improve their own lot at the expense of everything else. This is what Gandhi understood as the core of 'modern civilisation'. And 100 years later, as we are witnessing the highest levels of inequality in human history, along with a consumer society that is bringing the earth to the brink of complete environmental collapse, Gandhi's words ring true. So the most important question then becomes: what can we do about it?

Chapter III: Anarchy of the Spirit

The previous section looked at how Gandhi defended the Vedic civilisation against colonial subjugation. He railed against the mass propagation of modern education; he contested the totalitarian claim to truth of Enlightenment rationality; he tried to show fellow independence leaders how the contours of colonialism were wider than the political domination they were struggling against; he founded ashrams in which people lived according to Vedic disciplines; and he problematised concepts that are central to modern society, such as politics and religion, asserting the superiority of Vedic knowledge in organising actions and understanding. Gandhi's political campaigns are of enormous interest from this perspective alone. Of all the epistemological encounters that have taken place since the beginning of the colonial era, of all the non-modern knowledges and ways of life that have been erased, of all the innumerable voices that have been lost to the echoless silence of history, Gandhi's struggle against the forces of 'modern civilisation' stands as perhaps the most powerful example we have of epistemological and cultural resistance. And let us not think this colonial resistance is a thing of the past. Modernity's march of 'progress' continues till this day. Indigenous orders of knowledge and ways of life continue to be eroded by the seemingly irresistible forces of nation states and global capital. Gandhi's anti-colonial resistance, not only to the colonial state, but also to the colonial way of thinking and way of life, serves as a model of resistance for all those confronted with the totalitarian force of Enlightenment rationality.

But Gandhi's political programme should not be limited to what we would call 'anti-colonial' struggle. Although Gandhi's deployment of Vedic knowledge was very much rooted in Indian resistance to colonialism, the scope of the tactics and concepts he developed is much wider. As remarked by Vivek Dhareshwar, although 'Gandhi thinking with concepts evolved from Indian thought was continuous with the effort to break with cognitive enslavement; these concepts once developed would not be simply Indian, they could be employed by anyone.' (Dhareshwar, 2012b, pg 28) Much to the annoyance of his fellow independence leaders, Gandhi's politics was never confined solely to nationalist struggle against British colonists. Gandhi maintained that the English were even more colonised by 'modern civilisation' than those in the colonies, and hoped that Indian swaraj would be the first step in helping people across the world achieve their own swaraj. His spiritual approach to politics consisted of a general set of tactics for resisting modern forms of power, that can be employed by anyone. This last section broadens the scope of our investigation. Moving away from Gandhi's historical struggle against the forces of colonial modernity, we will examine the general applicability of Gandhi's approach to political action.

Political Anarchism

To understand how Gandhi's spiritual politics converges with the contemporary field of political theory, we will with one of the most important strands of progressive politics in the modern era – Anarchism. Gandhi's synthesis of politics and spirituality infuses anarchist thought with knowledge from a rich spiritual tradition, taking it in new and productive directions. We begin by outlining classical Anarchism; then we see how it fits with Gandhi's thinking and consider what Gandhi's spiritual politics can add to the anarchist tradition.

Classical Anarchism

The word 'Anarchism' is used to describe a wide range of different currents of thought and political activity. First emerging with British political theorist William Godwin, the term has since been adopted and developed by many prominent thinkers, such as Peter Kropotkin, Mikhail Bakunin, and Leo Tolstoy. Anarchism was not confined to political literary circles however, and there have been

many attempts to put anarchist ideas into practice. We can look to the Paris Commune and the Spanish Revolution for some of the most important examples of anarchist ideals being put into practice on a large scale. Like most concepts of political importance, the exact meaning of the term 'Anarchism', and how anarchist theory should be put into practice, is a point of serious contention and debate. Individualist anarchists, like Max Stirner, come to different conclusions regarding the nature of anarchy than do collectivist anarchists, like Pierre-Joseph Proudhon. Some anarchists, like those that participated in the Haymarket bombing, think that revolutionary struggle should be waged with the force of arms. Others, like the christian anarchists, see violence as a form of coercion and thus fundamentally opposed to anarchist ideals.

However, beneath these points of contention are broad strands of agreement. The word 'anarchy' is a Greek word, comprising two parts; αν – *an* (which translates as 'absence of') and αρχη - *archy* - (meaning 'authority' or 'government') - and the idea of 'absence of government' or 'absence of authority' lies at the heart of anarchist thinking. Anarchy is a form of thought that questions the legitimacy of people exercising power over others, and is particularly averse to the huge centralisation of power by modern nation States. Most anarchists challenge the legitimacy of centralised power on moral grounds, holding the freedom of the individual freedom to be of the utmost importance. Two pillars of Anarchist thought, therefore, are the decentralisation of power and individual freedom.

However, Anarchism's emphasis on individual freedom as a central tenet doesn't adequately set it apart from other schools of political thought. Many political philosophies claim individual liberty as a core ideal, including the hegemonic school of modern political thought – Liberalism. However, anarchist thinkers, such as Bakunin, argue that the liberal conception of freedom, which 'considers the would-be rights of all men represented by the State' as mere 'individualistic, egoistic, shabby, and fictitious liberty' (Bakunin, 1987). Whereas liberal thinkers argue that the modern nation State is democratic and ensures freedom for its citizens, anarchists argue that it does exactly the opposite: functioning through coercion, dominating the individual, impinging on their freedom. They argue that freedom is not something that can be provided for by the State; that, by its very nature, the State centralises power, taking it away from individuals, and so necessarily limits freedom.

Anarchists maintain that the symbols Liberalism holds up as that of a free society, such as the right to vote, are merely tokens that mask widespread societal domination and coercion. Bakunin writes that 'the representative system, far from being a guarantee for the people, on the contrary, creates and safeguards the continued existence of a governmental aristocracy against the people.' (Guérin, 1970, pg 11) Modern liberal governments cannot be truly referred to as 'democratic' as they do not represent the interests of the majority of people. Instead, what we call 'democracy' only serves as a mask, hiding 'the really despotic power of the State based on the police, the banks, and the army.' Liberal 'democracy' is merely 'an excellent way of oppressing and ruining a people in the name of the so-called popular will'. (ibid) Anarchism therefore rejects the legitimacy of the modern liberal nation State.

In this regard, Anarchism has a lot in common with another important strand of modern radical politics - Communism. Both are opposed to what they call the 'bourgeois' liberal nation state, as both see it as a tool used by elites to perpetuate their dominant positions in society. What divides them is not their attitude towards the liberal State, but rather their attitude to the State in general. Anarchists see the dismantling of the State as central to the project of human emancipation. Communists, on the other hand, see the State as a potential tool in creating a just revolutionary society. The communist method of revolution is the creation of the 'dictatorship of the proletariat', in which centralised power still exists, but is directed by the will of working people. Anarchists

argue that 'the creation of such a dictatorship would in itself suffice to kill the revolution and paralyse and distort all popular movements.' (Guérin, 1970, pg 24), arguing that the problem lies not merely with those sitting in the seat of government; the State itself is the source of domination.

Since much of it was written in a time before worldwide communist revolutions, there is now a prophetic ring to the anarchist criticism of this 'dictatorship of the proletariat' model. In 1870 Bakunin wrote: 'Take the most radical of revolutionaries and place him on the throne of all the Russias or give him dictatorial powers... and before the year is out he will be worse than the Czar himself'. (Bakunin, 1990, pg 220) As it turned out, the reality of the situation was even worse than Bakunin could have imagined. The Russian revolution produced a far more concentrated centralisation of power than what had come before it. The new regime brought death and destruction on a scale that the Tsar couldn't have even attempted. And rather than a new free society emerging from the ashes, the creation of Gulags and a huge network of secret police meant that the population was subjugated in a much more profound way than ever before. Russian anarchist Voline, who witnessed and participated in the Russian revolution, wrote: 'having taken over the Revolution, mastered it, and harnessed it, those in power are obliged to create the bureaucratic and repressive apparatus which is indispensable for any authority that wants to maintain itself, to command, to give orders, in a word: to govern.' (Guérin, 1970, pg 16)

Anarchism, then, is not just against one particular type of government, be it capitalist or communist, but rather against the concept of 'government' in general. Lyman Abbott wrote that 'Anarchism… rests upon the doctrine that no man has a right to control by force the action of any other man.' (Abbot, 1902) This doctrine means anarchism stands firmly opposed to centralisation of power and thus also to the idea of State. Unlike liberals, who claim that government is founded upon a 'social contract', anarchists regard it as founded on coercion, repression and violence. Proudhon expresses the anarchist view of government well when he wrote:

> 'To be governed is to be watched over, inspected, spied on, directed, legislated, regimented, closed in, indoctrinated, preached at, controlled, assessed, evaluated, censored, commanded; all by creatures that have neither the right, nor wisdom, nor virtue… To be governed means that at every move, operation, or transaction one is noted, registered, entered in a census, taxed, stamped, priced, assessed, patented, licensed, authorized, recommended, admonished, prevented, reformed, set right, corrected.' (Proudhon, 1923, pg 293-294)

The Anarchist position is that no person or institution should wield this kind of governmental power. The modern nation State in particular was, from its earliest conception, based on the idea of a creation of a 'leviathan'. This leviathan would be invested with such overwhelming power, that it would have the capacity to dominate any and all individuals. Anarchism, rather than advocating for taking over powerful institutions and direct them toward 'good' ends, aims at disrupting and dismantling structures of power, thus decentralising power, allowing individuals more control over themselves.

So we have seen that anarchists reject all forms of government, as well as liberal concept of freedom, but what does it positively stand for? What is the kind of freedom that Anarchism advocates? While no text can be referenced as an anarchist manifesto, Bakunin captured the spirit of anarchism when he wrote:

> 'I am a fanatic lover of liberty, considering it as the unique condition under which intelligence, dignity and human happiness can develop and grow; not the purely formal

liberty conceded, measured out and regulated by the State, an eternal lie which in reality represents nothing more than the privilege of some founded on the slavery of the rest… I mean the only kind of liberty that is worthy of the name, liberty that consists in the full development of all the material, intellectual and moral powers that are latent in each person; liberty that recognizes no restrictions other than those determined by the laws of our own individual nature, which cannot properly be regarded as restrictions since these laws are not imposed by any outside legislator beside or above us, but are immanent and inherent, forming the very basis of our material, intellectual and moral being—they do not limit us but are the real and immediate conditions of our freedom.' (Bakunin, 1987)

Anarchist freedom is not an abstract set of 'rights', doled out by the State; it is rather the freedom for individuals to fully develop the dormant power that lies within them. Anarchists argue that power is a force which, when centralised upon an institution or person, is taken away from individuals. It thus rejects all forms of centralisation of power, arguing that it always acts as an obstacle to human freedom. The anarchist position is that all highly centralised forms of power, such as the State, must be dismantled, and power must instead be localised. Only then will individuals have power over themselves, which is an expression of, and a necessary pre-condition for, freedom.

Foucauldian Anarchism

The work of Foucault adds to our understanding of Anarchism in a few of ways. Firstly, it greatly expands our understanding of power. Classical Anarchism focuses most of its attention on the official institutions of State: parliament, army, police. But we have seen that power is not solely concentrated on these points. It is not a thing to be seized or held, it is not 'a political structure, a government, a dominant social class, the master and the slave, and so on.' (Foucault, Rainbow, 2010, pg 291) Power is a set of relations between people, 'whether they involve verbal communication such as we are engaged in at this moment, or amorous, institutional, or economic relationships, power is always present.'(ibid) It is the force with which people direct the action of others, meaning it cannot be confined to a political or military office (although power may coagulate around these sites), but rather flows throughout the entire social body. All human relations involve power, and so power is intimately linked with the possibility of social life.

The problem is thus not power *per se.* It is rather with the deployment of tactics that fix power relations in place, leaving individuals little freedom to act otherwise. Foucault referred to these tactics 'technologies of power' and their use can turn relations of power into relations of domination. His historical work shows that the modern era has seen technologies of power taking hold of the minds and bodies of individuals as never before. As remarked by Ashis Nandy: 'It is in the last hundred years that the over-organization of modern society has designed for the individual a life-style in which he is 'subject' to expertise in virtually every sphere of life.' (Nandy, 1981, pg 179)

Because of the totalising nature of the modern society, technologies of power have come to permeate many aspects of our day to day life: from the concepts with which we understand ourselves and our surroundings, to the finest motor movements of our bodies. These techniques of power normalise individuals according to a certain standard, thus becoming an important productive force in the creation of individuals. In a situation like this:

'the conclusion would be that the political, ethical, social, philosophical problem of our days is not to try to liberate the individual from the state and from the state's institutions

but to liberate us both from the state and from the type of individualization which is linked to the state.' (Foucault, 1982, pg 785)

This point has big implications for the nature of political action. Power produces not only hierarchy and domination, but also truth, pleasures and the epistemological contours of our experience. It takes hold of our minds (with a 'regime of truth') and bodies (with disciplinary institutions or other strategies of bio-power) and produces a normative individual. Since power is not only a property of the State but also exists within and works through individuals, this means that the individual, the subject, become an important site of political action, and political resistance should be directed not only toward the State, but also against the technologies of power that produce individuals.

'Maybe our problem is now to discover that the self is nothing else than the historical correlation of the technology built in our history. Maybe the problem is to change those technologies. And in this case, one of the main political problems would be nowadays, in the strict sense of the word, the politics of ourselves.' (Foucault, 1993, pg 221-222)

Political action means transforming ourselves as thinking, feeling, experiencing subjects; it means transforming our minds through the creation of 'games of truths' different to the ones circulated by hegemonic institutions, transforming our bodies by establishing an alternative to modern disciplines. As consciousness itself is shaped by technologies of power, resistance to power means promoting 'new forms of subjectivity through the refusal of this kind of individuality which has been imposed on us for several centuries.' (Foucault, 1982, pg 785)

The decentralisation of power is not only an external process, dismantling the State and other power centralising institutions, but also an internal one, dismantling techniques of power that act upon and form individuals. While we can never free ourselves entirely from power (human beings will always influence one another's conduct, minds and bodies in positive as well as negative ways), nor would most of us what to (as it would mean cutting oneself off from all other people); we can free ourselves from techniques of power that limit people's capacity for exercising freedom.

Foucaudian anarchism calls for investing people with 'the management techniques… the morality, the ethos, the practice of the self, that will allow us to play these games of power with as little domination as possible.' (Foucault, Rainbow, 2010, pg 298) For freedom to be achieved, it is not enough to get rid of repressive social institutions; side by side with this negation has to be the creation of forms of subjectivity in which each individual is invested with as much power as possible. But what does this mean in practice? How is one to invest power in the individual?

As we have seen above, along with subjectivity being formed by techniques of power that take hold of the mind and bodies of individuals, there are also techniques of the self that give the individual control over their own minds and bodies. Just as modern society imposes disciplinary regimes to extract labour from the individual, there are also disciplinary regimes that have been devised throughout history for investing the individual with power over themselves. Just as modern States uses techniques to normalise the consciousness of the individual according to a certain standard, spiritual traditions have devised techniques that minimize the influence of external forces upon the mind, techniques that give the individual the freedom to transform their consciousness themselves. These techniques of the self Foucault recognised as 'a way of limiting and controlling power.' (ibid, pg 288)

When, in the production of individuals, the force of power acts not only through State control and police repression but also through shaping the contours of human experience, then the

implementation of techniques of the self which lessen the influence of external forces on individuals, giving them control over their own mind, becomes not only a tool of political resistance but also a political end. Anarchist political activity becomes a process of replacing technologies of power, the strategies through which people dominate others, with technologies of the self, the strategies with which people transform themselves in desired directions. Freedom is to be attained not by the dismantling or creation of an external structure, such as the nation State, but rather by the full development of all the material, intellectual and moral powers that are latent in each person.

However, despite the clarity with which Foucault sketched the general contours of the potential resistance, he never outlined anything like a positive programme for political action. He said once, 'I never behave like a prophet – my books don't tell people what to do', and, true to his word, his political work contains very little programmatic recommendations for action. Although he advocates for the propagation of techniques of the self as a form of resistance to techniques of power, he never described these techniques of the self that could be implemented. While he highlighted different types of localised resistances, he never defined a more complete response to the structures of modernity that he so meticulously dissected. This was in part because of his disinclination for political prescription and in part because he was simply not in a position to do so. How could someone who was so totally enmeshed in modernity's technologies of power prescribe a way out of them?

He could recognise the effect that techniques of power had on his subjectivity, and through his research he was able to perhaps change the rules, at least to an extent, of some games of truth but Foucault was a thoroughly modern subject. Although he brilliantly excavated epistemes from past eras, and helped transform the modern tradition into the contemporary configuration of 'post-modernism', his understanding of the world remained based on the modern regime of truth which he inherited. And so, although he advocated generally replacing technologies of power with technologies of the self, it was not within his power to say how one could do this.

It may therefore be apt to regard Foucault in a similar light to the work of his radical forbearer, Karl Marx. He was able to brilliantly diagnose the problems of modern society, but didn't exactly outline a potential remedy. There may have been various clues, various examples of localised resistance he could point to, but no explicit programme for political action. For Marx, the problem of devising the mechanics of communist transformation was left to his revolutionary disciples, such as Lenin, Mao and Ché. And while Foucault may have no such contingent of radical activists, it is perhaps possible that a framework for political action that challenges the structures of power he wrote about was developed before he was even born.

Many years before Foucault began adding terms like 'technology of power' or 'governmentality' to the field of political discourse, a revolutionary on the other side of the world intuitively understood the march of modernity along the same lines. And although he could not articulate it in a way that would be comprehensible to political scientists of that time, Mohandas Gandhi developed a programme to counter-act 'modern civilisation's' technologies of power, regimes of truth, disciplines, and bio-political policies. It is to this programme that we now turn.

Vedic Anarchism

Don't you think that there can be found in history evidence of a particular kind of these games of truth, one that has a particular status in relation to all other possible games of truth and power, and is marked by its essential openness, its opposition to all blockages of power?
- Genealogy of Ethics, An Interview with Foucault

Gandhi combined anarchist political philosophy with the teachings of the Vedic tradition to create something unique in the landscape of modern politics. In this section we will see how these two seemingly disparate fields of thought were synthesized with Gandhi's political understanding and activism. This section will also lay out Gandhi's programme for action, along with analysis of how they apply to our contemporary political landscape. We can begin by seeing how Gandhi's thinking lined up with the ideals of classical Anarchism.

Gandhi & Classical Anarchism

The parallels between Gandhi's political vision and Anarchism are well known. Although a relatively marginal figure in anarchist discourses, there is widespread recognition of the anarchic nature of Gandhi's thought. In his own time he was sometimes described as an anarchist (usually disparagingly by political opponents), he appears in some anarchist histories, (Ramnath, 2011) (Marshall, 1992) and he once even declared 'I myself am an anarchist, but of another type.'(Gandhi, 1956, pg 130)

Along with anti-colonialism, anti-statism was at the centre of Gandhi's thinking. He was not simply against the British ruling over India, he was against anyone ruling over India. He wrote: 'my patriotism does not teach me that I am to allow people to be crushed under the heel of Indian princes if only the English retire. If I have the power, I should resist the tyranny of Indian princes just as much as that of the English.' (Gandhi, 1938a, pg 64) And, according to Gandhi, tyranny is the cause and effect of State. Like the anarchists, he argued that the State is founded on coercion and violence, even going so far as to say: '[t]he State represents violence in a concentrated and organized form. The individual has a soul, but as the State is a soulless machine, it can never be weaned from violence to which it owes its very existence.' (Gandhi, Bose, 1935, pg 412) The individual has the capacity to act ethically. The State, founded on the logic of Machiavellian will to power, does not. The structure of State is one of inherent violence. It thus cannot be reformed, so must instead be abandoned.

It was not only the State that Gandhi was opposed to, but all forms of centralised power. He argued that 'centralisation as a system is inconsistent with the structure of a non-violent society' because it 'cannot be sustained and defended without adequate force.' (Gandhi, 1942, pg 5) With the centralisation of power, with the fixing in place of otherwise strategically open relations (to use Foucauldian terminology), there will always be attempts by people, not only to resist, but also to assume these centralised positions of power. Thus, to guard and enforce their power, people are compelled (to re-quote Voline's commentary on the Russian revolution) 'to create the bureaucratic and repressive apparatus which is indispensable for any authority that wants to maintain itself, to command, to give orders, in a word: to govern.' Because of this inescapable logic, Gandhi came to the conclusion that 'if India is to evolve along non-violent lines, it will have to decentralize many things.' (ibid) Power must be dissolved, decentralised, rather than seized.

As well as being against the State, and proposing the decentralisation of power as a remedy for oppression, Gandhi agreed with the anarchists on the importance of individual freedom. And like the anarchists, he was under no illusion as to to the nature of the 'freedom' afforded to the people of 'modern civilisation'. As we have seen above, he argued that the parliamentary democracy that many of his compatriots were struggling for would not bring true independence. He shared the opinion of the anarchists that parliamentary democracy merely masked oppression and domination, affirming that 'parliaments are really emblems of slavery.' (Gandhi, 1938a, pg 34) Gandhi, like the anarchists, argued that freedom cannot be provided for by the State, that self-government did not mean government by representatives, but rather 'means continuous effort to be independent of government control, whether it is foreign government or whether it is national.' (Gandhi, 1925, pg

276) To imagine that freedom can be assured by the State is to imagine freedom as an abstract set of 'rights', when we are about to see that swaraj meant something very different to Gandhi.

Although his understanding of swaraj comes from the Vedic tradition, he would probably have agreed with Bakunin's definition of 'liberty' as 'the full development of all the material, intellectual and moral powers that are latent in each person'. And according to both Gandhi and the anarchists, centralised government impinges upon, rather than facilitates, this development. In this regard, Gandhi would have defended the anarchists in their dispute with the communists. Emancipation is not something that others can bestow upon you. Revolutionary vanguards cannot emancipate people. People cannot be emancipated by anyone but themselves. Addressing his fellow Indians, he wrote: 'I know that you want [swaraj] for India; it is not to be had for your asking. Everyone will have to take it for himself. What others get for me is not [swaraj] but foreign rule.' (Gandhi, 1938a, pg 92)

So we can see that Gandhi and the anarchists held many of the same convictions. The State, and other forms of centralised power, are founded on violence, and only the decentralisation of power will bring about a just society. The centre of Gandhi's thinking was individual freedom, and a different kind of freedom than that provided by Western liberal democracies. But while Gandhi shared many of the same ideals as the anarchists, the way he arrived at these ideals was very different. Anarchism emerged out of the Humanist and Enlightenment concept of 'liberty', even if it stood firmly opposed to the 'liberty' of the political establishment. 'Swaraj', Gandhi's ideal of freedom, is a concept with a very different heritage.

Swaraj

The term 'swaraj' is a combination of the Sanskrit terms *swa*, meaning 'self', and *raj*, meaning 'sovereignty' or 'rule'. *Swaraj* can thus be translated as 'self-rule' or 'self government'. In Gandhi's era 'self-government' was an important concept around the world, and many people were struggling to free themselves from the European colonial yoke in pursuit of 'self-government'. What this usually meant was establishing a national parliament peopled by local representatives. However, Gandhi did not use 'self-government' in this sense of the word. Going against his most of fellow independence leaders, and the popular political understanding of the time, he was emphatic in saying that self-government had nothing to do with the establishment of an Indian nation state.

As we have seen, Gandhi's worldview came primarily from the Vedic tradition rather than modern discourses of political philosophy, and this was a large part of Gandhi's mass appeal. Unlike most other independence leaders, such as Nehru or Ambedker, to whom 'liberty' meant representative parliamentary democracy, for Gandhi 'liberty' meant the same thing it had done in India for millennia. As another independence leader, Aurobindo Ghosh, noted 'swaraj as a sort of European idea, as political liberty for the sake of political self-assertion, will not awaken India… true swaraj for India must derive from the Vedantic concept of self-liberation.' (Ghosh, 1962, pg 564) Within the Vedic tradition the idea of 'self-rule' has very different connotations than it does in political discourses. Rather than rule by a parliament of national representatives, Vedic *swaraj* meant an individual having control over their own mind and body, allowing them to pursue liberation from the bondage inherent within the human condition. We can better understand this point with a brief elaboration of the Vedic attitude toward the mind.

The *Bhagavad Gita* contains the verse: 'he who has not controlled his mind and senses, can have no determinate intellect, nor contemplation' (Goyandka, 2012, pg 47) and this view is essentially universal within the Vedic tradition. Throughout the vast diversity of often conflicting schools of thought that comprise the Vedic episteme, at least one element remains constant: acquiring

knowledge depends on the capacity to control one's mind and body. In this regard the Vedic tradition is different from ours, holding a different notion of 'truth' and 'knowledge'.

Within the modern order of knowledge 'truth' can be described as an abstract representation that corresponds to objects or events - a 'fact'. 'Knowledge' is a body of facts, and the act of 'knowing' means being cognisant of these facts. Thus, if I 'know' Paris is the capital of France, I know the 'truth'. But the concepts of 'truth' and 'knowledge' have a much broader meaning in the Vedic order of knowledge. While the Vedas do recognise the validity of what we would understand as 'knowledge', empirical and rational knowledge of the external world (termed *apara vidya* in Sanskrit), they distinguish it from another type of knowledge. It is this other type of knowledge (*para vidya*) that is at the centre of Vedic learning. *Para vidya* is not a set of facts but a way of living, a mode of perceiving, and a state of mind.

We can see this from the Sanskrit words used to describe Vedic learning. Vedic teaching is also known as *darshana*, derived from the word *darshan* - 'sight'. The ancient Rishis who composed the Vedas are referred to as 'seers', emphasising the fact that Vedic knowledge was not something to be said, but something to be seen, to be directly experienced. As Foucault writes of spiritual knowledge in general, the aim was not to simply to speak the truth, instead '[t]he subjectivization of truth is the aim of these techniques,'(Foucault, Rainbow, 1997, pg 238) and this very much applies to vedic knowledge. Truth is a state of consciousness in which one perceives the world clearly, unclouded by *avidya* (which we can call 'ignorance', but is better translated as 'that which obscures Truth'). Overcoming ignorance and living in accordance with Truth is the aim of Vedic knowledge.

However, although Vedic teaching claims to bring one in line with the Truth, this does not mean that the Vedas prescribe only one mode of living, one ethical code, or one type of discipline. Quite the opposite. As mentioned above, although Truth is ultimately one, everyone has their own perspective on it. Everyone has their own dharma and so their own pathway to Truth. However, despite the huge diversity of Vedic teaching and disciplines, there is a common thread that can be found guiding them all. Essentially all Vedic thought identifies ignorance with a single cause – the ego – and prescribe consciously working against the impulses of the ego as the way to overcome ignorance. Selfishness is the force that obscures Truth, while selflessness is the path to Truth.

The reason for this equation of Truth with selflessness and ignorance with selfishness can be understood with reference to Vedic metaphysics, which is based on the idea of an underlying unity of all existence. To act in the interest of one part (a single mind or body) against the interests of the whole, is an act of ignorance that prevents one from seeing the Truth, the essential unity, of the world. M. Hiriyanna describes it thusly:

> 'egotistical action is the result of a metaphysical error, which sees variety alone where there is also Brahman. Empirical thought, failing to grasp the ultimate reality, distorts it or cuts it up into parts and presents them as distinct from one another… This misleading presentation of Reality is seen in the case not only of the objective world, but also of the self. It is because each of us regards himself as distinct from others that he strives to guard or aggrandize himself. "When unity is realized and every being becomes our very self, how can there be any delusion or sorrow then?" In other words, all evil is traceable to *ahamkara*, the affirmation of the finite self, and the consequent tendency to live not in harmony with the rest of the world, but in opposition or at best in indifference to it.' (Hiriyanna, 1994, pg 73)

The source of ignorance, our distorted perception of the world, is the ego, and the Vedic tradition prescribes selfless action to overcome this ignorance.

But acting in a selfless manner is difficult. We are often inclined to act in ways that improve our own circumstances, while paying less mind to the circumstances of others. This fact is recognised within the Vedic tradition, which is why it prescribes bringing the mind and body under one's control as the first step to acquiring knowledge. Our minds are often full of egoistical impulses. Sometimes we are even compelled to act against the wishes of our better judgement. Acting on these impulses means being pulled around by the vagaries of the mind. Gandhi's views on the mind are fairly typical of Vedic teaching:

> 'We notice that the mind is a restless bird; the more it gets the more it wants, and still remains unsatisfied. The more we indulge our passions the more unbridled they become. Our ancestors, therefore, set a limit to our indulgences. They saw that happiness was largely a mental condition. A man is not necessarily happy because he is rich, or unhappy because he is poor.' (Gandhi, 1938a, pg 56)

Contentment is not an external circumstance but rather an internal one. Vedic knowledge has this inner contentment as its aim, and begins with training one's mind so that it is controlled by self-determined inner movements, rather than volatile external ones. It is only from this point that one can work toward ethical action, contentment, and knowledge.

Which brings us back to the concept of *swaraj*. It is in the light of Vedic teaching that Gandhi came to his understanding of self-rule. One achieves *swaraj* when they have brought the egotistical forces within them under control. In *Hind Swaraj*, Gandhi challenged the developmentalist claim that modernity represented the height of civilisation. He claimed that 'true civilisation' had existed in India for many centuries. As opposed to 'modern civilisation', 'true' 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.' (ibid) Gandhi equated control of the mind and ethical action with self-knowledge (i.e. *para vidya* or Truth), and in this way, aligned his political mission with the spiritual mission of the Vedic tradition that has been pursued in India and much of the rest of Asia for millennia.

So instead of the political 'liberty' that was being sought by modern liberals, Gandhi was in pursuit of a very different kind of 'liberty'. This liberty was 'self-rule', the individual having control over their mind and body, allowing them to pursue 'self-liberation'. Again, we can look Aurobindo Ghosh to elucidate;

> 'By liberty we mean the freedom to obey the law of our being, to grow to our natural self-fulfillment, to find out naturally and freely our harmony with our environment. The dangers and disadvantages of liberty (conceived in the limited western sense) are indeed obvious. But they arise from the absence or defect of the sense of unity between individual and individual, between community and community, which pushes them to assert themselves at the expense of each other instead of growing by mutual help' (Ghosh, 1962, pg 566)

This meant that, unlike the political definitions of 'self-rule' that existed in Gandhi's time, swaraj is not primarily a mode of political organisation. Instead swaraj is a state of mind in the individual has autonomy over themselves. This makes it a qualitatively different programme for action compared to what we are used to in the European discourse of political science. Gandhi's political programme

was one that, at a certain level, had to be undertaken by each individual themselves. No amount of State programmes will ever be enough for the individual to bring their mind under control. For Swaraj to be achieved it 'has to be experienced, by each one for himself.' (Gandhi, 1938a, pg 56) This meant that his vision of swaraj 'was not only to be experienced "internally", but it was also a non-sociological… programme for action. Highly individuated and internalized, this "governmentalisation" of the self centred on spirituality as a set of techniques for its attainment.' (Kapila, 2007, pg 17)

Individual Empowerment

But although the pursuit of swaraj had to be ultimately undertaken by each individual, that did not mean it was apolitical. Gandhi's great innovation was to politicise this ancient spiritual goal, and the concept of swaraj was to have important implications for his programme for political action. Rather than aiming to erect a particular system of government, his aim was rather to empower individuals, to bring about a situation in which everyone was in control of themselves. This meant that his political programme was one that aimed at empowerment, rather than resistance. While he clearly understood the importance of strategic resistance (he is most famous for his campaigns of mass civil disobedience), the focus of his political activism was on the building of individuals' capabilities, rather than the disruption of State capabilities or direct confrontation with the State.

To better understand Gandhi's thinking on the matter we can look to a key passage from *Hind Swaraj*. In this passage Gandhi makes the remarkable claim that colonialism was primarily the result of Indian failings, rather than British aggression:

> 'The English have not taken India; we have given it to them. They are not in India because of their strength, but because we keep them. Let us now see whether these propositions can be sustained. They came to our country originally for purposes of trade… They had not the slightest intention at the time of establishing a kingdom. Who assisted the Company's officers? Who was tempted at the sight of their silver? Who bought their goods? History testifies that we did all this. In order to become rich all at once we welcomed the Company's officers with open arms. We assisted them.' (Gandhi, 1938a, pg 35)

We can again trace Gandhi's ethical position here to the Vedic tradition. The principle of karma encourages one to assume ethical responsibility for one's own position. It states that present suffering is the result of past ethical failings. Rather than laying the blame for one's suffering on some external agent, the individual must look to their own behaviour for the cause of their difficulties in life. This is not done, in the way of much Christian teaching, for the reason of self-deprecation, imploring the individual to feel guilty for having done something wrong. It is rather done in a way that emphasizes the individual's moral agency, and their capacity to improve their situation. The source of the individual's problems is within themselves, and therefore the solution to their problem is within themselves. It is a principle that encourages self-reflection and thus encourages the individual to constantly improve their own ethical behaviour.

Extending this logic, we could say that the State only exists because we, in effect, consent to it. We have become reliant on it even. If we want to resist the oppressive and destructive structures of the State or global capital, we must first look to ourselves, examine the ways in which we are complicit in the operation of these structures, and concentrate on rectifying our own behaviour. According to Gandhi, this should be the focus of political action, rather than simply attacking structures that most people are ultimately dependent on. He draws the comparison;

'If I am in the habit of drinking *bhang* [an edible preparation of cannabis] and a seller thereof sells it to me, am I to blame him or myself? By blaming the seller shall I be able to avoid the habit? And, if a particular retailer is driven away will not another take his place?' (ibid)

Political action should therefore not be directed at 'smashing the State', but rather to bringing about a situation in which people no longer need or want the State. The focus is not on the destruction of the old, but rather the creation of the new, the buildings people's capacities so that the State becomes unnecessary. He writes:

'Political power means capacity to regulate national life through national representatives. If national life becomes so perfect as to become self-regulated, no representation become necessary. There is then a state of enlightened anarchy. In such a state everyone is his own ruler. He rules himself in such a manner that he is never a hindrance to his neighbour. In the ideal State, therefore, there is no political power because there is no State.' (Gandhi, 1931, pg 162)

To Gandhi, the non-violent path to independence meant the building of every individual's capacities so that they are no longer need to rely on the violent structures of State power; that 'complete independence through truth and non-violence means the independence of every unit.' (Gandhi, 1961, pg 4)

We can now look at the specifics of Gandhi's programme of empowerment. We can divide the programme of capacity building into two types: material and spiritual.

Material Swaraj

Central to Gandhi's vision of swaraj was *swadeshi.* Swadeshi directly translates as 'one's own country', and the *swadeshi movement* in India was a movement to boycott imported English goods in support of goods produced in India. However, the contours of the concept were much wider than this. Swadeshi was a central part of Gandhi's cosmology. As we have seen, Gandhi understood human life as an undivided whole and swadeshi so is a concept that can be applied to every field of life. Politically, swadeshi is people having the decision-making power over their own lives. Culturally, swadeshi is the protection and propagation of one's own traditions, practices and knowledges. Cosmologically, swadeshi is a 'universal law', the 'law of laws', stipulating that that which does not live in harmony with its surroundings tends toward collapse.

However, the fields of life most associated with swadeshi are economics and production. In this context swadeshi essentially means self-sufficiency and the localisation of production (one effectively implying the other). Gandhi gives the following definition; 'Swadeshi is that spirit within us which restricts us to the use and service of our immediate surroundings to the exclusion of the more remote.' (Gandhi, 1922a, pg 336) If people produce everything they need in life, using only what is in one's immediate surroundings, they do not become dependent on external political and economic institutions and so maintain their freedom.

A major part of Gandhi's political programme was therefore the revival of people's productive capacities, which tend to wane as they become reliant on national and international markets for their needs. Of particular interest to Gandhi was the revival of *khadi* – hand-spun or hand woven cloth. Textile production was, in Gandhi's time, the core of the industrial revolution, and was the industry that was having the biggest effect on Indian society. As Gandhi travelled around the villages of India, seeing the abject poverty in which many Indian lived, he came to the conclusion that the

'chief cause of their pauperization was the destruction of the spinning-wheel.' (Gandhi, 1945, pg 40) While this may seem like a big claim, historians have shown that there was a huge textile industry in India before the British colonial era. Not 'industry' in the sense that we might understand it (mass production in factories), but rather *cottage industry* or *small scale industry*.

Small scale industries are an organisation of production in which the means-of-production are locally owned, less mechanised, and the producer of the goods are also generally the ones who bring it to the market. These industries have been a major part of Indian society since ancient times, dating back at least to 2000 B.C. with Egyptian mummies being found wrapped up in Indian muslin. (Kundu, 2017) They included things like flour grinding, rice pounding, cotton ginning, rope-making, basket making, mat weaving, sericulture (silk farming), tobacco manufacture, bee keeping, ivory carving, locks, iron safes, along with a huge amount of artistic manufacture and handicrafts. (ibid) Of all of these industries, however, khadi was both the most important and the one most affected by exposure to international markets during Gandhi's life time.

With the mass appropriation of raw materials by the British, their political control of Indian markets, and the often violent destruction of Indian cottage industries (including measures such as chopping off the thumbs of the best Bengali weavers because English mass produced goods were still struggling to compete with Indian industry), (ibid) British industrial production boomed and the cottage industries of India were decimated. These developments meant the loss of a major source of income for many Indian villages and led to what Gandhi referred to above as the 'pauperization' of India.

One of Gandhi's main programmes for action therefore was the revival of khadi and the revival of Indian cottage industries. For many years he travelled all around the country with the *charkha* (the traditional spinning machine) teaching people once more how to spin khadi. For Gandhi, the charkha was the physical embodiment of swadeshi as well as a central element of his 'constructive programme', which aimed at the revival of Indian village life. Spinning khadi was so important to Gandhi that he made it one of the vows in his ashram, as well as setting the membership fees for the Indian National Congress at a specific amount of self-spun khadi. Khadi was the affirmation of the values of producers owning the means of production, unalienated labour, resource conservation, self-reliance, and human creativity.

But while khadi was clearly important to Gandhi in many practical and symbolic ways, we should perhaps not get caught up in the khadi itself. To Gandhi, khadi was simply the purest expression of swadeshi that existed at that present time and place; an answer to the question: 'what is the kind of service… that the teeming millions of India most need at the present time, that can be easily understood and appreciated by all, that is easy to perform and will at the same time enable the *crores* [tens of millions] of our semi-starved countrymen to live?' (Gandhi, 2001b) While swadeshi to Gandhi meant the spinning of khadi, this is only one answer of many. The spirit of swadeshi is reviving peoples productive capacities in all their forms.

Today this would mean reviving not only people's manufacturing capacities, but also their agricultural capacities. The revival of agriculture was not so important to Gandhi because at that time there was not really any need to 'revive' agriculture. Most people in India still produced the food they needed for themselves, or procured it locally. However, in today's world, more and more people are abandoning agriculture and moving into the city, and those that remain in the countryside often do so on mono-cultural farms producing goods for the market rather than for themselves. This means we are moving into a situation where most people in the world will be relying on three or four multi-national food conglomerates for their food. Thus food production becomes of central

importance to the concept of swadeshi. In the words of the environmental feminist, Vandana Shiva: 'if the spinning wheel was the symbol of our first independence, then the seed is the symbol of our second independence.' (Shiva, London, 2016)

We can make a few more points on the idea of swadeshi before moving on. Swadeshi does not mean that people are completely independent from one other. Quite the opposite. Social life is a central part of human existence. One can never be 100% self-sufficient, not least because the isolated individual is unable to satisfy their own social needs. While basic survival in modern society does not require any genuine personal relationships, the essentials in life all being mediated by impersonal market forces, swadeshi entails the building of strong social relationships; it entails individuals building self-sufficient communities that provide an enjoyable, ethical and sustainable existence. It is only after this is achieved, that one would be in a position to disengage from many of the more harmful national and international political and economic structures.

We must also point out that swadeshi does not follow a logic of insular community identity; it bears no feeling of ill will towards what is 'Other'. According to Gandhi, a 'true votary of swadeshi will never harbour ill-will towards the foreigner: he will not be actuated by antagonism towards anybody on earth. Swadeshi is not a cult of hatred. It is a doctrine of selfless service that has its roots in the purest ahimsa.' (Gandhi, 1945, pg 66) The idea of the 'foreigner' here is not linked to any nationalist, religious, or communal identity. It rather refers to spacial and social proximity. Those that are near are 'neighbours', those that are far are 'foreigners'. The neighbour/foreigner distinction is one that is fluid, and subject to constant change, as people are constantly moving across physical and social space.

Gandhi maintained that people are most capable of helping those that are near to them, because '[o]ur capacity for service has obvious limits. We can serve even our neighbour with some difficulty. If everyone of us duly performed his duty to his neighbour, no one in the world who needed assistance would be left unattended. Therefore one who serves his neighbour serves all the world.' (ibid, pg 39) The idea therefore is that one should love every person in the world as a neighbour, but should focus on serving the people that are actually their neighbours. This element of swadeshi can be contrasted with the British 'civilising missions', which many British people genuinely thought of as an attempt to help Indians; or the contemporary paradigm of 'development'. Gandhi would argue against these paradigms of 'help'. He would argue that we cannot serve people who are not of close social or physical proximity because we are not in a position to understand their problems. Or more precisely, the best method of helping 'foreigners' is simply to live an ethical life: 'at present we are riding on other people's backs; it is enough only if we get down', (ibid pg 36) a lesson many of us would do well to understand.

In sum, we can see that achieving material swaraj is not about taking control of centralised factory based means-of-production. Material swaraj entails de-centralising production. It entails building people's productive capacities, empowering them to produce for themselves, or for their neighbours, the things they need in life. This aim is actually in line with much of classical anarchist thinking, which:

> '...was often associated with primary resistance to the onset of industrialization….it was more than just a matter of co-opting an already-existing mode of production, changing its relations while retaining its means and instruments; it meant challenging the establishment of capitalism and modern governmentality, sometimes even opposing the structures of thought on which they were based.' (Ramnath, 2011, pg 26)

Material independence is a necessary component of swaraj. The argument is rather straightforward: if people are materially dependent on centralised structures of power, if they depend on these structures to eat, house and clothe themselves, then they will, by definition, never achieve a state of independence. However, if you do gain for yourself material independence, then you do not have to sell your labour on the market, you do not have to enter modern societies corporate institutions, and you have in large part freed yourself from the disciplinary machine.

However our investigation into the work of Foucault shows that these material considerations are not enough. Power is not only a material force, but also a spiritual one: working on the minds and bodies of individuals. Gandhi was well aware of this, which is why his constructive programme was not only about building people's material capacities, it was also about empowering them spiritually.

Spiritual Swaraj

The distinction between *material swaraj* and *spiritual swaraj* would have made no sense to Gandhi. For him, the material was the spiritual and vice versa. The act of spinning khadi, and other measures to achieve material independence, were spiritual actions as much as material actions. It is only within our modern discourses, in which the mind and body are separate and in which fields of human life and activity have been divided and exist separately from each other, that we can meaningfully speak of a difference. Nevertheless, although we recognise the contingency of this epistemological framework, modern discourses have organised human activity in this way, and thus so too does this study.

The term *spiritual capacity* here refers to the capacity to deliberately transform one's own subjectivity; the capacity to act on one's own mind and body to move it in a desired direction, using what Foucault referred to as 'techniques of the self'. Lower spiritual capacity means less power to shape one's own subjectivity according one's own will. It means that the self is more a product of technologies of power, an external force that shapes the subjectivity of the individual for a purpose external to that individual, than technologies of the self, the internal will of the subject shaping their own experience in accordance with their own aims.

So while this does include economic measures - making oneself economically independent from international markets clearly transforms one's subjectivity - it is not limited to them. Modern power operates through a vast network of apparatuses, investing itself ever further in the minds and bodies of individuals, playing an ever larger role in the formation of subjectivity, and severely limiting the spiritual capacity of the individual. Gandhi's programme for action offers a method of resistance to this *spiritual colonisation*, which we can look at from two angles; knowledge and discipline.

Knowledge

Modern society is characterised by a huge increase in techniques that make the individual 'known' to power. The emergence of the human sciences around the end of the 18th century allowed people to create ever more minute and precise knowledge about the human being, and modern power functions through the production of such knowledge. These techniques work to reveal the 'secret truths' of body and to elicit the innermost workings of the mind. The knowledge created by such techniques then becomes the 'self-knowledge' of the individual (the knowledge through which the individual 'knows' themselves), tying them to an often oppressive and hierarchical regime of truth.

We already outlined how Gandhi challenged modern society's colonial regime of truth, and need not to go into it again in great detail. However, it must be emphasized that the production of knowledge is one of the most important techniques for shaping human subjectivity, and so one of the most important fields of political action. Politics is not only a struggle over resources or forms of social

organisation; it is first and foremost a question of truth. To achieve *swaraj* one must disentangle oneself not only from material structures of power; just as important is disentanglement from epistemological structures. This does not mean that one must reject all forms of modern scientific knowledge; far from it. But it does mean rejecting the modern episteme's claim to be the sole authority on truth; it means accepting that there are many ways of seeing the same thing, and that one is not necessarily 'more true' than the other, despite claims to 'objectivity'.

However, this is not to say that we fall into a position of complete relativity; that all knowledge is thought of as possessing the same value. Contained within the Gandhian paradigm is also a method of assessing the value of competing claims to knowledge. This method is simply to look to the effects of the knowledge. It is to ask the question: 'what transformations does/can this knowledge bring to the world?' This method of assessing knowledge is quite similar to the method by which knowledge is evaluated in modern societies: the knowledge of the physical sciences is so highly valued because of its amazing transformative potential. But while modern societies assess knowledge based purely upon its potential for material transformation, or the explanatory or predictive power of such knowledge, Gandhi put ethical considerations at the centre of assessment.

Insisting upon an ethical valuation of knowledge means that modern knowledge cannot be considered solely in terms of technological advancement, or on our increased capacity to manipulate our environment. Ethical evaluation of knowledge means we must also contend with the results of this knowledge for living beings. It is to assert the validity of knowledge other than the 'empirical fact'. It is to assert, as Nietzsche did, the worth of 'life-furthering, life-preserving, species-preserving, perhaps even species-rearing' (Nietzsche, 2013) knowledge, over and above knowledge which claims 'objectivity'. Which would mean that modern science should not only be hailed for its advancements, but must also take responsibility for its failings; alienating labour conditions, ever expanding State and corporate power, the nuclear bomb, and global environmental destruction. Gandhi, a person who refused to separate the ethical from any sphere of life, didn't accept the argument that science was 'neutral'. He didn't allow modern knowledge to shirk responsibility for all its destructive effects. Within his problematic knowledge can never be thought of as neutral, but must always be placed within an ethical context.

An ethical framework for knowledge evaluation asks questions such as: 'What are the potential ethical consequences of this knowledge?' 'What are the structures of power which are sustained by this knowledge?' 'How does this knowledge shape the consciousness of the knower?' or 'What relationship does this knowledge establish between "the knower" and "the known?"' Considerations such as these led Gandhi to assert the superiority of the Vedic tradition as a basis for self knowledge.

However, techniques of power not only work on the level of truth, there also exists a vast array of apparatuses that affect praxis and take effect on the body. Building people's spiritual capacities means creating not only alternative forms of knowledge through which people can build different forms of relationships with the world, but also alternative disciplinary regimes through which these forms of knowledge can be both re-enforced, and put into practice.

Discipline
Swadeshi, making oneself materially independent, already takes one out of society's disciplinary matrix to a certain degree, ensuring that one need not be part of a disciplinary institution to earn a wage. But this is merely the first step. As we have seen, Gandhi was not only concerned with resistance; he was constantly thinking of how to form constructive alternatives. So while he was against the disciplines of 'modern civilisation', he was not against discipline in general. In fact,

discipline was at the centre of *swaraj.* He said 'The root meaning of *swaraj* is self-rule. "*Swaraj*" may, therefore, be rendered as disciplined rule from within.' (Desai, 1926, pg 97)

Contrasted with this 'disciplined rule from within' are both modern disciplines and modern 'liberty'. Modern disciplines are disciplined rules from without: allowing an officer to co-ordinate his soldiers with precision, or allowing managers to co-ordinate workers with ever more mechanised modes of production. But while Gandhi was clearly against such oppressive forms of discipline he 'was also sceptical of any strategies that sought the affirmation of liberty through only the absence or defiance of discipline. To him, this was nothing but 'licence', which ' as this word implies, it was literally authorized by discipline, and accepted by default the so-called discipline involved in modern civilization.'(Skaria, 2002, pg 967-968)

Power in modern consumer society functions not only through disciplining bodies, it must also entice them to pleasure. People must consume an ever increasing amount of goods to keep the societal engine of production running. This means that designated periods of 'license', non-disciplined, unrestrained, (commodified) pleasure, is an integral part in the operation of modern power. We cannot, therefore, imagine freedom as simply the absence of discipline. The idea of 'leisure as liberty' is entirely compatible with the forces of the State and global capital. Rather than advocate for the abolishment of discipline, Gandhi sought to replace the 'so-called disciplines' of modern society with a set of ethical disciplines, and he looked to the Vedic tradition for inspiration in this regard.

We have already seen above that the Vedic tradition was concerned with investing the individual with the capacity to control the processes of their own mind. However, this capacity was not something the individual would be miraculously endowed with. It was instead understood to be slowly built up over time, with the establishment of a system of ethical disciplines that would order one's conduct in the world. Unlike the discipline of modern society, which brings people involuntarily into its matrix, Vedic discipline is one that must be freely assented to, and requires no small amount of commitment. One chooses to incorporate this discipline into their lives in order to transform oneself in accordance with three, interlinked, aims:

1) to empower oneself,
2) to reduce selfishness,
3) and to cultivate selflessness.

1) What empowerment means here is increasing one's physical and mental capacities. This particular aim of Vedic discipline is probably the most well known in modern society, and within the modern world there has been a widespread propagation of the Vedic disciplinary techniques that empower individuals. Such techniques include *asanas* (referred to in modern society as 'yoga') or meditation. *Asanas* ('postures') increase one's physical capacities by improving the health of the body. Meditation increasing one's mental capacities by increasing one's power of concentration, and allowing oneself a measure of distance from one's thoughts. These disciplines help people to harness a mind that can sometimes be overwhelmed by emotions, thoughts and desires.

Other mental disciplines that Gandhi put into practice include the cultivation of particular thoughts or mental states. These disciplines are deliberative measures that aim to replace thoughts that are harmful or prevent one from being able to perform one's duty (dharma), with positive thoughts and mental states that are conducive to action. One example of such a mental discipline of *abhaya* (fearlessness). Abhaya was an important discipline for Gandhi, and one of the vows in the Sabermati ashram. Fearlessness was a necessary requirement of non-violent resistance: he wrote

that 'passive resistance cannot proceed a step without fearlessness. Those alone can follow the path of passive resistance who are free from fear, whether as to their possessions, false honour, their relatives, the government, bodily injuries or death.' (Gandhi, 1938a, pg 80) Being a non-violent resister did not mean avoiding political confrontation. Often it meant directly putting one's body on the line in the pursuit of justice. This meant that for Gandhi, the cultivation of fearlessness was a necessary requirement for the pursuit of Truth, and a central mental discipline of those wishing to engage in satyagraha. Other examples of such mental disciplines include *santosa* (the practice of contentment), or *iśvarapranidhāna* (contemplation upon the underlying unity of existence, and one's own shared identity with Brahman).

Many people feel they have only limited control over their thoughts; that often their mind can take them in directions they do not choose. People may feel that there are intrusive thoughts they cannot help but entertain, even though they recognise these thoughts are harmful. This idea is not shared by those of the Vedic tradition. Vedic teaching maintains that just as the body can be trained and brought under one's will, so too can the mind (although it is clearly a more difficult undertaking).

We can understand this point better with an example. For some people, even control of the body is difficult. A person who is trying to give up smoking cigarettes may sometimes feel like their body is not under their control; that they cannot help but go into a shop and buy a packet of cigarettes, despite their rational mind willing against it. However, over time, by resisting that impulse day by day, that person will realise that their body is under their control; that not smoking is something within their power. The Vedic tradition is built upon the idea that, through the consistent practice of spiritual discipline, one comes to a similar realisation of power regarding the mind.

However, these techniques of self-empowerment are simply one element. And as their widespread propagation in modern society suggests, these techniques are not necessarily political in themselves. Gandhi recognised this fact. While he talked of the importance of a strong mind and body, they were thought of as means rather than ends, a view fairly typical of the Vedic tradition. Whereas modern 'yoga' generally understands the aim of these Vedic techniques to be the increase mental and physical capacities (and the empowerment of individual fits perfectly with the contemporary neo-liberal idea 'self-improvement'), the Vedic tradition understands this empowerment of the individual as merely the first, preparatory, step toward the real work. One empowers oneself not for the mere fact of self-empowerment, but rather because one needs a healthy mind and body in order to act ethically.

This brings us to the next aim of the Vedic disciplines: the systematic reduction of selfishness (the word 'selfishness' refers to actions and thoughts which are directed toward the self), an aim that does challenge the social and economic order of modern society.

2) The aim of reducing selfish action is not exactly separate from the aim of self-empowerment; they are rather two sides of the same coin. The reduction of selfish actions and thoughts reduces the pull of these forces on the mind, and thus empowers the individual to act more easily in accordance with their own rational will. Freedom for Gandhi meant freedom not only from the State but also from all the selfish impulses that prevent people from acting according to dharma.

A major component of Gandhi's discipline was therefore the fortification the mind and body against the influence of such impulses. Freedom did not mean freedom from all restraint, as it is with self-imposed restraint that we can most exercise our freedom.'A man who chooses the path of freedom from restraint, i.e. self-indulgence, will be a bondslave of passions, whilst a man who binds himself to rules and restraints, releases himself.' (Gandhi, 1971, pg 34) Freedom to Gandhi was a practice

through which people increase the power of their will, building their material, spiritual and ethical capacities.

A central part of Gandhi's discipline was therefore *tapas*. *Tapas* is the discipline of self-restraint, and is a central element of essentially all Vedic disciplinary systems. The Vedas teach that action should not be motivated by the pursuit of material pleasure. The reasons for this are numerous: such pleasures are ultimately unsatisfactory; even if they are attained they lead only to the multiplication of desire; and finally, and perhaps most importantly, the pursuit of such pleasure often prevents one from acting in accordance with dharma.

In line with this view, the reduction of material desires was a core component of Gandhi's political programme. He wrote that: '[c]ivilization, in the real sense of the term, consists not in multiplication but in the deliberate and voluntary restriction of wants. This alone promotes real happiness and contentment, and increases the capacity for service.' (Gandhi, 1935, pg 18) This is not to say that we should neglect ourselves; every individual clearly has needs, and one has a duty to oneself to fulfil those needs, but it is to say that we should not go too far beyond those needs. 'A certain degree of physical harmony and comfort is necessary, but above that level, it becomes a hindrance instead of a help.' (Gandhi, 1936, pg 226)

Unlike the disciplinary practices that are aimed at individual empowerment, this element of Vedic discipline is at odds with the organisation of modern society. The capitalist mode of production runs on a logic of infinitely expanding 'growth'. Production levels and productivity must be on a constant upward trajectory or the capitalist system begins to break down. The fact that production must follow an upward trajectory means that consumption levels too must constantly increase, and States and corporations take active measures to multiply people's material desires. Gandhi perceived this and wrote; 'I do not believe that multiplication of wants and machinery contrived to supply them is taking the world a single step nearer its goal... I whole-heartedly detest this mad desire to destroy distance and time, to increase animal appetites and go to the ends of the earth in search of their satisfaction. If modern civilization stands for all this, and I have understood it to do so, I call it Satanic.' (Gandhi, 1927, pg 85) Vedic discipline aims in the opposite direction: less unnecessary consumption, and therefore less production.

It is only in the last few decades that we have become fully aware of the dangers inherent in a model of infinitely expanding growth. Today we are faced with the chilling reality of mass environmental destruction. Particularly in the last 200 years, human beings have put an end to much of the life on earth[5], with the rate of destruction constantly increasing.[6] It has gotten to a point in which even the normally sober toned scientific community now speak of a 'biological annihilation' that represents a 'frightening assault on the foundations of human civilisation'. (Ceballos et al., 2017) Many have begun to speak of this era as the *Anthropocene;* a major extinction event, in which human activity is causing the mass destruction of the earth's ecosystems. Our planet has a finite amount of resources, and a model based on an exponential increase in the use of those resources cannot last for long. One of the most pressing challenges facing human beings today is putting the brakes to the motor of 'growth' that is about to drive us off a cliff.

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5 With studies showing, for example, that human beings have already destroyed 80% of the forests in the world, (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 2010), as well as killed 83% of wild mammals (Bar-On, et al, 2018).
6 Forests are currently being destroyed at a rate of 375 km2 per day. At the current rate of deforestation, 5-10% of tropical forest species will become extinct every decade. Every hour, 1,692 acres of productive dry land become desert. 27% of our coral reefs have been destroyed and if it continues at its current rate rate the remaining 60% will be gone in 30 years. (The World Counts, 2019)

Many years before we became aware of human caused climate change, or before the rise of the 'degrowth' movement in progressive politics, Gandhi could see that the course plotted by modern society was a short-sighted one. One of his most prescient, and beautifully simple, aphorisms reads: 'the world has enough for everyone's need, but not enough for everyone's greed', and human beings are now beginning to realise the truth of this statement. Gandhi's programmes of *swadeshi* and *tapas* both aimed at an ethical and sustainable mode of living. *Swadeshi* is a material programme aimed at a situation in which people live within their means, and the necessarily correlate to this is the spiritual discipline of *tapas,* the voluntary reduction of one's material desires and propensity to consume.

However, *tapas* was not the only element of Gandhi's discipline that aimed at the reduction of selfishness. Neither was it the only element of his discipline that directly challenged the order of modern society. Another example of such a discipline was *aparigraha*, an important discipline within the Vedic tradition, and one of the vows in Gandhi's ashram. To Gandhi aparigraha was not a vow of asceticism, as it is sometimes understood, a vow to renounce the use of material objects or land; rather he understood it as a vow of non-possessiveness, not to hold something as one's individual property. It was a vow not to have the mental disposition of ownership toward anything, and to think of yourself as the mere 'trustee' of anything you are currently making use of. When Gandhi incorporate this vow into his discipline he wrote to his brother explaining that 'I had given him all that I had saved up to that moment, but that henceforth he should expect nothing from me, for future savings, if any, would be utilized for the benefit of the community.' (Gandhi, 2016, pg 237) While this idea no doubt appears radical to us, after being brought up in modern society, we must remember that such a strong emphasis on individual property is a relatively new development, and it was only brought to India when the British began imposing their private property laws on the sub-continent.

As the protection of private property is at the centre of the modern liberal social order, a mental discipline which acts against the disposition of ownership challenges the core of modern society. The discipline of *aparigraha* can be seen in many ways as analogues to the anarchist and communist ideal of abolishing private property, but rather than resisting private property on the level of State (by abolishing property law, or by the State appropriation of property), *aparigraha* was resistance on the level of individual consciousness. The individual deliberately disciplines their mind against the mental disposition of ownership. It traces the problem right back to the roots, because this feeling is ultimately where all of the State level private properties laws come from, and cannot be reorganisation of the State alone.

Tapas and *aparigraha* are just some of the most important disciplines that Gandhi employed to reduce selfishness. However, the reduction of the selfish actions and thoughts is not enough for the establishment of an ethical life. The emphasis of Gandhi's thinking was always on addition rather than subtraction, and so the focus of his discipline was not actually on the self at all; rather it was about the relationship between the self and the world around it. Ajay Skaria wrote that 'from within a Gandhian problematic, vows that disciplined the self and thus created a physical and conceptual space for neighbourly practices, were a prerequisite for *seva* (''service'') and were themselves a form of *seva*.' (Skaria, 2002, pg 965) So even the disciplines that do focus on individual self-empowerment are thought of as a form of service to others, as they are preparatory measures on the path to selflessness. Self-discipline was necessary because a person 'must arrange his physical and cultural circumstances so that they may not hinder him in his service of humanity, on which all his energies should be concentrated.' (Gandhi, 1960, pg 39)

3) The highest goal of Gandhian discipline is the cultivation of selflessness: putting the needs of the whole above the needs of the individual (and even more so above the desires of the individual). We have already introduced the concept of ahimsa, but as it is so important to Gandhi's thinking it is worth briefly outlining again here. Ahimsa is a central principle, not only of Gandhi's spiritual discipline, but to most Vedic disciplines (including Buddhism, Jainism, Vedanta, and Yoga). The concept is deeply significant in Vedic philosophy, but, at its core, it is one of beautiful simplicity: non-violence in thought, word, and deed. Yet it not a purely a negative disposition of non-action. In order to truly live according to ahimsa, one must cultivate a disposition of love toward all things. Many other disciplinary guidelines follow from ahimsa, such as *kshyama* (forgiveness, compassion) or *dāna* (selfless giving), but they can all traced back to ahimsa as their source. In order to better understand ahimsa, the ethical principle, as a disciplinary code, a guide for one's actions, we can delve a bit deeper in the concept of *spiritual disciplines*.

To live one's life by a spiritual discipline means navigating day to day according to a set of rules devised with a spiritual purpose. Once these rules have been established, one must, like the schoolmaster or prison warden, monitor one's behaviour, reflect on whether or not it complies with the rule, and, if it doesn't, try to correct it. However, unlike the disciplines of modern society, these rules are set in place freely by the individual themselves. The rationale for living according to spiritual discipline comes from the fact that doing what is right or beneficial can sometimes be difficult, and human beings tend to repeat old patterns of behaviour. Clear guidelines for action strengthens one's capacity to act in accordance with an ethic in which one believes. The mind, compelled by different impulses, often convinces one to do something that goes against their better judgement; having a set of ethical principles to anchor ones behaviour to, can help prevent one from being pulled around by the vagaries of the mind. And since we are preceded by many generations who have establishing their own ethical codes of conduct, many people choose to adopt a discipline that someone has already worked out. The system of the Buddha, for example, is comprised of eight disciplinary principles ('the eightfold path'): right view, right resolve, right speech, right conduct, right livelihood, right effort, right concentration, and right meditation. Each one of these rules is a disciplinary practice by which, with patient, reflection and resolve, one can order their mental and physical conduct.

Ethical reflections and judgement are often complex, and require a good deal of self-knowledge and tranquillity of mind (which is where the empowerment of the self becomes important). Unlike legal, or Abraham moral, codes, spiritual discipline is context dependent, and to be judged by each individual for themselves. Ethical dilemmas, such as whether or not one can do violence to the individual for the good of the whole, have no right or wrong answers. However, most spiritual disciplines, including Gandhi's, hold intention as key in such complex scenarios. For example, when one gives criticism that upsets another, one must reflect on that criticism and consider if it was delivered constructively, from compassion, or if it came from a place of anger or pride. If the latter then it is necessary to recognises a propensity to act in a way that does violence to another, and to resolve to alter such behaviour.

And, as we have seen above, spiritual disciplines are not only an integral part of Vedic philosophy; they were also central to Ancient European philosophy.[7] It is only with the Christianisation of spiritual discipline, when discipline began to be enforced by external agents (the pastor) rather than the individuals themselves, that self-regulated spiritual discipline declined in importance. Further, the advent of modern society saw the State greatly expanding upon this 'pastoral power' with a huge apparatus of new disciplinary institutions. In Foucauldian terms, this transformed Europe from a land in which human behaviour was based on 'self-governmentality' (spiritual disciplines),

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7   See Section: Technologies of the Self

individuals governing their own action, to one of 'governmentality' (modern disciplines) in which people were governed by others. Gandhi's aim was to reverse this trend.

Having fleshed out the concept of spiritual discipline, we can return to the concept of ahimsa. So far we have thought of spiritual discipline in terms of individual decision making, and this is largely how it would have functioned in a non-modern society. But today, we live in a world of increasing *structural violence.* This means that even if an individual lives their lives in a totally non-violent manner personally, they may still be enmeshed in a larger system of violence. One of Gandhi's main innovations as a spiritual figure was to realise that in today's world himsa and ahimsa (violence and non-violence) must be conceived of in political terms. He recognised that the concept of ahimsa had to be widened to adapt to the new global societies that the colonial powers had created. Those concerned with the human spirit cannot hold themselves aloof from the political because 'politics encircle us today like the coil of a snake from which one cannot get out, no matter how much one tries.' (Gandhi, 1920, pg 2)

A commitment to live one's life by the discipline of ahimsa means examining how one's existence effects others, and then devoting oneself to changing (to the best of one's ability) any part of it based on unnecessary violence. And when a person enmeshed in the structures of modern society begins to think seriously about it, they will soon realise that their lifestyle is dependent on a huge array of political and economic structures that bring great violence upon the earth: the unsustainable use of the earth's resources, the destruction of life, and the exploitation of people who are unfortunate enough to be born in the wrong part of global society. The degree to which life in a modern consumer society is dependent on violence may make it seem like living in an ethical way is a near impossible task. Yet more and more people are trying to influence the direction of modern society, attempting to lead it down a more ethical path. The past number of decades has seen a huge rise in importance of ethical movements such as 'ethical consumerism'.

However, we must not mistake Gandhi's political ahimsa for ethical consumerism. When looking at the enormity of the challenge humanity faces, and the deep structural factors at the root of our current difficulties, ethical consumerism can be considered only a half measure that still fits well with the paradigm of the consumer society, and even reduces ethics itself to a choice about what to consume. We can draw a comparison to Gandhi's thinking about swaraj, already quoted above, in which he said: 'I know that you want Home rule [swaraj] for India; it is not to be had for your asking. Everyone will have to take it for himself'. And the same can be said of ahimsa, it is not to be had by asking, each person must create a life based on ahimsa for themselves; we can try to influence corporations to adopt more ethical practices, but ultimately it is not enough. Consumer society is inherently destructive and centralised structures of power entail violence. Everyday life in a consumer society is so fundamentally dependent on the exploitation of life that much more radical action is called for to live by the principle of ahimsa.

Here we can look to the concept of swadeshi. If one creates a situation in which the necessities of life can be obtained locally and ethically, then one is no longer dependent on violent structures of global society. Living one's life according to a discipline of ahimsa therefore entails creating the local structures to break one's dependency on violent centralised structures. And so we arrive in the same place where we finished our discussion on material swaraj.

Gandhi's Vision of an Ethical Existence

After examining swaraj from these various angles, Gandhi's vision for an ethical human existence becomes clear. It is one where people are organised in communities that make it possible to live ethically. The word he used was *panchayat raj* (rule of the village community) and it entails not

only decentralisation of power, but also spacial decentralisation. The basic social unit for Gandhi was the autonomous village, and through the preservation and creation of these communities he saw human beings moving toward a better future. It is 'preservation', because for Gandhi, panchayat raj was not some idealistic Utopia: a working model for it could already be found in the villages of India. He wrote;

> 'And where this cursed modern civilization has not reached, India remains as it was before. The inhabitants of that part of India will very properly laugh at your newfangled notions. The English do not rule over them, nor will you ever rule over them. Those in whose name we speak we do not know, nor do they know us. I would certainly advise you and those like you who love the motherland to go into the interior that has yet been not polluted by the railways and to live there for six months; you might then be patriotic and speak of Home rule [swaraj].' (Gandhi, 1938a, pg 58)

In the Indian village, existing autonomously, outside of the sphere of influence of modern government, and according to Vedic ethics, Gandhi saw a model of swaraj that could be emulated. Because of this, many accused him of idealising the Indian village; of highlighting only what was good in the panchayat, while concealing its inequalities. And while there may sometimes be a degree of truth in this, Gandhi by no means shied away from facing up to problems. He was one of the most vigorous reformers that India has seen since Buddha, and spent at least as much time and energy on ethical (and sanitary) improvement of the panchayat, as on Indian Independence. However, while recognising the problems, he saw the people of the panchayat as living in a more autonomous and ethical manner than he remembered of his time in London, or in the colonial towns of South Africa. To him, the panchayat was much closer to his vision of swaraj than the model offered by modern society. A major reason for this was that he saw the panchayat as built on spiritual, rather than technological, progress. He wrote:

> 'Our ancestors dissuaded us from luxuries and pleasures. We have managed with the same kind of plough as existed thousands of years ago. We have retained the same kind of cottages that we had in former times and our indigenous education remains the same as before. We have had no system of life-corroding competition. Each followed his own occupation or trade and charged a regulation wage. It was not that we did not know how to invent machinery, but our forefathers knew that, if we set our hearts after such things, we would become slaves and lose our moral fibre. They, therefore, after due deliberation decided that we should only do what we could with our hands and feet. They saw that our real happiness and health consisted in a proper use of our hands and feet. They further reasoned that large cities were a snare and a useless encumbrance and that people would not be happy in them, that there would be gangs of thieves and robbers, prostitution and vice flourishing in them and that poor men would be robbed by rich men. They were, therefore, satisfied with small villages. They saw that kings and their swords were inferior to the sword of ethics, and they, therefore, held the sovereigns of the earth to be inferior to the Rishis and the Fakirs.' (ibid, pg 57)

This element of Gandhi's philosophy is clearly at odds with modern society's trend of hyper urbanisation. While human beings have lived in relatively small communities for the majority of our existence, the modern era is one that has seen rapid urbanisation and the creation of the industrial mega city. In 1800 the percentage of the world's population living in urban areas was estimated to be less than 7%. By 1900 this had risen to 16%. In 2016 it had sky-rocketed up to 54% and by 2050 it is expected to be at 68%. (Ritsche, Roser, 2019) The trend has become so widespread, so all encompassing, that many consider it the inevitable march of history and

'progress'; they consider humanity's future as residing in urban areas. Gandhi's vision of 'rule of the village community', therefore, is out of step with reality. People are not going to start to organise themselves in autonomous villages, they are going to do the opposite, continue to leave the villages in favour of ever growing mega cities. However, when one takes a step back from the perspective of contemporary trends in urbanisations, what appears really out of step with reality is the exponential rise in the number of city dwellers on a planet that is already well past the limit of sustainable human exploitation. The modern mega city is not a sustainable method of organisation, and in elucidating this point we can delve a little deeper into Gandhi's thinking on Panchayat Raj.

There are at least two reasons why Gandhi was against increasing urbanisation. The first was that living in a city made the task of achieving swaraj more difficult. Cities are places that are dependent on the regions around them to sustain themselves, '[by] definition, it can be concluded, cities developed as counterparts to the hinterland and, therefore, they axiomatically should be and are as a matter of fact unsustainable.' (Berger, 2014) If the city is dependent on resources coming in from outside, then the people of the city are equally as dependent. This is the first reason that Gandhi was against the city, city dwellers will always be dependent on wider structures to live, and the wider structures generally entail some form of violence. But even discounting this for the moment, a more pressing critique that Gandhian critique of the city is that it does not follow the law of swadeshi. In other words it is not sustainable. Something is 'sustainable' if we can do it forever. Although we see a lot of campaigns that aim to 'make cities more sustainable, 'sustainability is a binary, not a gradual concept. Something is either sustainable or not. Aiming to increase the sustainability is consequently a sham battle.' (ibid) Cities, at least the mega-cities we see around the world today, are not a sustainable way to organise human beings. To have the majority of human beings concentrated in a few locations, necessitates a huge transport industry and monumental and unnecessary use of energy and resources to bring things from one place. It is not something that is sustainable on a planet of finite resources. A responsible and sustainable use of the earth's resources is one that falls in line with the principle of swadeshi, in which people produce things for themselves from their immediate surroundings. No only is this mode of organisation not dependent on an unsustainable transport industry, but it also caps human consumption to what one can viably produce in their immediate area, unlike the city, which sucks up resources from every corner of the globe.

A final implication of the argument for the 'unsustainability' of the modern city is that, if modern cities truly are unsustainable, then the kind of transformation Gandhi is calling for will eventually be foisted upon us if we fail to freely adopt it. While Communist claims of the 'historically inevitable' nature of communist revolution turned out to be hollow, Gandhi's Panchayat Raj has perhaps a better claim to that moniker. While capitalism did not fall under the weight of class contradictions, it seems to many that modern industrial society will soon start to break down because of its environmental contradictions. And just like the fall of the Roman Empire meant people returning to a simpler life, dependent on the land rather than centralised structures of power, so too it would be if when the conditions of possibility for industrial society begin to be exhausted.

But, contrary to what some argue, Gandhi's philosophy can't be reduced to a 'return to the past', and it was not only about preserving what was already there. While he was clear in advocating for the preservation of what was good from previous generations, he himself lived in constant creation of the new. In his life he founded three communities (ashrams): Tolstoy farm, Sabermati ashram, and Sevagram ashram. Each had a set of ethical observances by which the people of the community lived. These observances included things covered above - ahimsa, satya, seva, and swadeshi - along with a few others, such as 'bread labour', which we will explore in a moment. With these communities, Gandhi was creating spaces in which people could choose to live according to ethical rules other than those set by modern society. It turned an individual struggle, to establish an ethical

discipline, into a social one by turning it into a community project. Eventually these community projects laid the groundwork for mass movements, as the ashrams became political bases of operation for the satyagraha campaigns.

To better understood nature of the social organisation that Gandhi was preserving and creating, we can remind ourselves of a few of Gandhi's ethical ideals. The first element of an ethical society is that it is non-exploitative. This is contained within the disciplinary vow of 'bread labour', just mentioned. In his *Ashram Observances* he wrote: 'the Ashram holds that every man and woman must work in order to live…. the idea is that every healthy individual must labour enough for his food, and his intellectual faculties must be exercised not in order to obtain a living or amass a fortune but only in the service of mankind.' (Gandhi, 1945 ,pg 35) In our society, many do not have to work to live, although they are perfectly capable of doing so.[8] They acquire property, capital, or positions of power and no longer need to work to maintain themselves. This Gandhi holds to be unethical. If one is not labouring to live than one is living from the labour of others and that is a form of exploitation.

But Gandhi's duty of 'bread labour' goes deeper than this. He understood the act of labouring as a spiritual activity, as something that we should not only do to avoid exploiting others, but as an end in itself. To labour was to empower oneself, and even if we somehow could invent machines to do everything for us, it would not be the right way for us to live. Obviously this did not mean he advocated that people continue with their alienated work on the factory floors, but he did think that all capable people should devote themselves to an honest and useful occupation. Bread labour was not merely an interdiction against exploitation, it was also a duty that one has to actively use the power within them for the betterment of life on earth. And even if one is not inclined to see the spiritual potential of labour, one can look at this from another angle.

If we live not on the labour of others, but on the work of machines, we replace one kind of exploitation for another. Industrial machinery means the exploitation of the earth. Before the industrial revolution, there was a limit to the amount of destruction we could bring about; that limit was are own physical capacities. But industrial humans created machines to overcome this natural limit. These machines have given us the ability to plunder the earth to extinction. Previously dense forest is flattened in minutes, previously impenetrably seas are reaped of all life. We have created a situation in which there are now no longer any natural limits to our destructive capacities, and so ethical limits become vital. Gandhi argued against the understanding of the world as existing to serve human beings and therefore argued against the use of industrial machinery. Which brings us to the next of Gandhi's ethical pillars.

An ethical society is one in which the people are not alienated from the essential parts of their existence. Here we can draw a comparison with the ethics of Marxism. A core component of the Marxist critique of capitalism is the argument that it is an alienating form of social organisation. It is alienating because the worker must sell their labour on the market and so 'labour produces not only commodities; it produces itself and the worker as a commodity'(Marx, 1964, pg 34). Marxist alienation therefore has a distinctly social character: it is the result of unequal social relations. Because production is organised in an exploitative manner 'the object which labour produces – labour's product – confronts it as something alien, as a power independent of the producer.' (ibid). Gandhi would no doubt agree with the alienating character of exploitation, but his understanding of alienation goes a step further than Marx, and can be understood with reference to the distinction of knowledge in the Vedic tradition.

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8   There are also many not in a position to labour to live. In this case, it is the duty of the able-bodied/minded to serve (*seva*) those who cannot labour to earn their keep.

As we have seen above[9], the Vedic tradition, like many other orders of knowledge, distinguishes between two types of knowledge – higher or transcendental knowledge (*para vidya*) and lower or relative knowledge (*apara vidya*). Apara vidya is knowledge which can be expressed in symbolic form and can be learned from reading a book, while para vidya analogues to direct experience. This is perhaps a little difficult to comprehend for many in modern society, as we are used to thinking of knowledge and experience as two distinct thinks. Obviously knowledge is derived from experience, but they can still be cordoned off from one another. That is why we can doubt whether or not this existence is 'true' (and Descartes' universal doubt was the foundational moment of modern European thought). But in the Vedic tradition it would make no sense to doubt whether or not experience is 'true'. Truth and existence are equatable terms. The very fact that someone exists means that their experience somehow partakes in Truth. To the Vedics, experience is the highest form of knowledge, and reducing it to symbols cannot be considered Truth in the same way that direct consciousness of that experience can.

The way Gandhi understood alienation stems from this distinction. Alienation is the result of the loss of para vidya. When one loses experiential knowledge of a part of ones reality, one is alienated from it. Alienation is therefore not only the result of unequal social relations, but also the result of modern society's propensity to create what Vivek Dhareshwar called 'experience-occluding structures' (Dhareshwar, 2001, pg 1). The marketisation of human relations, as explored by Marx, is an example of a structure that inhibits experience, but it is not the only one. Modern society has organised life in such a way that people are alienated from many essential parts of human existence. People are divorced from the production of their food, and most of the objects that surround, many people even loss connection to their own body after years of physical inactivity. In the modern people, people often access reality through a representation of it on a screen, or, at best, words on a page. For Gandhi, this means alienation and a stunted 'intellectual development':

> 'Intellectual development is often supposed to mean a knowledge of facts concerning the universe. I freely admit that such knowledge is not laboriously imparted to the students in the Ashram. But if intellectual progress spells understanding and discrimination, there is adequate provision for it in the Ashram…. It is a gross superstition to imagine that knowledge is acquired only through books. We must discard this error. Reading books has a place in life, but is useful only in its own place. If book-knowledge is cultivated at the cost of body labour, we must raise a revolt against it. Most of our time must be devoted to body labour, and only a little to reading. As in India, today the rich and the so-called higher classes despise body labour, it is very necessary to insist on the dignity of labour. Even for real intellectual development one should engage in some useful bodily activity.' (Gandhi, 1945, pg 38-39)

Knowledge exists not only in the mind, but also in the body, and to wherever else our experience extends. It is because of this that he claimed that 'our real happiness and health consisted in a proper use of our hands and feet.' Action is our way of relating to experience and to neglect this is to lose our grasp on Truth, our understanding of existence. 'Only the ignorant speak of wisdom and action as different, not the learned... He who sees them as one sees truly' (Gandhi 1968: 284). For Gandhi, non-alienation means therefore, not only non-exploitative social relations, but also an organisation of production in which human labour is still at the centre.

Because of this, many accuse Gandhi of being against technology, but that is not really the case. While he was against some technologies (those that facilitate unethical action or disempowered

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9   See Section: Swaraj

human beings) and was against the idea of technological development for its own sake, he was undeniably in favour of any technology that led to spiritual and ethical development. This can be seen from the fact that he spent his life advocating for the people of India to adopt what he saw was an empowering piece of technology (the charka), and even went so far as to call that technology the 'symbol of our freedom'. When asked one whether or not he hates machines, Gandhi replied:

> 'No. While my body itself is nothing but a meticulous machinery, how can I dismiss it? My spinning wheel or even this toothpick, for that matter, is a machine. I hate not the machines, but this growing passion for machines. I hate the passion for the machines which work upon diminishing man power. Some talk about machines which could spare man power when thousands of people are thrown jobless on the streets. Yes, I want the human toil and time to be spared not just for a sect of people but for humanity. I want the wealth to be accumulated not just in few hands but for all the people in the world. Today machines favor putting handful of people on top thousands.' (Jeyamohan, 2009, pg 68)

We can see therefore that Gandhi was not against technology as such, but rather against technology that alienated people, and disempowered the majority of people in favour of a minority.

So far we have focused on Gandhi's political vision as it concerned human beings. But ultimately, it was much wider than that. Another key ethical principle, as we have seen, is swadeshi. 'Swadeshi is that spirit within us which restricts us to the use and service of our immediate surroundings to the exclusion of the more remote.' (Gandhi, 1922a, pg 336) Ethical action is therefore action which is based on the local. And, although Gandhi was alive long before this word became common parlance, another concept that is contained within the swadeshi is is <u>sustainability</u>. Although we already touched on this point when talking about Panchayat Raj, we can briefly look at it with a wider lens. As mentioned above, swadeshi was not only an ethical principle, Gandhi understood it as a law of nature: those not in harmony with their surroundings tend toward a speedy demise.

Gandhi was making this point many decades before humans became aware of the existential threat that environmental destruction now poses to humanity, but the self-evidence of this 'law' is now being realised. Using regional and renewable materials to create buildings, tools and agricultural systems that work with their natural surrounds, instead of against it, is sustainable. Basing our social organisation around constantly increasing levels of destruction is not sustainable. Mono-cultural agriculture supported by poisonous chemical and synthetic fertilizers is not sustainable. Using our limited resources to send food, clothing, or anything else to the other side of the world is not sustainable. Creating huge machines to harvest resources from ever more endangered ecosystems is not sustainable. To believe that human beings can do these things forever is delusional, human being have been adopting such practices for less than 200 years and in this short space of time, have already ourselves to a cliff edge. To continue to operate according to this logic now that its effects have become clear is not only short-sighted, it is suicidal. To continue to co-operate with and maintain our current social and economic order is to dig ourself deeper into our own grave, day after day.

But one has no choice, unless one understands that there are alternatives. This is why Gandhi's political programme focused on creating an alternative to the social, economic, political and ethical structures of modern society. This position is something quite different from a lot of strands of Leftist thinking, which mostly focus around the State apparatus – either how to seize it and direct it, or else how to dismantle it. But to Gandhi, the question of State was of secondary importance; what mattered was local action, creating ethical spaces at the grassroots levels, and then expanding from

there. While Gandhi's apparent disinterest in the State sets him apart from most of those on the Left, one can see Gandhian ideals and tactics from some of the more marginal progressive movements.

For example, the hippie movement is one which shared many of the ideals of Gandhi. Although now the movement has been thoroughly de-legitimised through the propaganda of conservative forces, the hippies were an important movement in the 20th century and offered a serious challenge to the legitimacy of the modern society. The people that comprised the hippie movement were the 'baby boomers', the first generation born into the consumer society that we know today. When these people came of age, they rejected the norms of their time and rebelled against a society that they claimed was based on greed and war. A big part of the hippie movement was the creation of alternative communities, based on ideals such as love, non-violence and non-possession. So while Gandhi is not often spoken of in relation to the hippies, in fact they had much in common. And while the hippie movement was eventually crushed under the weight of State violence, the idea of creating ethical communities continues to this day and is even gaining momentum. Because the destructive impact of modern civilisation on the natural world has become too obvious to ignore; many people are seeking alternatives, trying to create an ethical life based on philosophies of environmental sustainability, such as 'perma-culture' (Mollison, 1988), along with other values, such as the importance of community.

We conclude this section with the clearest description that Gandhi ever gave of his ideal model of social organisation:

> 'Independence begins at the bottom... It follows, therefore, that every village has to be self-sustained and capable of managing its own affairs... It will be trained and prepared to perish in the attempt to defend itself against any onslaught from without... This does not exclude dependence on and willing help from neighbours or from the world. It will be a free and voluntary play of mutual forces... In this structure composed of innumerable villages, there will be every-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. Therefore, the outermost circumference will not wield power to crush the inner circle but will give strength to all within and derive its own strength from it.' (Gandhi, 1922b, pg 4)

In Gandhi's vision of an ethical society people have achieved a high enough level of independence, both material and spiritual, such that they no longer need to rely on, and contribute to, violent structures to live. To do this people must organise at the local level, create communities and build the capacities which are necessary to live. These communities will not be isolated from each other, but will join together in an ever widening, non-ascending, network of voluntary association in which the liberty of each individual is at the centre. This sounds great in theory, but the big question is: how are we meant to achieve something like that? What are the political strategies we can look to in order to move toward this ideal? Where do we even begin?

We end this work by describing the two strands of strategy that Gandhi developed during his years of activism: the first were his constructive strategies, and the next, his strategies of political resistance. As we outline the what his political strategies were, we can also reflect upon how these strategies could be applied to our contemporary political situation.

Constructive Programme

Gandhi's constructive programme was the positive side of his political strategies. He knew there was little point trying to tear down the system if he had nothing to offer in its place. This did not mean that he sat down one day and drew up a theoretical model for the perfect organisation of society. Within the Gandhian paradigm there is essentially no separation between theory and praxis. He did not speculate about how people *could* or *should* live. The focus of his political activity was always on creating practical and functioning alternatives to modes of living offered by modern society. He never advocated social change without first testing whether it was beneficial or even possible, so his political theory was always based on the way he and others in the ashram communities were already living their lives. He treated his own life as one long experiment to gauge the extent that one could live by his ethical vision of the world (indicated by the title of his biography *My Experiments with Truth*). He never claimed to have discovered the perfect form of human organisation, but was constantly experimenting with new modes of living, pushing the boundaries of his experiment further with each step. To be a satyagrahi meant living by the ethics that you advocate for. Gandhi believed that one can propose every kind of reform imaginable, but if one begins actually living by one's ideals, others will start to take notice.

The constructive programme thus begins with the individual. To affect social change one must first change oneself. Although Gandhi probably never uttered the aphorism that is often attributed to him - 'be the change you wish to see in the world' - it is certainly something he would have endorsed. If someone has not achieved swaraj for themselves, they are not in a position to help others achieve theirs. 'One drowning man will never save another. Slaves ourselves, it would be a mere pretension to think of freeing others.' (Gandhi, 1938a, pg 61) Much like in Vedic spiritual disciplines, the first element of Gandhi's constructive programme is to empower oneself.

And, as we have already seen, in practical terms, this means the creation of a community. One cannot achieve independence alone, and so the establishment of a community based on an ethical foundation is the first step in any constructive programme. But in order to build on an ethical foundation, and not to depend on the violence of modern society, it must be as self sufficient as possible. Achieving this takes time. It requires not only material resources, but also the building of ones intellectual, physical, and spiritual capacities. It require the capacity to create a diverse system of agricultural that provides a varied and nutritious diet; the capacity to build and maintain homes in which to live; the skills of the carpenter, weaver, and potter to create the material objects that make life easier and more pleasant; the spiritual discipline to be able to resist the instant pleasures offered by modern society; and an extensive knowledge of ones natural surroundings to be able to utilize nature's bounty in an effective and sustainable way. This is not to say that everyone must fully develop each of these capacities - a division of labour existed long before the birth of modern society and it will exist long after it; nor does it mean that everyone must live in one particular community structure - there has always been huge variety in the shape that a community can take. But what it does mean is organising this division of labour, this community, in an ethical way (i.e. non-exploitative, non-alienating, and sustainable).

Once some measure of swaraj has been achieved, when one is no longer dependent on violent modes of organisation, one is in a position to challenge them. This individual and community mission then takes on its political dimension. Once swaraj has been achieved it becomes a duty to educate others as to its feasibility, preferability, and necessity. 'The Swaraj that I wish to picture is such that, after we have realized it, we shall endeavour to the end of our life-time to persuade others to do likewise.' (Gandhi, 1938a, pg 60-61) The idea that one has to educate others to want to be independent may seem a little strange, but it is a necessary step when transforming a society in

which most people have been socialised into accepting dependence upon the structures of 'modern civilisation'.

Gandhi understood that one of the central battles of the anti-colonial struggle was to take place in the minds of the colonised. He wrote that '[w]e have to learn, and to teach others, that we do not want the tyranny of either English rule or Indian rule.' (Gandhi, 1938a, pg 93) To paraphrase to today's challenge: we have to learn, and teach others, that we do not want the tyranny of an industrial consumer society. People in modern society are not held in chains, and its violence can be perpetuated only with the consent of the population. If that consent is revoked, if people no longer co-operated with the violent structures that we have erected, then modern society would no longer function.

But there is little point to teaching people to seek independence from industrial society without also teaching how to go about achieving it. A growing number of people today are already becoming aware of the unethical and unsustainable nature of modern society, but see no way out. To remedy this situation, to empower people to live independently, human beings have recourse to something essential to our survival since the beginning: the transfer of knowledge and skills. After having made oneself independent, one is in possession of the knowledge and skills that make independence possible, and so one is in a position to empower others in this way. For Gandhi, as we have seen, the focus of this capacity building was the revival of textile production. He saw that Indian people had become dependent on British factories to clothe themselves, and so travelled the length and breath of the sub-continent teaching people how to use the charka to spin clothing. But the level of dependence in contemporary society is much higher than it was Gandhi's. People not only rely on mass industries to clothe themselves, but also to feed themselves, house themselves, and provide themselves with almost all their material objects. This means that today a Gandhian constructive programme would have to be far more comprehensive than the one Gandhi himself pursued.

And although such a comprehensive programme seems like a gargantuan undertaking, there is evidence that the beginnings for such a movement already exists. A growing number of people are acting at grassroots level, removing themselves from modern modes of living, and building something new. This sometimes manifests as individual action, sometimes as family action, sometimes even as community action, but we can already see many people taking action in a way that conforms to political program advocated by Gandhi.

For the moment this movement is relatively small and diffuse, but there is some evidence that these forces are coalescing. An example is the eco-village movement. Global Ecovillage Network, a network of eco-villages with over 10,000 members, calls an ecovillage 'an intentional, traditional or urban community that is consciously designed through locally owned, participatory processes in all 4 dimensions of sustainability (social, culture, ecology, economy) into a whole systems design to regenerate its social and natural environment.' (Global Ecovillage Network, 2019) Although the movement itself may not recognise it, they closely align with the ideals and strategies of Mohandas Gandhi. Vivek Dhareshwar wrote of Gandhi that he 'helps us rethink politics as the setting up of sites of ethical learning' (Dhareshwar, 2013, pg 34), and the concept of the eco-village fits perfectly with this. Eco-villages are composed of people who, like Gandhi, create ethical and sustainable communities that act as both an example and a place of learning. And while the eco-village movement is still nascent, and not without its problems[10], it can be seen as the embryo of a contemporary Gandhian movement.

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10 The fact that some ecovillage funding models excludes the non-wealthy for instance.

Although Gandhi advocated the central importance of grass roots actions, he did not completely rule out engagement with State politics. Gandhi was a shrewd politician and utilized all the possible political infrastructure at his disposal. He understood that the State could not simply be ignored, and ultimately, it could be put to use in creating a society that would no longer need it. Although grassroots action leads the way, it is ideally supported by appropriate State action, and there are a number of state measures and policies would support a Gandhian constructive programme. Examples include taking government subsidies that go to industrial mono-cultural farming, or funding a social welfare system that creates generational dependency on the State, and using it to support regenerative agricultural, or welfare programmes that empower power to live independently and sustainably. Other examples are would be a carbon tax, a ban on advertising, as well as a multitude of minor changes that give a secure legal basis to the eco-villages (concerning things such as zoning laws, architectural policy, waste water treatment, compost toilets, etc.).

Perhaps most essentially, it would mean a comprehensive reform of the education system. Gandhi characterised modern education as 'book-learning', as heavily focused on the acquisition of information. While he was not at all opposed to intellectual teaching, Gandhi insisted that this type of learning must be secondary to learning of ethics; and this cannot be gained simply by sitting in a classroom, digesting information. Teaching people how to live ethically is a holistic endeavour of building a multitude of different capacities essential to human life, social, ethical, intellectual, as well as occupational. Modern education, in contrast, is understood by some (with that number always increasing in our current neo-liberal environment) as an institution in which people are trained to meet the demands of the labour market. Rather than producing well-rounded ethical human beings who are able to sustain themselves, it equips students with ever more specialised skills that can only be sold on the labour market. (Davis, Bansel, 2007) For this reason modern education creates dependency, and so its transformation would be an essential element of any Gandhian movement.

The implementation of these policies would obviously require huge changes in government thinking. The underlying rational behind the action of the modern nation State has thus far been to bring people into the matrix of government and market structures, to create a population that is dependent on these structures to live. The more people that are brought into the system, the bigger the system grows, and the more power it has to exercise. What must be changed therefore is the foundational logic upon which the modern nation State is based, the Machiavellian will to power. Another huge change in thinking would relate to how we measure the success of a society. Right now, governments still measure the success of society based on the level of productive output, the GDP. This measure essentially pegs success to environmental destruction. But as the realities of anthropogenic environmental destruction truly start to hit home, the way we evaluate society may change. Measuring the success of a society by its level of sustainability, biodiversity, and human contentment, enable people to see the sense of the kinds of policy changes that would be appropriate under a Gandhian vision of social transformation.

But one final, essential, thing to note about potential State policies is their non-coercive character. Under no circumstances would Gandhi advocate for State action that compels people to live a certain way. As we have seen, Gandhi was thoroughly against the idea of the State, and so any utilisation of State apparatus must always be with the aim of empowering people to no longer have to rely on the State. Even if he thought that the village community should be the basic social unit, he would have opposed the idea of imposing this model of social organisation upon an unwilling population. Although he saw the capacity to clothe oneself as essential to achieving swaraj, he was also clear that '[t]he manufacture and use of khadi must not be imposed upon the people, but it must be intelligently and willingly accepted by them as one of the items of the freedom movement.'

(Gandhi, 1961, pg 3) And the same must be said of any potential transformation of society. Where people remain unconvinced, strategies to educate or incentivise people would have to be developed, since it would not be ethical to compel them (although environmental circumstances soon might).

Resistance

Gandhi's political action did not only take the form of building new structures. Creating new modes of social organisation often leads to conflict with the old, meaning we finally arrive at the element of Gandhi's politics for which he is most recognised – non-violent resistance. Gandhi described his method of political resistance as satyagraha, translated as truth force, or love force. The aim of the satyagrahi was not to conquer one's opponent, but rather find a mutual agreement with them. This meant, in the first instance, trying to understand one's opponents point of view. To Gandhi, although truth was ultimately one, everyone has their own view on it. And a commitment to Truth means trying to understand as many perspectives as possible.

One of the first satyagraha campaigns was in Champaran. It was started in support of small scale farmers, who were being forced to grow indigo under oppressive conditions by local landlords and British officials. To the frustration of the farmers he was there to support, the first thing he did was go to the landlords and hear their side of the story. But this was how he began all of his campaigns. Before he would take any action, he would ensure that he heard all sides. His aim was always to try and find a solution that was agreeable to all. He said;

> 'the very insistence on truth has taught me to appreciate the beauty of compromise. I saw in later life that this spirit was an essential part of Satyagraha. It has often meant endangering my life and incurring the displeasure of friends. But Truth is hard as adamant and tender as a blossom.'(Gandhi, 2016, pg 131)

What is striking about this tactic, investigating the position of one's opponent, is how it compares with modern society's approach to truth and knowledge. Instead of defining all knowledge that stands contrary to his own as 'unreason' or 'irrational', Gandhi insisted upon investigating all claims to truth; an attitude to truth is characteristic of the Vedic tradition. Truth is beyond any single point of view, and therefore no single point of view can claim for itself supremacy.

> 'What may appear as truth to one person will often appear as untruth to another person. But that need not worry the seeker. Where there is honest effort, it will be realized that what appear to be different truths are like the countless and apparently different leaves of the same tree.' (Gandhi, 2001c, pg 39)

This is not to say that all truths are entirely equal - there is the important ethical dimension in the evaluation of truth - but it does mean that the Vedic tradition deals with epistemological encounters differently than does the modern tradition. On the whole the tendency of the Vedic tradition was to try and assimilate knowledge (a dialectical encounter), rather than subjugate it.

Nevertheless, during the course of Gandhi's political campaigns, it was often the case that mutual agreement was impossible. In these instances Gandhi showed that, although he was committed to seeing the truth of all sides, he was also prepared to engage in fierce struggle against injustice. The force of himsa (egoism, selfishness) had to be resisted, but, as Gandhi understood it, this could only be countered with the opposite force – ahimsa. This logic can be understood with reference to a related concept, karma - another central pillar of the Vedic episteme. Karma is the law of cause and effect. It states that violent actions produce violent effects, and compassionate actions produce

compassionate effects. One cannot produce compassion from violence, or love from hate. In order to create a non-violent society therefore, one needed a non-violent political movement.

The doctrine of karma meant that Gandhi refused to separate the ends from the means, and so ahimsa (non-violent and compassionate action) was the only political action he would consider. 'As the means so the end. There is no wall of separation between means and end... Realization of the goal is in exact proportion to that of the means.'(Gandhi, 1924b, pg 236) All opponents, even apparently wicked ones, must be treated with respect and compassion. Gandhi's position on this matter is here reminiscent of Foucault's, in which it is social systems, rather than individuals or classes, that are held accountable for oppression.

> 'Man and his deed are two distinct things. Whereas a good deed should call forth approbation and a wicked deed disapprobation, the doer of the deed, whether good or wicked always deserves respect or pity as the case may be… It is quite proper to resist and attack a system, but to resist and attack its author is tantamount to resisting and attacking oneself.' (Gandhi, 2018, pg 245)

Instead of seeking to suppress perceived evil in opponents by violence or coercion, satyagraha was an attempt to appeal to the good in them. 'The Satyagrahi's object is to convert, not to coerce, the wrong-doer.' (Gandhi, 1939, pg 47) Satyagraha, and Gandhi's world view in general, is predicated on the idea that all people have the capacity to act ethically. Using ahimsa, the force of compassion, is an attempt to inculcate this force within the opponent.

But, what happens when this fails? When the force non-violent resistance is met by violence? How can one utilise the force of ahimsa if the State unleashes its dormant capacity for violence against the satyagrahi? How is oppression to be resisted if not by the force of arms? The answer that Gandhi gives perhaps upsets our ordinary sense of justice:

> 'In the application of satyagraha, I discovered in the earliest stages that pursuit of truth did not admit of violence being inflicted on one's opponent but that he must be weaned from error by patience and compassion. For what appears to be truth to the one may appear to be error to the other. And patience means self-suffering. So the doctrine came to mean vindication of truth, not by infliction of suffering on the opponent, but on oneself.' (Gandhi, 2000, pg 206)

It is here that Gandhi's method of resistance shows the full extent of its radical departure from conventional political thinking. Taking inspiration from no less a figure than Jesus Christ, Gandhi argued that physical violence should not be resisted. This did not mean that he thought the oppressed should consent to suffer injustice. Quite the opposite. To Gandhi, a commitment to Truth meant assuming the duty of fiercely resisting all injustice. But this resistance was to take the form of non co-operation, rather than violent retaliation. Here, Gandhi took inspiration from Henry David Thoreau's idea of 'civil disobedience'. Thoreau observed that the exercise of power in a society depends on wide scale co-operation. If power begins to be exercised unjustly, therefore, all that is necessary is that people withdraw their co-operating, short circuiting the system, bringing it down without firing a single shot.

We can remind ourselves of the Foucauldian concept of power for insight into this. Power 'does not act directly and immediately on others.' (Foucault, 1982, pg 789) It is action upon the action of others. Power, therefore, can only be acted upon those who consent to it (even if that consent is given under duress). When that consent is revoked, then power is no longer exercised, and all that is

left to the oppressor is violent attack. But, this violence does not signify the triumph of the oppressor. Violence is not, as some may think, the highest expression of their power. A relationship of violence is not a relation of power because, while power acts upon the action of others, 'a relationship of violence acts upon a body or upon things; it forces, it bends, it breaks on the wheel, it destroys, or it closes the door on all possibilities.' (ibid) Violence is the terminal point of a relation of power, the point at which power has failed.

So while the satyagrahi commits to non-violent methods, they cannot ensure that their opponents will do the same. A campaign of non co-operation against a system based upon structural violence (such as the State) can mean bringing violence upon oneself. The 20th and 21st century is littered with examples of violent State crack downs on peaceful movements, show that the State is benign until it feels under threat, at which point it violently enforces its regime. And according to Gandhi, this violence should be suffered willingly, rather than hiding away from confrontation. This is not to be done in a spirit of self-flagellation, however. Rather it is to done in order to reveal to everyone the true nature of the State.

We can again look to the work of Foucault for elucidation. He once wrote that 'politics is war by other means', (Foucault, 2003) and his historical analysis shows that modern apparatuses of power are based upon institutionalised violence, and are the outcome of historical contestations. Foucault argued that although these contestations only occasional erupt into physical confrontation, the unequal relations that they engender are based upon the constant underlying threat of violence. By not co-operating with these institutionalised forms of oppression, the real physical violence that supports it is brought to the fore. And Gandhi believed that by doing this, and by not fighting back with violence of one's own, one would ultimately awaken the moral sentiments of all the people that exist within and support the State apparatus, leading them to withdraw that support.

To conclude this section, we can look at the final important facet of Gandhi's insistence upon non-violence. As we have see above, Gandhi can be described as an anarchist. His aim was never to achieve power, but rather to create a world in which people did not rule over others. For this reason he never considered violence and coercion as useful political tactics, even against opponents who were willing to employ them. Like the Christian Anarchists, Gandhi thought that the heart of anarchism, a philosophy that sets itself against unjust hierarchy and coercion, was non-violence. He wrote;

> 'To use brute force… means that we want our opponent to do by force that which we desire but he does not. And if such a use of force is justifiable, surely he is entitled to do likewise by us. And so we should never come to an agreement. We may simply fancy, like the blind horse moving in a circle round a mill, that we are making progress. Those who believe that they are not bound to obey laws which are repugnant to their conscience have only the remedy of passive resistance open to them. Any other must lead to disaster.' (Gandhi, 1938a, pg 76)

For Gandhi, the force of violence can not be employed in creating a just society. He believed that the only possible result of a violent revolution is a violent society, that the only possible result of a coercive revolution was a coerced society. By definition, one cannot coerce another into achieving swaraj - independence. 'Real Home Rule [swaraj] is possible only where passive resistance is the guiding force of the people. Any other rule is foreign rule.' (Gandhi, 1938a, pg 79)

Till his dying breath Gandhi maintained the force of violence would not help us to build a harmonious co-existence, or to break the tug-of-war game of power, violence, and retribution.

Instead he advocated the forces of Truth (satya), compassion and non-violence (ahimsa) as the methods by which we may free ourselves from our history of struggle, our history of oppressor and oppressed in constant opposition to each other.

Conclusion

To conclude this work we can reflect on some of the goals that were set in the introduction and assess to what extent these goals were met.

Historical Aim

The first of these aims was historical. It arose from the premise that, although Gandhi is a world historical figure, the way he is understood in conventional histories does not do justice to the radical intention of his politics. This work therefore aimed at providing a historical account that got to the heart of his political movement. In order to achieve this goal we used the idea of *epistemological colonisation* to trace an alternative history of Indian modernisation; not as the light of the Enlightenment piercing into the dark malaise of Indian tradition, but rather as a complex transformation in which modern knowledge was deployed in the establishment of a new colonial order. We saw that the deployment of modern knowledge was not only a tactic of British colonists, it was also a tactic of Indian elites in securing their privileged position in society, or even of activists trying to improve the conditions of the least well off in Indian society. But when talking about knowledge we are not merely talking of abstract ideas. Knowledge is produced in constant dialectic with material realities. With the new colonial knowledge came a new colonial way of life. Modern knowledge implies not only a new way of thinking; it brings with it a new way of living, a new way of existing. And the colonial impression that modern knowledge was making on Indian society began to wear away at ancient Vedic understandings and ways of life.

It is within this historical context that we can understand the political activities of Mohandas Gandhi. While he was not necessarily opposed to modern knowledge, he *was* opposed to the idea that it was the highest form of knowledge, or that it had the only valid claim to truth. He challenged the logic of modern rationality which reduces everything that falls outside of its purview to the silence of 'unreason' or 'superstition'. And he not only stood against modernity's colonial logic, he ultimately went much further than that, challenging 'modern civilisation' supposed superiority over other forms of living, challenging its narrative of 'Progress', and putting into question the fundamental values upon which modern life is based. Unlike many other independence leaders, who saw modernisation as the best way forward for an independent India, Gandhi argued that the Vedic tradition was a superior framework for structuring life in independent India. Whereas modern civilisation is based on the 'multiplication of wants and machinery contrived to supply them' (Gandhi, 1927, pg 85), Vedic civilisation is built on on a solid foundation of ethics. His mission was therefore not only to free India from British colonialism and to protect the Vedic way of life against the subjugating force of colonial modernity, it was ultimately to actively propagate the Vedic way of life, or any ethical mode of life, as an alternative to modernity.

Although this first aim was historical, it is of interest not only to historians. The way we understand the past shapes the way we act in the present. The historical narrative composed above is one that highlights the epistemological nature of colonialism, and one that shows the truly radical nature of Gandhi's political struggle (both of which are obfuscated in many official histories). With a greater understanding of epistemological colonialism and of Gandhi's resistance to it, we are in a better position to understand and undertake anti-colonial struggle today.

Methodological Aim

The next aim was methodological. It operated from the premise that modern knowledges have tended not to engage with non-modern knowledges in a dialectical way, and have instead

'subjugated' them, essentially reducing them to silence. The aim originally was to achieve this by taking the truth claims of the Vedic tradition seriously. However, in the opinion of this author this work did not succeed in achieving this. While it has elaborated upon many of the central concepts of the Vedic episteme and, by adopting the perspective of Gandhi, sometimes tried to take the perspective of the Vedic tradition, the knowledge produced in this work has undoubtedly been that of modern political philosophy. The conceptual background of this work stemmed from the work of Michael Foucault, the method of investigation has been mainly genealogical, and the epistemological framework has been informed largely by the idea of the power/knowledge dynamic: none of which are elements of the Vedic tradition. While this has allowed us to criticise the modern tradition's claim to superiority over Vedic knowledge, it has also given a tacit epistemological precedence to a kind of post-modern criticism. In short the Vedic tradition was not examined 'on its own terms', but rather in the terms of post-modern critique. Whether it was even possible to achieve this goal is an open question. Can one engage seriously with a non-modern system of knowledge while producing a work that must adhere to the rules and regulations of modern academic discourse?

A further question arises regarding the fluidity of epistemes. When does a work of modern philosophy cross the threshold of being considered a work of vedic philosophy, or vice versa? Terms like 'episteme' or 'tradition' are useful in that they refer to a body of knowledge with shared origins, truth conditions, and concepts, but, like most concepts, what to include within its boundaries becomes a little fuzzy around the edges. At this point another question becomes relevant. Is there a central 'truth maker' that exists within these epistemological fields, holding all these disparate threads together (for example, the principle of Maya and Brahman, or of lower and higher forms of knowledge), or is it a matter of 'family resemblances'? If there is a single truth maker, than the idea of separating different traditions of knowledge is conceivable. But if not, and what is holds the knowledge of a particular tradition together is a set of family resemblances, then the goal of fully cordoning off one tradition from another seems futile since any division will be ultimately arbitrary. These are questions that arose out of the methodological aim during the course of this study, but it is beyond the frame of this work to investigate them.

Epistemological aim

While this study may not have faired well with its methodological aim, it can claim more success with its epistemological aim. This is because the latter aim was more modest. To engage with the Vedic tradition 'on its on terms' while remaining within the boundaries of modern academia is a complex undertaking. But the epistemological aim did not have to worry about the fundamental truth makers of the discourse; it only had to assimilate individual concepts from the Vedic tradition. And throughout the work many Vedic concepts have been introduced and their political connotations have been elucidated. For example, the concept of swadeshi has clear counter-parts in the discourse of sustainability, but it ultimately goes a lot deeper than its secular counter-part. The same can be said of concepts such as satya, ahimsa, and swaraj. rendering these concepts intelligible in the language of political philosophy undoubtedly enriches the conceptual tools that political philosophers have to work with.

Achieving this aim was also much easier because of the work of many other scholars. Particularly scholars from outside 'the West', some referenced in this work, have challenged the idea that only the secular concepts developed in Europe over the preceding few centuries offer valid means of conceiving of 'the political'. These scholars have pointed out that concepts such as 'rights', 'citizens', 'Nation', etc. are not universal categories upon which societies must be ordered. Even concepts that are at the very foundation of modern society, and whose existence is entirely taken for granted, such as 'religion' and 'politics', have been shown by these pioneering scholars to have

emerged in the context of a particular time and place, and exist only within a particular configuration of power and knowledge.

It is not only the work of scholars that this work has leaned upon. The epistemological aim should not be understood of as a purely scholarly exercise since, ultimately, it goes to the very heart of radical political action. The struggle over truth and knowledge, over which concepts we use to order our world, is the primordial political act, the act that goes shapes the rest of the struggle. This is a fact that Gandhi himself understood better than most. One of his greatest political legacies is in proving that social transformation does not have to be done on the terms set by modern political discourse. He proved that ancient spiritual ways of seeing and acting could penetrate the Machiavellian field of modern politics. He proved that one could challenge not only the political institutions, but also the institutional regime of truth. And he showed that by doing this one could mobilise millions of people.

Theoretical Aim

The theoretical contributions of this work cover a broad spectrum of themes, but what we draw attention to here are the links made between the political visions of Michael Foucault and of Mohandas Gandhi. Throughout the study many conceptual links have made between these two figures, but here we reduce these to three clear and essential points. The first two concern the centrality of knowledge and discipline to their respective understandings of politics, and the third is their shared teleology. We then look at the wider context of these theoretical contribution, and specifically the links they create between the fields of 'politics' and 'spirituality'.

Knowledge

With regard to the first point, the centrality of knowledge to the field of politics, much has already been said. Both Foucault and Gandhi understood that politics was first and foremost a question of truth. For Foucault, knowledge and power are essentially two sides of the same coin. Knowledge is produced in the exercise of power, and power is exercised in the production of knowledge. While Foucault's own work showed how this conceptual model can be used to understand historical developments in Europe, this work has shown its applicability to colonialism in India. But long before Foucault was making the theoretical links that show us the interconnectedness of knowledge and power, Gandhi exhibited a clear intuitive understanding of this connection, and took on the practical task of epistemological resistance to a colonial regime of truth. Along with setting up ashrams in which Vedic teaching could be transmitted, and struggling against the installation of a modern education in India, Gandhi was engaged in direct epistemic contestation, standing up to modernity's 'tyranny of Reason' on behalf of the ethically infused Vedic way of seeing.

Where Gandhi's and Foucault's understandings of knowledge, and thus perhaps their political programmes, appear to diverge is on their exact understanding of truth. While Foucault described truth as 'a thing of this world', as something produced by human beings in exercising power over each other, Gandhi thought that Truth was something much greater than this. While he would have agreed with Foucault about the relativity of Truth, that Truth has many sides, he would also have argued that these many sides ultimately add up to one, something typical of the Vedic tradition from which he stems. This position would allow Gandhi and Vedic philosophy in general to acknowledge the truth of post-modern relativism, while transcending it at the same time. In this way, he was able to work with a strong ethical programme for action in a way that some critics accuse post-modern figures of being unable to do.

However, it is noteworthy that by the end of his career Foucault had begun to embrace a less relativist understanding of truth. His final lectures were on the *parrhesiaste* of Ancient Greece who

he described as 'one who speaks the truth to power'. (Foucault, 1983) Foucault argued that these truth tellers were an essential part of Greek society. Their role was to prevent a system of knowledge, mired in a dense web of power, to lose sight of the world around it. This meant, for example, speaking frankly with the king about the state of the realm or honestly confronting the *polis* with some hard truths. These final intellectual writings from Foucault are relevant to this study in a couple of ways: first, they indicate a rapprochement between him and something like a non-relativistic understanding of truth; and second is the parallel between the ancient Greek figure of the *parrhesiaste* and modern civilisation's most committed truth teller, Mohandas Gandhi.

Discipline

The next clear link between Gandhi and Foucault is their recognition of the importance of 'discipline' as a political category. Foucault spent a large part of his career showing how modern society is based on controlling systems of discipline. Before modern times, the Sovereigns of feudal Europe considered themselves Lords over everything and everyone in the realm but in reality their effective power was diffuse and irregular. The industrial revolution saw the emergence of a huge continuum of disciplinary techniques that allow the Sovereign (now the nation State) to exert huge influence over people's everyday life, down to their inner works of their mind and the smallest movements of their body. It wasn't until later in his career that Foucault realised that discipline could be something more than a tool of oppression. His studies into ancient Greece and Rome revealed disciplinary practices that he called 'practices of liberation' which seemed to have an opposite effect to the authoritarian disciplines of modern society. These 'spiritual' techniques of self-discipline were not designed to control others; they were employed with the purpose of self control, empowering the individual and allowing them to shape their consciousness according to their own volition.

Gandhi also made a clear link between politics and discipline, and he was critical of modern society in this regard. But, to Gandhi, the problem of modern civilisation was not its disciplines; it was rather its lack of discipline. Less familiar with modernity's sites of productive discipline (the factory, workhouse, office, etc.), Gandhi was more concerned with the other side of industrial society, it sites of consumptive 'liberty'. For an industrial consumer society to function, it cannot be composed simply of disciplinary institutions; there must also be times during which discipline is slackened,and people are free to consume the fruits of industrial production. Leisure is just as important to modern society as work. But Gandhi did not consider leisure to be a form of 'liberty', instead he called it 'license' - that which is authorised by discipline. Against the 'license' and 'so-called discipline' of modern civilisation, Gandhi contrasted the 'true discipline' of Vedic civilisation, a discipline that aimed at empowerment of the individual and an ethical mode of existence.

Teleology

Which brings us to the third important link between Gandhi and Foucault. So far we have seen that both figures understood politics as centred around the categories of 'knowledge' and 'discipline'. We have also seen that they shared an understanding of modern society; although it claims to bring people 'liberty', it actually does the opposite, diminishing people's real freedom by pulling them into its nexus of oppressive knowledge and discipline. Taking these two points together show us that Foucault and Gandhi ultimately had something very important in common, a teleology. The teleology is the aim or purpose of something. To say that Gandhi and Foucault shared a teleology means they were working with the same purpose, toward the same end. This end was freeing people from modernity's circuits of knowledge and discipline (and license), and empowering them to establish their own self-chosen, fulfilling, and ethical system of knowledge and discipline by which to live. What this amounts to is a political vision we can call *spiritual anarchism.*

Both Foucault and Gandhi understood anarchism in terms of the way in which the subject is constituted, and so spiritual anarchism is the anarchist principle of individual freedom applied to the human spirit. It is spiritual in so far as it is primarily concerned with the human spirit, and it is political because it recognises the central role that politics plays in the formation of the human spirit. Spiritual anarchism is an understanding of social transformation which says:

> 'Of course, we have to change this regime and get rid of this man, we have to change this corrupt administration, we have to change the whole country, the political organization, the economic system, the foreign policy. But, above all, we have to change ourselves. Our way of being, our relationship with others, with things, with eternity, with God, etc., must be completely changed and there will only be a true revolution if this radical change in our experience takes place.' (Foucault, 1988b, pg 217 - 218)

Spiritual anarchists are not only concerned with the erection of a particular social structure. Where they primarily seek to affect change is at the level of individual consciousness. The goal of spiritual anarchism is the liberation of the human consciousness from the multitude forms of bondage, bringing this political movement in line with humanity's age old spiritual struggle.

A theoretical goal of the present work is to outline a clear teleology for two of the most important figures of the 20th century, in a way which they were not able to do themselves and has not been done previously. Although, ever wary of political prescription, Foucault never directly laid out his political vision in a teleological manner; he always stayed within the boundaries of critique and never wrote anything like a manifesto. He didn't need to since we can see that it is the logical end point of his long career of writing. The replacement of technologies of power, or practices of 'subjection', with technologies of the self, or 'practices of liberation' can be clearly seen as the moral of his oeuvre, with or without a manifesto. And while Gandhi was unable to articulate his politics in the academic language of political philosophy found here, this teleology is one he was clearly following throughout his lifetime of activism.

However, before proceeding, we must note that,although the spiritual anarchism of Foucault and Gandhi were remarkably similar,they were not exactly the same. In the same way that two communists may hold a different understanding of what a future communist society will look like, the teleologies of these two spiritual anarchists were distinct in a number of ways. Here we can briefly point to the differences between them.

Firstly, they differed in the way they saw the teleological process. For Gandhi, as we have seen, the emphasis was always on construction. Although most widely known for his method of non-violent resistance, he called his political programme the 'constructive programme' for a reason. The focus of his political activity was always on building experiential structures, rather than tearing them down. Foucault, on the other hand, was more concerned with forms of resistance, arguing that the political challenge of our era was not to 'discover what we are, but to refuse what we are'. This meant that although Foucault was clearly advocating that we resist modern society's technologies of power by developing our own 'practices of liberation', it was not exactly clear what these practices of liberation should be.

That being said, although Foucault never outlined specific technologies that might be suitable as alternatives to modernity's technologies of power, he did give some indication of the potential character of these technologies,as well as of the potential values of a subject liberated from modernity's nexus of power. It is here that we encounter another couple of important differences

between Foucault's and Gandhi's understanding of spiritual anarchism. To help us understand this difference we can return to a question posed near the start of this study: if we want to free ourselves from the technologies of power that create us as conscious subjects, 'what kind of technology, what kind of self, could replace it[?] In other words…. what kind of self could or should one then become?'(O'Leary, 2002, pg 13)

For Gandhi the answer was clear. The self we could and should become is the self beyond the individual ego, the self which does not experience the world as a single mind and body, but instead identifies itself with all existence. His aim was to transform the self from a part into the whole. To do this, following the Vedic tradition, Gandhi argued that the subject must use their freedom to establish an ethic of selflessness. Foucault, on the other hand, did not adopt a spiritual teleology of selflessness. In his eyes, the path of liberation didn't lead to the transcendence of the self,but instead to its transformation. Influenced by both the work of Nietzsche, who was his greatest intellectual inspiration, and the bourgeois milieu from which he hailed, Foucault thought that the freedom of the subject would lead to the subject being established on a base of 'aesthetics' rather than of ethics. Instead of the spirit pursuing the 'good' (because for Foucault, following Nietzsche, there was nothing that could claim such a title) it would pursue the 'beautiful'.

And this would point to quite a gulf, ultimately, between Gandhi and Foucault. Gandhi spent his whole life in pursuit of Truth, in the establishment of a way of life that would lead him to a communion absolute. We can describe this form of spiritual anarchism as 'ethical' and 'transcendent': through ethical action one can transcend the ego toward something higher. It is ultimately in transcending the ego that one achieves the true liberation of the ego. In contrast, Foucault, at least for the majority of his career, was consciously opposed to the idea of an essential Truth. He denied the possibility of the ego transcending itself toward something beyond itself, toward what he called 'that which was already there'. This refusal to allow for the possibility of something greater than individual experience meant that he held individual autonomy in choosing the contours of this experience as the highest good. This kind of spiritual anarchism can be described therefore as 'aesthetic' and 'immanent'. It is aesthetic because it is based on the individual's conception of the beautiful life, and it is immanent because the freedom achieved ultimately remains within the boundaries of the ego.

The opinion of this author is that the spiritual anarchism of Gandhi is both morally preferable and more logically consistent than that of Foucault's, since the latter allows the individual to shape themselves according to their understanding of the 'beautiful' and this leads to a few problems. In first place, if we exist within a network of oppressive power relations, then how can we ensure that something so variable and subjective as the individual's understanding of the 'beautiful' is not merely a product of the oppressive society from which we emerge? Another problem is that a spiritual anarchism based on the 'beautiful' allows the individual in principle to find aesthetic fulfilment anywhere, for instance through being a genocidal dictator. Aside from the obvious ethical problems this entails, it is ultimately contradictory because unless following some kind normative ethical prescription, the freedom of one will eventually impinge upon the freedom of another. This leads to a situation in which some people can achieve freedom but only at the expense of others. It is thus not spiritual anarchism but spiritual authoritarianism. This is the conclusion arrived at by the aristocratic philosophy of Nietzsche, that society would be centred around the freedom of a select few Übermenschen, but, given his clear anarchist and egalitarian leaning, this was not Foucault's vision for a just society.

What's more, Gandhi realised that releasing people from the subjectivising power of the modern State would not be enough to achieve a state of liberty. Even if freed from political bondage, people

will still be left with all the suffering and struggle inherent to the human condition: ageing, sickness, loss, death, anger, etc. Because of this Gandhi combined the political struggle with the spiritual struggle, a struggle that people have been grappling with since the earliest times. In fact he never separated the two: for Gandhi, the political struggle was merely one element of the spiritual struggle; political liberation was merely one step on the path to a higher form of liberation. And Gandhi understood this higher liberation as being sought using the same practices of liberation that have been developed over the preceding millennia.

In this regard Gandhi had an advantage over Foucault. He came from a tradition that been developing practices of liberation for thousands of years,and so could turn to it for inspiration in developing alternatives to modern knowledges and disciplines. Foucault, on the other hand, came from the heart of the modern society, and the spiritual technologies of his tradition were developed, or at least sanctioned, by a spiritually totalitarian regime, the Church. To find techniques of empowerment he had to go back in time 2000 years, and even then, these were spiritual techniques developed by a small group of aristocratic slave owners. Foucault was therefore not in the position to precisely define spiritual 'practices of liberation' that could replace modernity's 'practices of subjection', whereas Gandhi was. For this reason, Gandhi's form of spiritual anarchism, *vedic anarchism*, is a more useful framework for action than Foucault's.

Yet perhaps the differences in their respective understanding of spiritual anarchism are not as great as they first appear. While for much of his career he appeared to be at odds with that most popular of spiritual teleology, ego transcendence, the writings from his last few of his life seem to indicate a change of opinion.

> 'Can it be said that the subject is the only possible form of existence? Can't there be experiences in the course of which the subject is no longer posited, in its constitutive relations, as what makes it identical with itself? Might there not be experiences in which the subject might be able to dissociate from itself, sever the relation with itself, lose its identity? Isn't that the essence of Nietzsche's experience of eternal recurrence?' (Foucault, 2000, pg 237)

Musings such as this came right before Foucault's untimely death, and it is impossible to say where they might have led, but several points indicate the possibility that Foucault, having begun to conceive of politics in terms of a spiritual teleology, would ultimately have arrived at the same understanding of spiritual liberation as did Gandhi (as well as the many before him who have concerned themselves with the subject).

Which brings us to our final point of the theoretical aim of this project. The teleological formulation of these two figures leads to further considerations, which have potentially profound effects for the field of politics. Because their common teleology, the propagation of knowledge and discipline that would empower people, is essentially the same ideal as that being sought by spiritual figures such as Laozi, Patanjali, or Buddha.

Spiritual Politics

The say that Gandhi and Foucault's politics were 'spiritual' undoubtedly upsets our normal understanding of politics. Since its emergence 'politics' has always defined itself in opposition to religion. The secular thinking posits that whereas religion is about the 'supernatural', the belief in a deity, etc., politics is about the material reality of day to day life. However, even a cursory look at essentially all non-Abrahamic 'religions' will show this secular definition to be lacking. Far from being concerned with an abstract set of 'beliefs', most things that Europeans have defined as

'religion' are systems of knowledge and discipline by which people live their lives, and are therefore in competition with the propagation of modernity's own apparatus of knowledge/discipline. Modernity tends toward constant expansion, and aiming to bring everyone into its own nexus. Understood in this way, 'secularisation' is not a movement of religious toleration and the creation of 'neutral' social institutions; it is rather the de-politicisation of the vast global transformations that have taken place for the past two centuries.

But the idea of spiritual politics upsets not only the hegemonic Liberal understanding. The humanist elements of Enlightenment thinking always had a strong anti-religious tendency and progressive political forces have long been suspicious of anything that bore the mark of 'religion'. Out of Hegel's spiritual teleology of the spirit, Karl Marx developed a secular teleology of historical materialism. This teleology was one which would go on to have a profound effect on the 20th century and inspire revolutionary transformation around the world. The underlying idea of modern 'Progress' had, up to that point, been understood as the development of science and technology, or the propagation of modernities social institutions. Marx, however, insisted that progress be measured in ethical and social terms. His teleological endpoint was one in which all people shared equally in the material wealth of this world, in which there was no more social antagonism and the production of society would be distributed in a just and equitable manner. And this teleology inspired millions of people around the world since its conception.

However, the past number of decades has seen this teleological vision losing much of the vital potency it once possessed. Very few people today in the Global North live in the kind of material deprivation of Marx's Victorian England. Although levels of inequality sky-rocket in the post war era, so too has the material standard of living of essentially everyone in the 'the West'. Not only does everyone have enough to eat and to live, but most people even have enough for luxury consumer goods or holidays abroad. People are not roused by the idea of fairer distribution of material wealth in the same way that that were because most people now live comfortable lives. Marx's materialist teleology no longer speaks to people who have become relatively materially wealthy. But despite this material wealth, the spiritual alienation that Marx identified has only intensified. People in contemporary society are perhaps more alienated from nature, from their activity, from each other, and from themselves than were any human population in history, and its not exactly clear what seizing the means of production would do to remedy this.

What's more, even if we were to again pursue a Marxist course of liberation, it would not help us with the greatest problem we currently face. A society in which wealth is distributed fairly might be great for human beings, but it does nothing to slow down the industrial production machine we have set in motion. Marx's teleology is ultimately an industrial one; it understands industrial societies as more 'advanced' than non-industrial society, but this kind of thinking must be transcended to prevent the further destruction of the natural world. For these reasons, Marx's teleology no longer has the power it had to mobilise people. Progressive forces have lacked a unifying alternative since the fall of the Soviet Union, resulting in a loss of direction and momentum, and in an inability to offer a real alternative to the contemporary order. In such circumstance, it may be time to examine avenues that have hitherto been closed. Although we might not always be aware of it, it is not modern Europeans that first set out in pursuit of liberty. Some of our earliest writing show that this is, in fact, one of the earliest preoccupations of humankind.

Perhaps because it consistently insists on the centrality of freedom, anarchism is the strand of politics that comes closest to bridging the gap between politics and spirituality. Many anarchist theoreticians trace anarchist thought back to spiritual figures, such as Laozi or Jesus Christ (Kropotkin, 1970), recognition of shared values of modern anarchists and ancient spiritual leaders.

But it is the spiritual anarchism of Foucault that builds the strongest bridge between these two spheres. Through the work of Foucault we find the beginnings of a rapprochement between politics and spirituality. By the end of Foucault's career he was clearly making the connection between the fields of spirituality and the fields of politics:

> 'How can one analyze the connection between ways of distinguishing true and false and ways governing oneself and others? The search for a new foundation for each of these practices, in itself and relative to the other, the will to discover a different way of governing oneself through a different way of dividing up true and false—this is what I would call "political spirituality"' (Foucault, 2000, pg 233).

However, although he was starting to move toward a more complete recognition of the spiritual nature of his political vision, his early death meant that these tentative links could never be pursued to their full conclusions. By linking his philosophy with that of Gandhi's, there is suddenly a strong bridge between the field of politics and the field of spiritual knowledge, built by two of the most important political figures of the 20th century.

Practical Aim

The last aim of this work is practical. It looks at the strategies of political action and social transformation that Gandhi developed and utilized, to see how they might be applied in our contemporary world. We can split the type of strategy outlined into three.

First, we have seen that knowledge contestation was a central element of Gandhi's political repertoire. Whereas modern 'politics' has always been ruled by the 'tyranny of Reason', making it impossible to engage in social transformation on any terms other than those set by modern discourses, Gandhi showed that non-modern knowledges could challenge the political hegemony on its own terms (in Gandhi's case, the terms of the Vedic tradition). What this means in practice, today, is a willingness to challenge not only modern institutions, but also the modern regime of truth. Modernity's games of truth, centred on material sciences and rationality, have no doubt brought tremendous technological advancement, but they have also led to a mass extinction event. Potential tactics of this strategy would be to create space to listen to and respect long subjugated indigenous knowledge; it would be to open up important communication and knowledge platforms to alternative ways of seeing, or even simply to resist the spread of a totalitarian modern rationality where it has not yet reached. We can look at the work of Foucault for an intellectual tactic for this epistemological strategy. It would be to use the intellect to change the rules for the 'games of truth' on which our society is based.

Next, we saw that, above all, the focus of Gandhi's activism was on capacity building. His definition of independence, swaraj, meant that achieving independence was not achieved through assuming the seat of a centralised government. To be genuinely independent, to achieve swaraj, one must build one's capacities so as to no longer be dependent centralised structures. In today's world, where people's dependence on centralised structures is much greater than it was in Gandhi's time, this political strategy is even more necessary than it was 100 years ago. The first element of any political action should therefore be to free oneself from the violent structures of modern society. How can one realistically hope to a change a system on which one's living depends? The next step is then to empower others to do the same. Many people today are aware of the violent and destructive nature of modern civilisation, but have no choice but to contribute to it because their livelihood depends on it. It is therefore up to the people who have built the capacities to live independently to empower others to free themselves. We have also seen, with movements like the eco-village movement, that as a strategy is already being employed.

Finally, we have explored the core principle which Gandhi advocated to guide political action: ahimsa. For Gandhi, political action aims to empower every individual and to create a peaceful and harmonious co-existence. To achieve this he saw no other method of resistance than one based on non-violence. But, to Gandhi, this was no loss, because non-violent resistance was the strongest force that one could bring to bear. As in colonial India, the injustices of our society are made possible by the co-operation of the population. If that co-operation is revoked, if one instigates a campaign of mass civil disobedience, as Gandhi did, it would be sufficient to bring the system of injustice to a halt there and then, without a single drop of blood being spilled. A campaign of non-co-operation large enough to challenge the current system of global capital is perhaps a hard thing to imagine. Just as, before Gandhi, such a campaign challenging the largest empire in the world would have been a hard thing to imagine.

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