Liberal Humanism
and the
Non-Western Other

The Right and the
Good in World Affairs

Sushil Kumar

IIAS

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This book is dedicated to the memory of the
LATE PROFESSOR IQBAL NARAIN
who introduced me to
study and research in modern political theory,
comparative politics, government and politics of India

PREFACE

Writing this essay has been an exercise in self-learning. It is a pleasure to share with you what little I have learnt in the process. But there is a nagging thought. I should have gone some more distance before placing it before you. The essay may have been a little better then. Nonetheless, if some of those who decide to read it and are happy doing so, I would consider myself rewarded for the effort. In the first place, why did I make the effort at all? It was not possible to hold myself back from it when Francis Fukuyama celebrated the end of the cold war by reinventing Daniel Bell's end of ideology debate. He beckoned the non-Western world to jump on to the bandwagon of Western knowledge and experience and take the road to Westernization in culture and institutions. Westernization for him was relevant across history and context.

The advice favoured not classical liberalism and Renaissance humanism for locating policy and action. It was not inspired by Renaissance ideals or based on Western political thought of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Nor did it favour a re-enactment of development strategies of a select group of white males in the West who, during these about two hundred years, held near monopoly control over property holdings in their respective societies. Fukuyama's preference was for a modern version of liberal humanism which found its fuller expression during the cold war. Why should one uncritically accept Fukuyama's advice? Why should it not be subjected to mediation by race, gender, class or by a historically given situation when a majority of the people enjoyed no rights of ownership over means of production, or were otherwise, without property? Why should

the humanist values be reduced to a rights issue within a discourse of national power?

The advice for extending the modern version of liberal thought to the non-Western world bypassed the social tensions contingent on social inequalities and marked differences in ownership patterns. It sought to marginalize these tensions as effects of local social values and cultural practices. This was similar to the colonial tendency of denigrating non-Western cultures and civilization. Fukuyama used the same lens for viewing differences across historical periods. He did not work out its implications for organization of government in postcolonial societies, and, more generally, for state-society relations there. The very first step towards translating his advice into practice would be to underline the legitimacy and practical necessity of a conflict-driven top-down governance by people who style themselves as better than others by virtue of their language, lineage, class, certified merit or market value to pursue from a vantage point the goals of economic growth, social and political development. The bottom-up strategies of consensus-building on these goals were simultaneously downgraded. This opened a possibility for representative institutions to appropriate and reconstruct democratic processes in favour of such top-down governance.[1]

Fukuyama's exhortation for going the way of the West was expected to find favour at least among some sections of the present descendants of those who, during the pre-Independence period, owned huge land area and property which crossed the colonial divide as assets belonging to their owners. This carried into the postcolonial order the contradictions of the colonial past. These contradictions were joined by others over time especially in the elite-mass relationship. Fukuyama gave a slip to these contradictions. He did not take them into account and was confident that the post-cold war world order would work out their resolution

by flagging the modern version of democracy as integral to post-cold war political dispensation. Democracy was expected to do the magic. The dictators would behave as the Turkish economist Timur Kuran, predicted for individuals in his *Private Truths, Public Lies: The Social Consequences of Preference Falsification,* that they would not reveal their true preferences and prefer to act in ways that were socially acceptable. Hence the post-cold war transitions from authoritarianism to democracy were quick and fast, more like foreign policy gestures than substantive transformations.

Would such top-down democratic transitions yield a democratic moral order similar to the one described by a liberal like Vaclav Havel in his memoirs, or by a leader of the masses like Mahatma Gandhi? Would political, economic and legal orders be derived from such a moral order? Or, would they be just techniques cleverly invented for getting around the moral imperatives of democracy? This was the point for interrogating Fukuyama, his rose-tinted view of social tensions and inequalities and his support for an individualist-hedonist ethos. The interrogation would only remind him that both liberal democracy and the utilitarian thought were suspicious of the masses, majorities and popular democracy. These were meant to circumvent politics and not to realize democracy. How would his counsel deal with this reality?

Fukuyama's optimism was grounded on an *a priori* assumption, that the institutions of liberal democracy were in themselves sufficient for performing the functions as stipulated by him. His book *The End of History and the Last Man* was influential in shaping contemporary political thinking but could not effect reconciliation between power and liberalism or between capitalism and democracy. In the absence of such a reconciliation, when these trends were not in step, the kind of progress he counselled was, in fact, not a counsel for achieving progress but a counsel for disturbing social peace and harmony. Fukuyama hoped that

such reconciliation would be a function of the emerging unipolar world order. This hope proved to be misplaced. Non-democratic regimes crossed over to democracy in attempted convergence with the post-cold war power structure but it was convergence without commitment.[2] These crossover democracies constituted the *third wave* of democracy. Such top-down democracies failed in realizing liberal peace. Domestic and regional conflicts intensified.[3] These developments motivated Western powers, international organizations like the United Nations and European Union, as well as international financial institutions such as the World Bank and the IMF to join hands for advancing bottom-up democratization.

Like many others, I felt the need to participate in the discourse of top-down democratization. Where should I locate this face-off in international relations? Was it enough to understand it in terms of the mainstream theory? In other words, would my job end by viewing it as play of power politics on both sides? Or, was there a need to enrich understanding with reflection based on alternative (non-realist) approaches still struggling to demarcate a separate territory for themselves. This contest between mainstream theory and alternative approaches centred on debate over content and method of international politics. The alternative approaches put faith in science and its methods. The scholars were expected to rely on empirical social science methods for describing contentious national and international issues, and subject them to rational thought for promoting development with peace. The normative framework underlying these approaches comprised anti-statist liberalism, individual freedom, human rights, rule of law, tolerance, and respect for public opinion. Commitment to these political values, it was thought, was helpful in realizing rationality in international relations, and articulate a post-international politics vision of international relations. With

such a frame of mind, a scholar would be sensitive to growing transnational economic and social forces and receptive to the global public opinion. The institutionalization of scientific rationalism in the study of international relations was slow and whatever was achieved in this sphere, occurred under the shadow of Western scholarship. It was further handicapped by the inability of local scholars to construct innovative frameworks and methods or in articulating alternative rationality in the conduct of politics. An unsympathetic official approach towards it was another handicap. In official circles, these efforts were seen as a utopian drive similar to the interwar legalist vision. It was perhaps destined to the same fate. The result was that some of the institutions, professorial chairs and conferences aimed at promoting scientific rationalism were co-opted by the establishment and were steered into the realist black hole. This is a paradox. At a time, when conflict and war are to be avoided, the alternative approach to international relations, alternative to the mainstream realist approach, does not command favour of those who matter in the establishment. It does not have a favourable constituency in the existing institutional apparatus, either in higher education, or in government. Power politics was the preferred course of thinking and action and it was so manipulated as to tickle the *aam adami* (common man) by privileging emotive issues for public attention. The black box of such politics is sealed off from the gaze of the people.

A choice between these two visions of national and international politics depends on the political values a student holds. The radicals were opposed to the alternative vision underlined by positivist methodology. They mixed statism and subjectivism to make a heady mixture. The task, as I then thought, was of locating the point of conflation between these two visions. One way of doing it was to examine the top-down democratization process from the point of view

of those at the receiving end. This was a challenging task, attractive no doubt but it was beyond me. So, this essay which I have somehow put together is a very short and in a way a sketchy commentary from the perspective of such conflation. It is neither designed nor structured to be a dialogue with Fukuyama. It is located on a much wider canvas. Its focus is on a broader set of related issues. For this reason, the question why I made the effort of writing the essay is addressed under the chapter title, "The Push Factor".

The IIAS Fellowship that came my way soon after my retirement from the University enabled me to pursue it. The Fellowship opened for me an opportunity and a very congenial academic environment. The IIAS, Shimla, is an academic utopia. Everything here is done to facilitate creative thinking and research. From detailed attention to material needs to an extraordinarily welcoming and generous spirit of the entire staff, together with the grandeur of the *Rashtrapati Niwas*, its lawn, trees, footpaths, and exotic birds and their sweet notes,all make it an unusually inspiring place to work.

The manuscript was read by Professor Akshaya Kumar, Department of English and Cultural Studies, Punjab University, Chandigarh; Professor Saugata Bhaduri, Centre for English Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi; Professor Rashmi Doraiswamy, Academy of International Studies, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi; and Professor Sucheta Mahajan, Centre for Historical Studies, Jawaharlal University, New Delhi. They have my very sincere thanks for sparing time for it and making very useful comments. But the responsibility for any error of fact or judgment is entirely mine.

It is my great pleasure to dedicate this essay to the memory of the late Professor Iqbal Narain, who was Reader in the Department of Political Science, University of Rajasthan, Jaipur, when I joined it as a Lecturer. The Department was

then deeply immersed in research on contemporary political problems in India. I was associated with some of this work. It opened a great opportunity for me to work in close cooperation with him and what I learnt at that time, under his benevolent and able guidance, continues to be a source of strength to this day.

SUSHIL KUMAR

NOTES

1. The 'history from below' group including E.P. Thompson and Eric Hobsbawn had already challenged the metanarratives of history and such development. This also was not taken into account.
2. Ayesha Jalal claimed such convergence of Pakistan's democracy with India's democracy. See her *Authoritarianism and Democracy in South Asia*, Cambridge, 1995.
3. Kaldor, Mary and Vashee, Basker, eds., *New Wars*, London, 1997.

Chapter 1

THE PUSH FACTOR

The motivation for writing this essay came from the contemporary struggles for remaking society conducted within liberal and Marxist approaches backed in each case by strategic customization of humanities and social sciences for academic and ideological intervention.[1] Classical liberals regarded a truly human way of life as based on personal autonomy, rational self-reflection, a secular view of the world, material affluence and technological mastery of nature. Those who looked beyond this high ground and reached out for empirical evidence challenged the claims of classical liberals by advancing contradictory facts. They found the vision sustainable only through systematic social exclusions. The critics thus gave voice to the excluded groups. The aim was to build pressure in favour of inclusiveness. As democratic consciousness expanded, the Marxists, Freudians, feminists, linguists, spiritualists and others stepped in to advance critical theories of difference, domination and exclusion.

They marked out their respective constituencies and developed conceptual tools for offering criticism of the way liberal humanism worked out its agenda. There also surfaced disputes over disciplinary territory and scholarly jealousies. Moving along the margin, one would not know which of the critical pathways would lead to the fulfilment of the liberal dream. More so, because theoretical literature on critical theories is extant and is tough to read and understand.

[1] The aim here is not to endorse value relativism but to highlight the absence of a contextual political theory in the new nations.

A question arose in my mind. Were these struggles for remaking society comparable with the Aristotelian project of good life? While making the comparison, one thing came out first. There was clearly an inversion of priority from that in Aristotle. From building a good and virtuous citizenry, the priority shifted to constructing a good polis: "without the ideal city, there would be no good men." Aristotle did emphasize the need to construct a good polis but, at the same time, he also underlined the possibility of a good and virtuous life in imperfect political conditions. It was not so now. The trend today was to dump all blame for the wrongs of the citizen at the door of an imperfect polis. This shift implied a greater emphasis on external sources of goodness which encouraged dependence. The practice of virtue within manifestly imperfect conditions was no longer the test of a virtuous citizen.[2]

Constructing a good polis, in the absence of a political theory tailored to suit the relevant context, generated an imperative for imitative borrowing of political and economic institutions together with their supportive ideas and theories

[2] In classical thought, the focus was on pursuit of excellence and capacity to apprehend the good rather than self-interest. The political thinkers stressed defence of private property and romanticized agrarian virtues. The virtue-corruption dyad was, repeatedly re-invented and successively understood in terms of different predicates. It entered modern political discourse through the writings of Machiavelli who defined virtue as "that constellation of abilities and qualities" which a Prince must possess. Montesquieu idealized republican virtue in civic humanism. Soon these discourses were overtaken by growing antagonism between labour and capital, between upper and lower classes, or between dominated and subordinated social groups, and issues of social and gender justice.

from the developed world.[3] The internal sources of goodness resting on collective responsibility for shaping individual life chances were colonized and infused with the desire to re-emerge as institutionalized individualism driven by interest.[4] This is exemplified by the extension of neoliberal acquisitive drive and possessiveness among middle class youth in the non-West. It did open the door to imitative consumerism but did not end their otherness in relation to the West, including otherness on issues of character and moral uprightness. This approach to building a good polis was a top-down approach. Its effect was to further tighten the hold of Western political institutions on non-Western societies. More recently, it came in for attack from bottom-up social forces as they swelled and pushed for change.The present communications revolution paved the way for such forces to surface to the political battlefield. While positioned at the

[3] President Rajendra Prasad of India spoke of "the silken bond" between British and Indian Parliamentary Democracy. Austin, Granville spoke of "British imports" such as bureaucracy and representative governance in his *Working a Democratic Constitution*, New Delhi, 1999, p. 635. Jean Blondel likewise says: "Liberal democracy can therefore be described as a West European product, almost a British product, which expanded somewhat haphazardly to countries where West European countries, Britain in particular, had a major influence (it did not take significant root in former French, Belgian, or Dutch territories)." *Comparing Political Systems*, London, 1972, p. 169.

[4] The notion of collective responsibility here did not deny agency to the individual. On the contrary, the emphasis was on assertion of agency, though its referent was social good, not self-interest. Liberal individualism was a tool of class domination in development politics. It was a mechanism "by which the dominant classes can break up oppositional class forces by individualizing them (sic) political institutions are organized in such a way that the dominant forces of representation depend on the individual rather than the classes." Sutton, David, "Liberalism, State Collectivism and the Social Relationships of Citizenship," in Langan, M. and Schwartz, B., *Crisis in the British State, 1880-1930*, London, 1885, p. 64.

two ends of the political space for remaking societies, both top-down and bottom-up social pressures converged in taking the democratization process forward.[5] Each side showcased itself for the media, not so much for its use value in governance as for its exchange value for mass support. Each side tried to open and line up remote and isolated regions of the world. Each side tried to mobilize individuals breaking away from old bonds and becoming available for reintegration into new intersubjective communities. But they diverged when the top-down attempts aimed at remaking society while the bottom-up pressures aimed at remaking the state.

The aim was to transform state-society relations. The top-down dynamics aimed at preserving and enhancing the institutional autonomy of the state so as to give it a wide margin of agential power in domestic politics and international relations. This generated imperatives for the state to act on bottom-up social forces whether represented by classes, communities or international social movements which sought to reduce this margin or eliminate it.

When, therefore, the bottom-up social forces made their

[5] This has found its recent expression in Sitaram Yechury's views as summarized by Akil Bilgrami: "This idea of India (sic) is the idea of a nation that transcends its diversities and divisions in favour of a substantially *inclusive* unity rather than a unity based on the elevation of particular classes or communities or castes into a position of dominance, excluding others." "Introduction," *Social Scientist* New Delhi 39, January-February 2011, p. 1. The idea is laudable but its translation into reality foregrounds the difficult issue of just relationship between classes, communities and castes because capitalist growth cannot occur without elevating a class to a position of dominance and, if possible, also to a position of hegemony. The process is not like organizing a zoo where different animals have different enclosures and all get food and security in equal measure; *here the weak are the objects of prey.* The weak should know their reality which needs not be mystified for them.

way into the civil society for voicing their concerns, they became a part of realpolitik. They were targeted by social and economic monopolies within state institutions where they positioned themselves to oppose them.[6] The state, being an organized force, had an upper hand and was equipped to dissipate bottom-up social forces through complex mechanisms of a trade-off between carrot and stick in dealing with them. The state was able to tire them out by channellizing them through a maze of disaggregated and conflicting centres of power. This was how the state was able to maintain its autonomy of action and claim to be the sole, legitimate source of public policy. In a way, it was the instrumental application of exchange and trade-off mechanisms, legitimized by the presently dominant neoliberal approach to economic and social management, which helped the state in reclaiming the ethic of independent action. The crucial factor in the situation was the resilience and complexity of the state organization. The state which scored high on these variables was able to overcome attempts to subject it to social controls for blocking its adaptive capacity.

This essay foregrounds this issue of top-down governance. My argument goes like this: the top-down exercise of power was inherent in a political situation when postcolonial governments sought to draw their people into a development model imagined after the success stories of the modern West.[7] The leaders of the non-Western world took the ideas, theories, institutions and a host of other structures and practices associated with the leading states of the world and

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[6] Doyle, Michael, *Ways of War and Peace*, New York, 1997, p. 51ff.
[7] The successful experiment of war economy was read as development history of the West and became, in the hands of social scientists, a universal theory of development. This theory was practised through public policies which problematized the relationship between capital and coercion.

introduced them in their respective societies, to initiate the processes of modernization and nation-building. While the West forged its political institutions in the crucible of history against the background of their respective domestic and international situations that obtained at that time, the non-Western leadership took them as mechanical systems of universal validity hoping that they would produce the same developmental effects. The leadership knew what it wanted to achieve in their respective societies (catch up with the West) and so they went to the West to pick theories and institutions that, they thought, would take them to the same levels of development. The leadership probably did not realize that importing a political institution or its underlying political theory was not like importing a washing machine.

Taking this as the bottom line, I asked myself a few questions which motivated me to write this essay. Was it unthoughtful to exercise top-down coercion on social forces seeking to challenge the development priorities of non-Western governments based on a reading of Western history and political thought? How would non-Western political dynamics be impacted when the borrowed models of political institutions were not as good performers as their top models back home in European history?[8]

[8] Indian experience offers a typical illustration of it. The Constitution incorporated special provisions for empowering the government to use its good offices with the members of representative institutions in shaping political outcomes towards social objectives. It was not realized then that it was easier to say this than doing it. The first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, encountered difficulties in dealing even with the Provisional Parliament on the issue of *zamindari* abolition. Later the Golakh Nath case amounted to barring the route of constitutional amendment to social goals. Judicial activism or executive ordinances were not an effective means for achieving these goals Nor was the mobilization of intellectuals, not only for creating a climate for social reforms but also to suggest ways of clearing institutional blockages to them. Scholars were called upon to be relevant in teaching and research. Marxism, Gandhism, Spiritualism and other trends

How was such structuring of state-society relations linked to to inter-state relations? This link could be explored in terms of the first state debate. This debate focussed on the autonomy of the state in relation to the underlying social forces.

Liberal democracy, both in concept and practice, accepted the autonomy of the state as its starting point. It was therefore specific to the concept of unitary state. Multiculturalism, group differentiated rights politics, political and academic discourses of social difference were not good for its health. These factors combined and recombined in different ways to problematize statehood, nationhood, popular sovereignty and political community.[9] They problematized the conduct of foreign relations, insofar as state autonomy was a functional necessity for a state embedded in an international structure of dominance, hierarchy and differentiation. The state was socialized in the structural logic of international anarchy and was constrained to direct its foreign policy goals against unequal power relations. This, in turn, created imperatives for emulating and imitating the practices and institutions of the leading states in the system. The inevitable consequence of such imitative behaviour was instrumentalization of institutional norms and public policies in relation to the social constituents of the state. The state tried to maximize advantage while the citizens lacked capacity to negotiate its power. This disappointed those numerous people who

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were retooled as popular culture geared to national reconstruction. Popular culture even vulgarized them through innovative modes of reinvention in Cinema, Sport, Sex and Food for suggesting ways within the framework of liberal humanism for counter-balancing the social dysfunctions arising from top-down development.

[9] Axtmann, Roland, *Liberal Democracy into the Twenty-First Century: Globalization, Integration and the Nation-State,* Manchester, 1996. India is a typical case of volatility in state-society relations and promiscuity in conceptual anchorage of political process.

looked up to their rulers for *ram rajya* (ideal polity). Political relations based on democratic trust come to mimic unequal relationships in a modern market.

The extension of marketing techniques for cognitive and behavioural remodelling within premodern social formations was eroding the received wisdom of right conduct in discharge of professional, social and public responsibility. The attachment of new meanings to these non-market relationships prioritized the form in which a relationship was presented by one party to another, and subordinated to it the content of the relationship and its expected function.[10] When the people on the other side , thus caught unawares, were not able to decode the new meaning, or visualize the disconnect of form with function (or content) there opened a cognitive gap between the party instrumentalizing the relationship and the other acting as its consumer, generally to the disadvantage of the latter. To the extent that such consciously instrumentalized dealings made their way into political, professional, educational and cultural processes, the formal institutions, meant to be homes for such processes, were turned into *bazars* for maximizing the exchange value of power, position, status and expertise. The new meanings attached to public policies, events, news, handouts or public speeches, professional conduct, classroom lectures or highly personalized communications in the private sphere of respect, friendship, romance, love, care and the like had the effect of reducing socially embedded notions of moral right and good to the status of mere nominal concepts.

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[10] The preference for form over content subverts the conventional view of a social relationship while the preference for content over form in communication underlines rootedness. Aesthetic experience comes from presentation of pure form. This totalizes the separation of the middle class from the lower orders of society. See, Bourdieu, Pierre, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste,* London, 1979.

Taking the spotlight to the political effects of such practices on the part of political leadership,excluding other effects from our purview for the time being, we would notice a marked trend towards de-ideologization of politics, emergence of managerial state, self-aggrandizement of civil and military bureaucracy, all converging on what was known as the crisis of political theory.

Innocence was increasingly found commercially and politically viable. Use this lens to view commercial advertisements, speeches of political leaders in election rallies, seminar presentations of iconic figures representing the interests of marginalized people including women, or those of scholars bubbling with social justice concerns, the soft power of a young man in relation to his parents and teachers (refer to Chetan Bhagat's *Idiots*), or cat walk of little girls on the ramp, expressiveness of girl beggars at red lights, erotic niceties of an item dancer. The choice in favour of Machiavelli's foxes was subverting the moral framework of social and political institutions. Human relations were being distanced from their substantive meaning and redefining success. A quote from MacCannell is illustrative of this point:

The dividing line between structure, genuine and spurious is the *realm of the commercial.* Spurious social relations and structural elements can be bought, sold, traded and distributed throughout the world. Modern economies are increasingly based on this exchange. The line is the same one between furniture and priceless antiques or between prostitution and true love which is supposed to be beyond price. It is also the same as the distinction that is commonly made between a gift that was purchased, which is thought to be inferior, as opposed to one that has been made by the giver especially for the receiver.[11]

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[11] MacCannell, D., *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class,* London, 1976, pp. 155-56. Also see his *Empty Meeting Grounds,* London, 1992. Emphasis in the original.

Excessive reliance on the utilitarian and civic republican variants of political theory led to progressive decontextualization of *the political* and constriction of the political good to neutralism and proceduralism of state institutions and coercive processes and to such representation of liberal humanist values which encouraged social groups and aggregates to engage in rent seeking activities.[12] The state was not able to resolve the tension between liberty and morality, between liberty and equality, between homogeneity and diversity, between equality and difference, or between territoriality and deterritorialization. The inevitable result was an increase in crime, corruption and pursuit of *Lakshmi.* The state had nothing to boast about except growth percentages and import of coercive technologies. Political discourse was limited to concern for rights, opportunity, and prosperity. Liberty plus cash was supposed to do the magic. Intelligent people pocketed the cash and kicked the state. This was not just a crisis of political theory, it marked almost an end of it. A further elaboration of the issue was required to put in relief this widespread malady which inflicts misery on socially weaker sections of society and characterizes the non-Western political process.

The Enlightenment was appropriated into high politics of global leaders conducting world affairs. The same was true of elite groups who, likewise, appropriated it in domestic institutional settings. How should one respond to an emerging situation when Enlightenment was identified with Western civilization and the non-Western other was condemned as its irrational enemy? Or, when the elite groups identified it with their interests and condemned dissenters as riff-raff? Such a reading of the fault line between the West and the non-West, or between institutional

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[12] See, Keohane, Robert O., "International Liberalism Reconsidered," in Dunn, John, ed., *The Economic Limits to Modern Politics,* Cambridge, 1990.

leaders and the rest, divided the world and national societies into rival camps, one claiming to be the inheritor of Enlightenment and marginalizing the other as a remnant of pre-Enlightenment religious bigotism and backwardness.

By way of illustration, one can refer to an issue of the *New Scientist* in 2008 featuring an article entitled "Reality Wars". the articles summarized the situation like this: "After two centuries in the ascendancy, the Enlightenment project is under threat. Religious movements are sweeping the globe preaching unreason, intolerance and dogma, and challenging the idea that rational, secular enquiry is the best way to understand the world." Prime Minister Tony Blair celebrated the anniversary of the US-UK attack on Iraq by describing it as a continuation of the age-old battle between progress and reaction.[13] He referred to Europe's history of Renaissance, Reformation and Enlightenment which, he felt, left the Muslim and the Arab world uncertain, insecure and on the defensive. This was how the Prime Minister made a case for the invasion. It was an echo from the past, an echo of arrogance expressed long ago by Lord Macaulay when he said that "a single shelf of a good European library was worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia."[14] The Prime Minister identified Enlightenment with War on Terror and gave a twist to conduct of domestic politics, foreign policy and international relations. Support for Enlightenment was now signified by support for the US War on Terror; conversely, if you supported this War on Terror, you were liberal, secular and democratic, holding Enlightenment close to your heart.

Such instrumental use of Enlightenment is common among state elite, professional and academic leaders, and

[13] 'Progress' and 'reaction' are buzz words in India also and a partisan use of Enlightenment is the defining feature of Indian politics.
[14] The quote is from Hingorani, D.K., "Education in India Before and After Independence," *Education Forum*, 19 (2), 1977, p. 218.

the representatives of business corporations. They pose a neat binary: "Advance progress by supporting us, or advance reaction by opposing us." They silence their opponents by claiming a higher normative position for themselves. In this game of one upmanship, they make tall claims of grounding their activities on "disinterested reason and scientific inquiry." The claim is apparently not well founded. It is located within the realist framework of power politics. It falls in line with the opposition to scientific approach to the study of politics. Such opposition is also sounded by Bernard Crick when he describes the scientific approach as "the most flagrant case of the attempt to take politics out of politics – to avoid the purposive element in political theory. The academic study of politics has tried to do just this in its aspirations to be neutral, scientifically objective and value free."[15] The state elite, professional and academic leaders translate the triumph of Enlightenment as the end of politics because they want to rule out a successful challenge to liberal humanism and free market economy, and not to prescribe the use of scientific method in the study of politics.

But the emergence of an alternative vision cannot be ruled out as a real possibility because the pursuit of Enlightenment ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity through political and economic institutions of liberal democracy has not come up to the expectation. The critics point to the strategy of these institutions to channelize democratic participation more towards provision of services than towards promotion of democratic values. The critics regard the shift as a built-in function of these institutions. This was how these institutions were supposed to work. The main concern of the eighteenth century political thinkers was with the construction of political systems that simultaneously contained subordinate classes and achieved

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[15] Crick, Bernard, *In Defence of Politics*, Harmondsworth, 1964, 190.

consensus among dominant social groups. It was not just Thomas Hobbes, even John Locke did not support the grant of political rights to the propertyless. They wanted the "sizable class" of "wage labourers" who have no property to live at such low levels of subsistence as not to be "able to think or act politically".[16] Capitalist development, through social stability was their political aim. This limited the scope of political studies to designing institutions for elite consensus and containing people at the lower rungs of society and to mask it all with hopes of realizing the Enlightenment utopia. In order not to let the mask slip, a popular side of Enlightenment is invented for mass consumption. This new invention is popular culture. Popular culture opens the possibility of immersing Enlightenment into the folklore of liberal humanism without disturbing the social status quo based on inequality and relative deprivation.[17] One example of such immersion is Roy Porter's *Enlightenment: Britain and the Creation of the Modern World*[18] which describes an Enlightened social order as "a quadruple alliance of freedom, protectionism, patriotism and prosperity." In a social system of four dynamically related corners, any one corner can be picked up for stretching so that all the others also get stretched in the same direction. Here popular culture plays a role. The choice of prosperity for such stretching was

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[16] Macpherson, C.B., "The Social Bearings of Locke's Political Theory," *The Western Political Quarterly*, VII, 1954, pp.4-19. J.S. Mill also recognized that Parliament in his day was a class institution framing economic policies from the point of view of the employers of labour. See his *Utilitarianism, Liberty and Representative Government*, Everyman's Library Edition, London, 1960, especially Chapter 3.

[17] The oppressed social groups use modes of popular culture to change the meaning of commodities as well as that of language to express rejection of the dominant discourse. But the expression of such freedom is illusory. See, Fiske, J., *Understanding Popular Culture*, London, 1989.

[18] London, 2001, p. 30.

the easiest to make. Most people got round to it. More money in each hand is easy to represent as popular interest. Private interests and groups pushed for this choice and used it as a handle to break free from all moral and other relevant controls on privately defined notions of good life.

Hence political and business leaders capitalized on Enlightenment and "enjoyed their food and drink and the pleasures of society." Everywhere, the people at the top of the social ladder, the people with resources, yielded to such indulgences with a clean conscience. They were doing so, at least indirectly, to project themselves as role models for people at the lower rungs of society, as part of the effort for promoting Enlightenment through pleasure and entertainment.[19] It was not a matter of concern that such over stretching of Enlightenment left a deep impact on social life and political culture of Americans, no less on the aspirations of the West inclined middle classes everywhere. Vance Packard in his *The Waste Makers* and *The Hidden Persuaders* summarized the impact. He holds business corporations responsible for sinking Americans into lifestyles which turned them into wasteful and debt-ridden people. This was a negative consequence of taking Enlightenment to the masses through popular culture.

Seeing further in this direction, we find interesting things happening. Selling *curries* and *chutnies* in food outlets in Western cities and in the central court at shopping malls in India is becoming a preferred way for promoting Enlightenment. Food is not nutrition and taste alone; it is, besides, a cultural and morally elevating experience. When

[19] The same was true of comic strips, TV soaps and rock songs, as of trendy goods. These, no doubt, created an illusion of a homogenized nation based on consumption of standardized products. While so extending the meaning of Enlightenment, Giovanni Sartori's warning against conceptual stretching was obviously ignored. See, his "Concept Misinformation in Comparative Politics," *American Political Science Review,* 64 (4), 1970.

the table is well laid, who will shrug off for moral or religious reasons? You cannot today switch on a television channel in India which is not showing a programme like *khana khazana, chakh le, masterchef India, suvai thedi* and several others where generally male chefs are shown as cooking sensuous and healthy food. Is a quote from John Locke or Adam Smith necessary to legitimize it as emancipatory? No different is the effect of pleasure. A recent book on this theme begins with this sentence: "In a nation as dramatically divided as India, there are some curious places of shared desire: the melodies of Hindi film songs, the curves of Amitabh's or Madhuri's body, the vivid materiality of popular visual culture."[20]

Such instrumental uses are not limited to Enlightenment alone. Other intellectual trends such as Marxism and Gandhism have also been used like this. This has become an all pervasive practice.

[20] Dwyer, Rachel and Pinney, Christopher, eds., *Pleasure and the Nation: The History, Politics and Consumption of Public Culture in India,* New Delhi, 2001, p.1. The book later (p. 290) refers to "erotic pleasure through the presentation of women as a spectacle." Item dances in films and television music channels are being interpreted as drawing people away from narrowly conservative mindsets and driving them towards pleasurable activities. Similarly, Patricia Uberoi credits visual beauty of Hindu Gods in calendar art for mediating between the "secular and the sacred." See, her "Feminine Identity and National Ethos in Indian Calendar Art," *Economic and Political Weekly,* 1990. Further, the religious practice has become pleasurable with the availability of market-based sacred artifacts and accessories. See, Brinton Crane's *The Shaping of Modern Thought,* New Jersey, 1963, on the role of Christianity in social theory. Several transnational movements aiming to promote spiritualism on the pattern of Evangelical Christianity are today enacting a similar role in non-Western societies. Patriotism too is immersed in popular culture. Even the national anthem is a source of pleasurable experience in stylistic sound tracks and visual images. This was how the utilitarians were securing an edge over the republicans in a non-Western setting of institutionalized inequality.

Marxism offers powerful tools for understanding non-Western economic and social reality and in this respect it is recognized even in the West as ahead of liberal social science. The unmatched potential of Western Marxism is widely accepted. It lent flexibility of imagination to political strategy and so it was popular on the campuses of American universities during the seventies. As a social science, different from ideology, it paved the way for constructing social technologies which put dialectical materialism (including the philosophy of history) and political resistance (including social movements opposing domination) into an entertainment mode, bottling up social dissatisfactions in the private sphere of individuals, not allowed to surface except as crime.[21] Similarly the institutions which claimed to embody Enlightenment — especially the state, the corporation, and the institutions of higher learning — made instrumental use of its values for gaining relative advantage in relation to their opponents. They exercised monopoly control over its meaning to secure their position in the current political and economic system. The effect was to render resistance to exercise of power ineffective. This posed a serious threat not only to Enlightenment but also to its legacy. These threats took different forms through history. Under the impact of Enlightenment, humanity, instead of entering into a truly human state, regressed into barbarism as was evident from colonialism, fascism, anti-semitism and the present civilizational wars. The depletion of natural resources, environmental degradation and climate change were seen, not as consequences of a false start but as historical necessity or as contested issues of justice between "us and them". Further, the mastery over nature led to a loss of being

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[21] For those who were subject to structured exploitation in industry or elsewhere, Marxism now was not even a straw in the wind which they might try to catch in the hope of saving themselves.

one with nature. The self became a subjectivity, divorced from direct experience of the outside world. On top of all this during recent years, the effort to tarnish the image of Enlightenment by referring to its instrumental uses in the past, opened political space for an upsurge of regressive social forces in support for a return to some or the other variant of neo-medievalism. This was how the dynamic potential of Enlightenment in shaping the future of humankind was being undermined. Therein lurks a danger.

The uses of Enlightenment within the framework of liberal humanism and free market economy narrowed down its emancipatory capacity. Rather than leading to material improvement and social development of all humanity through methods of scientific inquiry, Enlightenment was harnessed to serve national power in international relations or serve sectional interests in domestic politics. The Enlightenment focus thus shifted to strong institutions especially the state and the business corporation. The threat posed by these institutions to emancipatory politics is hidden beneath liberal commitment to rationality, transparency, accountability, open debate and scientific approach. This makes it all the more serious. The entire political strategy of liberal humanism, in the words of political scientist George Novak, was "to persuade poverty to use its political freedom to keep wealth in power."[22] The true legacy of Enlightenment was being left behind.

Enlightenment teaches conscious and determined rejection of established authority as the basis of knowledge and action. Enlightenment needs to be located within such an epistemological framework. Experience, not authority, is the basis of knowledge. The contemporary resistance to capitalism hailed Marx as an Enlightenment social scientist

[22] Novack, George, *Democracy and Revolution*, New York, 1971, p.144.

rather than as a prophet of historical necessity. Noam Chomsky was similarly hailed when he pointed to industrial corporation as the source of power and knowledge in the twentieth century, which was entirely different from the source of it as perceived by John Locke and Adam Smith in the eighteenth century.[23] Mahatma Gandhi's rejection of colonialism and its subjection of the masses to direct and indirect violence, including that of colonial knowledge systems, was an endorsement of the Enlightenment legacy. In fact, he was the greatest Enlightenment figure of the twentieth century. The rejection of colonial pedagogy was an extension of Enlightenment which led to the decolonization processes. But the new states while accepting developmental statism within the normative framework of liberal humanism brushed aside its historical antecedents. They naively went along with what historian Charles Wetzel wrote:

If indeed the will can triumph over circumstances, and a classless world of hard-working, self-confident harmonious brothers is possible, Americans may be able to point the way.[24]

The promise of Enlightenment for humanity stumbled on its identificatin with liberal humanism. When, therefore, the negative aspects of liberal humanism surfaced and development benefits were found not reaching different

[23] *Understanding Power*, New York, 2002, pp. 221- 22.
[24] Wetzel, Charles J., The Peace Corps in Our Past," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences,* May 1966, p. 11. This was also the time when progressivism and imperialism were inseparable in American thinking: "The progressivism which gave rise to the Peace Corps reawakened an American idealism. (sic) Imperialism, however, was manifest in a kind of hard, unsentimental rationality common to those who regard power as a technical instrument for achieving goals superior to all other instruments in society." Schurman, Franz, *The Logic of World Power: An Inquiry into the Origins, Currents and Contradictions of World Politics*, New York, 1974, p. 419.

sections of the society, the issues of equity and justice were raised and state intervention was sought in favour of these values. Voices for limiting the right to property were heard. A new leadership surfaced which adversely impacted the existing elite consensus in the new states but its overall impact on eliminating social inequality and injustice was only marginal. A weakened elite consensus weakened the polity but the new elite did not make an effort towards social development. The scholars also chose to redefine social development by selectively mounting an attack on premodern social formations from the vantage point of select approaches in economics and sociology. These perspectives were, first, the mono-causal Marxist political economy of class relations; and second, the multi-causal post-Marxist social theory of structured domination. These perspectives were formulated in the West against social dynamics within a modern society, but the critics applied them to premodern societies. One tried to read premodern social formations in terms of Marxian concepts especially the concept of class while the other conflated Durkheimian-Parsonian interest based pluralism with premodern culturally based social diversity. Women and *dalits* are not interest groups, nor are religious communities majorities or minorities. Nor can they be represented as social classes. But historigraphy and social science research was undertaken within these perspectives. The research output therefore left minimal impact on class-based and other forms of social domination. On the contrary, it was helpful in regulating and redirecting the political activity of lower classes and social groups towards maintenance of the social status quo.

After the end of the cold war, space opened for rethinking the normative basis of the political order. The experience with an interventionary state was not worth repeating. Rather than reconstructing a rights-based liberalism into what it was not, the political opinion was in favour of recovering liberalism

and realize its economic and social potential and promise. The welfare content given to it and the collectivist orientation it underlined, were not acceptable. These modifications were regarded as deluding the citizen, and not supplying to socially disadvantaged persons with means for achieving personal dignity. What message did this communicate to people on the margins? You find the message pasted on your pillow when you wake up one fine morning: the dignified way of improving your social status is to take advantage of market opportunities rather than blaming others for your condition.[25]

Such reassessments of the welfare model were common in Europe after the Second World War. The post-cold war critics of welfare statism in the non-Western world rediscovered them. Earlier in Europe, the need was felt for reconstructing liberalism to roll back the regulatory state and defend Enlightenment ideals. Friedrich Hayek set up the Society for Renovation of Liberalism in 1938. Its members created a network of think tanks for addressing the issue. Their efforts were bolstered by the Heritage Foundation in the United States. The renovated liberalism, as it finally emerged, was called *neoliberalism.* Its declared aim was to bring Enlightenment back on the rails by putting the political and economic ideas of the eighteenth century back into the mainstream for political agitation and debate. But the real aim was to strengthen the West in confronting the socialist rival.

The foremost need of the system was to foster elite consensus in democratic political systems and use the lower classes in the interest of capital accumulation. This instrumentalist interpretation of the state was substantially modified by the structuralists who argued for the relative

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[25] There is no help for those who cannot look after themselves. King, John, *The Football Factory,* London, 1996, p. 64. Also see, Corfield, P.J., ed. *Language, History and Class,* Oxford, 1991.

autonomy of the state, so that public policies were not inevitably geared to the interests of the capitalists and indeed might be antithetical to their interests in the short run. Despite this liberal orientation, the structuralist position converged on the Marxist instrumentalist stand. The structuralist emphasis on maintaining elite consensus and cohesiveness of the social formation was seen by them as important for long-term interests of the dominant capitalist-class.

The instrumental use of the state by the capitalist class was not opposed by Marxists and structuralists. They relied on their principled position in rejecting even the possibility of a neutralist state emerging in relation to unequal and conflicting groups and classes within and outside its boundaries. But such was the effect of Western Marxism on it that this principled stand came to be reconciled to the liberal view of conflict-resolution and veered round to give a decisive voice to electoral procedures in deciding the competition between power and rewards. The Marxists and structuralists now came out openly in favour of electoral results bestowing legitimate authority on the winners to represent everyone within their territorially delimited constituencies, including the poor and the marginalized, though they themselves came from different social backgrounds. When therefore the rich or those belonging to known lineages or other categories of elitehood took away the rewards of power, there was nobody to raise eyebrows. This was how the liberal humanist orthodoxy animated a reformist approach. Robert Cox rightly says that "it takes the world as it finds it, with the prevailing social and power relationships and institutions into which they are organized, as the given framework for action". Would a people who were conscious of difference and inequality accept the world as they found it? Only a transnational elite can accept the world as it finds it. This elite comprises of the new rich in all

parts of the world and is able to see a harmony of interests among its members, not as much among themselves as in relation to the rest. Can it be shown as representing other than itself? In this context, the question of representation becomes crucial. It is all the more so because the agenda of this elite seeks to customize and monopolize the use of state, science and reason to its purposes. The top most item on this agenda is to work unitedly to help the West in tiding over its present economic crisis.[26] With this job on hand, the state is pressurized to push growth rates by introducing economic reforms and stall social resistance by deepening social liberalization aimed not so much to strengthen individual freedom as to weaken social solidarity of the oppressed. The state was also pressurized to infuse into processes of conflict-resolution and consensus-building a sense of autonomy in promoting social peace and non-violence, and, to that end, give high publicity to academic and media events related to the working out of these processes within specified spaces of social conflict. The evolving situation has components of social liberalism, market reform and investment openings. Pick and take away what is yours. The people are thus being led on the garden path of peace and prosperity. You feel that you are watching a miracle, like Lord Ganesh drinking milk. You want to know what lies hidden under the pedestal. So, I started digging in and discovered liberal humanism playing the game of hide and seek like small children, hiding something here and showing something there. In short, I attempted to write this essay on the emerging scene in world affairs, the make believe element in the conduct of post-cold war politics.

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[26] This is not to suggest a link between consumption patterns of the new rich and international capitalism.

Chapter 2

SCIENCE VERSUS RELEVANCE

The study of political science is a continuing dialogue between *scientism* on the one hand, and contesting approaches to *relevance* and *action* on the other. The issue is translated as an issue between rational universalism and social contextualism. The issue divides members of the faculty and student community into rival factions. As a young teacher, I was a witness to such divisions taking place. Engaged with the emerging superstructure for scientific study of politics, I saw the people on the other side opening fire. They limited the relevance of scientific research to the social context of its origin and development. Where was such research located? Who was engaged in it? Who was using it? Such questions were asked. These questions were not questions of fact but of politics. Politics was not visualized as entirely rational. It could not be comprehended by scientific rationalism alone. Politics and science were seen as alternatives if not also opponents. And so political research should move to locations where the problems were raising their head, and should be useful to those who were at the receiving end of social domination and economic exploitation.

The issue between science and relevance is formulated in either-or terms. There has not been any common ground between them. The intellectual and policy elite keep moving from one end to the other. There is no stable point to perch on. The situation calls for a change. The way for changing it is by transcending the polarity and integrating the rival

perspectives into a relevant ethic of national development. Social sciences never moved effort in this direction. They continued to conflate the rational with the Western (liberal or Marxist) so that the only way for realizing rationality in society was through a top-down dynamic along Western historical experiences at the behest of the dominant state and so treating national development as an act of will. It is not based on consensus in a non-Western society. It was pioneered by middle classes and did not square with the lifestyle and living conditions of the masses. It touched the latter sensitively. Those who claimed to represent the masses therefore wished to chart an alternative path for their societies. For them, the Western was provincial.[1] They wanted to draw on local sources of rationality for reconstructing their social world. The political space in non-Western societies is thus a site of continuing tension between liberal, socialist and alternative sources of rationality. This tension is the axis of politics in the non-Western world.

What are the options for the *aam adami* (common man)? Common people put their act together when faced with the issue. For them, the issue is one of choice between essentialism and constructivism, or between the universality of human essence and specificities of social construction. In real life situations, it is a choice between unencumbered and implicated self, or between individual freedom and social dependence. It is indeed the margin of choice offered by a man's social condition that matters. The choice, when it arises, is constrained by the limiting conditions of actor capability. An actor's awareness of these limits and of their difference from those of other actors motivates him or her in defining himself or herself differently from them. Such

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[1] Chakrabarty, Dipesh, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*, New Delhi, 2001.

self-definitions are formed within a web of social expectations and are characterized by a dual reality, being both subjective and objective at the same time, reducible to neither. As a subjective reality, choice making is like choosing a mental map, a negotiated consensus, a guide to action, and as the knowledge of this map is shared with others, there occurs an interlocking of knowledge and action which gives it a mind independent existence. Sociologists describe this as the phenomenological aspect of social reality. It counterbalances the essentialist notions of humanity and their derivative concepts of the right and the good, which the essentialists claim, are applicable across all social divides. No wonder, such claims are seen by the *aam adami* as empty slogans. For example, the campaign for protection of human rights, flagging the essentialist conception, is viewed as something which is external to the social context of an agent and as such is met with a measure of apathy, especially by people who easily trade the right for a preferred good.

A systemic effort for constructing an integrated ethic has an imperative of grounding formal analysis of a society not just within a universalist framework but on its existing reality. For this, it is necessary, first, to lay bare one's moral premises. One should then go to the history of political thought to discover how others addressed the problem in the past, and the lessons so learnt should help in bringing about such integration in one's own society. The usefulness of such an academic approach to the problem was limited. The question was, how should a *relevant* object of study be chosen? And, what should be the ground for defining the study as *scientific*? Non-Western definitions of *relevance* and *science* were constrained by global distribution of power. What Pierrie Bourdieu said in another context was equally true in this context also: "The political presuppositions of political 'science' appear as 'political' in the very choice of its methods

and objects."[2] Soon after gaining political independence, the imperative of survival in inter-state relations generated compulsions for grounding national interest on military power, modern economy and politics. This called for a scientific study of relevant Western practices as they were then the only available model to follow. Development thus became Westernization. The imperative for Westernization directed the non-Western political thinking towards the structural-functional mode which, for this very reason, was discontinuous with local history. The structural-functional theory put faith in the capacity of Western structures[3] to realize the normative framework of liberal humanism in non-Western societies. The (Western) structures embodying historically proven rationality were introduced as an enabling strategy for material development through application of technology.[4]

[2] Bourdieu, Pierre, *Political Interventions: Social Sciences and Political Action*, London, 2008; Indian edition, New Delhi, 2010, p. 386.

[3] Riggs, Fred W. says, "Action becomes a structure only when it is repeated often enough to become recognizable as a pattern. (sic) It is then reinforced by the attitudes and norms of those directly involved." See, his "Systems Theory: Structural Analysis," in Haas, Michael and Kariel, Henry S., eds. *Approaches to the Study of Political Science*, Pennsylvania, 1970, p.214. This definition of structure is at variance with the Marxist definition which eventually evolved into structuralism, a post-Marxist approach for analysing dominance within non-economic social structures.

[4] The structural-functional theory is not inherently static but it has been criticized for being static on account of the failure to distinguish between its analytic and prescriptive aspects. It is necessary to make this distinction to adapt it to a "developmental direction." Almond, G.A., "A Developmental Approach to Political Systems," *World Politics,* XVII, January 1965. At the same time, the choice of structural-functional theory for application to non-Western political systems was faulty for another reason also. It is a whole-system theory. It was for this reason inapplicable to structures picked up from Western political thought and implanted to perform dynamic but determinate functions

The modernization imperative was to confront tradition in everyday life through politics of representing it in unfavourable ways, or to go beyond the binary of modernity and tradition to modify, adapt and coopt tradition for harnessing its wide social base to give modernization a democratic cover. Such a conceptualization of agency role attributed primacy to the political sphere and to the role of political institutions and processes in social progress and development. This was described as political development, a democratic process emanating from a dominant political centre and spreading outwards. Being democratic, the process was expected to fit development with the interests of the masses. The masses, no doubt, were eager for material and technological development, but with minimum social costs.

The political question was, how should the costs and benefits be distributed among castes, communities and regions. This led to a lively discourse of democracy in non-Western societies. On account of the structural divide of the classes with the masses along the normative dimension, the discourse was aimed more to boost the legitimacy of the state than to bring it closer to the masses. The necessity for strategizing democracy arose because the ruling classes often found themselves sitting on a narrow social base. This gave rise to a foreign policy compulsion for linking the exclusionary dominance to the Western bloc in the East-West cold war. Both liberals and Marxists interpreted the situation as one which had the potential of excluding large

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in non-Western settings. The impact of structural diversity and of multi-functionality of structures was not anticipated. The expectation that these structures would perform expected functions proved to be illusory. See, LaPalombara, Joseph, "Parsimony and Empiricism in Comparative Analysis: An Anti-scholastic View," in Holt, Robert and Turner, John, eds., *The Methodology of Comparative Research*, New York, 1970. Also refer to note 10.

masses from the benefits of development. Democracy alone could save these masses from the consequences of such exclusion. But the democratic problem was compounded by, what Nicos Poulantzas said, the emergence of bureaucracy as a social category, classless in character but pulling its weight in favour of the pro-West politics and development. Could democracy succeed with such a bureaucracy continuing to be in command of political system outputs?

The non-Western world tried to correct the imbalance by revising its understanding of the decolonization process and this increasingly brought it under the impact of the Soviet bloc. The left intellectuals articulated the concepts of dependency and neocolonialism for interpreting the Western (mainly American) approaches to development and their impact on society and politics. The Western development approaches were criticized as conscious attempts for tilting the global political economy in favour of continued Western dominance. The non-Western states decided to confront this dominance. The nonaligned movement (NAM) fell in line with this approach. The non-Western state was the only available institutional agency capable of spearheading the confrontation. The political focus in the non-Western world, therefore, shifted to mobilization of economic and human resources for strengthening the state. This was a departure from the understanding given in the proclamations of nationalist leaders. The political class, within the framework of this new understanding, strategized foreign technological and military assistance, and emphasized on building indigenous capabilities for promoting industrial and military development. Exclusionary hegemony giving the state a narrow social base was a handicap in going through these processes of state-building, and so the politics of inclusive development was foregrounded for expanding the social base of the state through democratic participation. This

served as the context for redefining *relevance* in political studies.

The politics of inclusion required empowerment of the people for political participation on questions relating to equality and social justice. The attention was drawn to the locus of inequality and injustice in society. The locus was the structure of the social nexus. It rested on law, culture, morality and custom. It was, what Louis Althusser called, an ideology (in the sense of an opium of the masses). The focus of such an ideology was on production of the subject who recognized the existing social world as the only possible and reasonable one. Traditional approaches to study and research in history, humanities and cultural studies were tailored to advance this ideological function in society. Against such an understanding of the existing social reality, the ideology sustaining such a reality was chosen as the unit of analysis in contemporary humanities and social sciences.The need was felt for articulating a social theory and methodology which aimed at the transformation of the social structure in line with the goals of national development.

The Marxist theory of structure in capitalism gave helpful leads in understanding the problem. The problem before Marx (as also now) was, how should a structure be transformed when it possessed the capacity for reproducing the conditions for its continued survival and functioning? These structures remained unchanged, even though a diachronic analysis of their characteristics revealed infinite variations in characteristics and behaviour. The constancy of the internal structure, not its empirical profile, which posed the problem. This internal structure was stable and hidden behind the visible part. Empirical social science was incapable of investigating it. Marx posited a hidden internal structure of the capitalist system behind its visible functioning. An intelligible and coherent systematization of capitalist society

in terms of its visible features such as labour, wage and profit had pragmatic utility but was of no scientific value. A scientific conception of social life consisted in bringing out the hidden internal logic. The model of a society constructed on the basis of such a science corresponded to a reality concealed beneath its visible reality. The concealment was not due to the inability of consciousness to perceive it but it was so because of the nature of reality itself. If capital was not a thing but a social relationship (a non-sensible thing), it would inevitably disappear from consciousness when presented in sensible forms like machines, tools, raw materials, etc. This was how Marx distinguished structure from its visible constituents and their mutual relations. He pioneered the structuralist tradition. The structuralist position on the nature of cultural phenomena was not to treat it as a product of conscious individual human beings; rather, to treat it as a product of abstract social codes which individuals made use of as members of a society.

When the need for inclusive politics arose for expanding the social base of the state, the social scientists asked themselves, was Marxist structuralism capable of extension to non-capitalist and other social structures also? This question ignited a very creative dialogue among structuralism, Marxism, humanities and social sciences around several binaries such as structuralism versus empiricism, Marxism versus humanism, Marxism versus social democracy, structure versus agency, etc. The impact of this dialogue was to raise structuralism to the level of Marxist methodology It flagged its relevance to the study of non-Western politics. This was a European, especially French approach to social science practice, as opposed to an Anglo-American approach. Structuralism spread out from French intellectual circles to other academic centres, and took within its fold, literary, anthropological and sociological studies, and in the writings of various scholars, like Claude Levi-Strauss,

Jacques Lacan, Roland Barthes, Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida, differentiated Marxist methodology along different dimensions. These Marxist variants had supporters at Jawaharlal Nehru University. But it was Louis Althusser's anti-humanism and anti-empiricist structuralist Marxism which had the maximum impact on students and teachers. These students and teachers, though self-proclaimed Marxists and hailed as such by others, though proclaiming to be Marxists, were different from classical Marxists as they had forsaken the Marxist philosophy of history, and espoused social anthropological concept of social structure. To this extent, they were revisionist Marxisits.

The Marxist problematic of social change towards equality and social justice within the framework of historical materialism, according to Althusser, was an *epistemological break* from humanism embodied in American social science and the approach of young Marx. It was also a break from Marxism as ideology, a top-down process, criticized as 'end of theory' by E.P.Thompson. Althusser sought to establish *Marxism as a science* (distinct from *ideology*), and opened it to diverse applications within the limits set by local conditions and the goals of action. This led to post-Marxist extensions of Marxism to issues of social justice in inter-community relations, including gender and minority rights.

An interesting aspect of Althusser was that he squared Marxist social science with liberal principles of statism, scientism and secularism, the constituent principles of liberal humanism, but diverged from liberal humanism by problematizing humanism. Althusser's anti-humanism served as a theoretical base, as in Marx, for sharpening social contradictions through a dialectical process, leading to social change without a revolution. The term *dialectic* in Althusser refers to literary and theoretical picturization of social antimonies and does not find expression in argumentation relating to class polarization and political economy. The post-

Marxian argumentation around issues of social injustice monopolized the political space which Marxists fashionably but *incorrectly* claimed to be their own. That is, structuralists monopolized the discourses of class phenomenon through post-Marxist extensions of the concept. Hence, Althussiarian dialectic was an intellectual and ideational process aimed at delivering economic and social change. The Marxian emphasis on relations of production and capitalist appropriation of surplus evaporated in thin air.

Post-Marxism marginalized Marxism and strengthened the state. As the empirical evidence within post-Marxist frameworks was tailored to support *theory*, the dialectical process did not yield the desired social change. Althusser was providing a cover for emancipatory politics aimed at expanding the social base of the state. The emancipatory politics would rather critique the historically given social order and its ideological foundations than address the social contradictions emerging from the operation of modern economy and politics which were the focus of Marxian understanding. It was rooted in political struggles of postcolonial power structures, and not in the desire to realize a society based on Marxism grounded on a philosophy of history. Non-Western politics thus, continued to be in the interlocked grip of statism and dialectics where the latter actualized itself for advancing the state agenda.

The end of the cold war meant an end of bipolarity in the global system, while the collapse of the former Soviet Union discredited applications of Marxism in politics and social science. It is ironic that the collapse of the authoritarian state socialism should have been a stimulus for proclamations of the 'end of Marxism' or for self-doubt among Marxists. In any case, the end of the cold war created compulsions for a reorientation of strategy in non-Western states. Almost all of them shifted their policy stance from one of confrontation to imitation. Was it poverty of imagination on the part of

those who held the Marxist flag high? Or was it just a change of strategy? China was the front runner in adopting this new strategy. Post-communist and non-Western societies including India woke up to it somewhat later. Western economic institutions, capital, technology and management were welcomed. Even retail outlets (the malls) came in large numbers and dotted the urban landscape. They were legitimated through empirical verification of their characteristics in relation to those of comparable structures in developed modernity (symbols of *scientism* as Western rationality), not in terms of their social *relevance.* The middle class dream of living in a developed Western country was almost realized in the home country.

The logic behind such reorientation of strategy was probably in line with what was stated, as far back as 1968, by Servan-Schreiber in his famous book, *The American Challenge*, where he referred to a parallel process then underway in Europe. The process, he said, led to short-term dependence but, as he said, it promoted, in the long-term, both development and progress, which otherwise was not possible. The post-cold war non-Western world and the former socialist countries learnt this lesson for tailoring their own strategies. Their post-cold war slogan was: *develop, equalize and confront.*[5] This politics of equality and competition with the West was driven by liberal humanist logic of accumulation and national power. The driving force was provided by the state and the market. They were respectively grounded on ideological and

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[5] This underlined the synthesis of postmodernism with Marxist dialectics. Uneven development of capitalist economy led to it. That this would come to pass was not visualized by modernization theory. This led to a profoundly ambivalent reaction against dominance of developed regions, seeking at once to resist dominance and to somehow take over their vital forces for their own use. See, Nairn, Tom, "The Modern Janus," *The New Left Review*, November-December, 1985.

economic rationality. As such, they were both intrinsically authoritarian and non-democratic. They skewed political and economic processes towards external goals. This resulted in opening a gap between the state and its underlying society, and between the market and the people it served. The state and the market came to be characterized by exclusionary hegemony. Political and economic structures increasingly regressed on standards of democratic performance. This created serious problems for internal security. The situation was not sustainable. This point called for some elaboration.

Political restlessness was widespread at the grass roots level. Its impact on political legitimacy was critical. And the neoliberal shift from interventionary to market-led economy gave a measure of autonomy to the business leaders on issues relating to market development and expansion. Development economics had the effect of limiting social environment for doing business. A neoliberal economy expanded this environment. Business leaders now wanted to switch politics from the normative framework of modernity to that of post-modernity. For them, the political economy of modernity was restrictive and cost-ineffective. The imperative now was to evaluate the historically given social configurations and lifestyles in terms of market value. Their validity claims based on practice of traditional values and virtue were appreciated. This was at variance with the earlier practice of the hegemonic institutions to denounce them as remnants of a feudal past.

The hegemonic aim was to colonize and reconstitute these social structures and practices to generate bottom-up pressures in favour of modern liberal values, with the individual seeking freedom to pursue self-interest and to pass the burden of virtuous action onto public institutions. The political economy of modernity sought economic expansion by riding on the back of individualism; the political economy of post-modernity was riding on the back of

tradition and group identity. This led to market-driven reconciliations of freedom and tradition. Freedom-seeking individuals were switching over to market-delivered traditional lifestyles.[6] This trend was being reinforced by appropriate changes in academic approaches. The previous strategy of hegemonic modernity was being counterbalanced by a robust reconstruction of local history and culture as an alternative source of rationality and progress. The identification of the modern with the rational, and obversely of the traditional with the irrational, was being replaced by identification of the traditional with alternative rationality and conception of the good. This marked a departure from liberal humanist thinking and further compounded difficulties in grounding politics and economy on it.

   The cold war contest for the soul of the non-Western world had given a push to the universalizing processes. The social configurations of developed modernity were represented as characterized by rationality (and, as such, they were modern and progressive) and the rest were characterized as irrational, traditional and retrograde. The cold war protagonists sponsored their respective institutional configurations which were claimed by them as embodying their respective conceptions of rationality, modernity and progress in relation to the non-Western world. It was in this sense that the non-Western world had emerged as a site for contest among liberal, socialist and traditional approaches to progress and development. These approaches coincided with the Enlightenment, anti-Enlightenment and pre-Enlightenment philosophical trends. The socialist and liberal approaches (representing respectively anti-Enlightenment and the Enlightenment trends) were different from each other, insofar as one of them situated rationality and progress in the Marxist philosophy of history, while the other located

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[6] Featherstone, M., *Consumer Culture and Postmodernism*, London, 1992.

it in the philosophy of linear progress through limitless development of science and technology. But they shared their Western origin. The traditionalists (representing the pre-Enlightenment trend) described themselves as an alternative to the other two. Broadly, the Enlightenment and anti-Enlightenment trends, in relation to the non-Western world, were premised on structural-functionalist logic. This logic coerced the non-Western world to institutionalize the transformative agency role of knowledge and structures derived from the history of the West. The pre-Enlightenment trend was equally structural-functionalist in seeking to institutionalize the transformative agency role of knowledge and structures dug out from local history.[7]

The coercion was channelized through academics, professionals and bureaucrats who either took a futurist position and looked to great powers for ideological inspiration, but whose feet were unstable on the ground, or who took a traditionalist position and looked to the historical past for ideological inspiration, and, for this reason, whose

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7 Fred Riggs describes the second and the third axioms of structural analysis like this: "Second, although a structure normally performs a given function, there is no assurance that it will always do so. (sic.) The importance of the point is evident if we consider the tendency of foreign technical advisers to recommend practices which normally have a given function in the countries where they originated. In the new setting, however, a structure may be adopted but its functions are likely to be different. The second axiom may be tested by looking at the process of modernization, which means adopting by emulative acculturation, structures and practices that are prevalent elsewhere in societies regarded by the emulators as more advanced, that is, modern. The underlying assumption in these processes of modernization is that the borrowed structures will enable the emulators to accomplish results (functions) similar to those achieved by the modern country. Our second axiom warns that these may not follow." (Emphasis in the original is omitted). Riggs, op.cit., p. 215. Also see note 8 above.

feet were stable on the ground, but who were unsure about the future. They were constantly at pains either to reconcile their universalistic commitments with local history and social reality, or to reconcile the local with the universal. This problematized inter-level relationships in governance. For some people, the top was rational, progressive and futuristic, not so the local, which was described as slightly irrational, backward and antiquated, while for the others, the local was real and authentic, but not so the top which was unreal and artificial.

The Enlightenment and anti-Enlightenment social forces joined hands to represent the voices coming from the masses in terms of their ideological commitments. They joined hands against pre-Enlightenment philosophy which in their view had no space on the agenda of the contemporary world which, in parrot like rendition of the Enlightenment thinkers, was declared as a total break from it. But the pre-Enlightenment social forces could not be gagged and surfaced in diverse forms to spread their wings. In this triangular contest, when seen within a longer time frame, no one has been a winner yet, neither in the West nor elsewhere. Any two poles were always able to join hands against the third. The end of the cold war was thought to be an end of this triangular contest.

The end of the history debate, in fact, celebrated the illusion of the triangular polarity yielding place to unipolarity in world affairs, the unipolarity of liberal rationalism. This thought was intoxicating to liberal rationalists. When the intoxicated rationalists emerged from their stupor, they found Mahatma Gandhi and Bruno Latour to read and Osama to fight against. In the backdrop of these developments, it would not be premature to conclude that some form of checks and balances was taking shape in world affairs. In addition, there was an attempt to reconstruct each of the three approaches to optimize their synthesis. Truth

was still elusive. Conscious of its elusiveness, no power in future might feel confident enough to bully the world on grounds of its self-assured righteousness. The world would not yield to such an effort. It would retort, know the truth first before you dared to boot. This was how world affairs were on the way to revolutionary transformation. World affairs were moving towards a plurality of the right and the good. Fortunate are those who are alive to see this beautiful dawn.

On winding back to cold war days, one can figure out the main features of the path leading to this dawn. One finds that the self-assured approaches to rationality and progress, underlined by one or the other cold war protagonist, tried to shape public policy in the non-Western world. This endowed modern configurations with a pre-eminent position within the strategic framework for emulative development of these societies in the image of developed societies, liberal or socialist. And the mechanics of such development comprised of legislative processes, administrative procedures and resort to force against dissenters. Different sources of power intersected on this purpose, especially the sources of soft power. It was eventually a case of making an all round attempt to bridge the social divide by uprooting the *subjective* essence of man from local and affective relationships and substituting them with those based on citizenship. The liberal humanist dimension of such development was to inculcate the value of individualism and of competition in every sphere of social life. Competition (not cooperation, tolerance and mutual aid) was described as natural and integral to freedom which, in practical terms, called for making an effort, in line with the maxim that acquisition (as opposed to renunciation) was the purpose of life. Liberty, equality and fraternity (values listed in the preamble of the Constitution of India) were being replaced by a service providing state (*sarak, bijli, pani* — road,

electricity and water) aimed to facilitate competition for promoting economic growth, not social harmony or democratic society.

The social bond was now increasingly defined in terms of money, so that one learnt to carry the bond with society in one's pocket. This was how the modern configurations embodying great power notions of rationality and progress sought to confront historically given configurations, ideally embodying a different conception of the right and the good, and restructure them in line with the norms of modernity. Social and natural sciences and culture based notions of good life were judged against this overarching standard. The overall effect was to upset the relation between economic and non-economic priorities of individuals and groups and to undermine culture based tendencies for undertaking virtuous action.

The state, capital, organized and unorganized economic sectors took this framework as the bottomline for assessing their respective location in relation to one another. The question facing them was, how would their respective locations relate to processes of social differentiation under the impact of market-led economic integration? How would their social status end up in the changing economy? What does formal equality of opportunity mean when you start with a social handicap? In the face of great uncertainty on these issues, the different social actors were constrained to formulate their respective codes and rules of behaviour. The effect was to complicate the processes of integrating them into a whole, as required for democratic development of the society, or for economic growth within a capitalist framework. It was easy to dismantle but difficult to reassemble.

When the differentiating activities, institutions and sub-systems of the polity and economy continued to pull in different directions, defying integration, the ongoing

hegemonic struggle for the hearts and minds of the people became intense. The polity found it difficult to negotiate the differences. This added an ominous authoritarian dimension to political culture. The absence of consensus on national goals confounded the situation. A shift occurred in deployment of police, and in organization and use of investigative and criminal justice systems. Such coercive practices were complemented by stories of evil forces on the prowl, so that popular images of the emerging situation spoke in favour either of the repressive state apparatus or the agenda of the political right.

Chapter 3

RATIONALITY AS IDEOLOGY

The defining values of liberal humanism are scientism, statism and secularism. These values are grounded on primacy of reason in human affairs. They constitute the intellectual foundation of modernity and inspire efforts to wean humanity away from domination of arbitrary and extra-terrestrial powers. The success of the effort was evident from the willingness of humans today to submit themselves to rational authority while addressing problems relating to nature and society. During the last few hundred years, this led to unprecedented levels of technological development and enabled substantial increase in man's control over conditions of his life. This signalled a triumphant march of continuous progress to the present when it levelled off with a technology-based one world.

But social progress could not match it. Technological progress and social progress were out of step. Social progress lagged behind. The heightening of this awareness led to the question: would this disparity be a drag on further technological progress? Would the required social base for technological progress shrink? These questions were asked by those who foregrounded rationality in human affairs (liberal or Marxist humanists), either motivated by ideological rationality, or perhaps to bolster their existing levels of economic and political power. Here was the fault line. Rationality and technology were used by the socially strong as weapons against the socially weak, and harnessed social sciences to their cause. This became evident when the social

sciences were called upon to generate nomological laws to guide policy for addressing the emerging problem. The urgency of the situation prompted social sciences to accept the epistemological claims of positivist social science, even though it could be easily guessed then, that doing labour to discover genuine social laws to support a science of public policy was like chasing a mirage.[1] The problems which depended on such a science for their solution continued to be unresolved.

The consequent gap between the requirement of an industrial society for planning and the ability of social sciences to meet it by generating capacity for formulating and implementing the kind of plans needed, posed a threat to the continued existence of such a society. In Europe, for example, the social changes contingent on industry-led development could not be planned. Europe was therefore witness to social turbulence occurring in the wake of industrial development. Social and economic historians have recorded this. The recent example was that of postcolonial societies. After the end of the cold war, the framework of liberal humanism was accepted by them for promoting economic development driven by industry.

Simultaneously, the focus was on enhancing problem-solving capability. The focus was on application of scientific methods to solving social problems. Technological solutions to social problems were privileged. As this approach was extended to social sciences also, attempts were made to develop *applied* social sciences on the model of engineering sciences. The application of an engineering approach to

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[1] Cf.: "(I)t may be useful to distinguish between the laws which emerge from physical laboratories and, in turn, guide applied research in the industrial laboratories, as opposed to the kind of understanding which comes out of the sociological study of real situations, but which rarely leads to the formulation of strict causal laws." Rein, Martin, *Social Science and Public Policy*, New York, 1976, p. 102.

the solution of social problems led to strategies of social change conceived from a vantage point of a development morality that was external to the society which was targeted for effecting such change. This had implications for the unit of analysis and even the choice of problems.[2] All such attempts amounted to escaping the social question. The issue needed to be put in context and a brief elaboration of it would be helpful.

Why did social progress lag behind? The answer would run like this. The synthesis of rationality, as embodied in science, technology and capitalist economy, with a vision of good society characterized by freedom and equality, did not go beyond theoretical writings to realize a corresponding social reality, except probably for a short period when transition from feudalism to modern capitalism in Europe gave rise to hopes of such a reality emerging. Rather than progressing in tandem as predicted in theory, reason and freedom diverged under the impact of modernization and took different paths. While progress could be deduced from the first principles, a good society could not be created by an act of imagination. Yet a group of progressive social thinkers called futurists, celebrating liberal humanist thrust in history, continued to think otherwise and believed that a good society was just a technological fix. For them, such a society was basically a rational society in which the institutional agencies of bureaucratic state, capitalist economy and organized science reached out to diverse social processes and brought them within the fold of rationalization and technological control. This eventually turned out to be an effort to recast human existence in its diverse cultural settings in line with the imperatives of rationality.

[2] See, Damle, Y.B., "Theoretical Orientations and Methodological Perspectives for Sociology in India in the 1980s," in Nayar, P.K.B., ed., *Sociology in India*, Delhi, 1982.

Such total transformation of a society was not possible without the process getting initiated and followed up by chosen agencies. The agential formations (political institutions, economic institutions and social institutions) were attributed with functions aimed at producing the desired effects in the host society. The production of these effects by the designated agencies, in a political environment of liberal freedom and choice, required a civil society to back them. But the existence of a modern civil society in non-Western polities was problematic. The Orientalists explained this by pointing to the tradition of direct and unmediated relation of the ruler to the subject in these societies. Hence the focus on agential role for top-down social change had an imperative of first creating such a civil society. And there was little to build on, as there was not much in tradition to meet the requirements of top-down change.

Non-governmental organizations, together with civil society institutions and movements, both local and international, filled the vacuum. The civil society, so improvised, inevitably came to be embedded in the rationalist agenda of the state. As there was no society beyond the state, the civil society was an extension of state power in relation to the constituent communities within this state-society.[3] This opened space for building a *totally administered society*, in the terminology of critical theory. It was thus possible for the state to focus power on chosen communities, disintegrate them, uproot them from their organic roots and push them

[3] For an elaboration of this view, see Weber, Max, *Economy and Society*, eds. Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich, Berkeley, 1978 and Tonnies, Ferdinand, *Community and Society*, Tr. By Charles Loomis, New York, 1963. This enabled the state to restructure societal categories, patterns of social differentiation and stratification, as part of its hegemonic strategy for managing political and economic power. In this respect, the concept of civil society is different from its connotations within liberal and Marxist frameworks.

into a future which was discontinuous with their past. The state could not appropriate the past nor plan the future. The society was as a consequence frozen and its vitality for adaptation to the changing conditions of survival and further evolution was destroyed. In India, for example, the scholars often talk of a *historical break* which stifled the creative impulse of the people. They probably point to this discontinuity resulting from the state-sponsored march towards a rational society, modelled after liberal social values, led to a concept of the civil society which, rather than representing the underlying society, its value-orientations and interests, in relation to the state, was more like a cosmetic makeover of the interests and needs of the state in its relation to the society. A civil society of liberal humanist denomination was probably waiting to be born only after the existing complications arising from inter-community differences, poverty and ignorance were sorted out under the dynamic impact of a socially charged rational agency.

The first major problem was how should political and economic institutions or social structures for agency role be identified in a given society? The only place to look for was the history of political thought — a storehouse of information on political, economic and social formations, which had earlier played such a role in European society, economy and politics. The idea was to locate in non-Western societies, matching formations for performing agential roles modelled on their archetypical roles in European history. But in European societies the roles had grown locally. The social sciences took the history of these roles for generating theories for universal application.

The postcolonial societies which saw in one or the other cold war protagonist an image of their own future decided to choose the theory of liberal or socialist development to guide their choice of agency. This was underlined by the misconceived assumption that the thought, theory and

ideology constituted a consistent whole. The ideology, in any case, was external to this society and probably represented the global interests of the corresponding cold war protagonist. Yet national development in non-Western societies was mediated by it. It determined the choice of a development agency from among the state, nation, class and the individual. Within the framework of the political ideology chosen by a non-Western state, the choice of the agency could be from among the institutions located in the polity, the society or the economy. The choice animated discourses of the social structure and dynamics of social change. The imperative was to move the society towards developmental goals which were *discontinuous with its past.* The issue was foregrounded by the question, was a fundamental restructuring of the inherited social structure necessary for a decisive movement forward towards modernity? Was such restructuring, to be acceptable, must be grounded on the norms of liberal humanism? The answer was in the affirmative.

A break with the past was considered necessary for socio-economic modernization based on capitalist economy, functional interdependence and individualism.[4]

How would a break with the past be effected? Promptly, one would say, it could, of course, be effected through a social revolution. Apart from the discomforting fact of

[4] This, what Fred Riggs says, is a perplexing phenomenon of contemporary modernization. He says: "Because the salient governmental structures found in Western countries normally perform a given range of functions, it is often assumed, by Westerners and non-Westerners alike, that these structures can be counted on to perform the same functions wherever they are found. Consequently, modernizers, whether indigenous non-Westerners or Western foreign advisers, try to focus their energies on the transplanting of Western structures of government in the false expectation that their mere introduction will lead automatically to desired functional consequences." Riggs, *op.cit.*, p. 217.

historical continuities persisting through such a revolution, the issue of greatest import was the danger posed by such a revolution to those who lived in the comfort zone of the present, on the strength of huge economic and social inheritance, or otherwise. A revolutionary upheaval would take away these privileges and drive these people out of the comfort zone. A social revolution was therefore ruled out by social scientists who had "intellectual vertigo and an elitist mindset."[5] A break with the past should be engineered and not result from a social revolution. After all, the past was a multilayered structure. Treat it as autonomous, not grounded on a material base. By thus leaving the material plane untouched, the focus of effecting a break with the past would shift the effort to non-material levels. This called for choice of rational strategies for introducing such a change. Could Marxist humanism serve such an instrumental purpose? Would it not sharpen social differences to a point when social development predicted on social revolution would become difficult, if not impossible, for want of solidarity among socially marginalized groups? Would Marxist humanism open up political space for occupation by upper castes and classes which, in their own interest, promoted social divisions among the masses and strategized them to undermine social revolution? Would a social science based on Marxist humanism not render resort to revolutionary violence redundant by specifying convincing ways of promoting social and economic development, freedom and justice, by peaceful means? Would non-Western states not move on the fast track of development by carefully tailoring development and social policies on the model of liberal success stories?

The answers given to these questions did not reveal any commitment to ideological rationality or to a long term

[5] Dasgupta, Samir and Driskell, Robyn, *Discourses on Applied Sociology,* vol. 1: Theoretical Perspectives, London, 2007, p. 210.

trajectory of change. Here the trajectory was defined by political stability variables and GDP growth rates. What could explain this? A possible explanation was that non-Western states were goal-seeking systems and, as such, were adaptable to the changing environment.[6] Balance of power shifts in East-West relations during the cold war generated imperatives for tilting policies one way or the other. Such behaviour was a characteristic feature of the political system in state-societies where politics, not geared to a mission, was not a vehicle for taking forward a national purpose. These societies conformed to the Durkheimian notion of organic solidarity (contrived solidarity as opposed to living solidarity) grounded on economic interdependence and cultural individualism. Being contrived, the solidarity was grounded on rationality.

Such a conception of a rationally integrated society was amenable to the use of a mechanical metaphor for describing it. (The metaphor could, no doubt, apply to an aggregate in a railway compartment, but, when applied to societies which covered a long historical stretch to reach the present form of integration, it displayed more than normal imagination). Yet, such an imagination came into play and supported by sweeping assertions that social solidarity in every case, and in all situations, was contrived by elite or leadership interests, which were securely camouflaged by cultural and ideological rationalizations for social difference, inequality and exclusion. This called for developmental reconfiguration of society. As there was nothing natural or organic about social solidarity, it could be dismantled like any artifact in a workshop for reconstruction through *scientific* craftsmanship or rearrangement of modules and components.

Such social reconstruction was predicated on the dynamic

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[6] Interpreting behaviour as facts about the agent did not reveal its goal-directed dynamics in state-societies.

role of an agency. This led to a rediscovery of the state, the nation, the class or the individual as the locus of rationality for taking over the agential role. A postcolonial society could choose any one of them, or switch from one to the other, or merge one with the other. The possibility of a switch, say, from class to the individual, or from neo-Marxism to neoliberalism, when found necessary by the political class, infused flexibility when faced with balance of power changes among competing interests at the global level. The switch, once effected, was legitimated for domestic and international audiences in the language of the classical texts which pioneered the role of the chosen agency and the relevance of the related development model. The scholars who found the policy shift as corresponding to their own political commitments came out in support of it. Engaging the common man in support of policy choices was well illustrated by the massive social science literature sold in non-Western societies, at highly subsidized prices, by publishers in the US and the former USSR, and the kind of investments made by their governments and private agencies in universities and research institutes, to shape the normative preferences of the intellectuals and concerned citizens there. It is no different in postcolonial states where the chosen members of a powerful *social corps*[7] make investments towards top-down social transformation in a preferred direction, either in terms of universal ideologies, or in terms of more limited, identity-based conceptions of the good.

Political science, now in pursuit of a science of politics, conceptualized these agential entities in universal, *a priori* framework, disembodied them from their history, laced

[7] Meillassoux, Claude, "Towards a Theory of the Social Corps," in De Soto, Hermine, G. and Anderson, David G. , eds., *The Curtain Rises: Rethinking Culture, Ideology, and the State in Eastern Eulanticrope*, New Jersey, 1993.

them with rights and a defined role. Historiography too came under pressure to make normatively guided adaptations in its framework for reading the past so that history could be marched to a *pre-selected future.* The scholars probably did not ask themselves: would social change, defined in terms of an ideology which was not integral to society, not require strategic control and regulation from an external source of power? Would it have enough power to steer the society? Such a source of power was the state, imagined as a *total institution* resting both on national and international support including transnational solidarities, networks or linkages.[8] And yet the agential role was claimed to be immanent in the chosen social formation (state, nation, class, or the individual, as the case may be) on the analogy of such a role in European history. This role was visualized as unfolding itself through autonomous interaction with the larger society which under the dynamic image of its historical role in European history was naively seen as transforming itself in that given direction. The agency-society gaps which surfaced during the transition were getting filled up by social science research, creative arts and political rhetoric, or films, posters and advertisements — all aiming to reinforce the surface appearance of a well integrated and socially wholesome society emerging while, in fact, it was a society which was undergoing differentiation without matching integration and showing signs of fragmentation.

The disembodiment of the agential role from the context

[8] The historians would say that the Marxist philosophy of history was external to Marxist ideology. It could inspire diverse ways of narrating historical events or processes and, as such, negate any charge of ideological commitment on the part of Marxist historians. But the historical narratives of the same scholar, taken together, would tend to converge on a chosen conception of the preferred social good. Would it be very wrong to consider this as divided with ideological advocacy by a thin borderline, or be at least a half-way house to it?

of its historical origin and evolution in Western societies was necessary for its transmutation into a theory for universal application and transfer to other social contexts. Such disembodiment was also tactically necessary. It helped in securing the autonomy of the social formations by isolating them from their underlying postcolonial societies and thereby enabling them to treat such societies as objects capable of effecting top-down transformation. The process of matching the chosen social formation with its archetypical role generated imperatives for going beyond a rigid ideological stance to intellectual efforts for expanding the social base of the ideology. This led to social differentiation of the contesting ideologies, even to significant social overlaps among them. As a result, there emerged varieties of Marxism, liberalism, socialism, capitalism and fascism. These free-floating ideological instruments were easily available, as if on the shelf. Each had a theory and an academy to back it. Yet there was no good fit of a theory or ideology with the social conditions of a postcolonial society.

The interrelationship among ideology, agency and outcome being fluid, its correspondence with the specificities of the social situation to secure desired outcomes became a subject of diverse discourses. The youth revolt of the seventies brought forth the issues relating to this problematic. The revolt appeared to be directionless without a set goal before it. The revolt imbued itself with a religion-based optimism, only to foreground the importance of the youth in future social development. The youth figured out a radical version of Judeo-Christian tradition, that it collectively represented the Second Coming as saviour from authoritarian structures of an evil Establishment.[9]

[9] Erikson, Erik H., "Reflections on the Dissent of Contemporary Youth," *Daedalus*, Winter 1970, pp. 154-176. In India, it is common to talk of a transition from *kalyug* to *satyug*. The emerging political climate seems to square with such formulation. The scam raj, inflation, poverty

The social problem was also confounded by the cross currents of cold war politics. They polarized the political, economic and social agencies as liberal and socialist. This led to the emergence of cognate, though rival, liberal and Marxist, political sciences. This encouraged even renaming of university departments of political science, including that in Jawaharlal Nehru University. Once a departure from the universality of *science* in political *science* was made, further proliferation of political sciences as specialized areas of study (described as black studies, women's studies, *dalit* studies, and even international studies, Asian studies, etc.) could not be stopped. For organizational purposes, they were sometimes termed as specializations within political science, but their academic focus complemented the disciplinary focus only marginally. Religious, cultural or otherwise narrowly based political sciences also emerged. It was argued that human essence to be of universal acceptability could not be a monopoly of liberal thought. In any case the notion of human essence was based on the premises of an abstract individual and an undifferentiated humanity. Other streams of thought such as Marxist, Islamic, Christian or Hindu, and even African, Chinese, Japanese, Indian, Tibetan, or generally non-Western, should also get reflected in human essence. Or, it should be treated as a multifaceted, plural category. By the side of liberal humanism should be seated Marxist humanism, Islamic humanisms and their kind in other cultures, ideologies and geographical areas.

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and unemployment, together with violent methods of terrorists and left radicals are painting the Establishment as evil black, waiting for the Second Coming of the Saviour, a transition to *satyug*. Erikson eulogizes such New Left youth leading the revolt of the dependent people including the poor, the minorities, oppressed groups such as women and even the Hindus being a suppressed lot for hundreds of years.

The consequent fragmentation and contestation among different *avatars* of political science soon spread to all social sciences. This led to an increasing tendency to treat social sciences less as a vocation and more as a profession. Academic professionalization was openly advocated and institutionalized in higher education. Many senior teachers and educational administrators were unwittingly swayed by intra (within) disciplinary differentiations and subjected teachers and students to so-called professional management. The fractionalization of the disciplines led to the emergence of instantly improvised applied specializations serving government or non-governmental interests, public or private, including business and industry. Recruitment of in-house social scientists became common. Corporate houses and institutes of technology recruited in-house social scientists.

The specializations were contextualized at all levels – local, regional, national and global. Contextualization was there at institutional levels as well. Teaching and study of political science varied from one university to another. The variation reflected not the specificity of the local context, but the convenience of the faculty. As the aim of scholarly effort was to realize predetermined goals, the experts tried to fashion an approach, modelled on an engineering project. The inputs were picked from different sources, not confined to the disciplinary stream. The interdisciplinary approach thus thrived on bounded rationality of the goal set before scholars. Though useful in maximizing particularistic goals, bounded rationality excluded several issues of concern to the Renaissance ideal of universal humanism.

Professionalization of social sciences also undermined the humanistic conviction that humans should act according to their free will, and that they should not be open to external management for attainment of professional goals. And yet social sciences did not give up on professionalization. On the contrary, it rather increased manifold. The humanities

also jumped on the bandwagon. Big money was staked on professional competence to sway public opinion or market trends. Professionalized social science experts were easy to spot at academic conferences and seminars sponsored by specialized interests. These experts though belonging to the same discipline, say political science or sociology in universities, shared little among themselves. The particular interests they served circumscribed their knowledge, pursuit and identity. The universal component in the ideology of liberal humanism was not integral to the professional vision of scholars. This was how social sciences and humanities were ceasing to be animated by the Renaissance ideals. A further impact was to differentiate social sciences in terms of three processes: particularization, contextualization and universalization. Still further, an increasing differentiation between thought and theory was becoming visible. The thought in social sciences aimed at holistic understanding of social reality, while social science theory was increasingly becoming parsimonious and particularistic. Theory today aimed at production of the subject, tailored to advance the ideological function of the ruling class. Such theories today ruled the roost. They supplanted the quest for universal thought addressing the issues relating to humankind in general.

It would be useful, at this point, to have a brief overview of perfectly rational steps taken in building universal theories. The first step was an investigation into the relation of the agential structures in European history to the then political, social or economic processes in European societies. The findings based on these investigations were postulated as invariable relationships and theoretically presented in the nature of *geometrical theorems* capable of fitting into other historical contexts for securing predetermined outcomes. It was assumed that these structures would reproduce the functions that are integral to them. This generated interest in interplay of agency with context and outcome and led to

studies in international and comparative development based on empirical sociology, comparative politics and international relations. The research findings elaborating the interplay of agency with context and outcome were articulated as huristic frameworks for collection of data for fine tuning the postulated relationship between the agency and the outcome.

These studies led to theory building in the image of geometrical theorems. These theories formed the backdrop for choosing a social formation in a given non-Western society for agential role. The choice, in any case, was an innovative response. It bridged the historical and cultural gaps between Western and non-Western societies and bypassed the incongruence of knowledge gained in one society for application to the other. But the choice, once made, was legitimated by political science on two grounds: first, political science, being *science,* constructed theories of universal application and was no respecter of cultural differences — invoking the liberal humanist preference for scientism in social life; and second, the non-Western other was labelled as living in a cultural vacuum and had no history of its own.[10] It was devoid of knowledge relevant for development and modernization.[11]

[10] This view finds support even among some scholars of Ancient History and Culture of India.

[11] This approach is integral to politics of identity. The construction of the Western identity on these lines was no different from the construction of other identities, past or present. The Athenians described non-Athenians as barbarians. The other always conveyed a pejorative meaning. In non-Western world, inter-identity hostility is pervasive. Radical politics, grounded on Marxist constructivism, makes use of it for opening political spaces advantageous to it. It takes advantage of hate groups both in domestic politics and international relations. See, Klineberg, Otto, *The Human Dimension in International Relations*, New York, 1964; and Deutsch, Karl, *Nationalism and Social Communication: An Inquiry into the Foundations of Nationality,* 2nd ed., Cambridge, 1966.

The argument in favour of a strategy for universalizing development was rounded off with construction of identity markers of archetypical agential actors, the state, nation, class and the individual, as guides to identifying social formations in non-Western societies for performance of agential role in what was a totally different historical context. Macrosociology took the lead in this effort. The first step was construction of empirical typologies of Western and non-Western social formations by taking the notion of *attribute space* as the starting point. To quote Lazarsfeld, "It is obviously possible to take a set of variables and to find all possible combinations. Each single combination might be called a type or some subset of such combinations."[12] The next step was to identify social formations in select non-Western societies to serve as agencies for driving history after the model image of their counterparts in European history. The non-Western leaders were even imagined like copycats of past Western heroes. They were encouraged, for example, to support peace through democracy like Wilson, or lead a revolution like Lenin or Mao. Wilsonianism, Leninism or Maoism are common referents in non-Western societies. The choice of a social formation was based on its attributes even though its matching attributes constituted only a small subset of the total attributes defining the model agency in Western political thought. If, therefore, one takes a non-Western society as constituted into a state on the basis of a few, not all, the attributes of the state as given in Western political thought, then one has to give a fresh definition of the state. It is troubling to find several definitions of the state listed in a textbook. An intelligent undergraduate student, when asked to define the state, would not be able to go beyond listing the various definitions. Every definition has a story behind it. No textbook gives this story. And every story is open to contesting discourses. This means that the choice of a social formation for agential role is underlined by

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[12] Lazarsfeld, P.F., *Main Trends in Sociology*, London, 1973, p. 21.

subjective, ideological and political preferences in a given context. The choice making also required a balance between embeddedness of the social formation and its autonomous capacity for the required role. For this reason, the choice of an agency in every case rested on ambivalence of matching criteria with the empirical reality of the social formation in question. This was so with the state, nation, class or the individual. Each of these agencies was differentiated along one or the other dimension of its empirical types. The chosen social formation could be challenged on grounds whether the choice matched with the necessary requirements.

Such match making became a sport among social science scholars. Academic contestations on this subject coloured life in the universities. They served as fodder for ideologues and the media. But they were not taken very seriously in processes of governance and policy making, because authoritative choice in favour of a social formation for agency role underwent historical shifts from one to the other, without any shifts in perception of national interest, may be, in the face of systemic change. Such changes in the past were often legitimated in the name of pragmatism and encapsulated in pithy phrases like "the correlation of world forces in favour of socialism" and "the third wave of democracy." In any case, the social formations once chosen were defined in terms of their expected role, empowered with such entitlements and rights as precribed in the universal theory and ideology, and flagged off with a mission on unchartered territories of non-Western societies.[13]

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[13] This probably takes Riggs' structural analysis a step forward. An implanted structure of change was not only multi-functional as Riggs emphasized, it was also of several types in its concrete empirical manifestations, and as such would not fit into a universal definition of it in Western political thought. Certainly such a structure was not supposed to deliver the expected function. Yet it was so expected. This could be a source of weakness of the political system in relation to the domestic society or in relation to external powers

When the agencies did not produce the desired social effects, space opened for heated ideological discourses and intellectual lobbying. By way of illustration, one could examine the discourses underlined by such issues as these. Was the postcolonial State any different from the one conceptualized by Bodin and Hobbes? Which social formation in pre-capitalist economies fitted into the mould of a revolutionary class as described by Karl Marx, taking the non-capitalist path as a given condition? How could Lenin's *What is to be Done?* be interpreted in socio-economic conditions of Asia and Africa? Did the state elite constitute an exploiting class? Was caste an exploited class? Was gender a class? Did marginalized minorities and castes constitute a revolutionary coalition? Was civic nationalism possible without an ethnic base? Was a socially embedded woman in the countryside, not exposed to the vile practices of urban environment, capable of exercising the same rights as Margaret Thatcher or the like? The public sphere was saturated with debates on such civil society issues defined in terms of systemic contingencies.

On account of the close affinity of the civil society with the state, it was quite rational for the civil society to undertake programmes for reconstruction of people's subjectivity to make it correspond to the dominant values of the day. The reconstruction strategies included political and managerial dominance exercised by those who belonged to a charmed circle of social corps comprising academics, journalists, professionals and other opinion leaders who advanced *official* interpretations of events and opinions, represented them in politically correct terms, and backed them with rewards and punishments in different institutional settings. The efforts of official spokesmen during media events is sometimes quite entertaining. This was how relevance was preferred to science. Private interests have also started behaving likewise. They too have organized social corps. Institutional empowerment for politically correct

representation of events, opinions and behaviour was an important source of dominance. In a context of public-private partnership, like *bhagidari* in India, it was difficult to figure out who was dominating or who was being dominated.

The social corps also sought to resolve dilemmas, first, between limited and expanded spheres of state action, and second, between cultural *tabula rasa* and celebration of cultural heritage. The futurist's choice of an expanded sphere of state action and a present which was exorcized of cultural and religious past, confounded both liberals and cultural historians. It led to the construction of the non-Western other as an essence craving for a form which outwardly proclaimed equality with the West even when the desired form was inconsistent with its inner self.

This craving for equality with the West underlined, what Habermas called, the dialectic of Enlightenment. This craving drove the swollen middle classes of the non-Western world to transform their lifestyles by indulging in high-end fitness, health and spiritual goods and owning high technology-based consumer goods from cars, i-pods, cell phones, and internet-based social sites and chatting facilities to a host of others which would soon be on offer.[14] This was how the middle classes were chasing a mirage and, in the process, boosting the economy of the West – a mirage, because these classes would find themselves buried under the goods which boosted their egos for a while but became obsolete soon after and lost their instrumental role.[15] The motivation for

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[14] Mass production generates imperatives for business to feed our desire for more goods while persuading us to abandon still useful products in favour of newer ones. The advertising industry produces new meanings — images of romance, beauty and good life — which induce the customer with false needs, say for example, a branded shampoo improves love life.

[15] The middle classes emerged in Asia at a time when prolonged recession and low growth rates depressed home markets in the West.

chasing these high-end technological products came from within, by a sense of cultural inferiority reinforced by evocations of traditional lifestyles and social practices, or what Marx called "the stupidities of rural life," which were an endless source of humour in their homes. The evocations were of the nature of cognitive understandings within a conceptually comprehensive understanding of a universal good. The cognitive project of universal good served as an Archimedian point external to the communities to legislate reform in these societies. *A priori* universal good implied that non-Western societies had no idea of good life and had no option other than to succumb to top-down structural pressure to conform. The negative aspects of such a process were interpreted by non-Western leadership as incidental, not intrinsic, to a view of good life contingent on unbounded progress.

The futurist perspective on development in non-Western societies put liberal humanism and its most important intellectual pillar, John Locke, on his head, in the sense that it inverted the relationship between civil society and the state. In Locke, the state is grounded in civil order. It is not the other way round. The civil association, as a moral association, pre-exists politics and governance. Requiring the state to produce a designer model of civil association and civil morality, amounted to requiring it to do an engineering job. The state might attempt to go about doing this by exercising control over society within a framework of, say, *total administration.* This amounted, on the part of the state, to reject the finitude of the political realm. The state thereby spiralled into a blind drift, as the critics sought to countervail it by subjectivizing the quest for freedom through contestation. The intellectual foundation for such a process was laid, for example, in *Sociological Imagination,* when Wright Mills, while writing on reason and freedom, referred to a contemporary phenomenon characterized by the rise of a

man on the scene who had rationality but without reason, who was increasingly self-rationalized and also increasingly uneasy.

The philosophers of the Enlightenment hoped to see a free individual as the seat of reason. Liberal humanists made it their dream. It was eventually overtaken by a kind of social and economic development which chased a different goal. Karl Mannheim's *Man and Society*, written against the backdrop of German Nazism, elaborated the concept of self-rationalization. To quote Mills, the concept as defined by Mannheim was the way in which an individual, caught in the limited segments of great rational organizations comes systematically to regulate his impulses and aspirations, his manner of life and his ways of thought, in rather strict accordance with the rules and regulations of the organization. The rational organization is thus an alienating organization: the guiding principles of conduct and reflection, and in due course of emotion as well, are not seated in the individual conscience of the Reformation man, or in the independent reason of the Cartesian man. Wright Mills added, the guiding principles are alien to and in contradiction with all that has been historically understood as individuality. The individual's need to change his life-world finds expression in argument and contest. Politics becomes discursive and also democratic.

If increased rationality and increased freedom were divergent, then increased technical control over society would deny people freedom to write their own biography. Who would then write it for them? This question was a caricature of the Western model of development. More importantly, it posed a challenge to the concepts of Western political thought in their application to non-Western political process. How would one answer these questions: what gave political legitimacy to the state? Why should people obey it? The answers to these perennial questions in political thought,

within the framework of liberal humanism, fell into two streams. One was based on the concept of democratic consensus, that legitimacy and obligation were grounded on the consent of the governed; the other was based on the concept of development, that legitimacy and obligation belonged to that segment of the political class which addressed the collective aspirations for progress and modernity.

Democracy emphasized free and fair elections, rule of law, minority rights and inclusive development. Self-government gave people control over their lives and destiny, and generated legitimacy for the political system. This was the lifeline of the political system, more so in state-societies where the state had no overriding national purpose to attain. State survival was the *raison d'etre*. Compared to nation-states, the capacity of state-nations to offer resistance or effecting a political revolution, was limited. The choice was between state-society and nation-state, between democracy and national purpose. Was reason helpful in making a choice? It was not. The vivisection of the ground reality prompted empirical observations of different sections of this reality from different perspectives of theoretical criticism. These critical articulations eventually came together to form a radical reaction to liberal humanism.

THE RADICAL REACTION

The decolonization process was scarcely complete before it was overtaken by social crises and conflicts of the time. There was general impatience with action towards fulfilling public aspirations aroused during the struggle for independence. Political science was impacted by this. Students and teachers reacted to it in the style of revolt against slow and laborious efforts to turn the study of politics into a scientific discipline. They were sceptical of the claim that scientific credibility

would generate capacity for innovative application of theories to the evolving postcolonial situation. Macpherson described such claims as based on overconfidence in the strength of liberal democracy and pleaded for post-liberal-democratic politics.[16]

In any case, who was prepared to wait long enough for this disciplinary status to emerge?

The dissent was mounted against the way things were moving. While the dissent had a streak of nostalgia for past traditions and classical approaches to study and research, it was mainly a call for greater democratic commitment. It was a call for active participation in political processes to give political push to economic development and upliftment of the masses. Faith was put in politics as a means for attaining these goals. And politics for them was not just an exercise in logic and rationality, it was pursuit of democratically conceived social goals based on the Marxist theory of economic and social history. Students saw in it an opportunity to give meaning and purpose to their otherwise dull studies. They moved their activity beyond campus libraries to campus coffee shops, and translated social problems into political slogans and term paper topics. They swelled political ranks in different institutional settings to oversee their functioning and led public demonstrations against any lapses that surfaced. They voiced social commitment through publications, journalistic writings, electronic imagery and artistic expression. Soon the volume of such activity was found to be inversely proportional to ability to successfully address issues relating to society and economy.

This realization came when socialism collapsed in one country after another. Even though the radicals did not give in and blamed their loss to external machinations, the

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[16] Macpherson, C.B., "Politics: Post-Liberal-Democracy?", in Blackburn, Robin, ed., *Ideology in Social Sciences*, Bungay, Suffolk, 1972, pp. 17-31.

message was loud and clear. Prior maturation of the capitalist system was a necessary condition for progressive social groups (young students, in this case) to act out successfully the emancipatory role of a social agency. The non-capitalist path was not sustainable. It was becoming increasingly evident that the social formations described in the history of political thought as agencies of political development and social transformation should first undergo, in specific social settings, the historical process of maturation, both material and normative, before taking over the agential role, immanent in the evolving dialectic of the social structure.[17]

Such maturation could not take place in non-Western settings. The best explanation for it was offered by Lenin in *State and Revolution.* Lenin said: "The state is an organization for class domination, for the oppression of one class by another: it is the creation of an 'order' which legalizes and strengthens this oppression by moderating the class conflict." The state represented the centralization, monopolization and organization of the instruments of violence, which were therefore wrested from individuals and groups and entrusted to the state. From the Marxist standpoint, the growth of the state and organized power reinforced the oppression of one class by another by institutionalizing and legalizing it by making it official. The non-Western states were formed to realize this dynamics. And so, state-building was characterized as a politically progressive programme. The primacy given to order problematized this programme especially the issues of justice and freedom. Hence there was no escape from democratizing order at the behest of an informed and democratically vibrant citizenry.

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[17] Even such maturation of agential structures was not enough. Other prerequisites for performance of the agential role must also be there. Refer to note 9 and its follow up for theoretical insights on this subject given by Fred Riggs.

The new states were not formed within the territorial boundaries of their respective colonial states. Nor was the civil society in these states a successor to the civil society during colonial domination. These states were reconfigurations of colonial states, especially those colonial states which were subjected to colonial partitions. The new states were formed by the West to fit into an imagination which was external to them and were reinvented by it as its subordinate other. These new states did not mark a total break with the colonial past. At the same time, they were not successors of the colonial states. Nor were the civil societies in these states continuous with the civil societies during colonial times. Civil societies were generally strong in colonial states, especially in those colonial states where the people had to struggle for political independence. This struggle gave rise to a political tradition of confronting the state, especially on the part of those who were subjected to exclusionary hegemony and treated as native savages or barbarians. This tradition was taken over to the postcolonial civil society. This was so in India.

The civil society emerged as an assemblage of groups and individuals who perceived themselves as outside the state (despite equal citizenship and civil rights) and whose only common ground was their consciousness of externality and and opposition to the state. Political parties and especially the media capitalized on it. The radicals too did this. But the political aim now was just the opposite from that during the colonial era. The aim was to end exclusion and to pressurize the state to formulate strategies of inclusion. This politics of inclusion was linked to democratic imperative for moderation of stand on contentious issues, and called on individuals and groups not to take the law into their hands by opting for violence, rather than approaching the established authority for addressing their complaints. The effect was to moderate class conflict, rather than sharpen it

to let the class mature as an agency of social revolution. These processes were reinforced by the state when it initiated processes of structuration in the civil society. It formulated policies for reconstructing social categories and cleavages while also dominating social discourses of these cleavages. The impact was to create conditions in which agential structures were not able to act out their role as robust actors.

The other features of postcolonial civil societies included those described by Locke, Hegel and Gramsci. In the Lockean sense, the civil society was a collective human aggregate capable of entering into a social contract for setting up the state. In India, the adoption of the Constitution was often described as such an act. There is, no doubt, a certain amount of arbitrariness about such a description which colours political processes in unacceptable ways. In Hegel, the civil society was that layer of society in which individuals were socialized into playing socially useful roles and were thus bound together by the reciprocities of exchange and necessities of cooperation. The state turned these reciprocities and necessities into a self-regulating moral universe. The civil society as such a moral universe was located in Hegelian imaginary in the space between the state and the household. This left a sufficiently wide zone of private action which was neither civil society nor the state and was governed by social mores and hierarchies beyond both civil society and the state. The radicals were supportive of civil society structuration along the imperative of reciprocity and cooperation. But they focussed their attack on the layer of private action, where the people were used to a life based on historically given traditional ways and social practices. They sought to confront this layer of private and traditional social practices, colonize it and impose on it the liberal social norms including those of participation in the public realm. The idea was to inculcate among non-Western people, a strong desire to repudiate otherness and participate in the discourse

of modern society and politics. The radicals articulated the perspective of equality and social justice to illuminate the real face of traditional social practices. In Gramscian terms, the civil society was comprised of institutions, ideologies and agents, representing the political values of the dominant class. It hegemonized other classes and incorporated them into a social order which suited its interests.[18] This was a democratic process. Gramsci was of the opinion that, in the absence of such a civil society, the state would become despotic and authoritarian. The radicals favoured this approach. They styled themselves as civil society activists for promotion of modern democracy.

The extension of rationality embodied in liberal and Marxist frameworks to conditions not ripe for them rendered these frameworks problematic. Marx and Weber while laying the intellectual foundations of social sciences anticipated such a situation arising. The non-Western situation for them was characterized respectively by Asiatic mode of production in economy and by patriarchy and patrimonialism in society. The utilitarian evaluations of non-Western societies on the part of the two Mills, took these discourses forward. The Orientalists reinvented it. No wonder, the Orientalist perspective loomed behind the social science effort to change and develop the non-Western world in a pre-given direction. By skipping the social maturation stage, the political elite put great reliance on diverse mechanisms of top-down control and regulation of society, as if to forge social history on the anvil of politics and public policy. It was a paradox that social sciences, while claiming to be fighting

[18] The linkages between knowledge and power gave rise to discourses which motivated empirical research in several non-Western societies. See, Althusser, Louis, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses: Notes towards an Investigation," in Althusser, *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, Tr. by Ben Brewster, New York, 2001, New Delhi, 2006, pp. 85-126. But, is there an escape from knowledge-based elitism?

Marx and Weber in their evaluations of non-Western societies ended up in proving them right. The claim of the social sciences was that they marked a break with the Orientalist tradition by locating themselves onto universalistic assumptions, which was too optimistic. For more than half a century, the social sciences had a field day, backed by Western funds, liberally used by experts to develop and test professional tools of social change. The aim was to turn the optimism into reality. While the effort was on, it was haunted by the ghost of the Orientalist tradition. As objects of social science research, these societies were rechristened as *developing* societies. Extensive empirical studies were conducted within theories and frameworks which were handed down to generations of scholars as a self-validating closed tradition.

The aim was to generate and accumulate knowledge and marshal it to prove the Orientalist perspective false. Social sciences, by and large, failed the hope. Politics and social life continued to be in the same mould. Patriarchy, lineage and other elements which defined tradition in these societies continued to be the chief drivers of public and private behaviour, undermining the liberal humanist goals of social equality and justice. Social science noises were loud enough to silence other voices, while the emptiness of these noises was reassuring to those wielding economic and political power. It would be difficult to say why the social sciences were led to take a short cut to the goals embodied in Western history and political thought. Could such development ever be delivered?

Intuitively, one could say, yes. Thinking counterfactually, if there were no social sciences to guide action, would the development score, in politics, economy and society, as a consequence of the Western development structures reproducing their invariable functions, be better or worse? It was a highly emotive interrogation of the enormous effort

and energy spent on social sciences. The vested interests
and even the establishment in non-Western societies might
react to it with anger. In fact, this was all the more a reason
for interrogating the effort and subjecting it to a critical
evaluation.

Radical politics emerged from this process of
interrogation. The radicals mounted attacks on social science
practices and their ideological undertones. The radicals
realized that the theoretical apparatus of liberalism and
Marxism was not adequate to meet the contemporary needs
of equality and justice. Comparisons of marginalized groups
within and across international borders did not yield useful
results. The radicals therefore shifted their focus to the
epistemological position of neo-Marxist French structuralists
like Louis Althusser. These structuralists preserved the
autonomy of economic processes (unlike Marx who
characterized them as subject to class interests and relations
of production) and, instead targeted oppressive social
practices for theorizing on collective identification of the
oppressed people as the dynamic of social change.

The radical focus was on conflation of the level-of-analysis
problematic with the agent structure problem. This lent
primacy to social structures. The aim was to dissociate study
from methodological individualism, as was the preferred
mode in the contemporary social analysis. The radicals
thought that the trend of heaping explanatory variables on
the unit of analysis, rather than on the systemic level where
they actually belonged, the social sciences did not advance
insightful understanding of the social processes. The
postcolonial development, when seen through the lens of
systemic compulsions during the cold war, had strategic
similarity (at least partially) with the systemic compulsions
of colonial development with the difference that the former
emphasized governance, based on voice and participation
of the people, while the latter, was elitist and non-democratic

in decision-making. In the non-democratic non-Western world, this margin of difference was considerably reduced and was close to reinventing the colonial order as a hegemonic project.

Such development was imitative of the West. It had a subtext of acquiring equality with the West and confronting it through engagement in competitive activities. But this goal was internally hollow. It was devoid of a contextual and integrated political theory of the good. With the passage of time it was therefore difficult to keep the society united in pursuit of it. Expressions of patriotic sentiments in the face of enemies, real or imagined, within or outside national boundaries, for promoting social cohesion, or for maintaining state values and institutions, were, at best, a short term measure to fill the hollowness. As the postcolonial state was not rooted in the underlying society, its conduct of world affairs was designed to spot politically correct sites for parking the goal-oriented development strategy. It shifted gear from socialism to neoliberalism, from one approach to another, generally corresponding to the changing structure of the international system. The normative hollowness of development politics, combined with the absence of relevant political thought, contributed to this situation. Economic growth based on rational policies was purposeful upto a level. Beyond that, it needed to be infused with a philosophy of history to fire the imagination of a social agency for marching the nation towards, say, the classical humanist goals of liberty, equality and fraternity. This awareness should serve as the entry point for the discourse of *maturation*.[19] Was such a

[19] This is an additional argument in support of the view taken by Fred Riggs that the structural-functional theory is inapplicable to development problematic in the non-Western world. See note 10. Johan Galtung attributes it to the situation of structured inequality between the global core and periphery. He says that the structures developed in "motherland of liberalism" or in "fatherland of socialism"

maturation of agency possible in state-societies? No definitive answer could be given to this question. And so there was increasing ambivalence about grounding development on lessons learnt from the history of Western political thought. This ambivalence was about the suitability of economic and social development agencies identified in this political thought. These agencies were not home grown and lacked authenticity. They did not enjoy the backing of the larger society. This called for innovative political thought which located its stakes not in the past or the present, but in the future.

The situation was confounded when the modernist thought started loosening its grip on world affairs. The post-modernist impact was leading to an internal crisis within the Orientalist perspective. Postmodernists disagreed with the modernist opposition to non-Western cultures. The modernists criticized non-Western cultures as lacking in essential features of rationality. The postmodernists expressed their disagreement with this assessment. They rejected rational-irrational binary and celebrated difference, fluidity and hybridity. In terms of this perspective, the non-Western cultures appeared significant. This change was probably motivated by the post-cold war systemic context which favoured the expansion of world economy by using culture industry for targeting the cultural needs of diverse

are taken as models in the periphery "by virtue of their place of origin, not by virtue of their substance."Continued reliance on these structures, even in the face of evidence to the contrary, is explained by him in these words: "Theories, like cars and fashions, have their life-cycle, and whether the obsolescence is planned or not, there will always be a time-lag in a structure with a pronounced difference between centre and periphery. Thus, tram workers in Rio de Janeiro may carry banners supporting Auguste Comte one hundred years after the centre forgot who he was." Galtung, Johan, "A Structural Theory of Imperialism," *Journal of Peace Research*, 13(2), 1971, pp. 90 and 92.

communities across the world. The People's Republic of China was quick in responding to this motivation, as was illustrated, for example, by the flooding of Indian markets with *cultural* goods desired by different communities and classes there. This was part of the present strategy for competitive accumulation of national power. In subtle ways, the effect was to expand the area of neorealist anarchy within the regional state system. The time was therefore ripe for raising issues relating to the historicity and relevance of Western political thought and international theory to the non-Western world. This was of crucial importance during the present uncertainties associated with systemic transition. As the transition proceeds, should the non-Western world also undergo a corresponding transition from imitative to contextual development goals?

Was imitative development possible without loss of autonomy? Post-colonial states depended largely on external legitimation of their policies. Such was not the situation when Western states underwent capitalist development. The non-Western states were born in a different world. It was not of their making. Against this background, Jawaharlal Nehru's policies of non-alignment and mixed economy were a contextual responses. His idea was to have a shield against the intrusiveness of cold war ideologies and politics. The issue was not whether his non-alignment was genuine or not. The issue was whether it served the purpose of such a shield to enable India to chart an independent path for itself. But the post-Nehru India was successively lowering the walls against the entry of intrusive international forces, driven to do so by the continuing drive towards modernity, growth and power.

Taking India in such a model role, a postcolonial state must first assess, as Nehru did, its location in the world historical context. Such a state had an imperative to contextualize its approach to public policy. Nehru did it by

foregrounding his post-independence vision, shaped on the anvil of Mahatma Gandhi's thought. But it was difficult to persist with such a vision, as the policy process was subject to emerging domestic and systemic features. Post-Nehru India, together with several other postcolonial states, therefore accepted some aspects of Western political thought and contemporary development policies of Western states for imitative application across time, space and culture. The postulate of universality in application of available knowledge in a given area, especially economics, subjected policy to expert evaluation at every stage of formulation. In non-Western societies, this sharpened social contradictions which were difficult to resolve. Take just one illustration. These were states characterized by a thin layer of secular humanism side by side with a thick layer of religious supernaturalism. This made liberal humanism problematic for such states. Similarly a thin layer of secular legal restraints on behaviour in the public sphere existed, side by side, with a very thick layer of godless hedonistic pursuits in the private sphere probably after the popular images of profligate *mughals*, indulgent *rajas* or majestic *mai-baps*, away from public gaze, where business or sycophancy made inroads for delivery of products and services. The result was for everyone to see: hypocrisy in the public sphere and loss of individual autonomy to service providers in the private sphere and, at times, the indulgences marked a regression into animality.[20] These contradictions rendered governance based on secular humanism difficult. The difficulties took different forms in different countries.

In India, for example, the political impact of social contradictions was felt from time to time. During the late seventies, this led to another call for relevance and action, mainly in support of a development model inspired by the

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[20] Private vices expand the role of money-economy and are therefore seen as public virtues.

ideas of Mahatma Gandhi. It took the form of the J.P. movement. Later, there was yet another call for relevance and action for realizing social equality and justice through state action and public policies of affirmative action in favour of the downtrodden and marginalized. And recently, on the far right, religious fundamentalism was on the rise, yet again for relevance and action. It signified political use of religion. The ruling elite, as beneficiaries of modern science and technology, in pursuance of their interests which they defined in secular terms of power and wealth, saw a lot of sense in strengthening their popular base by appealing to the masses in terms of their needs or reintegrating the social and political life of common people around religious faith and ritual. More people today visit religious places of their choice, never skip a religious ritual, never miss a *namaz* or a Sunday mass. Such common observations were an effect of increasing politicization of religion in the contemporary postcolonial situation.

The approach to religion in post-Reformation Europe was different. In Protestant Christianity, the struggle with liberal values was fought within churches and teaching institutions. In postcolonial societies, on the contrary, it was fought within the state. Ethnic, caste and religious communities were popularly designated, not so much as cultural entities, but as *political* entities, as minorities and majorities within given territorial areas. The issue between them, far from being cultural in nature, amenable to resolution through academic and theological dialogue, was of the nature of high politics. Intercommunity issues escalated straight to political or judicial institutions for evaluation and adjudication. This encouraged exclusiveness among political identities, religious, caste and ethnic, rendering power balance among them ever more vulnerable to manipulable and unpredictable events. Everyone knew that such preoccupation with identity was not healthy for democratic

governance based on liberal humanism. Its effect was to distance the masses away from the classes, rather than to direct the political energy of the masses at the classes.

The relation of classes with masses is insightfully presented in Ralf Dahendorph in his *Class and Class Conflict in Industrial Society*. He refers to the superimposition of religious conflict on top of class conflict in late nineteenth century France. This had a built-in dynamic for intensifying political conflict. The situation constrained all those on the side of such a coalition to be at once anti-clerical and socialist. They labelled themselves as Marxist or as political left and characterized the rest as political right. Reading this with Lenin's *What Is To Be Done?* and his criticism of economism there, that economic grievances by themselves would not lead the working classes to adopt revolutionary ideologies, one would conclude that the state must consciously take measures to control the revolutionary tendencies of community-class coalitions. These coalitions reconstruct economic grievances as religious and political protests. In India, this strategy of superimposing conflicts on top of one another was adopted by left-inclined academics and political leaders. The strategy paid rich political dividends to its leaders. It had the effect of limiting their flexibility when negotiating industry-led development in the private sector. This inclined them to take a constructivist position blaming poverty and backwardness either on persisting imperialist policies (a stance becoming untenable) or to local interests which stood in the way of capitalist development. They remained within the limits of the liberal-democratic framework of capitalist development.

Postcolonial nation-building did not look up for a lesson or two from a much vaulted American nationhood, and its flag holding President Barack Obama, the first American Christian today, and an American first and last, though of African and Islamic origin, that these identities must

eventually disappear from the political landscape under the impact of calibrated programmes of eliminating social and economic conditions which originally produced them. Even those who espoused theories of social and economic history, especially Marxist historians, did not specify such conditions of redemption. As the approach was political, the issue was allowed to drift. There is no light yet at the end of the tunnel. Rationality in politics is unavoidable though the limits to what it can accomplish must be recognized. For example, reason cannot contribute to shared and meaningful solidarity that moves beyond interest and struggle. And it is difficult to envisage how people can reflexively and collectively change social conditions and reconstitute their identities.

Chapter 4

ESSENTIALISM VERSUS CONSTRUCTIVISM

When the judgement of history pushed scientific socialism over the edge, liberal humanism, the ideological winner in the cold war, instantly got worldwide acceptability. The foremost need for it now was to address the issues articulated by the radicals in the course of their attack on it from the mid-sixties onwards. The attack was mounted from within the institutions of higher education in the United States, France and other European countries, even though these institutions were its most powerful allies. The echoes of the attack were heard in universities outside these countries as well, including universities in India, especially Jawaharlal Nehru University. The radicals did not aim to repudiate liberal humanism or replace it with another ideology. Their aim was to infuse it with greater relevance by drawing on socialist values which appeared to the radicals more suited to non-Western realities. The aim was to confront the Western attitudes of otherness so that the West understood itself better by looking at the image of its own creation.

The political imperative was to expand the social base of liberal humanism and of its institutional embodiment, the state, by making it more inclusive of the underlying society. Its exclusionary dominance was slipping it into a crisis. The radicals opened space for changing the architecture of its social dominance. They favoured a democratic surge to match the rising tide of political assertions based on ethnic or religious affiliation. They also mounted pressure for

addressing development issues and the welfare deficit. This was the only way for infusing a new vitality into liberal humanism as a programme of action. Hence a fuller view of liberal humanism was possible only from the vantage point of the radical attack on it. What follows below is a modest attempt in this direction.

The attack was articulated from the perspective of radical social theory, radical in postulating a dialectic between human activity and its product (the artifacts produced by such activity). The dialectic surfaced when the product acquired an autonomy of its own. A process of objectification acted back on the producer. Sociology described the process as *reification* — a process of giving to what was one's own product, an existence of its own, independent of oneself, the producer, and endow it with power to rule over and command the producer. The radicals emphasized that positivist social science was incapable of foregrounding this dialectic, in the sense that it was not equipped to point out social contradictions embedded within institutions, customs, and other aspects of the social structure, and treated them as "fetishized commodities." These structures embodying social inequalities were not given in nature, and yet the divisions and boundaries created by them among people were described as natural. For the radicals, the positivist social science was inherently incapable of conforming to the ideal of a common humanity. The policy discourse, on the other hand, aimed at policy goals, how should they be achieved? Nothing would be allowed to come in the way of these goals. It would thus accept the world as it presented itself, including inequalities, injustices and what not. All these and other features of the world, though constructed, were taken as given and were, to an extent, even essentialized, to move forward in a competitive environment of going ahead of others.

The radicals rejected the policy-maker's approach. The

radical discourse underlined an unchanging human essence[1] which could be recovered only by rolling back social divisions and inequalities. They asked, why should diverse forms of social difference and inequality be accepted as given in nature? These divisions defined political faultlines which the members of the political class, in their narrow interests, accepted as the dividing line among players on a ping pong table. The radicals, though claiming to be Marxist constructivist with a focus on class struggle, went beyond it to formulate a more inclusive concept of constructivism. Such reformulation of constructivist approach pluralized social structural conflicts in the wake of capitalist development. It was not just class conflict that got sharpened by capitalist growth. The Marxists spoke of class, no doubt, but the social constructivists were post-Marxist structuralists to include race, gender, caste and ethnicity. In fact, it included anything that generalized a person to a group identity. And the site of political conflict in any context was defined by the perceptions of those who dominated others and those who were subject to such domination.

The radical articulation of such a framework for thought and action had an immediate effect of weakening class conflict and serving as a comfortable cushion for the upper classes against the lower classes.[2] The framework helped in choosing non-class sites of social conflict to oppose and soften class identification. When the swelling numbers of the poor

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[1] The essence of something is its nature, what it is in itself, what constitutes its reality, as opposed to its constituent features, or its mere appearance. The term was used first by Plato and Aristotle in association with what they called the *idea.*

[2] The radicals criticized the liberal-pluralist view of state neutrality between different classes and groups. For them, the state as the handmaiden of dominant classes worked in the interest of these classes. Within this perspective of Marxist political economy, the state enjoyed no autonomy and directly served these classes. But this

and miserable were shown on the media, they were perceived just as data, and not a threat. The pictures of their helplessness and weakness were reassuring and a source of entertainment. Such pictures decorated glossy magazines and walls in fashionable drawing rooms. A complementary strategy producing a similar effect was to orient social conflicts to demand compensatory benefits for past practices or present wrongs. This grounding of constructivism within a liberal framework was a trap for those at the receiving end of social injustice. Once the lower classes were hooked to making such demands, negotiations relating to entitlement and delivery would emerge as the cutting edge of social politics aimed to break lower class solidarity by dangling carrots before individual beneficiaries. In addition, the whole process yielded an enlarged social base for the state. The same was true of government schemes doling out individual-level benefits including employment or cash transfers.

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perspective was not easy to translate into public policies when there occurred divisions within dominant classes, when for example the interests of different corporate houses clashed and called on the state to make a choice between them. This led to introduction of corrupt practices at higher levels of state functioning and unfolded a dynamic for destabilizing society. The only way to countervail such an emerging situation was to promote the "relative autonomy" of the state, so that public policies were not inevitably geared to capitalist interests, and sought to ensure the cohesiveness of the social formation, providing a stable framework within which capitalism could be fostered. This view is advanced by post-Marxist structuralists. The structuralists went even a step further. They expected the local bodies and units of a federal polity characterized by inter-group social dominance to ensure the reproduction of the conditions under which capital accumulation could occur, as for example through reproduction of labour force. Thus the imperatives of capitalist development required the transformation of an instrumental state to an autonomous one, and this could be effected only through direct action and protest movements. The present anti-corruption movements in India can probably be cited as an example.

The radicals attacked liberal humanism for projecting capitalist economy and representative democracy as normative systems of worldwide applicability. The radicals pointed to the hollowness of these claims. Liberal democracy, they said, limited democratic participation to the institutional arena where political parties reduced it to a political game of top-down processes aimed at mediation and represent-ation of people's interests. Politics was cut off from social concerns and was confined to an artificial world of its own. The radicals pointed to the failure of these processes in democratizing the relationship between state authority and citizenship.[3] The mediation could not solve the liberal problem of controlling state authority, the democratic problem of representing the authentic people's voice, and the welfare problem of extending state provided services to those who needed them most. To put it more elaborately, the mediation was not effective against the use of public office threatening life, liberty and property of the people, or against violation of norms meant to apply to autonomous areas of governance like education, health, the common land, or against private power distorting representation of dissenting voices, or against technology-intensive and dehumanizing urban environment. Nor was the mediation successful in introducing social reform or expansive social policies, even though the transformation of liberal democracy into a strong welfare state was anticipated by, say, T.H. Marshall, taking an optimistic view of the interplay between the ballot and the interests of the poor and the marginalized.

[3] Berkowitz, Peter, "Between Principles: Democracy and the Communitarian Challenge," in Shain, Yossi and Klieman, Aharon, eds., *Democracy: The Challenges Ahead*, London, 1997. A similar conclusion was reached by an empirical study of public attitudes towards democratic institutions conducted towards the end of the nineteen nineties by the University of Stellenbosch, South Africa, under a project called the World Values Survey.

In short, the performance of liberal democracy fell short of expected levels in protecting individual rights or the rights of the people on the margins, or in realizing the good immanent in its ideology. Keeping this in mind, Fouad Ajami and Richard Falk proposed more composite lists of core human rights. And Rajni Kothari emphasized humane and more democratic governance.[4] In any case, the success of liberal democracy depended on formalization of inter-insitutional mediation of state and market processes with imperatives of strong citizenship. The apparatus for such formalized mediation was either inadequate or absent. Hence, mediation in specific areas of policy implementation was generally left to individual administrators who relied on various service agencies, and who looked for personal advantage in a context of mutual disharmony and incompatibility in the functioning of these agencies. This posed a challenge to the post-cold war hegemonic project which connected a minimal state with an unparalleled expansion of market forces. The effect was to weaken the stability and viability of the political system. In some quarters therefore the process of *democratizing democracy* by bridging the widening gap between the representative and the represented through participatory mechanisms was advanced as a corrective.[5]

The radicals went further and rejected the claim that these normative systems were based on Enlightenment reason; rather, they were attacked by them as based on the rationality of the vested interests. Still further, the attacks focussed on privileged treatment given to Western concepts of nature,

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[4] Kothari, Rajni, *State Against Democracy: In Search of Humane Governance*, Delhi, 1988; *Rethinking Development: In Search for Humane Alternatives*, Delhi, 1990; *Poverty: Human Consciousness and the Amnesia of Development*, London, 1993.

[5] De Sousa Santos, Boaventura, *Democratizing Democracy: Beyond the Liberal Democratic Canon*, London, 2005.

justice and truth in relation to other cultures. The radicals charged liberal humanism with promoting Western approaches to art, literature and science as models for others to follow. In short, the radicals attacked the structures of Western economic, political and knowledge systems as decontextualized and ahistorical in relation to non-Western societies, insulated from the dilemmas of these societies while trying to negotiate them. Arturo Escobar referred to these systems as hegemonic and homogenizing juggernaut of domination.[6] They represented borderless Americanness, aiming to subject the entire humanity to the brutalities of the Manifest Destiny. Extending the attack to domestic politics of non-Western states, the radicals charged those occupying positions of power in social and political institutions with practices of distance, difference and indifference towards people lower down on the social scale. These practices hurt like those of colonial bureaucracy and were a source of resentment among those aimed at. The radicals claimed that these practices ran counter to liberal humanist claims of a universal humanity and its naturalistic understanding of an unchanging human essence.

The Marxist approach situated the human essence in class relations. Post-Marxists located it in structured relations of social dominance. Hence the radicals reformulated and expanded Marxism beyond class and also situated human essence in the nexus of non-class social relations. The radical approach was thus a significant departure from the Marxist focus on class. It was post-Marxist. Yet, the radicals made noises claiming to represent Marx. The idea was to juxtapose class with other social categories of structurally dependent and dominated groups, including women, socially backward groups, religious and other minorities. The subjectivity of

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[6] Escobar, Arturo, *Encountering Development: The Making and Unmaking of the Third World,* Princeton,1995.

these groups was grounded on constructivist notions which minimized, if not altogether denied, the effect of individual will in the construction of a person and rejected the possibility of personal transcendence. Hence the dependent and dominated people were driven into a mindset of perpetual opposition to the larger society, which even went beyond the national boundaries to perceived constraints on their personhood. Louis Althusser called it "materialist *dialectics*."[7] This point is more forcefully put by Peter Winch. Winch rightly says that the meaning of a particular action is dependent on the social structure to which the actor belongs. Each society produces its particular logical system. The activity of a social scientist must be limited to analysis of his own society and its people because the logic of social action depends on the institutional structures internal to the society. The universal principle of logic and method cannot be regarded, in any sense, superior to the logic inherent in various structures.[8]

This facilitated reconstruction of social history as a dialectical process of unfolding relations among social groups. It was assumed that social history was independent and autonomous of a parallel unfolding of economic history through a dialectical process of relations between classes contingent on, what Marx said, the relations of production. The disembodiment of the social from the economic, amounted to moving away from the Marxian position, rather reformulating it for correspondence with social contexts not visualized by Marx. For the radicals, therefore, social and economic histories were not a unified phenomenon. They diverged and unfolded themselves autonomously of each other. It was possible to struggle for social equality and justice without intervening with processes of economic exploitation

[7] *For Marx*, London, 1965, p. 169, as quoted by Davis, Colin in his *After Poststructuralism: Readings, Stories and Theory*, London, 2004, p. 154.
[8] *The Idea of Social Sciences and Its Relation to Philosophy*, London, 1954.

within a capitalist framework. Such representation of social reality was not visualized by Marx.

The radicals, in this sense, were non-Marxists; at best, post-Marxist. They were comfortable with social turmoil as long as it did not impact property relations. They pointed to social injustices and inequalities embedded in the social (non-economic) nexus alone. They contrasted these practices with the liberal humanist notion of universal humanness. The radicals went further and caricatured the liberal choice of the individual as the engine of bottom-up change towards economic growth and social progress through pursuit of utility. Was the individual self-made or socially constructed? they asked rhetorically. They favoured the group as a unit of analysis in strategies for realizing social equality and justice. Further in their attack, the radicals moved their guns towards practices based on the humanist doctrine that man (masculine identification of humankind) was the rational agent for transforming society. It was therefore not surprising that at Jawaharlal Nehru University, where I was a teacher, women students were front runners in campus politics. Rejecting the humanist claims of individual autonomy, they asserted that, in the case of women, the self was defined in relationship with others; it was defined for them in everyday life of subordination and dependence on men within the framework of patriarchy. The incorporation of the pleasure principle into the protest, in line with Marcuse's reinvention of Freud in *Eros and Civilization*, to ground action on it, had a strain of post-feminist rejection of virtue as defined in tradition. This was, at the same time, a post-structural rejection of humankind's identification with masculinity. Just as Albert Einstein could be imagined as feeling puzzled by the reality of nuclear weapons originating from his theories,[9]

[9] Amis, Martin, *Einstein's Monsters*, Harmondsworth, 1988.

so might Karl Marx be imagined as bewildered when supposedly confronted with neo-Freudian modes of liberal egalitarian politics originating from his theories.

The humanist ethics treated science and technology as a means for realizing goals in relation to nature and society. It rejected any effort to invoke the support of supernatural forces. Integral to this position, was the identification of rationality with natural sciences. There was no rationality other than Newtonian rationality. The link of liberalism and modernity to such a conception of rationality was the foundation of the liberal humanist thought process. It came in for attack at the School of International Studies, where I was located, both with respect to their use and non-use in the conduct of international relations. India's stand on the non-proliferation regime, arms trade, interventionary strategies, and, above all, the models of the future especially the Club of Rome study *The Limits to Growth* and the United Nations *World Plan of Action* evoked stimulating discourses. Common to these discourses was opposition to logical positivism and scientific methodology in study and research on social and international issues. Though the authors of these models had claimed apolitical and scientific status for their work, they were derided by the university community as highly political in design and purpose. Global breakdowns would occur, it was asserted, not on account of the factors included in these models but by those left out – neo-colonialism and underdevelopment. Why was the unequal distribution of resources between and within nations not taken into account in the models? Similarly, the North-South gap and regional conflicts were blamed on Western machinations. For the same reasons, Noam Chomsky was widely read for his views on American power. The massacre in East Timor evoked intense criticism especially because of the British arms deal with Indonesia. India's stake in the East-West balance drew the attention of the university

community to several other contemporary international developments such as the war in Vietnam.

The university had built up a tradition of Marxist argumentation which offered a framework for organizing thought and action on aspects of constructed social reality. The radical voices were heard in all disciplines especially political science, economics and history. The construction of the non-Western world as symmetrically opposite of the West capable of linear progress according to universal laws similar to those in natural sciences, came in for strong criticism. The radicals attacked the analytical concepts and formalized models for understanding non-Western reality. For them, an analysis based on such models was misleading. These models compartmentalized theory and practice. The radicals attacked such artificial fragmentation of reality into causally autonomous segments without foregrounding the underlying structures such as the capitalist economy which linked them together. So far so good. But this academic stand was not integral to the stand they took on cold war issues. They counterposed Western (read American) social science with Marxist social science and, while supporting the latter, presented the non-Western world as the symmetrical opposite of socialist states, claiming that socialist success stories had lessons which were capable of directing progress on the non-capitalist path to the socialist stage.

The radical attack was neither totalizing nor revolutionary. It was political and constructive in relation to liberal humanism. The aim of taking up the radical position was to rally support for an autonomous political economy both at national and international levels which in fact was the agenda of liberal humanism. It was a case of Marxism (read, radical theory) pursuing liberal ends. Public policies designed for achieving these ends were considered necessary for maintaining social harmony and stability when programmes of economic development were undertaken. The radical

attack aimed to secure such autonomy at the international level through power balance between the cold war protagonists. The radicals opposed the growing power of international capital and pleaded for empowering national capital and the farming community as counterweights. The struggle for progressive agenda, within the framework of this discourse, was influenced by the social theory of progressive bourgeoisie. Further, humanism being a common factor in both liberal and Marxist thought, the radicals supported secularization of civil society and public life largely for realizing the liberal humanist ends as aforesaid, but also probably to draw support for their cause from diverse religious communities.

The radicalization of politics in favour of an independent development approach led to linking of economic growth to social goals. It corresponded with the aspirations and behaviour of progressive sections, including the upwardly mobile middle class of backward groups. The elite among them desired better material conditions including a share in global innovations relating to comfort, luxury and entertainment and, to an extent, arranged for them in private clubs away from public gaze. At the same time, they felt secure in conforming to community values based on tradition. For the reason, they were not in a strong position to catalize social transformation. The assessments made by communitarians like Kymlicka and Taylor supported this view. They found Rawls and Dworkin, whom this class and the radicals within universities had put on a pedestal, too atomistic and incapable of advancing group rights. For the communitarian critics, affirmative action as a mechanism of social change was more an affirmation of liberal principles than a visualization of an alternative society.

The radical social theory foregrounded people who believed in social construction of backwardness and demanded compensatory benefits, both at domestic and

international levels, thinking that such compensatory benefits would pave the way for egalitarian nationalism at home and an egalitarian world order globally. It gave rise to new nationalism and new internationalism which put the right and the good in world affairs in an entirely new framework. But the results were not encouraging. The compensatory benefits did not roll back backwardness. The strategy as an extention of liberal humanism did not work. Invoking past injustices as an exogenous factor in social change, could not deliver, because the endogenous system remained unchanged and processed external inputs in terms of the dynamics inherent to its structure.

The radicals used Marxism as a window for exploring which aspects of the contemporary material conditions were undermining universal humanism. What was there in the material conditions which led to alienation with the notion of a common humanity? This empirical question generated debates which had the effect of fragmenting the left. Each fragment now searched for theoretical roots and empirical pastures for its position on the issue. Each fragment of the left, articulated its discourse in contest with other left discourses. The appropriation of surplus value leading to social differentiation and class formation ceased to be the sole theoretical root for Marxist social mobilization in politics. It was taken over by critiques of different forms of domination based on social and cultural institutions and ideology. All forms of domination converged on the authority of the state. The limits on state authority, for this reason, became synonymous with liberation.

This was how Marxism came to lean on liberalism and worked to realize its ends in society and politics. It was no different when Marxism held back from offering criticism of ideologies paraded as sexism, racialism, scientism, rationalism, statism, and secularism. It went along with the critical perspective in offering a critique of such material

conditions that triggered a dialectical process of viewing social difference as identity, grounded on self-perception of its subordinate and sub-human existence, mocking at essentialist notions of universal humanity. These sub-human material conditions made their way to media images and emotional narratives. Slum dogs, desperate housewives and excluded communities emerged as rallying points for new nationalism, as also sites for profit making cinema and persuasive images and used as fodder in electoral politics. At the international level, say, in North-South relations, it served as a ground for articulating new internationalism through tradeoffs and related policy linkages.

The radicals further pointed to the failure of liberal democracy in safeguarding freedom from scientific and technological rationality increasingly delivered as packaged products and services, meant to create an artificial living environment, capable of coercing people into adaptive self-rationalizations meant to mask a deeply felt sense of helplessness in coping with it. The net result was loss of control over conditions of life. The radicals, in line with C. Wright Mills, bewailed "increasing rationalization of society" and the intensifying "contradiction" between "rationality and reason."[10] The radicals expressed concern over the shift of social conflicts between classes to between decision-making administrators and dependent participants. The shift, they felt, undermined class conflict and its transformative impact on society as visualized in Marxist social theory.

On the other hand, social difference organized itself for identity politics. Different identities located themselves, not within a pluralistic framework of mutual commensurability but, within a framework of mutual incommensurability. The recent debates on inclusion bear this out. They revealed

[10] *Sociological Imagination*, New York, 1959, Paperback Edition, 1967, p. 169.

the primacy of political power on the agenda of social difference. Mutual communication and cooperation were not given as much importance. Disadvantaged groups and minorities attacked the liberal prescription of confining social difference to the private realm. Rather, they clamoured to flag it in the public sphere and demanded accommodation into the political system. Such a political orientation insulated distinct social groups from one another. The result was that, instead of contributing to inclusive politics, it turned the political community into a chessboard of social groups, seen as vote banks. Public policies and coercive agencies of the state were also harnessed for consolidating such support. This took governance further away from the goal of a democratic society as also from the goal of revolutionary class conflict.

This led to another tricky issue, how should religion be situated? Public endorsement of religion was discomforting and highly intolerable. This was on account of the close link of liberalism to the hegemonic ideology of capitalist development and its naturalization in discourses of modern politics and humanism as an idea that man possessed the capacity to rationally transform society through the agency of his own efforts without invoking supernatural intervention. Liberal humanism was thus an approach to human emancipation based on rationality. Cultural leaders in the non-Western world attacked this. They counterpoised liberal humanism with a widely held belief that men were saved not by their rational faculty but by the free act of God's grace; they were governed by their covenant with God and their pledge of total obedience; any violation of it invited personal, even collective, condemnation. Politics was, thus, underwritten by several texts. Each text was read with reference to other texts. Hence politics was inter-textual.

CONSTRUCTING THE OTHER

Liberal and humanist ideas contained in Locke's texts of the late seventeenth century were at the core of liberal humanist thinking. The contemporary England, the home of these ideas, evolved representative government and constitutionalism as institutional embodiments of these ideas. These institutions came to be regarded as integral to liberal humanism and were taken as based on reason, liberty and equality. These values drove the triumphant march of England to industrial progress. The consequent material prosperity was expected to produce an individual who was unified, knowing and autonomous, who desired peace and leisure to cultivate what lay ineluctably within him. The individual subject, as the author of meaning and action, a source of creativity and innovation, was not a slave of dull uniformity and conformism.

Liberal humanism in the classical liberal tradition was focused on realizing liberal democracy and individual autonomy. It was highlighted by freedom from arbitrary rule and a bill of rights. Law and governance bolstered these rights for advancing individual autonomy. The expanding capitalist class found in it a close ally against its two adversaries: the feudal aristocracy and, more importantly, the masses not yet free from community ties for incorporation into the expanding liberal order. The individual rights were protected by law and played a progressive role in relation to these adversaries and promoted competitive entre-preneurial activity. This role was underwritten by an anthro-pocentric view of nature thrown up by the Renaissance. This view was combined with the Enlightenment belief that man, though a part of nature was nevertheless different from it in the sense that reason enabled him to get over his limitations in pursuit of interests. It was the individual's right to use reason through the application of science and technology to generate wealth and possess it. Modern

liberalism transformed progressive individualism into what C.B. Macpherson called "possessive individualism." Viewed through this lens, the non-Western world looked different and backward. It was open to construction as the other.

COLONIAL DISCOURSE OF NON-WESTERN
SOCIETY AND CULTURE

The first orientalists were Jones, Tod and Mackenzie. They were associated with the Asiatic Society of Bengal. This society was set up by Sir William Jones at the behest of Warren Hastings, the first Governor General of India. They translated India's thought and culture into forms which were compatible with and comprehensible to European sensibilities and scholarship. Later, in the twentieth century, the thought of Michel Foucault and Edward Said came in handy for giving Orientalism a negative connotation. The Western curiosity of non-Western knowledge systems was henceforth seen from this perspective.

A discourse is a firmly bounded area of social knowledge. In Michel Foucault's concept, it is a linguistic apparatus through which the articulation of knowledge becomes an expression of power and gets linked to cultural hegemony for elite control of the masses. In the context of imperial policy, the non-Western world is not simply out there to discover . It comes out alive as Orient only within the colonial discourse. It is subjected to theoretical investigation combining the "assault of Anglicising evangelicalism and utilitarianism."[11] Such colonial discourse theory originated in Edward Said's writings. In *Orientalism,* Said describes the

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[11] Cf.: "Until India's independence, the Anglicist policy, as the source of educated and Westernized Indians, both elite collaborators and nationalist resisters, was the more highly valued, although the British indulged in a fresh burst of a different sort of Orientalism both in *the post-Mutiny preservation of the Indian princely states and in their renewed*

institutions, disciplines and thought processes used by the West for several hundred years to know the non-West. His formulations illuminate the construction of the non-Western other. The colonial discourse was conducted through various disciplines in natural and human sciences which aimed at constructing both colonizing and colonized subjects. Their respective subjectivities as complexes of signs and practices represented them to each other and governed their mutual perception and behaviour. This was how the West constructed the non-West and established its dominance over it in the process of knowing it. Power and knowledge were conflated with culture, language, race and distance as features of a top-down relationship. It was a self-seeking and self-serving imperialist imposition of cultural otherness on an alien and a supposedly less civilized region of the world. The Orient was nothing more than a construction; it had no existence in its own right. Barney Cohn illustrates this point which can be read in the context of the 2011 census in India. Caste is included as a category for this census. Cohn refers to census of British India conducted every ten years since 1881. The categories of caste and religion featured there. A quote from an Oxford paperback *Reinventing India* is relevant:

In addition to opening up avenues of political participation within the Raj, the British sought to define the terms under which different groups of Indians could participate in the political process. (sic.) (I)t is clear that British policies of enumeration, divide and rule, did much to harden these identities (caste and religion). As Barney Cohn points out, "what was entailed in the construction of census operations was the creation of social categories by which India was ordered for

interest in Islamic culture and rulers as a counterpoise to a Hindu-led nationalism." MacKenzie, John M., *Orientalism: History, Theory and the Arts*, First Indian ed., New Delhi, 2012, p. 3. (Emphasis added.) For the eighteenth century version of Orientalism, see Cannon, Garland, *The Life and Mind of Oriental Jones*, Cambridge, 1990.

administrative purposes (sic.) and by which supplicants could be recruited to the British cause. The blunt categories of caste and religion (sic.) were not designed to respect the particularities of *jati*, and nor were they attentive to the possibility of forms of religious affiliation, like *bhakti* cults or *sufism* that cut across the boundaries between Hinduism and Islam. The colonial authorities then sought to build upon these brute categories by linking the (slow) evolution of a representative government to the award of separate electorates and reserved seats for Muslims and Hindus. These awards were built into the reforms of 1909 and 1919 and were anticipated by Curzon's decision in 1905 to divide Bengal into Hindu West Bengal and Muslim East Bengal. In the 1930s, Britain sought to extend this courtship of landed Muslims by appealing in similar terms to lower caste Hindus; the aptly named communal award of 1932 saw British Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald promise separate electorates for the (Hindu) Depressed Classes, much to the consternation of Mahatma Gandhi.[12]

The colonial interests were driven by the knowledge of the non-Western world. Knowing the Orient was simultaneous to the process of exercising power over it. The Orientalist texts constructed the Orient and the way it was represented was indicative of the way the dominant culture exercised power over it. Such construction of the non-Western other was propagated through literature, philosophy, pamphlets, speeches and travel writings. The Western self was heaped with all the virtues and achievements of the Enlightenment such as reason, science, progress, universality, beauty and truth, while the non-Western other was cast in anti-Enlightenment darkness of irrationality, superstition, backwardness, particularity, ugliness and myth. The Orient was Orientalized. Both coercion and consent worked together to produce "Orientalized Orientals."[13] It was a never-

[12] Corbridge, Stuart and Harriss, John, *Reinventing India: Liberalization, Hindu Nationalism and Popular Democracy,* New Delhi, 2000, p. 8.
[13] Soguk, N., "Reflections on the 'Orientalized Orientals,' *Alternatives*, 18(3) 1993.

ending process and continued into the present. This was evident from the contemporary demonization of Islam. This was a replication of the ways in which the Orientalists constructed the Orient in the nineteenth century.[14]

News, expert knowledge, and political commentaries were the ways of perpetuating Western power even after decolonization. A real world existed behind the representation of that world. The representation, therefore, could not be taken as a statement of truth. Historians criticized it as ahistorical historicism. Such linking of power to knowledge questioned the liberal humanist assumption of knowledge as neutral, of the neutrality of facts from values. It was against this background that the radical scholars in South Asia, especially in India, approached history writing from anti-imperialist perspectives. Both Marxist and cultural historians were anti-imperialist, even though they could not agree on the relationship of history to issues of democracy, participation and inclusive development. Some other scholars defined the boundaries between the colonizer and the colonized in psychoanalytic terms of hyper-masculinity and hyper-femininity. The male-originated discourse of postcolonial Westernization led to top-down exercise of dominance. The efforts aimed at realizing hypermasculine development fantasy through hyperfeminine West-phalianism. Such a reading of the postcolonial situation was wide off the mark but its contribution to the hegemonic crisis which confronted several non-Western states could not be denied. These debates gave rise to renewed interest in Anglicist policies including the study of English language and literature. Gauri Viswanathan speaks of a "salutary, emancipatory influence because it released Indians from false consciousness and replaces outmoded styles of thought

[14] Said, Edward, *Covering Islam: How the Media and Experts Determine How We See the Rest of the World*, New York, 1981. Updated, revised and with a new Introduction, 1997.

with enlightened concepts of justice and liberty."[15] Was
colonialism exploitative, or emancipatory also? This was like
coming back to the old question in political theory, how
should the good be predicated? This question has been
central to political thought and reflection.

POLITICAL THOUGHT IN WORLD AFFAIRS: PARTICULARISM VERSUS UNIVERSALISM

How should the good in politics be measured and politically
right defined? The history of political thought addresses it
as the core issue. One finds several shades of the good
between the known conservative and radical poles.
Liberalism is at the centre. It has a right wing and a left
wing. The latter is interventionist liberalism. Right wing
liberalism is inclined towards traditionalism, social
constructivism, authoritarianism and elitism. It takes recourse
to emergency measures for preservation of political order
and opens opportunities for the intellectual elite in
government. The trend has been in favour of conservative
and right-liberal approaches to the good. These approaches
represent the interests of property-owners. Some
traditionalists among them treat property as a trust rather
than a matter of absolute right of use and disposal. It has
been said that the theoretical pretensions of revolutionaries
and radical reformers are not those of political science but
rather those of abstract political theory. One can start from
the classical Greek thought of Socrates, Plato and Aristotle,
and their Greek successors, the Stoics and the Epicureans.
Then there was thought which developed at other
Mediterranean sites such as the Roman, Jewish and Christian,
and at Asian sites, the Islamic, Buddhist, Confucian and
Hindu. No less important was the role of rationalists, whether

[15] Viswanathaan, Gauri, *Masks of Conquest: Literary Study and British Rule
in India*, London, 1989, p.17.

liberal or Marxist. The liberals grounded the good on self-interest and freedom of private judgement and, in the thought of John Rawls and Ronald Dworkin, developed theories of egalitarian justice, and put them under the guardianship of reason and a system of rights.

Karl Marx, on the other hand, advanced a notion of right by foregrounding structures of dominance for conceptualizing the good. Added to these were the reflections of contemporary thinkers such as Martha Nussbaum, Amartya Sen, and, above all, Mahatma Gandhi, who practised reason not in an aggressive mode of eliminating all irrationality. Together, they set the scene after the Second World War for development of political theory in dialogue with their thought and reflection when political concepts were defined and redefined in terms of predicates which suited the contemporary political goals and conditions. It was like squaring the circle by locating the good within the spaces between conflicting radical and conservative values. My own university was a clear case of de-radicalizing social change in terms of the leads given by Western Marxism. The concept of the political took shape first. What is political in a given situation? The political was defined in different ways in relation to different components of political process. These divergent theorizations gave rise to oppositions and contesting discourses of the right and the good.

The post-cold war focus of the political was on expanding the space between Jihad and McWorld – that is, between weak democracy and strong market. There emerged a discourse of the free market. The political here meant deregulation, privatization, foreign direct investment and minimal government. The rule was: let the market decide. The seductive image of the market permeated society and began to shape the political sphere. Citizens were transformed into consumers of politics, into an audience for the antics of political superstars. Market ideology or

economic liberalism could not countervail this trend. The institutions of representative democracy like parliaments, political parties, periodic elections, independent judiciary, and human rights were in themselves not adequate to ensure democratic outcomes. Nor was affirmative action for social inclusiveness. Nor was legislation for transparency and accountability in government functioning. These measures were undoubtedly desirable supplements but did not go far enough in meeting the democratic ideal of popular participation in decision-making on matters that affected people closely. The need was to reconstruct these top-down institutional processes which were an adaptation of democratic governance to the cold war imperatives.

The issue could be framed within the history of ideas. The classical texts on moral, political, religious and other such modes of thought contained dateless wisdom. This wisdom should help in understanding how the diverse conceptualizations of the good were intertwined with elitist strategies and claims to social power. The different conceptions of the good were divided on issues between reason and revelation, rationality and non-rationality, freedom and equality, autonomy and dependence, difference and dominance, inclusion and exclusion, or individual and collectivity (nation, community, class or caste, or the human universalism). The ideological and institutional foundations of such imaginations were anchored in social sciences, especially political science getting voice in debates on pluralism versus relativism, liberalism versus totalitarianism, democracy versus capitalism, or the left versus the right. There was as yet no way of bridging the gaps between the contested positions. The political leadership generally attempted to squeeze out alternatives to the preferred position.

By way of illustration, some such timeless wisdom in the history of political ideas comes to mind rather, off hand, in

the context of post-cold war world affairs when attention is turned to Herbert Spencer's *The Principles of Ethics*,[16] where he recognized the relevance of relative ethics in an imperfect society comprising imperfect people. In the context of relative ethics, the right should meet one criterion only: it should be deduced from the conditions of existence. It should not be grounded on absolute ethics of a perfect society. A right was therefore meaningful only when the rights-bearing entity was aware of the limits of its capacity for exercising it in pursuit of the good. Hence, the right was calibrated across social differences between those who chose rights for protection and promotion of the good and those who did not, those who used it for utility. This also gave the right a utilitarian foundation. The question whether the distribution of capacity for effective exercise of rights was just, made no sense. Social embeddedness of large sections of people leading to their near total submission to the community good was helpful to the elite in pursuing their political goals. This existential situation denied the people, the real status of free and equal participation in competition for rewards in modern economy and administration whatever be the legal position on the subject. The utility of rights for them was not the same as for the others. They chose not to exercise the rights (which legally belonged to them) and this situation was in a paradoxical relationship with the notion that rights did not belong to people independently of their choosing to exercise them. Instead of leaning on legally defined rights, these people would prefer to be a part of functional groups and their social networks based on non-coercive and voluntaristic contracts, thereby submitting themselves to demands that even violated these rights. For people who were lower down on the scale of capacity for meaningful exercise of rights, these groups and networks,

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[16] London, 1893.

despite being caught in practices which overtly undermined these rights, opened up opportunities for these people to express power, freedom and individuality, generally in opposition to established authority. Hence equality of rights, not reinforced by equal capacity for exercising them, opened opportunities for power-seeking individuals. At other levels also, relative ethics paved the way for aggrandizement of power. Likewise, some states were born weak. The entitlements of such states and other rights bearing entities which were born weak were a political resource for global or regional centres of power. Now, move attention from relative to absolute ethics, or to the other end of the social pole inhabited by people powered by capacity for exercise of rights. This pole was inhabited by the elite. At this level, the elite possessions and rewards were legitimated in terms of market rationality. Their possessions and rewards were claimed to be justified by market assessments of their competence and were therefore beyond criticism.

Similar responses emerge among all rights-bearing entities along the line. The present study uses this as the background for a critical examination of the contemporary discourse of the right and the good, juxtaposing the West in opposition to the non-West, which, of course, is too broad a general-ization but is metaphorically relevant in contemporary world affairs.It is helpful in answering the question, why some postcolonial states feel weighed down by their new found status, so much so that some scholars have even suggested return to trusteeship or colonial tutelage, or why the downtrodden are not able to emerge as equal to others, or why the propertyless citizenry prefers to suffer in silence.

After the end of the cold war the issue was seen as settled in favour of liberal values and democratic procedures. It was a rights-based liberalism. Faith was put in the atomistic theory of society treating individuals as rights-bearing entities under law. This empowered the individual to pursue his or her

interests, unhindered by the cultural norms of their corresponding social situations. One serious consequence of such practices is to fragment the subjective world of the individual between acutely discrepant worlds of primary and secondary socialization. In the world of secondary socialization (the world of identity forged by secondary socialization, civil society approved identities as modern or secular nationalist), it is easy to reject the limiting conditions of the cultural context (the world of primary socialization) and manipulate its norms for personal advantage. And so the empirical profile of liberal humanism, in fact of rationality itself, was different in different contexts.

The disappearance of distinct cultures to make way for dominant Western culture appears inevitable with the passage of time. Individuals everywhere are becoming more like one another than different, all shaping themselves after the image of the Western man. Such representations of the West, though incorrect, become pervasive and give rise to hopes of Western culture becoming universal. T. von Laue's *The World Revolution of Westernization: The Twentieth Century in Global Perspective*,[17] is illustrative of this optimism. This image is grounded on the belief, nurtured especially by those who think rather lowly of their own culture, that the shortest route to success consists in approximating the Western man, either through mimicry of style, consumption and relationships, or through capturing within one's own self and within one's own culture the traits one sees as the reasons for the West's success on the world stage. The change is thus external; it is purposive, not developmental. Those imitating the West are generally blind to the historical reality that its triumph is grounded on an internal dynamic of development, the historical phases it went through – the Renaissance, the Reformation, the Enlightenment and the

[17] New York, 1987.

scientific and industrial revolutions. The people emulating the West tend to reverse the sequence.

No wonder, the moment of liberal triumph was also the moment of challenge to it. The critics claim that Western preeminence is to be explained not so much by the internal dynamic as by the treatment the West has given to other civilizations leading to disruption and destruction of their economies and societies. They reject the universalist claims of Western civilization. Likewise, in domestic politics, the nationalist claims of the state elite are opposed by subnational groups. Marginalized communities target dominant communities. They strategize marginality and backwardness. These communities undergo a process of identity formation through anticipatory socialization into the norms derived from such instrumental uses of identity. The individual opts for such an identity for manipulative purposes. The individual internalizes the new reality (the new identity), not as his reality, but as something to be used for specific purposes. "If this phenomenon becomes widely distributed the institutional order as a whole begins to take on the character of a network of reciprocal manipulations."[18] These identities heap the blame for their backwardness at the door of the dominant other. Justice now emerges as the primary political value, more important than freedom and even fair play. Postcolonial states, backward communities, and the periphery of developed core areas within such states define their respective identities in terms of the injustices suffered through history and make a choice among available agencies and stylized theories and ideologies to mobilize their supporters. History, politics, economics, science and technology are marshalled to serve this cause. This challenges the basic premises of liberalism. Individuation as a process for producing autonomous moral entities at all levels is almost

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[18] Berger and Luckmann, Penguin Edition, 1971, p. 192.

given up. As a consequence of it, world affairs are witness to odds against a liberal order. The borderline between internal and international is crossed over by engagement with external factors taking hold of the political process and privileging it over internal dynamic of social development. Those spearheading such an engagement organize themselves into competing identity groups. They are upwardly mobile people capable of taking advantage of international movement of capital and technology. Those who are left below this critical threshold seek security through family and village clusters and flag traditional values learnt through primary socialization. The political space gets crowded with such desperate identities.The situation is mirrored in a cacophony of rights claims and visions of the good. Its face-off with neoliberal governance according to reason and market criteria (bordering on anarcho-capitalism) reveals a political process which is decentred, enabling different centres of power to moves according to different logics. They construct narratives for reading and writing political events with an eye on their respective supporters. This generates a lot of political and ideational confusion in the pursuit of policy.

One of its effects has been to push Western civilization into self-analysis. Acrimonious debates on its foundational principles have surfaced. The non-Western world strongly reacts to aspects of this debate, especially against those who characterize Western civilization as Christendom, as a child of Christianity. In the context of globalization, such characterization of Western civilization has sparked a related debate on the nature of capitalism and the role of religion in its growth. Can capitalism take root in non-Christian communities? Which non-Christian communities can serve as better hosts to capitalist growth? These are hot questions. A related hot issue is the representation of pre-capitalist social order, whether such an order should be taken as an idealized

conception of the good life, or should it be seen as a product of social domination and marginalization at the periphery? This is how the issues of faith get entangled with issues of economy and governance. The other complex of political entanglements is around issues of territorially organized communities. The strategies of accumulation on national and global scales are interpreted as leading to differentiation of classes along regional and national boundaries so that the relations of production (in the Marxian sense) get organized as relations between the core and the periphery both between and within nations.

Can these conflicts be resolved within the framework of liberal humanism? Is liberal thought and theory helpful? Yes, they are helpful but not fully so. One way of proceeding in the matter is to discover the weakness of liberal theory in the face of these several conflicts. In the context of this study, it would be fruitful to question Fukuyama's claim for liberal democracy as the most developed form of democracy. The counter-claim is that liberal democracy is a product of an evolutionary trajectory specific to some Western countries. Their historical experience cannot be generalized or universalized. A positive relationship between democracy and the market posited by this experience may not be replicable in other contexts. In any case, the experience with liberal democracy, especially in the non-Western world, need to be put under the scanner. Its inadequacies have come out visibly. Liberal democratic regimes have not been able to control national economic life or advance social programmes in the face of powerful corporate interests and international financial agencies. A "non-party political process" has gained strength and is raising "a new discourse on democracy" by inventing political practices which expand the arena of politics beyond the representational institutions such as elections and political parties."[19]

[19] Seth, D.L., p. 45.

What lies at the root of the confusion? One of the reasons is the liberal lack of commitment to its own moral code and the lurking fear that any compromise with atomistic individualism would amount to support for conservative historicism and social forces represented by tradition. F.A. Hayek, when charged with lending such support, answered the critics in his *The Constitution of Liberty*,[20] the chapter titled "Why I Am Not a Conservative." Liberal consciousness was, no doubt, distorted when such a construction of liberal values was dressed as a programmatic agenda for a preferred imagined community. It was further distorted when the world was taken as passing through a phase of disenchantment, with people increasingly resembling characters in Robert Musil's novel *The Man Without Qualities*[21] and their behaviour becoming temporal, contingent and capricious. The liberals overlooked these distortions and continued to rely on reason-based approaches to human affairs. Reason, as embodied in science and technology, was considered capable of creating common patterns of thought, consumption, politics and values. A reference could be made to P. Sztomptka's *The Sociology of Social Change*.[22] Such a position taken by liberals negated their own moral position.

Liberalism came to be identified with structures of elite (or class) domination shaping public interest. The rule of rational and enlightened individuals over the masses was legitimized. To celebrate such a rule as grounded on "rationalism that regards an independently existing reason as capable of designing civilization through reconstruction of social and political institutions in accordance with a preconceived plan", was to take a top-down, elitist approach to politics. The quote is from my monograph entitled *Political*

[20] Chicago, 1966.7.
[21] Translation, New York, 1996.
[22] Oxford, 1993.7.

Development: Risk, Anxiety and Innovation.[23] Such shifts in liberal self-understanding, generated a dynamic of sharp social differences arising and articulated as exclusivist claims of alterity. When such differences were put to political use as was the case almost everywhere it became difficult to sustain institutional autonomy. Tolerance of difference gives way to a discourse of rights and political process gets caught in a vicious cycle. The situation is endemic to the project on nation-building and state consolidation. It became even more problematic because the nation was imagined differently by those leaders who had joined hands to march it to political independence. Should it be a civic nation or an ethnic nation? Should it have a socialist orientation or a nativist orientation? Each of these imaginations continued to be backed by their respective constituencies which react to every event and even to minor policy changes. The problem needs to be addressed. The problem is that these social constituencies marginalize their common interest and are not able to recover it in their consciousness as a pre-existing reality. It is a paradox that just when the state, as a vehicle of democratic engagement, is becoming problematic, the clamour for democratic engagement at the global level is becoming louder. A way to resolve the paradox is to bring the three themes of inclusion, equality and voice to the centre stage of political culture and civil society. Rather than moving from theory to action, it should be the other way round. From institutional and political practices that exclude and oppress, the way forward should be through participatory practices that include and emancipate.

Liberal democracy needs to be supplemented with participatory democracy. This point is forcefully brought out by Bonaventura de Sousa Santos in his edited collection of essays, *Democratizing Democracy: Beyond the Liberal Democratic*

[23] Shimla, 2003, p. 17. The note 21 on page 48 is also relevant.

Canon.[24] For example, the citizen, as an autonomous agent, should revisit sites of shared experience and ask rhetorical questions: how does the experience shape my sense of identity? What does it mean for my action at other sites? It is hoped that this approach will slow down the present tendency of reducing political conflicts to claims based on right and restore a sense of common purpose to civic life.

This is far from the reality. A bottom-up demolition of a political culture that thrives on strategic uses of difference is not easy. It is institutionalized in the political system and is entrenched in top-down processes including academic debates. Any attempt to interrogate it is embarrassing to concerned academics and a veil of silence descends, only to be broken by repetitive references to primacy of freedom and justice in the social order as a point of convergence. It is difficult to define a common ground among diverse discourses. What is the common ground between, say, free market and socialism, or between realist and feminist international relations? It is difficult to talk across subfields. Almost all the talking occurs within the circle of specialists. A specialist in a subfield is often wary of poaching by outsiders through intrusive questions or unwanted concern. It is easy to imagine that this insularity lacks academic openness, and, may be, is an unintended cover for the interests of social groups which the specialists claim to represent.

The branching of political and social theory into subfields and further subdivisions spreading outwards is a consequence of attempts to relate it to political and social realities that are far more varied and differentiated than is visualized in grand theories. The focus on action for achieving goals conceived within a framework of relationship between ideation, historiography and science motivates interpretations of real life experiences to serve as an intellectual foundation for realizing a vision of the future

[24] London, 1997.

through politics. What good is theory otherwise? This line of thinking went back to Marxian emphasis on changing the world and to the seventies when logical positivism was attacked for its value neutrality. In this context, the need now is to grasp the full import of theory as politics, and, of reason as its servant.

A twofold dynamic is at work. First, the Enlightenment utopia is under pressure from the post-cold war cosmopolitan agenda and rapidly expanding global capitalist economy to come to terms with different non-Western cultures making their presence felt in the West in the aftermath of increasing ethnic dispersion there. This problem of reconciling the cosmopolitan agenda with non-Western cultures opens up space for theory development. This sets off the second dynamic. The non-Western cultures claim that they are not just different from the West but also incommensurable with it, having a distinct domain of moral precepts rooted in human aspiration at a non-material plane. This encounter between Western and non-Western cultures is grounded on the notions of difference and subjectivity. The primacy of subjectivity in the totality of non-Western historical experience with the West, its evaluation and expression, has rendered non-Western identity construction amenable to multiple discourses. The process is dependent on the presence of multiple subjectivities in relation to the West largely because of a plurality of experiential locations. An articulation of a unified response to the West therefore becomes difficult, if not impossible. Response to the West is a site for contest among powerful social forces. Everything is contested, whether it is negotiating the relationship with modernity, reform in social and religious practices including the status of women, resistance against colonial and imperial challenges to statehood, or peace on protracted domestic and international conflicts. The idiom and style of such contestation is determined by theories representing divergent social realities and interests.

The focus turns to the interrelationship between identity and participation in politics. This dual process is unfolding because, on the one hand, it is difficult to see how economic aspirations raised by the adoption of free market principles can be fulfilled in the short run while, on the other hand, it is equally easy to see how the socially disruptive impact of rapid economic growth is generating a security need for belonging to a community grounded on collectivist ideals of good life. A revolt against the colonizing domination of individual rationality is becoming evident. A withdrawal from the rational worldview on which the rise of the West is based, is taking place, as the people are retreating into various post-modern lifestyles. Critical thinkers such as Jean-François Lyotard expressed it as the turning of human faith away from engineered progress.

This casts a shadow on social liberalism and secular democracy, essential concomitants of free market in a globalizing world economy. How should politics go over the hump of self-defined identity preferences? An open question is, will statist policies funded by growth and privatization succeed in offering the dream of a new future? Will enhanced public spending absorb the shock of social disruption? Will the strategy of recovering personal virtue be helpful in muffling the noise? It is argued that personal virtue rests on subject position capable of transcending social antagonisms, clearing the way for the social to constitute itself as a stable and unified totality. Social disruption under the impact of liberal rationality and free market economy is the space where the secular state is struggling for political support in competition with its rivals who see, in the emerging situation, an opportunity for their style of politics.

Chapter 5

LIBERAL COLONIZATION
OF THE GOOD

The cultural vehicle of economic and political power, enjoyed by Europe and America for about four hundred years, was the universal and secularist worldview of the Enlightenment. During this period, the Enlightenment conceptions of reason and knowledge spoke the same language as the Western machines and their products.[1] Western technological and military superiority spread across

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[1] The point that needs to be underlined is that the liberal discourse of reason and knowledge in the non-Western world took a *rhetorical turn*; it ceased to be an exercise in theoretical reconstruction through interaction with the non-Western discourses of reason and knowledge. It lost its theoretical character and aimed at winning the adherence of a non-Western audience for producing the desired effect – that is, a switch from non-Western to Western value-orientations. In terms of this understanding, the liberal axiom that the right is prior to the good is rhetorical and the liberal thought that developed in terms of this axiom is aimed at fuelling political struggle against non-Western conceptions of the good with a view eventually to colonize and stifle it and its related thought processes. As a consequence of it, the social and political theory in the non-Western world took on a very different character. Cf.: "A cursory glance at contemporary political theory is sufficient to show that though some of its content may have universal reach, its form remains parochial. Political philosophy as it exists today takes little inspiration from non-Western societies." Bhargava, Rajiv, "Introduction: Outline of a Political Theory of the Indian Constitution," in his edited collection of essays, *Politics and Ethics of the Indian Constitution,* New Delhi, 2008, p.1. Political theory became a preserve of universities with the sole aim of consolidating top-down structures of power in pursuit of progress and universal rationality.

different cultures along with Enlightenment conceptions of nature, freedom and truth that defined cultural modernity. During this period, economic and technological modernization often seemed, at least to Americans and Europeans, inseparable from cultural modernization. They claimed that Western rationalism and naturalism was a necessary condition for economic and technological progress. They believed that the West was at an advanced level of human civilization while other cultures and civilizations were at a lower level. This was Western "ethnocentricism – expressed politically in extreme nationalism, psychologically in passionate xenophobia."[2] The non-West reacted to it strongly. Lerner describes non-Western value-orientations in these words:

The hatred shown by anti-colonialism is harvested in the rejection of every appearance of foreign tutelage. Wanted are modern institutions but not modern ideologies, modern power but not modern purposes, modern wealth but not modern wisdom, modern communications but not modern cant.[3]

Non-Western cultures find it difficult to define the individual as a theoretical entity, not a situated one, capable of defining interest and making a choice. For liberalism, every other entity is secondary. Liberals define society as nothing more than an aggregation of individuals. In terms of this assumption, a harmonious linking of society with structures of political power was taken for granted. It was possible to visualize that such structures of power, from the local to the global, would be amenable to organization into a coherent whole.

When this assumption got interfaced with social reality on the ground, a movement occurred towards accommoda-

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[2] Lerner, Daniel, *The Passing of Traditional Society*, Paperback ed., Glencoe, 1964, p. 47.
[3] Ibid., p. 47.

tion of collectivist understandings of society. This accommodation could not be achieved. The liberals insisted that even a situated (and socially constructed) individual was no less autonomous in defining interest and in making a choice, and as such was not any less an agency. This liberal axiom served as the foundation for deriving a theory of society (social liberalism) from political theory and using it as a rational framework for empirical study of actual societies. This was a clear case of liberal appropriation of dissident Western approaches to social and political theory, such as Hegelian and Marxian approaches, and of forcible colonization of non-Western approaches.[4] As a consequence, there occurred a distance and divergence between political and social theory, on the one hand, and actual existing societies, on the other.[5]

This confounded the problem and the task of accommodation became complex. Two things happened. First, the liberal political theory attempted to fit the collectivist theories of society to its assumptions, while the collectivist theories attempted to fit liberal theory to their assumptions. The effort was not much of a success. The polemics on *the political* continued. The interests grounded

[4] The aim here is to extend the postmodern perspective to the contemporary discourse of development (as, for example, in India where development is extolled as the goal of public policy). The discourse is shaped by Foucault's conceptualization of relation between power and knowledge. This relationship unfolds a reality marked by appropriation of the non-West by the First World knowledge backed by the First World power. See, Schuurman, F.J., ed., *Beyond the Impasse: New Directions in Development Theory,* London, 1992; and Slater, D.,"Theories of Development and Politics of the Post-Modern,"*Development and Change,* 3, 1992, pp. 283-319.

[5] The West and the non-West are treated not as geographical but as broad cultural categories. Such binary oppositions cover up significant differences within each category. The limiting effect of analysis within such a structured framework is accepted.

on different definitions of political space could not be reconciled. Mainly, the top-down and bottom-up definitions of political and social theory could not be reconciled and often stepped outside the framework of accommodation, especially when the collectivist theories of society tried to derive non-liberal political theory from the assumptions underlying social identities.[6] When different states fashioned their political institutions and policies after these rival theories, the processes of cooperation and confrontation among them shaped politics and international relations. It was against this background that a reconceptualization of

[6] Such developments cast a shadow on liberal optimism relating to identity-based political agency. Why then liberals (and Marxists, say, in India) continue to support identity-based collectivist ideologies and forms of governance, is an open question. It appears to be so because their support for primary accumulation in a pre-capitalist economy through policies of blood and fire accords with the rule book on capitalist development but is difficult to reconcile with a public face stylized in the image of Bolsheviks or Maoists as champions of the poor and the marginalized. The compulsions of the situation called for a strategic detour and this led to the grounding of identity politics on their reading of the Emergency. This was not Marxism but post-Marxist politics. Identity politics was now seen by them as a political contrivance for countervailing social forces that might lead to a relapse into authoritarian (or allegedly fascist) politics. But it is not possible to kick up identity politics without reinventing tradition. J.D. Eller says that identity (or ethnic) politics is "virtually unthinkable" without memories of their cultural past and in "the most extreme cases the tradition may even be a fabrication, an invention." J.D. Eller, *From Culture to Ethnicity to Conflict: An Anthropological Perspective on International Ethnic Conflict*, Ann Arbor, 1999, pp. 29-30. The authenticity of identity-centred cultural narratives as fodder for identity politics is, therefore, an important concern in peace and development study, besides its relevance for history writing. Just as, according to Marx, bourgeois historians do not tell the full story of primary accumulation "which transforms the producers into wage workers," so the historians of identity politics do not tell the full story of the past and distort tradition.

politics and international relations was undertaken as a serious academic challenge, so that some light could be thrown on the issue of order, freedom and justice within and between societies.[7]

THE LIBERAL THEORY AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

The right and the good as ethical predicates were now treated as contingent on the nature of the international system, then understood as a kind of ordered anarchy, based on logic of self-help, rational choice and balance of power. The supreme principle of this order was the notion of sovereignty understood as exclusive power of defining the right and the good within its territorial boundaries. This understanding of the international system got undermined when great power actions sought to replace the self-regulating logic of self-help with practices that superseded sovereignty and perhaps pointed towards a future establishment of a world state. This implied a shift in world political ontology from a conception of international order based on sovereignty to one based on a more abstract and contested idea of humanity. In modern political discourse, the concept of humanity figures prominently in reconstructions of the idealist view within the framework of critical philosophy. Such reconstructions articulate two approaches: institutionalization and internalization.

The examples of reconstruction within the *institutionalization* approach are, first, Vattel's concept of mankind's natural right to the earth, a right that transcends the human imposition of dominion.[8] The second is Kant's

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[7] The challenge was met by extending the social and cultural theories of constructivism and postcolonialism to international relations. See, Onuf, Nicholas, *World of Our Making*, Columbia, 1989.

[8] Emmerich de Vattel, *The Law of Nations* (edited by Joseph Chitty), London, 1834, p. 143.

cosmopolitan project. Kant argues that all things prior to the establishment of the right are possessed by the world in common.[9] He does not endorse Vattel's notion of a primitive state of communion. He dismisses it as something that cannot be proved. He replaces it with what he calls the original possession in common which, he declares, need not ever have been a reality but can be derived from practical reason. If possession remains an abstract concept then it must be justified rationally, *a priori*. Rationally, it can be declared that the world originally belonged to human beings in common. As there is no world republic yet, the world is still held in common. All domains claimed by nations are provisional. Kant suggests a paradigm that reaches beyond sovereignty. It suggests that it is neither the will of the state, nor the right embodied within it, that provides the basis of *the political* in global community. The political is grounded on a notion of humanity, a community of mankind.

Jurgen Habermas is the third example of reconstruction within the institutionalization approach. He says that the very nature of the international arena has changed significantly from the time Kant proposed his idea for perpetual peace. In his time, warfare was limited, confined between whole polities based on conflicting reasons of state. He was writing from a historical perspective that was yet to experience such things as world wars, civil wars, guerrilla (terrorist) wars, or wars of nationalism, ethnic cleansing, or genocide. Kant's cosmopolitan project is in need of reformulation.[10] Peace now demands that all aggressive wars are deemed criminal. In this sense, the imperatives of international law and

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[9] *The Metaphysics of Morals,* Immanuel Kant, *Political Writings* (edited by Hans Reiss and translated by H.B. Nisbet), Cambridge, 1991, p. 350.
[10] Jurgen Habermas, "Kant's Idea of Perpetual Peace, with the Benefit of Two Hundred Years' Hindsight," *Perpetual Peace: Essays on Kant's Cosmopolitan Ideal* (edited by James Bohman and Matthias Lutz-Bachmann), Cambridge, 1997, pp. 113-153.

morality have moved beyond Kant. Sovereignty is no longer the norm. It is no longer inviolable. It is no longer the source of international morality. Habermas says that the world is emerging into a post-national constellation, as the nation-state is yielding ground to non-government actors.[11] Globalization is also eroding its effectiveness. Increasing interdependence has given rise to political, economic, social, and cultural integration across international borders and has produced fissures within states.

This has undermined the principle of territoriality in politics. Habermas says:

Because nation-states must make decisions on a territorial basis in an interdependent world society, there is less and less congruence between the group of participants in a collective decision and the total of all those affected by their decision."[12]

The changing nature of world affairs is threatening to move the nation-state towards obsolescence. An urgent need of the present is to advance the cosmopolitan project through appropriate institutional innovations. The first step in this direction is to give the status of world citizens to such individuals who are fired with zest for cosmopolitan values and are prepared to advocate them or otherwise work for them, even in defiance of national legal and other constraints. Institutional machinery should be there to protect their autonomy and freedom. This task cannot be left to the enforcement agencies of particular states. Habermas says:

The point of cosmopolitan law is, rather, that it goes over the heads of the collective subjects of international law to give legal status to the individual subjects and justifies their unmediated membership in the association of free and equal world citizens.[13]

[11] Jurgen Habermas, *The Postnational Constellation* (edited by Max Pensky), Cambridge, 2001, pp. 122-3.
[12] Ibid., p. 70.
[13] Habermas, 1997, p. 128.

The political needs of world society require movement beyond rights and formation of a world domestic policy. The rights based on international law cannot be the basis for relations among peoples. Non-government organizations should therefore emerge as the site for rational deliberation and will formation on such issues. Global powers should also become proactive in broadening their political horizons from issues of national interest to issues of global governance.

Alexander Wendt, on the other hand, takes the *internalization* approach. He is not convinced that the nation-state is in decline: He says:

It may be that non-state actors are becoming more important than states as initiators of change but system change ultimately happens *through* states.[14]

The conceptual problem, he says, is national interest. Wendt argues that the determinants of national interest in relation to the international system are contingent, not fixed. The system itself plays a role in how states view themselves and each other and so what needs to be rethought is the given-ness of the national self in national interest. What is required is a reconstruction of the national self, so that the self-understanding of a state undergoes such a change that enables it to come together with other states to form a pluralistic security community. Social learning is the crucial factor in processes of change. The structure of the state's system can change only through processes of social learning and reconstruction. These processes should gradually reconstitute political culture, both national and international and transform the way the states come to view themselves, each other, and the possible relations between them. In this reconstituted political culture, the norms of global polity

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[14] Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, Cambridge, 1999, p. 9. Emphasis is in the original.

will be internalized by states to such an extent that they will inform and shape, not only their actions but also the definition of their interests. Wendt says:

International interests are now part of the national interest, not just interests that states have to advance in order to advance their separate national interests; friendship is a preference over an outcome, not just a preference over a strategy.[15]

Such reconstitution of international political culture is possible only when the states system is embedded within a common cultural framework. The Western states system is so embedded. The recognition of a people as a sovereign state implies certain evaluation in terms of adherence to certain norms or criteria, central to self-understanding of the Western international system. These standards of evaluation have historically evolved, as Wendt says, whether the people in question are Christian or civilized, or whether their government adheres to basic principles of democracy, capitalism, or human rights. This practice of inclusion and exclusion gives rise to a sense of collective identity for collective action against perceived outsiders such as rogue states. Wendt says:

It constitutes states as individuals with the right to play the game of international politics but does so in a way that makes each state seem to be the sole proprietor and guardian of that right. Westphalian states are possessive individuals who do not appreciate the ways in which they depend on each other for their identity (sic). The effect of collective amnesia is that juridical sovereignty is dependent on others and constitutes self-interest as the appropriate way to relate to each other, and self-help as its systemic corollary.[16]

Wendt's point is that neither self-interest nor self-help is an inherent property of states; it is rather the result of a certain

[15] Ibid., p. 395.
[16] Ibid., p. 295.

understanding of a state's own individuality. What is generally taken as common sense in international politics, is actually based on socially and historically evolved ideas and values. This being so, it should be possible to go beyond them or even to transform the states system. It should be possible to shift its cultural base from that of conflict to that of friendship. For the same reason, it should be possible to ground the non-Western states system within the framework of a non-Western culture, that does not necessarily privilege the liberal democratic culture of the West over its own norms. Of course, these norms will have to be brought in line with the aspirations of the people.

THE LIBERAL THEORY AND DOMESTIC POLITICS

In domestic politics also, the ontological issue was the self-understanding of the state as the sole and exclusive source of the right and the good for the underlying society. These categories of political discourse were constructed in terms of *a priori* principles of reason as embodied in modern political theory. They were used to evaluate social institutions and practices. Discrepant institutions together with discrepant individual and group behaviour, rooted in tradition and its rationality, were subjected to ruthless enforcement measures. The moral self-understanding of the society was allowed expression only within the spaces not covered by such enforcement and state regulation. The emphasis here was on situations of mismatch and incongruence between state and society. All such situations emerged as sites of contest on issues of the right and the good. In this contest the state makes high demands on society.

In a liberal democracy, for example, the state is committed to treat all citizens as individuals and to treat all individuals equally. Freedom and equality are not found in nature.

Freedom and equality have to be realized through training of both mind and behaviour. The individual should regard himself or herself as free and equal and regard other individuals as free and equal and orient his or her expectations and behaviour accordingly. But individuals are born as members of families and communities: ethnic, class and religious communities. These communities shape individual self-understanding in accordance with some coherent worldview or conception of good life. As such, they introduce values and standards of conduct. They establish differentials of rank and status. The self-understanding of an individual is shaped by these standards and this gives him or her a sense of belonging to the community and a sense of identity.

The defining attribute of liberal citizenship, free and equal individuality, is alien to the perspectives that most immediately impact his or her selfhood and attitudes towards others. In situations of such mismatch, what kind of demands does the state make on society? Which social constituencies does it nurture with patronage and resources or political support and legitimacy? What kind of responses do communities make to such patterns of cooptation? And what consequences follow from this? Domestic politics, in such a context, is constituted by intercommunity contest for power and the relation of each community to the state as mediated by its leaders. The choice of leaders underlines their agency power in relation to the rest of society and not their fit with community norms of good life. The ontological issue always remains in the foreground: does the state exist as the custodian of a universal culture constituted by liberal democratic values? Are these values universal and need to be represented as of a higher order? While these issues are subjects of academic discourse, their embodiment in state

structure, especially in the non-Western world, leads to conflict.[17]

This universal approach served as a site for a discourse of the good, embedded within the liberal conceptual system, as derived from the Enlightenment notions of reason, nature and freedom. The liberal discourse of the good is constituted

[17] In Europe and America, this worldview was never alien to their native cultural traditions in the way that it was in the non-Western part of the world. Its roots went to traditional European religious and political beliefs. These conceptions of reason and knowledge (no doubt hostile to the pre-Enlightenment cultural traditions from which they sprung) came out winners through historical development spreading over centuries by successfully transforming the organizing principles of these societies from pre-Enlightenment to Enlightenment values. Non-Western liberals, including liberal Marxists, sought to reinvent the political strategies and tools used in bringing about such social transformation for application to their respective societies. The concepts of social development and social democracy were not in line with the philosophical foundations of non-Western cultures. These concepts served as ethical space external to these societies for taking a critical stand on tradition and culture. It was soon discovered that the incompatibility of the Enlightenment values with religious and political traditions of non-Western societies was far greater than that in Western societies. This had implications for the state-led development project. A more powerful and conscious intervention was considered necessary to bring about social change. Probably, for this reason, identity politics appeared as a strategic partner. The state-led development politics forged ahead by foregrounding the disadvantaged and deprived masses to garner support. It asked the question: What was the source of disadvantage and deprivation? Critical sociology and linguistics found the source in social hierarchies, practices and the use of language. The historians documented it. The consequent divide between state and society gave rise to difficult and complex issues of social policy. Only two choices were open to the state: either it could rely on interventionary politics to fit society into its framework, or it could push large parts of the society outside its moral domain. Neither choice was workable in the long run – how long, one could not say. Also see footnote 3.

of three frames or cognitive schemata serving as a means for "conscious strategic efforts by groups of people to fashion shared understandings of the world and of themselves that legitimate and motivate collective action".[18] The liberal discourse is therefore conceived as instrumental in fostering common perceptions for specific political purposes, and, for this reason, the discourse analysis aims to measure the effectiveness of the discourse in achieving certain political ends. The three frames within the liberal discourse of the good are given below.

Justice consisting of state neutrality towards various and rival attitudes of good life, freely chosen by individuals, groups and communities, freely pursuing them without any pressure or compulsion arising from the way public institutions (social, economic and political) are structured and function, or from the public posture or action on the part of other communities or social actors.

Social Justice through systems of affirmative action and welfare provisions for the disadvantaged sections of society, and grounded on the idea that the state must be justifiable to its citizens on equal terms without any premise that some lives are inherently better and nobler than others.

Inclusive Society forged through expansion of the participatory base and respect for human rights and norms of a democratic political culture. A record of India's efforts to forge an inclusive society underlines the difficulties involved in realizing this aspect of the good within the liberal framework.[19]

[18] D. McAdam, J.D. McCarthy and M.N. Zald, *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements: Political Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Cultural Feelings*, Cambridge, 1996, p. 6.

[19] Even the West has not been able to realize an inclusivr society. It has been exclusionary of pre-Christian belief systems in their understanding of the good. See, Margot Adler, *Drawing Down the Moon: Witches, Druids, Goddess Worshippers and Other Pagans in America Today*, Rev. Ed., Harmondsworth, 1986.

The development models adopted by India since independence have been located in the aspirations of the national movement for economic growth and participatory democracy for forging an inclusive society. These aspirations found concrete expression in the Preamble, the Fundamental Rights and Duties and the Directive Principles. India's journey to this goal was based very largely on Anglo-American historical experience privileging pluralist political structures and mixed economy for achieving rapid industrialization and democratic outcomes. It was hoped that this model would take care of social divisions consequent on class polarization and, as such, guard against forms of totalitarian solutions.[20] The deficiencies of this model soon surfaced with its failure to record sustained economic and democratic development. India therefore looked for an alternative model. The question now was this: How can the virtues of socialism, including its moral stand on social justice, be related to new strategies of economic growth, while, at the same time, overcoming the debilitating aspects of socialist, or national socialist inheritance?

A pragmatic combination of liberal and Marxist political values (having a lineage in Nehru's socialistic pattern) was taken as offering a panacea for societal divisions and fragmentation within the overall framework of sovereign

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[20] This means that identity politics picks holes in the assumption that progress towards a liberal capitalist order is totalizing. The economists as engineers of such progress are blindfolded by this assumption. What Marx says on this point is relevant. He says, "For them (the economists) there are only two kinds of institutions, artificial and natural. The institutions of feudalism are artificial institutions, those of the bourgeoisie are natural institutions. In this, they resemble the theologians who, likewise, establish two kinds of religions. Every religion which is not theirs is an invention of men, while their own is an emanation of God." Marx, Karl, *The Poverty of Philosophy* (1847), Translated Edition, London, 1956, p.105.

statehood. There was a body of political and social thought available to draw on, including the political thought of Lord Beveridge, Graham Wallas, and Harold Laski. Fabian socialists and London School of Economics radicals also had a lot to contribute to India's thinking on the issue. Their ideas and our actions took praxis along two distinct (but related) lines:

- The institutions of society, government and economy were politicized and their role in society was located in ideological understanding of radicalism and communalism.
- Identity and ideology were treated as two sides of the same coin. Caste, class, gender and minorities were bracketed as underprivileged, subject to domination and underdevelopment at, the instance of the privileged rest.[21]

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[21] Such linking of identity and ideology implied an assumption in favour of identity-based agency and encouraged public policies in support of political empowerment and affirmative action for realizing social justice. The assumption implied that identity groups had some kind of collective consciousness. Attempts were made to strengthen the assumption through commercial films, documentaries and other forms of mass communication when they celebrated the people at the bottom of the social ladder moving up into government and professions, identity groups taking up arms against their alleged exploiters, or individuals (especially women) breaking tradition and taboos to come out into freedom. Such conflation of identity and ideology was academically flawed. It will be worthwhile to recall what a British expert on politics in India has to say about a seminar in India on election results. Cf.: "The seminar was devoted to the interpretation of recent election results. For two days, I was listening to people speaking with a great deal of confidence about caste politics, caste alliances, and interpreting the electoral results as emerging alliances between various caste communities. It was, as if, communities were imputed collective wills, intelligence and rationalities. As my turn came, I asked a rather naïve question: Why is it that we, as analysts, use

This model could boast of stalling communal and radical forces from playing out their strategy of dividing society with adverse effects on the historical dynamics in favour of liberal capitalist development. One is reminded of what a British historian once said to compliment Harold Laski:

If today in this country, there is no communist movement of any size, if all socialists can still be at home in the Labour Party, we owe it to Harold Laski than to any other single man.

Thus, even during the period beginning, more or less, with the seventies, India's model of development was faithfully running parallel to Anglo-American historical experience.[22]

the same conceptual language and the same mapping of Indian society – according to imputed caste and community identities – as political activists and those who devise electoral strategies?" T.B. Hansen, "Politics as Permanent Performance: The Production of Political Authority in the Locality," in John Zavos, Andrew Waytt and Vernon Hewitt, eds., *The Politics of Cultural Mobilization in India*, New Delhi, 2004, p. 19.

[22] The neo-Marxist stand of liberals in India closely parallels the political strategy of liberals in England, including the members of the Independent Liberal Party (ILP), during the thirties when the rise of fascism in Europe was complicating the international scene. As part of their accommodation strategy, their radical stance was designed to coopt communists into the liberal fold. By modelling their political strategy in this way, the Indian Marxists probably are seeking to coopt extreme left and religious right into the liberal fold (again a strategy of accommodation). Their political strategy was facilitated by the swing of intellectuals and the educated youth towards Marxism (in the wake of higher education reaching out to women, backward castes and communities) creating space for student leaders belonging to these social groups to actualize identity-based political agency. Its dynamics in forging an inclusive society has proved to be self-limiting, because these student leaders and their political patrons took a very narrow view of political economy, a view which became the official ideology of social (including gender) justice. In Marxian terms, such official ideologies were social constructions for perpetuation of dominance.

The inadequacies of this model surfaced during the eighties both on economic and political fronts. There was political instability, fiscal deficits and foreign exchange crisis. Unemployment, identity conflicts and violence marked the social landscape. Forging an inclusive society was still a mirage. The question was:

Is the goal of an inclusive society sustainable in the absence of sovereign statehood? If the answer is no, then a further question arises: How should India reconstruct its development model to square it with an intellectual and ethical context in which sovereignty is suspect?

The celebration of a non-sovereign state is almost a fad. International relations scholars do not tire of pointing to the erosion of sovereignty in an increasingly interdependent world. The state revealed several centres of power within its organisation. This opened space for transgovernmental relations. Such loss of its unitary character had implications for sovereign statehood.. The scholars of comparative politics find it intellectually and normatively satisfying to analyze institutions and processes that put effective limitations on exercise of internal sovereignty — in fact, on exercise of all kinds of authority. Inadequate theoretical guidance for meeting the situation further handicaps the state. There is a lack of theory which addresses postcold war system level changes in their relationship with unit level changes. In the absence of such a theory, scholars and policy elite, are less dogmatic about characterizing the phenomena. Is the trend towards social fragmentation driven by globalization? Or, is it driven by factors internal to India? Where should action be located? The people who should know find themselves constrained to move from one position to another. They echo what Martin Hollis and Steve Smith say:

It seems to us that top-down cannot do all the work on the explaining side. When even Waltz considers that structures only shape and shove

and that their influence can be resisted then we also have to look at the units.[23]

In the absence of theoretical guidance or experience in similar situations in Anglo-American history, India is choosing a development model that goes beyond ethnocentric assumptions underlying identity politics played out within democratic political institutions, a politics which auto-nomously works out its strategy towards building an inclusive society.[24] It appears that India is going beyond this model. The choice now appears to be in favour of a social inter-ventionist state, strategically linked to social forces not en-compassed by pluralist processes and institutions, mobilized around emotive issues which are clubbed together within the blanket concept of social democracy. Dominance is not given up in governance while policy-making and implement-ation rely very greatly on social partnership — that is, partnership of the stakeholders on a given policy issue. It is in this arena of partnership that interventionist politics steps in.

The central institutions of government do not act as umpires or referees in intergroup struggles and political competitions (as is premised in pluralist democracy). On the contrary, they encourage organized private interests to barter away some of their freedom in favour of incorporation into the state system for some consideration as also for helping public bureaucracy in administering policies. Increasing formalization of interest group activity, with

[23] Martin Hollis and Steve Smith, *Explaining and Understanding International Relations*, Oxford, 1991, p. 198. Hollis and Smith accord agency to both system and the units. Scholars like Wendt question this notion of dual agency in international relations.

[24] India is going beyond these assumptions because a fear lurks in some sections of the society that these may not be able to prevent a recession of the polity into a situation when authoritarian options in nation-building become feasible.

power of recognition, cooptation and delivery of benefits to social groups and interests, turns the state into a self-defined entity that claims to incorporate and represent society in its totality.

CIVIC CULTURE AND CIVIC EDUCATION

The liberal conception of the good rests on the conception of a split self and its realization through cultural creation of free and equal citizens. This defines the cultural and educational challenge faced by any liberal democracy. It must establish means of public education and encourage forms of culture that can produce and sustain identities consistent with citizenship. Where citizens fail to achieve such identities and remain bound to particularistic and cultural worldviews, liberal democratic institutions feel challenged. The legitimacy and, in fact, the very existence, of a liberal democratic state depends on its success in creating a strong constituency in support of its political goals.

The liberal state is designed to rule over people who are willing to associate with one another in spite of the fact that they, as members of different ethnic, class and religious communities, pursue conflicting conceptions of good life. To make such rule a practical possibility, the citizens of a liberal democracy must be shaped by a political culture that supports the exercise of civic virtues such as tolerance. For liberal political institutions to work, citizens must undergo a very unusual and difficult process of individuation, a process by which they must come to identify themselves both as members of particularistic ethnic, class and religious communities and as members of a civic community that regards them as free and equal individuals**.**

Liberal democratic regimes are unique in this way. No other form of government faces this kind of challenge. A regime based on principles intrinsic to ethnic, class and

religious worldviews do not face this sort of cultural and educational challenge. There, the processes of cultural reproduction in family and community are sufficient to produce identities consistent with the authority of the regime. Governments rule in the name of the ethnic, class or religious values that shape the entire course of human life. The differentials of rank, status and relative worth that legitimate rule, are consistent with the identities as formed within the educational system and participation in cultural activities. Public educational institutions do not bear the burden of first creating among those who are ruled a cultural self-understanding consistent with the values underlying citizenship and with the principles underlying governmental authority. Countervailing forms of political culture required to sustain that self-understanding, are also not required.

Such countervailing forms of education and political culture balance and neutralize values and self-understandings based on particularistic identities. A liberal democratic state defines its citizens as free individuals who, incidentally, are only members of a particular ethnic, class and religious community. The hierarchies generated by such communities are irrelevant to the state in its treatment of citizens. Public education, then, must produce persons who, in fact, in their own self-understanding, at least insofar as they act within the public sphere, see their membership in such communities as in some sense subordinate to their membership in the broader civic community. This means that public education in a liberal democracy should aim at eradicating the hierarchies generated by particularistic cultural communities so that as citizens they are not influenced by the values underlying those hierarchies. Of course, public education in liberal democracies today also serves other ends – notably, the creation of technical experts and skilled workers needed in a modern industrial economy. The basic political work of public education in a liberal democratic regime in

non-Western societies (including India) is the creation of citizens, the creation of persons who identify themselves and one another as free and equal individuals. To the extent that public education is civic education aimed at promoting a civic community, it serves as an institution of good governance.[25]

The goal of civic education is the inculcation of this normative standpoint (ideal attitudes, dispositions and values) proper to citizenship. This stands in conflict with the cultural formulations of good life, addressing the general issues of life, such as love, sex, friendship, suffering, sin, death and salvation. These issues of life represent a worldview. Such culturally rooted conceptions of the good are generally not supportive of the values integral to liberal conceptions of citizenship and therefore do not necessarily serve the ends of civic education. Liberal democracy needs a countervailing culture, a culture supportive of citizenship, a set of ideas

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[25] The creation of technical experts and skilled workers, needed to run modern industry, is given a secondary place in colleges and universities, especially those focussed on humanities and social sciences, the fields of study that have come under considerable impact of post-structuralist discourse analysis and critical linguistics. Natural science departments generally feel that they get step-motherly treatment in allocation of grants and faculty positions. Of course, there are specialized institutions such as IITs, IIMs, Medical Colleges and Institutes of Higher Research in specialized areas of natural sciences to fill the gap. But this does not explain the political character of university functioning. Teachers and students in the humanities and social sciences imagine themselves as custodians of civic values and they devote time and energy in projecting this image through the media and engagement with social and political activities. In this game of mobilizing a countervailing civic culture, the payoffs to the loyalists in universities and other centres of higher education have emerged as sites for hard bargaining among personal, political and academic interests. This has almost legitimized integration of politics and perspective in university education in India.

that can be embodied effectively in cultural representations for the purpose of shaping civic identities. This countervailing culture can be described as civic culture. It provides the needed resources for civic education. Civic education reproduces and strengthens civic culture. When civic culture and civic education function effectively, large numbers of people who have the formal status of citizens in a liberal democracy, actually develop the attitudes, dispositions and values proper to citizenship. Liberal democracies can exist only when these numbers are sufficient to meet the political challenges that arise from the opposite end. Of course, the generation and reproduction of civic identities and values are supported by secondary, cultural, social and economic forces that operate independently of the dominant form of civic culture in any particular liberal democracy. Market economy, geographical and social mobility, individualistic attitudes and choices in religious matters, all contribute in different degrees to the creation and maintenance of civic attitudes. Sports, films and fictional narratives are also linked to construction of civic identities.

FUTURE DILEMMAS

Since the end of the cold war, the liberal appropriation of political space is complete and has the backing of great powers. Where do world affairs go from here?[26] The

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[26] The participants at the Fellows' Seminar at the Institute on September 22, 2004 where I made a presentation on "A Euro-American Narrative on World Affairs" raised doubts on the capacity of a liberal approach to realize the good as conceptualized within the parameters of its values. It was pointed out that the principle of neutrality was suspect, that non-liberal political considerations made their way into the choice of good life. Individuals and communities challenged social harmony. And there was evidence of increasing poverty and social inequality.

normative goal of purging politics of particularistic attachments points attention to the strategic uses of power by the West in relation to postcolonial societies. Societies are differentiated on a continuum between development and underdevelopment. The concept of development is so predicated that the societies along the continuum come to be regarded as unequal. Instead of regarding development and underdevelopment as social constructions, this approach regards underdevelopment as a problem which experts in international development should deal with. For these experts who are treated as repositories of authoritative knowledge on development matters, an underdeveloped society has a subject status having special needs that the international community should provide for, like prosthetic limbs for the physically handicapped, so that these special provisions should make normal life possible for such a society and open up social and political choices for it, but not equality. Using childcare as metaphor, it can be said that this approach is modelled on the Truby King method of feeding by the clock and subjecting children to strict regimentation of routine, to facilitate their development after a desirable image of adulthood.

Since the end of the cold war, this approach is being given up. The focus is on great power reconstruction of select postcolonial societies which are seen as threats to freedom and peace. The reconstruction project includes a determined ideological intervention in the domestic political order of these societies and setting up of institutions based on liberal values. The contemporary political discourse of intervention has wrought fissures among development experts on the sources of underdevelopment and has legitimized and reinforced the existing bias against cultural particularism. In fact, a major discursive shift has occurred in this respect. The emerging situation appears to be in a

paradoxical relationship with the celebration of difference.[27] The need is to recall that social sciences and humanities have been integral to the dynamics of power in the relation of the West to non-Western societies. This relationship of knowledge to power can be briefly elaborated.[28]

First, the relationship between knowledge and political argument is very different in the non-West from that in the West. Knowledge does not inhabit an exclusively cognitive sphere but is itself a constitutive part of political interaction and discourse. It encourages a rational choice analysis of options open to the non-West or subjects the actors to a neo-institutionalist format of rules that constrains options. In either case, there is always an over rationalized conceptualization of the situation, matching contingencies and options. The political argument proceeds either along the lines of the knowledge available on the issue on hand, or along the lines of the rules (the neo-institutionalist position)

[27] The contemporary discourses of liberal values operate as systems of representation constituted by the evolving rules of conduct in domestic politics and international relations. They control and regulate the production of meaning in institutional practices and impact postcolonial politics and social processes in a major way. See, Michel Foucault, *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*, London, 1967; and *The Birth of the Clinic: An Archaeology of Medical Perception*, London, 1973.

[28] Foucault's understanding of power, as diffused, without a central locus and his emphasis on connection between discourse and knowledge privileging Western-educated and trained experts as promoters of hegemonic discourses in non-Western societies, is relevant to the point at issue here. Cf.: "We are subjected to production of truth through power and we cannot exercise power except through the production of truth." J. Rouse, "Power/ Knowledge," in G. Gutting, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Foucault*, Cambridge, 1994, p .99. This means that the Enlightenment values are "an enforced regimen of truth." Ibid., p. 99. How can the truth of a spiritual tradition be established without first acquiring political power?

or along the lines of the legal norms (the legal position). Hence, the emergence of the knowledge society makes the exercise of political options difficult. On all issues, the non-West can see itself only into the mirror of the West.

And second, the interpretations of cultural and intellectual heritage of the non-West in terms of Western liberal values, is to deny to this heritage even the possibility of its progenitors having autonomy of mind and pursuing universal truths. This echoes the current neo-Marxist view, dominant in the academy treating autonomy of mind and universal truths as illusory concepts. For this reason, the study of the non-Western heritage (mainly the reading of the texts as carriers of this heritage) is grounded on the hermeneutics of suspicion. The common view is that the texts and institutions of non-Western cultures conceal an ideology that seeks to rationalize motives of domination. Hence, the job of a critic is to discover the truth that the texts and the institutions conceal.

Even non-ideological critics have a starting point of suspicion towards this heritage. Their overriding interest is in " power over representation of certain social groups." The concealed motive of social domination remains in focus.[29] Central to the enterprise of criticism is the prevailing "mistrust of the self-understanding of a non-Western culture." The critics take the ideological (liberal) position without ever subjecting themselves to critical self-reflection, as if their intellectual and moral superiority were self-evident. Their starting point is basic disinterestedness in a non-Western culture. For this reason, they take the culture as a text and translate it into a language that serves their own agenda. The translation is in the language of resistance. The vocabulary, idiom and images are taken from resistance to

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[29] Gregory Jay, "Ideology and the New Historicism," *Arizona Quarterly*, Spring 1991, p. 143.

imperialism, racism, patriarchy and economic oppression. After preparing the ground for resistance, an attempt is made to affirm the identity of disenfranchised groups against the imperializing tendencies among the dominant groups to repress them.

Difference is emphasized as the marker of identity. Resistance is articulated around the consciousness of such *difference*. Consciousness of *difference* is taken as central to preparedness for resistance. The blacks are seen as radically different from the whites, the *Dalits* from the non-*Dalits*, women from men, heterosexuals from homosexuals and, even children from adults. The *difference* is highlighted, even though it is difficult to point out which empirical referents of difference are addressed. This process results in the translation of a non-Western culture into the language of an ideology, probably contrary to the intentions and purposes of its progenitors.[30]

Above all, this *difference* principle yields to the principle of coercion. The imperatives of forging political solidarity among the members of a disenfranchised group demand that the leaders of the group translate *difference* into a prescription for a particular way of thinking. It is argued that the political purpose of the *difference* principle is not served when the people who look black, think white, or when women think like men, and so on. It is, in this way, that the *difference* principle leads to formation of integral worldviews articulated as 'black thinking,' 'feminist thinking,' '*Dalit* thinking,' 'lesbian or gay thinking.'

Such integral worldviews of the disenfranchised groups share territory with the Western discourse of liberal values in non-Western societies, in opposition to the non-Western culture, and its conceptions of nature, reason and self. This

[30] See Robert Alter, *The Pleasures of Reading in an Ideological Age*, New York, 1989.

is how the Enlightenment and anti-Enlightenment cultures join hands in opposition to pre-Enlightenment culture. This is how the culture wars in the non-West are fought out. There is a great amount of intolerance towards cultural difference. Discourse territory is shared only among politically like-minded cultures. The exclusion of pre-Enlightenment culture from discourse territory means that its values are treated with contempt and condemned as reactionary. A culture may be very tolerant and inclusive, and be prepared to accommodate a vast amount of political difference, but it has to draw a line to define what is outside its limits of tolerance. The other culture, generally the more powerful culture of the West, may not be tolerant. It may not be accommodative of difference. It may not be prepared to broaden the zone of agreement through accommodation. In such situations, the burden of accommodation lies only with one of the parties to the cultural war. This intensifies the conflict and totalizes politics. The primacy of the right over the good gives the right an instrumental value in this conflict.

It was not so during ancient and medieval times. Political thought then aimed at making politics a servant of good life. Social and cultural values in those days encouraged a sense of vocation, a feeling of dedication in the pursuit of a job, not its use for self-interest. The dedication was not grounded on self-interest but on inspiration that came from within. The emphasis was on duty to one's vocation and not on the right to a satisfactory return. All this changed with the passage to modernity. In modern times, a reasoned discussion on the good is not expected to yield any agreement, much less a universal agreement. It is not possible to agree that the self is driven to a vocation by nature or divine will. It can neither be reasoned this way, nor proved in terms of known scientific principles. Against the background of such disagreements, it is not possible to order

society according to some conception of human good, both social and personal. Modern political thought therefore rejects the idea of ordering the individual and society in this way. It rejects the idea that concern for a positive conception of human good should be a guide to political action. It marked a rethinking of politics so that it focuses on arranging human affairs in a way that allows those who are divided about what constitutes good life to live together peacefully. While the ancients wanted to lay down the rules of life, the moderns are eager to lay down the rules of the game. The emphasis is on seeking procedural solutions to individual and social problems. Machiavelli, Hobbes and Locke laid the foundation for this line of thinking. The idea is that when people differ on purposes of life, they should have maximum freedom to pursue them with minimum duties.

Non-Western nations are now increasingly realizing that their thinking on the modernization process has been an import from the West. This was possible largely because of the non-Western passivity and acceptance of inferiority. That they have a different evolutionary path was not given a serious thought. It is different now. It is also getting a boost from developments in other parts of the world. The Japanese and several non-Western nations have proved that thoroughly modern strategies of economic and technological progress can be adapted to and supported by ancient non-Western cultural traditions. It is no longer necessary to speak the cultural language of the European Enlightenment in order to prosper in the global market economy. Linking economic development to cultural modernization is not the way forward.

A rethinking on modernity is underway so that appropriate steps can be taken for its autonomous emanation from cultural traditions (as it had happened in the West) through a process of reinvention and reconstruction of these

traditions. Some space is opening up for assertion of cultural particularism. The aim is to give shape to the idea of alternative modernity. In the non-Western world, the protagonists of Western and non-Western modernity are locked in political battles even though they share a common platform: both reject the Western approach of a universalistic, culture neutral, value-free standpoint on all cognitive, moral and political matters. Both agree that this so-called universalistic approach is itself an expression of Western particularism. While the West is learning to recover its particularism, there continues to be mental blocks in its way of such recovery, created by the main corpus of modern political theory-based metaphysical conceptions of nature and reason.

These conflicting trends were greatly heightened in the last decade of the twentieth century. Their mutual acrimony exposed the limits of state power in managing and regulating the underlying societies and focused attention on the emergence of competing centres of power within these societies, their effects becoming increasingly visible as instances of widespread normlessness and institutional ineffectiveness. Corruption, criminalization and insensitivity are evident in domestic politics, while break up of states, civil wars, cross-border terrorism and intervention have become factors of primary concern in the conduct of international relations.[31] One way of overcoming this crisis presently confronting "project modernity" was to give a boost to reconciliation between cultural traditions and the

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[31] Cf.: "Egypt has embraced a series of Western ideologies: British imperialism under the royal family; socialist nationalism under Nasser; and free market capitalism under Sadat and now Mubarak. Despite the changes of ideologies, certain things have remained constant: the repressive nature and corruption of the ruling classes; the poverty and lack of social services for a large section of the community; and Egypt's diminished status as a regional power. Islamic extremists can

requirements of the day through processes of reform. The other way of overcoming the crisis was to tighten the hold of the left liberal approach. Each one of the models was an improvization of a modern society and was characterized by an imbalance specific to it. The Western type was dominated by capitalist economy and the primacy given to monetary mechanisms. The other was modelled on the institutional practices of the former Soviet Union, especially its bureaucratic mechanisms.

The absolutization of money was less destructive of modernity than absolutization of power. Both the models separately and in combination converge on the effect they produce — "colonization of the life-world" and progressive erosion of the cultural basis of collective will formation and democratic participation. This begs the question, are the West and the non-West two different worlds of politics? If the answer is yes, then it is imperative to address their specificities. The post-cold war globalization should transcend these differences and be grounded on a truly global cultural framework. For this it is essential, as a first step, to coopt non-Western cultures as equal deliberative partners in the discourses of the good.

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argue convincingly that Egypt's woes result from its abandonment of Islamic values and corruption of its Westernized ruling class, all the more so as the only ones to provide health and educational services in the shanties and the slums are the Islamic extremists. It is little wonder that Egypt is a major recruiting ground for Al-Qaeda." Shaun Riordan, *The New Diplomacy*, Cambridge, 2003, p. 105. What is true of Egypt may probably be true of other non-Western states, and may be of India also. The point is that liberal empiricism as the Enlightenment tool of social change (leading for example, to identity politics of difference) is also a strategic tool in the hands of its pre-Enlightenment and anti-Enlightenment opponents.

Chapter 6

WORLD AFFAIRS: AN INTERTEXTUAL NARRATIVE[1]

The study of politics is motivated by the need to have a systematic understanding of how societies are organized politically, how they are governed and generally how power is exercised. The debates on these issues are set against the need to explore the meaning of human good and its relationship to the divine and the natural order. A political order has an imperative to clearly state its approach to human good, especially in relation to its social context and the natural order including human nature. It must also specify its role in the realization of this good. The debates on these

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[1] Intertextuality is a concept in literary theory. An intertext is "multi-dimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash." The quote is from "The Death of the Author," in Barthes, R., *Image-Music-Text*, (trans. Heath, S.), New York, 1977, p. 146. Similarly Allen, Graham in his *Intertextuality*, London, 2007, p. 1, says, "Texts, whether they are literary or non-literary, are viewed by modern theorists as lacking in any kind of independent meaning. They are what theorists now call intertextual. The act of reading, theorists claim, plunges us into a network of textual relations." In terms of this concept the meaning of a text is simply not "in" the text but is to be read in relation to other texts. The use of the concept here is aimed to emphasize that the meaning of world affairs is not authored by any agency (or boxed in a text) but is situated in the intertext and its interpretation depends on the perspective of a given interpretive community. The reality is not discovered; it is scripted through interpretative practices used by scholars. Intertextuality imputes meaning on reality or obfuscate it through a global community of scholars when they interact among themselves through exchange programmes, seminars, professional lectures, publications and book reviews.

issues open up several options for making a political choice. These debates are grounded on principles and axioms of political thought and ideology. Such reflective activity is going on since ancient times, and, in the West, since the times of classical Greek philosophers.[2] These philosophers reflected on these issues in the belief that politics operated along natural and rational principles, more or less, in the same way as the rest of the universe. Such reflection on the intersecting themes of nature, God and man continued for centuries.[3] In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the impact of the Enlightenment thought and of the Copernican and the Newtonian revolutions in the natural sciences, revolutionized the study of politics. It was a great cultural upheaval and advanced culture towards a break with the past in philosophical and political understanding of the relation of man to nature and God. But the impact was not complete as pre-Enlightenment cultural values continued to prevail among sizable sections of the people. Even so, the change was significant. Its strong dynamic spread outwards. The thought and practice in important sectors of individual and social life were transformed and the effect was felt on reconceptualization of the right and the good in international relations. The ethical predicates of international behaviour came to be treated as contingent on the nature

[2] The non-Western religious and cultural systems also have a rich tradition of such reflection going back to the ancient past. But the focus here is on the Euro-American political thought and tradition.
[3] The genealogy of these changes can be traced from the time when Aristotelianism was introduced in the West. It gradually led to the demise of the medieval imperative of submission to God's will. By the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, a completely different set of cultural values emerged which was marked by confidence in reason, desire for freedom and pursuit of individual happiness. The use of reason boosted the growth of science and technology for industrial revolution which paved the way for creation of wealth and hopes of material progress. The culmination of this transformation was the Enlightenment.

of the international system which was understood as an ordered anarchy based on logic of self-help, rational choice, and balance of power. These predicates were embodied in norms, rules and institutions of the international order. The change was meant to be totalizing and as such it was conceived to be highly exclusionary and even violent, towards the values it sought to supplant. But it was not successful in doing so. Before long, a counter-movement emerged. This anti-Enlightenment cultural movement was no respecter of pre-Enlightenment and Enlightenment values and sought to go beyond both.

THE TEXTS

- The pre-Enlightenment values represent a basically religious culture and its supporters constitute, what is known in politics, as the religious right or the far right. The Bible was the source of knowledge about God, especially the Old Testament. The Bible taught, among other things, the history of humankind and the divine purpose. Political questions could also be solved by referring to the Old Testament. Everything was understood as working in accordance with God's plan. Even the events of history were not chance occurrences; they served to carry out God's will. Today however, only a very small section of the people in the West accept an otherworldly view of life or a duty-centred view of ethics.[4] For a large number of the people belonging to the religious right, it is not the fear

[4] In the West, these people are referred to as Christian fundamentalists. They emphasize literal interpretation of the Bible. Many hardcore fundamentalists even believe that anyone who does not use the King James version of the Bible is destined for hell. See, Elaine Pagels, *The Origin of Satan*. New York, 1995, for contemporary attitudes towards heretics. By and large, they are the people who opposed the accommodation of religious doctrine to modern scientific theory and philosophy. This is true of fundamentalists also in other religious traditions.

of God that regulates their motives and actions.[5] The religious right, in their case, almost merges with neo-conservative politics which defines religion in practical terms, with a view to harness its social benefits. The believers, they say, commit fewer crimes, have more stable families, and take better care of children, the sick and the old people.

- The Enlightenment values, on the other hand, represent a materialist culture, and, in politics, its supporters constitute what is called the right. They stand for material prosperity and progress. They defend the freedom of the individual to define his or her happiness and pursue it through application of reason, science and technology. They reject all social and political considerations to limit this freedom.[6] The Enlightenment culture rests on new conceptions of cognition and knowledge (popularly known as scientific method) making claims about the nature of things beyond the realm of conflicting cultural worldviews. The scientific method serves as a kind of neutral ground where the adherents of different ethnic, class and religious interests can meet and reach agreement.
- The anti-Enlightenment values are a reaction to the

[5] In the non-Western world the pre-Enlightenment otherworldliness and religious beliefs are very pervasive and ethics is grounded on religious conceptions of morality. Conversely, social instability and degeneration are seen as consequences of a decreasing hold of religion on society.

[6] They celebrated the end of the cold war as the triumph of these values. Cf.: "The triumph of the West, of the Western *idea*, is evident, first of all, in the total exhaustion of viable systematic alternatives to Western liberalism." Francis Fukuyama, "The End of History", *The National Interest*, Summer, 1989, p.3. (emphasis in the original). During the cold war, Western liberalism was constrained by strategic compulsions and was defined as opposition to totalitarianism. See, F.A. Hayek, *The Constitution of Liberty*, Chicago, 1960, pp. 103 ff.

Enlightenment culture of bringing the individual freedom and happiness to the centre of social and political concern. They represent a culture that opposes prosperity and material progress as ends of human existence. They define progress as conservation of natural resources. They define rationality as rooted in emotion and subjectivity. They define freedom as linked to equality. They support social movements for realizing social justice. They use deconstructionist and poststructural methodologies, in place of scientific approaches. In politics, they constitute what is known as the left.[7] The success and popularity of the anti-Enlightenment left is evident from the dominance of its cultural values in the university departments for humanities, in creative writings, in drama, theatre, film, television, radio and in newspaper stories.

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[7] The post cold war left can be better represented as the "political and cultural left." It is opposed to the pre-Enlightenment values and posits a conflict between neo-liberal economics and humanities. For the left, human concerns are prior to market rationality, poverty to growth. But in real life situations the choices do not present themselves so neatly. They lead to dilemmas and are capable of distorting a long-term vision. In the context of India, for example, the *hindutva* ideology of the BJP is regarded as representing pre-Enlightenment values. And opposition to *hindutva* takes precedence over opposition to market rationality and capitalist growth. This is also a reason for Indian Marxists to make a significant presence in the feminist movement, as women, more than men, are situated in a religion based social order and as such in pre-Enlightenment values. Hinduism is criticized as based on gender inequality and suppression. The argument is carried further in the idiom of the cultural left: the state should not be a *father figure* for its citizens as the rightists (conservatives) visualize it, but a *nurturing mother* as the leftists (progressives) demand. Attack on patriarchy becomes an important plank. Probably this inspired Bollywood to produce films that dramatized even patricide such as *Etbar* and *Rakt.*

INTER TEXT

- In all sectors of contemporary world affairs, especially in politics and international relations, these rival cultural systems and their respective value systems are locked in contest.[8]
- The world today is deeply divided by disputes over the nature of man, knowledge, virtue, politics, and art. It is simplistic to situate these cultural disputes on a left-right dimension, even though it is common to think of them in such binary terms. This is so because each of the cultural systems (pre-enlightenment, enlightenment and anti-enlightenment) has internal diversity and divisions. Each of them has a diverse set of authors, texts, arguments, opinions, assumptions, institutions, and practices. Each of them is substantially pluralized. Yet, each of them, has identity markers that suggest its unity in the midst of such plurality.

[8] Cf.: "This means, in part, that the philosophers whom we call 'great' were connected with each other, irrespective of political borders or the boundaries of language. (sic) This situation changed entirely at the end of the eighteenth century with the appearance of Fichte. At that time, a split took place that has, since, separated the two worlds of philosophy: the Anglo-Saxon, which is basically empirically oriented and what is called Continental philosophy, which understands itself as somehow in a tradition that between Johann Gottlieb Fichte and Edmund Burke emerged at the end of the eighteenth century. (sic) The difference between these two experiences echoes the divergence of opinion. Early in his philosophical career, Fichte wanted to develop an apology for Jacobinism in politics, which, in this context meant the attempt to build a new life in much the same way as an architect builds a new house. Just as the architect provides a blueprint from which to build the house, so also the political philosopher, or at least the theoretician of politics, provides a design from which to erect a new society. Burke, on the other hand, taught that this 'architectural' attitude towards political life rested on a fundamental mistake — the aggressive imposition of a design for life on a people – that every sound philosophy had to target for criticism." David S. Pacini, ed., *Between Kant and Hegel: Lectures on German Idealism - Dieter Henrich*, London, 2003, pp. 4-5.

Each of them engages the others with a view to oust them from the position of power and authority in society. Such inter-cultural engagements are characterized by intolerance, bigotry and social politics of groups. In this effort, each has, on its side, a considerable number of wealthy, educated and articulate supporters. They articulate its political agenda through academic research, literary and artistic expression, and media representation. Each claims universality for its values and forges coalitions with like-minded individuals and groups in business, politics, academics and the media.

When such culturally grounded coalitions act on political and policy issues in their respective local contexts, the value positions they take are often difficult to reconcile logically with the value propositions that define the relevant cultural system. The values get disengaged from their original meaning. That is, within each of the cultural systems, the empirical and the rational do not fit together neatly. The values have no uniform sets of predicates.[9] Each value displays a mixed bag of empirically identified predicates. Hence, an empirical reading of world affairs does not reveal

[9] For this reason, the contemporary philosophical and theoretical studies are reflecting on the rival cultural and value systems, in an effort to discover a middle ground. The "critical theory" as pioneered by Habermas and associated with the Frankfurt School, is a good example of such efforts. The scholars belonging to this school agree that Habermas should not be regarded as an anti-religion *philosophe,* nor should the other members of the school such as Bloch, Benjamin, Horkheimer and Adorno. The younger members of the school are trying to reconcile rationality, religion and liberalism by using the approach of neo-Kantian and linguistic philosophy See, Eduardo Mendieta, ed., *Jürgen Habermas, Religion and Rationality: Essays on Reason, God, and Modernity,* Massachusetts, 2002. Also see, Henry Rosemont, Jr. *Rationality and Religious Experience: The Continuing Relevance of the World's Spiritual Traditions,* Chicago, 2002. The anti-Enlightenment position of the school is clearly brought out in Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment,* (translated by John Cumming), New York, 1975.

culturally singular patterns in different parts of the world. It is not possible to have a map of world affairs showing pre= Enlightenment, Enlightenment, and anti-Enlightenment zones in different colours. This means that the three cultural systems cannot be read without linking one to the others. Contemporary politics and international relations are, therefore, an intertextual narrative which weaves the three strands into a dynamic whole. This view reveals a dramatic aspect of world affairs, the reversals and reprieves, digressions and sub-plots, their tragic, comic and farcical nature, always interesting to those participating and observing and, in which, the actors are both characters and authors.[10]

The values embodied in the three cultural traditions can be paired into oppositional relationships to show how constellations of cognate values have led to construction of political ideologies, articulation of narrowly defined interests, and submission of political claims.[11] These value constellations are juxtaposed in mutual opposition, so that each constellation has a negative connotation for the other. During the Renaissance, for example, there emerged the value of 'gentlemanliness'. It has negative connotations for 'rusticity', its opposite. One may ask, what is 'gentle-

[10] World affairs are not a linear story. A linear view of history is an artifact of the narrative form, that stories have beginnings, middles, and ends. This view draws a blind on phenomena like contradiction, change, intertextuality and cultural polyphony. The intellectual hold of this view is so strong that a preferred story, when not found true, leads to a rearrangement of facts to fit it. The converse is also true — that is, the people rewrite their stories to reduce dissonance with their experience.

[11] Take, for instance, the term 'modernity.' Its claims to universality, are designed to perpetuate the dominance of the capitalist West on the non-Western world. Earlier, the Renaissance had claimed modernity as a justification for abolishing the secular power of the Church, Later the bourgeoisie claimed modernity as a justification against absolute monarchy. Similarly, the fundamentalists in several cultural traditions, claim terrorism as a means to social progress.

manliness'?[12] The answer is that gentlemanliness represents a collection of behavioural values, such as graceful manners, poise and refinement in self-expression including choice in such matters as food and dress, music and dance, and courtesy in relation to women. Rusticity is assumed to be just the opposite. However, gentlemanliness, as a product of the Renaissance, is organically related to modern economy and society in the West and, as such, has assumed an instrumental value there and supports claims to preferential treatment in distributional benefits.[13] This also applies to such values as progress and freedom. These values have also assumed an instrumental character in relation to interests, both organized and unorganized, and serve as a platform for individuals and groups to advance their agenda of claims on others. These others must meet these claims or face the charge of opposing freedom and progress.[14]

Hence, the contest among pre-Enlightenment, Enlightenment, and anti-Enlightenment cultural and value systems is the core dynamic of politics and international relations in the West.[15] But, it is not limited to the West. It spreads outwards and gets linked up with interests in the non-West. This link up has taken many forms of historical

[12] Mason, P., *The English Gentleman: The Rise and Fall of an Ideal,* London, 1993.

[13] The compulsions of survival in the modern world (a world conforming to the Enlightenment values) privilege gentlemanliness over rusticity. The Minister of Tourism in India, Renuka Choudhary, emphasizing the need for attracting tourists to the country, said: "Indian men, wearing Ray Ban glasses and driving Ford cars, pull the windows down , spit on the road, and they urinate on the roadside. What to do?" *The Times of India,* Chandigarh, August 14, 2004, p. 7.

[14] The common man interprets economic reforms as leading to better conditions, even in the short run from his or her point of view. Reference is to Dr. Somnath Chatterjee's *Walk the Talk,* NDTV, August 14, 2004.

[15] Cf.: "A states-system presupposes a common culture." Martin Wight, *Systems of States,* Leicester, 1977, p.46. This was so in ancient times also.

experience in the non-West. For example, the Enlighten-
ment values are linked to the experience of imperialism
for more than three centuries, and to the diffusion of
liberal ideology through the institutional format of civil
society.

The Enlightenment values are also linked to development
of a modernist outlook and scientific development. The anti-
Enlightenment values are linked to experience, especially
during the latter half of the twentieth century, with politics
of social and political emancipation at the behest of global
social movements and, with discourses of political
empowerment and social justice in domestic societies and
politics and, in international relations across the North-South
divide. The pre-Enlightenment values are linked to
experience with tradition and culture in the non-Western
world. Further, they are linked to the recent resurgence of
tradition and culture because of the spaces created by the
inability of the modernization and democratization projects
to live up to their promise. This link up is dynamic. Efforts
are on to explain the relevance of traditional values and
knowledge systems for everyday discourses of the common

Martin Wight, in his description of the states-system of Hellas, quotes
from Herodotus's *History of Persian Wars* to emphasize the community
of culture between Athens and Sparta underlying their political
hostility as the most important factor explaining the unwillingness of
Athens to have relations with Persia at the cost of Sparta. The quote is
important in the context here, and so it is reproduced in full: "There
are many great reasons why we should not do this. First, and foremost,
the burning and destruction of the statues and temples of our gods,
whom we are bound to avenge to the utmost rather than make terms
with the perpetrator. And next, because the Hellenes are related in
blood and language, and have shrines of the gods and sacrifices in
common and a similar way of life, it would ill become the Athenians to
betray all this." Ibid., p. 46. Also see Martin Wight's "Western Values
in International Relations," in Herbert Butterfield and Martin Wight,
eds., *Diplomatic Investigations*, London, 1967.

man so that he recovers his conviction in traditional concepts and beliefs and meaningfully relates them to experience of misfortune or to dissatisfaction with one's lot in life. The idea is to relocate tradition into those sensitive spaces of life that are left untouched by modernity and Western science.

Different actors in politics and international relations situate themselves in one or the other of these cultural systems. Their individual stories unfold through interaction with other cultural systems and therefore need to be read in relation to the other texts in addition to their own. All the three stories weave together into an intertextual narrative.[16] The Western and non-Western narratives have a fault line. The Western narrative unfolds itself within the framework of a shared culture. It is not so within the non-Western world or between the Western and non-Western worlds. As a consequence, the contest among the three cultural systems in the non-Western world and, in relation to the West, is sometimes played out in a normless manner and, at times, becomes ugly.

The central dynamic in the process is the interpretation of values as interests, interests as claims and claims as rights. Interests, claims and rights amalgamate to constitute a political ideology, perched strategically at its intersection with political and social philosophy and theory. It assumes a pedagogical function in social and cultural contexts.[17] When such ideological and pedagogical processes occur within

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[16] This suggests a biographical approach to understanding politics. Each political actor weaves the texts into a unique pattern.

[17] Such pedagogical function is performed in contemporary societies by school textbooks, fictional narratives, the media and the film. The values are presented to the targeted social fragment that learns these values through metaphors and defines its interests in the context of its experiences in the larger society. The pedagogical strategy seeks to filter out other metaphors. This restrictive exposure of citizens in non-Western societies to the range and types of metaphors (especially

a. historically evolved society, then they lead to the realization of value through history. The consequent value of relativism in relations among societies arising from their different

the filtering out of those metaphors that represent the values rooted in the culture of these societies) is an abuse of the natural human capacity for learning cultural values. This is justified in the name of freedom. In this context, the controversy in India over history textbooks is a contest over the mapping of India's historical experiences and a restrictive choice of metaphors for communicating them to school-going children. The controversy is not over the historical truth but over the continued relevance of the institutions of family, language and heredity. Modernity leads to a decline of these institutions, with the aim of eventually reconstructing them. As these attachments lose relevance, schools emerge as the sole agencies for transmitting to children the *preferred culture* of the society in which they are born — *preferred* by the state or its agencies.The role of the family in transmitting culture declines and that of schools and textbooks increases. In this context, a recent newspaper report is significant. Cf.: "In a clarion call to counter what he termed as RSS culture, Samajvadi Party National President and UP Chief Minister, Mulayam Singh Yadav has called upon his party workers to work towards opening more and more educational institutions across the state. This will help prepare an indigenous alternative to the saffron brigade in the world of education." *Sunday Times*, Chandigarh, September 12, 2004, p. 6. Another newspaper report can be cited. Cf.: "Chapter 14 of the new English textbook of the State Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) for Class V refers to a newspaper report about what happened on May 11, 2003 when Nisha was to get married to Munish Dalal. She is depicted as a heroine for daring to walk out of the marriage. At the end of the chapter, "Man in Jail Over Dowry", students are asked to do a project on the anti-dowry episode." *The Hindustan Times*, Chandigarh, September 14, 2004, p. 1. Similarly, the Social Science textbook for Class VIII brought out by the Gujarat Textbook Board, substitutes Ayodhya for Awadh, and so Nawab Wajid Ali Shah is described as the Nawab of Ayodhya, not of Awadh. *The Times of India*, Chandigarh, October 2, 2004, p.8. Such polititization of textbooks posed a dilemma: It lowers the efficiency of schools as institutions of good governance, while return to good parenting based on old family values is not possible. And the society reaps the harvest of youth delinquency.

histories may, in due course, be transcended through the very same historical development eventually pointing to some kind of convergence towards a unifying value. At present, such a unifying process of historical development is ruled out because the ideological and pedagogical strategies, specific to the West, are finding their way to the non-Western world where they are not integral to the underlying societies as they belong to different cultural and value frameworks. The result is that non-Western societies are getting segmented and even fragmented.

The growth of political consciousness in terms of Western political values opens up opportunities for a social fragment in a non-Western society to select, as if, from the shelf a suitable value to articulate its interests and advance them as claims on another fragment and demand their satisfaction as rights through the agency of the state.[18] In this rights-centred politics, it is interesting to find each rights' holding entity, whether it is the state, the nation, the class or the individual, having a prismatic reality. Prism, as metaphor, is helpful in understanding their differentiated reality. Take the case of the state. It refracts its reality into a rainbow of state types. The same is true of other rights' holding entities. Ask such questions as these: What is a state? What defines a nation? When does an economic group become a class? What defines an individual? The answers to these questions are

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[18] The emphasis here is on the defining feature of disciplinary approaches in political science and international relations. These approaches in relation to the non-Western world are *ahistorical* and *socially disembedded.* The political space is populated by values, ideas and ideologies that float around autonomously. No attempt is made to situate them within the historical and sociological context of their origin and the purposes they served there. They are detached from their context, "detached like keys from the ring". It is completely forgotten that, in a different context, they serve totally different purposes .

limited by temporality and contingency. The answer depends on who is asking the question, where and in what context. As the question is political, so the answer is political. Both the question and the answer have reference points in political theory and, so both, can be legitimately situated in the realm of the political. This underlines the *political* nature of political theory. State your interests, and there is always someone to devise a theory and fabricate a corresponding ideology and pedagogy for making a claim on others for the satisfaction of these interests.[19] Or, a theory is already there (which is more often the case) for giving meaning to experience and defining it as interests for political articulation. It should be possible to say that the *political* nature of such tailor-made political theories is playing havoc, not only in domestic politics, but also in international relations. The non-Western societies are easy buyers of these theories. It is not so with the developed Western societies where political theory stands firmly on their respective histories. This is well illustrated by a quote from the memoirs of John Colvin, British Counsel General in Vietnam, relating to his meeting with his Cuban counterpart in 1966:

He addressed me didactically (sic) on the principles of Marxism-Leninism and the inevitability of the triumph of communism throughout the world. I saw no reason to put up with this and politely pointed out to him that diplomatic relations, which Cuba and the UK

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[19] The following chapters present such prismatic reality of the rights-holders in terms of different theoretical approaches which conflate right, claim, utility and entitlement, so that these terms are used interchangeably, both in theory and practice. At the same time, no attempt is made in these chapters to relate a given theoretical approach to particular social fragments and the definitions of their respective interests, or to the kind of political behaviour generally associated with particular social fragments when making claims on society for the satisfaction of the interests so defined.

enjoyed, were between states and should exclude ideological polemic or the *export of political theory*.[20] (Emphasis added.)

Political theory, as an export item, cannot easily cross barriers when the relations are between states. This is evident from this quote. But, even in the case of inter-state relations, the corrupting ideas get smuggled into society through diplomatic missions. For this reason, the Americans, till the end of the nineteenth century, were suspicious of diplomacy. Again a quote from an American senator should illustrate the point:

This diplomatic service is working out ruin by creating a desire for foreign customs and foreign follies. The disease is imported by our returning diplomats and by the foreign ambassadors sent here by monarchs and despots to corrupt and destroy our American ideals.[21]

When one state exports political theory directly to the people of another state, the situation is different; it takes the form of people's diplomacy.[22] This form of diplomacy is specific to revolutionary states. For such states, diplomacy is

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[20] John Colvin, *Twice Around the World: Some Memoirs of Diplomatic Life in North Vietnam and Outer Mongolia,* London, 1991, p. 56, as quoted in David Armstrong, "Revolutionary Diplomacy," in Christer Jonsson and Richard Langhorne, eds., *Diplomacy*, Volume II, London, 2004, p. 385.

[21] Cited by David Armstrong, ibid., p. 382.

[22] Cf.: "Diplomacy was no longer an inter-state process, excluded and isolated from domestic political process and the impact of the media and public opinion. Diplomats stepped out of the chancellery into the seminar room and the auditorium, and networked with political leaders, legislators, journalists and the media people, vice-chancellors, teachers and students. They defined issues and politely suggested frameworks for their analysis. This helped them in creating space for pursuit of policy objectives of their respective governments. (sic) Diplomacy was found to be more effective than military might in securing this strategic outcome. (sic) An impact of this new diplomacy (an euphemism for not so honourable activities at times) was not always wholesome for state and nation-building processes in most

not an art of compromise, or of conflict resolution by peaceful means. They are guided by the rationality of the revolution, not by the rationality of peace and stability in international society. They think that any conception of a state sharing a common interest with other states in mutual respect for state rights in domestic politics and international relations, is a fiction. The hopes based on it are misplaced. In fact, they regard the division of the political world into sovereign states as the most unjust form of political division. They regard the political world as composed of economic classes, racial and religious communities. Hence the rules and norms of international law regulating inter-state behaviour can, and should, be freely violated for taking the revolution to other states. They practise people's diplomacy in relation to the states regarded as hostile to the goals of the revolution, while not opening their own borders to the practice of people's diplomacy by other states.

RIGHTS ONLY, WHO KNOWS THE TRUTH?[23]

The people today shy away from talking about virtue or the human good. But they are always too eager to talk about rights. The mindset is either one of scepticism or of relativism

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third world societies, leading in different measures to non-governance and governmental non-performance. It increasingly became difficult to locate responsibility and enforce accountability, as special interests with cross-border links emerged and brokered influence with political leaders, state elite and international centres of power and influence." Kumar, Sushil, "Power, Interests and Ideas: Twentieth Century International Relations," *Studies in Humanities and Social Sciences*, Shimla, IIAS, IX (I), Summer 2002, p.10. This twist in the practice of diplomacy can thus be attributed to the emerging features of the world order such as transnational networks and social solidarities.

[23] The Enlightenment challenged religion and offered nothing in its place; it asserted individual autonomy; and regarded truth as consisting of social progress and free inquiry. John Stuart Mill, John

– scepticism, there is truth but cannot be known[24]; relativism, there is no fixed truth. Why is it so?

• The pre-Enlightenment period was characterized by a widespread belief in God. Nothing was a chance occurrence, as all events were according to God's plan and served God's will. With increasing knowledge of other civilizations, the Western consciousness of Biblical truth was confronted with other ways of looking at God.
• The Enlighttenment thought appeared during the period spreading from the late seventeenth to the eighteenth centuries. It marked the culmination of a change in ideas brought about by such people as Francis Bacon, an English philosopher, who abandoned the deductive way of understanding nature handed down from Aristotle onwards. He rejected the authority of tradition and relied on methods of experiment and induction to offer a means

Dewey and Jurgen Habermas agreed that the search for truth should lead to liberal republicanism. A liberal society was the proper home for search for truth. It mistook material progress for happiness and technological sophistication for virtue. It was, in this sense, that liberalism sought to colonize non-Western cultures and civilizations. It treated them as incapable of inquiring into truth. See, Honig, Bonnie, *Political Theory and Displacement of Politics*, Ithaca, 1993; and Connolly, W.E., *Political Theory and Modernity*, Oxford, 1989.

[24] Rationalists can be viewed as sceptical about the possibility of empirical knowledge while not being sceptical with regard to *a priori* knowledge, and empiricists could be seen as sceptical about the possibility of *a priori* knowledge but, not so, with regard to empirical knowledge. Both rationalists and empirists get confounded when they are told that both reason and fact are clouded by unconscious motivations and instinctive urges. The confusion is further confounded by postmodernists who regard all knowledge (including that in natural sciences) as in complicity or negotiation with power. The impact of such pervasive scepticism is not limited to the domain of philosophical inquiry, but also shapes the society by promoting nihilistic attitudes.

of distinguishing truth from untruth. The old beliefs were unsettled. This caused great confusion. John Donne, the poet, said: "It is all in pieces, all coherence [sic] gone."[25] Isaac Newton marked the shift from religion to science. He showed that man could understand nature and was no longer cursed to be at the mercy of an unknown world. Newton demonstrated that the physical world was susceptible to human understanding. So great was his impact that Alexander Pope was prompted to write, "Nature and Nature's laws lay hid in night, God said 'Let Newton be!' and all was light."[26] Newton was preceded by the Copernican revolution. It was a jolt to what was taken as the immutable truth. The transition from revelation to reason meant that the truth was not subordinate to a divine, supernatural or transcendent reality, forever

[25] See, James Turner, *Without God, Without Creed: The Origins of Unbelief in America,* Baltimore, 1985. The recent advances in the philosophy of science aim to bridge the gap between pre-and post-Enlightenment ways of looking at man and nature. The humanities respond by trying to bridge the gap between religious and humanistic perspectives, while the natural sciences attempt to go beyond empirical approaches and treat natural laws not as immanent in nature but as impositions of the human mind. The idea is to address the long-standing issue between realism and idealism. Realism is the belief that experiences that come by way of our senses must reveal a *real* world that exists, independent of any human perceiver. Idealism, on the other hand, is the belief that there is no objective reality apart from the products of our imagination or mental constructs. An attempt is made to resolve the issue through epistemological relativism: natural sciences work through closures, while there are no closed systems in nature and society; a theory in science is a conceptual scheme that scientists invent in order to explain to themselves the observed phenomena and the relationships between them; it is not so in the humanities. See, R. Bhaskar, *Scientific Realism and Human Emancipation*, London, 1986.

[26] Quoted in Norman Hampson, *The Enlightenment*, NewYork, 1968, p.21

inaccessible to human reason. Rather, it was neither divine nor transcendental. It was accessible to human reason. All ideas must face rational scrutiny. This generated faith in man and in his power to direct his life and that of society towards his purposes. This view of man was there in classical antiquity also but was lost in medieval Christendom. There was a sense of nostalgia for the ancient world and an urgency was felt to restore to man the capacities, strengths and powers that genuinely belonged to him but were ignored or denied to him by the medieval Church. With the help of reason, man could master nature and himself; and through reason, men everywhere, regardless of culture or tradition, would discover the universal rules by which they should live their lives.

- Counter-Enlightenment[27] mocks the assumption that the darkness of fanaticism will naturally give way to the light of reason. Its intellectual character is defined by explicity repudiating the Enlightenment. Its contemporary supporters use the same tools that the supporters of the Enlightenment have been using for a couple of hundred years. They use the same media and the same public arena. The counter-Enlightenment supporters advance their point of view through radical engagement with Durkheim's concept of "organic solidarity." An attempt is made to link it with the difference principle. It is claimed that no intellectual harmony is possible without regard to local differences in culture and custom. Such differences are both ineradicable and desirable. Human nature expresses itself in widely differing systems of value. Between universal humanity and specific individuality,

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[27] The term owes its origin to Isaiah Berlin through his entry titled "Counter-Enlightenment" in the *Dictionary of the History of Ideas*, Vol. II, New York, 1973, pp. 100-112.

there lies a wide zone of cultural specificity and difference. Every culture conceives of human nature in its own terms and organizes its development according to that image. These differences need to be preserved. The Western culture has no superior claim over non-Western cultures. The difference principle is also linked to the moral concept of social justice and an agenda for realizing it. It is also linked to demand for rights in the face of political repression.[28]

Hence, the definition of society as an ontological reality has become a battleground of intense cultural politics. The proponents of the rival viewpoints style themselves as involved in a world historical process for rebuilding society after an ideal image. They constantly watch the flow of events to pick up those that vindicate their respective positions, grounded either on religion, reason or the right. The right is at the centre of the complex relationship among the three and so it will be useful to identify salient features of the complexity from perspective of the right.[29]

- *Political thought during the ancient and medieval times aimed at making politics a servant of the good life, not so now.* The relationship between the right and the good was then different from that in modern times. Social and cultural

[28] Counter-Enlightenment is not an atavistic relic of the past, but a thoroughly modern affair. The counter-Enlightenment masters were Marx, Freud, and Nietzsche. Among the American counter-Enlightenment writers are Alasdair MacIntyre, Michael Sandel, Roberto Unger and Christopher Lasch and, in Britain, the better known is John Gray.

[29] The notion of rights, in the sense, in which it is used today received its definitive formulation in the works of the seventeenth and eighteenth century philosophers such as Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau.

values in those days encouraged a sense of vocation, a feeling of dedication in the pursuit of a job, not its use for self-interest. The dedication was not grounded on self-interest but on inspiration that came from within. The emphasis was on duty to one's vocation and not on the right to a satisfactory return from it. All this changed with the passage to modernity. In modern times, a reasoned discussion on the good is not expected to yield any agreement, much less a universal agreement. It is not possible to agree that the self is driven to a vocation by nature or divine will. It can neither be reasoned this way, nor proved in terms of known scientific principles. Against the background of such disagreements, it is not possible to order society according to some conception of human good, both social and personal.

- *While the ancients wanted to lay down the rules of life, the moderns are eager to lay down the rules of the game.* Modern political thought rejects the idea of ordering the individual and society in a manner as it was done during earlier periods. It rejects the idea that concern for a positive conception of human good should be a guide to political action. It marked a rethinking of politics so that it focussed on arranging human affairs in a way that allowed those who were divided about what constituted good life to live together peacefully. The emphasis was on seeking procedural solutions to individual and social problems. This way of thinking was pioneered by Machiavelli, Hobbes and Locke. People differed on purposes of life and so they should have maximum freedom to pursue them with minimum duties. The aim was to secure individual liberty and peace for all.

The pioneers of modernity, no doubt, jettisoned the conception of the good. But it was hoped that traditional social norms would continue to have a hold on human behaviour to make room for a proper and dignified life

in society, and that, therefore, liberty would not degenerate into selfishness in politics and social life. They believed that individual pursuit of diverse interests would be moderated by influences arising from family, education, religion and natural law. But this hope was misplaced. In modern times, a reasoned discourse on morality cannot lead to agreement on universal standards or premises of moral action. Everyone will not agree on a common philosophy of human nature and destiny. The people can agree only on what must not happen (the negatives of morality) and use of the rights language to prevent that from happening. The attempts to make a case for morality in politics and world affairs are, therefore, not possible separately from a discussion on rights. In order that rights are not interpreted as freedom to be one's own judge or to define the proper standard of behaviour for oneself, it is necessary to give moral discourse a form of deliberation on the dignity of the human person as a source of morality and human rights.[30] In this sense, the notion of universal and inalienable rights is helpful in confronting the anarchy and arbitrariness of relativistic judgments.

- *Hence, in modern politics, the word 'virtue' has been largely supplanted by the term 'rights.' The rights language has appropriated the discourse of the good. The result is that, as opposed to the earlier notion that politics should play an indirect role in promoting conditions and shaping context for inculcation of virtue by the people, politics now has come to play a more direct role in promoting virtue by legislating rights, privileges and entitlements,*

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[30] The theory of natural rights is premised on natural law, and hence views rights from the perspective of a fundamental moral framework. Lincoln's anti-slavery views were so premised. This mindset is a part of the American heritage. It is filled with confidence in the capacity of the human mind to discern fundamental principles, to apply them to contemporary circumstances, and act accordingly.

for individual persons as well as for bodies corporate (legal persons). One effect of this change has been to expand the boundaries of the political and, as such, creates space for what is claimed by sectional interests as normatively grounded political action. Over the years, therefore, the number of rights and right holders has multiplied to a point where the very idea of rights gets terribly diluted.[31]

- *When interests parade as rights, the notion of inalienable rights as derived from nature, weakens.* When interest-based politics is camoflaged as a popular movement, then the mobilized people regard their stakes in it as consisting of not just interests but their very humanness. This gives a sharper edge to the politics of social mobilization for excercising democratic pressure of secure rights and entitlements for an increasing variety of socially differentiated groups. This is often described as an expansion of participatory democracy and an end to exclusion. Is it really so? The reality is far from it. The politics of rights points to a greater relativization of moral standards.

- *Conducting moral discourse in the language of rights creates moral confusion. There are some rights that are negative. Nobody should violate my privacy, even though my private life may adversely*

[31] The new social movements, for example, articulate their goals in the language of rights and take the form of angry protests and self-righteous indignation. These movements are driven by alternative visions of society. These visions are not articulated on the model of, say, the nineteenth century vision of social justice.Cf.: Equal treatment of all in every respect has been advocated by some nineteenth century anarchists: equality of occupation (intellectuals to participate in manual work) of consumption (all to eat and dress alike) and especially education, would ultimately wipe out existing inequalities of personal characteristics such as those of talent and intelligence and would eventually mould a uniform human species." Flex E. Oppenheim, "Egalitarianism as a Descriptive Concept," *American Philosophical Quarterly*, 7 (2), April 1970, p.28. Also see, Isaiah Berlin, "Equality as an Ideal," as reprinted in Frederick A. Olafson, ed., *Justice and Social Policy*, Englewood Cliffs, NJ, 1961, pp. 128-150.

impact the moral ecology of other people. Similarly, I should not be fined for not doing my work, or for damaging public property, for it will adversely impact my capability to pay school fees for my children. If the rights discourse is a moral discourse, then why complain that there is a declining decency in private lives, or declining seriousness in discharge of public duty, or increasing callousness towards public property? Such confusion results from treating rights as a source of social morality.

- *The situation is no better when the rights discourse is focused on positive rights. Every positive right is a claim on others. Who are these others? Who is supposed to meet these claims? Which agency should supply the need?* For example, every young man or woman has a right to work. The question is, who is supposed to provide them with jobs? Does the rights-holder have any duty towards those who come forward to meet his or her need?

MORAL SELF AND THE GOOD

Ethical Discourse

The assumption is that the rights discourse is aimed to raise the moral level of humanity. But is it possible to do this without a conception of the good in the background?

Moral consciousness is a cognitive process of learning. One learns what corresponds to one's natural predispositions which mark out certain things rather than others for learning.[32] The consciousness grows into a self-system through incorporation of moral precepts which are learnt

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[32] There is no agreement on the question whether human nature is something fixed and hard wired, or it is plastic. John Locke, rejected the notion that moral consciousness was innate, a part of hard wired human nature. He was an empiricist and said that a child was born as an amoral entity and learnt moral precepts through reflection on experience.

at different stages of the life cycle, in ways that involve interplay of nature and environment, both physical and cultural, in a social setting of relationships at the level of the family, community and wider humanity. The concept of the good for a person, therefore, is a self-system of moral consciousness. It eliminates conflict between personal motivation and moral action and removes all nagging doubts and uncertainty about virtuous action. This view coincides with the classical thinking on the subject. It represents the Aristotelian tradition of virtue ethics.

In *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle defines the good as something that is always desirable for itself and never for the sake of something else. It is *eudaimonia* (happiness) or flourishing. It is given by nature. The good cannot be what the humans ought to be, as opposed to what they actually are.The human good is implicit in what humans are. Like all creatures, humans have an end or a final cause, which is an overarching frame of reference for resolving moral dilemmas arising from conflict among lesser goods.

In this respect, Aristotle probably comes close to the Platonic concept of a unitary good, a single Idea or Form of Goodness. But he differs from him in emphasizing its embeddedness in human nature or its character as immanent in humanity, as opposed to Platonic emphasis on the transcendental character of the Idea. The good, though embedded, needs to be acquired. Aristotle draws an analogy between ethical virtues and artistic skills. Both are acquired through practice and internalized as habit. A person who deals unfairly with others will acquire the habit of unfair dealing, and become an unfair person. The analogy does not go further. The practice of an art produces an effect (a product of art) while the practice of goodness only reveals the character of goodness. It is recognized in terms of its character, not in terms of its effect or product. With Aristotle, there is a practical side to goodness. The practice of goodness

should steer between the extremes, somewhere between opposing impulses to passions and emotions.

Neo-classicism shares ground with natural religion (deism) where, as Alexander Pope said: "For modes of faith let graceless zealots fight, he can't be wrong whose life is in the right."[33] Religious orthodoxy leans on Aristotle's views to give goodness a foundation in nature. Calvinism, for example, seeks to realize the good through the Aristotelian ethic of moderation and relies on the church in realizing the economic benefits of religion. In extreme situations of social decline and moral nihilism, it even advocates the subordination of the state to the church. It is, in this sense, that Calvinism is regarded as the spirit behind the emergence of modern industrial societies in the West. Lutherism, on the other hand, relies on the state for promoting the Protestant ethic for industrial development.[34] The point here was that medieval scholasticism (characterized by neo-classical revival) or Christian ecclesiasticism (characterized by religion-based conceptions

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[33] Quoted in Norman Hampson, *The Enlightenment*, New York, 1968, p. 105. A view of nature as clockwork, created by God but governed through secondary causes. Hence, a distance developed between God and nature since nature was now understood in terms of natural laws that were comprehensible to men. This way of thinking also reconciled Christianity with science, as science came to be perceived as nothing more than a discovery of the ways of God. Also see, James Turner, op. cit., pp. 31-32.

[34] Protestant ethics celebrating the virtues of thrift, industry, sobriety and responsibility, was identified by many sociologists centuries later as the driving force behind the success of modern capitalism and industrialized economy. Particularly, the ethics as espoused by Calvinism, which in its extreme, advocated subordination of the state to the church, diverging from Luther's view of the state to which the church is subordinate, was ironically credited as the spirit behind the emergence of the modern Western industrial state. In that sense, the post-cold war Islamic theocratic states are Calvinist in principle.

of the good) were not opposed to economic growth and prosperity through application of science and technology to production, and so, in important respects, they paved the way for the Enlightenment revolution. This, in a way, points to the central issue in neoliberal globalization.

CLASSICAL AND MODERN POLITICAL THOUGHT:
CONTRASTING WAYS OF SIGNIFYING STATE,
NATION, CLASS AND THE INDIVIDUAL

Modern political thought gives ontological significance to definitions. This means that a definition constitutes its object. Thomas Hobbes says that names are "signs of our conceptions" and manifestly "not signs of the things themselves."[35] This was an effect of the epistemological revolution initiated by scientific rationality. A science-based understanding favoured the view that the cosmos was just an empty space.[36] This led, on the one hand, to a new understanding of the role of language. The cosmos being empty, the objects within it cannot be credited with meaning other than the one given to them by the observer and expressed in words. This was different from the role assigned to language in classical and theological thinkers. They visualized the cosmos as comprised of substances (as theorized by Aristotle).

The Aristotelian world was a verbal world. It was a noun-oriented world. In such a world, the heterogeneity of nouns only could do justice to the diversity of reality. A separate noun was used for designating a separate reality. Each substance came into being out of something which shared its name. The idea was not only to name an object but also to describe its essence and essential qualities. The noun revealed the essence of the object. The word embodied the

[35] *English Works*, p. 16
[36] This was the Cartesian notion of *rex extensa*.

reality. Change the word and you refer to another reality. The scientific worldview changed all this. On the other hand, the notion of an empty cosmos was linked to cosmopolitanism. Daniel Deudney says:

In the modern era, cosmopolitanism has been a significant component of Enlightenment political ideology, employing an essentially Cartesian notion that the human world is constituted by abstract geometric space that is infinitely extensive, utterly undifferentiated and non-anthropomorphic.[37]

The use of nouns in characterizing objects therefore became casual and arbitrary. It was a logical outgrowth of the new spatial cosmology. Such a cosmos was largely numerical rather than verbal.[38] It was no longer a characterization of the structural aspect of the objects as represented by their embodiment of substances specific to each of them. Instead, it became an arbitrary designation by the use of language. A shift in the position of words in relation to one another changed the reality. It was like a re-arrangement of furniture and fittings in a house to transform the drawing room into a bathroom. In this sense, a range of objects could be united by some feature common to them but which were otherwise separate. The reality was visualized as nothing but invention or a creation of the mind.

The demolition of a religious view of the cosmos believed to be inhabited by a mind or consciousness, resulted in upsetting deeply held beliefs about ends and purpose of life. This led to an ethical disorder in society and

[37] Deudney, Daniel, "Ground Identity: Nature, Place and Space in Nationalism," in Lapid, Yosef and Kratochiwil, Friedrich, eds., *The Return of Culture and Identity in IR Theory*, London, 1996, p., 133.
[38] Cf.: "To the Enlightenment, that which does not reduce to numbers, and ultimately to the one, becomes illusion; modern positivism writes it off as literature." Horkheimer, Max and Adorno, Theodor, *Dialectics of Enlightenment*, Translated by John Cumming, New York, 1991, p. 7.

undermined the existing conceptions of human good.[39] A strong need was therefore felt for reconstituting the ethical order. This led to articulation of ethical discourses for addressing the problem. These modern discourses were very different from premodern ethical discourses, largely because of the contrasting social milieu in which the two were located. The location of the modern ethical discourse was dictated by the need to address the social conditions of ethical disorder which came about under the impact of scientific thought on society. This thought did not distinguish one human being from another. There was no inner essence of a human being which was different from that of other human beings. Internally all were born blank and empty. This underlined the principle of equality. The ethical imperative was to correspond behaviour to the specificities of the inner essence. The ethical imperative was to regulate the pursuit of self-interest by equal individuals so that social and political order could give equal regard to the interests of everyone. This was not tantamount to imposing a dull conformity. There still was wide scope for differences to flower and add colour to society. Such personal pursuits did not affect the equality principle and was open to behaviour based on personal choice. The ethical principle was normative conformism in the public sphere and difference in the private sphere. This led to the invention of the utilitarian principle. It satisfied the equality principle by defining the good as promotion of the greatest happiness of all when each person counted for one and no one for more than one, and sought to regulate the private spheres by distinguishing between high and low levels of pleasure.

The utilitarian approach focussed on freedom and equality across all social and natural differences. This led to a liberal

[39] The reference is to the conceptions of the good in classical thought (Plato's four cardinal virtues of prudence, temperance, fortitude and justice), or in Christian theology (the virtues of faith, hope and love).

egalitarian discourse of the good. A distinctive aspect of the discourse was to ground the good on rationally conceived axioms and, for this reason, it was treated as of universal validity. But the relativist discourses of the good were grounded on empirically observable personal and social differences among people. These innovative ideas created an imperative of translating them into norms, institutions and practices. The liberal political thought attempted to do this by coinciding the public-private boundary with the absolutist-relativist binary in conceptualizing the good, so that the absolutist notion of the good was applicable to the public sphere where it was enforceable through law, while the relativist notions of the good could be pursued freely in the private sphere. The right in the public sphere was extended to give legitimacy to diverse notions of private good. The diversity thrived under the cloak of absolutist notions of right. The liberal political thought, thus, demolished the existing inequalities and replaced them with new inequalities This was the nemesis of the liberal ideal. The individual found himself or herself robbed of natural freedom and social autonomy in defining his or her notion of the good. This freedom was appropriated by those who held political power and controlled market forces and who used these resources to promote their interests. In the process, they completely changed the conditions of life and livelihood. These conditions delimited new spaces for locating the good in its new incarnations of meaning and content. They generated new social inequalities and gave rise to keen contests among politically organized groups for freedom in defining their respective good in this new context.

The problem of regulating these contests and containing the associated conflicts called for adjustment in methods and techniques for addressing it. The problem was confounded by liberal democracy and the doctrine of *raison d'etat*. The state pursued its interests through "cunning,

recklessness and ruthlessness,"[40] force and fraud at the expense of morality and principle. As other actors fell in line with this approach, aggressive nations, intolerant communities and possessive individuals surfaced on the political scene. No doubt, attempts were made to reconcile self-interested behaviour with common interests. Ethical norms were prescribed for promoting desirable behaviour. The responsibility for crimes against humanity was located on individual decision-makers and enforced through international criminal courts. But these measures could not effectively mediate exclusionary self-interested behaviour of political actors.The conditions necessary for the success of these measures did not exist. The countervailing forces were gathering strength and taking leads from the mass politics initiated by Hitler and Stalin.[41] Mass politics was necessarily exclusionary and aggressive. It tried to "explain everything and every occurrence by deducing it from a single premise."[42] From the French Revolution onwards, ideological thinking aimed to manipulate power to establish a perfect society modelled on its premises.

   This trend culminated in the twentieth century and took the form of total commitment, global confrontation and total war The states engaged one another in competitive development of social and economic infrastructures for generating military power and in forging a perfect mix of

[40] Nicholson, H., *Evolution of Diplomatic Method*, London, 1954, p.27.

[41] The reference was to a view of mass society "as an abstract collection of individuals who receive impressions from the mass media." In a mass society, people "receive" opinions rather than "express" them. Mills, C. Wright, *The Power Elite*, New York, 1956, p. 304. Also see, Kapstein, Ethan and Mastanduno, Michael, eds., *Unipolar Politics: Realism and State Strategies After the Cold War*, New York, 1999. The authors show that the end of the cold war, rather than ending the struggle for power among states, in fact boosted it.

[42] Arendt, Hannah, *Origins of Totalitarianism*, New York, 1958, p.468.

institutions and policies for generating economic competitiveness and efficiency. The trend was based squarely on the doctrine of *raison d'etat.* As part of the Enlightenment legacy, the doctrine legitimized ruthless pursuit of national interest by the state and seeks to reconcile it with a preferred normative order based on competitive politics which is "utopian, messianic and potentially totalitarian."[43]

What was the most crucial factor which led to the unfolding of world affairs along this trajectory? For answering this question, one has to dig at the intellectual foundation of modern politics. In the seventeenth century, when political thought was freed from the rigidities predicted upon a structurally rigid cosmology, it moved beyond the methodology of classical thinkers who used nouns for designating different political realities and invested a lot of energy in defining them, so that the nouns and definitions revealed the essence of these realities. There was excessive concern with the subtleties of language in choosing words for naming a differentiated reality. Even the explanatory function was attributed to definitions. The 'why' of any reality was reducible to its definition because its name combined both description and explanation.

With the onset of modernity, political thinkers jettisoned this methodology and rediscovered the neo-platonic flair for universal concepts. This was in line with classical and medieval faith in rationalism that reason alone was capable of finding truth without experimental tests but, at the same time, marked a break with classical and medieval methodology. This break was the beginning of modern political thought. The focus was now on explicating universal concepts based on an altogether different approach towards the use and understanding of language in political

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[43] Anderson, M.S. *Europe in the Eighteenth Century,* London, 1987, pp. 417-18.

discourse.[44] A disjuncture occurred between the universal and the particular and between the theoretical and the particular. Bertrand Russell treats this as a philosophical problem. He says:

Let us consider, say, such a notion as *justice*. If we ask ourselves what justice is, it is natural to proceed by considering this, that and the other just act, with a view to discovering what they have in common. They must all, in some sense, partake of a common nature, which will be found in whatever is just and in nothing else. This common nature, by virtue of which they are all just, will be justice itself, the pure essence, the admixture of which, with facts of ordinary life, produces the multiplicity of just acts. Similarly, with any other word which may be applicable to common facts, such as 'whiteness' for example. The word will be applicable to a number of particular things because they all participate in a common nature or essence. This pure essence is what Plato calls 'idea' or 'form'. (sic.) The idea of *justice* is not identical with anything that is just: it is something other than particular things, which particular things partake of. Not being particular, it cannot itself exist in the world of sense. Moreover, it is not fleeting or changeable like the things of sense: it is eternally itself, immutable and indestructible.[45]

Not only the concept of justice but also other concepts such as equality and freedom were normative concepts. They were not amenable to empirical definitions, and were open only to cognition in terms of their predicates. As universal signifiers, these concepts were also not subject to *a posteriori* validation. Politics thrived when their predicates were endlessly put to wilful articulation by vested interests seeking to derive benefit in relation to agencies like states, nations, classes and individuals, especially in the non-Western world where these agencies measured low on the scale of Weberian

[44] Macksey, Richard and Donato, Eugenio, eds., *The Structuralist Controversy*, Baltimore, 1970.
[45] Russell, Bertrand, *The Problems of Philosophy*, London, 1912, Reprint, 1971, pp. 52-53.

ideal types. These agencies were no better than 'typical combinations' of a few of the required traits. Buffetted by contradictory predicates of state-ness, nation-ness, class-ness and individual-ness, these agencies were generally not capable of making their own truth. This made them ever more eager to exercise the rights, specific to their respective formal status, as a means for building capability. But it was just fodder for power politics. Strategic signification of such predicates always lent itself to irrational forces, *a la* Nietzsche and Freud. These forces defined politics as exercise of power through hegemonic construction of social boundaries and framing of difference, identity and inequality.[46] Combined with scholarly withdrawal in the name of science and value neutrality or scientific value relativism from evaluations in absolute terms of ends and means, the right and the good, just and unjust, this process drove the world, at the behest of ambitious and dynamic political leaders into an era of total ideology and total war.

[46] For discourses of identity and difference, see Ashley, Richard, "The Geopolitics of Geopolitical Space: Towards a Critical Social Theory of International Politics," *Alternatives*, 12(4), 1987, and Walker, RBJ "Geneaology, Geopolitics and Political Community: Richard Ashley and the Critical Theory of International Politics," *Alternatives*, 13 (1), 1988.

Chapter 7

STATE RIGHTS

INTRODUCTION

The state is a person in public international law. From the sixteenth century onwards, this law came under the influence of modern positivists. Legal positivists, like John Austin assigned to sovereign parliament exclusive power over the rights and liberties of its citizens. In this respect, all states are independent and co-equal with one another. Every state is entitled to sovereign rights conferred on it by positive law. But the entitlement to these rights is contingent on its recognition by other states. The grant of recognition is entirely a matter of policy, not a matter of fact. The question, whether a particular political entity does or does not constitute a state, in fact, is not in itself, an issue. Recognition is a discretionary, not a mandatory act. The capacity to hold rights and to exercise them in a responsible manner is not relevant to the issue. The entities which are strong on constitutive features are sometimes excluded from the membership of the states' system while those that are weak on them are included. The situation is characterized by marked inequalities and differences among the members. Nonetheless, they enjoy equal rights.

Equally important are differences in conceptualizing the state. The statements mandating the interests of the individual or of the greatest number of them recurred in state theories but were often subordinated to other maxims privileging the group or the state itself. The state rights are thus legitimated by a notion of the right which is an arbitrarily chosen predicate of state=ness. A change of the predicate

harnesses the state to different purposes. It is in this sense that the state is fundamental to political science and international relations. In its widest interpretation the field covers all aspects of politics including relations across state borders. While the name *international* reflects the infusion of nationalism into inter-state politics, the field of study would not have a basis without the division of humanity into separate political communities. The question arises: what are the ethical implications of theories that uphold the state as a moral standard in politics and international affairs? Authors such as John Stuart Mill and Michael Walzer used liberal principles to build a theory of international ethics based on the state. The impact of their theory was the transfer of moral authority from the individual to the state and, as such, a distortion of the balance between the individual and the state in a liberal conception of international affairs. To build a liberal theory of international ethics based on the individual, it is necessary to meet the challenge of this interpretation of liberal theory.

There are three schools of thought addressing the moral implications of sovereign statehood. The first is suggested by Niccolo Machiavelli who dismisses the entire exercise and argues that the power politics of states makes political ethics, if not impossible, then at least unwise. The second, arising from the ideas of writers such as Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, assumes that states have a logic and morality of their own and thus should not be measured against standards applicable to individuals. The third view is the mainstream international relations approach pioneered by theorists ranging from Hugo Grotius to Emer de Vattel to Hedley Bull. This approach steers away from the other two extreme positions. It assumes that the state, as the principal agent in international relations, possesses rights but, at the same time, is bound by rules and responsibilities. This approach has been subject to varied interpretations covering a wide spectrum of positions from that of the *raison d'etat* school which asserts

that state interests are their own justification to that of those numerous scholars who regard the state as nothing more than a vehicle for asserting the rights of the individual.

The extreme approaches challenge the liberal approach to ethics in international relations. It is necessary to examine these approaches to cast into relief the subtleties of the liberal conception of the state. The representative authors of the extreme positions need to be examined to show the moral implications of their ideas for international relations to show, for example, how the liberals who treat the state as a moral actor get challenged. The need is also to examine the question: Do liberals have a lesson to learn from the state-centred approaches to ethics in international relations?

THE MODERN STATE

Politics and the Modern State

The modern state is central to the definition of modern era in politics, as distinguished from the ancient and the medieval. The modern states system originated in Europe and spread worldwide. Politics and international relations are therefore concerned with the question: What is meant by the state and what is its role? The postcolonial societies are so labelled because they have been in the process of deciding not only how they adapt the concept of the modern state to their traditional societies but also the kind of state they choose for themselves: liberal or socialist, democratic or totalitarian, plural or fascist.

Modern politics is distinguished by a clear demarcation between temporal and religious realms. Medieval politics was grounded on a hierarchical and theocratic society "in which temporal and spiritual power came from God."[1] But the historical dynamics often overflows neat conceptual

[1] Walter Ullman, *Medieval Political Thought*, Harmondsworth, 1979 reprint, p.12.

categories and gives rise to innovative ideas. This happened during the Renaissance. The rediscovery of Aristotle in Europe in the thirteenth century was a turning point. It made a dent into medieval thinker's view of a unified system of knowledge; religion, ethics, politics and economics were not treated as different disciplines.[2] A study of Aristotle marked a shift from this medieval position. Aristotle differentiated between the person as a person and as a citizen, thus, setting up two facets of being, each with its own norms.[3] Whereas the medieval thinker would see a person in relation to God, the Renaissance thinker would see that person in terms of his responsibility to the country and its civic life. Not only did the division between the two facets of a person opened space for conceptualizing citizenship, it also made the idea of the state possible. The state as a separate autonomous entity emerges from the idea of the state as a citizen writ large.[4] The concept of the state did not exist in early medieval thought.[5] Its appearance marked one of the sharper departures from early medieval thinking.

In the early medieval period the concern was with government, not with 'the political'. After the barbarian invasions and the collapse of the Roman empire, the problem was to figure out how to govern society. The kings and counsellors found it handy to apply Christian doctrine to governance. For them, the Bible was not only a religious work, but also a source of law and governance. In contrast to this, the later medieval thinker, Thomas Aquinas, turned to Aristotle for a guide to governance. From then on, many writers and especially the Renaissance humanists, looked to

[2] Ullman, ibid., p. 16.
[3] Ullman, *Medieval Foundations of Renaissance Humanism*, London, 1977, p. 94.
[4] Ullman, 1977, p. 94.
[5] Ullman,1979, p.17.

the classics as a source of political ideas. These writers were interested in the notion of the state. Quentin Skinner says that the term 'state' was used in the Italian city republics and appeared in Machiavelli's *The Prince*.[6] The Renaissance republicans associated the idea with monopoly of power in civil matters. The term 'political' appeared alongside the concept of the state. The political realm eventually got wider by the fact that more and more people began to think about politics. During the early medieval period, the offices were held by clerics since they were more literate than the others. The issues of governance were not discussed separately from those of religion and, more significantly, ordinary people did not discuss them at all. During the later medieval period the scene started changing. Philosophers and other scholars were now increasingly addressing political issues.

The modern understanding of the state incorporates conceptions of territory, population, sovereignty, government, legal status, monopoly of violence and the right to use force. Its existence raises the question, whether the state itself has moral rights and responsibilities. The three different approaches listed above give different answers to this question and, by implication, different conceptions of ethics in international relations. The Machiavellian school denies that the state has a moral aspect; the Hegelians treat the state as a source of moral value; and the Vattelians regard the state as a bearer of rights and subject to rules.

THE AMORAL STATE: MACHIAVELLI

Machiavelli's *The Prince*, dedicated to 'magnificent Lorenzo' presents the conception of a political unit which is above morality and to which therefore no moral rules apply. The

[6] Quentin Skinner, "The Modern State: Acquisition of a Concept", paper presented to *History of Political Thought Seminar* on April 29,1986, University of Oxford.

freedom of the state to act is circumscribed only by the limits of prudence. Machiavelli's view, thus, presents the most cogent argument in favour of amoral politics within an autonomous political realm. There is a clear distinction between the private and the public spheres. The private morality does not bind the public realm. The idea is to emphasize that a ruler, in order to remain in power, should not desist from actions that, if done by the individual, will be deemed immoral. Hence the rules of governance laid down in the great treatises of natural law would not enhance the power of the prince. Such rules presumed human nature to be potentially good and reflected divine spirit. A ruler cannot build power on presumed goodwill of others. One must assume the worst in order to defend one's power. Machiavelli says:

Hence a wise 1eader cannot and should not keep his word, when keeping it, is not to his advantage, or, when the reasons that made him give it, are no longer valid. If men were good, this would not be a good precept, but, since they are wicked and will not keep faith with you, you are not bound to keep faith with them.[7]

Machiavelli was aware of values such as social unity and justice but treated them as instruments to be used for the benefit of the state. He says, "victories are never so complete that the victor needs have no caution or respect for justice."[8] He defends his position by stressing the importance of keeping allies compliant rather than by citing considerations of justice. The actions of a ruler should be judged in terms of prudence and not against abstract principles. "A prince should care nothing for the accusation of cruelty so long as he keeps his subjects united and loyal."[9] In short, the autonomy of the

[7] Nicolo Machiavelli, *The Prince*, edited and translated by T.G. Bergin, Ill.: Arlington Heights, 1947, Chapter XVIII, p. 51.
[8] *The Prince*, Chapter XXI, p. 67.
[9] *The Prince*, Chapter XVII, p. 47.

political realm implies that the prince should make decisions on the basis of considerations of power and nothing else. General moral precepts have no relevance in politics.

Machiavelli had reasons for arguing in support of amoral politics and governance. First, he was unhappy that Florence was invaded in 1513. Only a strong prince could defend Florence. Second, he was eager to win favour with the then ruler of Florence. So he wrote *The Prince* to suggest ways for bolstering the power of the ruler. For this, it was imperative to deny the existence of any moral community within or beyond the state. For him, the state has no moral purpose, or bound by any moral standards, or subject to moral evaluation. The natural law theories of just war are pointless speculation. Disruption of peace or declaration of war need not be underlined with some moral purpose. There is no need for a prince to feel constrained that the use of violence should be proportional to the mission. No moral principle can be invoked against killing of civilians or prisoners. Peace between states was difficult to negotiate and sustain. It is because treaties have no moral standing. They can be broken. A state will try to gain the wealth and territory of another state as soon as an opportunity presents itself. The occurrence of organized violence in international relations makes self-defence an important requirement.[10]

THE STATE AS A MORAL ACTOR: HEGEL

For Hegel, the state has rights inherent in it. Its rights are not derived from any source outside itself. It is so, because the state is an ethical entity. It is the concrete embodiment of freedom and ethical life for the individual. It represents

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[10] Is cooperation among states possible? A closer reading of *The Prince* shows that Machiavelli was open to its possibility. He does talk of the common interests of the allies and the stabilizing effects of a balance of power.

the absolute spirit, the *geist*, and not the general will.[11] As such, it has a transcendental nature. It is the culmination of a dialectical historical process where the freedom of the individual finds its ultimate institutional embodiment. History, in this sense, is nothing except the evolution of the idea of freedom:

Philosophy concerns itself only with the glory of the Idea mirroring itself in the History of the World, i.e. the Idea of Freedom, whose reality is the consciousness of Freedom and nothing short of it.[12]

The evolutionary process moves forward through resolution of contradictions culminating in the state. The consciousness of freedom therefore implies that there is no contradiction between freedom of the individual and the demands of the state on him:

(P)ersonal individuality and its particular interests not only achieve their complete development (sic) but, for one thing, they also pass over of their own accord into the interest of the universal... (T)hey take it as their end and aim and are active in its pursuit.[13]

In this context, the individual cannot refuse the call for duty in war. War has uses also. It revitalizes the state. Hegel says:

War has the higher significance that, by its agency, as I have remarked elsewhere, 'the ethical health of peoples' is preserved in their indifference to the stabilization of finite institutions; just as the blowing of the winds preserves the sea from the foulness which would be the result of a prolonged calm, so also corruption in nations would be the product of prolonged, let alone, perpetual peace.[14]

In Hegel's schema, the state is much more than administration. The state gained moral basis from the *geist*,

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[11] Charles Taylor, *Hegel*, Cambridge, 1975, p.427.
[12] G.W.F. Hegel, *Philosophy of History* (translated by J. Sibree), New York, 1902, p. 569.
[13] G.W.F. Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, (translated by T. M. Knox), Oxford, 1942, p. 160.
[14] Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, p. 210.

not its citizens. Instead, individuals were to find expression in this all-embracing state. While differentiating the state from civil society, Hegel rejected the Lockean conception of the state as the protector of individual interests:

If the state is confused with civil society, and if its specific end is laid down as the security and protection of property and personal freedom, then the interest of the individuals, as such, becomes the ultimate end of their association and it follows that the membership of the state is something optional. But the state's relation to the individual is quite different from this. Since the state is mind objectified, it is only as one of its members that the individual himself has objectivity, genuine individuality and ethical life.[15]

In Hegel, the individual is subsumed by the state. The individual has rights as a bearer of the rational will. The rational will is the source of rights. The individual is only a vehicle. There is no such thing as negative liberty (freedom from the state).

The individual has no identity other than the one given to him by the state. Charles Taylor argues that Hegel, by defining moral duties to one's community as duties to the customs of that community, legitimizes what exists because it exists.[16] Hegel does not distinguish what is from what ought to be.

THE STATE IN A SOCIETY OF STATES: VATTEL

Emer de Vattel was a legal theorist of the eighteenth century. He pioneered liberal tradition in international relations theory. The liberal idea of the state, grounded on the notion of autonomous individuals, was used by him to develop a conception of an international society of states bound by its own laws. This conception was a turning point in international relations theory as it provided a framework within which

[15] Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, p. 156.
[16] Charles Taylor, *Hegel and Modern Society*, Oxford, 1979, p. 83.

other scholars developed their own theories of the state in international relations.[17] He had an insightful understanding of state behaviour as he was born into a family which had its members in government. His uncle had worked as a diplomat for Frederick I of Prussia and he himself was an administrator in Saxony. He could thus understand the diplomatic practices of his time. He could see that the European states had begun to devise customs and conventions to regulate interaction among themselves. He could also see in this a scope for the application of natural law principles to the conduct of states.

The first thing he did in this direction was to emphasize that the law of nations was a separate sphere of law applicable to relations between states. He made an analogy between people in a state of nature and states in international society and claimed that both were bound by natural law to act for mutual good. States were free and independent and like an individual in the state of nature each state was morally equal in relation to other states.

Such equality existed even when states were of different sizes and of different strengths. When states were equally sovereign they had an equal right to govern their respective populations. Within the society of states each state that was self-governing was sovereign. Autonomy was the salient feature of sovereignty. By making a direct analogy between individuals and states, Vattel was able to create an international society of free, equal and autonomous states, equal with reference to their sovereignty, not power, money or population, and bound together by rights and responsibilities in their relation to themselves and with one another.

The responsibilities to oneself are internal obligations and those to others are external obligations. These obligations

[17] A more extensive discussion of Vattel's theories of international relations is not included here.

carry with them the right to enforce compliance. (Vattel, however, did not delineate the details of such enforcement). An obligation without a corresponding duty to enforce it, was not a perfect obligation. Violation of a right always called for redress. The right of a state to liberty and self-defence was a perfect obligation. Violations of perfect obligations could justify the use of force, after all peaceful means of redress were exhausted. The injuries such as invasion would be a just basis for war. Others could help a state defend its rights.

Conversely, imperfect obligations do not carry a right of enforcement. The obligated party may judge the claim but is not bound to enforce it. The execution of the obligation rests on the conscience of the obligated agent. Vattel considered humanitarian aid to be an imperfect obligation. A state could decide whether and how it could relieve the suffering in another state. This imperfect obligation originated in the duties between people but Vattel averred that similar obligations were obtained between states. He hoped that states would be predisposed to help others but they could not be compelled to do so. The obligation fell on states to honour these principles. When they honour them, their actions not only enhanced mutual goodwill but also preserved the liberty of the state.

Vattel argued that the states regulated their behaviour to preserve balance of power and thus their liberty. If one state appeared as becoming too strong, the others would combine to balance it. Vattel's ideas found a modern expression in the work of Hedley Bull.[18] Bull delineated the anarchical society of states. He was interested in Vattel's ideas on international society and balance of power. Bull argued that by consciously participating in common institutions such as

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[18] Headley Bull, *The Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in World Politics*, London, 1977

exchanging diplomats and obeying at least the rudiments of international law, the states demonstrated enough commonality of interest to be considered an international society. The members of this society agreed to respect each others' independence, to honour their agreements and to place limits on the use of force. Thus, state liberty was one of the cornerstones of international society but the lack of central authority was not an impediment to order in international society. Bull likened the situation of states to that of individuals in Locke's state of nature. Rules to promote society existed there, but without an authority.

Taking Vattel's definition of the balance of power as the starting point, Bull evolved and elaborated different ideas, such as the idea of alliance politics against a strong state, or the idea of a more complex arrangement of power for the preservation of the states' system based on sovereign equality. The aim underlying the balance of power approach was not to preserve peace but to safeguard states' rights. Vattel's hope was that balance of power would constrain great powers in the use of force against smaller powers but the experience with the conduct of international relations in the eighteenth century proved to be contrary to this hope. The rights of smaller powers could not be preserved and were openly violated.[19] Balance of power proved to be inadequate in this respect.

Yet, the writers in the liberal tradition such as Vattel and Bull were eager to plead for an international society in which states were the actors and were free and autonomous though bound by rules. In the liberal conception of international society, states were free, equal and independent. State rights had a pre-eminent position in Vattel's system. Vattel considered state rights to be the most important element in

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[19] In order to maintain balance between themselves, Austria, Prussia and Russia were willing to sacrifice Poland in a series of partitions (1772-1815)

his system which in fact was designed to sustain them. When state rights conflicted with another principle such as the law of nations, state liberty took precedence.

LIBERAL THEORY OF STATE RIGHTS

The liberal conception of state rights in international affairs displays features of both, positive and negative liberty. Whereas on the domestic level the liberal sees the state as a threat to the individual; on the international level, the state is likened to the individual in international society. While in domestic political theory, negative liberty is concerned with state interference in the affairs of the individual; on the world level, the idea of negative liberty defends the state from the interference of other states; thereby making non-intervention, a pillar of liberal international relations theory, bringing the state to the centre of such a theory. Positive liberty addresses the issues of self-expression and self-governance. On the international level, self-expression becomes self-determination, which is another pillar of the state-centred liberal international relations theory.

NON-INTERVENTION

The principle of non-intervention ran through the entire state-based liberal international relations theory from Vattel to Mill to Bull. Bull described intervention as dictatorial or coercive interference by an outside party or parties in the sphere of jurisdiction of a sovereign state, or more broadly, of an independent political community.[20] R.J. Vincent (a noted writer belonging to the natural law school) argued that, as people were equal, so were states; and therefore, no one could judge anyone else.[21] The idea of equality and

[20] Hedley Bull, *Intervention in World Politics,* 0xford: 1984, p.1.
[21] R.J. Vincent, *Human Rights,* p.115.

autonomy underpinned Vattel's principle of non-intervention. Such interference would overstep the bounds of sovereignty. Because no state could judge another, no state could presume to have the moral authority to intervene. Likewise, Mill linked non-intervention to liberal conceptions of autonomy and self-determination. Intervention undermined the autonomy and freedom of the target state, insofar as it implied that one or more states could claim moral superiority over it and were justified in imposing its ideas on it:

To go to war for an idea, if the war is aggressive, not defensive, is as criminal as to go to war for territory or revenue; for it is as little justifiable to force our ideas on other people as to compel them to submit to our will in any other respect.[22]

Intervention could not be a means for spreading ideas and ideologies. A monarchy may feel threatened if the political culture of a neighbouring republic holds out an attraction for its citizens but this cannot be an adequate reason for overthrowing the republic. For the same reason, it would be unjustified on the part of liberals to use intervention for imposing a democratic form of government on another state, or for Marxists to promote an international proletarian revolution.

Non-intervention as a norm did not apply, in Mill's thinking, to forms of intervention within the framework of colonial rule. Mill argued that independence that was so important to advanced people was detrimental to barbarians.[23] He said that barbarians had no rights as a

[22] John Stuart Mill, "A Few Words on Non-Intervention,' *Dissertations and Discussions: Political, Philosophical and Historical*, 3 vols., London, 1867, vol. 3, p.166.

[23] Ibid., p. 167.

[24] Ibid., p. 168, (emphasis in original); Hedley Bull, *Intervention in World Politics*, 0xford: Clarendon Press, 1984, p.1; R.J. Vincent, *Human Rights*, p.115.

nation.[24] Mill's exclusion of colonial people from the scope of non-intervention as a norm of international relations stemmed from his understanding that, because they did not follow the rules of the European society of states, they were outside international society.[25] This approach to non-intervention was in correspondence with Mill's views on personal liberty. Mill said that the essence of liberty was on development of capacities. A people had to develop their capacities by their own effort. No one could do it for them.[26] In an article published in the same year as *On Liberty,* 1859, he argued that an outsider could not give liberty to a country. Rather, they must win it for themselves:

(I)f they have not sufficient liberty to be able to wrest it from merely domestic oppressors, the liberty which is bestowed on them by other hands than their own, will have nothing real, nothing permanent.[27]

Michael Walzer concurred with Mill's view that struggle was integral to the concept of freedom. One achieves freedom through struggle:

It is not true then that intervention is justified whenever revolution is; for revolutionary activity is an exercise in self-determination, while foreign interference denies to a people those political capacities that only such exercise can bring.

The test of freedom was the readiness of a people to struggle for it.[28] Freedom comes from strength of character. A people should be regarded as deserving freedom only when they were prepared to win it on its own. By implication, one could say that poor and uneducated citizens ruled over by a powerful elite would not have a right to govern themselves

[25] Cf.: 'In the first place, the rules of ordinary international morality imply reciprocity. But 'barbarians' will not reciprocate. They cannot be depended on for observing any rules.' ibid., p.167.
[26] *On Liberty*, p.56.
[27] Op.cit., n. 22, 174.
[28] Michael Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, p.89.

since they (probably) could not outwit their leaders. In effect, a people got the government they deserved. Walzer seemed to accept such a formulation when he commented: "That over time there was a match between populations and their rulers that outsiders had an obligation to respect."[29]

Mill did allow intervention in three cases when citizens could no longer be said to be in the process of working out their self-government. In each of the cases the country in question was divided and others were intervening on behalf of one faction or the other. If one country had already intervened then another could come in support of the other faction and thus redress the balance. Mill allowed intervention in defence of non-intervention also.[30] A state could intervene to take on another that was meddling in the affairs of a third country. In such a case, the intervening state could claim to be acting in the larger interests of the people — that is, to safeguard order and law.

In the third instance, Mill, conscious of the then current diplomatic practice, allowed intervention to stop a long drawn out civil war[31]. If the sides were so evenly matched that no resolution of the conflict could emerge and the country was likely to be torn asunder, then a strong neighbouring state, with the support of the other neighbouring states, could demand a settlement. He chose to permit one state to act on behalf of the international society rather than condoning collective intervention. Having one state act, would be one way to achieve fast action without spreading the political disagreement too far. Again, this provision supported order; a long civil war could destabilize politics in the area by creating refugees and exiles who may choose to continue their conflict from outside their country.

[29] ibid., "The Moral Standing of States", p. 224
[30] Cf.: "Intervention to enforce non-intervention is always rightful, always moral, if not always prudent". *Non-Intervention*, op.cit., p. 176.
[31] ibid., p.172.

SELF-DETERMINATION

The principle of non-intervention was a contingent condition for creating space for a people to realize self-determination, the second principle of state-based liberal international relations theory. The concept of self-determination was a recurrent and contested theme in liberal thought about international relations. Mill described the fight for liberty as a part of the self-determination process. Woodrow Wilson saw self-determination as a building block of a liberal international order. Self-determination was enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.[32] Michael Walzer suggested that, in the debate following the publication of his *Just and Unjust War,* the concept of self-determination figured prominently in defence of respect for diversity.[33] No one group of people can claim a monopoly over virtue and the correct way of governance. The fervour with which a people were willing to defend their government or to overthrow it was part of the process of making a political choice. Even when the state was a democracy, it could be taken as an expression of the political will of only a group of the citizens. Hence self-determination always involves a contest for power among different groups, within a society. Self-determination, diversity and pluralism go together. It would be presumptuous of any political philosophy to claim to have all the answers.

Liberalism regards truth as contingent on existence of diversity. The people should be left free to organize their polity themselves. Pluralism means toleration. The principle of self-determination entails toleration of other cultures. Self-determination has been particularly useful to those who were not part of the Western culture. Forming a state was a way of

[32] The Charter Articles 2 (4), 2 (7), and 55.
[33] Michael Walzer, "The Moral Standing of States: A Response to Four Critics", in Beitz et al., eds. *International Ethics,* p. 223

taking control of one's own destiny and having a say in international affairs[34]. Western food, Western clothes and Western news permeate cultures worldwide. Within the territorial limits of their state, the non-Westerners can at least try to limit the degree of such influence. The liberal theory brings the state to the centrestage of international relations and grants it autonomy and the right of self-determination and protects these against intervention by other states.

SOURCES OF STATE RIGHTS

Mill and Walzer, while accepting the liberal premise that society was composed of individuals, conferred rights on the state in its relations with other states. This problematized the relationship between freedom and state rights. The problem called for resolution and the liberals tried to do this by giving an ethical colour to the concept of the state. Liberal theorists have used at least six analytical devices for doing this: i) making an analogy between the state and the individual , ii) incarnating the state as protector of the individual, iii) seeing the state as the agent of its citizens' will, iv) presenting the states as an institutional expression of political consent, v) deriving the rights from international society, and vi) seeing the state as an agent of justice. Vattel had pioneered the idea of a society of states parallel to the human society by making an analogy between the individual in civil society and the state in international society. Use of the state-person analogy enabled him to relate individual freedom to states. Time and again, he described states as if they were individuals. Like the individual, the state was free and independent. Both were subject to natural 1aw, but Vattel, at the same time emphasized, that, on account of

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[34] Hedley Bull, "Justice in International Relations", *Hagey Lectures at the University of Waterloo (1983-84) October 12-13, 1983*, p. 27.

differences between states and people, it was necessary to have a separate 1aw of nations. While claiming that the state was under natural law, Vattel made the state a subject to its own rules. When a conflict arose between the principles of natural liberty and those of state sovereignty, the latter, he said, should usually prevail.

This can be elaborated by making a reference to Vattel's stand on the norm of conscientious objection. According to Vattel, the most dramatic conflict between a citizen and the state occurred in the event of a war. It was during a war, when the state was engaged in its most basic function, self-defence, that the state called on its citizens to kill other people, depriving them of their right to life. To justify taking up arms, the citizen must be assured of the rightness of the cause. The citizens, no doubt, should be able to weigh their duty to their state against their duty to humanity. If the duty to humanity was not abrogated simply by membership of the state, then the right of conscience does take precedence, and the state should tolerate genuine conscientious objectors. On this point, Vattel and Grotius differed. Grotius held the view that citizens should not be forced to bear arms against their will. Vattel, on the other hand, would not give to citizens, the right to judge their sovereign's decisions and, for this reason, absolved soldiers of personal responsibility for their acts. Such downplaying of responsibilities to humanity in the case of soldiers implied, for Vattel, that loyalty for the state took precedence over the duty of humane behaviour towards others.

This clearly was a departure from the natural law tradition and got reflected in Vattel's support for reduced controls on state behaviour. Charles Beitz rightly said that before Vattel and Christian de Wolff, the state was considered a part of a larger moral order.[35] While Wolff retained the idea

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[35] Beitz, p. 71.

of a larger moral order by positing a concept of an overarching supreme state, a *civitas maxima,* for promoting common good and for providing adequate life, peace and security for the individual, Vattel rejected this notion, leaving states free. The state-person analogy suggested that states should be treated like individuals and so they should be given freedom and autonomy.

Beitz elaborated this further by saying that the state-person analogy was used to defend the idea of non-intervention.[36] Just as the principle of negative liberty was intended to guard against interference in people's lives, so state liberty and sovereignty were to shield the state from intervention. Vattel emphasized that no one had the right to meddle in another state's affairs. The analogy between the person and the state enabled Vattel to confer rights on the state, parallel to those of the person.

The second approach to the state as an ethical entity was to conceptualize it as a protector of the rights of the individual. On the international level, the state defended the interests of its citizens against the machinations of other governments. States were obliged to help their citizens when they were jailed or held captive abroad. The state would conclude treaties with other states for acquiring legal rights considered necessary for defending the interests of its citizens in commercial and other transactions with these other states or their citizens. The state might take responsibility for defending the people of a certain denomination, outside its territorial jurisdiction, as, for example, the Europeans felt responsible for protecting Christians everywhere.

States played the role as protectors because individuals could not defend themselves from another state by themselves. Rarely, would an individual obtain legal redress from the actions of another state. The person involved might have to use the resources of his or her own state's legal

[36] ibid., pp.75-76.

system, or request his or her own country to take the grievance to an international adjudicator. The claim of a state to rights was, thus, grounded on its obligation to defend individuals. For example, states might use the protection of their nationals as an excuse for involvement in the affairs of another country. This was advanced by the United States as part of the justification for its invasion of Grenada.

The Western powers had used a similar argument when troops were sent to defend their legations in China during the Boxer rebellion in 1900.

The third approach to the state as an ethical entity was to conceptualize it as an expression of the will of its citizens.[37] In terms of this approach, the state was the vehicle that individuals used to express their political preferences and to exercise the right to choose their lifestyle. Acceptance of these personal rights meant respect for the state that facilitated their expression. Vattel treated such a state as having a will of its own because it was the result of human deliberation. Thereby the state also gained legal personality that enabled it to bear rights and duties.[38] It was evident by implication that only those states in which citizens had a voice in politics would be accorded rights. This would exclude authoritarian regimes and many such states that falsely claimed to be democratic.[39]

The fourth approach to the state as an ethical entity was

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[37] This is not an exclusive category. For example, one can consider states to be a manifestation of the will of their citizens, and also use the state-person analogy when describing international politics.

[38] Otto Gierke said that "moral personality" merely meant that a non-physical entity had 1egal existence. Otto Gierke, *Natural Law and the Theory of Society 1500-1800*, translated by Ernest Barker, Cambridge, 1950, p. 97.

[39] What sort of 'democracies' would be included is not clear. The liberals would probably be more inclined to consider a liberal democracy as an expression of individual will than a people's democracy.

to conceptualize the state as expressing the consent of their members without having direct political representation. Michael Walzer differentiated between states enacting a democratically directed will and the states expressing an ongoing contract between past, present and the future generations to live in a certain way.[40] This point does not depend upon the degree of democracy, but on the existence of a historical political community. This meant that the state's right to sovereignty and autonomy would be the way to safeguard such a political community and its institutional expression, the state. Given such a contract, it could be concluded that territorial integrity and political sovereignty could be defended in exactly the same way as individual life and liberty. Walzer asserted that the right of a nation or people not to be invaded by another state derived from the common life that its members lived on this piece of land and not from the legal title on it that they claimed to hold or not hold.[41] In this case, the state's right to sovereignty derives from the need for protecting a living, an ongoing community or communities on its territory.

Edmund Burke (and later Michael Walzer) were pleading in favour of traditions that hold the members of a society together. Burke's concept of *virtual representation* presented the idea of a community as an expression of people's will without elected representatives. In virtual representation,

there is a community of interests and a sympathy in feelings and desires between those who act in the name of any description of the people and the people in whose name they act, though the trustees are not actually chosen by them.[42]

[40] Michael Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, p. 54.
[41] ibid., p.55.
[42] Edmund Burke, from a letter to Sir Hercules Langrishe, cited in R.J. Vincent, "Edmund Burke and the Theory of International Relations," *Review of International Studies*, 1984, p. 215.

A notion of trusteeship looms behind these views. This opens a new approach to understanding the role of a society in relation to its state especially that of a post-colonial society. The focus is on traditional and customary cadres within such a society.

The fifth and sixth approaches to state rights were different from the preceding four approaches. In these four approaches, the focus was on the ethical character of the state as the source of state rights. The fifth and sixth approaches were not so grounded. In terms of the fifth approach, state rights derive from the international society. The international society when conceptualized as a moral entity was assumed to have goals of its own from which flowed the rights of the state. Reciprocity and mutuality wove the moral fibre of the international community and gave a moral character to such features of international relations as balance of power and respect for treaties. Some scholars like Mill even denied membership of the international society to states not inclined to practise reciprocity as a behavioural norm. Mill regarded the violation of this norm as barbaric and as such outside the boundaries of a civilized community of states. Recognition of states under international law was also a means for bestowing the rights of sovereignty and equality on a state. Sovereign equality was a right that a state could enjoy only in relation to other states and so it required recognition by such other states. A state derived this right from the international community when its state members recognized it as sovereign and equal in relation to them. Sovereignty and equality are the rights that the international community grants to states in pursuance of its goals.

Hedley Bull, in his famous book *The Anarchical Society* listed several functions of the international society including protection of external sovereignty, regulation and limitation of violence, keeping of promises, and respect for domestic

jurisdiction. He did not want to put any ethical value on these functions and the corresponding claims of member states advanced as rights. He did suggest that the structure of international society did imply that states had some rights, and, like the rights to sovereignty and equality, these rights were also grounded on reciprocity. The international society might not have an ethical content (as was being claimed for it by the US and other Western countries in the context of humanitarian intervention), the upholding of these state rights was its goal. Fulfilment of this goal required the international society to grant these rights to states. The post-cold war international relations, marked by claims made by the US and other great powers who were in favour of an ethical substance of the international society and its working out through military and diplomatic means, underscored the contingent nature of this goal and of state rights, insofar as the international society was obliged to pursue its goal and grant rights to states only when state organization and its policies conformed to its ethical purpose and the imperatives of its actualization.

The sixth approach to state rights regarded the state as a moral agent and as such of intrinsic value, and, for that reason, its rights were not derived from any source other than itself. This view of the state recalled Hegel's holistic conception of the state, an entity in which alone freedom could be realized.[43] Non-Western writers on the other hand defined their societies (not states) in holistic terms as communities in which alone values were manifested and found expression. On Islamic society, Bozeman said:

the followers of Islamic law had the common conviction that the true meaning of democracy could be discovered only in Islam, where the

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[43] G.W.F. Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, tr. by T.M. Knox, Oxford, 1942, para. 260, p.160.

community conceived comprehensively, as unbounded in space and time, was destined to guard communal traditions and propagate unitarianism provided that it is organized in accordance with the irrevocable principles of Koranic law.[44]

Bull said that pro-state attitudes in the third world could be traced to their historical experience of political helplessness associated with statelessness.[45] In their eyes, the state could be an agent of justice redressing past grievances in relation to the international system.[46] In their understanding, statehood gave access to international politics especially in such forums as the United Nations General Assembly or UNESCO where their votes counted as much as those of richer and more powerful states. They claimed for the state in their part of the world certain rights such as the right to autonomy, sovereignty and equality to redress the deprivations suffered by its citizens in the past.

RECONCILING STATE RIGHTS WITH
THE RIGHTS OF THE INDIVIDUAL

The liberal theory of international ethics problematized the relationship between international society, the state and the individual. It was so because international society was assumed to be an autonomous analytical level capable of having goals of its own which it could pursue either through the agency of the state or by denying agency to the state. Or the international society could bypass the state and go directly to communities, groups or individuals.

When the international society would pursue the first strategy and decide to bestow rights of sovereignty and equality on the state agency (treating it as a moral entity),

[44] Bozeman, p.59.
[45] Bull, "Justice in International Relations," p. 27.
[46] ibid.

then it sought to marginalize groups, communities and individuals with a view to factor them into its calculations as of secondary importance. This posed the problem: How could the moral agency of the state be reconciled with group and community rights and individual freedom? The state-based theories of international ethics challenged the individual-centred liberal theories because they suggested that the liberal values of individual rights and freedom should be so designed as to be able to accommodate the moral agency of the state. Otherwise, a theory based on the rights of the state could end up in violating the rights of the individual. The idea of state-based morality, in any case, would allow the exercise of individual rights to be constrained by citizenship rights. Granting a pre-eminent moral position to the state would tend to limit individual rights to life, liberty and property. These theories limited the scope of transnational moral concerns emerging from non-governmental relations of individuals across international borders.

But when the international society would pursue the other strategy and decide to deny agency to the state (treating it as an immoral entity on account of its role in promoting conflict, violence and want) it would bestow rights on groups, communities and individuals as moral agents (exercising a measure of autonomy from the constraints arising from the economic and political structures defined by the state, hoping that such exercise of autonomy on their part would pick holes in these structures) and factor the state as of marginal importance. In terms of this strategy, the international society was taken not only as having goals but also moral purposes. This posed the problem: how should the international society relate to the state? Should the grant of state rights of sovereignty and equality be contingent on fulfilment of certain conditions laid down by the international society? Was it that sovereignty and equality

were no longer historically valid or normatively relevant categories? Did the state have an ontological reality? Or, was it a construction? Could the international society encourage and strengthen the agency of groups, communities and individuals vis-à-vis the state structure? Which was the reference point for discourses on these problems: democratic state or radical democracy?

These problems and the issues they raised should define the perspective for an examination of the state-based theory which is congenial to its basic tenets of non-intervention and self-determination. These tenets of the theory laid the foundation for the conduct of international relations which denied the individual access to remedial measures at the level of the international society. The international society closed the space for situating the individual within its moral principles and political goals. The individual was lowered in the hierarchy of moral entities and was transcended by the state that was taken to represent him or her in all political aspects.

The principle of non-intervention barred individuals from making an appeal beyond international borders when their rights were abused by their own state. Outside help, in terms of this principle, was tantamount to intervention and a violation of state sovereignty. The right to sovereign statehood was bestowed on a state by the international society to serve as a shield for the right of a people to have a government of their choice. The ruling elite came to use it as a shield for their authoritarian and tyrannical rule. They violated citizens' rights, stifled domestic criticism and sheltered themselves behind the right of sovereign statehood against foreign criticism and attack, treating all such criticism and attack as unwarranted intervention in their domestic jurisdiction. Sovereignty and non-intervention as state rights gave the ruling elite a long enough rope in relating themselves to their citizens in any way that suited their interests. This

contradicted the basic liberal principle that the state should be constrained from making inroads into the lives of its citizens.

The liberals such as Locke posited the right of rebellion so that the citizens would be justified in shaking off such a ruling elite.[47] What, if they were not? Could they appeal for outside help? Would not such a help transform the struggle into an international one? The principle of non-intervention therefore barred such help. Mill also objected to it.[48] Mill argued that people had no choice but to liberate themselves by their own effort because part of being human was making choices and struggling for a goal. The oppressed had no alternative to winning freedom through a successful rebellion. The struggle for freedom was an assertion of the will to be free. Paternalistic intervention by other states was not desirable. A rebellion to be successful must have the support of many people who have a keen desire to set up new institutions. Minorities, poor and illiterate people, not able to offer effective opposition, should be left to their fate. The dilemma of a democratic state was: How should minorities and marginalized groups be brought within the fold of the democratic process? Would empowerment strategies create necessary conditions for them to engage in personal development and capacity building? There was no clear answer to these questions. What then should be done? Dissenting voices among liberals asked: Should the state be so shielded behind the tenets of sovereignty and non-intervention?

Walzer permitted intervention in four extreme cases — to help national liberation, to stop massacre, enslavement, or mass expulsion.[49] The liberal view veered round to the view that there was a moral order beyond that of the state.

[47] Locke, *Second Treatise*, Chapter 19, para 222.
[48] Mill, "Non- Intervention," p.173.
[49] Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, p.90.

Even the right of non-intervention was subordinated to that higher order. Massacres, slavery and mass expulsions were violations of liberal ethics because they were of the nature of direct attacks on the rights of the individual – the rights to life, liberty and autonomy. Walzer, thus, acknowledged that the moral limits to international behaviour were determined with reference to the rights of the individual, not the rights of the state. This problematized the relationship between the state and the individual. Moral agency was vested in the individual, as also in the state. Could sovereignty and non-intervention be subordinated to international strategies for enforcing individual rights?

The second challenge of state-based liberal theory went beyond the problems arising from the subordination of human rights to state rights to problems arising from the fusion of morality with politics. In the context of such fusion, there was no means available to international society to measure the state behaviour and evaluate it. The criteria of state-based morality would be self-justifying. The destructions on a scale comparable to that of the holocaust could not be understood in terms of such self-justifying criteria. The citizen also would not be able to evaluate the performance of the state to which he or she belonged. Citizen dissent would get expressed on grounds of conscience alone.

Third, the state-based morality displaced the individual from the central position he or she occupied in liberal theory. The state right to self-determination dislodges the individual right to self-determination. For this reason, Walzer preferred to grant rights to political communities and urged outsiders to respect the way a group of people had chosen to live.[50] Liberal outsiders should not interfere with governments not organized on liberal and democratic principles.[51] Imposing

[50] Walzer, "The Moral Standing of States," p. 224.
[51] Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, p. 89.

a Western style of government on another community abused right of this other community to have a government of its choice.

Walzer's pluralism paved the way to further demo-cratization. If diversity were to be valued, then one should want to see it flourish within communities, not just between them. Diversity was an expression of differences in the human character and these differences found their maximum expression when each person could choose how he or she wanted to live. It was the individual who should have a right to self-determination, not the state or the community. The rights bestowed on the state by the international society — the rights to sovereignty, non-intervention, equality and self-determination — have revealed a tendency to undermine the basic liberal values of individual rights and personal freedom. The two sides of the liberal theory were in a problematic relationship with each other. The tenets of sovereignty and non-intervention shield the state against violations of human rights. The tenet of equality did not imply equality among groups of people. The right to self-determination infringed personal autonomy.

The liberal discourse especially in the present post-cold war phase sought to counter the challenges posed by the state-based liberal theory by asking the question: What was the purpose of the state? In answering this question, the liberal theories began with the individual but diverged over the nature and the role of the state.

Mill and Walzer granted rights to the state because, in their estimation, the state was, in some respects, a vehicle for expressing decisions at the level of the individual. State-based theories suggested that the state expressed the individual in international affairs and the theories based on the individual contended that the state represented the individual at the international level. If the state was

interpreted as an expression of the individual, then it took
the fulfilment of individual's goals to the international level.
If the individual wanted freedom and equality in
international affairs, then he or she could get these through
membership of a state.

The state as a subject of international law was entitled to
take part in international affairs as an actor. The grant of
rights to the state was indirectly a grant of rights to the
individual, insofar as the individual was not an actor at the
international level and could participate at that level only
through the membership of the state. In a sense this was an
effort to be one's own master, to achieve what Berlin called
positive liberty. If states were members of international
society, then participation at that level was possible only
through control of the state. This was how individual
autonomy and participation were reconciled. The state, as a
representative of the individual, derived its rights from the
individual and was, to that extent, not a depository for rights
held on behalf of the individual. If, on the other hand, the
state was taken as an expression of the individual, then it
was represented as an entity that was separate from the
individual. There was no direct transfer of rights between
them. This notion marked the society of states from that of
individuals and created two tiers in human society — one,
the mass of humanity and the other, the society of states.

The need was to find a common ground between these
divergent approaches of the liberal theory. Such a common
ground could serve as a sounding board for making an
assessment of state action in the exercise of the rights derived
from the tenets of sovereignty, equality, non-intervention
and self-determination. The common ground could be
either the good of the individual or the good of the state.
The good of the individual could also be the good of the
state, but the good of the state would not necessarily be the
good of the individual. The state must be able to convince

its citizens that its actions in exercise of its rights are designed to promote their good. Otherwise the action in the exercise of state rights could lead to violation of human rights and erosion of individual good. This implied that the state could not have objectives or goals which violated human rights and individual good. This further implied that the society of states was not morally separate from that of individuals. The human values such as life, liberty and personal freedom should always mediate state policies in international relations. For example, the state should not torture enemy soldiers for eliciting information from them. Similarly, the state should take necessary measures for protection of human rights of its citizens against attacks from cross-border terrorism. A theory of international ethics based on the individual in a world dominated by states could serve as the common ground between the divergent approaches of the liberal theory. The state could thus play a positive role in international relations. Hedley Bull commended such a description of the state's role. He said that "the existence of discreet states allowed order to be maintained at least in some areas, despite disturbances elsewhere." It was in this manner that the gap between the state-based liberal theory and the liberal theory based on the individual could be bridged.

Chapter 8

NATIONAL RIGHTS

INTRODUCTION

National rights are articulations of national goals and purposes after defeat in war or in the face of corruption and betrayal on the part of political leaders or otherwise, when the sentiment of national self-determination takes hold of the people and acquires precedence over every other political value. Such nationalists generally underlined culture and ethnicity in nationhood and in their definition of national interest. Ethnic nations generally aligned themselves with anti-democratic forces and mobilized power in opposition to other nations. Ethnic nationalists held that the nation idea was immortal even though it revealed itself, time and again, in new forms. The catastrophic consequences of policies motivated by ethnic nationalism generally prompted rethinking on the predicates of nation-ness. Attempts were then made to ground nation-ness on the rationalist humanitarianism of Immanuel Kant or the constitutional legalism of English Whiggery or political reformism in England. Decolonization movements and postcolonial visions were inspired by the ideal of nationhood predicated on modernization. Social mobilization is crucial to the process. Major clusters of old social, economic and psychological commitments are eroded or broken and people become available for new patterns of socialization.[1] The nation is thus constituted by consent, commitment and self-determination

[1] Deutsch, K.W., *Nationalism and Social Communication*, Cambridge, 1953.

of a people. This underlies subjectivism and volutarism in self-identification of a people as a nation. This was the basis of liberal and anti-colonial nationalism. The leaders of the new nations were attracted to it and supported democratic ideals of liberty, self-government and popular sovereignty while, at the same time, predicating the nation on *volksgeist* which revealed itself in songs, myths and legends and which provided people with a rich source of creativity, and reflected the organic unity of people, a community of intellect and spirit. But the realization of these ideals was driven by the need to approximate the attributes of prestigious nations in the international system.[2] This was in line with the Parsonian model of state-societies where the external orientation gave primacy to goal-attainment.[3] Nation-ness could as well be predicated on other orientations, the predicates which tore the nation apart, or invested value in what was otherwise a trivial matter, or gave an elevated sense of honour, but the rights, as rationally conceived in political philosophy, applied to all nations equally.[4]

[2] Such links between systemic and sub-systemic levels of politics is theoretically conceptualized by Singer, David, "The Level-of-Analysis Problem in International Relations," *World Politics*, XIV (1), October 1961, and Hanreider, Wolfran, "Actor Objectives and International Systems," *The Journal of Politics*, XXVII (1), February, 1965. Related to this is the tendency among states to compare performance levels with one another. As status maximizers, they fear that others may attain a higher ranking in an issue-area. See, Young, Oran, "International Regimes: A New Theory of Institutions," *World Politics*, 39, 1986.

[3] Goal-seeking behaviour departs from a moral system comprising rules of action or duties or rights or virtues or some combination of these, some kind of deontological system. This marked the faultline between Nehruvian and post-Nehruvian behaviour patterns.

[4] Deutch, K.W., *Nationalism and Its Alternatives*, New York, 1969.

THE ENLIGHTENMENT TRADITION AND
THE CONTRACTUAL NATION

The term 'nation' has been defined in two ways: contractual and cultural.[5] The contractual nation embodied the ideas of democratic self-government. It implied a conception of the nation as a group of people who together formed a government. According to Kedourie, it was the Whig theory of the nation, as it was rooted in the ideals of democratic government enunciated during the English Civil War and later by the American Revolution. The idea of a contractual nation owed much to the political theory of John Locke. It embodied the political will of the individual. Individuals decided to form government to protect right to life and property. For this reason, sovereignty resided with these individuals and the legitimacy of the state depended on its representation of their wills. It was in this sense that the conception of the contractual nation corresponded to Lockean liberalism. But the issue of representation became problematic in the thought of subsequent political philosophers.

GROUP WILL AND SELF-DETERMINATION

The intellectual foundations of a cultural nation lay in the thought of Rousseau and Kant. This thought was consistent with liberal ideals and so the concept of cultural nation had links with liberalism and was consistent with it. This could be elaborated with reference to Rousseau's idea of the general will and Kant's concept of self-determination. In *Social Contract*, Rousseau distinguished between the will of

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[5] Kedourie calls them the Whig and Continental theories of nationality. See, Elie Kedourie, *Nationalism*, London, 1979, pp. 13-14. Hinsley uses the terms 'voluntaristic / administrative' and 'cultural.' See, F.H. Hinsley, *Nationalism and the International System*, London, 1973, p. 43.

all, which was merely a summation of individual wills, and the general will, which expressed the good of the community. He said that the individual could be forced to be free by making him or her submit to the tenets of this general will. If the government represented only a sum of individual wills then it was nothing more than a mirror of the majority will. But Rousseau was aware that the majority could be factually and morally wrong. Modern European history bore this out. The majorities in certain European states believed in racial superiority (a belief which was both factually and morally incorrect) and backed the policies of their respective governments to further imperialism, fascism and anti-semitism.

From the perspective of liberal ideals, there was a need to build defences against governance based on the will of the majority. Rousseau argued that there was a collective will above the momentary preferences of the majority. Such separation of collective will from the will of the majority could be more clearly seen by looking at two twentieth century examples from recent American history: the extension of franchise to women and the civil rights legislation of the fifties and sixties. These examples clearly showed that these actions brought the United States closer to the liberal ideal of a democratic polity, even though large segments of the population, constituting a majority in some places, disapproved of them. It was clear that a more inclusionary polity should take precedence over majority preferences for excluding sections of the population from democratic participation. This was so because the real will of the people was different from their expressed views. The real will would often lie dormant till it was realized. Once an idea or ideology was able to tap and mobilize this dormant and latent general will, it emerged as leader. Cultural nationalists and Marxists were able to do this. Kant's conception of self-determination was another factor in the development of

cultural nationalism. To be free, according to Kant, the individual must obey the moral values emanating from his or her soul. The only moral limits were those that one imposed on oneself.[6] Hence, the concept of national self-determination was woven with two ideas: the idea that a group could have a collective will, and the idea that freedom (self-determination) consisted in choosing to follow one's own moral code against which all external forces were irrelevant.

FRENCH REVOLUTION AND THE IDEA OF CULTURAL NATION

The question now was, how were Rousseau's general will (as opposed to the will of all) and Kant's self-determination applied to the concept of cultural nation? For understanding this link, it was necessary to consider three historical events. The partition of Poland in the 1770s, the French Revolution, and the invasion of Germanic states during the Napoleonic wars. Lord Acton regarded the partition of Poland and the revolution in France as the two events that led to the rise of modern nationalism. Prussia, Russia and Austria divided Poland among themselves, so that during the years 1772-95, Poland disappeared from the political map of the world. The partition was legitimated on the ground that the Polish crown was elective and not hereditary, and so it was outside the family of European hereditary monarchies.[7] International borders were declared unjust because the regime was not a monarchy and claims over its territory were advanced which eventually led to the partition of the country. The people had no voice in deciding the future of their country. Such were the norms those days.[8]

[6] Kedourie, p.30.
[7] Lord Acton, "Nationality," John Neville Figgis and Reginald Vere Laurence, eds., *The History of Freedom and Other Essays*, London, 1907, p. 274.
[8] Ibid., p. 276.

The partition of Poland was an event of great historic importance but its political impact was overshadowed by the French Revolution, an event of still greater historic importance. The Jacobins overthrew the French monarchy in the name of a France conceived separately from its monarch. The Revolution evoked the spirit of a contractual nation when it called upon the people to rise against the monarchy and reform the political system. Once in power, the revolutionary government transformed the former subjects into citizens, committed to create and promote a cohesive nation. The people of France had formed themselves into a nation not only for the limited purpose of overthrowing the monarchy but also for purposes of changing and transforming the society for self-government. It was in this sense that the French Revolution foregrounded the nation, rather than the individual, as the dynamic of socio-political change. This was the most powerful political impact of the Revolution.[9] This could be elaborated with reference to the actions and policies of the revolutionary government. The Jacobins used a blend of cultural and political factors to create a nation.[10]

They made French the official language throughout the country, to the detriment of regional and local dialects. The ability to speak and write in the national language became a prerequisite for participation in national political life. A compulsory, universal and state-supported elementary education stressed the teaching of civics. Already, in this early phase, nationalism was answering questions relating to the future of the new state. How would this France meet threats from its enemies? The answer was that the threats

[9] Ibid., p. 276. And, George G. Brenkert, *Marx's Ethics of Freedom*, London, 1983, p. 89.
[10] Carlton J.H. Hayes, "The Rise of Nationalism," in *Essays on Nationalism*, New York, 1926, pp. 47-48.

would be met not by paying huge sums to a disinterested and mercenary army and public service people, but by drawing on the strength of its citizens as a whole. For this it was necessary to weld them into a nation.

This was what the revolutionary government successfully accomplished. The strength of the French nation was demonstrated by the *levee en masse*.[11] They were not mercenaries. They were draftees and volunteers. They were harnessed to the defence of the country against assaults of anti-revolutionary enemies. When, under Napoleon's banner, France invaded its neighbours, it could claim to be a revolutionary people's army freeing other people from tyranny. Even though the rulers of these states opposed this army as an invading army, the subjects, who nurtured a desire for a republican revolution, welcomed it as the herald of a new political order, and, as a consequence, new territories were added to France. Avignon voted to become French in 1791. Savoy and Nice followed suit in their plebiscites in 1792 and 1793 respectively.[12]

The French Revolution thus demonstrated an effective use of nationalism in the construction of a modern society. The church and the monarchy lost legitimacy and ceased to be effective instruments for shaping society. The Enlightenment and the French Revolution created

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[11] The French *levée en masse* of 1793, which replaced former theories and regulations concerning the obligation of military service with a universal concept more encompassing in its moral claims than any that had prevailed under the Old Regime. The *levée en masse* has accordingly gone down in history as a spontaneous, free expression of the French people's ideals and enthusiasm. It also became a crucial source for one of the most powerful organizing myths of modern politics: that compulsory mass social mobilizations merely express, and give effective form to, the wishes or higher values of society and its members.

[12] Hayes, op. cit., p. 276.

discontinuities with the past, as nationalism emerged as a new focus of loyalty for binding a people to the state. Now it was the state not the church that organized institutions for imparting education and civic training. Instead of a shared religion, it was a shared culture that defined a nation.[13] Language was the key constitutive element of education and culture and so it came to be regarded as the defining element in cultural nationalism.

HERDER AND FICHTE

The intellectuals in Germany reacted sharply to the French Revolution, its ideas and practices, including its export to other parts of the world. This reaction was situated within the framework of the contemporary German romanticism characterized by nostalgic yearning for lost folk heritage. It was at the root of German political thought on cultural nationalism. The German romanticism had two sides to it: first, a rejection of the French Revolution and endorsement of classicism, liberalism, and individualism;[14] and second, a search for and celebration of what was uniquely German. The movement of French armies into territories neighbouring France, also brought about change in attitudes towards French civic nationalism. This change was clearly reflected in the thought of Herder and Fichte. Herder did not live long after the French Revolution (he died in 1803). He was, therefore, not a witness to the greater excesses of the French empire. His approach to nationalism was, as a consequence, soft and, in a way, apolitical. His nationalism was a simple celebration of cultural heritage and not a differentiated ideological response to political events.[15]

[13] Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, Oxford, 1983, p.142.
[14] K.R. Minogue, *Nationalism*, London, 1967, p. 73.
[15] Isaiah Berlin, *Vico and Herder: Two Studies in the History of Ideas*, London, 1976, p. 157.

Fichte, on the other hand, was politically venomous in his responses. For him, the proximity of the French troops to Germany was not an issue that could be considered with detachment. It was to be addressed frontally and with a certain amount of passion.[16]

Herder described the nation as an ethnic and cultural entity based on common language. Maximum personal expression was possible within the framework of a nation. The people who spoke the same language, and who shared ideas and cultural mores held the key to understanding the character of the nation they together constituted. Herder said:

Every language bears the stamp of the mind and character of a national group. (sic) The genius of a nationality is nowhere more displayed than in the physiognomy of its speech.[17]

Elaborating this, he added:

(N)ation has no idea for which its language has no word: the liveliest imagination remains an obscure feeling till the mind finds character for it.[18]

For Herder, every language group whether it was a nation, people or a *volk*, was a distinct cultural entity representing historical values that should be allowed to flourish.[19] History narrated the contributions made by different nations through realization of their respective national genius. Language played a role in this by enhancing social cohesion and revealing in human affairs the role of both reason and divinity. Herder said:

Speech alone has rendered man human, by setting bonds to the vast

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[16] "Introduction" in J.G. Fichte, *Addresses to the German Nation*, (ed. R.F. Jones and G. H. Turnbull), Chicago, 1922, p. 6.
[17] Herder in *Ergang*, p. 105.
[18] Herder in *Outlines*, p. 420.
[19] Ergang, p. 252.

flood of his passions, and giving them rational memories by means of words.[20]

Different cultures expressed this divine spark differently. In Herder's view language was the most important determinant of the national identity. Unlike religion, language was something shared by the people of the Germanic States in the Holy Roman Empire (dissolved by Napoleon in 1806, three years after Herder's death) and which separated them from the French.

Herder's ideas had profound political effects. Modern nationalists accepted the principle that the boundaries of language groups and national groups should coincide. The nation was for them the culmination of political evolution as it allowed maximum possible personal expression and freedom to the individual through social bonds and relationships and not through exercise of rights. Like Hegel, he proceeded on the premise that society was a web of such bonds and relationships and the individual became truly human only by fulfilling his or her social role. He went to the extent of saying that "in a certain sense (sic) every human perfection is national."[22] It was only in a group that individual talents emerged and grew. Human ideals could not be achieved when each individual cultivated his or her own garden. A life dedicated to the community as a whole was noble.

Nations, though performing important social roles, were not eternal entities.[23] The decay or death of a nation did

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[20] Herder, *Outlines,* p. 420.

[21] Herder, *Treatise on the Origin of Language,* London, 1827, p. 118.

[22] Robert Reinhold Ergang, *Herder and the Foundations of German Nationalism,* New York, 1931, p. 84.

[23] Herder likened a nation to an organism that lives, grows and dies. Cf.: "Nations exist in the infancy, youth, manhood, and old age of the human species; and how many have been engulfed upon others, or arisen from their ashes." *Outlines,* p. 429.

not necessarily invalidate the values or ideas they represented and embodied. The new nations might represent those values better. For example, the demise of the Athenian democracy did not imply the end of the democratic idea. On the contrary, modern democracies represented the idea of democracy more truly as their underlying societies were not based on the institution of slavery. The ideals of a dead nation could be taken to a higher level by the emergent nation. Similarly a nation in the course of its life was capable of supporting different political forms. The French, at one time, were an *avatar* of the *ancient regime*; at another time they were the vanguard of revolutionary Europe. It was the same nation that supported the two forms of political organization. Linguistically, culturally and ethnically, it was the same nation, though the two historical periods represented two different political forms. The post-revolutionary France championed the rights of man and a version of popular sovereignty, and as such broadened the scope of European political debate. The Revolution, however, did not change the French taste for food and fashion, or, for that matter, the French preference for strong leadership.

The continuity of the French nation into the post-Revolutionary France was a proposition not acceptable to those who took the contractual position on the definition of a nation. The cultural nationalists would accept the continuity proposition while the contractual nationalists would not. Cultural nationalists would regard post-Revolutionary France as the same nation as the *ancient regime* France, but muted to embody new values. Philosophical debates apart, it was not difficult to see that it was possible for a people to continue to cherish their traditional cultural habits even when passing through fundamental political change. The philosophical debates on the concept of nationhood were positioned on two different levels: citizen

mores and constitutional guidelines. The conception of cultural nation, at one level, emphasized values and norms considered necessary for a satisfying and meaningful life for individuals and for community cohesion and solidarity. At another level, it linked it with nationalism and national self-determination, where the issues of culture got confused with criteria of governance, and sometimes with the spoils of political power. This amounted to appropriation of culture into power politics.

Fichte made the connection between power and culture central to his theory of national self-determination. He said that a cultural nation had a right to have its own state. Like Herder, he based his definition of the nation on language. But he went beyond the views of his predecessor by positing a historical mission for Germany, unlike other European nations. For him the German state was a vehicle for realizing German ambitions. While his *Addresses to the German Nation* were, no doubt, polemical lectures and delivered in the heat of anger against the French invasion, their effect on his theory of national self-determination was great. In his Tenth Address, he described a language group as a nation and declared that, to preserve its national identity, it must be self-governing. He said:

Just as it is true, beyond doubt, that wherever a separate language is found, there a separate nation exists, which has the right to take independent charge of its affairs and to govern itself.[24]

Fichte went on to endorse the corollary that linguistic identity could not be preserved without political independence. The nation, according to him, had claims over the individual that went well beyond those of Herder's. Whereas Herder considered the nation to be a step between the totality of humanity and the individual, Fichte regarded an individual's

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[24] *Addresses to the German Nation,* para 191, p. 215.

autonomy as only an "expression of the nation's."[25] The spiritual life of the individual emanated from the nation for which he or she should be willing to die. Fichte said:

In order to save his nation he must be ready even to die that it it may live and that he may live in it the only life for which he has ever wished.[26]

Fichte's conception of autonomy differed markedly from that in the liberal tradition. One emphasized the autonomy of the nation, while the other emphasized that of the individual. German nationalists used nationalism to transcend liberal ideals that they associated with the French Revolution. This approach was paralleled by that of the Italian nationalist, Giuseppe Mazzini who intended the national movement to be an expression of liberal values.

THE LIBERAL THEORY AND THE NATION: MAZZINI

In Mazzini, there was a combination of universal divine law, republican liberalism and fervent nationalism. His ideas perched on the intersection of the various ideologies of the mid-nineteenth century. So he situated the concept of the nation in a wider context. Nationhood for him was the articulation of a political goal of a more cohesive society in a more just world. Like Vattel, he was an eloquent synthesizer of the ideas of his age. Again, like Vattel, he persuaded many liberal theorists that there could be an entity other than the individual (that is, the nation) as an expression of liberal values. For Mazzini, the nation embodied the principles of autonomy, self-governance, and social cohesion.

Mazzini was a prototypical nationalist: a committed theorist who tried to put his ideas into practice. Like so many of his successors, he dedicated his life to the cause of his nation.

[25] Anthony D. Smith, *Theories of Nationalism*, London, 1971, p. 17.
[26] *Addresses*, Sixth Lecture, para 115, p. 136.

His vision was to arouse the spirit of the people to inspire them to liberate themselves from their oppressors. He was the founder of Young Italy in 1831 and the leader of the Triumvirate governing the short-lived Roman republic in 1849. To realize his goal of setting up an Italian republic, he also did not hold himself back from instigating countless political intrigues, while, at the same time, presenting himself as a moral exemplar to uplift the morale of the masses. In his ideology, he tried to underline the historical and theoretical connection between nationalism, socialism and liberalism. Liberals liked him because of his commitment to individual autonomy and self-expression, to republican government, and to duties to humanity at large. Socialists approved of him for his commitment to equality. A self-governing nation was for him a necessary condition for achieving liberty, equality and republicanism. He called upon Italians to rise up,

with one spontaneous impulse, in the name of the Duty and Right inherent in a people, to constitute itself into a Nation of free and equal brothers and demand that rank, which by right, belongs to it among the nations already formed.[27]

Mazzini tried to synthesize the linguistic component of nationhood (central to the conception of cultural nation) with the contractual conception of nationhood. He urged the Italians to identify the territorial expanse of their language and form a republican state on it. He drew an arc from the Mediterranean to the Alps to the Adriatic and said:

(A)s far within this frontier your language is spoken and understood; beyond this you have no rights.[28]

Nationality as a cultural category was significant. A person

[27] Mazzini, "To the Italians," p. 235.
[28] Mazzini, "Duties to Country," in "The Duties of Man," in *The Duties of Man and Other Essays*, London, 1907, p. 57.

developed within the framework of norms and social constraints of a nationality. It was nationality that shaped character and personality. Mazzini was eager to embed personhood in nationality. He said:

Nationality, which is the conscience of the peoples, which assigns to them their share of work in the association, their office in humanity and hence, constitutes their mission on earth, their individuality.[29]

Based on language and culture, a nation for Mazzini should stress its duties, not rights. He said that rights came from duties. In his note "To the Italian Working Class," Mazzini said:

(E)very *right* you have springs from a *duty* fulfilled.[30] (emphasis in the original)

The rights theory was divisive as it focused only on liberty.[31] Clamouring for rights only produced shallow materialism and a shallow society. Mazzini criticized Berlin's concept of negative liberty. He said:

For those constrained to battle with hunger, what was liberty but an illusion and a bitter irony?[32]

Mazzini proposed a society based on duty that by its very nature would bind people together through mutual obligations. He said:

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[29] Mazzini, "Faith and the Future," p. 176.

[30] Mazzini, "To the Italian Working Class," in *The Duties of Man and Other Essays*, p. 3.

[31] Cf.: "The triumph of *individualism* can only engender a revolution for Protestantism and liberty. (sic) The Republic, as I at least understand it, means association of which liberty is only an element." Mazzini in "Faith and the Future," p. 146. Leo Moulin also said, "In the 1830s and 1840s, the word individualism had a negative connotation suggesting selfishness," in his "On the Evolution and Meaning of Individualism," in *International Social Science Bulletin*, Paris, UNESCO, Vol. VII, 1955, p. 181.

[32] Mazzini, "The Duties of Man," p. 10.

Right is the faith of the individual. Duty is common, collective faith. Right can only organize resistance; destroy, not build. Duty builds up and associates; it springs from a general law, whereas Right has its origin only in individual will.[33]

Duty bound the nation to humanity. Mazzini never stopped emphasizing that the people should obey the divine law. The entire humanity was one unto that law. This law was the source of duties to humanity. He said:

The origin of your duties is in God. The definition of your duties is found in His law. The progressive discovery of and the application of His law is the task of humanity.[34]

Mazzini thus spoke the language of natural law, laced with religious belief and idiom. He referred to the spark of divinity in each individual to underline the equality of all as parts in a larger whole. This defined his concept of nationalism and the tone and temper of his appeal to his countrymen,

Your first Duties — first, at least in importance — are, as I have told you, to humanity. You are *men* before you are *citizens* or *fathers* (sic). If, wherever one of your fellowmen groans, wherever the dignity of human nature is violated by falsehood or tyranny, you are not prompt (sic) or do not feel yourself called, being able to fight for the purpose of relieving the deceived or oppressed you disobey your law of life or do not comprehend the religion which will bless the future.[35] (Emphasis in the original)

This combination of republicanism with duty towards humanity in the name of God gave his republican ideology the colour of a religious crusade.

Now, the republican party is not a political party; it is an, essentially, religious party. It has its faith, its doctrine, its martyrs from Spartacus

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[33] Mazzini, "Faith and the Future," p. 169.
[34] Mazzini, *The Duties of Man and Other Essays*, p. 21.
[35] Mazzini, *The Duties of Man and Other Essays*, p. 51.

onwards; and it must have doctrine inviolable, authority infallible, the martyr's spirit and call to self-sacrifice.[36]

The result was that participation in the political process aimed at national unity and establishment of a republican government in Italy, was nothing short of fulfilling one's duty towards both God and humanity. Such implication of God with republicanism was also strategically expedient. Because, when confronted with the intransigence of the temporal authority, the crusading reformer could appeal to the higher authority and claim divine sanction for extreme measures. Mazzini said:

(W)e fell as a political party: we must rise again as a religious party.[37]

If republican reform was a religious goal, then the republicans, by their actions, should be regarded as enacting a divine plan. Mazzini tried to explain this by establishing a link between the individual and humanity. The nation was the link. The individual had no alternative other than to attend to his or her own goals and needs. He looked at humanity as something distant. The nation bridged this distance. By being loyal to the nation the individual fulfilled his or her duties to humanity.[38] The nation arose from the spirit of the people and showed the way they should do their duties. This gave them a place in the realization of the divine ideal. The nation represented the collective faith of a people in this ideal. For Mazzini, the concept of duty foreclosed any possibility of conflict between the individual and the nation. According to him, all human activity revolved around obligations to promote social welfare as embodied in the concept of the nation. Till such time as the nation emerged in Italy there could be neither liberty nor welfare. The nation

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[36] "Faith in the Future," ibid., p. 150.
[37] "Faith and the Future," p. 174.
[38] Bolton King, *The Life of Mazzini*, London, 1912, p. 296.

was the culmination of all theories of rights and duties, liberty and equality.

Mazzini tried to fuse Herder's concept of a cultural nation with Fichte's dictum that every cultural nation should have a state of its own for social solidarity and cultural regeneration.

The nation, for him, was an embodiment of all the values of social reform. The people were the only true revolutionary force,[39] not the class. Like other nineteenth century reformers, he recognized that the new working class had its specific needs,[40] but he distanced himself from Marxists and socialists by deriding class conflict as "social crime."[41] He did not justify the then existing economic system of Italy. He only relied on moral force and education, not on property redistribution through violence, to bring about change and economic justice. It was necessary to realize social justice without disturbing social unity.

He held up the nation to resolve class conflict on the one hand, and fight against denial of freedom on the other. He relied on the idea of the contractual nation in which the individual found freedom to choose his or her own government, while, at the same time, praising the notion of the cultural nation in which every individual was equal to all others, irrespective of his or her social class, equal as a repository of national values. These national values gave best expression to the aspirations of the oppressed people. For him, therefore, the nation enabled the individual to do his or her duties towards humanity, act as an agent of liberty and equality. These basic principles of republicanism were consistent with the basic principle of the cultural nation that the nation was divinely ordained and a part of God's law for

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[39] Mazzini, "Faith and the Future," p. 186.
[40] Geetano Salvemini, *Mazzini*, London, 1956, p. 162.
[41] Ibid., p. 171.

humanity. It was in this sense that Mazzini thought that republicanism and nationalism were mutually consistent, and that nationalism was a champion of liberalism.

NATIONAL RIGHTS AND THE INDIVIDUAL

In Mazzini's ideas, thus, the nation was the most important political actor, both domestically and internationally. It was the moral standard. It was the point of reference while making moral choices. This attached pre-eminence to duties towards the nation. For this reason, national rights took precedence over the rights of other actors such as the individual and the state. The individual found self-expression in the nation. In contemporary times, this was also the view of Michael Walzer, who considered a historical community to be a part of self-expression. As regards the fit between a political community and its government, Walzer argued the government of a country was bound up with its history and culture. If the liberals valued diversity and pluralism, then they must accept that the others might not choose a Western style of government. Self-expression and self-governance might mean upholding certain cultural values and not necessarily liberal government. Outsiders must respect this.[42] If there were no fit, the people would rebel.[43] The government and the nation must fit together. For Walzer, a political community was a cultural nation, though not necessarily based on a common language. The task of setting up a legitimate state was not limited to legislating the rights of the individual. The task was to reconcile these rights with the community's unique way of doing things. Cultural bonds did have a role in politics because these ties were a part of self-expression. The nation served as a platform on which the people could perform cultural rituals that gave meaning

[42] Michael Walzer, "The Moral Standing of States," p. 224.
[43] Ibid., p. 222.

to their lives. National fulfilment was a way to achieve personal fulfilment. The nation regulated such ritualized behaviour to reconcile it with common interests and the rights of the individual. It was, in this sense, that the individual was incomplete without participation in a cultural nation.

For Mazzini, such participation was the way to contribute to the welfare of humanity as a whole. Hence, the Italians, by organizing themselves into a state of their own, would play a role in the European international society.[44] Without achieving national self-determination, the Italians would be less than complete. Their talents would have no outlet and there would be no way open to them to discharge their duties towards humanity. Nor would they have any voice in governance. Nor would they be free as individuals. National self-determination was necessary for personal freedom.[45] These ideas were rediscovered during the postcolonial period in the twentieth century, and found expression in the United Nations Declaration on Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples because this Declaration treated national rights as integral to human rights. Denial of national rights to a state, or control of its natural resources was an affront to the rights of each person to self-government. If the people were personally incomplete and also above all, politically inaudible, without a nation, then they certainly would not have any standing in the international society. This definitely made the nation more

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[44] Mazzini exhorted his countrymen to declare to the world "the body of religious, moral, and political principles in which the Italian people believe at the present day, of the common ideal to which it is striving, of the special mission that distinguishes it from other people, and to which it intends to consecrate itself for its own benefit and for the benefit of Humanity." "To the Italians," in *The Duties of Man and Other Essays,* pp. 235-236.

[45] Cf.: "The subjection of peoples to alien subjugation, domination and exploitation constitutes a denial of fundamental human rights." Brownlie, 1985, p. 300.

important than the individual in the life of a people. If national and individual rights conflicted, those of the nation would have moral priority. All the people living within a state must conform to the values of the underlying nation. Those not conforming to them would not be a part of it. Mazzini spoke of:

(T)he *active* belief in one God, in one Law, in one End – as the only means possessed by us to *realize* Truth.[46]

NATIONAL SELF-DETERMINATION

In the process of self-determination, every nation would end up in having a state of its own so that the boundaries of the nation and the state became co-terminus. In terms of this principle, the legitimacy of the state rested on its acting as the political arm of the nation. When more than one nation lived within the territorial boundaries of a state then any one of the nations could wage a struggle for self-determination. A multinational state was akin to an empire and so by definition illegitimate and a rebellion against it by a dissatisfied nation was justified. This approach had a perfect fit with Mazzini's political goal of carving out Italian and Slavic states from his contemporary Austrian Empire. Mazzini claimed that the formation of these states should not be stopped by the forces which derived their legitimacy from a hereditary monarch. The legitimacy of these newly formed states derived from the nations which they respectively represented. When formed, these states would be legitimate international actors. The issues raised by Mazzini were focal points of politics and international relations in the twentieth century. The meaning and content of these issues evolved through contest with structures of power in different regional contexts. If every nation should have a state of its

[46] Mazzini, "Faith and the Future," p. 177.

own, then national self-determination should include the right to territorial integrity and also a right to natural resources and wealth within the boundaries of the state.[47] What still remained unsettled was the issue between peoplehood, nationhood and statehood. How were the three entities related to one another? Which of them was the custodian of national rights?[48] How should the nation be grounded?

This was now a subject of intense political conflict. Who was a member of the international society, the people or the state? Were the people represented by the nation? Who owned the natural resources, the state or the nation? What about the rights of the local people over local resources? Or, what about the rights of the local community that had been using these resources for over several generations? Which of these entities enjoyed legal, political or moral priority in politics and international relations?

[47] The Charter of the United Nations was proclaimed in the name of the "People of the United Nations"and called for respect for "self-determination of peoples." (Article I(2). The 1960 Resolution of the UN General Assembly, Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Peoples (Resolution 1514– XV, December 14, 1960) said, "Convinced that all people have an in alienable right to complete freedom, the exercise of their sovereignty and the integrity of their national territory, solemnly proclaims the necessity of bringing to a speedy and unconditional end, colonialism in all its forms and manifestations." Similarly, the 1962 General Assembly Resolution on Permanent Sovereignty over Natural Resources spoke of "free and beneficial exercise of the sovereignty of peoples and nations over their natural resources must be furthered by the mutual respect of states based on their sovereign equality." The violations thereof hinder the development of international cooperation and the maintenance of peace.
[48] The problematic nature of the relationship among peoplehood, nationhood and statehood was emphasized by me in my Introduction to the National Seminar on *Creativity and the State in Contemporary India*, organized by the Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Shimla, at India International Centre, New Delhi, on April 25-26, 2004.

Considerations of international ethics would dictate that, when state rights and national rights conflicted, the national rights took precedence. If a group of people calling themselves a nation decided to break away from a state to form their own state, would they have a moral right to violate the territorial integrity of the state of which they were a part? In contemporary world affairs, it was evident that the formation of a new state would mean the break-up of an existing one. New states emerged in Europe when the Austrian Empire broke up. The break-up of empire-states got an impetus with the success of the decolonization process. The break-up of the former Soviet Union was justified in this way. That, therefore, national rights preempted state rights and so no state had a moral right to obstruct the process of national self-determination, or defend itself with forcible action. The UN General Assembly said:

The establishment of a sovereign and independent state, the free association or integration with an independent state, or emergence into any other political status, freely determined by a people, constitute modes of implementing the right of self-determination by that people. Every state has the duty to refrain from any forcible action which deprives peoples referred to above, in the elaboration of the present principle of their right to self-determination and freedom and independence. In their actions against, and resistance to, such forcible action in pursuit of the exercise of their right of self-determination, such peoples are entitled to seek and receive support in accordance with the principles of the Charter.[49]

[49] UN General Assembly, "Declaration on Principles of International Law Concerning Friendly Relations and Cooperation Among States,"reprinted in Ian Brownlie, ed., *Basic Documents in International Law*, Third Ed., Oxford, 1985, p. 42. It was claimed that the Declaration did not give the right to national self-determination moral priority over state right to maintain territorial integrity. Because the Declaration also said that "Every state shall refrain from any action aimed at the partial or total disruption of the national unity (sic) of any other state." Ibid., p. 43.

WARS OF NATIONAL LIBERATION

An international ethics based on national rights would deem the pursuit of national interest in international relations justified, even through resort to war. It would also endorse wars of national liberation seeking independent statehood for cultural preservation and expression. Foreign rule was a clear case of national suppression. Modern history was full of instances when the leaders of such suppressed nations took to agitations, even violent ones, to gain national independence. For this reason, the anti-colonial wars were treated as just wars, and legitimacy was given to irredentist movements.

The centrality of the nation to international ethics was further evident from the fact that the struggle for national rights was treated as advancing democracy. In Mazzini, such a struggle was capped with republican ideology. At the Paris Peace Conference after the First World War, President Woodrow Wilson of the United States, equated national self-determination with popular sovereignty.[50] The liberal approach to peace continued to articulate its anti-statism by demanding autonomy and empowerment of identity groups, including nationalities. They justified intervention on behalf of such groups. If state intervention would not lead to such realization of autonomy and empowerment, then outside intervention was justified. Michael Walzer lent his support to the cause of such intervention. The Declaration on Principles of International Law Concerning Friendly Relations and Cooperation Among States also allowed national groups to "seek and receive support." In situations of civil unrest in one state leading to inter-community violence, outside states often got involved into it by the desire to help the beleaguered communities.

[50] Alfred Cobban, *The Nation-State and National Self-Determination*, London, 1969, pp. 63-64.

This normative framework held out the danger of becoming a destabilizing force especially in situations when the ground reality was complex. National and ethnic groups and communities were intermingled. Drawing international borders along national lines was not possible. Some part of one or another group would always be on the wrong side of the border and, serve as a ready excuse for an expansionist state to disrupt international peace. It was so with Hitler. The right of national self-determination could not be harnessed to aggressive policies for redrawing international borders. The focus must be on autonomy and self-development. The nation as a moral actor must focus on the development of its members. National rights must jettison much of their historical baggage.

CHALLENGES TO LIBERAL THEORY

Herder, Fichte and Mazzini were the thinkers who defined the intellectual roots of the concept of a cultural nation. They believed that the nation was the highest expression of the person. Cultural and national ties found their highest expression in the personality of the person – in the behavioural and other qualities of the person. For liberals, the role of these ties in politics was problematic. The liberals were wary of culture as represented by tradition. Yet many liberals not only tolerated but actually practised the customs and ways of their culture in a manner as to demonstrate their unity and identity. It was so in both traditional societies and in modern ones.[51] This was not a statement of their views on the role of such ties as an expression of cultural identity in politics. The issue whether or not the nation was

[51] The people took pride in their national heritage. This was so in modern societies too. Take the case of Britain. The Welsh children continued to learn Welsh. Also, the Irish immigrants in the United States continued to observe St. Patrick's Day.

an expression of the individual was at the core of nationalism's challenge to liberal thinking. The liberal dilemma came out clearly in the differences between J.S. Mill and Lord Acton on the question of nationality. These two nineteenth century liberal thinkers held opposing views on the subject. Mill said:

Where the sentiment of nationality exists in force, there is a *prima facie* case for uniting all the members of the nationality under the same government and a government to themselves apart. This is merely saying that the question of government ought to be decided by the governed.[52]

The principle of nationality, according to Mill, was an extension of the right of self-government. He said that, when many nationalities existed within a single state, it was difficult to maintain freedom. The members of different national groups would lack the necessary fellow feeling to make democracy a success. They would not be able to agree on the required political values to sustain free institutions. He said:

Free institutions are next to impossible in a country made up of different nationalities. Among a people without fellow feeling, especially if they read and speak different languages, the united public opinion, necessary to the working of representative government, cannot exist.[53]

Lord Acton, on the other hand, was sceptical of nationalism. He thought that in certain situations it could be an oppressive force and inconsistent with liberal values. He *felt that a national group, once in power, would exclude all others and set*

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[52] J. S. Mill, "Of Nationality as Connected with Representative Government," in J.S. Mill, *Utilitarianism, Liberty, Representative Government*, London, 1954, pp. 360-361.

[53] J.S. Mill, "On Nationality, as Connected with Representative Government," in J.S. Mill, *Three Essays: On Liberty, Representative Government, The Subjugation of Women*, London, 1975, p. 382.

"limits to the exercise of popular will and substitute for it a higher principle."[54] He took a pluralist stance and said that the existence of more than one national group within a state, rather than hindering freedom, would promote it. Acton said:

The co-existence of several nations under the same state is a test, as well as the best security of its freedom. It is also one of the chief instruments of civilization, and, as such, of natural and providential order and is indicative of greater advancement of national unity which is the ideal of modern liberalism.[55]

The different perceptions of Mill and Acton underline the dilemma of relating individualism to nationalism. Mill believed that nationalism and feelings of brotherhood would enhance individual rights. Acton thought that it would undermine them. Was Mill thinking of a liberal notion of society as composed of individuals in which shared values and fellow feeling, as the defining criteria of nationhood, arose from being part of the same polity? Probably it was so.

Acton, on the other hand, was thinking of a society in which shared values and fellow feeling arose from common history, culture and tradition. If these were taken as the defining criteria of nationhood, then the alignment of state boundaries with those of the nation would mean that those who were not part of the nation would be under constraint and enjoy few choices. Their freedom of personal expression would be limited and they might feel compelled to conform. This might equally be true of those who formed part of the nation. Those who were part of it and those who were not, lacked positive freedom to determine their destiny. The ideal of individual freedom expressed as 'I, me, myself' was

[54] Lord Acton, *The History of Freedom and Other Essays*, London, 1907, p. 290.
[55] Ibid., p. 299.

downgraded and, in any case, become unattainable. When asking, who am I? one would be constrained to answer it in terms of nationality, because the principle of national self-determination implied that a person was a part of the nation and was defined by the nation. In national self-determination the self was the nation and not the individual. It was likely that national fulfilment became synonymous with individual fulfilment. Such thinking linked nation-based theory to state theory.

State legitimacy rested not on observance of democratic procedures and respect for individual rights, but on we-they kind of affinity with the political elite: Rule by foreigners was *prima facie* illegitimate, while the rule by nations was *prima facie* legitimate. Oppression somehow became more tolerable when there was ethnic affinity with the rulers.[56] If a ruler belonging to a different ethnic group was seen as an outsider (more or less equivalent to a foreigner), then the aggrieved ethnic group would desire either a separate state for itself or maximum possible autonomy within the same state.[57] This complicated the relationship between territorial integrity and ethnic autonomy, and between nationalism and good governance. There was always a possibility that rule by outsiders or foreigners had greater correspondence with the criteria of good governance than rule by insiders. In such an eventuality how would nationals judge nationalism?

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[56] A wag might even say that an Idi Amin or Pol Pot would be more acceptable than rule by foreigners.

[57] This was the dynamic force behind the movements for national independence culminating in the break-up of the European empires through grant of independence to the colonies in Asia and Africa. The dynamic that led to this, could as well lead to the break up of the new states. The decolonization process, though generally interpreted as a concession to liberalism was, in fact, a concession to nationalism. Rather than resolving the relationship between the two, it further complicated it.

In short, the problem was one of negotiating culture with other imperatives of statehood, with individual rights and good governance, with the issues relating to nationals and foreigners, and to social democracy and economic growth.

Probably there was a need to revisit contemporary European history. One should revisit President Wilson's support for the principle of national self-determination as instrumental in advancing liberal values and democracy.[58] Mazzini had spoken of national self-determination as leading to formation of a republican state. For him, a nation was clearly based on language, culture and religion. His ideal nation was cohesive, caring and Catholic. He went so far in his commitment to this conception of nationhood that he made no provision for other faiths and even associated atheism with criminality.[59] He was not interested in promoting diversity. There was a need to revisit his vision to find out the relationship of his republicanism with self-government and liberalism.[60]

There was also a need to revisit national self-determination as related to liberal conceptions of war and peace. The liberal internationalists who supported the League of Nations and, who later framed the Charter of the United Nations, aimed to limit the use of force to the extreme case of self-defence. They wanted to outlaw it for all the other reasons. It was this sentiment that had led to the Kellog- Briand Pact outlawing war in 1928. The principle of national self-determination went against this sentiment. It opened space for just war. A

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[58] Kedourie was of the opinion that President Wilson's reference point was the concept of contractual nation. See his, *Nationalism*, London, 1979, pp. 130-31.

[59] Mazzini, "Duties of Man," p. 21.

[60] Probably Mazzini's republicanism was synonymous with majority rule. But the liberals would not accept it as democratic unless it successfully negotiated minority autonomy and individual rights.

link up of this principle with liberalism was problematic and
called for rethinking. All the more so because many liberals
now started thinking that peace was after all not the best
condition.[61]

Such liberals extended support to wars of national
liberation,without realizing that such wars could not be
resolved like other wars.[62] National self-determination
inspired both political division and irredentism and so
sustained a war, almost indefinitely, as national aspirations
could never be fulfilled once and for all. These were of the
nature of protracted wars and had no end point.[63] Such
wars opened space for outside intervention, with all the risks
of its escalation into a major war. The reason was that the
struggling nations were given the right to seek outside help
and the UN General Assembly endorsed the right of outside
states to use it as a legitimate reason for intervention. Hence,
the wars of national liberation opened up opportunities for
making just wars and just interventions. The liberals departed
from their position of abolishing war to one of waging just
wars.[64]

There was one more reason to revisit the principle of
national self-determination. Probably there never was a
historical situation to which it could be applied in letter and
spirit, without compromising with geopolitical compulsions

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[61] See, Michael Howard, *War and the Liberal Conscience*, (The George
Macaulay Trevelyan Lectures at the University of Cambridge, 1977),
Oxford, 1981, p. 31.
[62] Lord Acton, *The History of Freedom and Other Essays*, London, 1907, p.
299.
[63] If every cultural group was justified in claiming a state of its own,
then successive wars of national liberation would lead to endless
vivisection of the existing states. Similarly, as long as nationals lived
outside their nation's state boundaries, there would be a just cause
for starting a war.
[64] Michael Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, p. 90.

of the contemporary international relations. President Wilson tried his best to apply it to the peace settlement after the First World War. He soon discovered that the principle could not successfully navigate the complexities of international politics. He found that reunited Poland could not have access to the sea without a corridor through German-speaking lands. The German-speaking South Tyrol was added to Italy. Harold Nicolson rightly concluded that President Wilson's idealism foundered at the Paris Peace Conference.[65] He lost in some measure at least, his leadership among the delegates.[66] Undoubtedly national pride and feelings of self-worth among a people were fostered by membership of a nation but the relationship of culture to politics was problematic.

[65] Harold Nicolson, *Peacemaking, 1919*, New York, 1985, p. 170.
[66] Ibid., p. 164.

Chapter 9

CLASS RIGHTS

INTRODUCTION

Every economic system has at least two and generally more than two classes whose interests diverge from one another. Consciousness of belonging to a class relates to the collective image of that class. The members of a society evaluate their own position and allocate themselves into classes, differentiated by status and prestige. Eventually, a consensus emerges on who is where. Broadly six classes are identified: upper-upper, lower-upper, upper-middle, lower-middle, upper-lower and lower-lower. When occupation-related conflicts of value and behaviour intersect with class, then the conflicts between occupational groups turn into antagonisms within and between classes. This is how occupational conflicts are mounted on class differences. The differences between town and country and corresponding inequality between intellectual and physical labour further reinforce the divisions. The cumulative effect of such differences and divisions is to prevent the members of a class from taking a common position in relation to other classes.

The processes of class unity and consolidation are further subverted when they get unequally coopted into state structures or are manipulated by powerful interests in other classes. Affirmative action, for example, uses such internal economic inequalities to divide the deprived groups. The achievers belonging to such groups are barred from claiming the entitlements on offer to the failures. This is how individual achievements add up to constitute a privileged

group within a class. This is given official recognition even though it is opposed to class-based inequality and the collective nature of this inequality.

The concept of class cannot be separated from the concept of hereditary privilege. The convergence of power and wealth is closely related to inheritance.[1] Class consolidation is further obstructed by relating its internal divisions to their corresponding cultural groups based on ethnic, religious and caste groups. These processes of fragmentation generate, within a class, a set of social formations which are held together by their distance and opposition to one another, even though they all identify themselves as political left and articulate opposition to other classes. They claim entitlements and justify direct action in the name of social justice. The transposition of cultural difference on class identity enables these social formations to fight bitter battles not against other classes as much as against culturally different groups. This erodes the specificity of class conflict in relation to other social conflicts that normally obtain between economically unequal social groups, between the rich and the poor or the privileged and the underprivileged.

The most potent and coherent class-based social theory emerges from the Marxian analysis of economy, society and politics. This theory has three constitutive moments: first, a critique of capitalism; second, a vision of social development beyond state socialism, a vision of a communist society; and third, a theory of history, a theoretical account of how humanity got to the present and how it would march to the future. The pull of history is felt through advancements in

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[1] Kolko, Gabriel, *Wealth and Power in America: An Analysis of Social Class and Income Distribution*, New York, 1962; Francis, David R., "Most Millionaires Start with Inherited Wealth," *The Christian Science Monitor*, April 19, 1975, p. 21.

mode of production (or mode of ownership) and its relationship to a political regime and the form of class struggle. Transitions occurred from slave state to feudal state, from feudal state to capitalist state and finally from the capitalist state to the socialist state. Political conflict basically remained the same, as between owners of the means of production and those who had to rely on their labour to earn a living.

A class is composed of people who hold similar positions in the system of social production, similar roles in the division of labour, possess certain common interests opposed to the common interests of the other class. The owners claim the right to coerce the propertyless labour employed by them to do productive work. The exercise of coercion includes the right to appropriate the surplus value generated by the labour while at the same time making an effort to increase the margin of the surplus value by lowering the market value of labour. The propertyless, on the other hand, derive their rights from a philosophy of history which postulates social development through action on the part of the workforce to mitigate its suffering by socializing property and the means of production.

In terms of this theory, a society is organized around class relations and the economic class, not the state, is the engine of history. The class is not just an economic category. It is also a social and political actor. By engaging in the dialectic of class struggle, it pushes history along a set path. The state, on the other hand, is a construct meant to obscure this social dynamic. It is a superstructure of legal, political and cultural institutions. Politics and internatinal relations forge around society, especially inter-class conflict and cooperation.

This framework, giving primacy to class in social analysis, gained wide spread acceptance both in theory and practice. Class conflict emerged as the focus of attention. It was found that class conflict was never confined to these two classes. Secondary clashes operated in conjunction with the basic

conflict. Alongside the two main classes, there were nearly always survivals of classes corresponding to the previous system which did not entirely disappear. The rising and declining classes maintained a variety of alliances with the main classes, joining forces now with one side and now with the other.

Parallel to these advancements and as a follow-up occur transformations in the nature and organization of society, from a tribal to a slave society, from feudalism to capitalism, and finally from socialism to communism. The transformations are not linear or evolutionary; they are dialectical. In dialectical terms, each historical stage is the *thesis*. Rather than serving as the building block for the next stage, it brings forth its opposite, the *antithesis*. There occurs a violent struggle between the two, taking society to a stage higher than either, thesis or antithesis, to *synthesis*. According to Marx, history is a process of social development, totalizing each stage and separating it from the other, driving humanity to a final resolution of the conflict between existence and essence, between objectification and self-assertion, between freedom and necessity.

Take the case of transition from feudal to capitalist economy. The feudal order underlined by fragmented political power became unstable when its social stratification system consisting of processes of ascribed power, status and reward were challenged by increasing number of individuals who came forward to claim primacy in all social relations. This called for a retooling of political mechanisms for promoting a new social order. It now became imperative to reconstruct political institutions as agencies for accommodation of rebellious individuals and doing so with the aim of promoting, what later came to be called, social development. The supreme political institution, the state, was invented and conceptualized in the context of this social need. The state came under pressure to democratize the feudal society by granting individual rights of freedom and

enterprise. More and more individuals sought social mobility through application of science and technology to social and human problems. A sizeable number engaged themselves in technological innovation and entrepreneurship.

The consequent proliferation of production technologies revolutionized the economy. The site of productive activity moved to factories. The factory was characterized by social differentiation between the owners and those who worked as labourers. The economic interests of the two social groups were polar opposites: the owners aimed at profit and would take more and more work from the labour for less and less wages. The polarity in their respective interests was structural and the two were positioned in a mutually antagonistic relationship. Therein lay the origin of the two classes, the bourgeoisie and the proletariat.

Inter-class relations in a context of free exchange brings to the fore the importance of material factors in historical dynamics. These material factors are inclusive of economic as well as social factors. At the heart of the economic is the social. In Marxism, the economic is socialized. It is given a social dimension. For Marx, society does not consist of individuals, but expresses the sum of relations within which individuals stand. The economic is situated in a network of social relationships held together by their common engagement with productive work; it is a social organization of production. So the crucial thing in material factors is the distribution of work between sexes, between the young and the old within the sexes, between and within family units, within and between kin and ethnic groups and, eventually, between social classes.

Myths, rituals and ideologies arise to reinforce relations of productions as social bonds for stability in exchange of goods and services. Some social bonds are based on contract entered into a free market by free individuals. Others are far more stable and are entered into independently of free will. These social bonds turn the disaggregated relations of

production into a social organization of production. When cultural factors alone are not enough to keep production going, coercion becomes necessary. Such coercion is exercised through the instrumentality of both ownership and distribution.

These social organizations of production and distribution come in the way of class consolidation and hence undermine the historic role of class in social development. The consequent shortfall in class solidarity entails negative consequences for both society and the economy. In India, for example, they hold the economy back from the next stage of growth. They forestall progressive social change by obstructing the emergence of a trained and skilled blue collar workforce. Another negative effect is the rise of extremist politics among those who find that electoral and growth processes are not able to mediate non-economic social inequalities. Violence is the key component of extremist sensibility. Terror and sabotage are used as means of egalitarian participation and moral development. This evokes contrasting interpretations. Does this represent opposition to growth economy based on science and technology? A textbook may say so. But a person in the field may see in it as an expression of anger against the existing division of labour in which certain culturally defined groups continue to occupy only certain economic positions.

The consequent political divisions based on caste, community and ethnicity, when correlated with class, occupation and territory, become difficult to resolve. The growth strategies only sharpen the divisions rather than building bridges across them.[2] The malintegrated groups

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[2] Many scholars interpret the situation as similar to that of colonial relations. They even conceptualize it as one of internal colonialism. See, Hechter, Michael, *Internal Colonialism: The Celtic Fringe in British National Development, 1536-1966*, London, 1975.

accept the authority of the state but do not treat it as legitimate. They identify themselves as political left and resist centralizing tendencies and the demands of state machineries on them. The ruling elite responds to the emerging situation, either by using force or by replacing the model of social development based on social conflict with a neo-corporatist model of bargaining among organized interests of business, labour and the state for reaching consensus rather than seeking mass public approval for public policies. Such hegemonic politics makes the situation worse. Democracy, in this context, paves the way for economic growth with social stability. The argument has not substantially changed since the time when American scholars like Walt Rostow, Gabriel Almond, Karl Deutsch and others linked democratic development with economic growth. The link was crucial to preventing resort to class rights for revolutionary social change.

This foregrounds the issue: What are the rights of a class in relation to the other? These rights are not grounded on the law of the land or on institutional norms of the society or on any other source of moral consideration. In Marx, they are grounded on dialectical materialism that is, on the inevitability of conflict in the historical process underlined by contradictions in the material conditions of people. These contradictions surface when the surplus labour of primary producers is appropriated. The primary producers are treated as nothing more than commodities, as units of manpower whose market price is the wage. The primary producer does not own the product of his labour. Nor does he own the tools used by him in the production process. Nor does he own the market price of the product. As a consequence of it, direct producers are driven into a life of self-estrangement and self-alienation. Marx understood the situation in systemic rather than in moral terms.

The law and the institutions including political parties

are just means used by economic interests to promote their goals. This means that economics and politics are not autonomous spheres. They are fused in political economy. Political institutions and processes are the means for realizing and promoting economic interests. Likewise, political means are used for reconstructing the economy for socializing the means of production. Political economy is a process of colinear causation. This opens space for activation and intervention of other factors especially those located in the subjective realm – the factors like ethics, morality and consciousness – as well as objective factors such as social and economic inequalities which can be manipulated to heighten or depress the social dialectics. For reasons of logical consistency, Marx kept these factors out of his argument. He took an amoral position. He was contemptuous of those who used moral arguments.[3]

The right for Marx is not grounded in morality. It is not a moral right. At the same time, he does not deny the importance of free choice and decision-making on the part of individuals. He accepted that people would accept his point of view out of free choice in spite of, rather than because of, their class origin. Similarly, the conduct of the classes especially that of the class of primary producers, would always be involved in making choices and decisions relating to strategies and tactics to be used in politics. This would be so in all situations and historical circumstances. They would undergo great intellectual effort to make right choices. These would not be moral choices but those based on their understanding of the historical process.

Marx rejected the notion of inalienable rights as based on individualistic assumptions and not on any understanding

[3] Skillen, Anthony, *Ruling Illusions*, Hassocks, 1977, p. 129. Undoubtedly, Marx in his early writings has an ethical conception of human beings as free, self-determining subjects. Marx, Karl, *Capital,* vol. 1, (1867), Harmondsworth, 1976, p. 179.

of social good. The notion of rightness is thus underwritten by theory (as propounded by Marx) not by morality (brushed aside by the exploiting classes). The need is not for right action in accordance with the prescribed rules of conduct, but for action based on the needs of the moment as understood in terms of social dialectics. These needs reflect a vision of the good. The socialization of property is seen as social good as it will put an end to appropriation of surplus value. A truly free human being will then emerge. The practical relations of everyday life between man and man, and man and nature will present themselves to him in a transparent and rational form.[4] Marx postulated that class rights grounded on a philosophy of history would legitimize ruthless pursuit of economic interests by the antagonistic classes. The owners of the means of production would increase the margin of surplus value for maximizing their privileged position, while the workers would translate the awareness of their increasing misery into strategies for offering resistance in diverse ways. But the wage increases and social benefits which they are able to get do not change their status in the production system.

The workers continue to be a *class in itself* without a political role. They become a *class for itself* when they assume a political role. This happened when they acquired a will to gain political power for defending their interests. The consciousness of their status as a class was crucial for this transition. Such political transformation of economic status gave workers (wage-earners) their historic role. The contradictions built into a mode of production revealed themselves through the dialectics of class struggle as the engine of history.[5] These contradictions do not work out their historic role in a political vacuum. Political forces steer them in ways which divide and

[4] This is a departure from the stand taken by young Marx.
[5] George G. Brenkert, *Marx's Ethics of Freedom*, London, 1983, p.36.

dissipate their energy. It is in this sense that Marxism is in continuous dialogue with the state which uses sociology as its whipping boy. It is not surprising that the vital role of class conflict in historical dynamics is not borne out by facts and Marx is criticized for over stating his case. Duverger says:

Before the nineteenth century, the mass of people were usually allowed no part in political life. They were exploited but they had neither the intellectual means of understanding that they were being exploited or of envisaging the possibility of changing their situation nor the material means of fighting against it. Political conflicts took place within a limited elite, among whom class differences were fairly small. The rival factions which competed for power had no class basis; national or dynastic rivalries, religious or ideological conflicts, disputes among clans, and competition between individuals were more important than class struggle, with which they had very little connection. (sic) Private ownership of the means of production represents one kind of privilege transmitted by heredity; history has other examples to offer. (sic) Social classes result from the inequality of opportunity that society offers its members at birth, and from the fact that this inequality determines some major types of basic situations. Classes can be defined by their degree of wealth, by what they own, by their legal privileges, or by cultural advantages. (sic) Quite apart from any private appropriation of the means of production, inequality of salaries and of social situation has certain hereditary consequences.[6]

Such problematization of class rights opened space for rediscovery of Marxism as a sociological framework for study and control of social processes. The Second International, 1889-1914, held the flag of Marxism aloft as an approach to the study of philosophy and society suited to the needs of contemporary thinking about politics in the West. The relationship between productive forces, regime type and social relationships was potent with possibilities. In *The Poverty of Philosophy*, Marx put it synoptically: "The windmill will give

[6] Duverger, Maurice, *The Idea of Politics*, London, 1966, pp. 58-59.

you a society ruled by a sovereign; the steam powered mill, a society dominated by industrial capitalism." The effort went a long way in developing Marxism as an academic field which came to be known as Western Marxism. Its ramifications now extended to epistemology and methodology, and beyond the study of society, economy and politics, to culture, religion and morality. Family, private property and rights of inheritance are the basic structures of society. They define the right and the good in politics and world affairs. The rest is drama and hypocrisy. But this does not close the circle. Civil disobedience is still an option.

WESTERN MARXISM

The Second International

It was formed in Paris on July 14, 1889. It was an organization of labour and socialist parties mainly from West European countries dedicated to work for international socialism. During its various congresses, there surfaced conflicts between moderates and revolutionaries. The moderates favoured reform of capitalist societies. They put faith in existing constitutional frameworks and pushed the Marxists to press for labour legislation aimed at improving the lot of the working classes. They had an upper hand. In its very first meeting it declared May 1 as International Workers' Day. It was at the Zurich congress that the German delegate set the tone for ideology, policy and methods of the European labour movement when he said: "If the proletariat wishes to be emancipated from the yoke of capitalism, it must first be emancipated from the yoke of the revolutionary catchword." It was now recognized that "political action" was the most powerful weapon of the working classes. On the other hand, the revolutionary Marxists who had anarchists also among their ranks, favoured wholesale replacement by violent means, if need be, of the existing system. They

attacked the moderates as "revisionists." The moderates answered back and described themselves as revolutionary in the sense that they aimed to transform the bourgeois society into a socialist society. They maintained: "The proletariat is a class party, an autonomous party, autonomous in aim, autonomous in organization, autonomous in method; but the bourgeoisie is not a solid block and so in democratic countries they should form judicious alliances with the representatives of democratic peasantry, artisans and small shopkeepers and support laws favouring the proletariat."[7] Such social dynamic is hampered by the state which is a superstructure of legal, political and cultural institutions based on class dominance.

It is not only at the level of the state that politics and international relations are played out. They are also played out at another level, that of the society, where they feature class cooperation and conflict. This framework has since evolved into a huge corpus of thought and practice at the instance of Lenin and neo-Marxists.

RADICAL STUDENTS' MOVEMENT

Even though Western Marxism originated in response to the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, the development of Marxist political thought in the West known as Western Marxism gathered momentum during the three decades following World War II. These were the decades of rapid change in politics and international relations of Europe. Against the background of these changes, a very useful body of thought emerged. This thought was of the nature of theoretical intervention into the processes of change. The

[7] Formation of such rainbow coalitions was suggested in India also for capturing political power and, short of it, for winning concessions. In a way, it was just a variant of an idea pioneered in the Second International more than a hundred years before.

aim was to reconcile Marxist thinking with Western social realities. It responded to the radical movements led by students and young revolutionaries in Western countries including the US and France which found an echo in non-Western countries, say, in India. These movements rejected orthodox Marxism and were averse to application of social science methods in crafting strategies for pursuit of violent and revolutionary social change.

The young radicals were in favour of a critical, open-ended and less dogmatic approach to Marxism. A major concern was to address the policy of the Third International and later of the Comintern to "fight fascism on the battleground of bourgeois democracy." The inability of the working class in successfully obstructing the rise of fascism and nazism in Europe served as the starting point for rethinking the roots of authoritarianism and fascism. In India, for example, it became the major preoccupation of the anti-fascist intellectuals. These intellectuals made a conscious departure from orthodox Marxism and, rather than looking for the roots of fascism in economic and political problems, they looked for it in ideological and cultural factors. They looked to the Frankfurt School for guidance. They were divided into two camps. One camp looked to fascism as a revolt against reason, while the other camp treated it as "destruction of reason." The Frankfurtians showed a clear preference for Freudian psychoanalytic criticism of capitalist civilization and the best way to fight fascism was to seek the liberation of repressed instincts. They proudly styled themselves as neo-Freudian revisionists and had all the fun.

STRUCTURALISM

Social structures are not intentional products of human subjects. They exist prior to them. They unfold a social dynamics according to their own rules. In Western Marxism,

the concept of social structure draws inspiration, not from structuralism in Marx, but from structuralism in social anthropology. The constitutive elements of a social structure, according to Levi-Strauss, are differentially related to one another, while in Marx the relationship is determinate and invariable. Unlike Marx, the relationships do not unfold according to some overarching philosophy of history. Marx describes a capitalist society as a totality, a structure of relationships characterized by dominance and exploitation. The structure was capable of keeping its constituents in the dark about their entrapment in the complexity of social relations and, thus obstructed the development of oppositional consciousness. This was how the French structuralism of Louis Althusser could be characterized.

HUMANITIES, SOCIAL SCIENCES AND PROGRESSIVE SOCIAL CHANGE

Western Marxism was committed to oppose violent systemic change. By implication, this implied opposition to the use of science and technology for developing instruments of violence. Marxist intellectuals in the West advanced historical analysis of violent changes in the past. They described the French Revolution as leading to the despotism of the Jacobin elite and then to that of Napoleon. The English civil war ended in military dictatorship. The story of the Russian and Chinese revolutions was no different. The preference therefore should be for a critical, open-ended and less dogmatic approach to social change. The other major concern of Western Marxism was opposition to Americanization of culture and society under the impact of mass production and consumption of goods. The British cultural studies emerged during the sixties to articulate such opposition. Richard Hoggart, Raymond Williams, E.P.

Thompson and Fredrich Jameson forced a shift in culture studies towards post-Fordism and postmodernism. The shift was celebrated as "cultural logic of late capitalism" and celebrated the culture of the industrial working class.

The Birmingham school emerged as the nodal institution for such intellectual activity where scholars including Stuart Hall focussed on interplay of ideologies and representations of class, gender, race, ethnicity and nationality in media and literary texts. The effect of newspapers, radio, television, film and other forms of popular culture also received attention. How did different audiences interpret the media culture in different contexts? They attempted to answer this question by developing Marxian theories of political, social and cultural institutions.

The twentieth century Marxian theorists ranging from Georg Lukacs, Antonio Gramsci, Walter Benjamin, to Jean-Paul Sartre, Herbert Marcuse, Louis Althusser, Fredric Jameson and Salvoj Zizek took this approach further. They analysed the past and the present of these institutions. They studied the social practices within these institutions to highlight their impact on economy, politics and society.

A sharp decline occurred in revolutionary consciousness of the working class. This class was getting integrated into the capitalist system. The only way of offering resistance to hegemonic forces was through cultural modes specially tailored to suit this purpose in a given context. This moved attention to the salience of style and subculture. There was ever greater social acceptance of difference, multiplicity, eclecticism, populism and consumerism. The coming of techno-capitalism has led to packaging of postmodernism into modules of local culture for popular information and entertainment. Is this an effective way of offering resistance to cultural Americanization? It certainly is not so. One can point to the working class which , under the impact of technocapitalism, has been disembodied from the Marxian

philosophy of history. By predicating class on culture, we have swapped class rights for culture rights. Its effect is felt on the domestic economy and more importantly in world affairs.

Chapter 10

INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS

INTRODUCTION

Individual freedom was under threat from autonomous forces of organized rationality. Indivduality and eccentricity, personal drive and creativity were sidelined in favour of standardized role performance. Unimpeded rationalization of work and social life was not out there as a historical model to follow, but an idealized projection of faith in greater rationalization, consolidation and socialization in overcoming obstacles to goal attainment. This scenario drove people to despair. Orwellian distopia was an example of it. Progressive rationalization should, therefore, alert humanity of its possible consequences, say of organizational and constitutional theories, which should be taken as tentative and never conclusive.

Rationality expressed as technology, legislation or organization should not be harnessed to purposes internal to it. Instead, it should be used for humanistic purposes external to it. Individual-ness should not be predicated exclusively on the ability to serve the productive process or to preserve the organized social system. Other predicates were also there. It could be predicated better on natural diversity and plurality. These human features need to be conserved . This defined the context for appreciating the importance of individual rights in modern and modernizing societies.

RETURN TO THE FIRST IMAGE

Collective entities such as the state, the nation and the class, dominated the scene in international relations to such an extent that political concern was steered away from freedom and autonomy of the individual person to issues of power and interest of these entities. This was mainly so during the cold war, when its protagonists, the US and the former USSR, were conceptualized as layered formations of state, nation and class. This was not a satisfactory situation, at least from the liberal perspective. The end of the cold war led to a shift in emphasis. The individual was brought to the centrestage and, as the only source of moral worth, was privileged in relation to state, nation and class. Individual rights were given primacy over the rights of these other actors. The emphasis now was that these collective entities derived their legitimacy and value from their commitment to the rights of the individual.[1]

The others privileged the claims of collective entities. They asked: What gave pre-eminence to the individual? What were the sources of individual rights and how could this pre-eminence of individual rights mediate the rights of these entities? For answering these questions, the first need was to trace the schools of thought that gave such primacy to the individual and, briefly, describe their main ideas. One

[1] The liberal theories of politics can be differentiated along levels of analysis. The Manchester liberals like Richard Cobden privileged individual rights over the rights of other entities while Kenneth Waltz in his classification of the causes of conflict put individual level conflicts at the bottom. The post-cold war liberals thus put Waltz's neorealism on its head. Cf.: "Political philosophers have constantly attempted to erect systems of thought attributing absolute rights to some political entity or the other; equally, constantly, the attempt to assert these absolute rights in practice has led to a practical denial of individual rights and the enthronement of the principle that might is right." Cobban, Alfred, *The Nation State and National Self-Determination*, Rev. ed., London, 1969, p. 106.

would find that there were four such schools of thought: Natural law and Judeo- Christian theology, natural rights, the social contract theory, and the theory of basic needs.

SOURCES OF INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS

Natural Law and Judeo-Christian Theology

The Judeo-Christian theology made a profound impact on Western political theory and this could be seen on many of its strands. For example, Martin Luther's conception of direct and personal faith in God, not only attacked the Church hierarchy, but was also suggestive of the principle that all men were equal. Even the most ordinary people were capable of finding faith on their own without the help of intermediaries.[2] Protestantism thus contributed to the discovery of the individual as carrier of worth. This theological stand was strengthened by the conception of human dignity as derived from a God-given capacity to reason. This capacity for rational thought that went a long way through historical development towards the emergence of the individual as the focal concern in Western ideas on society and politics, was grounded on the Christian belief that God created human beings in His own image. The Bible gave expression to this belief in these words:

And God said, 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.'[3]

Theologians interpreted this likeness not as physical likeness but as capacity to reason. A Jewish theologian, Moses Maimonides said:

The word image, on the other hand, is applied to physical form, i.e. the essential feature of a thing by which it becomes what it is, which

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[2] Quentin Skinner, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought*, Volumes II, Cambridge, 1978, p.11.
[3] *Genesis*, 1.26.

constitutes its true character, insofar as it is that particular thing. In man, this feature is the one from which springs human perception. It is because of this human perception that the words 'in the image of God He created him' are used.[4]

Thomas Aquinas took a similar position. While commenting on Aristotle, in an attempt to resolve the teachings of the Bible with Greek philosophy, he said:

(T)he human intellect which obtains the light of reason from the divine intellect.[5]

The Biblical belief that God created human life and gave it intellectual perception and domination over the earth and its animals,[6] was not, in itself, enough for leading theoretical development towards conceptualization of human rights as the basic tenet of personal freedom and moral worth. The blending of this Biblical precept with classical philosophy and the consequent discovery of human capacity to reason, was the necessary ground needed for such conceptualization. The Christian influence could also be seen through the influence of medieval scholasticism on the natural law tradition. The belief that divinity was constitutive of humanity shaped the treatment of natural law at the hands of Christian scholastics.

It was in this context that the natural law was regarded as prescribing certain basic principles applicable to all human beings without distinction. The natural law theorists asserted that these principles could be discerned through "practical reasonableness."[7] The natural law now came to be seen as

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[4] Moses Maimonides, *The Guide to the Perplexed: An Abridged Edition*, London, 1952, p. 52.

[5] Thomas Aquinas, "Commentary on the Politics of Aristotle," in Alexander d'Entreves, ed., *Aquinas: Selected Political Writings*, London, 1924. (Thomas Aquinas was a thirteenth century Christian scholar.)

[6] *Genesis*, 1:26.

[7] John Finnis, *Natural Law and Natural Rights*, Oxford, 1986, p. 25.

universal and egalitarian based on capacity to reason. Though grounded in Christian belief, it assumed a trans-Christian form that was secular in orientation so that it could be universal in application.[8] Cicero emphasized this when he said:

True law is right reasoning in agreement with nature; it is of universal application, unchanging and everlasting. (sic) And there will not be different laws at Rome and at Athens, or different laws now and in the future, but one eternal and unchangeable law will be valid for all nations and all times.[9]

Some scholars disagreed with Cicero on the unchanging character of natural law and said that the interpretation of natural law could change over time as a rational response to changing circumstances. Cicero's emphasis on universality was generally accepted. Maimonides and Aquinas went along with it. The influence of Roman law on theology was evident from their writings, though the distance between theological roots of natural law and Roman law was increasing. The scholars were engaged in debates on whether the natural law was the basis of law or of ethics or of both. For the Renaissance scholars, the two were separate spheres. They could, therefore, take the discourse of universality further by stressing that law was applicable even to non-Europeans and non-Christians, including the aborigines.[10]

Another aspect of the transition from the medieval to the

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[8] The liberals also trace the intellectual foundations of their thought to classical thinking on natural law conceptualized as part of an unchanging larger system of law that applied universally. The Stoics, for example, had equated nature with reason and reason with God. In Aquinas this approach was Christianized.

[9] Cicero in *Republic*, quoted in Alexander de' Entreves, *Natural Law: An Introduction to Legal Philosophy*, London, 1952, p. 21.

[10] See, James Brown Scott, *The Spanish Origins of International Law: Francisco de Vitoria and His Law of Nations*, Oxford, 1934. Also see, Skinner*, Foundations of Modern Political Thought*, Vol. 2, p. 169.

Renaissance approach to natural law was the shift of focus
from community to the individual.[11] The reason was that
different writers were now theorizing on property and were
interested in projecting the individual as the owner of
property and as bearer of freedom. The dilemma was: Could
freedom like property be traded? Some scholars thought
that freedom itself was a property and could be traded. They
wanted to justify slavery as natural. Others differently,
thought that freedom in natural law could not be a subject
of such trading.[12] This stance was rooted in the religious
premise that everyone was made in the image of God and
was equal before God. All people were capable of salvation.
This prepared the ground for embodiment within the
natural law tradition of a universally applicable legal doctrine.
The leaders of the French and American Revolutions saw in
this an opportunity to advance the discourse of freedom by
treating natural law as the basis of natural rights.[13]

NATURAL RIGHTS

The theory of natural rights underlined the focus of political
theory on the individual. It was becoming increasingly clear
that even though the natural rights theory originated in
religious doctrine, the advocates of individual rights were
charting an independent course for themselves. Rather than
treating God as the source of these rights, they were
grounding them on nature. Hugo Grotius, for example, was
of the view that the existence of rights was not dependent

[11] Paul E. Sismund, *Natural Law and Political Thought*, Washington,
D.C., 1971 p. 76.
[12] Richard Tuck, *Natural Rights Theories: Their Origins and Development*,
Cambridge, 1979, p. 49.
[13] Alexander d'Entreves, *op. cit.*,p. 48.

on the existence of God.[14] Writers like Grotius maintained that the uniqueness of humans owed much to the capacity to reason than to divine intervention. In this context, there were two approaches to natural rights. The first was associated with HAL Hart and the other with Immanuel Kant.

Hart argued that if there were any moral rights at all, then the first among them must be the right to be free–that is, to be able to make choices. All other rights followed from this.[15] There was no place for moral action by the individual unless there was individual freedom. A person was capable of making moral choices and so he needed personal autonomy and the right to free speech and religious freedom.[16] These rights belonged to the individual as a person, and were not contingent on membership of the state or on holding of a quality or a status. No ground for differentiating people had any bearing on their moral standing. A person's right to freedom was not determined by his or her sex, race, class or citizenship. Nobody should do anything to coerce or restrain choice. Individual freedom demanded a duty of forbearance on the part of others. One person's freedom constrained another person's freedom. One could be free only as far as one did not interfere with another's freedom. How should one accommodate another's freedom? This brought in the issue of other (higher) values such as social order or social justice as reference points while

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[14] Cf.: "What we have been saying would have a degree of validity even if we should concede that which cannot be conceded without the utmost wickedness, that there is no God, or that the affairs of men are of no concern to Him." L.E. van Holk and C.B. Roelofsen, eds., *Grotius Reader*, The Hague, 1983, para 11.

[15] HAL Hart, "Are There Any Natural Rights?", *The Philosophical Review*, Oxford, 1955, Reprinted in 1985, p. 175.

[16] The Bill of Rights in the U S Constitution and the French Declaration of the Rights of Man could be regarded as concrete embodiments of this approach.

making a choice. Starting from the individual, it was possible to move to a whole set of other values in society thereby problematizing the issue of constraint and accommodation in choice-making at all levels.[17]

Kant, on the other hand, developed the concept of individual worth and autonomy as the starting point of reason. The source of moral value was not human nature ("not a free person making moral choices," as Hart said). In Kant's view, human nature was shaped by experience and coloured by subjective elements. It therefore could not be the source of morality. Kant wanted to give an objective foundation to morality.[18] The only moral foundation that Kant could envisage, that was not distorted by subjectivity, was reason itself. It would be worthwhile to quote Kant himself on this:

From what has been said, it is clear that all moral concepts have their seat and origin wholly in *a priori* reason and, indeed, in common human reason as well as in that which is highly speculative; that they cannot be abstracted from any knowledge which is empirical and merely fortuitous; that this very purity of their origin makes them worthy to serve as our supreme practical principle; that their real influence and the unqualified value of actions suffer in direct proportion to the empirical which is added to them.[19]

The problem for Kant was to define the imperatives of ethical action. This was necessary because no human being was "disinterestedly objective." The imperatives linked the objective laws of morality to the "imperfect human volition."

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[17] This opened up possibilities for strategic interaction. Bringing additional values on the table for negotiation might have a strategic purpose of constraining choice of targeted individuals or groups.

[18] Brendan Liddell, "Kant's Moral Revolution," in his *Kant on the Foundation of Morality: A Modern Version of Grundlegung,* Bloomington, 1970, p. 5.

[19] Immanuel Kant, *The Fundamental Principles of the Metaphysics of Ethics* (translation), New York, 1938, pp. 27-28.

One was the "hypothetical imperative." Action linked the objective laws to the desired end of such action. The other imperative was the "categorical imperative" which linked the objective laws to an action which was objectively necessary of itself without realization of another end. The categorical imperative was a direct derivative of reason. Kant elaborated the concept of categorical imperative by pointing to certain aspects of its relation to ethical action. The categorical imperative might stress the universal element in ethical action: "Act only on that maxim which will enable you at the same time to will that it be a universal law."[20] Second, the categorical imperative prescribed respect for rational beings, since they were ends in themselves, not means:

Now I say: "Man and every rational being anywhere exists as an end in itself, not merely as a means for the arbitrary use by this or that will."[21]

And Kant added,

Act, so that in your own persona as well as in the persona of every other, you are treating mankind also as an end, never merely as a means.[22]

Finally, the categorical imperative ordained that all speculation on ends must aim at an ideal world in which everything is accorded with reason.[23] In short, Kant's categorical imperative implied ethical action which was universal in value orientation and based on respect for all men as rational beings. Kant's ethics converged on the maxim: "Treat others as one would himself or herself like to be treated". It was morally wrong to kill or steal as these actions violated the principle of respect for all human beings; one would not like these actions to become universal, done

[20] Ibid., p. 38.
[21] Ibid., pp. 45-46.
[22] Ibid., p.47.
[23] Scruton, p. 71.

by everyone to everyone; and, all rational beings were equal in the act of willing, because every rational being had a "legislative will."[24] Kant's concept of ethical action also extended to non-human rational beings, because he was building his argument on a general concept of rational being as such. It was now common knowledge that primates (especially gorillas) had capacity for reason.[25] It was imperative to treat them as rational beings. In short, the Kantian perspective had three pillars: reason, autonomy and universality. It prescribed that the moral right should lead to respect for the rights of all rational beings.

SOCIAL CONTRACT THEORY

Two possibilities were there: either individuals had rights in the state of nature which, in some form, they surrendered through a social contract to a common authority, or they were given rights by this common authority, once it was formed. The first possibility was an approach to the theory of natural rights and was the organizing assumption of the social contract theory. According to this theory, the rights belonged to the individual person. He or she was born with them. These rights were the foundation of each person's self-determination, self-government, autonomy and equality, even prior to the formation of the political community. The rights not surrendered by the individual person to the common authority, were vested in him or her. The other possibility was that the individual person had no rights prior to the social contract and the formation of the political community. There was no such thing as natural rights enjoyed by the individual person in the imaginary state of nature, as no rights were possible outside the political and

[24] Kant's *Ethics*, p. 49.
[25] Francine Patterson, "Conversations with a Gorilla," *National Geographic*, 154 (4), October 1978, pp. 438-465.

social structures. The rights were the creation of duly constituted social and political authorities. This was the constitutive theory of individuality.[26] The individual as a holder of rights was a socio-political creation. Frost took this position when he said:

Unlike the contract theory, it (the constitutive theory) holds that rights are not things possessed by individuals prior to entering into social and political relationships. Rather it contends that a person is constituted as a rights holder of a certain sort within the context of a specific social relationship. Contrary to all rights-based theories, it argues that rights are not things which a person can be conceived of as having outside of, or prior to, any and all social and political institutions.[27]

Rights derived from the common agreement to establish a society. Creating social and political institutions meant creating rights. An individual person realized rights in the process of making claims on others. Rights were of the nature of claims in the consciousness of the individual persons, even though such claims were never made or realized. An individual would react to a denial of such claims, not necessarily in his or her case but also in the case of others. Personal worth derived from recognition of such claims by others. It was not just possession of rights but their recognition by others that mattered. This position was close to Hegelian idealism, insofar as Hegel regarded citizenship as essential to becoming an ethical person. Similarly, rights were necessary to the becoming of a person into an individual. Equal moral worth of all individuals was possible to realize only through rights and their recognition by others. The two faces of the social contract theory of rights are often in dynamic relationship: the one face would be used to limit state power, while the other face would be used for

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[26] Frost, p. 4.
[27] Ibid., p. 162.

reconstruction of the state for securing social equality through social justice.

THEORY OF BASIC NEEDS

This theory placed primary moral value on sustaining life rather than on enhancing liberty. The focus therefore should be on what sustains life: security, health, food, shelter, and water. This orientation corresponded to Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Once one level was satisfied, the next level would appear salient.[28] Moral action, thus, consisted in moving from the lower level to the higher. Once the basic requirements of life were met, it was possible for an individual person to move to the satisfaction of other needs.

This theory problematized the relationship between personal income and life sustaining needs. It questioned the development policies aiming at increasing personal incomes, rather than at relieving poverty.[29] Non-satisfaction of basic needs impacts human deprivation more severely than non-satisfaction of other needs. In fact, development economists for a long time tried the incomes approach. It was assumed that with increases in incomes through foreign exports and investments there would occur expansion and deepening of the market because more and more people would purchase more and more goods and services and the benefits of it would percolate to the poorest. But this did not happen. Whatever income increases did occur under the impact of market forces were very largely offset by the very same market forces as the price of food, housing, cooking fuel, health care and other basic necessities

[28] Ross Fitzgerald, "Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs: An Exploration and Evaluation," in Ross Fitzgerald, ed., *Human Needs and Politics*, Rushcutters Bay, NSW, 1977, p. 36.
[29] See, Paul Streeten, "Basic Human Needs", *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, Special Edition, Autumn 1978, pp. 29-46.

increased. It became increasingly difficult for the poor to sustain life, not to mention reaching a level when the needs at a higher level could be addressed. It was not merely the economic policy but also bad governance that made the situation worse. The benefits of different government-sponsored schemes did not reach the target population. Some people blamed it on corruption in public services. Others blamed it on lack of commitment and public spirit in public functionaries. Some blamed it on both.

Voluntary and non-governmental organizations saw in the worsening situation an opportunity for claiming for themselves the advantage (compared to public services) of direct contact with the masses through teams of intelligent and inspired young graduates eager to work at the grass roots. While the economists and political scientists were engaged in calculating the relative role of bad development policies and bad governance in their analysis of the situation, the non-governmental organizations moved forward to collaborate with government bodies in implementation of the poverty-related programmes and got away with huge allocations for themselves from public funds.

The basic needs approach, as related to poverty elimination, was more action-oriented and amenable to setting an agenda for action, than other approaches. It was, therefore, possible to insulate it from political and ideological controversies of the day and make an appeal to the wider community, both national and international, and underline the urgency of action. This gave primacy to the right to basic needs as compared to the right to political and civil rights.

Some scholars, especially political science people, criticize it as an approach taken by economists which was narrowly situated and unworkable. They would like to factor political empowerment of the poor and the marginalized in any agenda for action. As political empowerment was always against some identified social group (and in a local or

institutional setting, the empowerment strategy was directed against personally identified individuals and groups) the humanitarian appeal to the larger community for help and participation would lose some of its edge. If the individuals and social groups so identified for opposition would have a say, direct or indirect, in the implementation of the programmes (which normally they would have) then corruption and casualness in the implementation of the schemes was bound to creep in. The blame for it must, at least in some measure, go to the politics of empowerment, whatever might be the normative coating on it.[30] For example, if income generation programmes for women were designed in opposition to the role of fathers and husbands in the family, then the latter would be casual if not also hostile to them, apart from being perceived by fathers and husbands as an affront to their culturally defined role in the family. Of course, there would be a need for public policy instruments to plug the inadequacies in the performance of these roles arising from personal and circumstantial compulsions.

To foreground these inadequacies to attack culture and seek to substitute it with other values was counter-productive, besides being arrogant. Similarly, the midday meal scheme, if grounded on the assumption that food even when available at home would not be available to children was probably wrongly conceived. It amounted to shrinking the area of community action and bringing politics to the fore. The dynamics of the empowerment politics was necessary to understand and assess, not only who gained from it and who lost, but also to analyse its social costs. A report card on it should be an important input into the policy process.

30 See, Raymond Plant, Harry Lesser and Peter Taylor-Gooby, *Political Philosophy and Social Welfare: Essays on the Normative Basis of Welfare Provision*, London, 1980.

PERSPECTIVES ON THE INDIVIDUAL

The Individual: An Ontological Reality

The liberals would generally treat the individual person as an autonomous and indivisible entity, and so the basis of moral theory. This liberal position was challenged on the grounds that collective entities such as the state, the nation and the class could also be attributed with moral worth and taken as the basis of moral theory. This posed the problem of relationship between the individual person and the group (any of the collective entities): whether the individual constituted the group or it was the other way round. Should the moral primacy be given to the individual or to the group? The idea was to pose questions to challenge the ontological reality of the individual. These questions express a sceptical view of the individual as an ontological reality. A few examples of such questions follow. Could human life be treated as a continuum such that birth and death were necessarily the precise moments describing the existence of a person? Was foetus a person? Was there a point when a person could be said to exist? Would it not be correct to say that a human being became a person only on becoming self-conscious? Would it be incorrect to say that human volition was fleeting and ever changing?[31]

While these arguments would undoubtedly challenge the reality of the individual person, it could not be denied that the reality of the individual person was far more certain than that of the collective entities. It was, in this sense, that the individual could be taken as a source of moral value. Michel Donelan said:

Individuals were the first and the last entities of human life, before church, before state. If there was moral reason in the world anywhere,

31 See, Derek Parfit, *Reasons and Persons*, pp. 270-352.

it was in individuals; and individuals used it in debate with one another to make their society.[32]

Individual person is the most distinct constitutive entity of society and the most salient building block of its political, economic and cultural institutions and practices.[33] In international relations theory also the individual person is a more distinct and salient point of reference, a sounding board for moral evaluation of policies and actions, than the state, the nation or the class. On surface, the state would appear to be the most distinct and salient actor in international relations. But it was just a legal fiction. On an empirical plane, there often arose contentions on whether a given state really possessed the legally defined criteria of its existence. Nations and classes were more vague than the state as entities and lacked distinctness and salience to serve as the basis for moral theory. The contractual nation was nothing more than a convenient social framework for forming a government.

A cultural group that was closely knit within itself and had its history going far back into the past might not like to be reduced to such a social framework and judge any efforts to so reduce it as an affront to it, and regress into a political struggle to transit its identity into that of cultural nationhood. The process of national self-determination on these lines might escalate and not suggest any stopping point.[34] The concept of class was no less vague. One could take the Marxist theory as a guide and divide the world into exploiting and exploited classes. Or, one could take the structuralist position

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[32] Michel Donelan, "The Political Theorists and International Theory," in Michel Donelan, ed., *The Reason of States: A Study in International Political Theory*, London, 1978, p. 83.

[33] David K.Lewis, *Convention: A Philosophical Study*, Oxford,1986, p.35.

[34] This was borne out in an increasing number of ethnic hot spots in the world.

and divide the world into a centre and a periphery. The
Marxists were not in agreement on the criteria of class
differentiation and its applicability in concrete empirical
situations. The structuralists were not clear on the boundaries
defining the centre and the periphery and talk of a
periphery within the centre and of a centre within the
periphery. In the last analysis, the individual person is the
only distinct and stable source of value.

ANTECEDENTLY INDIVIDUATED SELF

Certain rights were universal, and were held against
everyone and prior to all other rights. These rights belonged
to every human being.[35] Even those outside the scope of
civil and political rights, such as children, were entitled to
them. Since humanness was an elastic category, the range
of rights belonging to a person as a human being, was also
elastic.[36] The liberal theory of international ethics was based
on human rights as a moral imperative of the international
society and its agenda was to promote them in the conduct
of international relations. As these rights were derived from
natural rights, not from political allegiance, they implied a

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[35] R.J. Vincent, *Human Rights*, p.13.
[36] This would be evident from a perusal of the Universal Declaration
of Human Rights, International Covenant on Economic, Social and
Cultural Rights, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,
Bill of Rights in the Constitutions of different states and ethnographic
profiles of humanness. Some scholars also distinguished between
core and other rights. See, Maurice Cranston, *What are Human Rights?*,
London, 1973; and Jeanne Hersch, "Is the Declaration of Rights a
Western Concept?", in Howard E. Kiefer and Milton K. Munitz, eds.,
Ethics and Social Justice, New York, 1970, pp. 323-332. Similarly, R.J.
Vincent was of the opinion, that the right to life implied the right to
subsistence. How could life be sustained without food and health?
Adequate food and health care was necessary for it. Ibid., p. 90.

duty on the part of public agencies to implement them. A large number of international and national agencies sprang up to oversee the implementation of these rights.[37] These agencies hold the flag of human rights high in domestic politics and international relations. They could act in two ways. Either they could act through the governments to mitigate oppression and denial of human rights or they could bypass the government and mobilize public opinion against the government or even use other instruments to advance their goal.[38]

A person was taken as antecedently individuated and so the task of these agencies was only to safeguard against regressive tendencies leading to asocial individualism in which the individual was nothing better than a bundle of self-referential desires and possessions. The rights were meant to create conditions for the development of unique, inborn qualities in persons, the qualities whereby "human beings become a noble and beautiful object of contemplation."[39] This was possible only when the innate nature was allowed freedom manifesting itself through free choices so that the process of individuation conformed to the uniqueness of the person. Such a process of individuation would definitely take some persons towards pursuit of higher goals, away from pursuit of mere pleasure as the end of life. J.S. Mill said:

Those only are happy (I thought) who have their minds fixed on some object other than their own happiness; on the happiness of others, on the improvement of mankind, even on some art or pursuit,

[37] On the conferment of responsibility, mainly on public agencies and marking them out for implementation, see D.D. Raphael, "The Rights of Man and the Rights of the Citizen," in D.D. Raphael, ed., *Political Theory and the Rights of Man*, London, 1967.

[38] These points are elaborated by Raphael, Ibid., pp. 112 ff.

[39] J.S. Mill, *On Liberty*, p. 59.

followed not as a means, but as itself an ideal end. Aiming thus at something else, they find happiness on the way.[40]

Mill held an essentialist view of the individual person. His was an essentialist individual with an "authentic self."[41] It was a romanticist view of the self — a view that attributed to each person, characteristics of personal depth such as passion, soul, creativity and moral fibre. In the absence of an outside referant, there was no contradiction between the form and essence. This is underlined by classical liberals and can also be interpreted in terms of the Hindu view:

(M)an is a manifestation of God and a complex multi-dimensional being including within him different elements of matter , life, consciousness, intelligence and the divine spark which is the Godhead within him.[42]

Within such a view, the identity question (Who am I?) was easy to answer. It was easy for the individual person to reflect

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[40] *Autobiography,* London, 1873, 1924, p.120. Mill's conception of personal growth through pursuit of higher goals corresponded significantly with Indian thought as represented in the ideas of Mahatma Gandhi when he said that it was possible for man to extricate himself from the downward pulls of the lower self and realize the higher self in him. For Gandhi, the human nature has an inherent evolutionary urge for self-development through self-realization. This Gandhian conception of the essential self should be the point of departure for intellectual conceptualization of social and political development In the Preface to *Hind Swaraj,* he says, "It teaches the gospel of love in place of hate. It replaces violence with self-sacrifice. It pits soul-force against brute-force." M.K. Gandhi, *Hind Swaraj or India Home Rule,* Ahmedabad, 1962, p.2.

[41] K.J. Gergen, *The Saturated Self,* New York, 1991, p. 7.

[42] S. Radhakrishnan*, The Bhagavadgita,* p. 46. Commenting on Gandhi's views on the *Bhagavadgita,* Mahadev Desai said, "If the world is but a reflection of *Brahman,* the individual self is but a spark of the Universal effulgence. Indeed, both are one, but for the limiting conditions." *The Gospel of Selfless Action* or *The Gita According to Gandhi,* Ahmedabad, 1984, p.42.

on the meaning and direction to his or her life and activities.[43] Freedom and individuality were inter-changeable. They meant the same thing. The individual had the power to resist both society and the state, because the authentic self was self-subsisting; its realization was not dependent on outside sources. Self-realization was possible only through self-knowledge acquired, to use Locke's phrase, "perception of our mind within us"— that is, through internal observation that was closely analogous to acts of observation by which the knowledge of the external world was gained. The enjoyment of freedom therefore warranted limits to state power and a morality of non-interference. Power should not be exercised over any individual against his will except to prevent harm to others; his or her own good, physical or moral, could not be a sufficient reason for doing it. Freedom was necessary for human growth through self-development and pursuit of higher forms of pleasure. J.S.Mill said:

Let it be remembered that if individual life is short, the life of the human species is not short; its indefinite duration is practically equivalent to endlessness; and being combined within definite capability of improvement, it offers to the imagination and symbolizes a large enough object to satisfy any reasonable demand for grandeur of aspiration. If such an object appears small to a mind accustomed to dream of infinite and eternal beatitudes, it will expand far into other

[43] The stipulation is that the person has an essence (call it substance or matter) which is embodied in a form called the individual. The essence is inborn and so its source is nature or divinity. It differentiates one person from the other. The philosophical debate on "essence-form" relationship goes back to the ancient Greeks and continues to reverberate through positivist and post-positivist thought. In rights discourse, the choice is between two approaches: the essence determines behaviour in an environment of freedom and, so rights are claims for creating such an environment, or behaviour is all that matters because the essence cannot be known in isolation from the form, and so rights are claims for realizing the form.

dimensions when those baseless fancies shall have receded into the past.[44]

SOCIALLY INDIVIDUATED SELF

The positivist philosophy challenged the metaphysical grounding of individuality and a view of individuation processes as self-development through self-knowledge and pursuit of higher pleasures, and the characterization of such individuated persons as agencies of divine will or world-experience and not a manifestation of something that could not be observed or experienced. Positivists saw the human being as having appetites, passions and desires and the mind as a "slave of the passions" which dutifully served and obeyed them. Karl Marx also took this view when he attacked the French *Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen*:

None of the supposed rights of man therefore go beyond the egoistic man (sic) that is, an individual separated from the community, withdrawn into himself, wholly preoccupied with his private interest and acting in accordance with his caprice.[45]

Thus, positivism marked a twofold paradigm shift. The first shift was a transition from the metaphysical stage to the positivist stage, to quote Auguste Comte:

(T)he mind has given over the vain search after Absolute notions, the origin and destination of the universe, and the causes of phenomena, and applies itself to the study of their laws – that is, their invariable relations of succession and resemblance.[46]

The second shift was from individualism to collectivism. The

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[44] J.S. Mill, "Three Essays on Religion," in John Robson and Jack Stillinger, eds., *Collected Works, Autography, and Literary Essays*, Vol. X, Toronto, 1981, pp. 420-21.

[45] R.C. Tucker, *The Marx-Engels Reader*, Second Edition, New York, 1978, p. 43.

[46] Quoted in H.D. Aiken, *The Age of Ideology*, New York, 1956, p. 125.

socialists and social democrats in Europe in the nineteenth century focused on the welfare of the working class, together with the welfare of the whole community, rather than on the rights of the individual.[47] A collective whole was conceptualized as constituted by social and historical forces. The attributes of the individual were, at best, of marginal significance, if at all. Emile Durkheim said:

The determining cause of a social fact should be sought amongst the social facts preceding it and not among the states of the individual consciousness.[48]

Social wholes were formed by the prevailing social forces. The social facts about these social wholes should therefore be ascertained in terms of these forces. The relation of these social wholes among themselves and their relation to their respective individual members were not determined by the consciousness, attributes and moral perspectives of these individual persons.[49] The positivist understanding of a social

[47] Only after the end of the Second World War, an effort was made to redress the balance by focusing again on the rights of the individual. The problem now was of reconciling collectivism with individualism. The intellectual history and practice of Marxism and socialism during the second half of the twentieth century was nothing but a history of such efforts, and of progress in this direction. Most of the contemporary conceptual, cultural and ideological development occurred around the resolution of individual with collective needs, interests and meanings.

[48] Emile Durkheim, " Preface," in K. Wolff, ed., *Emile Durkheim and Others on Sociology and Philosophy*, New York, 1960, p.110.

[49] When applied to inter-state relations, the Durkheimian approach would probably describe as hollow the present attempts to capitalize on people-to-people relations through such activities as cricket matches. That is, the people-to-people longing for good and friendly relations might not find expression in inter-state relations of hostility — because peace was something people plus. The theories of international politics grounded on liberal conceptualization of it were of the nature of hypotheses and, as such, music to the ears of war-weary people but, not a representation of reality in conduct of inter-state relations.

collective was built around the Cartesian strategy of objectifying phenomena. The social phenomena was, thus, rarefied, abstracted and objectified, and finally reconstructed in terms of hypotheses, methods, data and conclusions. Data was collected to map diverse social phenomena. Men and women were counted and measured on any number of indicators. There was almost an avalanche of numbers.The individual was objectified and reduced to a number.[50]

The individual person was reconstructed and robbed of moral autonomy and free will. He ceased to be an autonomous intentional subject, in the sense that he could choose to act in opposition to the norms of philosophical realism based on the assumption of a positive link between capability and intention. In this sense, he ceased to be a self-determining centre of decision-making.

The implication of such reconstruction was clear and potent: not only was the essentialist cultural view of the individual jettisoned, the whole question of individual identity (Who am I?) surfaced as an unexplored area and opened up the possibility of entering the hidden terrain of the self, for the benefit of business and governance, in institutions and organizations, public and private. The reconstructed individual was largely a means to something, to the realization of the goals set by these institutions and organizations for him, and, to that extent, ceased to be free as an end in himself. The essence of every individual person now came to be seen in terms of his orher innate potential. The process of individuation consisted in developing this potential for socially generated opportunities so that individuals could find a fit between their respective capabilities and the requirements of different roles.

[50] Individual persons as intentional systems and autonomous moral agents are the building blocks of a liberal society. But in market-based liberalism, such individuals are out of the picture.

The rights discourse came to be focused on the availability of these opportunities and defined morality within this framework. The focus now was on both social status and the use value of individual persons. The self became a subject of assessment by others. The answer to the question "who am I?" came to be related to your answer to the question "what do you think I am?" The individuation process emerged as a constitutive element in society. Identity was seen as both signifying and functional. The flaunting of identity in terms of qualification, specialization, status in an organization or an institution or class became commonplace. The typical human qualities of love, respect and tolerance acquired strategic value but were no longer very relevant in self-consciousness of self-identity.

THE EMBEDDED SELF

The theoretical approaches to understanding the individual person were too general and failed to connect to the local context especially in non-Western societies. In fact the theoretical grids were not relatable to local contexts. The knowledge available there was not translatable in terms of the theoretical concepts. The general theoretical understanding of the individual person was highly exclusionary. Hence the generality could not be accepted unless it was able to bridge the vast gap between a universal humanity and specific individuality. The gap amounted to a cultural gap, between the universal and the particular and as such difficult to span.

Cross-cultural studies could facilitate conduct of diplomacy, trade and tourism, but could not orient different cultures towards a convergence. This was so, because every culture had its own conception of human nature and defined the self in its own terms. One shared characteristic of non-Western cultures, which distanced them from the Western culture, was the nature of the social space. In non-Western

cultures, the social space was a dense network of interdependent relationships placing a high value on solidarity and a sense of community. Embeddedness and interdependence were the main factor in the definition of the self and its individuation. Non-Western cultures differed from their Western counterparts in treating individuation process as a situated phenomenon.

Cognitive development was integral to the individuation process. It was a means to social competence rather than an end in itself. Participatory learning through sharing of responsibilities was suited to development of cultural and affective competence. Formal learning was suited to development of linguistic, conceptual and rational competence. For this reason, the process of individuation for community solidarity was in conflict for realizing cosmopolitan values. Hence no claims for universal human rights could be validated without their successfully negotiating identity particularities. The need was to ground the theories of the individual in the socio-cultural reality and articulate critical discourses (within the hermeneutic tradition) based on stories told *by* the people instead of those *about* them. In short, the movement for universalizing individual rights would gain momentum only when the rights were attributed with meaning for the individual person in the socio-cultural context of the non-Western world.

Chapter 11

DE-COLONIZING THE GOOD

The idealized conception of liberal citizenship is a rhetorical statement. The people must be distanced from their commitment to religion-based norms of good life and persuaded to subordinate them to their identification as citizens. Unless such distance is achieved by a significant section of people in a society, liberal democracy cannot function, much less flourish. Hence, the rhetorical strategy aims to achieve a countervailing social base in favour of civic culture. Formal education and radical pedagogy are used to incorporate liberal values into the social discursive space and situate them there strategically. The idea is to motivate a corresponding interpretation of embedded relationships and form a community of people with shared experiences and shared meanings. Different representational, literary and art forms are mobilized for demolishing community conception of the good and for colonizing it by foregrounding exclusive primacy of individual rights in all social relationships.

In non-Western settings, the membership of such a civic community is limited to those sections of the people who have physically and mentally gained the required distance from the norms of the community good. For this reason, the civic community gets restricted to those people who have, by and large, distanced themselves from society itself. They crave to live in enclaves, claim special facilities like clubs to be able to insulate themselves from the gaze of the common man, while indulging in lifestyles of their choice. Unable to

substitute traditional norms of social care and security with corresponding modern norms, practices and institutions, the members of the civic community, at different stages of their life cycle, end up with considerably increased deviance and anomie (when past middle age adults indulge in corruption and favouritism, especially, in pushing their children into comfortable positions)[1] or when the members of the younger generation make deviance a pastime. It can be said that the ontological separation of the civic community from the underlying society, generates tension between principle and practice of civic values on the part of those who champion them in the political system.

Rhetorical calculation is not integral to the liberal cognitive project or to its self-understanding. Its use in the modern liberal praxis in the non-Western world is pervasive. The rhetorical content consists of a vocabulary for describing liberal political norms and structures as natural. All human beings, in their natural or prepolitical condition, are shown as free and equal. The norms of civic life are presented as a set of claims about the nature of things as they exist in themselves, beyond the realm of conflicting cultural worldviews. Non-liberal social and economic arrangements, tied to local culture and history, are shown as arbitrary and subversive of freedom and equality. This argument is rhetorical. The anthropological and historical studies show premodern economic and social organizations as more in line with nature than the arrangements labeled as natural by modern liberals. These studies show that locally grounded social arrangements and ways of thinking represent the

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[1] Haksar, P.N. said the same thing in these words: "Our civil services (sic) are committed, first of all to themselves and their nuclear family (sic) (and beyond this to) making secure the future of our sons and daughters (sic) and, if possible, the members of our subcaste, caste, community and region." *Premonitions*, Bombay, 1979, p. 201.

natural order of things better than liberal value propositions of universal applicability.

The political and international strategy of modern liberalism is based on the assumption that liberal social and political institutions strike roots spontaneously wherever arbitrary and oppressive regimes are effectively countervailed and held in check by political forces both inside and outside international borders. This is so because all human beings naturally affirm the norms of freedom and equality and the political and social institutions based on them. The rhetorical imperative of modern liberalism is governed by a universalistic and culture-neutral logic grounded on nature. The rhetoric is conceived as corresponding, not only to nature, but also to the faculty of autonomous human reason, and moral equality of all human beings. The rhetoric serves as a blinker for all those who feel disaffected in their life situation; more so, when liberal values are transformed into an ideological platform for their emancipation. This passage of values to ideology, a characteristic feature of modern liberalism, results in construction of social disadvantage as equivalent to a status of lesser humanity. Such a construction of liberal values is self-negating because the equality of all human beings in nature as accepted in liberalism does not depend on equality of all human beings in possession of worldly goods. The impact of such a construction on disadvantaged social groups is rhetorical. A disadvantaged person is drawn into the belief that there exists a common ground of humanity and that therefore the social history of disadvantaged position reveals the real causes working behind the status of 'lesser humanity'.

The rhetorical turn in the practice of liberal values, clears the way for the West to export political theory and liberal institutions in the name of democracy. In the wake of the First World War, the West exported democracy to Germany.

After the Second World War, the West exported democracy to Germany again and to Japan, and after the cold war to Yugoslavia, Afghanistan and Iraq. In some quarters at least, such policies have been explained, in terms of international relations theory, as pretexts for an economic strategy to open foreign markets, or as part of the cold war strategy to impose friendly liberal regimes everywhere in order to contain the spread of communism. These explanations make no sense in the absence of a belief that liberal democratic political regimes are expressions of the natural order of things and so superior to other regimes. This top-down process of diffusing liberal values and civic good gives rise to multiple sites for interface of the right and the good.

COMPETING RIGHTS, COMPETING GOODS

Politics and governance are nested in the problem of matching competing rights with competing goods at all levels of analysis, from the individual to the state and beyond. For this matching to occur in an orderly way, it needs to be mediated by structures, each claiming to embody a moral principle and delivering value to its members. Thus the concept of *structure* and *system* are central to any discourse of the relation between the right and the good.

This discourse is always situated in liberalism. Of course, a shift has occurred of late towards new liberalism, as post-Rawlsian liberalism is called. New liberalism is an attempt to reconcile the Enlightenment conception of a liberal society with anti (or post)-Enlightenment thinking on the human condition by bringing into the discourse the idea of the good. The aim of such reconciliation was to enrich (not to destroy) the Enlightenment project by drawing on the emerging philosophical insights relating to the human condition. In a way, it was a European contribution to a primarily Anglo-American project.

The idea of structure rests on the assumption that all human activity, both physical and mental and its products, both material and non-material, including thought and imagination, values and perception of the good, is constructed, not natural. Its roots went back to the thought of several philosophers, such as Karl Marx, Sigmund Freud and Ferdinand de Saussure. The thought of these philosophers was synthesized into a nucleus of what later came to be known as structuralism. It was enriched by contributions from Frederick Nietzsche, Martin Heidegger, Claude Levi-Strauss, Vladimir Propp and a host of other philosophers. Structuralism, as an approach to social sciences and humanities, including the study of art and literature, snowballed into an intellectual movement in the first half of the twentieth century. Karl Marx emphasized underlying economic structures for understanding class polarization in perceptions of the right and the good. Sigmund Freud stressed the unconscious as the underlying structure of the human psyche shaping perception of the right and the good. Ferdinand de Saussure emphasized structural linguistics for uncovering the embeddedness of the right and the good in any given language group. For each of these philosophers, the structure is a dynamic principle (may be, having the connotation of a force or an impulse) capable of constructing social reality by means of a well-integrated system of cultural and institutional agencies. The system, its agencies and their operational values get reflected in human perception and imagination, and help in identifying what is desirable and good and in tailoring a strategy of action for realizing them.

The experiences embodied as concepts and reflexes are subjectively articulated in the form of perception in the face of similar experiences. The nature of these categories points towards a basic epistemological problem. Immanuel Kant addressed this problem in what he called critical episte-mology. He disagreed with rationalists (the Enlightenment

view) that human perception of the world should be
organized around categories arrived through exercise of
pure reason. He said that such categories, though useful,
did not give practical content to perception. Knowing the
world in universal terms was no guide to action in a given
situation. In a similar way, Kant recognized the
epistemological inadequacy of empiricists who grounded all
knowledge on experience. The categories of perception
derived from experience were also too narrowly located and
could not be a guide to action, as their practical significance,
if at all, was limited to particular situations. Kant, therefore,
suggested an entirely new way of formulating the
epistemological problem. Rather than relying on reason or
experience for arriving at categories that match with the
nature of objects, the need was to so construct categories
that they shape human experience of objects. In other words,
according to Kant, in his *Critique of Pure Reason*, it was, no
doubt, reason that determined the conditions of perception
through construction of categories that filtered human
experience of objects, but for such experience to be
universal, the categories so constructed must conform to *a
priori* principles.

Undoubtedly, Kant's solution of the epistemological
problem marked an advance in critical philosophy, as it
opened the doors for grounding reason, but it was not
advanced enough to be able to account for social differences
and narrow down to practical guidance in specific contexts
shaping the human condition. A synthesis of perception with
universal imperatives for action was not sufficient. After all,
society was not a harmonious whole. It had, within it, deeply
embedded structures mediating thought, institutions and
social practices, differently for different people even within
the same social space. Perception, therefore, could not be
homogeneous, neither in terms of rational categories, nor
in terms of practical necessities. To posit otherwise would

not lead to a correct understanding of the social situation, it was thought, nor will it lead to a correct definition of political space for contests among perceptions of particular goods. The study of political development as a definition of political good in non-Western settings had erred on this count, at least in the initial stages, when the heuristic framework of structural-functionalism was accepted for analysing politics in a non-Western setting[2] This was forcefully pointed out in a recent study by me:

(T)he societies characterized by structural inequalities of different socio-cultural groups and classes, resulting in unequal incorporation of such groups and classes into the political system, were not amenable to the analytical premises of this model.[3]

Practical action for realizing a particular good must, of necessity, be narrowly focussed. This created imperatives for further grounding of reason. The movement away from universality to particularity was not merely a response to the existential conditions (including unequal endowments) but was pushed by a heightened consciousness of social differences when perception of such differences was filtered through historical processes. It was possible to fire this consciousness by inventing myth and giving wings to social imagination. Historical narratives did exactly this.

As normally understood, history was a study of the past. But the past was always studied from the vantage point of the present. History was not read by going into the past as it

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[2] Cf.: "This approach used the integration perspective to posit normative consensus and structural equilibrium as self-evident bases of a society. It emphasized that the choices in political development were of simple inference from the cultural traits shown by a mass of people corresponding to the level of their modernization and economic growth." Sushil Kumar, *Political Development: Risk, Anxiety and Innovation*, Monograph in Dissemination of Knowledge Series, Shimla: IIAS, 2003, p.39.

[3] Ibid., pp. 39.

was lived then. It was read in the present. As the present was encapsulated in modernity, it could be defined only in terms of the problems and aspirations generated by modernity. Understanding the nature of these problems and aspirations was therefore central for taking a position in the present and for reading the past for finding clues for solving the problems and realizing aspirations for the future. Heightened consciousness of social differences promoted different understandings of the problems and aspirations and led to articulation of different approaches for reading the past. This line of thinking was not new. It was modelled on Rousseau's metaphor — man and women were born free but everywhere they were in chains; and, if going back into the past was not possible, then the problem was of finding ways of liberating them. This line of thinking when taken to the non-Western reading of its own past could take one of the two main directions.

First, it could take the same direction as was taken in the eighteenth century by the philosophers of modernity. Take the case of the social contract philosophers — Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau. Each imagined a fictional past, a state of nature. Each described it in terms of his metaphysical conceptions of nature, man and society and each suggested a different pathway for solving the problems and realizing the aspirations. The theoretical points advanced by them constituted the main elements of the Enlightenment discourse. Rousseau's republicanism and Locke's concepts of civil society and trusteeship of the governing elite continued to be the frontline solutions for political problems in the present twenty-first century and continued to serve as conceptual foundations for designing polity in line with human aspirations for the future. Even a twentieth century philosopher, John Rawls, imagined a fictional past described as 'the original position' and examined the present-day problems against it. His theory of justice was an outcome of

this exercise. Hence, a reading of the past in the present did not imply reading a real, lived past. It was possible to read a fictional past. It was also possible to read both real and fictional pasts simultaneously, so that they shaded off into each other for the purpose of defining political space for contest among notions of particular goods at the behest of social groups charged with a heightened consciousness of difference and agency.

It was thus evident that the political thinkers of modernity in Europe were defining the political good for their respective societies to address the emerging problems and aspirations within the present of their times, without taking sides on contentious issues of the lived history. The articulation of the good was left to the workings of instrumental rationality harnessed by the ruling elite in formulating public policies. The overall epistemological framework of linear temporality was accepted. This point found mention in *The Discovery of India.* Nehru said, "There is only one way traffic in Time."[4] For this reason, the good so defined became readily acceptable to the people. Had the political thinkers not invented a fictional past and, instead, spent their energies on digging out, from different historical contexts, instances of socio-cultural practices running counter to their rational axioms and translating such definitions of the good into political doctrines for discrimination against the social groups held responsible for those practices, then the European societies might have undergone greater turbulence than what they did, and the project of modernity might have been upset. Anthropological studies did describe several socio-cultural practices in European past that, to a modern conscience, were appalling. Some of these practices continued into the present.

[4] London, 1946, 447.

Scholars in Europe did not treat these practices as deeply embedded structures shaping societies in ways that interfered with rational perception of the good there.[5] European philosophers took care not to ground reason on an imagined socio-cultural space populated with mythical issues abstracted from a reading of history in terms of values external to the society then. European scholars knew that it was not the way to move a society towards modernity.

The second direction that historical study could take for filtering perception of the good, was to imagine solutions to

[5] Cultural Marxists in the non-Western world likened culture to the means of production acting out its dynamics in dialectical relationship with the ontological quest for a new social being through transcendence. This understanding was cast within the Gramscian view of history as continuous process and the assumption that the key for gaining control of this process was through *cultural hegemony*. Hegemony, in this context, was a complex and fluid construct and required a subtle combination of ideological and cultural practices. See David Forgacs, ed., *An Antonio Gramsci Reader, Selected Writings, 1916-1935*, New York, 1988, pp. 206 ff. Such strategizing of culture by non-Western practitioners of Enlightenment values distorted the perception of the good, as it led to its disembodiment from community solidarity. No different was the embodiment of the good in community solidarity, again for strategic purposes. For a recent example of it, see Samuel P. Huntington's *Who Are We? The Challenges to American Identity*, New York, 2004. Huntington's conclusions were caricatured as below:

> Huntington believes that there is a core American identity, shaped by dissenting Anglo-Protestantism. In the past, all immigrants (the first Americans, he points out, were settlers, not immigrants) were willing to subscribe to this identity. But among those arriving today, according to Huntington, are many who refuse to share (sic) and even denounce as criminal (sic) America's cultural identity. He warns that, unless the United States insists that they accept it, which is unlikely, given the global priorities of business and the multicultural fantasies of liberal elites, the United States of America will suffer the fate of Sparta, Rome, and other human communities. Alan Wolfe, "Native Son: Samuel Huntington Defends the Homeland," *Foreign Affairs*, May and June, 2004.

present problems incubating in the past. Mahatma Gandhi urged that India should return to the age of *ram rajya*. It was not an un-reflexive invocation of tradition or of classical antiquity. The epistemological break with European philosophers consisted in treatment of time as absolute, not relative. The past, present and future were not taken as radically (ontologically) different. The past was not distanced from the present. Such a perception of the good would not accept any evolutionary mediation. The historians would celebrate resistance to assimilation under the impact of immigrants, invaders or more modern forms of hegemonic controls (colonialism, imperialism or modernization). They would reject the social science theories of industrialization, postulating radical transformation of society. They felt self-assured in their position in the context of recent empirical evidences picking holes in the totalizing theories of modernity and the recent collapse of totalitarian socialism in the former Soviet Union and China. They, of course, would not deny the desirability of absorption of ideas and practices from other cultures but would insist on rediscovery of these other cultures within the framework of cultural heritage. For them, such impact of other cultures, was the strongest stimulus to creativity within a cultural tradition as evidenced in art and literature. The overall attempt of such a reading of the past was to give their perception of the good, a dual role: affirmative and critical in preservation of identity.

In short, the formation of concepts and categories for organizing experience and perception of the good, led to, what might be described as, ontologization and canonization of social life. Fact and myth were woven together for reading the past and interpreting the present for articulating rival political agendas generally characterized as reflecting tension between archaism and futurism. They caused cognitive conflicts and dissonances. The conflicts and

dissonances intersected with subjectivity to fragment the self and torment consciousness. The situation, in a way, conformed to Heidegger's notion of the decentred self.

Such an unhappy situation was ripe for transgressing the boundary conditions in the meta-narratives of Enlightenment modernity and pre-Enlightenment notions of culture-centred good life. It was now possible to recentre the discourse of the right and the good in the postmodern emphasis on social difference and the poststructuralist notion of agency. It was, therefore, asserted that while the totalizing theories of modernity and the cultural theories of identity monopolized political consciousness as competing narratives of the good, the agency was in a position to advance notions of particular good by taking a critical stand on unhappy real life experiences with the working out of these narratives. The agency was able to challenge the essentialist and universalizing elements of these narratives to uncover the unreality of their political agenda. The agency was supposed not only to liberate political consciousness but also to launch a counter-agenda – that of decolonizing the good and contextualize it in specific socio-cultural conditions of the people. It was a departure from the totalizing assumptions of practical reason on the one hand, and from the essentializing definitions of culture on the other hand. It symbolized a struggle for the middle ground.

The structure-agency debates thus posit a creative tension between the narratives of good unfolding through stories of state, nation and class and the good that inhabits the life-world of the people whose practical reason in realizing it did not link up with these narratives and who increasingly felt that the reflection of their desires in the unfolding stories was much short of their expectations, if not a mere mirage.

The consequent turn in political understanding should have shifted academic effort from macro-level processes to micro-level concerns in a political universe that was closer to the lives of the people, and should have brought to the

centrestage of academic concern, the rights and the goods as perceived and claimed by social groups and communities. The existential reality of decentred life worlds of individuals, groups and communities should have served as sites for analysing the transformative potential of politics and public policies. The academic study of politics — should then have emphasized policies for building institutions of cultural pedagogy for mediating competing rights with competing goods, with considerations of a more humane and consensual social order, conforming to the law of the land. This would have also created a right environment for realizing the civic good within an overall framework of value pluralism.

Such an academic shift was not affected. One reason could be the organizational rigidity of the two cultures in universities. The rigidity was rooted partially in the personal interests of both teachers and students in the continued organization of disciplines as separate departments. The definition of the subject matter in different disciplines excluded a lot of social reality that was relevant to it. Such exclusion was necessary for enforcing paradigms rooted in the position taken by scholars in ongoing social struggles and privileged by them for their students. Professionalization of academic studies by recentring them in policy domains and goals was not undertaken and the politics of hegemony between the two cultures persisted. This conditioned academic perceptions of the social good in scholarly writings and had the effect of shaping the interpretation of events and policies in domestic societies and international relations. The effect of such scholarly practices on real politics should not be underestimated.

POLARIZED PLURALISM: THE TWO CULTURES
AND THE POLITICS OF HEGEMONY

The theoretical constructions as narratives of state, nation, class and individual, and their explanatory frameworks

modelled on natural sciences, with emphasis on identification of causes and discovery of law-like regularities, guided empirical investigations for explanation and evaluation of events and processes within a teleological understanding of a universal good. Politics was defined as space for social engineering through social churning, with a view to "construct political communities of shared legacy and common destiny."[6] The human content of the enterprise was missing, whether the pathway for championing hegemony was liberal-Marxist, or the post-cold war Marxist-liberal. The human content was absent because human behaviour was objectified as mechanical reflex to an external environment. The fault lay in the conceptions of structure and agency as distinct entities and, in the co-lateral assumption that the dynamics of modernity would be able to draw on the capacity of the reflexive subject to master the external environment and eventually emerge as an autonomous reflective agent.[7]

The focus on the human content of human behaviour, on the other hand, would take the argument on a different plane. It would treat behaviour as a product of intention and self-understanding and creative of meaning for the self and others.[8] For this reason, the postmodern and

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[6] Kumar, *Political Development*, p. 39. The idea was to posit an ontological transformation of the social being for realizing the good and so the concepts used for describing the hegemonic process were value-loaded and had no content. Cf.: "Social churning as a new coinage came into vogue to describe the normative preference, even though little theoretical and empirical effort was undertaken to give it meaning and depth." Ibid., p. 39.

[7] Individual autonomy is an idea that is generally understood to refer to the capacity to be one's own person, to live one's life according to reasons and motives that are taken as one's own and not the product of manipulative or distorting external forces.

[8] Charles Taylor emphasized this difference. See his *Human Agency and Language: Philosophical Papers*, Vols. I and II, Cambridge, 1985.

poststructural philosophers rejected the treatment of social structures and human agents as purely objectified identities.[9] For them, such an understanding of the emancipatory enterprise gave it a hegemonic character. They preferred the discourse theory for interpreting the politics of hegemony and uncovering its meaning. They relied on linguistic analysis for this purpose. Language, as the only means of representation that made social reality intelligible was constitutive of such reality. Language represented reality in binary terms.

An experience derived its meaning from its structured difference from the other, its opposite. The meaning given to an experience was independent of its content. For this reason, the linguistic representation of reality was always exclusionary. It never represented the reality in its totality. If access to social reality in its totality were not possible, it would be illogical to assume that it was so accessible. On the basis of such a faulty assumption of accessibility, attempts to objectify social reality for analysis would be further illogical and doubly faulty. To take the analysis of such an objectified social reality as ground for explaining social behaviour was misleading. An understanding of social reality on these lines should not define the problematic of world affairs today when market availability of weapons and strategic blueprints for violent action ruled out organized conflict as a sane choice.

The positivist differentiation in the ontological status of state, nation, class, community and the individual hierarchized these entities in a manner that their competing rights and conceptions of the good could not cohere peacefully in the post-Westphalian European states

[9] See Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mauffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*, London, 1985; Ernesto Laclau, *New Reflections on the Revolution of Our Times*, London, 1990; and Ernesto Laclau, *Emancipation(s)*, London, 1996.

system.The modern history of Europe (in fact, of the entire Western world) was a narrative of polarized pluralism in which states and nations, classes and communities, groups and individuals kept on combining and recombining themselves to create a political order based on hierarchical relationships, morally sanctified in the name (or cover) of serious engagement with realization of a preferred conception of the good as the crescendo of the Western civilization. But, the hierarchic ordering was never stable. Those at the receiving end of it often succeeded in upsetting it. When in power, they also used the same institutional mechanisms for realizing their conceptions of the good and eventually met the same fate as their predecessors.

The concept of time in the Western philosophical tradition left no choice other than to treat historical dynamics in terms of linear or dialectical images and visualize a leading role for a specific social entity in different time periods of this trajectory. This simplified reading of the Western narrative of world affairs was not aimed to underline a meaningless seesaw between entities polarized along the line of hegemony (as was the problematic of anarchy generally understood in the study of international relations). Nor was it aimed to deny teleology to the Western civilization. Nor was it aimed to underrate the narratives focused on the ontological superiority of a dynamic force in historical unfolding of the human good. It only aimed to highlight that Western world affairs were a narrative of conflict, dominance and realization of sectional good through hegemony.

Sarvodaya (good of all) was alien to this narrative. The historical processes in the West for realizing the good did not have a singular logic. A look at the scene in the West today would make it amply clear. On the one end of the social spectrum, there were groups of people who would prefer the use of military machines for realizing human good (humanitarian intervention.) At the other end, there were

people who saw the hopes of human salvation through mind-expanding techniques made available by pharmacology (especially the use of LSD) or by holy men from the East. The various configurations of social groups formed a spectrum of colours on the social landscape in the West. They were not engaged in a common discourse of the human good because no social configuration was prepared to see social reality in its totality. There was a kind of academic untouchability in their relations with one another. Even sociability was lacking. There was no love for the other. Even academic reputations would rise and fall according to the position a scholar would take on the issue of human good. In political science, for example, Samuel Huntington, whose career spanned several decades and who was a doyen among Enlightenment-oriented scholars, suddenly fell from grace after his post-cold war publications focusing on civilizational fault lines and more recently on Anglo-American Protestantism as the foundation of American nationalism.

Should the non-West go on this beaten path? Should social entities be ontologized and polarized into hierarchical relations for purposes of social engineering through social churning? Was it not pretentious on the part of hegemonic forces to monopolize morality on their side and push large masses outside the moral sphere of the polity and treat them as objects for purposes of governance? If not, then the alternative was to treat them as equal partners in governance and development. No doubt, attempts were made to craft such an inclusive approach by drawing academic resources for it from Marxism-Leninism, especially theorizing on the problem of nationalities. A rediscovery of this approach in different socio-historical contexts in the non-Western world generally led to politics of identity.

The break-up of the former Soviet Union led to an interrogation of this approach and created space for crafting a new strategy that combined liberalism with the Marxist

approach. It was a strategy of Enlightenment crossing over
to the anti-Enlightenment conception of the good. But in
relation to the pre-Enlightenment conceptions of the good,
a composite liberal-Marxist approach continued to be
hegemonic. The strategy was to privilege secular social groups
as ontologically superior to non-secular social forces. The
strategy, while claiming to be radically liberal, fell short on
the basic liberal principle of moral autonomy and went far
in retaining the Marxist principle of socially interventionary
politics. It was a strategy of combining state, nation and class
into a unitary ontological category, ready to forge class
alliances across international borders, for exercising
hegemonic control over community-centred groups and
classes for de-centring their social solidarity from their
conceptions of the good (normally grounded on religious
beliefs), and push this helpless lot onto the vagaries of the
market. The consequent break down of community-based
morality was evident all over the non-Western world, with
marked increase in crime, corruption and trafficking in
women and children. The strategy was so ruthless as not to
hold it back even from using criminals for its purposes by
putting them into high offices of the state for combining
state apparatus with criminal outreach for exercising control
across the line of hegemony. The fulcrum of this strategy
was the assumption that the Machiavellian use of state power
would not let these communities and classes organize
themselves into a matching organized force. This assumption
was not misplaced but did not cover the possibilities of
sporadic and anarchic use of violence and its impact on
society and politics.[10] What was the answer to the problem?

[10] For colonial *realpolitik* and its impact on India-Pakistan relations,
see Shaikh, Farzana, *Community and Consensus in Islam: Muslim
Representation in Colonial India, 1860-1947,* Cambridge, 1989. What is
the seat of freedom, the community or the individual? This is an
unanswered question in South Asia.

One could think of two solutions. First, the hegemony should become truly hegemonic – that is, totalizing. It should be grounded on the discourses of *negativity* and *completion*, and completely stripped of elements of dominance and political manipulation.

These terms were used by post-structural scholars to describe the hegemonic process as oriented towards completion of an incomplete identity – that is, a process whereby an incomplete identity approximates the models of a complete identity. The hegemonic process, as a contingent factor in the self-awareness of an incomplete identity, sets off the logic of negativity in the domain of its self-awareness and transforms it into a self-reflexive agent striving for completeness, as it was understood in terms of the hegemonic values. To paraphrase Hegel, the identity, being aware of its incompleteness in the context of the ongoing hegemonic process, was an objective category and became a self-knowing, self-actualizing ethical substance.

The political strategists putting their faith in the efficacy of the process often forgot (or failed to take into account) the boundary condition for realizing the teleology of completeness. The striving of a self-conscious identity towards completeness was possible only within a social space that permitted such striving to appear as a practical option. There was no way to engineer an identity as a potter would engineer mud into a pot. When the market was not in a position to offer adequate opportunity (might be because the opportunity costs of doing so were high and not affordable) and the state was helpless in the face of its own compulsions, the uprooting of the individual from the security and moral domain of the community-centred good life and pushing him or her into the market, was the surest way to mediate the thinking of even a morally upright (but self-reflecting) agent in a way that, his or her intention would look for other possibilities. Hence, the discourses of negativity and

completion should not be pushed too hard. The law and order machinery should recognize its limits and Machiavellian *realpolitik* in inter-group and inter-community relations would not go far enough. The second solution to the problem followed from this recognition – that liberal thinking should recover the true meaning of value pluralism and adapt the concept of civil society to the specific conditions of non-Western societies.

VALUE PLURALISM: A BRIDGE ACROSS THE TWO CULTURES

The relation between value pluralism and political liberalism is problematic. Isaiah Berlin is famous for two master concepts. First, he defined a moral universe in which important values are plural, conflicting, incommensurable in theory, and not amenable to combination in practice — a world in which there is no single, univocal *summum bonum* that can be defined philosophically, let alone imposed politically. Second, he defended negative liberty, understood as the capacity to choose among competing conceptions of the good.

Do these two concepts fit together? If value pluralism is taken seriously, then autonomy in the form of negative liberty is to be given priority over all other values. Within the framework of value pluralism, it is imperative to recognize that a life defined by habit, tradition, or the acceptance of authority is as valid a form of human flourishing as any other. This will amount to denying universality to liberal claims and so also to the politics of hegemony and ground them in particular norms of good life. Value pluralism regards a liberal political community, at best, as one valid form of political association among many others. This line of argument has important political implications for non-Western states where social differences cut deep. In these states, a conception of political community, grounded on

universalistic principles is imperative and so theoretical and institutional innovations are needed for reconciling such a conception of political community with the existential reality of value pluralism.

Value pluralism is neither scepticism nor relativism. It consists only in demarcation of social space within which the things are objectively good and outside its boundaries, they are objectively bad. Within this social space, the good is multiple and cannot be reduced to a common measure. Nor can it be ranked in a clear order of priority. Nor does it form a harmonious whole. No single conception of the good is valid for all individuals. What is good for one may not be equally good for the other. Life in society is characterized by a variety of goods, both moral and material. The variety is so vast that it is not possible for any one individual or group to possess all the different kinds of goods. Some individuals or groups may be able to possess more than others but none can possess them all. Those who possess more cannot be allowed to attribute pre-eminence to their possessions, or subordinate others to them in value, or exclude them from the moral domain of the society. No individual or group can claim to be morally universal. This understanding of value pluralism clearly implies a measure of indeterminacy within which various choices of good life are rationally defensible. Value pluralism, thus, underlines moral freedom. As there is no one uniquely rational ordering or combination of incommensurable goods, no one can advance a valid reason, binding on all individuals, for a particular ranking or combination of the goods. While, therefore, coercive interference in individual or group choice of the good is not permissible, it is certainly permissible to coerce individuals or groups from not interfering in the exercise of similar freedom by others. This means that moral freedom should encompass freedom of choice between the goods. In short, the two defining conditions of value pluralism are,

first, the principle of autonomy of choice; and second, the diversity of available choices. These conditions emerged in the West in specific historical conditions. Each can be traced to a distinct historical root. Autonomy of choice is rooted in the Enlightenment project. The Enlightenment culture claimed that freedom from externally imposed restraints could be gained through exercise of reason. Hence, a rationally examined life was better (in fact, superior) to reliance on tradition or religion. A good life was one that was self-directed. External determination of the will was to be avoided. The second condition (the availability of diverse choices) was rooted in the Reformation project. The Reformation culture aimed to come to terms with the political consequences of religious differences within Christianity.

The central task was that of managing diversity by practising toleration within a framework of civic unity. Autonomy and choice are conjoined in value pluralism. To privilege autonomy understood as capacity for critical reflection and choice of the good, is tantamount to robbing the state of its neutrality and making public authorities a party on the side of the Enlightenment culture in the continuing tension between reason and religion, reflection and tradition. This results in marginalization of the vast masses that, on account of poverty and lack of formal education, are not able to cross over to the Enlightenment value of rational reflection for securing freedom from external pressures on their beliefs and actions. For this reason, these masses also get antagonized with the political system which, while not able to provide them the required resources for building the necessary capacity for internalizing the Enlightenment value and translating it into their thought and practice, subjects their social and political behaviour against the norms derived from this value.

The consequent hierarchization of social groups undermines value pluralism and social diversity necessary

for maintaining social harmony and political stability. In the conditions of non-Western societies, the focus of the political system should therefore be on protection of diversity. The political leadership and public authorities find themselves in a situation when they, rather than excelling in rational reflection leading to formation and implementation of public policies (as is expected from them), readily yield to pressures in favour of sectional biases and interests. The situation can be redressed (at least partially) by foregrounding value pluralism. While autonomy through promotion of rational reflection is necessary for the viability of the civic sphere in a society suffering from deep divisions, there should also be enough room for those whose lives are better governed by tradition, authority and religious belief.[11]

The relation of value pluralism to religion is also problematic. Systems of religious belief seek to establish hierarchies of values within frameworks of universally binding higher order purposes. This imbues a religious community with an internal drive for socio-political domination cutting into the idea of a civil space for free participation of all communities in cultural and political life of the society. Value pluralism confronts such a drive for domination. Whenever such domination is anticipated, feared or perecived, political forces come into play to restrict state coercion on behalf of a single faith. Or, the civil authorities (in collusion with civil society activists) decide to use different instrumentalities to widen the fissures within the majority religious community to allay the fears and to counter anticipated domination. As these measures cannot be justified in terms of a real experience of domination, or adequate empirical evidence

[11] See, Brown, Chris, "Towards a Neo-Aristotelian Resolution of Cosmopolitan-Communitarian Debate," in Fritz, Jan-Stefan and Lensu, Maria, eds., *Value Pluralism, Normative Theory and International Relations*, London, 1999. The South Asian liberals never succeeded in reconciling principle with interest.

of the society moving towards religiously sanctified higher purposes, there opens up a vast political space for levelling charges against public authorities of bias and partiality and of departure from the norm of neutrality.

The foregrounding of value pluralism, as a framework for liberal governance in social conditions of deeply grounded diversity warrants that public authorities should soft-pedal subjective evaluations of domination, treat them as a case of transferred anxiety about socio-economic backwardness and use them as a platform for trade-off with measures for modernization.

Hence, value pluralism generates imperatives for the state to stand firmly on the ground of neutrality, without getting trapped into inter-community politics surrounding the concept of secularism. It should eschew policies of social intervention beyond the goal of maintaining, for all communities, a meaningful social space for religious practice and belief in decent ways. It should guard the moral autonomy of its citizens as subjects without treating them as objects of cultural transformation. Treatment of human beings as objects of socio-cultural transformation gives a teleological spin to statecraft and to political and economic practices.

There cannot be any rational principles for giving weight to competing goods at the level of the individual. Personality factors, socio-economic conditions, choice of role models and, above all, consciousness of moral autonomy generally contribute to the making of a choice. But at the level of competing political goods, the situation is different. Here the claim has to be advanced as a valid claim within the framework of rules that define the validity of a claim. Competing goods at the political level thus get transformed into competing valid claims. In situations like this two possibilities are open. First, the winner takes all. Second, a strategy of balance, compromise and accommodation is

evolved. The liberal position of polarized pluralism rests on
the first preference – the winner takes all. The liberal position
claims to represent the Enlightenment approach and
strategizes its relation with pre-Enlightenment and anti-
Enlightenment conceptions of the good. European history
is read to identify challenges to the Enlightenment values.
These challenges are reinvented in the specific socio-
historical settings of non-Western societies. The general
trend is to identify two challenges, Stalinism and fascism.
The strategy of polarized pluralism and the politics of
hegemony squarely rest on a reading of European history in
a non-Western postcolonial context, on the normative goal
of fighting Stalinism and fascism there.

Mythology and demonology are invented and advanced
on the backs of the academia and the media to scare the
haves and the upper classes (and in non-Western societies
these classes, apart from the industrial bourgeoisie if
it is there at all, include aristocracy, upper castes and
communities and religious minorities who see in Stalinism
the ghost of the majority community acquiring state power)
to come out with financial and political support against such
an eventuality. A pre-emptory strategy is to fragment what is
feared as the possible social base for the rise of fascism or
Stalnism.

The organized labour gets coopted into the strategy, again
after the pattern in European history, when the English
working class had chosen to be on the side of the colonialists.
The aim of the strategy is to force doctrinal Marxists into
the mould of social democracy and the poor and the weak
into that of liberalism. The grounding of political strategy
on fear arising from anxieties of anticipated risks fits very
neatly into the Western especially American social science
tradition. It will be appropriate to quote from a recent study:

"(S)tates and nations are neither good nor bad but they get so labelled
when the norms of their organization and behaviour hold out a risk of

undermining normative and political preferences of the great powers. (sic) Such a context of risk has been a constant presence in the postcolonial world. (sic) The risk of the new states trying to fashion themselves after the European models of state and nation has, throughout, been of paramount consideration, lest the new states choose to repeat the European history of state construction and nation-building through war and suppression of freedom.[12]

The point here is that such an understanding of the non-Western situation has a significant component of myth and invention and does not conform to the tenets of liberal politics. It is 'the winner takes all' kind of politics. It is hegemonic and totalizing for large masses of people. Or, it is indifferent towards them as was colonial liberalism.[13] If it is not such a take-all strategy pursued by the elite, then it is a balancing strategy.

It brings in an element of *realpolitik* in inter-community relations.[14] This also does not conform to the principle of

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[12] Kumar, *Political Development*, pp. 7-8.

[13] Cf.:"But the raj could not have survived if we British had not been convinced of our superiority and, so few Britons could not have ruled so vast a country if they had not also created an Indian elite who shared their conviction that British culture was inherently superior to their own. (sic) That was why we concentrated our efforts on creating that small elite and *left the rest of India to itself.*" Mark Tully, *No Full Stops in India*, New Delhi, 1991, p. 57. Emphasis added. Other scholars have also commented that societies, like that in India, with complex and highly structured social hierarchies and richly elaborated theologies could only be managed by coopted intermediaries, like the diverse array of *rajas, zamindars*, princes, and *Brahmans*, who permitted a tiny cadre of British officials to rule over the country. Feelings of shame about their cultural heritage motivated the colonized to shape their society on the model of the Western intruders. Jawaharlal Nehru termed it as the "psychological triumph of the British in India." *Towards Freedom*, New York, 1941, p. 264.

[14] The *manufactured threats* enable inter-community antagonisms to dig themselves deep though not in the form of rival fronts. Cf.: "The general confusion inside and outside the institutions necessitates

value pluralism. Compromise and accommodation are a part of the process, not unprincipled compromises, but those that reconcile the right with the good in inter-community relations. Such compromises are the only way out when, in multicultural settings, the heterogeneity of the good cannot be reduced to a common measure. The diverse conceptions of the good should constitute a discourse in which boundary crossing occurs in an atmosphere of social harmony The singular dynamics of the discourse is bound to enhance the area of agreement when decentralized local-level discourses bring together particular conceptions and practices of good life for addressing practical and human problems of the locality.[15] It is obvious that the real problems of life and society

and favours the formation of support networks crossing the boundaries of systems and institutions which must be personally connected and preserved. In a certain way, then, the disintegration of institutions makes room for a re-feudalization of social relationships. *It is the opening for a neo-Machiavellianism in all areas of social action.*" Ulrich Beck, Anthony Giddens and Scott Lash, *Reflexive Modernization: Politics, Tradition and Aesthetics in the Modern Social Order*, Oxford, 1994, p.44. Emphasis added.

[15] The feasibility of such a discourse is contingent on a retooling of pedagogy and a reconceptualization of civil society so as to disembody it from the politics of hegemony. It should be recalled that the notion of civil society had developed in the democratic context of Athens in which all free men participated in decision-making process or governance of society. This classical notion was reinvented in modern times to serve as a safety net to protect those victimized by the capitalist economy based on rationalist utilitarian principles. Later, the notion was appropriated by liberals and, in the non-Western context, integrated with the politics of liberal hegemony. In a way, it was a side effect of cold war politics in relation to the former Soviet Union. Non-Western liberals accepted such a reconstructed model of civil society without critically examining its relevance to the conditions of their societies. To trace the lineage of such a reconstructed notion of civil society to the practice in Athens, was not fair. At least, I thought it this way. When, therefore, Professor D.P. Chattopadhyaya asked me in the course of a seminar at the IAAS, Shimla, whether there was a

in the non-Western world cannot be addressed today in terms of un-reflexive traditionalism. Nor can they be addressed in terms of unmediated rationalism. A bridge across the two cultures, combining philosophical reflection with empirical guidance will enlarge the area of national consensus on moral and ethical issues. The civic good will then relate to people in a more harmonious and less hegemonic way. This will also paint liberalism with non-Western colours, endogenize it and decolonize the good. Such a development is also expected to underline that in a democratic and modern polity the society should give meaning to the constitutional order and the Enlightenment values embodied in it, rather than being transformed into a mirror image of it through practices of hegemonic politics.[16]

tradition of civil society in India, I said no, because the connotation in India was not similar to that in Athens; there was no overlap between it and the present connotation. My idea was to underline the difference. The civil society in India needs to be so reconstructed that, rather than waging a political struggle in favour of right only, it draws closer towards accommodation among competing notions of civic good and is able to nourish values of love, compassion and togetherness among members of a local community.

[16] The non-Western world can present before the Western world an example of a harmonious blending of pre-Enlightenment, Enlightenment and anti-Enlightenment values in their conception of the good.

POSTSCRIPT

Anti-colonial nationalism aspires for democratic deter-
mination of politics as opposed to determination by those
who consider themselves superior to others. This aspiration
had a perfect fit with liberal humanist values of liberty,
equality and fraternity. After the First World War when the
Bolshevik Revolution opened new routes for moving faster
towards the goals of material progress and military power, a
change of gear to speed up economic performance in the
West became necessary. The humanistic values yielded place
to the goal of national power. This new face of liberal
humanism was alluring but did not attract the leadership in
the new nations of the non-West, particularly Jawaharlal
Nehru. The new classes — rural, urban, commercial and
professional — whose emergence was a direct consequence
of the colonial rule, probably played a role in this. As
crossovers to the postcolonial political condition they
continued to be important stakeholders in state power.[1]

When local and regional leaders saw disconnect between

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[1] This situation was mediated by the inheritance situation characterized
by a shift in the centre of sovereign power from international relations
to domestic politics, from institutions of colonial dominance to
institutions of sovereign governance. As the inheritance situation
was a continuum, the boundary between colonial and postcolonial
order was of little empirical relevance. No wonder, Amitai Etzioni
called the shift in the locus of power an *internationalization* process. It
was a process by which the standards of behaviour that were externally
enforced became part of the internal system. See, Etzioni, Amitai,
Political Unification, New York, 1965.

their political aspirations and the post-independence power structure, they forged accumulation strategies of their own to play the game as others did. These strategies found support from the left-inclined intellectual and political forces. This weakened the soft state and disturbed the apple cart of liberal politics and capitalist development. Capitalist economy shaped social relations in a way that the majority of the population gained access to the means of production by selling labour power to those who owned them. Capitalist market acted as an invisible hand, one that could effectively strip the means of production from individuals and compel them to search for employers so that the social base of ownership gradually narrowed down while the size of propertyless wage labour expanded. It was a case of "accumulation by dispossession."[2] Historically, a parallel case was that of weavers in India who starved in millions when British textiles arrived. In the contemporary scene, a close parallel was the intrusion of cheap Chinese goods in post-reform India. It was producing a similar effect by squeezing village artisans out. This might be the text book approach to capitalist development that India followed but China itself did not follow it. It closely integrated artisans and skilled workers into strategies of Chinese industrial development. China preferred a cooperative alternative to industry-led capitalist development. India's strategy was more in line with Marx's reading of the experience in United States and Western Europe where agricultural mechanization had driven small farmers and peasants away from their land. China did not take this road. The working of a capitalist market in these Western countries led to massive social dislocation and produced enormous pain and suffering. The situation calls for appropriate adaptations in planning economic growth so that the competition for power along national-regional

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2 Harvey, D., *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, Oxford, 2005.

and urban-rural divides does not get polarized. Such polarization will have negative effects on growth economics and related development programmes.

Just by way of illustration one can point to the changing attitudes of small peasants, subsistence farmers, self-employed artisans, fishermen and entrepreneurs. They were veering round to the view that, besides other factors, the regulatory effect of environmental and economic laws, combined with international competition posed by cheap Chinese goods, were making the traditional way of life non-viable. It was common to hear parents telling their children not to live out the roles they themselves did. But the young were not impressed by this advice. They were conscious of a kind of class divide in operation. While the rich people were sending their children to the best institutions in the world and paying for it, those at the lower levels hit a glass ceiling. The depressing effect of such inequality on lower class children was reinforced by pessimistic narratives of those who went for formal education in cities or villages. They did not see in their experiences a route to good life. They would rather keep off the school as there was nothing worthwhile to learn for realizing a preferred future. The tendency of heaping blame on rural teachers for non-performance of students was a little off the point and not able to see the unwholesome impact of top-down development on curriculum and style of teaching modelled after contemporary practices of schools in Western countries or in developed urban centres. The depressing stories based on experience in real life situations was digging into the very foundations of liberal humanism — scientism, statism and secularism – and the visions of good life that it sustains.

These visions are counterposed by visions of good life articulated by social power structures claiming legitimacy for the good immanent in their respective agendas. This saturated the political arena with notions of the good – the

state versus the nation, the community versus the nation, the class versus the community. Power structures were able to have tailor-made theories to support their claims. "With this aim in mind, the theorist resorts to numerous linguistic and rhetorical devices to render the argumentation as persuasive as possible, appealing to the emotions of the readers, and to ensure a favourable reception."[3] The notions of the good emphasized more on difference and identity than on the liberal humanist faith in essential humanity idealizing the self-governing individual.[4] It was mainly an inter-elite discourse and not an elite-mass discourse. Its transformation into a class, communal and rights discourse is mainly a language game.

The Gandhian moment seems to have arrived. The Gandhian individual is embedded in multiple roles calling for simultaneous attention but, according to Gandhi Ji there is always a natural pull towards performance of nobler roles. He said that it was possible for man to extricate himself from the downward pulls of the lower self and realize the higher self in him. This should illuminate what MacIntyre says on the ethical side of multiple roles,

we all approach our circumstances as bearers of a particular social identity. I am someone's son or daughter, someone else's cousin or uncle; I am a citizen of this or that city, a member of this or that guild or profession; I belong to this or that tribe, that clan, this nation. Hence what is good for me has to be what is good for one who inhabits these roles.[5]

The different roles especially when they are constitutive of

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[3] Neal Wood, *Reflections on Political Theory: A Voice of Reason from the Past*, London, 2002, p. 61.
[4] J.B. Schneewind, *The Invention of Autonomy*. Cambridge, 1998.
[5] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, pp. 204 - 05. See note 40, p. 173 for the views of J.S. Mill and Mahatma Gandhi on the role of the higher self in the context of debates on human rights.

identity result in stress and fragmentation of the self. Individuals therefore just walk away from them. Alternatively, "as global culture permeates local ones and new configurations emerge that synthesize both poles," there arise "contradictory forces of colonization and resistance, global homogenization and new local hybrid forms and identities."[6] The local community is the mediator in interpretation, adaptation and transmission of humanist values and forges an authentic synthesis with the ethical values inherent in its own moral and philosophical systems. But the modern prejudice against everything local comes in the way. The prejudice is bolstered by networks of telecommunication and information technologies. Alvin Gouldner rightly refers to a new class of professionals which claims high economic and social status on the basis of its ability and skill in context-free communication. Delocalization has become a matter of social prestige and status.[7]

The local is a natural habitat of human values based on neighbourhood sentiments. These sentiments are a necessary condition for the expression of wider and nested human concerns in relation to the members of the locality across all social differences. There is a need for accommodating the local in public policies aimed at economic growth and nation building. The future holds out some hope of such a thing happening. As the local is getting connected to the internet, cable and satellite television, the prejudice against it is yielding place to eager acceptance even by the existing elite. Anti-localism is dubbed not only as elitist, it is becoming anachronistic too. The local has the potential of inculcating

[6] Kellner, Douglas, "Globalization and the Postmodern Turn," in Axtmann, Roland, ed., *Globalization and Europe: Theoretical and Empirical Investigations*, London, 1998, p. 28.
[7] Gouldner, Alvin, *The Future of Intellectuals and the Rise of the New Class*, New York, 1979.

civic values and taking the human component of liberal humanism to its Renaissance roots and tailor liberal and libertarian messianism to suit its imperatives. The return to Saint-Simonian and Comtean positivism which transformed political theory into social theory needs to be tempered with a locally grounded rationality. The processes are already underway. The local, national and cosmopolitan are being collapsed into a single vision. The pursuit of self-interest can be in harmony with national and cosmopolitan values. It is possible to bring faith in essential humanity back on the pedestal and extend a helping hand to the last man in the hovel. In short, the local agency alone has the capacity to command hybrid resources for a dynamic transition beyond the postcolonial predicament.[8] This amounts to predicating liberal humanism on Gandhian values which have not been integral to its practice especially during the cold war. It is legitimate to ask, would it still be liberal humanism as we knew it?[9]

[8] See, Breckenridge, Carol and Van Der Veer, Peter, eds.,*Orientalism and the Postcolonial Predicament: Perspectives on South Asia*, New York, 1993.
[9] The post-cold war shift in sources of revenue has inclined the ruling classes to support an investor-friendly political economy, which has become a contested political space. This process has a parallel in India. The colonial state attempted to shift the sources of revenue to private property in land and industry, with a view to outflank the Gandhian nationalist agenda. See Roudolph, Llyod and Roudoph, Sussane, *Reversing the Gaze: Amar Singh's Diary: A Colonial Subject's Narrative of Imprial India,* New Delhi, 2000.

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