

Truth, Aspectual and Total

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Truth is known from an aspect or an angle. That is not to say that truth is partial. In fact, partial truth is strictly speaking an error of expression. Truth is either whole or not at all. What is perhaps meant by this frequent idiom of partial truth is not the denial of whole truth but assertion of aspectual truth or truth from an angle. All truth is discovered from the aspect or the angle which the seeker or the knower adopts. Error may lie in not taking up the angle properly. ...Results of such error are sometimes described as relative truth, when not a lie.

Perhaps I am rationalizing an inadequacy into a theory. I have not written books. Was it that I did not have the time or the ability for them? Or the structure of my mind corresponded somewhat with the structure of truth to produce "Aspects," "Fragments,"? But the book-writer is generally not aware of the aspectual nature of truth as I have been. Writing on aspects in a knowingly aspectual manner, one does not have to tutor facts to fit them into a theory nor to torture theory in order to include all the facts. With the background of these considerations, it has been thought advisable to collect my writings on theory, as many as possible, within a volume. If these pieces have had significance singly and still possess it, their collection does not lose it merely because they are apparently disconnected. Their total significance may in fact have heightened. If the pieces singly have been devoid of value and have only dressed up some point of fleeting utility as enduring truth, their collection will prove to be a silly venture, if not harmful. Time will judge.

On Small Unit Machine

Of various theories propounded in this book. two seem to have been a little shaken up with subsequent developments. The theory of the small-unit machine is one...The other theory which has occasioned some sniggers is the formulation on Marxism that it is Europe's weapon against Asia...

A Formulation on Marxism

Marxism is not the only doctrine that has sought or maintained Europe's superiority over the colored people. All theories emanating in the last three centuries of Europe's domination have done so. Of capitalism or liberalism, no proof is necessary, for their whole career is tied up with the oppression and exploitation of Asia and other coloured lands. All doctrines, so it appears, have their being within certain framework of power. They are unable to burst this framework, not unless they are born outside it. Adam Smithism, Marxism and other doctrines such as those

of Rousseau, Locke and Hegel have each served Europe's spirit and aims. It is indeed possible that none of them would be able to prevent a catastrophe to Euro-America, should this high improbability become a possibility. In that case Marxism will have been like any other European doctrine- sharer and symptom of Europe's destruction, of course, without a willed design.

No great doctrine consciously aims at anything that does not cover the whole human race. In its conscious aims Marxism has joined the human race superbly. It has talked of man, not the European. It has raised a consistent structure of plenty, equality and peace for all mankind, and not only part of it...

On Gandhism

The Gandhian doctrine has proved a little more inadequate.

Whatever may have been the inadequacies of Gandhism as a governmental doctrine of doing good, it was unmatched in all history as a people's doctrine resisting evil. Civil disobedience both as individual's habit and collective resolve is armed reason, and anything else is either weak reason or unreasonable strength. Such civil disobedience is Gandhiji's gift to mankind...The point is not whether Buddha is in fact greater than Gandhi; he may well be or perhaps he is not.... Buddha is not terror to any government, Gandhi is. . Gandhi's disciples run him down oftener stealthily because they are afraid of his civil disobedience, the specter that haunts them.

No government, not even a truly Gandhian one, can love those who resist it or its acts however civilly. Civil resisters must ever be ready to suffer government's displeasure when they transgress the law, they must be willing to take the consequences. If a government and its civil resisters accept the situation that both must act within limits appropriate to either, a higher synthesis may evolve that must overcome the contradiction between governmental Gandhism and oppositional Gandhism. Civil resister must not practice violence under any circumstances. If this happens, government must forego all repression except arrest and proper detention. There must be mutual respect for the two positions.

India's freedom struggle made compromises and was unable to realize its aims. In fact, it reversed some of its aims. Inadequacies of Gandhism in government have perhaps flowed out of the inability of Gandhism in opposition to carry the struggle to its end. On this single instance, it would be unfair to build a theory of the compromise that inheres in non-violence. Doubts have been aroused and future experiments in satyagraha will have to beware of the tendency to compromise, to diminution in the revolutionary character of its struggles.

On the Concept of Statehood in India

The malady goes deeper. It has the cast of centuries. No people on earth has ever lost its statehood for as long as the Indian. Collective immorality has become a part of the Indian character that one despairs whether it is not permanent. Ruling classes of the country have over the centuries evolved a peerless skill in adjustment. They adjust to all that comes into the country and is powerful. Never has a people been as listless and disinterested as the Indian and as for as long. It is a marvel that the people and the native ruling class who have been up to the neck in the bog of collective filth over the centuries have not sunk. They have maintained their identity, however miserably. Of this saga, there is no need to talk here; what matters for the present story is the adjustment and listlessness, which to natives as well as foreigners is the genius of synthesis, when they mean to be generous and ignorant. Acceptance of new or foreign elements in order to kowtow to the conqueror or imitate him unthinkingly is submission or vulgar living; synthesis arises out of deliberate and discriminatory selection of the new, the healthful or the foreign. If ever the Indian people learn to discriminate between submission and synthesis, the true flowering of the Gandhi doctrine may yet take place.

Philosophical Liberalism and Programmatic Extremism

I must here introduce a little impertinence in the shape of the story of my thought. Ever since I started thinking, I have been a philosophical liberal. ...Philosophical liberalism could well go with a certain amount of programmatic firmness. ... One could both be liberal and active against injustice.

I have been compelled to watch myself in recent years. I have been sometimes made uneasy by my own programmatic extremism or immoderation. This spilled over into some formulations of philosophy or principle. That the acceptability of such thought narrows does not worry me so much as the suspicion that it may not correspond to the many facets of truth. Intolerance is galling to me. I do not think I am intolerant except politically. Is this political intolerance justified? Can it not be substituted by some better attitude? To answer these questions, one must understand that this programmatic extremism has been forced on me by the nearly total untruthfulness of the national scene. In the slough and bog of the nation's politics, nothing stays, nothing of worth holds out and sticks up. Limited interest is supreme. The individual looks out for himself or his small group. Behind moral exhortations or philosophical stereotypes lurks some fraud, some double-dealing, some doing in of the people for a narrow interest. When such is the national scene, to capture firm ground out of this ubiquitous bog of fraud would not be possible through a programme of moderation and enveloping good-will. Firm stakes of principle and policy must be driven into the bog. In view of the surrounding scene, they appear more extremist than they are.

The National Scene

The national scene is of course peculiar. It consists of a ten centuries old class of hereditary slaves, who are also second-grade rulers, of an even older system of castes, that narrows and stagnates ability of a people, listless, mangled and morose. A liberal programme and philosophy only serves in such a case to present a front of health when all is rotting within. This national scene is also remotely paralleled by the international. The philosophical and programmatic liberal in areas of prosperity does not appear such a cruel mockery as in those of poverty and caste, but he is clearly a sham and a frustrating talker. Back of him is indeed a people in general well-being, but his phrases ring hollow and there is in them no new message for humanity. A programme of firmness and extension is obligated.

An Extreme Philosophy

Sankara

This raises a whole question of philosophy and programme. The world has indeed known a combination of philosophy and programme, almost entirely sealed to each other. Sankar propounded an extreme philosophy, monist and fanatical. With him, truth did not possess many facets. It was a single principle. This single principle was idealistic, something placed entirely in the mind and able to lead a life of its own unencumbered by the realities of the world. These phenomena were so to say hindrances to obtaining of true knowledge and they had therefore to be overcome. Here begins a most remarkable story of the mind. There are two ways to overcome appearances. One is to fight them and mould them according to the truth as one sees it. The other is to live with them as they are, but to denude them of all spiritual importance. A liberal programme is then born. Man is taught to adjust with all that exists, for what exists is of no importance. A dichotomy of spirit emerges. An extreme philosophy exists side by side with a liberal programme, a philosophy of undefiled principle with a programme of multiform defilements. Such a division of spirit exists nowhere outside of India, and the Indian mind is still largely what Sankar made it. It is a mind, for whom concrete truth and argument have become wholly relative and meaningless, to whom dirt and misery are not objects for protest and anger, always for indifference, at best for sympathy, for whom equality and fellow-feeling are transformed into equanimity, a matter of pure principle. Some will say that transformation from equality to equanimity is elevation, some reduction.

Karl Marx

Another philosophical extremist was Karl Marx. He produced a matching programme of extremism. With him, the world could be understood only in so far as it was sought to be changed. This philosophy left little room for mediation and quietism. It was activist philosophy which reached the limits of extremism. Aspired change became the key to knowledge. Equality and destruction of owning classes was the focal point of his aspiration to change. Never before was such a philosophy formulated, in which truth became synonymous with a certain of activity, not activity as such but a specific form of it, egalitarian change in property relationships. Such a specific activity intended to change laws of ownership must necessarily raise hell, both from those who want it and those who resist it. The programme has to be combative, in inception as also in reaction to the owners' struggle; it too reaches the limits of extremism. If Sankar was a philosophical extremist, whose programme was liberal, Marx was a programmatic fanatic, whose philosophy matched its programmes's extremism. The results of Sankar's venture have been well-known through the ages. Those of Marx's are yet somewhat fluid. But they seem to be tracing a pattern in which the thing sought to be destroyed is re-emerging in an altered form and the sighting of truth is as far as ever, of tranquility perhaps further away.

One might be tempted to think of what might happen, if the particular brand of Sankar's philosophical extremism were joined to the particular brand of Marx's extreme programme. Is it at all possible? Would it be possible to contemplate the Himalayan blanket of snow under which all things become like one another and equal and to discover from it Sankar's changeless essence as also to work from its Marx's equalising change. Such permutations of thought are a beautiful fantasy, but they are perhaps as unreal as the gathering of all hues into a single picture. Nevertheless, the most unrealistic phantasies produce results, if they are genuine and powerful enough. Such effete attempts in this direction have already been made. These adventures of idea have tended, particularly with age, to diminish their Marx for the benefit of Sankar. This fantasy is perhaps in its very essence a fraud.

Gandhi

Gandhi called himself a moist, an aviation like Sankar, therefore, a philosophical extremist. But he was a philosopher not through the medium of words but that of acts. Philosophers through acts are rarely aware of their philosophy; they do not possess enough introspection. Gandhi was in fact a philosophical liberal. What he called God or truth or non-violence or inner voice was hardly a single substance, metaphysically speaking; that may have been so in an ethical sense. It is doubtful if, to Gandhi, the absolute either as idealist or materialist principle filled the world. He talked a little too much of God, but that was all. He was a pluralist, well aware of plural causes and effects. He considered all the possibilities, causes and effects, of a situation and, except for the criteria of justice or freedom, non-violence or people's welfare, there was no all-enveloping monism in his thought. All arguments did not lead to a single substance. This

philosophical liberalism was joined to an exceedingly eclectic programme. Not only were programmes of varying types and intensity, current at the same time, but even such of them as were mutually cancelling were reconciled under Gandhi's programmatic liberalism.

It is perhaps too early yet to evaluate Gandhi's combination of philosophical and programmatic liberalism. In the achievement of freedom seems to lie his greatest merit, at least to most of his countrymen. That is in truth no merit at all. India would have won her freedom without him and perhaps a better and faster freedom. The people and the country were divided.

Some of the more discerning foreigners have seen in him the authentic voice of the unhappy, the distressed and oppressed. That is true. But the century has produced other such voices, probably more vigorous and purposeful. What has happened of his people after freedom is as sorry a tale as happenings during transfer of power from British to Indian hands. His people have slid into their usual pastime of unprotested oppression of the many by the few. What part of this infamy is due to Gandhi's programmatic liberalism and what to degradation of national character will be satisfactorily sifted only after the epoch has run out its course.

... The pure fight for freedom, which raises such few doubts, gave Gandhi's liberalism unusual firmness just as the method of non-violence gave his freedom-struggle, elsewhere so extremist, its liberal tones. If this non-violence weaves into the rest of the century and afterwards, the Gandhian conjunction of philosophical and programmatic liberalism will re-acquire meaning which it has almost wholly lost currently.

A firm programme has become necessary throughout the world. A liberal philosophy with a firm programme is thus indicated.

...To the traditional Indian mind, caste-ridden and as frightened of change as it is devoid of hope, revolutionary programmes are an object of mixed ridicule and fear. Such attitudes are sustained by reason, however curious and twisted.

.. The disease of armament is making the biggest noise.... In actual fact the disease of poverty is deadliest.

A Paradox of Our Times

Poverty and Armaments

...A paradox of our times is the increasing poverty of mankind, while an uncritical belief in progress has become one of its articles of faith.

How an unscientific characterization of the age as the age of progress could have arisen reveals piquantly where the world mind has gone astray. One part of the world is continually progressing to ever greater heights of comfort and luxury. This is the Euro-American part of the world, and also the elite and the ruling classes in the rest of it.... Given certain circumstances, the benefits of technology, which one third of the world enjoys today would, so the belief goes, be made available to the other two thirds. Science fiction or popular science sustains this belief...Much more will have to be done by way of thought and social rearrangement than has so far been done in order to end poverty.

Disease of the Monotonic Mind

A third disease has started being mentioned, the disease of the monotonic mind. Some perspicacious minds are already devoting themselves energetically to lamenting or treating this disease. If poverty and war were to be abolished, the thing that would do that, would as an unhappy sequel, indeed undesired, bring on this disease of monotonal mind. A descriptive analysis of solutions to poverty and armaments would perhaps incidentally explain this disease of monotone, if not its treatment.

...Disarmament is the great shout of the age, although discovery should have been, if man were more intelligent.

The futility of weapons is now established...

Removal of injustice and inequality/Civil Disobedience

A way must be found to combat injustice without weapons. That way has already been found. In the act of civil disobedience lies the irresistible impulse of the man without weapons to justice and equality. Civil disobedience is assured reason. ...In order that reason may retain its quality and yet assert itself, there is no way other than that of civil refusal to obey the dictates of unreason. Reason is then truly armed with a force like itself and sharing its characteristics.

Civil resistance in the mass has been proved possible, though not yet conclusively and for all circumstances. Individual civil disobedience is yet a rarity.... The crux of the matter is therefore

individual and habitual civil resistance. The greatest revolution of our time is therefore a procedural revolution, removal of injustice through a mode of action characterized by justice.

Our century is characterized by the revolt of man all over the earth against all forms of injustice at the same time.

Seven Revolutions

We have already considered the **procedural revolution of non-violence**. There are seven revolutions in all. A main revolution of our times aims at **achieving equality between man and woman**. Of all injustices plaguing the earth those arising out of the inequality between the sexes are perhaps the bedrock.

The third revolution is aimed **against caste**. Although caste as a mature institution is confined to India it is universal as essence and incipient beginning. Caste is immobile class.

Of the two revolutions that have made the greatest noise in our country and the earlier one is nationalist and the other social. The nationalist revolution has asked for the freedom of the people, the social revolution that of the individual.... **Hidden imperialisms are showing themselves**.

The fifth revolution **of the poor against the rich**, the little against the big, is necessary for all mankind, more so for the coloured people.

A revolution specific to our time aims at demolishing **inequality based on colour**.

The seventh revolution aims **at protecting privacy against encroachment by the collective**. The individual has been steadily losing his sovereignty to organization.

Seven revolutions and a good, seven revolts against injustice and public planning to good, are the healthful signposts of this century, same as increase in cruelty and poverty is its virulent disease. Whether health will be able to overcome germs of disease will depend largely on the outcome of the issue between weapons and disarmament. This issue will itself depend on how far and how soon the seven revolts against injustice mature. The curse of monotone may perhaps be made low.

I will end with another story of my thinking. Non-violence has almost always been one of my lodestars. I had indeed ever distinguished non-violence as an internal weapon from its use in international disputes and been somewhat reserved about the latter. International non-violence had nevertheless been a logical need and an inchoate hope. Since the commencement in right earnest of Indo-China battles, I have been compelled to advocate the use of weapons. In order to leave no room for misunderstanding I have deliberately exaggerated my position. I have asked for the bomb if it were available. I may not use the bullet for victory over another's home, but, when my own country is attacked, I would not hesitate to use any weapon that is necessary and available.

Nearly fifteen years ago I had stated in a European capital that Mahatma Gandhi and the atom bomb were the two originalities of our century and one would defeat the other before it ended. ...The point to consider is ...why I have not striven to explore possibilities of international non-violence.

A specific of the Indian situation

A specific of the Indian situation is the long absence of statehood. For over ten centuries India had no state. As soon as an occupying power prepared to turn native, it was overpowered by yet another invader. The cauldron was set simmering again. It was not allowed to settle down into a native and vigorous statehood. India's state in the past ten centuries vacillated between being vigorously foreign and natively impotent. In the process of turning native, the foreigner has tended to impotence. The continual struggle between the impotent native and the conquering foreigner has been miscalled the Hindu-Muslim conflict, which has been one of its secondary expressions. This has further obscured the vision.

The long absence of native statehood has not been acknowledged by either the Muslim, who has taken false satisfaction, or the Hindu, who has not known where the misery arose. To one who has digested India's history over the last ten centuries and more statehood is almost a physical need. Everything else must take second place, even man and humanity. Without the state India had been producing not men but mice and the humanity of the tallest of them was almost over an abstract cover for stinking individualism, either submissive or greedy. The people can afford to take no risks yet. They dare not play with their state. Peoples with longer experience of statehood have greater vigour and potential for all kinds of defense.

In such a specifically national situation the state has been attacked. All the poisoned springs of injustice are threatening to burst forth. To dam them back, one needs all the weapons, and, as

it is one's own home, also the bomb at this point, the similarity between Gandhiji and the bomb becomes evident. Both have their source in combating injustice. The bomb can in addition wreak injustice upon others. Gandhi's method serves alone the needs of justice; the bomb also of injustice.

Combating injustice through other ways is precondition to abolition of weapons.