Dr Namrata Goswami
India should issue a ‘National Security Policy’ Document

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India should issue a 'National Security Policy' Document
Dr Namrata Goswami

Dr. Namrata Goswami is one of the foremost Indian thinkers on long-term global trends, emerging security challenges, and scenario building. Dr. Goswami is currently a Senior Analyst and Minerva Grantee. She regularly consults with Wikistrat, and is associated with NATO Partnership for Peace (FPPC) “Emerging Security Challenges” working group. She was formerly Research Fellow at the Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses (IDSA), New Delhi where she specialized on ethnic conflicts, insurgency, counter-insurgency and conflict resolution. She has been a Jennings Randolph Senior Fellow at the Congressionally Funded United States Institute of Peace (USIP) in Washington DC, where she explored long-term India-China-US scenarios.

Designing a Miracle to Save South Africa
Dr Howard Richards

Dr Richards is a philosopher of Social Science who worked with the concepts of basic cultural structures and constitutive rules. He is Research Professor of Philosophy at Earlham College; PhD in Philosophy, University of California, Santa Barbara; J Duit Doctor (J D) Stanford Law School: Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE) Oxford University (UK). PhD in Educational Planning from Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE), University of Toronto, Canada. He now teaches at the University of Santiago, Chile, Dr Richards is a Catholic, a member of Holy Trinity (Santissima Trinidad) parish in Lanarch, Chile, and a member of the third order of St. Francis, O.F.S.

The Greatest Challenges Facing Humanity Today
Ela Gandhi

Granddaughter of Mahatma Gandhi. Born and grew up at the Phoenix Settlement the first Ashram established by Mahatma Gandhi in Indian South Africa. Presently retired after serving 9 years in the SA Parliament representing ANC, 15 years as a social worker in the Child Welfare field, and an activist in the movement against apartheid. Served ten years under banning orders of which 5 years were under house arrest. Serves as Trustee of Gandhi Development Trust and Phoenix Settlement Trust, co-President of World Conference on Religions for Peace and chairperson of the Advisory Council of King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz International Centre for Intercultural Dialogue.

Reason, Expression and Freedom
Dr Ganesh N. Devy, Chair, People’s Linguistic Survey of India

Prof Devy, was educated at Shivaji University, Kolhapur and the University of Leeds, UK. Founder of the Bhasha Research and Publication Centre at Baroda and the Advarii Academy at Tezgadhi. In January 2014, he was given the Padmanabh by the Govt. of India. He was advisor to UNESCO on Intangible Heritage. Devy’s books are published by Oxford University Press, Orient Blackswan, Penguin, Routledge, Sage among other publishers. His works are translated in French, Arabic, Chinese, German, Italian, Marathi, Gujarati, Telugu and Bangla.

Selective Morality
Mark Ulyseas

Ulyseas has served time in advertising as copywriter and creative director selling people things they didn’t need, a ghost writer for some years, columnist of a newspaper, a freelance journalist and photographer. In 2009 he created Live Encounters Magazine, in Bali, Indonesia. March 2016 saw the launch of its sister publication Live Encounters Poetry & Writing. He is the author of three books: RAINY - My friend & Philosopher, Seductive Avatars of Maya – Anthology of Dystopian Lives and In Gethsemane: Transcripts of a Journey. www.amazon.com

Nepal Scapes
Mikyoung Cha

Mikyoung Cha is a graduate in Oriental Painting from Hyoyong Women’s University, Daego, South Korea. She has participated in a number of group art exhibitions in South Korea and Japan. In 2016 she took up photography – the camera becoming her paint brush. This globe trotting photographer is a regular contributor to Live Encounters Magazine.

Images after a 5K Race
Carl Scharwath

Carl Scharwath, has appeared globally with 100+ magazines selecting his poetry, short stories, essays and art photography. Two poetry books: Journey To Become Forgotten [Kind of a Hurricane Press] and Abandoned (ScarsTv) have been published. Carl is the art editor for Minute Magazine, a dedicated runner and 2nd degree black-belt in Taekwondo.

Festive Turkish Meal Ideas
Ozlem Warren

International cooking teacher and Turkish culinary expert Ozlem Warren is a native of Turkey, lived there and extensively travelled for 30 years. She has been teaching wholesome, delicious Turkish cookery in the US, Jordan, Istanbul and England. Her recipes have been published in the local media in England, Hurriyet and Sabah national daily newspapers in Turkey. Ozlem also took part at the “Turkish Chef of the World”, “Dunyamin Turk Sefleri” TV program aired at TRT, National Turkish TV channel and in 37 countries.
Dr. Namrata Goswami is one of the foremost Indian thinkers on long-term global trends, emerging security challenges, and scenario building. Dr. Goswami is currently a Senior Analyst and Minerva Grantee. She regularly consults with Wikistrat, and is associated with NATO Partnership for Peace (PfPC) “Emerging Security Challenges” working group. She was formerly Research Fellow at the Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses (IDSA), New Delhi where she specialized on ethnic conflicts, insurgency, counter-insurgency and conflict resolution. She has been a Jennings Randolph Senior Fellow at the Congressionally Funded United States Institute of Peace (USIP) in Washington DC, where she explored long-term India-China-US scenarios in order to craft sustainable security frameworks to enable unimpeded human development and security. She was co-lead and editor of two IDSA sponsored works on long-term trends, *Imagining Asia in 2030*, and *Asia 2030 The Unfolding Future*. Her latest book published by Pentagon Press, New Delhi is on *India’s Approach to Asia, Strategy, Geopolitics and Responsibility*, 2016.

**Dr Namrata Goswami**

**Senior Analyst and Minerva Grantee.**

**INDIA SHOULD ISSUE A ‘NATIONAL SECURITY POLICY’ DOCUMENT**

The idea behind a National Security Policy (NSP) document is to inform one’s own citizens about the directions that the democratic state is undertaking with regard to its national security and foreign policy. The essence of such a document is an informed citizenry, including those citizens who serve in the bureaucracy and the military. Given all those who find their place in the national and state legislatures in India are elected by the people, it is only fitting that those who represent them are transparent with regard to their official undertakings. It can never be forgotten that people elect leaders to act on their behalf, and should be kept informed from time to time, about what their leaders pursue as a national security vision. Moreover, a NSP is a signal to allies and partners in the foreign policy arena as to the goals India sets for itself on its path to preferred end-states, and the strategy it adopts to get there.

For now, as it stands, most of us citizens, and others, trying to make sense of Indian national security priority and goals are left contending, trying to find some discernible patterns in speeches given by Indian Prime Ministers and Presidents, or its External Affairs Minister, or from the debates that take place in parliament, as to the directions of Indian national security policy and goals. As a consequence, this results in faulty interpretations, as well as overt bureaucratization, secrecy, and lack of transparency, which goes against the idea of an informed citizenry specifically within the Indian democratic context. This opaqueness further hinders ‘cutting edge’ ground-breaking national security research, by independent scholars, who could offer valuable insights to forward national security innovations and interests. Given India’s economic growth and growing influence on the world stage, it is only pertinent that a NSP should be issued, similar in tenor and spirit to the excellent Indian Navy’s Maritime Security Strategy published in 2015.¹ For example, at the World Economic Forum (WEF) held in Davos, Switzerland, Prime Minister Narendra Modi highlighted India’s support for democratization, globalization, and its commitment to address climate change during his address.
He spoke out against protectionist measures stating, "instead of globalization, the power of protectionism is putting its head up...their wish is not only to save themselves from globalization, but to change the natural flow of globalization." I believe such speeches should be backed by a NSP, registering Indian inter-agency institutional backing to policy speeches, adding weight and depth to Indian commitments towards international security. If as Modi asserted at Davos, that India could show the way in dealing with the three challenges he highlighted (terrorism, protectionism, and climate change), that leadership role should be highlighted in the NSP.

The preamble to the Indian Constitution, clearly states 'we, the people of India, have solemnly resolved to constitute India, into a sovereign, socialist, secular, democratic, republic'. This makes it clear that the representatives of India are its citizens, no matter what positions they hold in life and that all are equal before law. It is appropriate that citizens be informed about the general directions, without revealing classified details, of India’s national security undertakings thereby strengthening India’s democratic ethos. The task of writing a NSP should be undertaken by the Prime Minister’s Office (PMO), along with the National Security Council (NSC), spearheaded by his National Security Advisor (NSA). This document should be released at the beginning of every year, so that citizens are informed about what their representatives envision as India’s national security priorities.

**Recommendation: What could be India’s stated National Security Priorities?**

There are three core national security priorities for India. First is to maintain the territorial integrity and sovereignty of India. Second is to ensure India’s economic growth and military modernization. Third is to promote peace and security in its strategic neighborhood.

1. **Maintaining India’s territorial integrity and sovereignty**

**Policy:** Some might argue that this is stating the obvious. But most government documents are about stating the obvious, as a way of reminding the citizens they serve as to what governments are there for: public service. Such a documental reassurance is especially critical for areas in India that face pervasive violence from non-state actors demanding secession, to include the Northeast of India and Kashmir, as well as a state like Arunachal Pradesh that recently witnessed Chinese road-building activities. This took place in the aftermath of the 2017 Doklam crisis in which Indian and Chinese troops faced-off each other for more than a month in Bhutan, leading to heightened global speculations of conflict escalation in a nuclearized environment.

China claims the entire state of Arunachal Pradesh as its territory and will utilize such road-building activities to highlight its claim and threaten India. Consequently, the Indian NSP should clearly name China as a ‘territorial aggressor’ and a revisionist power, while at the same-time reassuring its citizens in Arunachal Pradesh that the Indian military will secure and protect their ancestral land. For instance, on December 26, 2017, Chinese civilian track construction company crossed the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in Tuting area of Arunachal Pradesh with their road-building equipment. Indian official statements asserting that this is due to differing perceptions of the LAC is not enough to assuage entrenched local sentiments and fears of Chinese encroachment. Moreover, both China and India have, time and again, committed via written agreements to honor the LAC, surely, there has to be some common understanding of the LAC. Otherwise, why sign these agreements on behalf of the citizens of India, especially those in Arunachal Pradesh, who are directly impacted, if there is no assurance from China that it would not constantly take advantage of this ‘differing perception’ of LAC argument to cross it and then have it justified on the ‘differing perceptions’ rationale. It only works to China’s advantage. While rhetorically committing to maintain ‘status quo’, China aims at territorial revision by stating, ‘actually, our understanding of LAC status-quo is wildly different.’

The NSP should make it clear that India will not tolerate any threat to its citizens from either Pakistan or China, especially via cross-border terrorism from Pakistan and transgression by the Chinese PLA to the Indian side of the LAC thereby creating a fear psychosis for Indian citizens. During my field visits to the border areas of Arunachal Pradesh, in interviews with local people living there, I got the sense that they perceived that somehow the national government in Delhi did not really care about their fears, in its attempts to downplay Chinese aggressions across the border. The NSP should address these local fears. Recently, China sold to Pakistan, the Wing Loong I, a large combat drone, which is a medium-altitude long-endurance drone built by the Chinese firm Aviation Industry Corporation of China (AVIC). This drone was sighted via satellite images at the Alam Air Base in Mianwall, Pakistan.

An NSP document should also ideally include reassurance for areas like Jammu and Kashmir where peace is routinely disturbed by cross-border terrorism. India witness violence in several of its Naxal or left-wing extremism affected states, propelled by an ideology of an alternative state system to be achieved through People’s war. This, the Naxals aim to achieve, by their People’s Liberation Guerilla Army (PLGA) with an armed strength between 8,000 to 10,000 cadres. The NSP must outline how the state aims to tackle such non-state armed violence, especially in areas it governs.

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Indian Navy – South Naval Command conducting exercises.

INS Vikramaditya. Singapore gives Indian Navy access to Changi Naval Base to counter China threat in South Asia.

Strategy: The Indian state’s national security strategy to deal with Chinese aggression or cross-border insurgency/terrorism, for instance by the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (Khaplang) or NSCN-K in 2015, or by Pakistan based terrorist groups, has been to challenge such aggression by visible demonstration of military power as well as destroy terrorist camps by special forces units. This occurred both with regard to NSCN-K camps in the Indo-Myanmar border and the terrorist camps in the Indo-Pakistan border. With regard to left wing extremism, India has utilized law enforcement and special police forces. This strategy should be clearly articulated in the NSP document, aimed at providing much required coordination amongst federal and state agencies on the line. The NSP should coherently state India’s willingness to pursue and negate threats to its territorial integrity and sovereignty from external agencies and groups. While understood orally, it is more effective to have it stated in a written document.

2. Economic Growth and Military Modernization

Policy: India’s viability as a robust democracy is dependent on economic growth and a military capable of defending its borders. India ranked 40th out of 137 countries on the WEF’s list of being globally competitive, and its infrastructure and institutions are not yet robust. While Prime Minister Narendra Modi has pledged to spend USD 60 billion in Indian infrastructure, that would depend on tax generation and a healthy economic growth. India’s ranking in the global corruption index by Transparency International was low, with it being designated the most corrupt country in the Asia-Pacific. A Forbes study found that corruption is rampant in education, health, and other public services. Consequently, 73 per cent of bribes are paid in India for work in the public sector in order to procure identification documents, police reports, mandatory for getting passports, or ration cards for social benefits. Sadly, people most affected by these corrupt practices, are devastatingly poor, and view themselves as disempowered citizens with little or no influence, their lives ruled by fear of those in power. The NSP document should establish Indian citizens’ entitlement to their social benefits as a matter of national security and make it a priority. It should severely penalize those found guilty of taking advantage of people’s desperation. It is indeed a matter of national security, as most of the secessionist movements in Northeast India and the Naxal conflict have identified causes such as political disempowerment, lack of dignity, state repression and absence of economic opportunity as rea-sons for taking up violence.

Along with a stress on economic development aimed at citizen’s prosperity and happiness, India clearly needs a social security system that guarantees benefits to its citizens.
However, human risks will arise with no practical solution for those whose names do not appear on the NRC, given India and Bangladesh do not have a bilateral policy of repatriation of citizens. This, by itself, poses a national security risk, of plausible futuristic communal tensions, and should be dealt with in the NSP. Whether it would work as a ‘deterrent factor’ to discourage further illegal migration will depend on how the updated final NRC is implemented on the ground and how those, who have been found to be illegal migrants, are repatriated back to the country of origin. Given India’s ‘Neighbor first’ policy with Bangladesh, how would one reconcile two opposite poles; targeting its citizens while at the same-time expecting Bangladesh to limit its strategic shift towards China. How will India increase its influence in its neighborhood region, while at the same time securing its borders and territory? Matters like that should be explained clearly in the NSP as to why collecting data on illegal migration helps in addressing societal fears, like those in Assam, of being taken over by an alien culture.

Strategy: The strategy should be clear and premised on realism: given the adversarial positions of countries like China and Pakistan towards India, that clearly threaten its territorial integrity, the NSP should make clear that India’s thrust towards military modernization is to safeguard against such threats, and a willingness to use force when necessary. With regard to internal crisis like secessionist violence, an approach that ensures ‘rule of law’ with a proclivity towards meeting genuine demands of development and safeguard of individual dignity should be highlighted including peace talks between the government of India and insurgent groups like the NSCN (IM). Detailing the demands of development and safeguard of individual dignity should be highlighted including peace talks between the government of India and insurgent groups like the NSCN (IM). Detailing the effects of long standing peace-talks with insurgent groups is useful.

Promote Peace and Security in its Strategic Neighborhood

Policy: The NSP should clearly articulate what India views and includes as its strategic neighborhood. For one, it is Indo-Pacific, which supports all export and import of goods via sea routes; Afghanistan, and the bridge it offers to Central Asia; Myanmar/Burma, given the linkage it offers to Southeast Asia and the growing status of ASEAN-India relations; China, given the long-standing border dispute and its growing influence in India’s neighborhood to include its One Belt, One Road (OBOR) initiative; Bangladesh, given the long borders with it, and cultural and societal connections stemming from India’s history; and Pakistan, given its adversarial position vis-à-vis India. The existence of nuclear weapons in China and Pakistan is of strategic priority, compelling India to consider seriously, missile defense shields, for instance like the U.S. Army’s Terminal High-Altitude Area Defence (THAAD) deployed in South Korea. Both China and Pakistan share a deep-seated alliance and Pakistan is a key factor in the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), an integral part of Chinese President, Xi Jinping’s OBOR initiative. The NSP should explain why India is developing a stronger relationship with the U.S. and Israel, as well as the rationale behind its support for a Quadrilateral with the U.S., Japan, and Australia. The NSP should both represent policy priorities and outline the strategy to be adopted to achieve goals.

Overall Strategy: It is in India’s strategic interest that it officially publishes an annual NSP, so that its own citizens and friendly countries are not left in the dark as to what its policy positions on national security and foreign policy, really are. It helps in efficient and effective coordination across various agencies within the overarching framework of the national security priorities of the state. It brings in the much-needed predictability and proves useful to form partnerships of trust and to send clear signals to adversaries as to what the Indian response would be to transgressions into its territory, both by state and non-state actors. Otherwise, like the perception that plagues its public-sector institutions of inertia, inefficiency, corruption and adhoc practices, India may find its influence slipping unless it meticulously builds an innovative and adaptive national security architecture, to include organizational and doctrinal clarity.

While the NSP is a policy document, the strategy adopted by India should be based on realism regarding its territorial integrity and cross-border terrorism or in its conduct of safeguarding SLOCs, and building up strategic partnerships. Dealing with violent and non-violent protests for better ethnic representation requires both a realist approach of ensuring physical safety for its citizens from non-state armed violence as well as a robust ‘rule of law’ to protect citizens from state brutality. The recent violence in the Dima Hasao district of Assam is a case in point in which two Indian citizens protesting against a so-called draft Naga framework proposal by a private individual, succumbed to their injuries in police firing. Non-violent protests are the hallmark of a democracy for citizens to mark their aspirations and frustrations with a particular policy or regime. Unfortunately, I have heard too many stories of Indian state representatives abusing their power especially when dealing with those citizens who they see as underprivileged or lacking power, to be deluded by those trying to defend such actions in the name of nationalism or patriotism. For I believe, true patriotism is to strengthen India’s democracy and its representative institutions, not to perpetuate abuses of power and illiberal attacks on those who try hard to ensure that India is a living embodiment of a country based on democratic values and humane kindness towards those who are the least privileged. For they are entitled as citizens to the state that is India, and enjoy in the fruits of its democratic culture and existence.
In that spirit, the NSP serves the noble purpose of building up an informed and enlightened citizenry, sharing with them how their institutions represent them, including the institution of the Prime Minister and the National Security Council. Transparency, especially towards its own citizens, is the hallmark of a stable and secure democratic power. And an NSP document serves that core purpose.

End Notes


16. Ibid.


24. Ibid.


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www.wikipedia.org

**Dr Howard Richards**

**DESIGNING A MIRACLE TO SAVE SOUTH AFRICA**

New times call for new ideas. In a desperate situation, like that of South Africa today, some people may be willing to consider the new ideas that are on offer, going on the lookout for measures that might work. Others may have their minds already made up; they might be already sure that they know what miracle, if it would only happen, would save South Africa. A third group may be so confused and depressed that all they want to do is crawl in a hole and die; or -- what may be psychologically the same thing -- kill someone or set something on fire. This article is an offer of new ideas, designed to be food for thought for the first group, the questers; to question the certainties of the second group, those on either the right or the left or in the centre who believe the right path is known but just not followed; and to inspire hope and clarity in the third group, those whose emotions are deep but whose thoughts are muddled and incoherent.

I organize my offer of new ideas around a quote from Amartya Sen:

“I must confess that I find it altogether difficult to be convinced that one’s scepticism of unrestrained capitalism must turn on such matters as the usefulness of aggregate capital as a factor of production... rather than on the mean streets and strained lives that capitalism can generate, unless it is restrained and supplemented by other often nonmarket-institutions.”

The first clause of my quote from Sen alludes to technical arguments that debunk the theory -- unfortunately too common in the higher echelons of South African society and in the technocracy -- that being business-friendly means raising profits to get more investment and more jobs. As its National Development Plan (NDP) duly notes, South Africa is already a high-profit country. The coexistence decade after decade of high profits and high unemployment should in itself be sufficient to open the minds of those who assume without question that the raise-profits-to-get-jobs theory is true.

The theory that jobs will be created by raising the returns to capital has, in any event, been bogus for a long time. Already in 1873, Walter Bagehot wrote in his classic account of how the money market works, _Lombard Street_, “we have entirely lost the idea that any undertaking likely to pay, and seen to be likely, can perish for want of money.” If that was true in 1873, how much more is it true today!

Today when the world is awash with speculative capital floating around the world in a casino economy!!

Today when highly paid shady characters invent one Ponzi scheme after another to turn money into more money in a world where the opportunities for profitable investment in the real economy that hires people to produces goods and services are few and far between! It is bogus to say that production happened because capital became available, because today capital is always available. It is more accurate to say that in a capitalism system, production either happens or does not happen depending on whether investors see opportunities for making enough profit to justify the investment.
To be more specific, the projected return on investment (ROI) should cover the cost of capital plus enough value to motivate the entrepreneurs and everyone else whose consent is required. Keynes adds “animal spirits,” claiming that investment would be far less than it actually is if it were motivated only by rational calculations of returns.

Those who have grasped the concept that there is no simple causal relationship between raising returns on capital and creating employment opportunities for the poor, may be ready to question other aspects of conventional wisdom.

Keynes adds “animal spirits,” claiming that investment would be far less than it actually is if it were motivated only by rational calculations of returns.

Those who have grasped the concept that there is no simple causal relationship between raising returns on capital and creating employment opportunities for the poor, may be ready to question other aspects of conventional wisdom. They may be ready to question following the advice of foreign advisors like Dani Rodrik and Ricardo Hausmann, who invariably advise sweetening incentives for foreign investors. They may be open to giving priority not to pursuing development by subsidizing new enterprises, but by improving working relationships with companies that already operate in South Africa. They do not need expensive wooing. They already make profits and generate a surplus. (By a “surplus” I mean, roughly, income above and beyond all their costs, normal profits, and reasonable executive salaries.) They serve market niches that have already been proven to exist. To work with existing business in South Africa, the principles of Corporate Social Responsibility and Corporate Citizenship do not need to be established. They are already established. The major foreign firms already doing business in South Africa do not need to be introduced to the concept of creating shared value.

I would be dishonest if I did not acknowledge that according to my general point of view, the prospects for human survival are bleak without culture shifts and without transformations of basic social structures (like property, shifting from what Fritz Schumacher called “institutionalized irresponsibility” to “institutionalized responsibility”).

It is already part of their working vocabulary. Improving working relationships is not expensive: Don’t tie them in knots with unnecessary bureaucracy. When they do something good, celebrate it. Assign officials with pleasant personalities to deal with them, not pretentious petty tyrants. Answer their phone calls. Reply to their e-mails.

The real problem, which needs to be understood in order to create real solutions, is not raising capital. It is not solved by running around the world trying to persuade people with money to bring their money to South Africa.

First let me say what I think the real problem is at the level of what I will call the Basic Cultural Structure (BCS) The BCS is more fundamental and more general than the more specific set of institutions called “capitalism.” Capitalism presupposes it. Briefly: the BCS is the private law framework for business historically derived from mainly from Roman Law in early modern Europe, and brought to Africa from Europe. The BCS provides the rules that constitute markets. They relate human beings to each other as buyers and sellers. By phrasing the main issues in terms of deep cultural structures created by human beings over the course of time and in terms of how culture interfaces with nature, I am widening the context, bringing into view problems and solutions that are invisible when the focus is narrower. When I do use the word “capitalism,” I mean by it a system whose dynamic moving force (and criterion for rational decision-making) is accumulating capital.

I would be dishonest if I did not acknowledge that according to my general point of view, the prospects for human survival are bleak without culture shifts and without transformations of basic social structures (like property, shifting from what Fritz Schumacher called “institutionalized irresponsibility” to “institutionalized responsibility”). Unfortunately, I cannot do much more than assert my general point of view here. I will be more specific about the more specific problem of funding the inclusion of the excluded.

At the level of the BCS, that is to say, at the level of the language-games-with-money people in modern societies play every day, the main problem in creating enterprises in order to generate employment is finding undertakings that pay. The foolishness leading South Africa and the rest of the world down the Road to Nowhere, is that while undertakings that pay are becoming scarcer and scarcer, governments are working harder and harder to create them where they would not otherwise exist, spending themselves into debt and risking default in the process.
My general claim that the persistent failure to solve the problems of poverty and ecology is due to inhumanity hard-wired into deep structures could be made about any country in the world. It is made poignant in South Africa by the Freedom Charter of 1955, the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996, and the National Development Plan of 2012. They were three blueprints for a new social order. Their promises have been broken.

Second, and more fundamentally, at the level of the physical bottom line, down at the level where the stomach growls with hunger and the fists clench with rage, the real problem is meeting human needs in harmony with mother nature. It is not, strictly speaking, a conventional job that humans need. It is a decent livelihood that brings with it dignity, self-esteem, physical health and mental health.

From my general point of view, the cultural level (the BCS) is out of sync with the physical level. The human species evolves as a species whose ecological niche is culture. Culture is the adaptive mechanism par excellence. Culture and all the features of the human body that make culture possible empower humans to learn, and to pass on learning to the young through education. But under the rules of the game of our currently dominant BCS, we learn to measure the rationality of decisions with numbers that count money. Meeting the physical needs of our brothers and sisters in harmony with mother nature is not even the purpose of human action, and therefore cannot be expected to be its result. Making money is. Measured by the physical bottom line, decisions made taking money as the bottom line criterion are often irrational, and disastrously so. What is required is a different interface of culture with nature.

My general claim that the persistent failure to solve the problems of poverty and ecology is due to inhumanity hard-wired into deep structures could be made about any country in the world. It is made poignant in South Africa by the Freedom Charter of 1955, the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996, and the National Development Plan of 2012. They were three blueprints for a new social order. Their promises have been broken. I believe that it is not too late to keep their promises, but only if we recognize social change at the level of basic cultural structures, at the level of the spirit of Ubuntu. Do you remember Ubuntu? Traditional African values, skilfully blended with Christianity by Desmond Tutu, came close to becoming South Africa’s official national philosophy in 1994-1995 at the time of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. It cannot be a coincidence that as the immediate danger of civil war faded away the vogue for proclaiming the sisterhood and brotherhood of all South Africans tended to fade away too.

What would the world be like today if from the 17th to 19th centuries Europe had not conquered Africa and imposed Roman Law, but instead Africa had conquered Europe and imposed values like those Tutu and Mandela and many others attributed to Ubuntu? Although this is an unanswerable question, I suggest that it is a good question to ponder when thinking about how to design for the future what Martin Luther King Jr. called one World House for one Human Family.

“I must confess that I find it altogether difficult to be convinced that one’s scepticism of unrestrained capitalism must turn on such matters as the usefulness of aggregate capital as a factor of production... rather than on the mean streets and strained lives that capitalism can generate, unless it is restrained and supplemented by other often nonmarket-institutions.” - Amartya Sen

My advocacy of working in a spirit of traditional values that stress social responsibility, with existing undertakings that demonstrably do pay, rather than force-feeding capitalism to try to expand it to make it do what it does not do - namely, provide a decent livelihood for everyone who needs one - runs into an obvious challenge: Then how will the excluded be included? If not by the magic wand of government spending, tax breaks and labour “discipline” designed to coax into existence businesses that will hire the unemployed, then how? Answering this question with new ideas that begin by contrasting (a simplified account of) the Roman and liberal cultural hard wiring of Europe with the (idealized) Ubuntu and communitarian cultural hard wiring of Africa leads me back to my quote from Amartya Sen:

“I must confess that I find it altogether difficult to be convinced that one’s scepticism of unrestrained capitalism must turn on such matters as the usefulness of aggregate capital as a factor of production... rather than on the mean streets and strained lives that capitalism can generate, unless it is restrained and supplemented by other often nonmarket-institutions.”

The second clause of the quoted text is even more important than the first. I underline Sen’s words “supplemented” and “non-market.” As Sen and his co-author Jean Dreze say repeatedly, the market is only one way to provision the people with what they need, and often not the best way.
People need caring and reliable attachment to other people. Community building in CWP at its best (not at every site) recovers in the 21st century some of the togetherness of belonging to an ancient clan, while providing the dignity of meaningful work so necessary for the self-esteem of people today. It is not just about money. The participants in CWP at Erasmus near Pretoria have taken community seriously by organizing themselves into committees to be sure nobody is forgotten or uncared for and no aspect of general welfare is neglected. There is a committee for looking after the elderly. There is a committee for the ill. There is a water committee. And so on.

In principle there are innumerable ways to mobilize resources to meet needs. The short answer to the question how those for whom private business provides no jobs can be included has two parts: (1) In an Ubuntu social structure they are never excluded because they are always family; (2) When it comes down to practical questions about putting food on their plates and music in their hearts, the answer is that there are innumerable ways to do it. There are all the market ways and all the non-market ways. Even if one way is not finishing the job and needs to be supplemented, the number of remaining possibilities is still infinite.

Examples of supplementing capitalism with non-market institutions can be drawn from South Africa’s Community Work Programme (CWP). CWP has a mandate from Cabinet to use public employment to catalyse community development. Why does it have that mandate?

Because the government is underfunded and deeply in debt. To make the human social rights promised in the Constitution real, the government needs all the help it can get. Community development mobilizes private sector resources to multiply the impact of scarce public-sector resources. For starters, it mobilizes the resources of the poor themselves. For example, at Orange Farm south of Joburg, ex-con CWP participants use their skills in drama and poetry, and their knowledge based on their own experience, to deliver valuable advice to future ex-cons by putting on performances in jails for prisoners who are about to be released. As frequently happens in CWP, because they are motivated by their mission they put in many more hours than they are paid for.

Because everybody has emotional and social needs. Emotional and social needs evolved with the human body over many thousands of years, and they are still evolving. People need caring and reliable attachment to other people. Community building in CWP at its best (not at every site) recovers in the 21st century some of the togetherness of belonging to an ancient clan, while providing the dignity of meaningful work so necessary for the self-esteem of people today. It is not just about money. The participants in CWP at Erasmus near Pretoria have taken community seriously by organizing themselves into committees to be sure nobody is forgotten or uncared for and no aspect of general welfare is neglected. There is a committee for looking after the elderly. There is a committee for the ill. There is a water committee. And so on.

Because we must prepare for the future. In an old church in the part of Joburg called Alex (Alexandria), you can see young CWP participants practicing their song and dance routines. They must audition to qualify. They must work hard work to succeed. They get recognition doing performances in local schools. The message for the schoolchildren is: Here on the stage are healthy happy young people who do not do drugs! In the future—which is already arriving with the mechanization of the mines and the loss of most of the jobs in the jewellery industry to 3D printers—advanced technology will make most labour redundant and most conventional economics irrelevant, but humans will still need meaningful lives and self-discipline. That is why what is happening at the old church in Alex is cutting edge.

The examples must not be allowed to eclipse the general principle. Echoing Sen and Dreze, and in the light of the big picture of the long evolution of human and especially African cultures, Gavin Andersson has formulated the general principle as Unbounded Organization (UO). It means alignment across sectors for the common good. Part of the history that led Gavin to the idea was the alignment (not without glitches) of government, banks, builders and people’s self-help housing organizations that built three million homes and cleared many slums.

UO is not a recipe. It is an attitude: Serve. Do what works. Collaborate.

Simple enough. UO says nothing that the world’s great religions have not been teaching for ages. So why is social justice so hard to get that it requires a new concept to get it? I think I have an insight to share about why in today’s ultra-capitalist global economy it is so bloody hard to put UO or any transformation of capitalism into practice. My insight is not gloomy. Figuring out why it is so hard leads to figuring out how to make it easier.

The insight I am about to share sees the homeostatic character of capitalism. I was led to think of it by living through the Chilean military coup of 1973. Like any other homeostatic system, capitalism defends itself when perturbed. Its stubborn resistance to change—especially when change is in the best interests of everybody—is not mainly due to the liberal individualist ethics and the mainstream economic theories that support it, nor to the way the news is slanted in the mass media. It is due to objective necessity. The system defends itself with the scarcity that ensues when it is attacked.

Human life has come to depend physically on the accumulation of capital, in other words on profit-making. When the dynamics driving accumulation are perturbed, people have to do things like standing in line for hours to buy bread, as I myself did in Chile in 1973.
Many books, as well as innumerable articles and TV presentations, have accused the ANC of perturbing capitalism. Their authors cite evidence to prove their case. High wages are driving away investment! Labour laws are driving away investment! Taxing capital gains is driving away investment! They do not see that the same evidence proves that there is something wrong with capitalism as we know it: namely, that it only works when it is unjust, and even then, it is unreliable.

Overwhelming forces press for restoring accumulation. It does not matter whether the system is perturbed, as Friedman or Hayek would say, because Keynesianism or populism or Marxism led to policies that undermined investor confidence; or because, as Kalecki says often happens, those who have economic power slow the economy deliberately for political reasons; because, as Marx, Luxemburg and in his own way Schumpeter point out, liberal capitalism is unstable and inevitably self-perturbs itself; or because in the spirit of Pareto or more recently Luhmann, the homeostatic mechanism causes scarcity when it is triggered even though the human actors whose actions sum to this result are unaware of what is happening and why. Whatever the reason may be why the accumulation of capital stops working, the system defends itself by establishing or re-establishing a regime designed to favour profit-making.

Many books, as well as innumerable articles and TV presentations, have accused the ANC of perturbing capitalism. Their authors cite evidence to prove their case. High wages are driving away investment! Labour laws are driving away investment! Taxing capital gains is driving away investment! They do not see that the same evidence proves that there is something wrong with capitalism as we know it: namely, that it only works when it is unjust, and even then, it is unreliable. A somewhat smaller number of authors are quite sure that capitalism is the problem, and see the solution, implicitly or explicitly, in one form or another of worker ownership of the means of production. I am proposing what I believe are new ideas: the main failings of capitalism as we know it are symptoms of deeper problems at the level of the basic cultural structure, while capitalism, defined as a system driven by capital accumulation, can cease to be a homeostatic mechanism that punishes redistribution, and become a mechanism for the generation of a social surplus that can be used for such worthy purposes as funding community development. Community development in turn pulls together diverse resources to organize livelihoods for the growing numbers of people who are redundant in the labour market.

Designing a miracle to save South Africa begins by seeing the deep causes of South Africa’s deep desperation in hard-wired deep cultural structures. It begins with a culture-shift to what Mahatma Gandhi called the first principle of non-violence: see every human being as a being with a soul, not just as an abstract belief, but as an intense living faith. Start meetings with prayer. End them with ceremony.

Ubuntu begins with ceremony. When a child is born into the community, it is first held by the grandparents, because the grandparents will be the next to depart for the spirit world, from whence the child has just come. Thus begins a life-long process of education by ceremony. Admittedly, there are elements of fiction here, but there are also elements of fiction in the fact well-known to child psychologists that if the parents expect a child to be a good child who will grow up to be well-behaved, then what they expect will probably happen. This is a fiction at age zero, because at age zero nobody knows how a child will turn out at age 5, 10, 15 or 55. If, on the other hand, it were a fact that in their deepest hearts of hearts all human beings are assholes, it would be a fact best not mentioned.

Unlike Ubuntu, which grew gradually in Africa, the principles of the now prevailing rule of law were built in Europe in the 17th and 18th centuries, using principles of Roman Law that had already been constructed in the year 533 when the Emperor Justinian promulgated the Institutes. They are enforced today by the World Trade Organization and by the courts of almost every country. They make it impossible for democracies to compel the 1% who own most of the wealth to share it. Reading between the lines, one can tell that even Thomas Piketty does not believe in the practicality of his own proposals for taxing inherited wealth. He confesses frustration that neither he as an academic researcher or the world’s tax collectors really even know how much wealth there is and who owns it, in which fiscal paradise it is hidden, or in the names of what legal fictions it is titled.
Here I return to where I began. If minds and hearts continue to be dominated by the thoughts and sentiments inspiring what I have called the Road to Nowhere, then the answers are, respectively, yes, democratic self-governance will always be an empty promise, and no, economic democracy is not a real possibility.

Nevertheless, the wealthy can voluntarily share their wealth if they choose to do so.\textsuperscript{31} They can accept the principle that if human rights, like those guaranteed in the South African Constitution, are really rights, then it is everybody’s job to make human rights real, and not to allow them to lie stillborn as dead letters on paper. It is not just the government’s job. Those of us who possess the means to do so (I include myself because although I am not rich I do have more than I need) can discreetly support community development. Being discreet and supportive, rather than conspicuous and commanding, is called for to avoid taking away poor people’s ownership of their own efforts to mobilize their own resources to help themselves and to help each other. Everybody, even the 1%, can become partners in Unbounded Organization. Being genetically similar to the 99%, the 1% have the same capacity for empathy everyone else has.\textsuperscript{32} Moreover, it is in their own vital interest to cooperate with everyone else in reweaving the shredded social fabric in stopping the juggernaut advance of drug culture, youth gangs and crime; and in staving off ecological disaster. The ship is sinking. When it goes down, the passengers in the first-class cabins will end up with everyone else at the bottom of the ocean.

All that being said, and never underestimating the power of charm; not forgetting for one moment that Arnold Toynbee drew from his twelve-volume study of history the general conclusion that civilizations are on their way up when elites rule by charm, and on their way down when elites rule by force; and always eschewing divisive rhetoric; it remains to ask whether democratic governments have any real capacity to govern. When and if it comes down to playing hardball with capital; when and if there is a democratic government determined to negotiate the best deal possible for people and planet; then, is the bottom line still going to be that the promise of the People’s Charter “The people shall govern!” will be forever an empty promise? Or is real economic democracy a real possibility?

Here I return to where I began. If minds and hearts continue to be dominated by the thoughts and sentiments inspiring what I have called the Road to Nowhere, then the answers are, respectively, yes, democratic self-governance will always be an empty promise, and no, economic democracy is not a real possibility. Democratic governments will continue to impoverish the public purse, taking one measure after another making the rich richer than they already are, for the sake of wooing reluctant new investors who know full well that everything customers really need and will to pay for is already being produced with efficient methods and sold at affordable prices by existing firms.\textsuperscript{33} Even a big private business can become non-capitalist by becoming mission-driven,\textsuperscript{34} treating profits as a means not an end; proudly generating a surplus above and beyond what is needed to keep itself running and then delivering the surplus either to the government as taxes or to its own charitable foundation, or to both. To go Somewhere instead of Nowhere, the government should think of itself less as a marketing firm devoted to selling South Africa in the global market-place, and more as a friendly licensing agency, working with existing firms occupying existing market niches to enhance their contributions to the common good.

Even a big private business can become non-capitalist by becoming mission-driven,\textsuperscript{34} treating profits as a means not an end; proudly generating a surplus above and beyond what is needed to keep itself running and then delivering the surplus either to the government as taxes or to its own charitable foundation, or to both. To go Somewhere instead of Nowhere, the government should think of itself less as a marketing firm devoted to selling South Africa in the global market-place, and more as a friendly licensing agency, working with existing firms occupying existing market niches to enhance their contributions to the common good.

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\textsuperscript{31} See my 1996 essay “The Parable of the Rich Man” in the second issue of this magazine.

\textsuperscript{32} See my 2010 essay, “The Unbounded Organization” in this magazine.

\textsuperscript{33} Sen and Dreze and Andersson envision, have to -- the infinity of other ways of provisioning -- that supplemental and often non-market alternatives or everybody — practices UO. At least some of the keeper for existing business, if it – or somebody, or everybody — practices UO. At least some of the

\textsuperscript{34} See my 2016 essay, “Mission-Driven Businesses” in this magazine.
Transferring resources to where they are needed is part of the cultural ideal. I know I am simplifying, but I believe I am simplifying in a way that reflects the observed fact that what is horrifying and immoral to some is virtuous to others, and vice-versa. I am cautioning that following the practical advice of economists like Amartya Sen and Jean Dreze will be difficult without a culture shift toward the communitarian end of the spectrum.

I have also been implying, if you read between the lines, that it is one thing to transfer surpluses created by private businesses to fund community development and non-mercantile employment against the tacit background of a dominant liberal culture whose central ethical and legal principles are freedom and property; while it is quite a different thing to transfer them against the tacit background of a traditional communitarian ethic. In the latter case serving others is what each of us is born to do; it is dharmic living; it is stewardship of our gifts; it is what it means to be human; or it is something similar expressed in the vocabulary of some other tradition. Transferring resources to where they are needed is part of the cultural ideal. I know I am simplifying, but I believe I am simplifying in a way that reflects the observed fact that what is horrifying and immoral to some is virtue to others, and vice-versa. I am cautioning that following the practical advice of economists like Amartya Sen and Jean Dreze will be difficult without a culture shift toward the communitarian end of the spectrum.

Infinitely more could be said about how the citizens of an economic democracy might organize and continually re-organize their common life when and if economic democracy becomes possible. Indeed, it is of the essence of democracy that (1) its conversations never end; and (2) its institutions never assume fixed, final forms. But instead of saying more now on that or any other topic I think I should stop and hope for feedback. I believe, perhaps mistakenly, that I have already succeeded in briefly introducing the most important considerations to bear in mind to achieve a turn-around for South Africa. What do you make of all this? I am waiting for your comments.

End Notes

4. I take normal profits to be what Alfred Marshall called the supply price of the business man’s abilities. They are profits large enough to make it worth the while of the entrepreneur to continue to engage in business, and which is part of the same thing—to retire debt and to make other necessary payments properly made from earnings. They are what it costs society to pay for and enable the services of the entrepreneurs who organize the creation of goods and services. Alfred Marshall, The Theory of Business Profits. The Quarterly Journal of Economics. Vol. 1 (1897), pp.477-481.
6. David Ricardo in his Principles of Political Economy and Taxation (1817) argued (actually echoing some similar thoughts already found in Adam Smith) that the rents (surplus) of agricultural landlords (and by extension the proceeds of the sale of any natural resource) were especially appropriate funds to tax to pay the expenses of the government. Ricardo’s main argument was that the landlord cannot evade the tax or pass it on to someone else, but there was always lurking in the background (again as in Smith) the point that the landlord did not do any work to earn the money; his rent was just a consequence of the superior fertility of land he happened to own, most likely because he had inherited it. (This point is diluted, but not destroyed by taking into consideration the fact that rent is paid not only for land as it comes from nature, but also for land as landlords have improved it.) A summary of the ensuing 19th century pre-Marshall controversies about rent by Joseph Schumpeter (in his History of Economic Analysis, New York, Oxford University Press, 1954, pp. 671-79) concludes that rent came to be regarded as some sort of Costless Surplus. In the similar language developed during the same time period by Karl Marx rent is a charge made for a Gift of Nature, although Marx also wanted to say that in the last analysis the source of all three of what he called the Holy Trinity –rent, interest, and profit– is the extraction of surplus-value (Mehrwert) from labour. Alfred Marshall in his Principles of Economics (1st edition 1890, 8th edition 1920) defended Ricardo against his critics, finding something right in the general idea that rent does not enter into the costs of production. Marshall defines specific kinds of rent (quasi-rent, which is a bonus for Lucky One who owns something that fetches a price higher than its cost of production because producing it takes a long time, so until production catches up to demand Lucky One benefits from its temporarily high price; and Locational Rent, e.g. the rent paid to put a restaurant in an airport, that derives from the scarcity of locations and the extra money to be earned because of having a good one.) These and other themes in the history of economics give credence to the idea that earnings that (1) represent little or no effort by the earner and/or (2) are not needed to motivate production, are especially appropriate sources to tap to fund the post-1948 guarantees of social rights such as health, housing, pensions and employment. Among those who propose to capture rents (surplus) to fund social programmes today are the authors of South Africa’s National Development Plan and Joseph Stiglitz in the white papers he writes for the Roosevelt Institute in New York. www.rooseveltinstitute.org. My own view seeks to draw credibility from all of the above, but it has some wrinkles of its own: following Schumpeter’s theory of innovation, it gives scientists, inventors and entrepreneurs credit for creating surplus; it adds normal profit to the cost of production before calculating the surplus; and in the end, mine is an ethical theory and not an economic theory at all. It requires practical judgment (Aristotle’s phronesis) and the broadly based ethical rationality advocated by Amartya Sen in The Idea of Justice. Cambridge MA: Belknap Press, 2012,) to decide what should and should not be counted as surplus. More references and more detail are given in Chapter 8 of my forthcoming book Economic Theory and Community Development.
9. Karl Marx coined the term “capitalism.” In Chapter 25 of Capital he implies the definition of it if I am using. He can also be read as defining capitalism as a system where everything—including people, land, and money—becomes a commodity for sale; and as defining capitalism in terms of the wage relation, which makes profit possible by extracting surplus value from labour, thus privately appropriating the social product.
Infinitely more could be said about how the citizens of an economic democracy might organize and continually re-organize their common life when and if economic democracy becomes possible. Indeed, it is of the essence of democracy that (1) its conversations never end; and (2) its institutions never assume final, fixed forms. But instead of saying more now on that or any other topic I think I should stop and hope for feedback. I believe, perhaps mistakenly, that I have already succeeded in briefly introducing the most important considerations to bear in mind to achieve a turn-around for South Africa. What do you make of all this? I am waiting for your comments.


12. Thus, John Maynard Keynes remarks that the economic problem has always been the problem of the weakness of the incentive to invest. General Theory. London: Macmillan, 1936 and successive editions. p. 347.

13. James O’Connor. The Fiscal Crisis of the State. New York: St. Martin’s Press, first edition 1973. One of O’Connor’s main points is that it is not the welfare state that is primarily responsible for governments running up unpaid debt. It is the cost of promoting business. That cost includes infrastructure, security, R and D, much of education and training, and the revenue lost by having to shift tax burdens onto people with comparatively low incomes, for example by the Value Added Tax.


15. They are made analysing Spain, Sweden, Austria, South Africa, Indonesia, Venezuela and the World Bank in Howard Richards and Joanna Swanger, The Dilemmas of Social Democracies. Lanham MD, Rowman and Littlefield, 2006. (henceforth DSD)


18. For a more detailed account of the European historical origins of the BCS that now organizes the global economy and the world juridical order as well as the rule of law within most nations, see Costas Douzinas, The End of Human Rights. Oxford: Hart Publishing, 2000.

19. Michael J. Battle, A Theology of Community; The Ubuntu Theology of Desmond Tutu. Cleveland OH: Pilgrim Press, 2000. It should also be mentioned that the idea of Ubuntu has been important enough that there is a considerable literature written by authors who denounce it.


22. The observations regarding Erasmus and Alex are as of my visits in 2013. At Erasmus CWP blends with traditional authority.


24. Gavin Anderssson and Howard Richards, Unbounded Organizing in Community. Lake Oswego OR: Dignity Press, 2015. See also other works by Andersson and the website www.unboundedorganization.org


26. Peter Drucker expressed the somewhat similar thought that although a business cannot survive without profit, how the profits are distributed and to whom is a political question. Peter Drucker, Business Objectives and Survival Needs. Journal of Business. Volume 31 (1958) pp. 81-90 at p. 87.


29. The fundamental legal barriers separating social democratic governments from the resources they need to run a welfare state were discussed by Jurgen Habermas in The Legitimation Crisis. Boston: Beacon Press, 1975.

30. Thomas Piketty, Capital in the Twenty-First Century. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2014. Further details on why it is impossible to sustain a social democratic welfare state without a culture shift at the level of basic ethical/legal social structures are given in The Dilemmas of Social Democracies previously cited.


33. A similar obstacle, a shortage of paying customers, stands in the way of lifting the poor out of poverty with Grameen-style microcredit and other schemes for incubating micro-enterprises. This point is discussed in detail in Chapter 3 of my Economic Theory and Moral Development, forthcoming from Dignity Press.

HUMAN EXPLOITATION

Born and grew up at the Phoenix Settlement the first Ashram established by Mahatma Gandhi in Inanda South Africa. Presently retired after serving 9 years in the SA Parliament representing ANC, 15 years as a social worker in the Child Welfare field, and an activist in the movement against apartheid. Served ten years under banning orders of which 5 years were under house arrest. Serves as Trustee of Gandhi Development Trust and Phoenix Settlement Trust, co-President of World Conference on Religions for Peace and chairperson of the Advisory Council of King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz International Centre for Interreligious Dialogue. Honorary doctorates were conferred on her by the Durban University of Technology, University of KwaZulu Natal, Siddharth University and Lincoln University. Ela Gandhi is the granddaughter of Mahatma Gandhi.

ELA GANDHI

SOCIAL AND SPIRITUAL ACTIVIST, GRANDDAUGHTER OF MAHATMA GANDHI

THE GREATEST CHALLENGES FACING HUMANITY TODAY

The greatest challenge facing humanity today, I would say, is exploitation of a group of people by other groups of people. It is I believe one of the most pressing problems today. Daily in the world we see people working hard, e.g. the domestic worker, the farm worker, the factory worker and so on. They leave home before we even get up from our beds, they walk and commute long distances to get to work because they do not have their own cars and in most cases they live far from their work places. Their work is hard and farm workers work in all weathers. Yet they earn a miniscule percentage of what we earn, and are treated as “second class citizens”. They are the working poor, they are not unemployed yet they have very little money to be able to live a comfortable life. Importantly they are not counted in the statistics of the poor.

The story of such exploitation of one group of people by another group of people, is an old problem plaguing humanity. Exploitation has taken many different shapes, e.g. patriarchy, serfdom, slavery, indentured labour, colonisation of indigenous people forcing them to work, taxing people so that they have to work to access money so that they can pay taxes, forcing prisoners to work on farms or on building roads and now we have sweat labour and bonded labour. The common feature is that society is divided into ethnic groups and the one ethnic group exercises its authority over the other. The authority is derived from various power relationships spanning over centuries of oppression of one form or another.

Why do they choose to work in these conditions? Is it because work gives them dignity; is it that they need to be occupied; are they lazy and so can only access these kinds of jobs; is society doing them a favour by offering them these jobs? These are important questions that economists should ask in order to understand whether these people have a choice at all.
In my view all this is possible where large sections of communities live in poverty and it is the poverty which compels them to take on any job and to accept the exploitation as there is no other alternative. They have no choice. They live between starvation and exploitation but are not counted as the poor (Sen, n.d.)

Our society today is more unequal than ever before. The poor get poorer and the rich get richer. Within this situation we do have many ills such as violence, crime, corruption, drugs and countless other problems which many people would see as the biggest challenge but digging deeper into causes rather than looking at the symptoms we see that all this arises from exploitation and poverty, it is part of a system that we are perpetuating.

**Exploitation an appendage of capitalism and neo liberalism:**

This situation is created by the capitalist system which Kimberly Amadeo, President of world money watch and author of a number of books on the economy defines as, “Capitalism is an economic system where private entities own the factors of production. The four factors are entrepreneurship, capital goods, natural resources, and labor. The owners of capital goods, natural resources, and entrepreneurship exercise control through companies. The individual owns his or her labor. The only exception would be slavery, where it is owned by another individual or a company.”

In more recent times towards the end of the 20th century, capitalism was replaced by neo liberalism which is defined as “Neoliberalism replaced modernisation theory as the official approach to development in the 1980s. It focuses on economic policies and institutions which are seen as holding back development because they limit the free market. The agreement by the World Bank and IMF that neoliberal policies were the best path to development is referred to as the Washington Consensus following a meeting in Washington by world leaders in 1989.”

In my simple language, all this means - Some private individuals control the means of production, employ labour, exert influence on governments through bribery and corruption, get governments to create a free market economy which gives them all the power to be able to access services such as electricity, water, land roads etc so that they can set up their industries and be encouraged to do that without government interference. This results in the situation where governments enable these businesses to earn a maximum profit with very little obligation to give back, because the captured Governments make laws which keep the taxes for these companies at a reduced level because they want the industries to flourish. Their reasoning is that these companies offer employment to jobless people and enrich the country through their “investment”.

In many countries the labour laws if they exist at all are kept at minimum standards so that exploitation of workers continues - We refer to this as the free Market System because there is minimum interference or regulations by the government. The surplus money that these companies have can be invested at will so that there is little if any obligation on their part to invest these funds in the country where they operate.

But what is in my opinion the most despicable thing about this system is that Companies are able, under this system, to operate in secrecy. Monies are stashed in subsidiaries and tax havens. Some countries are able to enrich themselves by allowing such tax havens while other countries remain in impoverished conditions and their populations continue to suffer gross exploitation.

In these countries Governments become weak, bribery and corruption thrives, exploitation flourishes and the countries are often destabilised through various kinds of devise tactics such as religious differences, class and caste differences and recently Xenophobia. All this leads to building a violent society and fear in the community.

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The Neoliberal system that we are all subjected to in one form or another. The most disturbing aspect of this system is that it is similar to "terrorism" and it uses terrorism to maintain its hegemony. Within this system we do not know where the attack will take place, we do not know who is the attacker and most times we do not know why the attack is taking place. This is because of the secrecy behind it and so people do not know how to handle the problem.

Not surprisingly it is these very companies that produce synthetic food, seeds, medicines and weapons. They create monopolies, and to guard their wealth they need a war economy and a corrupt government over which they can exert power. So in my view all the ills that we experience today are directly a result of this thinking and planning by these big companies.

In this new market driven materialistic world there is no place for ethics and morality. It thrives on profit motives, it thrives on creating markets more often than not with false means made attractive to lure the gullible buyers to buy what they do not really need. Profit levels can only reach great heights if the cost of production is low and the price of the goods is high. That happens when we overwork our workers and under pay them- the terminology they use is "mean and lean" companies. There is no place for ethics and morality in this system.³

How much more can be achieved if the cost of defence is channelled to social services:

“The amount of money spent on the defence sector equals $4.7 billion a day or $249 per person. According to the World Bank and the Office of Disarmament Affairs (ODA), only about 5% of this amount would be needed each year to achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015. The military expenditure figures of the big spending countries are much higher.”⁴

We speak of peace when our countries are building a war economy. We speak of peace in the midst of millions suffering from effects of poverty and deprivation.

Flight of capital from the developing countries:

Another issue of deep concern particularly to us in Africa has been the subject of a paper presented by Asha Ramgobin, my daughter, She writes,

“In response to the age-old question of why some powerful, rich people exploit those who are less powerful and poor, one dimension of the answer to that question: because they can.”
One of the primary ways through which tax is avoided is as a result of abusive transfer mispricing, trade misinvoicing and thin capitalisation practices. A 2015 report from Global Financial Integrity on the impact of illicit financial flows on the poor states that trade misinvoicing is now estimated to constitute up to 80% of all financial flows.³

Member states often compete with each other to see who has the best business climate, the most generous tax holidays, the best investor protection and other extremely lenient fiscal initiatives instead of uniting to demand fair deals.⁴ Some describe this as a “race to the bottom”.

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At a more general level, tax is also avoided as a result of old, ineffective tax laws and tax laws that are not effectively enforced.⁶ As stated above this situation is at times a result of inadequate knowledge and capacity to promulgate laws and reliance upon the major international accounting and legal firms to assist countries develop laws that these companies later use to the advantage of their corporate clients.⁷

A further branch of root causes of tax avoidance is the lack of transparency in commercial activities. Anonymous companies and other legal entities pose a major challenge to developing countries in particular as there is often no meaningful confirmation of beneficial ownership in all banking and securities accounts,⁸ which makes it easier to conceal funds and thereby make illicit financial flows easier. Cobham in his report emphasised that illicit financial flows are by definition hidden and hence policymakers should be concerned with the extent of financial secrecy which is necessary to facilitate illicit financial flows at the national and regional levels as well as globally. He warned of the “specific risks posed from relatively financially secretive African jurisdictions such as Mauritius, as well as emerging issues such as the planned Nairobi international financial centre, or Gambia’s aggressive entry into the supply of anonymous shell companies.”⁹ He highlighted the fact that all else being equal, the easier it is to hide something, the more likely that something will be hidden.¹⁰

These secrecy jurisdictions use both banking secrecy and low tax rates as selling points to attract business. They often deliberately develop a legal framework that makes it easy for transactions to be carried out by institutions and individuals who are not resident in their jurisdiction.¹¹

The common perception is that most tax havens are located on small islands. While this is true geographically, politically and economically most tax havens are closely linked to major developed countries. Research has shown that many major law firms and accounting practices that are based in the City of London also operate out of satellite offices located in British Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies.¹² Prof Ogutto stated that “many tax havens act largely as booking centres for instructions issuing from cities such as London, New York, Tokyo, Frankfurt, Paris and Zurich.”¹³ She goes on to suggest that “major international banks make use of these jurisdictions because of their permissive regulatory regimes, zero or minimal tax rates, and their secrecy arrangements that entail the non-disclosure of beneficial ownership of companies and trusts.”¹⁴

The path of righteousness-Dharma:

All this Gandhiji would describe as adharma, or irreligious practices. Dharma means behaviours that are considered to be in accord with rta, the order that makes life and universe possible, and includes duties, rights, laws, conduct, virtues the sum total of which are the teachings of all our religions and could be described as the “right way of living” or living our religion- not just the rituals but the values taught by our religions.

Traditional societies lived these values to the best of their abilities. They produced food and shared it. Their children and the old and infirm and those afflicted with disabilities were cared for lovingly by their families, which comprised of a large number of people spanning generations.

An example from my country that I was confronted with was the story of a community that lived on the banks of a river in Durban for many years. Here they built their simple homes built of wood and iron with no electricity or tapped water in their homes. They used paraffin lamps for coal stoves or paraffin stoves, some were able to acquire gas stoves and built their own pit toilets or a bucket system. They had access to a piece of land which they could till and grow some vegetables. People had their own little chicken run and managed to have enough chicken as well as eggs for their own consumption and also to sell, grew enough vegetables for their own use and to sell to the richer families in the city nearby, built their homes to comfortably live with their extended families - grand mum and dad, mother and father and children and their spouses and grand children - 4 generations all living together in a home that they could easily extend as the need arises, with enough rooms to accommodate all of them. Then one day there was a storm and their homes were gutted down as the river rose and burst over the banks into the homes, and the rain poured over them. Some homes withstood the storm but many were flattened. Families had to be evacuated.

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³ www.liveencounters.net february © www.liveencounters.net 2018
This is one scenario of modernism, better homes more safety and comfort in the sense that they had electricity, water, sewerages and refuse removal services but no family, no loving care and less money to spend. Life became a burden trying to meet all the bills as the municipal services come at a cost. Gandhiji said, “It is not literacy or learning that makes a man, but education for real life. What would it matter if they knew everything but did not know how to live in brotherliness with their neighbours?”

We organized shelter for them in a community hall until the storm subsided. It caused tremendous damage to their property—furniture and clothing were destroyed and families had to start from scratch to build up their homes. The government stepped in and built high rise three storey roomed flats for them in an area that was almost 15 kilometres away from where they were living and 20 km away from the city centre where they sold their surplus vegetables and earned some money. The younger generation were able to walk to work.

But now living in the new area the families were split up or those with many children were crammed in their one room flat. They had no access to land to grow vegetables or keep chicken. The younger ones had to take several taxis to get to work and so much of their money was spent on transport costs. Life became miserable for the elderly and generally for the community as they now had fewer hours for leisure because of time spent on commuting. Some elderly and people living with disabilities had to seek shelter in state run facilities leading a life of loneliness away from their loved ones. They had no choice. They were forced to move by the government.

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An unsympathetic government disturbed the communal life style of these people and forced them to live in a strange neighbourhood where it took years before they could make friends and establish a community. We who worked in this area began to discuss a new way of looking at life, looking at developing a cooperative spirit, sharing ideas and work and earning together. But when we depart from the truth or these values than we are practising adharma or sin. When we see what modern society has done then we can understand why Gandhiji called it adharma.

The huge difference between Varnas and the Caste system:

Another issue that Gandhiji spoke about and which he is criticised for is varnashradharma, this in summary is a scriptural description of life, wherein society is divided into 4 categories of functional groups. It describes these four groups in relation to occupations that people follow and these occupations are inherited, passed down from one generation to the next. The four are 1. The priesthood or people who teach religion, 2. Those who protect people and run the affairs of government.

An illustration of its natural growth can be seen in the skilful designers who have worked over many generations in creating the beautiful garments that we see in India. Because of modernity they are now reaching a stage when their skills are endangered and will become extinct unless some incentive and interest is given to them. When visiting some of the highly artistic regions of India such as Jaipur you see how little children skilfully carve ornaments with unique patterns and work through them with a speed and precision that comes from early learning handed down from generation to generation.

3. Those who engage in business and the economy and 4. Those who labour, and create goods, working with their hands. They were all interdependent and there was no hierarchy and there was no strong rigidity in its practice but it grew naturally. An illustration of its natural growth can be seen in the skilful designers who have worked over many generations in creating the beautiful garments that we see in India. Because of modernity they are now reaching a stage when their skills are endangered and will become extinct unless some incentive and interest is given to them. When visiting some of the highly artistic regions of India such as Jaipur you see how little children skilfully carve ornaments with unique patterns and work through them with a speed and precision that comes from early learning handed down from generation to generation.

This system was distorted over the years, many delineations were created and each category was ranked and a hierarchical caste system created with the place of the shoe maker, street sweeper and toilet cleaner at the very bottom of the hierarchy relegating them to untouchable status and the Brahmins at the top. They were considered to be of the highest rank and perhaps the unreachable. Thus began the notorious caste system, with the Brahmins the chief beneficiaries and the toilet cleaners the worst victims. They further added rigidity to the system completely denying any movement from one to another job caste.
Ambedkar used this power to entrench reservations for the lower castes in government, public service, universities and so on in the constitution. A result is that while the caste system is criticised and a strong Dalit movement exists in India, today many couples marrying across caste lines prefer to be recognised as the lower caste. Their children also prefer to take on the status of the lower caste. This is because they are able to access the reserved seats. It has raised much anger among the higher castes who are in the majority but are not able to access these seats. As Gandhiji had predicted under these circumstances the caste system will remain entrenched because people see an advantage in keeping it. Gandhiji advocated a solution which lies in following the path of dharma.

This remains a blemish on the Indian. While some of Gandhiji’s writings indicate his acceptance of the varnashramadharma, what he did in his life time indicates a different perspective. 1. He encouraged internmarriage between the different castes hoping that this would eliminate the system. 2. He objected to a separate voters roll for the lower castes because he believed that this would only help to entrench the system. This is what Ambedkar (A lawyer and leader of the so called lower caste) wanted as a prerequisite to the granting of independent status to India. He was persuaded by Gandhiji to withdraw this and was later entrusted with the task of drafting a constitution for independent India.

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Dharma expects of us that we work not for what we get in material terms but for the love of it and as a service to the people. This service is not limited to just caring of people, but also includes menial tasks such as cleaning the toilets and the commons. He had three basic rules, 1. Do the work to the best of your ability, 2. Ensure that you do not leave any dirt for others to clean so each one takes care in keeping the place clean and 3. Take care of the environment and the animals in all the work that we do. In Gandhiji’s view of society reflected in Hind Swaraj, doctors, lawyers, nurses, teachers and so on work to help build the community and not for what they will be paid or how much they will be able to earn from their work. This is dharmic living.

Our dharma is that we should perform our duties as best as we can. Our dharma also decrees that we respect all God’s creation. Our duties are based on our talents and our learning. Learning does not only take place in schools, but a lot of learning is from observation and practice and not from theory and rote learning.

We can see in this system a positive outcome in which we see learning happening through early exposure to the occupation of the parents. In modern society however we see exposure at an early age to friend circles or neighbourhood groups, where the child learns certain basic skills.

But while looking at some of the positive spinoffs from the Varnashramdharma, there is undoubtedly a terrible exploitative trend in this system when it relegates millions of bhangis or cleaners, to a life of misery and gross exploitation. There is undoubtedly a hierarchical difference. In Gandhiji’s understanding the scriptural societal organisation was flexible and if desired one can move from one job to another freely and with no consequences as there was no hierarchical difference. In Gandhiji’s ashrams all had to take turns to do all the work from the most menial to the most sophisticated.

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A devotee would work in a way that does not destroy the environment, but helps to conserve and heal. Dharma is an important way of thinking and living.

There was a story of a young agricultural graduate who visited a simple uneducated farmer and walked with him into the orchid. He then told the farmer. “You see this tree, pointing at the tree under which they were standing, will bear more mangoes than you have ever seen if you just use this fertilizer, and he gave the farmer a small packet. Use it just once a month around the tree. I will come back in six months to see your beautiful crop of mangoes.”

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Something wrong with the education system? Do we need less theory and more practice? Do we need greater humility so we can also learn from those on the ground? Education is key to new ways of looking at the world. New respect for all. New motives and ambitions based on ethics and morality, which are old as the hills as Gandhi referred to them. They are contained in all our scriptures. We have to study them and move from memorising passages to practising what we learn. Gandhi’s life depicted that.

The farmer looked at him in amazement and said sure I’ll try it. Six months later the graduate came back and seeing the farmer, eagerly asked him, “so did the tree yield a bumper crop of mangoes”. The farmer shook his head sadly and said, “I religiously used the fertilizer for the past six months but there are no mangoes on that tree”. They walked up to the tree and the graduate was taken aback when he saw the tree was laden with litches.

Something wrong with the education system? Do we need less theory and more practice? Do we need greater humility so we can also learn from those on the ground? Education is key to new ways of looking at the world. New respect for all. New motives and ambitions based on ethics and morality, which are old as the hills as Gandhi referred to them. They are contained in all our scriptures. We have to study them and move from memorising passages to practising what we learn. Gandhi’s life depicted that.

Gandhiji began to transform his life style in South Africa:

He came to SA a young man of 24 with ideas of his own importance as a London qualified barrister. He wanted to live where the top lawyers and judges lived, he had to dress like them and his world view was determined by these ideas of status and elitism. He soon realised that no matter what he did he could not brush off the discrimination he had to face because he was not white. He soon realised the terrible atrocities that were committed against some of the Indian brothers and sisters who were brought to South Africa under false pretences and then indentured for 5 years, during which time they became the property of their owners. While some were treated reasonably, others were badly tortured and driven to commit suicide, killed while trying to flee and generally lived in miserable conditions. He soon realised that the sons and daughters of the soil, the African people were so badly treated in their own country. He wrote, “The Europeans were no doubt better dressed, better educated but not the moral superiors of the African peasant.”

Having read the scriptures, the Bible, the Koran and the Gita and philosophers such as Tolstoy and Ruskin, he changed his lifestyle, leaving a beautiful home in the city of Durban to live on a farm 22 Kilometers out of Durban, in a neighbourhood where predominantly African people lived and where there were no facilities, services or infra structure such as roads and transportation. Here he invited those of his friends who were prepared to try a new way of living. The system was based on the Kibbutz system of communal living with individual homes and people could cook their own meals or share. They grew vegetables, each had his/her own patch and kept a few cattle for a communal dairy.

They devised their own natural remedies based on Gandhi’s reading of various naturopaths. They began to experiment with methods of conservation and use of waste for purposes of enriching the soil. They all prayed together each evening and morning and the prayers were recited in each of their religions, it was like a coming together of diverse peoples in one unique setting united in their values and their commitment.

From city luxuries to a simple basic living was a major transition in his life and this started in 1904, 11 years after coming to SA.

Satyagraha- nonviolent action:

Another important experiment which Gandhi started in SA was the nonviolent action against injustices. This is a powerful weapon which he started in SA and which was then adopted by many all over the world including Martin Luther King, Nelson Mandela and many others. He left this important legacy for posterity and named it Satyagraha. He maintained three important principles in pursuing this course. 1. He believed strongly that violence cannot help to resolve problems and once said, “an eye for an eye will end up making the whole world blind.” 2. He believed that ignoring injustice without confronting it was cowardice and that we must confront injustice wherever we see it. And 3 He believed that nonviolent action can produce positive results as it is caring and seeks to transform the other rather than to humiliate and defeat the other.
Gandhiji maintained three important principles in pursuing this course. 1. He believed strongly that violence cannot help to resolve problems and once said, “an eye for an eye will end up making the whole world blind.”  2. He believed that ignoring injustice without confronting it was cowardice and that we must confront injustice wherever we see it.  And 3. He believed that nonviolent action can produce positive results as it is caring and seeks to transform the other rather than to humiliate and defeat the other.

He trained people to participate in the Satyagraha movement. “The whole concept of Satyagraha was profoundly significant to me... It was in this Gandhian emphasis on love and nonviolence that I discovered the method for social reform that I had been seeking.” (Martin Luther King, Autobiography)

Gandhiji contrasted Satyagraha (holding on to truth) with “duragraha” (holding on by force). “There must be no impatience, no barbarity, no insolence, no undue pressure. If we want to cultivate a true spirit of democracy, we cannot afford to be intolerant. Intolerance betrays want of faith in one's cause.”

"By dint of our perseverance, our patience, our reasonableness, our law-abiding methods and the justice of our demands, all these obstacles shall be removed and enemies overcome... By the gentleness of our manners... and by the nobility of our character shall we break down the adamantine wall of colour prejudice and force even our enemies to be our admirers and our friend.” (John Dube-the first President and founder of the African National Congress )

Through Satyagraha Gandhiji hoped to change the world by starting from the smallest unit of society the village. He advised Nehru and the Congress “banish the idea of the capture of power and you will be able to guide power and keep it on the right path.... There is no other way of removing the corruption that threatens to strangle our independence at its very birth.”

Earlier in 1908 he engaged in a dialogue with young people who wanted to forcibly overthrow British rule in India. He spoke about the futility of replacing one power with another which follows the same path. He advocated that it is far more practical to transform the thinking of the opponent and our own to build a new society based on new thinking apart from that of the colonial power but similar to some of our own traditional thinking based on our scriptures. Religion and values that religions promote are very important to developing new thought.

He firmly placed ethics and morality at the centre of change. He also spoke about redefining power, about liberation not as capture of the state but building of new relationships, new way of approaching people and thinking about others who may have opposing views. “Transformation rather than defeat of an “enemy”. So in short I see exploitation perpetrated by neoliberal tendencies as the biggest threat and I see a firm promotion of dharmic living as the way to go.

End Notes

1. U.S. Economy- Capitalism Characteristics Pros Cons and Examples
2. The Neoliberal Theory of Economic Development –posted on December 7 2015
4. Opportunity Costs Military spending and the UN's Development Agenda p.16
5. Fjeldstad, p. 12
7. See Forum Syd: “Bringing the Billions Back” at page 19
9. See Global Financial Integrity: “Illicit financial flows and development indices” at page 24
11. Ibid at page 7
12. See “Bringing the Billions Back” at page 19
14. Ibid at page 33
15. Ibid at page 33
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Now a little bit about what ‘knowledge’ is. We experience the world through senses – the sensory perception accumulates in the brain to the extent we have memory – individual memory. Individuals remember the accumulated wealth of sensory perception but a point comes when the individuals have to fade into time and pass on the experience of the world to the next generation and it is there that the perception of many individuals – the memory based perception of many individuals is gathered and posited, collected as if it is outside individuals, as if it exists objectively. While the origin is in the mind of an individual and many such individuals, what gathers, what gets collected becomes impersonal from one generation to the next generation requires a mechanism and that gives rise to institutions such as schools and at a later stage universities. All of us present here are in the business of carrying the old stock of remembered experiences to the new generation. So what is called knowledge is essentially accumulated memory. When memory gets complicated then what is accumulated requires a different regimen, a different regulation for controlling it, for keeping it safe for making sense of what is gathered – the collective memory.
It is easy for one or two generations to remember – But if you go to fifty generations before your time you would be lost. So it is at this stage that a certain arrangement needs to be introduced, a certain classification needs to be introduced in what is collected. And that gives birth to what is called taxonomy.

Around the 15th and the 16th century in Europe, when there was a sudden outburst of new intellectual energy there was an attendant attempt at classifying things differently. Before the 16th and the 17th century, memory was – the collected memory – treated through certain known paths. There were mnemonics (tricks to remember) in use in plenty. For instance, a certain character/letter helps in recalling several facts, and so one put such characters/letters together and made a little verse. In many languages, the first letters of the words of colour terms for all colours in the spectrum are put together to make an acronym. It helps one to remember the colours in the spectrum. Such were the memory tricks that civilizations have used all along in all ages. It is the necessity of the human consciousness and its relationship with the external world. During the 16th and the 17th centuries in Europe, scholars found that these tricks were no longer enough to keep together all of the collected memory of centuries in the form of a manageable knowledge stock. Therefore, they started devising new methods of classification so there was a taxonomy for Chemistry, (the periodic table) Zoology, Botany, Physics etc. - for Planets and stars, for all kinds of Geological material and so on. Thinkers in Europe felt that having so many different tables, so many different classifications still keeps all of the knowledge beyond the reach of a single individual scholar and they started wondering whether there could not be a single method to remember everything. Many of them developed strange methods of remembering. One of them was Leibniz, a German philosopher. Leibniz finally arrived at a level of abstraction; it was to strive at abstracting facts, physical experience, mental experience or memory or history. This came handy in abstracting and harmoniously bringing together all that was known. In this way, Leibniz arrived at a higher level of abstraction. He held that everything can be remembered if it is converted to digits such as 1 and 0. He maintained that one can split everything in terms of strings of zero and one. The assumption was that if one understood how to read this, how to relate this zero – one, 001,100– infinite series of combinations, permutations of these digits, then anybody would have a good chance to ‘know’. Leibniz said that “harmony is the governing principle of the universe”. By this he meant that all knowledge has to be harmoniously placed together. No two sets or sub-sets of knowledge known to humans should be incongruously placed with the general order of knowledge. Leibniz made a very important historical accomplishment in that what he created was described in his lifetime and subsequently in all generations as ‘universal knowledge’. ‘Universal Knowledge’ is not knowledge about the universe. It is the basic method of recording and organizing knowledge. If you know that method then it can be applied to any subset of the collected knowledge. That was the meaning of the expression he used it, in his own coinage. Now this had a guiding principle laid down, for what it means to think and the idea of thought took a more concrete shape than it had during the time of Aristotle who said “I like Plato but I like Plato’s thought more”. This idea of what thought is very clear in Descartes’ formulation “I think, therefore I exist”. From the 17th on to the 18th century this method of thinking and this method of knowledge had defined conversely what knowledge is and what thought is.

In the 18th century we have important Philosophers who speak in terms of primacy of thought over experience and the superiority of thought over vision. Hobbs in ‘Leviathan’ takes a stand, where he says, if you give free range to imagination, you become a sinful person. In fact, imagination leads you to ‘melancholy’ a disease which was considered to be universal in England at that time. Shakespeare’s treatment of King Lear has an element of ‘melancholy’. Lear the old King is under the attack of melancholy. Milton’s treatment of Satan has this element of ‘melancholy’ because Satan is shown as burning in a dark river. Darkness is associated with melancholy because they believed that vapors rise from the spleen and affect the thinking process. Darkness was associated with melancholy.
Now, science or what Europe called science came up and rationality and thought based on rationality took shape precisely in centuries when colonialism was the order of the day and that had a great impact on our destinies here and destinies of people in Africa, Latin America and so on. We had our own traditions of remembering things. We had our own traditions of handing down knowledge from one generation to the next generation. In western traditions, veracity – evidence – proof became the defining features of thought based knowledge.

Through the 19th century there used to be debates as to whether science holds truth or poetry holds truth. Is scientific truth superior to poetic truth, and so on. Unnecessary controversies, unnecessary debates I would say. This faith in rationality – there is a contradiction of terms - Science became a kind of a religion and religion was therefore dropped out of people's life - at least social life. This faith in science and rationality created huge struggles during the 20th century, and based on quite a dogma-like faith in science, millions were killed in Europe and outside.

Hobbes says that imagination seizes what does not exist and the affected mind starts seeing goblins, witches, ghosts when they are hit by melancholy driven imagination. As against that, thought was considered as the harbinger of light. Thought made things clearer. Thought showed the contours of reality in very clear relief. Therefore, knowledge had to be thoughtful or rational. The term rational means the ability of the human mind to know. That is the basic meaning of the term 'rational'. Humans have a 'rational' mind (a view later rejected by Sigmund Freud) that was the belief at that time.

As we move ahead in the 19th century after the war devastated Europe and after Napoleon was no more. Suddenly a very important French thinker – Augustus Comte decided that not only Physics, Zoology, Botany, Mathematics, Planets, Chemistry be linked together in a system, but even what we call today humanities or social sciences. They were only called human disciplines – even they be linked in the same systematic, symmetrical way with the rest of Knowledge. So he produced his wonderful series of tomes on 'What is Human Science' He started his work in 1822 or 1823 and completed it by 1835 middle of the 19th century. In all this history rationality and knowledge based on rationality had developed its rhetoric to justify themselves. And this rhetoric said that if thought is not logical if it is not in the structure of ‘A, therefore, B’ – “something happens, therefore, something else happens.” We see that in action in construction of history in Hegel’s sense. History is not just the memory of what happened in the past, but history is the sequence of things in terms of causality.

Now, science or what Europe called science came up and rationality and thought based on rationality took shape precisely in centuries when colonialism was the order of the day and that had a great impact on our destinies here and destinies of people in Africa, Latin America and so on. We had our own traditions of remembering things. We had our own traditions of handing down knowledge from one generation to the next generation. In western traditions, veracity – evidence – proof became the defining features of thought based knowledge. In our traditions it was not veracity, proof or evidence, but when a guru taught a shishya, the shishya knew that the guru has knowledge and the guru understood intuitively that the shishyas have acquired that knowledge. So intuition was the parameter for judging validity of the knowledge process or transaction- not evidence not proof, not logical proof but intuition. Now these two traditions came into direct conflict during the colonial times. We of course had other traditions of remembering. We had traditions of memory of people who worked with hands - the farmers, women and so on, and their traditions of memory had never been canonized in India.

They were rejected, unfortunately, which was a great tragedy for us. But even in those traditions, those other traditions, the logic was that tradition of knowledge develops along certain hazy lines of intuition rather than rationality. This clash gave the rest of the world a sense of inferiority and Europe a sense of unnecessary superiority.

Unnecessarily Europe started thinking that science and therefore technology will civilize humans all over the world and effectively produce lasting solutions for basic dilemmas of being human. This faith kept multiplying through the 19th century.

Through the 19th century there used to be debates as to whether science holds truth or poetry holds truth. Is scientific truth superior to poetic truth, and so on. Unnecessary controversies, unnecessary debates I would say. This faith in rationality – there is a contradiction of terms - Science became a kind of a religion and religion was therefore dropped out of people's life – at least social life. This faith in science and rationality created huge struggles during the 20th century, and based on quite a dogma-like faith in science, millions were killed in Europe and outside. Initially, I had said that the Greeks thought of visionaries and those visionaries imagined that 'word' had a power of its own – that 'word' itself illuminates things. Religions all over the world considered 'word' having a magical power. It is the 'word' that connects the mind and the world – chitta and vishwa – the conscious and the phenomenal world and, thereby, bridges the word and the world.
The print technology made the written word considered more serious than the spoken word which is against the spirit of the Greek and the earlier Upanishadic, several non-Upanishadic and Buddhistic traditions. In our country for instance this had a terrible impact on languages that we spoke and a similarly terrible impact was there on spoken languages in the rest of the world. I will give a little account. In the 19th century the print technology came to India. In some parts of the world it came a little earlier, some 20 years earlier. I am giving a broad picture so it doesn't matter - Only some languages were printed. Others were not printed.

In this view, not the ‘word’, not the consciousness, but the connecting thing is seen as of a greater importance than either the ‘word’ itself or the mind that pursues the ‘word’. That also was a way of knowing because the ‘word’ knew itself as a verb rather than ‘knowledge’ which is normally seen only as a noun (and rarely as a verb ‘knowing’). That was a tale of many civilizations on what ‘word’ is. Throughout the 19th century societies all over the world found a new expression. I shall come to this new expression in a minute’s time. It was the way the print technology made the written word considered more serious than the spoken word which is against the spirit of the Greek and the earlier Upanishadic. That was an important thing because the print technology made the written word considered more serious than the spoken word which is against the spirit of the Greek and the earlier Upanishadic, several non-Upanishadic and Buddhistic traditions.

The one that was printed were considered languages of substance. The languages that were not printed were considered as inferior languages. Languages only of spoken tradition- oral tradition and what is oral were considered less important than what is written. Our writers have not only been writing but also passing on their knowledge through the oral means. Tukaram in Marathi for instance used to sing bhajans as well as write them. He was known to people all over the country through his singing as was Meera and Akkamahadevi rather than through his writing. So it was the oral expression that had a greater attraction for people. Written expression remained along with the oral expression without one excluding the other; without one denying the other. Is Tukaram truer in his writings than in his bhajans? Or is it the other way around? That question is absurd because both came to him naturally. Throughout the 19th century our writers who earlier communicated orally took to print in a big way because India is a country that loves languages.

By the beginning of the 20th century when we had some glimpse of a nation that was around the corner, a nation that was about to take birth. Our leaders started thinking about the language diversity, and felt quite lost with so many of them around. They said there could be a linguistic state reorganization when we become independent. Indeed after independence there was a commission for linguistic reorganization of states based on languages that were in print – or had written literature in them. These languages were given states for themselves. Languages which did not have written literature in them were denied statehood. To give some examples the Bhili languages spoken by more than two and a half crores did not get a state. So it got distributed in four states such as Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat and Maharashtra. The same happened to Santali, of course, much later, a Jharkhand was created. A similar thing happened with Gondi language. There are many such languages which got bisected, trisected or fell into many small fragments. Because of this ‘written alone is authentic logic’ in the 1962 census India had a list of 1652 mother tongues. In 1971 census, this had been brought down because of a cutoff point that was introduced. There had to be at least 10000 speakers for a language to be included in the census data that is published. We do not know what happened to those 1554 mother tongues. In my estimate at least 250 have died in the last 50 years in India. Globally this situation exists. Globally it is believed that there were 6000 living languages. And it is also estimated by a number of agencies and individual scholars and linguists that out of 6000 at least 4000 may quite likely disappear in the next 50 years. Globally it seems that languages die. Human languages die. Not just language A or B but language itself is dying and that is a worrisome situation. Why have we arrived at this situation? Is it only because of Colonialism or Writing or Rationality? There is something more happening.

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The entire history of the Second World War shows that countries are aligned along the idea of ‘nation’ or ‘freedom’. Therefore ‘Freedom’ and ‘Nation’ started appearing as ideas that were antithetical. People are looking for a new kind of ‘Freedom’. I said that the social contract changed. Today even that social contract appears to be out dated and the human mind is looking for a new kind of ‘freedom’.

The human mind is probably looking forward to jumping out of this frame work to find a new ‘freedom’. Very briefly let me add, that is, the cosmos is believed to be almost 1400 crore years old. The big bang took place 1400 crores of years ago. The solar system emerged about 600 crore years ago. The Earth settled down 450 crore years ago. Life started in its initial form around 250 crore years ago. Humans emerged around 500,000 years ago. Language as we know is only 70,000 years old. Which means humans after emerging as homo-sapiens formed communities but did not have the kind of language that I am speaking to you now – not sound based language. For the first 2 lakhs years, probably it was the language of the theatre. Sometimes you nod your head – that’s the language of theatre. It is not French, Spanish, Malayalam or Marathi – it is Universal. Almost for 2 lakh years after that the language was of tones – tonality. I will call it language of music. Laughter is a remnant of that pre-historic phase of the evolution of humans.

At least for the last 70,000 years that humans have developed the language that we speak. It has started coming to the notice of in recent decades (about 30 years) that the human brain has started developing fatigue for language as we use it. When verbal articulation first enters the brain, it is in the left lobe of the brain that it gets stored and processed. This area of the brain is known as the Broca’s lob. The processing is effected through a coordinated and immensely complex work of some 85 billion neurons that help the brain to reduce the sound signals into abstraction and judgment. Neurologists have started promoting the view that the children today do not take to reading, not because they are cognitively deficient but because they are cognitively ahead of our times. An excellent research on dyslexic children points to the fact that children with dyslexia are at least a 100 years ahead of other children – in terms of their ability to abstract which is the key for formulation of what we call knowledge. Children’s ability to abstract and their ability to arrive at judgments is greater in the case of dyslexic children. Now these scientists have turned back to point out that Leonardo de Vinci was dyslexic and Einstein himself was dyslexic and so on.

Scientists are saying that in the future humans might move out of the linguistic phase. I said theatre, music, language might move out of this phase and get into a phase of cognition, perception which is based on visually – the visual image – the image based communication – image based cognition. Scientists say this because images get into the brain through the eye – the work that the neurons have to do is less. And the entire load of memory that we have dumped upon the present and the future generation is far too much for the brain to carry in terms of linguistic transactions alone.
If you have such a cognition, such a mechanism to relate to the world then you will be able to relate to many planets, not just the earth, not just the present and the past and the future as segmented as if it is a slice of bread. You can have multiple chronologies, orders or movements that can be perceived by the human brain. It is that kind of freedom that humans are looking up to. And it is therefore what we call the epistemic base of knowledge that has started collapsing. Therefore what used to be called knowledge is today becoming knowledges. There is a famous report on knowledge written by a Canadian French philosopher called Lyotard, “The Post-modern Condition” which has this argument: that Knowledge will no longer be in terms of analogies but in terms of paralogies. Not in terms of the Leibnitz kind of classificatory scheme but in terms of many such kinds of classificatory schemes, each one of which need not be consistent with the other. That is to say that Reason will no longer be the basis of knowledge. Expression will be of a different kind. When that happens humans will have emerged into a new kind of freedom.

This appears to be the logic of the evolutionary process. Not the logic of human thought as it has been so far. But this evolutionary process is far beyond the capacity of human ability to control. When such a radical shift happens in the evolutionary process there is a common observation: Orthodoxies of all kinds come together and try to reduce diversity. Because evolution has slowed down we are on the right side of evolution or are trying to oppose it. Today the state, the nation, the society are all hell-bent on controlling freedom, rationality and expression. One might think that this is happening only in India. The murders of Rationalists, the murders of journalists, the attacks on scientists, it is not happening only in India. I am not trying to justify what is happening in India. I have condemned it publically. I have condemned it personally and I have opposed all those attacks without any ambivalence. If you look at Turkey it is precisely the same that has happened. Kamal Pasha made Turkey a modern state. Today in Turkey 2000 students disappeared from a campus because they decided to subscribe to a certain course in their curriculum. Many writers are in jail. They have been killed. This is happening in Egypt. I was at Grenoble last year. Grenoble is the place where the French Revolution started. When I was there, it was the day when Britain exited Europe. The Mayor called us and said “since you are from other countries, don’t protest. It will be risky for you. Rather come and have some wine with me. But I said Grenoble is known for the French revolution!

I was at Dandi, on 30th January last year. Dandi is a small village known for the Salt Sathyagrah. I wanted to take a group of 700 or 800 writers there to protest against the attack on expression. The Sarpanch said “I will give you lunch – cost free! Don’t protest!”
David has been a professional editor and journalist for over thirty years beginning his career on the subs desk of the Morning Star newspaper. He is editor of numerous historical publications under the Socialist History Society imprint. David’s interests and research include Turkey and the Kurds, literary figures like George Orwell, Edward Upward and William Morris, British anarchism, the 17th century English revolutionary era and the history of psychoanalysis. He has contributed towards many different publications and writes review articles, commentaries, opinion pieces, polemics and poetry.

David Morgan

ROJAVA, a MODERN UTOPIA

"A map of the world that does not include Utopia is not worth even glancing at, for it leaves out the one country at which humanity is always landing. And when humanity lands there, it looks out, and, seeing a better country, sets sail. Progress is the realisation of Utopias.” - Oscar Wilde, The Soul of Man Under Socialism

It’s actually surprising that it has been permitted to exist for so long. There are so many forces ranged against it, some publicly and others privately, who would surely like to have seen it strangled at birth or would be content to sit quietly on the side lines as some other brute agency executes the task. That’s exactly what Turkey is now doing in the Afrin province of Syria which has been run by the Kurds since 2014 and is now coming under sustained attack. Kurds are rightly alarmed that Afrin is going to suffer the same fate as Kobane a few years ago; but when the people of Kobane came under assault by ISIS fighters, they resisted valiantly and managed to push back the offensive. In achieving that victory, the embattled Kurds earned the respect of people the world over, inspired a good number of volunteers, both men and women, and it led to them being supplied with weaponry by the United States which realised that Kurds were effective allies in the coalition against ISIS. Now that ISIS has receded from the scene, Turkey’s President Erdogan has been permitted to make a move to eradicate the Kurds in Afrin and aims to undermine their experiment in popular democracy in the wider territory known as Democratic Federation of Northern Syria or more popularly as simply “Rojava”.

http://www.supportrojava.org/a-small-key/
https://kurdistantribune.com/do-not-let-afrin-become-kobane/
Rojava may be Utopia to many, but that doesn’t mean it should be dismissed too lightly as an impractical exercise in idealism. Even hard-nosed realists must have some sympathy with their fate. In fact even those who pride themselves on being unpolitical would be impressed by the resilience and bravery of the men and women of Rojava. Their experiment in popular democracy is a pointer to the future.

Rojava’s existence for more than five years as a de facto autonomous enclave in northern Syria has been an unprecedented experiment in democracy for a region that’s known long periods of dictatorship and unimaginable tyranny. The Kurds, along with local Arabs, Assyrians and Turkmen and led by the Democratic Union Party (PYD), have been gradually building a new society on a cooperative and democratic basis which has been a remarkable endeavour amidst all the turmoil and conflict that has been taking place around them. All the while, Turkey has been seething and waiting for the right opportunity to attack. Now Ankara has seized the moment and has unleashed its military might with a merciless determination. The Turks have threatened to continue until “every terrorist” is eliminated from the entire Rojava region and they plan to push on to other areas of Rojava after Afrin is defeated including Kobane.

If Turkey is allowed to succeed it would be a tragedy for the Kurds and mark a huge setback for the liberation of women in particular because women have been granted equal rights with men under the new administration. All the different ethnic communities are represented in the running of the Rojava territory and have been working amicably together, according to all reports. Visitors have been impressed by how efficiently the region is run and the air of freedom that the people breathe is infectious. The existence of a radical democratic alternative society to the oppressive neighbouring regimes is a strong symbol of hope to many that “another world is possible” and many anarchists and other progressives have flocked to Rojava. Equally, its existence stands as a threat to many vested interests, not least of which are the current regional rulers and those who control the levers of power everywhere. Greater equality and fairness are not what any of the global powers bargained for when they threw their support behind the uprising against Damascus seven years ago.

Rojava may be Utopia to many, but that doesn’t mean it should be dismissed too lightly as an impractical exercise in idealism. Even hard-nosed realists must have some sympathy with their fate. In fact even those who pride themselves on being unpolitical would be impressed by the resilience and bravery of the men and women of Rojava. Their experiment in popular democracy is a pointer to the future. It has already succeeded in planting the seeds of change and its destruction would be a tremendous loss, but it is too early to predict that as a final outcome. All that can be said with any certainty is that its very existence has been quite remarkable and that alone is sufficient to inspire generations to come to struggle on until the promise of true freedom is achieved. It represents a necessary Utopia.

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But all this talk of socialism is for losers. Those who have no chance of making it in the real world; this fantasy is all they have to fall back on. It’s terrible that politicians who should know better can get away with making false promises and offering people a solution that has no chance of working. The way they take us for mugs is totally criminal. I suppose that’s the price we have to pay for free speech and living in a democracy. We have to be tolerant and let them have their say; we are not a tyranny after all.

And if the poor won’t work, let them starve. There’s no such thing as a free lunch. Well, I’ve never had one. But you can try the lottery if you want a quick route out of drudgery. Someone’s got to be the lucky one. There’s a winner every week. It might be you – or me. If you don’t play you will never know. You know it makes sense. But all this talk of socialism is for losers. Those who have no chance of making it in the real world; this fantasy is all they have to fall back on. It’s terrible that politicians who should know better can get away with making false promises and offering people a solution that has no chance of working. The way they take us for mugs is totally criminal. I suppose that’s the price we have to pay for free speech and living in a democracy. We have to be tolerant and let them have their say; we are not a tyranny after all.

"The Utopian dreamers want to build a new society, one that’s fair for all, with equal rights for women, no discrimination and no favours for the privileged few. Eliminate corruption from all government offices so that our esteemed representatives become true tribunes of the people and are not simply feathering their own nests. Well, they are just p-------- in the wind, aren’t they? Surely you agree? They don’t stand a chance of success. Look at the odds stacked against them? It’s a never-never land. All those menacing neighbours with their weapons waiting to pounce; the big boys pull all the strings in the media to make them sing the tune they want us all to hear. There’s just a handful of idealists who cannot even handle a gun and would be much more effective staying at home and writing poetry or blogging at night to their hearts content; that way they do no harm to themselves or to anyone else. Anyway idealism is the cause of so much damage and distress. It gives people false hope, that leads people astray and that’s dangerous.

"Just take a long look at that region. It’s dominated by evil tyrants who eat babies and rape their own daughters, they marry girls at 11 or 12, and add to that all the domestic violence, the FGM, it’s all too ugly to even think about; and these are the ones who are supposed to be our friends and allies. Feminism in that region of the world is impossible; it’s a "s---hole", to borrow a phrase. Come on, you really are dreaming. It’s terribly sad that they are getting crushed and everything though, heartrending to see mothers wailing as they cradle their dead babies covered in blood and dust; people killed for simply dreaming of a better life.

Yeah, that’s not fair and I do feel for them a lot. But what can I do about it?

"Far better to have been reading Machiavelli than Thomas More; I’m sure that’s what my old teacher would have told us. If you upset the apple cart only dreadful consequences follow; you have to be prepared to pay a very, very high price. Most ordinary folk are too cowardly for that, aren’t they, well aren’t they?"

https://kurdistantribune.com/do-not-let-afrin-become-kobane/
Spain

photographs by
Joo Peter

Spain is very European, with its unique and powerful traditions - at the same time a blend of many cultural influences like ancient pre-Indo-European cultures (Basques), Roman Empire origin, northern invaders, Muslim occupation (Andalusia), gypsy culture and much more. However, Spain’s conservative social structure in the past, catholic dominance and oppressive large landowners (going back to the giant slave farms of the Roman Empire), has been ruling Spain for a long time and was exported to Latin America. The republican movement in the 30s tried to overcome this past, the civil war following showed a polarized society, with rising urban centers searching for more independence (a bit like Catalonia today). Dictator Franco won the civil war back then, just like most of the dictators in Latin America. After Franco died in 1976, things slowly changed. Today, Spain and many Latin American countries are dynamic democracies.

Catholic woman in religious parade in Granada, dressed elegantly in traditional black gown.
Detail of people in the fires of hell in painting on tiles in Serville.
Jesus carved in black wood in the The Mosque–Cathedral of Córdoba.

Sculpture of Madonna in a black, white and gold dress, Granada, Spain.
Girl in an elegant traditional andalusian black dress with hat on a horse checking her smartphone.
Catching a relaxed moment in a classic restaurant in Madrid.
Bull fights shown on TV in a typical bar in Madrid.
Selective Morality

Ulyseas has served time in advertising as copywriter and creative director selling people things they didn't need, a ghost writer for some years, columnist of a newspaper, a freelance journalist and photographer. In 2009 he created Live Encounters Magazine, in Bali, Indonesia. It is a not for profit (adfree) free online magazine featuring leading academics, writers, poets, activists of all hues etc. from around the world. March 2016 saw the launch of its sister publication Live Encounters Poetry, which was relaunched as Live Encounters Poetry & Writing in March 2017. He has edited, designed and produced all of Live Encounters’ 120 publications. Mark’s philosophy is that knowledge must be free and shared freely (without charge) to empower all towards enlightenment. He is the author of three books: RAINY – My friend & Philosopher, Seductive Avatars of Maya – Anthology of Dystopian Lives and In Gethsemane: Transcripts of a Journey. www.amazon.com

Mark Ulyseas

Selective Morality

Not too long ago one witnessed Meryl Streep speak eloquently about wicked Weinstein and her country’s President, Trump. Prior to these sterling performances, this celebrated actress gave a standing ovation to a convicted child rapist, Roman Polanski, at the Academy Awards. Of course, he was not present. This selective moral approach appears to be growing amidst self-appointed gendarmes who have two sets of morals – one reserved for themselves and the other, a platform to express their righteous indignation (read as self-promotion). Now with the new mantra being #metoo we are spectators to a stream of the bold and the beautiful coming out of the woodwork with colourful narrations of how they were violated on their way to stardom. Perhaps it never occurred to them to raise their voice at the time when the incidents happened. Could it be that crying wolf would have jeopardised their chances to stardom and hence they suffered in silence… only to speak up when stardom was achieved and there was enough money in the bank? Was this a silence of convenience?

The glitterati from around the world has predictably chimed in with their own revelations. Not to be outdone by the righteous indignation of a section of women in the USA, TIME magazine quickly nominated #metoo as the ‘person of the year’ 2017.

Any actor who has spoken out against this rising selective morality has been shouted own. Suddenly anyone who has balls and wears pants is a sexual deviant.

Perhaps if the women in question have a quiet chat with the Kurdish women fighters they would get another perspective on how to handle those that infringe on their sexuality, among other things.

French actress, Catherine Deneuve, is one of the 100 French women who has defended men’s ‘right to hit on’ women in an open letter that speaks of a new ‘puritanism’. Sane voices amidst the chanting of Hollywood homilies.
Selective Morality

What happens in Europe has become the yardstick for the rest of the world. After a number of Parisians were gunned down by terrorists the chant was 'pray for Paris'. And so on. And prior to this, in the aftermath of the fall of Nazi Germany, the term Nazi is used liberally for anyone or anything that slightly resembles that of non-political correctness. Even words like holocaust are reserved exclusively for Europeans.

The Europeans consider themselves the civilised world. And this is odd because it was they who colonised large swathes of the world, raping, looting and enslaving the colonised. Holocausts were a dime a dozen, like the deliberate extermination of ancient societies and occupation of their lands. Selective morality is best reflected in the image of Meryl Streep applauding a child rapist. And Tony Blair justifying the invasion of Iraq. Goebbels would have been proud of these folk. He knew the power of word and image.

One is not condoning sexual harassment per se. But it is apparent that individual thinking on the matter of what constitutes sexual harassment is fast losing its sense of proportion. It is a known fact that such harassment is, usually, perpetrated by people known to the women. Is this reflective of the societies we have created where socio-religious-economic issues collide with one another, thus making morals elastic? Hence, the rise of selective morality?

Society is what we make of it, the order we create. It cannot exist without our regular individual inputs both moral and economic. But it can get easily warped when selective morality becomes a populist chant led by glitterati with a penchant for self-promotion.

If women face various forms of sexual harassment/abuse so do men, boys, girls, homosexuals, lesbians et al. Unfortunately sexual harassment of men is rarely heard of because 'men don't cry' nor do boys.

The insidious sexual discrimination of the LGBT community continues on the hour, every hour. But then, who bothers about these ‘sexes'? They are often viewed condescendingly as fringe folk of society.

Selective morality is not a new phenomenon. There is another more insidious form that has been around for a very long time and it emanates from former colonial countries, all surprisingly situated in Europe.

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The sacred Hindu swastika is deliberately confused with the Nazi Hakenkreuz. People of a certain religion in India have of late been 'associating' the Hindu swastika with the Nazi Hakenkreuz, implying that some Hindus are Nazis. The ‘European,' effect is clearly visible in this ex-colony.

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But this is acceptable. The massacre of Africans, Asians, Aborigines (Australia), the destruction of civilisations in the Americas etc., because it was carried out by those whose morals were, in their own eyes, unimpeachable. Many thought they were doing their God's work by civilising the great unwashed. They had/have two sets of morals – one for their societies and one for the rest of the world. It matters little if Europe has systematically produced many Hitlers that died with one another to rule the world. European selective morality has stood the test of time.

The perceived big bad boys of today are Russia and China. Over 30 million Russians were killed in both world wars, millions injured or taken prisoner. Many millions more were killed by Stalin. Whilst the Chinese had faced the full wrath of the Japanese Imperial Army and later by its own bloody cultural revolution when millions were killed. Now that they (Russia and China) have become world powers the former colonials find it an indigestible development and have continued to undermine their power.

The developments in the Middle East and the devastating effect and aftermath of the illegal invasion of Iraq by USA and UK is reflective of dual morality. No sanctions were imposed on these two countries. No legal action in the World Court. The UN looked on... like how a castrated dog would look at a bitch in heat. There were no celebrities shouting from the lectern to ‘pray for Iraq’. Curiously, it was the Russian intervention in the Middle East that destroyed ISIS.

The mantra of civil rights has been abused so often that no one in their right mind believes the rubbish churned out by western capitals. The propaganda aimed at countries like India, Russia and China is fine tuned to give the impression that only western nations are truly free whilst the rest of the world wallows in civil rights violations that go beyond the pale.

Social media is overrun with millions of ill-informed folk with click happy fingers who share links to dubious news reports and are ever ready to 'bash' any image that does not conform to their selective morality. The spewing of hatred and abuse has turned social media into one global garbage dump of misinformation and disinformation.

Selective morality is best reflected in the image of Meryl Streep applauding a child rapist. And Tony Blair justifying the invasion of Iraq. Goebbels would have been proud of these folk. He knew the power of word and image.
There is an exoticism that surrounds the magical, and far-flung regions of Tibet. Great explorers have been tramping over these inaccessible and at times hostile lands for centuries to bring home fascinating imagery and tales of magic. Stories and photographs grant us with portraits of “the other” but where is this line between objectification and the true life of these resilient and faithful people?

For nearly a decade I have strived to portray the truths of these people, specifically the livelihood of Tibetan women. What is not often seen in our media flooded with sensationalist imagery, is the work these women must endure to simply survive in one of the most extreme environments on Earth. Whether a young nomadic girl in the mountains or an elder living at her home in the valley, these are women that hold up more than half the sky.*

*Chinese proverb: Women hold up half the sky.
The Gorkha earthquake that occurred in April 2015 devastated large parts of this beautiful land. Despite the destruction and the thousands that died, the people have shown an extraordinary resilience to survive, and to continue to honour their Gods and Goddesses. Their faith rekindling their lust for life.

The following photographs are just a glimpse of this land and its remarkable people.
Reflection of the Ekadesh Rudra in the Bagmati river.
Sadhus at the Pashupatinath Temple complex.
Pigeons - Kathmandu Durbar Square (Basantapur Darbar Kshetra).
Women - the Kathmandu Durbar Square (Basantapur Darbar Kshetra).
Statues - the Kathmandu Durbar Square (Basantapur Darbar Kshetra).
The Hindu cremation of the dead on the banks of the Bagmati river near Pashupatinath temple.
Carl Scharwath, has appeared globally with 100+ magazines selecting his poetry, short stories, essays and art photography. Two poetry books: *Journey To Become Forgotten* (Kind of a Hurricane Press), and *Abandoned* (ScarsTv) have been published. Carl is the art editor for Minute Magazine, a dedicated runner and 2nd degree black-belt in Taekwondo.

I am a dedicated runner and this compliments my art perfectly. On many training runs my mind drifts to either new poetry verses, short story ideas or photography.

Either a landscape, a store window, an abandoned house or a unique situation will capture my imagination.

The following photographs were taken after I had run a long distance race. At the end of every race that I have run, visions appear in the form of reflections in shop windows...the play of evening light embraces the soul and hence I am compelled to record what I feel from what I see.

Creativity rests within all of us but it needs a catalyst to emerge. For me, running is this catalyst. And I rejoice in this celestial blessing.
Reflections in a shop window.
Evening Alley, photographed through a window.
Urban Jungle

Portal
One of the feedback you readers kindly gave for my book has been to include Menu Suggestions in the book. And I kept my promise and included a variety of menus in the book, to help with meal planning; such as Traditional Menu, Vegetarian Menu, Gluten-Free Menu, Mezze based menu, Southern Turkish themed menu, Kebab based menu etc. Inspired by this, I thought to share some Turkish meal ideas with recipes and their beautiful images from my upcoming book, Ozlem’s Turkish Table, Recipes from My Homeland, so you can enjoy with family and friends over the festive season, I hope it inspires to you all.

Afiyet Olsun,

Ozlem
Turkey

We Turks always start our meal with soup, corba, traditionally and I can’t think of a better soup than Ezo Gelin Corbasi, Spicy bulgur and lentil soup to warm us all. So easy to make and dried mint and red pepper flakes flavor this soup so beautifully; you can make a big batch and freeze left overs, one of our firm favourites.

Ezo Gelin Corba; Spicy lentil and bulgur soup; image from my cookery book, Ozlem’s Turkish Table

Boreks, savory pastries are a huge favorite in our home – children love them as well as adults. How about an assortment of boreks for the festive season, like in this image from my cookery book? Traybake Spinach and cheese filo pastry, Ispanakli Borek, Traybake filo pastry with ground/minced meat, Kiymali Borek or filo triangles with cheese and spinach or parsley, Muska boregi, would all be great crowd pleasers.

Assortment of boreks, savory pastries with filo, from my book, Ozlem’s Turkish Table
I will definitely be making these scrumptious Potato and Bulgur Patties, served with pomegranate molasses, during the festive season. They are so easy to make and absolutely delicious; pungent cumin and red pepper flakes flavor these patties beautifully – you can serve as a side to your mains; they are absolutely lovely when dipped in to pomegranate molasses, nar eksisi – a delicious southern Turkish specialty.

Aubergine/eggplant is king of vegetables at home and Karniyarik, stuffed aubergine/eggplant with minced meat and vegetables always makes an appearance in our festive tables. You can also make Split aubergines/eggplants with vegetables filling, Imam Bayildi, if you prefer the vegetarian option – love them both.
There can be quite rich food and indulgence during the festive period and I opt for fruity desserts most of the time. This baked dried apricots with walnuts fits the bill perfectly; healthy, light, easy to make and great for entertaining – also gluten-free.

Turkish coffee, Turk kahvesi, is a special drink for us – it really is a more than a drink with all its rituals and it is the perfect end to a special meal. Here’s how to make the perfect Turkish coffee.