The Dialectics of an Advaitin Gandhi and the Modern World

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Ambika Dutt Sharma and Vishwanath Mishra, *Sanatan Gandhi: Bapu Se Vaishwik Samvād,* Jaipur: Prakrit Bharati Academy, 2012. ISBN: 9788195289189. (pp.192 pages). ₹ 350.

This review critically examines Sanatan Gandhi: Bapu Se Vaishwik Samvād *by Ambika Dutt Sharma and Vishwanath Mishra. The review will assess the authors' contribution to the discourse on peace, violence, and Mahatma Gandhi's philosophy, while exploring intersections with selected modern thinkers. It highlights the book's strengths in critiquing modernity and presenting Gandhi as a relevant guide in today's world, including as a cultural analyst. It suggests potential challenges regarding cultural bias and oversimplification, urging a more inclusive exploration of Gandhi's philosophy and ideals rather than limiting him to Advaitin persona.*

Key words: Gandhi; modernity; violence; Ambika Dutt Sharma; Vishwanath Mishra

> Generations to come, it may be, will scarcely believe that such a one as this ever in flesh and blood walked upon this earth (Albert Einstein on Mahatma Gandhi, Einstein Archive 1953).

Einstein's words on Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi (1869-1948) hold value beyond his own time. Renowned for his steady commitment to truth and non-violence, profound respect for all religions, and advocacy for swaraj (self-rule) and satyagraha, Gandhi's legacy remains. For those intrigued by the foundational principles of Gandhi's philosophy and, in particular, his central philosophical stance, the book titled *Sanātan Gandhi: Bāpu se vaishvik samvād*, written in Hindi, by Ambika Dutt Sharma, a philosopher, and Vishwanath Mishra, a political scientist, should be of interest. This review of a Hindi book seeks to highlight the often-overlooked scholarship on Gandhi by Hindi authors. Typically, when discussing Gandhi, a few prominent names such as Ramchandra Gandhi, Anthony J Parel, Bhikhu Parekh, and Rajeev Bhargava, who write in English, come to mind. However, many significant Gandhian thinkers, including the authors and the writer of the foreword of the book under review, remain largely unknown to a broader audience. Although Gandhi's thoughts have been analyzed by several scholars all over the world, a comparative analysis of his metaphysical background and the ethics and epistemology arising from it, has been almost neglected. The authors of this book make an effort to fill this gap and argue that Gandhi was a great philosopher of humanity and a comprehensive cultural analysist.

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Interpreting him as an Advaitin or Sanatanist, *Sanātan Gandhi* envisions a hypothetical dialogue between Gandhi and the modern world.[1] In their earlier Hindi publication, *Hannah Aarent :Himsa kā Utkhānan* (2020),[2] Sharma and Mishra have already worked out an archaeological approach utilizing the insights of Gandhi and Hannah Arendt. Much like Michel Foucault, they strive to construct an archaeology of knowledge, where "archaeology" is a metaphor presenting knowledge including of violence as something that lies beneath a surface and needs to be uncovered before it can be understood (Kendall and Wickham 1998).[3] In the humanistic realm, the "remains" are not physical artifacts like tools or substantial material, but rather ideas, facts, language, lived experiences, transformed value consciousness, and deconstructions related to violence. The authors argue that a profound understanding of violence cannot be achieved solely through the examination of physical events or surface-level manifestations; instead, it necessitates an exploration of the deeper layers of human experience.

Sanātan Gandhi is part of the Ahimsa-Shanti Granthmala series, published by the Prakrit Bharati Academy in Jaipur, Rajasthan, in commemoration of Gandhi's 150th birth anniversary. The series addresses various forms of violence and promotes social development based on non-violent principles. In the Preface, Nand Kishore Acharya highlights Gandhi's profound global impact, emphasizing that Gandhi's understanding of Advaita was rooted in the Sanātan or Brahmic tradition. In the context of the book, this tradition does not subscribe to a sectarian approach. Rather, it stands for perennial truth and values that can be embraced by any culture or civilization. For instance, when we look at Gandhi's emphasis on truth and non-violence, he is not limited to any specific space and time. Based on the Sanātan (perennial) tradition, he tries to convey it as a message for humanity. It is also the tradition of Advaita, which speaks of one reality. Following this, Acharya underscores Gandhi's belief in the unity of all life, which underpins his commitment to non-violence. In the words of Gandhi:

> I do not believe […] that an individual may gain spiritually and those who surround him suffer. I believe in advaita, I believe in the essential unity of man and, for that matter, of all that lives. Therefore, I believe that if one man gains spiritually, the whole world gains with him and, if one man falls, the whole world falls to that extent (Gandhi 2000: 408).[4]

This quote, among others of the same category by Gandhi, is used by Sharma and Mishra to examine Gandhi through three synonymous terms in the context of present book: Advaitism, Sanātanism, and Hinduism. Throughout the book, Gandhi is represented as an Advaitin, and thinkers like Martin Heidegger, Hannah Arendt, Bhimrao Ambedkar, Balgangadhar Tilak, Jyotiba Phule, Jürgen Habermas, Yuval Noah Harari, are portrayed as Dvaitin (dualist). Through this perspective, the book explores the origins of violence and nonviolence in the respective epistemologies and metaphysics of Gandhi and these dualists. The book begins with its first chapter, offering a fresh portrayal of Gandhi and examining his philosophy "over time and across time" (17-33). To make sense of this metaphorical narrative of Gandhi, the book starts with Yuval Noah Harari's scientific utopia, suggesting that the future holds the possibility to make humanity immortal, or close to it, through genetic engineering and nanotechnology. The authors revisit the thesis from their previous work, exploring how the world's transition from modernity to postmodernity has fueled this unexamined utopia, putting civilization in danger through various forms like war, pandemics, or the mechanization of humanity itself.

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Interpreting Harari's dispositions, the authors argue that science, after experiencing numerous paradigm shifts, has reached a point where it is perceived as a panacea for all human problems. However, this perception subjects humanity to the control of the world through, for example, capital and technology. Does such a naturalistic reductionism not do injustice to spirituality, morality, and creativity? Sharma and Mishra draw attention to Gandhi, who foresaw these dangers nearly a century ago in his critique of modernity and its alternative forms—be it our obsession with wealth, technology, consumerism, to name a few (17-24). Gandhi criticized modern civilization and its artifacts because these neglected the holistic self of human beings. As the authors state: "Gandhi indicates a state of complete annihilation of holistic self of humanity in modernity where man, as a tool-making creature, is at the risk of becoming a tool himself" (19).

Accordingly, Gandhi urged that Indians should learn from the west, which had experienced the hidden repercussions of modernity but found itself in a catch-22 situation, unable to extricate itself from its complexities (20-3). In this regard, Gandhi's insights become prescient and offer valuable lessons for navigating the challenges posed by modernity and its consequences today. Likewise, Sharma and Mishra argue that the answers to such questions depend on the conditions we want to create for humanity based on evidence of human evolution. And for this task, the authors present a dystopian view that the future, shaped by technological advancements, hinges on evolutionary capabilities like language and toolmaking. And followers of this tradition argue that this human uniqueness, influenced by anthropocentric, eurocentric worldviews, Abrahamic traditions, and capitalism, sets the stage for a transformative destiny. Rather than facing extinction through technology, humans may transcend their biological limits through it, according to Harari. Projects like the Human Genome Project suggest modernity's culmination not through Habermas's vision of communicative rationality but through technological self-determination and enhanced human efficiency. And this is a cause for concern. As the authors points out:

> The thinkers of the non-Brahmic tradition, be it Marx, Max Weber or Habermas or Harari, are convinced of the possibility of bringing about changes in human conditions through the alliance of science and technology. They find this assurance in the instrumental rationality of man, which is dualistic in nature and differs from Gandhian Advaitin rationality. As Benjamin Franklin said, 'Man is a tool-making creature.' While explaining human nature, Karl Marx has also accepted this statement by Benjamin. Likewise, Harari's depiction of human evolution in homo sapiens, based on Darwin's theory of natural selection, highlights tool-making as a distinctive biological characteristic of humans. It is based on the belief that necessity is the mother of invention. Thus, Harari's argument, along with those of others mentioned here (which is an argument in defense of the globalized form of capitalism) can be examined in light of Gandhi who has offered a unique critique of modernism (19).[5]

Sharma and Mishra claim that the byproduct of the above ideology is a pragmatic, crudely hedonic, and blindly materialistic civilizational consciousness that lacks self-awareness or a sense of life's highest aims beyond sensual needs (Huxley 2011).[6] Gandhi, they demonstrate, can serve as a mirror for modern civilization, urging it to pause and reflect on the essence of being human and our relationship with the world. Subsequently, they move to the following chapter entitled, "Sanatan Gandhi: Rethinking Mahatma" (34-52). This chapter answers a number of questions about how Gandhi became Gandhi through an evolvement of his philosophy over time, and explore his open-book character. The authors explore the various perspectives on Gandhi, including those of Rabindranath Tagore, Chakravarti Rajagopalachari, and Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan. Tagore saw Gandhi as 'embodied

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truth,' Rajagopalachari as 'Yudhistir revisited,' and Radhakrishnan as an ideal man. These historical figures provide insight into the Gandhian aura and his impact on Indian philosophy (36). The chapter also includes numerous motivating anecdotes related to Gandhian life, revealing the unique personality and character that are synonymous with Gandhi (41-7).

Here it would also be relevant to mention that Gandhian swaraj and gram swaraj (village autonomy) are integral concepts within Gandhi's philosophy of truth and non-violence, his vision for India's independence, his emphasis on self-governance, economic self-reliance, and social equality. Gandhian swaraj encompasses the broader idea of freedom, moral self-purification, and decentralized governance, advocating for local empowerment and reduced reliance on central authority. Gram swaraj, as a specific manifestation of this vision, focuses on village self-governance, promotes economic self-sufficiency through local industries, sustainable living practices, and inclusive decision-making. This grassroots empowerment is essential to realizing Gandhian swaraj, as Gandhi believed that true national independence and social justice could only be achieved through the self-sufficiency and democratic governance of villages. These concepts collectively aim to create a sustainable, equitable society grounded in ethical living and local autonomy, forming a holistic approach to true self-rule without being dogmatic. As the chapter concludes:

> Gram Swaraj is not a return to the era of bullock carts nor is it a rustic lifestyle of the ignorant people, which is considered synonymous with backwardness. In fact, this is a self-fulfilling Gram Swaraj. By applying the adjective self-reliant in gram swaraj, on the one hand, he has shown the opposite of the life-view of the modern sensual civilization, which is engaged in the fulfillment of physical desires, and on the other hand, in its opposite sense, he has described the life-philosophy of *Sanatan Bharat* as an alternative civilization. Therefore, it would be appropriate to say that the mind of Mahatma Gandhi's 'Hind Swaraj' is a fundamental criticism of the violent nature of modern civilization, while its heart is the self-revealed religious realization of non-violent truth-seeking India. In fact, the creator of this union of mind, brain and heart is Mahatma "Sanatan Gandhi" (49).

The third chapter emphasizes the significance of reassessing Gandhi's persona through a global humanistic lens in the discussion of his book *Hind Swaraj* (53-104). The importance of *Hind Swaraj* is likened to other seminal works in various literary traditions, including *Dhammapada* in Buddhist literature, the *Communist Manifesto* in Marxist literature, and *Srimad Bhagavad Gita* in Sanatan literature (53).[7] Moving forward, the authors show that the ongoing global escalation of adverse effects from industrial civilization prompts a widespread reassessment of Gandhi's insights. They highlight Gandhi's perspective as highly relevant and useful in addressing contemporary challenges. In *Hind Swaraj*, Gandhi argues that a nonviolent society is achievable only in a self-contained rural setting, distinct from industrial civilization. Building on this, the authors challenge common misinterpretations of Gandhi's ideas. They assert that Gandhi's vision of a 'self-sufficient rural civilization' embodies a nuanced approach aligned with his holistic view of societal progress.

This chapter on the rereading of *Hind Swaraj* also discusses the existential tragedy faced by the west. Sharma and Mishra eloquently illustrate how responses and solutions to these existential crises, manifested in ideologies like Marxism, modernism, postmodernism, feminism, green politics, and others, are ultimately insufficient and inconsistent with the essence of human nature and thoroughly fail to address the root cause of problems (55-7). The authors compellingly argue that these ideologies, while attempting to address specific issues, often result in unforeseen problems, creating an endless

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cycle of challenges. For instance, Marxism, in its endeavor to resolve consumption and production issues, ultimately culminates in violence. Feminism, in its advocacy for rights, sometimes becomes entangled in a narrow understating of identity politics that inadvertently fosters divisions among individuals. Postmodernism's effort to create space for aspects beyond reason lead to relativism and an erosion of objective truths.

The discussion in this chapter highlights how seemingly easy solutions to existential crises give rise to more complex and problematic issues, emphasizing the need for a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of human existence. Likewise, the authors question the epistemologies supporting modern civilization, whether it is rationalism, empiricism, or pragmatism, highlighting their incompleteness in capturing the essence of reality and the intricate human issues (57-61). They suggest that sacrificing or going beyond these limited epistemologies can help us gain a deeper reflection again creating space for Gandhi . Thus, if one wishes to break the chain, we will have to be ready to sacrifice or go beyond everything that appeals to us, whether sensuously or commonsensically, as valuable. And Gandhian philosophy can be a means to this pursuit. Subsequently, Sharma and Mishra emphasize how Gandhi's perspective emerges from a deep-seated conviction that these systems, driven by an unyielding pursuit of material progress and unchecked consumerism, inherently undermine fundamental human values and spiritual well-being (61-74).

Gandhi harbored profound skepticism towards the blind faith placed in these models as a means of human emancipation, arguing that the relentless pursuit of wealth and technological advancement often comes at the expense of spiritual and ethical foundations. Gandhi's critique extended to the dehumanizing consequences of modern industrialization and wealth concentration, leading him to champion decentralized, self-sufficient, and village-based economies. Through their analysis, Sharma and Mishra underscore the timeless relevance of Gandhi's critique, urging a reassessment of societal progress and a shift towards more humane and compassionate foundations for the betterment of humanity. They also argue that politics is not a neutral kind of practice or institution; it emerges from a certain value system. Thus, if it emerges from modernity or the model followed in their view by Marx, Hobbes and Harari, the results will not be different from what we have observed in the past (75-82).

Subsequently, the book moves into its fourth chapter with a discussion on the comparative study of *Hind Swaraj* and *Communist Manifesto*, while discussing on Man and Machine from Gandhi, Marx, and Heidegger's points of view (106-28). The chapter begins with the ideal depiction of Indic civilization and its shortcomings referencing Jacques Barzun's *From Dawn to Decadence: 500 Years of Western Cultural Life*, a book which offers a comprehensive account of European history and development including Marx-Engels and their utopia, but does not mention Gandhi and his vision of an ideal world (Barzun 2001).[8] Sharma and Mishra challenge what in their view is an imperialist and orientalist interpretation and argue that Gandhian Hind Swaraj is not in any respect inferior to Marx's *Communist Manifesto* (106). In fact, the authors argue that *Hind Swaraj* captures a better version of an ideal world based on peaceful coexistence . And this pacifism is beautifully expressed by the authors throughout the book in general, and in this present chapter in particular. Furthermore, what also distinguishes Gandhi from Marx, as discussed by various authors, is that in Gandhian Swaraj, no one thinks of their rights. Rights come when they are needed for the better performance of duty. The true source of rights is duty. If we all discharge our duties, rights will not be far to seek (110-12) .

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Marx critiques capitalism's exploitative nature, advocating for a classless society achieved through a violent proletarian revolution. The focus is on economic structures and the redistribution of wealth to eliminate class distinctions. The chapter then hypothetically analyzes Gandhi's perspective on Marx, highlighting Gandhi's principled opposition to Marx's reliance on violent revolution and the establishment of a centralized state. It questions the means proposed by Marx, asserting that replacing one form of violence with another, did not lead to true liberation, rather complicated the matter more. Gandhi's philosophy, centered around non-violent resistance, differed significantly from Marx's approach, as he advocated for a morally and spiritually grounded transformation without resorting to violence. In the words of Gandhi:

> Socialism and Communism of the West are based on certain conceptions which are fundamentally different from ours. One such conception is their belief in the essential selfishness of human nature. I do not subscribe to it for I know that the essential difference between man and the brute is that the former can respond to the call of the spirit in him, can rise superior to the passions that he owns in common with the brute, and, therefore, superior to selfishness and violence, which belong to the brute nature and not to the immortal spirit of man (Gandhi 1957: 270).[9]

Sharma's and Mishra's analysis emphasizes the paths both Marx and Gandhi proposed for achieving a utopian society. Despite Marxism's critique of modernity and capitalism, it essentially transforms into a different form of the same, in their view. In contrast, Gandhi's outright rejection of communism and socialism from the beginning allows no room for a mutation of such ideologies behind the veil of technology and/or pragmatic artifacts (121-22). This controversial perspective will be further examined towards the end of this review. After incorporating perspectives from Gandhi and Marx, the authors introduce Heidegger alongside Gandhi to question the pragmatic stance of technology (123).

The authors illustrate that Heidegger's critique of technology revolves around the notion that modern technology, driven by an instrumental and calculative mindset, transforms the essence of being (123). This perspective resonates with Gandhian philosophy as well. Heidegger contends that technology, in its essence, is not merely a neutral tool but a way of revealing the world and shaping human existence. He argues, much like Gandhi, that the prevailing understanding of technology as a means to an end oversimplifies its impact. According to Heidegger, technology imposes its own framing and ordering upon human experience, reducing everything to a calculable and controllable resource. Heidegger's concern is that this reductionist approach to technology leads to a loss of a more authentic understanding of being and a distancing from our essential connection to the world (Rajan 2024).[10] Heidegger argues that modern technology's dominance blinds us to alternative, more holistic ways of perceiving existence. He advocates for a deeper, reflective engagement with technology, urging us to transcend efficiency and control in favor of a more contemplative relationship with the world. In summary, Marx, Gandhi, and Heidegger critique modern civilization from distinct angles: Marx targets capital, Gandhi emphasizes humanity, and Heidegger focuses on human subjectivity. Heidegger warns against technology's erosion of individuality, suggesting that parliamentary democracy and communism are insufficient defenses. Gandhi, in contrast to Marx and Heidegger, proposes an alternative civilization rooted in holistic perspectives (125-26).

With this discussion, the book begins to unfold its penultimate chapter. The discussion focuses on Gandhi and his philosophy of non-violence in the age of excesses. Accordingly, this chapter delves

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into the extremist currents of identity, representation, and redistribution, providing a detailed explanation that makes sense of the violent and disturbing outcomes of modernity, including wars, cold wars, pandemics, religious conflict, and various other challenges experienced in our recent history. Sharma and Mishra write:

> Violence has been feared throughout human history since Socrates. It was also deterred by the love of Jesus, but it was most profoundly disturbed by Gandhi because in him there is truth, love, wisdom, and inexhaustible knowledge. Otherwise, if there had been courage in violence, then why did Godse not accept Gandhi's invitation to stay with him for a week, after Godse's attempt to attack him with a knife on July 22, 1944? Because Godse did not risk his illusion being shattered, whereas Gandhi was willing to take the risk of non-violence. You and I are living in an era of excesses and contradictions, where a compliance with moral rules requires taking risks, and what is unethical is no longer uncomfortable. Otherwise, how can we have we reached an age of extreme violence, if violence is no longer the moral norm? (130)

Those acquainted with Sharma and Mishra's earlier publication, *Hannah Arendt: Himsa Ka Utkhanan*, are likely to find answers to the raised question in the aforementioned quote. Complementing this, the book systematically progresses to its final chapter, delving into the discussion of Gandhi and Hannah Arendt, shedding light on their impact in revealing the intricate layers of violence. Discussing violence as a symbolic representation of power, the chapter engages the myth of linking power and violence as a symbolic representation of good governance, a paradigm shift in human essence and the conception of work and labor, the foundations of authoritarianism and totalitarianism, and other themes that have reshaped the entire human condition (Arendt 2019).[11] The book concludes by emphasizing that the reflections of Gandhi and Arendt serve as a therapeutic solace in our traumatic world order, which often lacks sensitivity towards fellow human beings and the environment (175). It underscores the importance of respecting everything we encounter. The wounds inflicted by violence cannot be healed with more violence, but rather with non-violence, embodying the perfect Advaitan philosophy that Gandhi espoused.

> The conflicting voices of Gandhi and Hannah Arendt can also be heard in this undertaking. But this opposition can be bridged through Advaita methodology and formulas can be derived for the bright future of humanity. The first step of this sutra starts with understanding 'Who am I and what is power.' Its second step is related to understanding how modernity has deviated from the answer to 'Who am I and what is power' from its origin. Gandhi and Hannah Arendt answer both these questions in their own ways. There is a difference though. Hannah Arendt exposes layer by layer the violence that is spreading like algae in modern civilization, while Gandhi is active in uprooting it completely (175).

To conclude, the book emerges from a profound concern for the wellbeing of the world, encompassing nature, humans, and other positive ideals. Its central idea is straightforward: violence, in any form, is detrimental to all living beings and the environment. As beings endowed with creativity and thoughtfulness, humans perpetually seek perfection and solutions to various problems, be it hunger, poverty, or inequality. The challenge lies in discerning which ideologies to embrace and which to reject. But some questions remain.

If ideologies like modernism and communism are defective due to their supposed sectarian and dualistic approach, where can we find the foundation for an ideal philosophy? Can solutions to

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problems that have emerged within a specific culture and civilization (in this case Gandhian philosophy that is said to be embedded in the Sanatani, Brahmic, and Advaitin cultural framework) suffice to fix the problems of another one (in this case, the 'west' as reflected in the work of Marx, Hobbes and Harari), as the book seems to imply? The authors claim confidently that a civilization based on advaita culture offers a better worldview. Yet, it should be pointed out that while critique is indeed beneficial for the evolution of thought and value systems, completely rejecting a culture based on certain negative outcomes might not do justice to that culture itself, as Gandhi himself argued.

Gandhi rarely expressed remorse or apathy towards any culture or civilization; instead, he consistently sought opportunities to learn from them, be it from the Greeks, Christianity, Islam, Jainism, or any other worldview that has thrived (Andrews 2016).[12] The book's differentiation between Brahmic and Abrahamic cultures may not align with Gandhi's overarching philosophy of universal harmony and peace, as the following Gandhian remarks suggests:

> I am an advaitist and yet I can support Dvaitism (dualism). The world is changing every moment, and is therefore unreal, it has no permanent existence. But though it is constantly changing, there is something about it which persists, and it is therefore to that extent real. I have therefore no objection to calling it real and unreal, and thus being called an Anekantavadi or a Syadvadi. But my Syadvada is not the syadvada of the learned, it is peculiarly my own […]. The seven blind men who gave seven different descriptions of the elephant were all right from their respective points of view, and wrong from the point of view of one another, and right and wrong from the point of view of the man who knew the elephant. I very much like this doctrine of the manyness of reality (Gandhi 1986: 22).[13]

This pluralist aspect of Gandhi remains relatively unexplored in the book and could be considered in future editions. Similarly, it is also not clear theoretically what kind of an Advaitin Gandhi was, whether a practical or an idealist one. Although the book rightly critiques extremists and poses challenging questions that demand significant sacrifices, whether in terms of power, identity, or entire ideologies, the authors may have to face charges of cultural bias when they endorse the Brahmic value system in general, and Gandhi in particular. In principle, Gandhi remains consistent, but his dream of Ramarajya is also a utopia. As we know, utopias are ideals that are not fully achieved, but progressed towards (Barbara 2012).[14]

Relatedly, one question that will frequently arise for any Gandhian scholar, is whether we can or should really confine any thinker to any particular theory or system that fits into our ideological framework. In other words, the book has argumentatively depicted Gandhi as an Advaitin or Sanatani, but is it a just representation of his life project, or is it a glorification of Advaita, a theory of reality, behind the veil of Gandhi? Similarly, there are many views that label Gandhi as postmodern, a man of the renaissance, a cosmopolitan, and so on (Rudolph and Rudolph 2010).[15] But do these categorizations do justice to a thinker or leader ? Perhaps, the authors could have mentioned that the Gandhi interpretation they offer is merely limited to their project.

Further, the book's use of binaries such as east and west, Brahmic and Abrahamic, sensual, and spiritual cultures, as well as its presentation of Gandhi as a representative of eastern, Brahmic, and spiritual culture raise questions too: If Gandhi was an Advaitist (a non-dualist), the central claim of the book, how can he stand for binaries? Perhaps the authors need to clarify how classification and binaries differ in the context of this book. Likewise, while the book commendably navigates Gandhi's

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teachings, it falls short in incorporating Gandhian principles of self-critique (Gandhi 1997).[16] A Gandhian approach would entail a more rigorous examination of potential criticisms and counterarguments against Gandhi's own ideals which have been already made in literature. It should also be noted that while adeptly critiquing modernity's approach of definitions, the authors fall into a similar methodological trap themselves. Modernity, often criticized for its reductionist tendencies, tends to oversimplify complex phenomena, and the authors, despite their insightful critique, inconsistently simplify Gandhi's philosophy by categorizing him within conventional modernist labels. Similarly, in their exposition on the contradiction within modernity based on outcomes, the authors employ a pragmatic approach, which, ironically, mirrors the very framework they criticize (Prado 1987).[17]

These critical points prompt reflection on the need for a more nuanced and reflexive approach to analyzing Gandhi's philosophy and its intersection with modernity and pragmatism. Yet, despite these temporary shortcomings, the book adds unique value to Gandhian philosophy and compels us to reconsider how Gandhian scholarship, as well as other works in languages besides English, should be given due consideration on the global platform. Such recognition would make the world more cosmopolitan, and by implication, translations should take place so that ideas are no longer confined to specific cultures and languages. And for this, I congratulate both Ambika Dutt Sharma and Vishwanath Mishra for their long intellectual journey for peace, adding value to Gandhian philosophy, which has become the symbol of harmony.

Rajan is a philosophy researcher by training . He obtained his master's and PhD. degrees in philosophy from the Department of Philosophy and Religion at Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi, India, specializing in metaphilosophy, comparative study, and normative ethics. His current research focuses on comparative philosophy and modern Indian thought. His work has been published in international journals of repute, including the Journal of Indian Council of Philosophical Research (JICPR), Journal of Dharma Studies, Journal of AI & Society, Journal of Human Value, JCREOR, and Summerhill-IIAS Review. In these publications, he has addressed significant issues in Greco-Roman and Indian philosophy, ethics, humanistic studies, and cultural studies.

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1 The phrase, "non-Brahmic tradition," has been frequently used by the authors throughout the book to contrast with the Brahmic tradition, which they have synonymously used for Advaitism and Hinduism.

2 See: Ambika Dutt Sharma and Vishwanath Mishra, *Hannah Aarent : Himsa Ka Utkhanan* (Jaipur : Prakrit Bharati Academy, 2020).

3 Gavin Kendall and Gary Wickham, *Using Foucault's Methods* (London: SAGE Publications,1998).

4 Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi* (India: Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, 2000).

5 All the quotes from the book under review have been translated by me. The page numbers refer to the Hindi original.

6 See, Aldous Huxley, *Brave New World* (London: Huge Print Press, 2011).

7 Although the domain of Sanatan literature is very vast, it is conventionally said to place the Prasthānatrayī at the top. This includes the Upanishads, the Bhagavadgita, and the Brahma Sūtra-s. See, Śaṅkarācārya, *Prasthānatrayī: mūlamātram* (India: Sarasvatī Mandira, Ādiśaṅkara Brahmavidyā Pīṭham, 2023). Furthermore, according to the Santan tradition, those who do not find time to read the Upanisads and the Brahma Sūtra-s, may simply understand the central teachings of all these in the

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Bhagavadgita, with which Gandhi was well acquainted (Gandhi 1965). See: Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, *Gita, My Mother* (India, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1965).

8 Jacques Barzun, *From Dawn to Decadence: 1500 to the Present, 500 Years of Western Cultural Life* (London: HarperCollins, 2001).

9 Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, *Socialism of My Conception* (Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1957).

10 Rajan, "*Philosophy of Technology for the Lost Age of Freedom: A Critical Treatise on Human Essence and Uncertain Future*," *AI & Society: Journal of Knowledge, Culture and Communication*: Springer (DOI: 10.1007/s00146-024-01942-y, 2024; last accessed on June 16, 2024).

11 Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (London: University of Chicago Press, 2019).

12 Charles Andrews, *Routledge Revivals: Mahatma Gandhi's Ideas (1929): Including Selections from His Writings* (New York: Taylor & Francis, 2016).

13 Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, *The Moral and Political Writings of Mahatma Gandhi: Truth and Non-Violence* (London: Oxford University Press, 1986).

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