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Warp and Weft: Governance through Alternation - world governance as a Gandhian challenge for the individual

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This paper was written as the counterpart to another on [Spin and Counter-spin: Governance through terrorism](#) that provides the context for the development of the Gandhian arguments here.

Introduction

The focus on terrorism as a strategy employed by 'terrorists', and the response to it by the saviours of 'civilization', has created a strange environment for the evolution of governance in the 21st century. The introductory paper on [Spin and Counter-spin](#) explores the implications for the individual faced with the challenge of interpreting new kinds of messages from 'terrorists' and from government -- and the implications for world governance.

The question raised in what follows is the nature of the learnings to be gained from the metaphor in bridging between the activities of 'spin doctors' and how future governance is to be spun and enabled by the individual. The ability of individuals to 'spin their own yarn' has been severely eroded to the point of non-existence -- because of the apparent quality of the imported product. Consequently the individual is forced to import truths and memes that have been 'spun' elsewhere and has become totally dependent on them to provide threads of discourse with contemporaries. At issue here is the process whereby individuals construct their own sustaining realities as a way of relating to realities spun elsewhere. The issue is the process whereby individuals can develop viable 'homespun' realities as the most sustainable basis for healthy and meaningful world governance.

The modern spinners of exported realities derive much of their viability, if not all, from the manner in which their truths can be made to persuade and seduce individuals to buy into them. The paper explores insights from Gandhi's thinking, arguing that the focus on nonviolence also tends to obscure consideration of some of the more personal implications of his initiative that are relevant to the issue of world governance in a society dominated by spinning. His phrase 'self-rule' tends to be understood by many as relating to political independence whereas to others it can more fruitfully be applied to one's own self. As normally translated as 'home rule', it obscures this sense of personal governance of one's own domain. Gandhi endeavoured to combine both senses, although less attention has been paid to his thinking in relation to the second or the process of their combination.

The exploration here of Gandhi's spinning-wheel raises the question of what might be an equivalent symbol, appropriate to the many cultures of the world, that would weave together the threads of insight appropriate to world governance? Modern governance is seen here as essentially conceived in terms of 'warp' -- the threads of a single directionality -- and every effort is made to avoid designing in 'weft' -- namely threads of a contrasting directionality (such as those of 'anti-globalists' or 'terrorists'). The argument points to a kind of reality-spinning radical philosophy that could represent an individual reframing of Gandhi's *swaraj*. Part of the challenge is that, through inability to respond to such cross-cutting issues in the governance of one's personal world, they are projected onto the challenges of world governance.

The argument raises the possibility of a reinterpretation of Gandhi's *satyagraha* to transcend its implicit polarization -- as a way to engender a different quality of world governance.

Prospects for world governance: the good news

What kind of new environment do the many forms of spin in relation to terrorism create for effective world governance in a highly turbulent and confusing situation?

The situation itself provides an interesting 'thread' that can be pursued through the metaphor of 'spinning' -- now so widely used to describe the manner in which information relevant to governance is managed and presented. This usage derives from the folk tradition of 'spinning a tale', more dubiously associated with 'spinning a web of lies'.

The metaphor has long had a more profound cultural significance in legends, notably the mythic weaving of the three Fates of Greek myth, spinning, weaving and cutting the fragile threads of human life. Lives are lived as the stories are told - sensibility and destiny are a feature of the telling, of the creative activity of both teller and listener. The telling itself thus becomes part of what is told, what is lived [more]. Athena, daughter of Zeus, was goddess of wisdom, warcraft, and handicraft. At handicraft, what the goddess did best was weave. And this makes sense, since wisdom and cunning seem naturally tied to the idea of weaving.

There are many comments on the web about 'how the web is spun'. *Spinning the Web* (1994) by Andrew Ford was the first book in print to deal with publishing information on the web [more; more]. This perspective has notably been important to the expression of women on the web as articulated by Hope A. Olson and Anna E. Altmann (*Metaphor and Women's Voices on the World Wide*) who argue that: 'Web, weaving, spinning seemed to us to form a network of related metaphors, across a wide variety of contexts, over a long period of time' [more]. To pagans, for example, because the symbolism of the wheel was so important to Yule, it became a day sacred to Goddesses of the spinning wheel, it being a metaphor for the great Wheel of The Year. The idea of spinning to create things, has become a part of modern paganism in the form of casting spells: 'When we make magick, we often say we are spinning a spell, or spinning a charm'.

Notable use has consequently been made of spinning as a metaphor in the poetry of East and West. In the poetry of Punjabi Sufi saints, the act of turning the spinning wheel is analogous to meditation. A 17th century American poet, Edward Taylor, is best known for his poem *Huswifery*: It illustrated his willingness to be refined by God by way of a spinning wheel. Throughout the poem, Taylor compares himself to its various parts and their movements [more]

These different threads come together in Mahatma Gandhi's spinning philosophy and the manner in which he made it a central theme of the Indian independence movement that has been described as *Spinning a Nation*. The spinning wheel became the central image in the Indian flag. Making a largely abandoned village technology central to the uniting of a highly rural country may well represent the kind of improbable creative initiative for which parallels could usefully be sought in relation to world governance. **The question raised in what follows is the nature of the learnings to be gained from the metaphor in bridging between the activities of 'spin doctors' and how future governance is to be spun and enabled by the individual.**

In exploring this line of reasoning it is important to move beyond the judgement of Gandhi so ignorantly propagated by Winston Churchill (1930): "It is alarming and also nauseating to see Mr. Gandhi, a seditious middle temple lawyer, now posing as a fakir of a type well known in the east, striding half-naked up the steps of the viceregal palace, while he is still organizing and conducting a defiant campaign of civil disobedience, to parley on equal terms with the representative of the king-emperor." [more] Given his admiration for Churchill, would George Bush have said otherwise? It is also necessary to move beyond the focus on the spinning wheel as a technology in order to understand how it 'worked' in creating and sustaining a new mindset -- whether or not a person engaged in its daily use as advocated by Gandhi.

For George Woodcock:

Many of Gandhi's proposals, which to outsiders seem absurd and faddish, and which contributed to the alien view of him as a special kind of inspired clown, were completely sensible in the setting of the India he was attempting to elevate into self-respect and freedom. To revive the craft of spinning, which Indian peasants had ceased practicing before the turn of the century, was much more than an act of antiquarian sentiment. It was an effective way of drawing attention to a whole group of conditions that needed changing: the virtual extinction of Indian village crafts; the fact that because there were no crafts the peasants were unemployed four months of the year; the final appalling fact that their cash income was so minute that even a few rupees earned spinning yarn in the idle season would increase it notably. Practicality (which helped him to forge original techniques of revolutionary action) and lack of prejudice (which brought him a following and a breadth of acceptance unprecedented in India with its divisions of caste, language and religion) combined in Gandhi with an exceptional insight into the power of symbolic actions to move people's minds, and also with, as Nehru remarked, "a curious knack of doing the right thing at the psychological moment." To tramp a couple of hundred miles in 1930 through the summer dust of Indian country roads, with a lonely beach as his destination, and there to pick up a fleck of forbidden salt and defy an unreasonable law; it was a simple, poetic act, but it united the Indian people more than any act by any person before, and it hastened the end of the British Empire. [more]

At the beginning of the 19th century, Indian cotton spinners and weavers were supplying finished cloth to markets in Asia, Africa, Europe, and even the Americas. It was difficult for foreigners to compete with the Indian workers. Indians produced goods cheaply, and the technology of spinning and weaving cotton by traditional craft methods was difficult for competitors to master. However, once British factory-owners had learnt the techniques of machine spinning and weaving, they imported cheap raw cotton from the American plantations. Finished cloth from British mills became much cheaper than the Indian handloom products. Cotton mills in Lancashire,

England, exported more and more cloth to India, and by the mid-1800's much of India's basic needs in cotton clothing was being met by British factories. Indian spinners and weavers lost their jobs, and had to turn to agriculture to make a living. [more]

Is the impoverished individual of the modern world to be usefully likened to the Indian villager of Gandhi's time, forced to wear imported clothing 'from the mills of Lancashire' owned by their oppressors? Although now of course the individual is faced with a huge amount of 'spinning' -- stories, yarns and theories distributed from the West through the multinational-controlled media and their proxies. The impoverishment may well be primarily cultural.

The ability of individuals to 'spin their own yarn' has been severely eroded to the point of non-existence -- because of the apparent quality of the imported product. Consequently **the individual is forced to import truths and memes that have been 'spun' elsewhere and has become totally dependent on them to provide threads of discourse with contemporaries.** As in the case of the villager, it is such imported 'fabric' that individuals have become obliged to wear as their interface (protective or decorative) with their environment. It is through such imported cultural products -- whether scholarly or edutainment -- that the individual now tends to articulate his or her identity and worldview. It is in terms of the distant frameworks of *Dallas*, *Dynasty* and other media creations, that individuals find role models for their daily lives. The ability to 'spin one's own yarn' (whether as a story or a philosophy) is considered as totally quaint -- as was the spinning wheel of Gandhi's time.

Gandhi was able to demonstrate to millions that this quaintness was a major threat to the British Empire's governance and its economic exploitation of India. In this light the key questions would seem to be:

- how individuals can re-learn the art of 'spinning their own yarn', and how this can sustain them more effectively than imports
- how this may be perceived as a major threat to those from whom pre-spun memes are currently imported.

At issue here is **the process whereby individuals construct their own sustaining realities as a way of relating to realities spun elsewhere** from which a kind of *ersatz* nourishment is currently to be derived. It is the distinction currently played out with respect to foodstuffs -- between the 'naturally-grown' and the 'artificially-grown'. The imposition on the population of genetically-modified and hormone-loaded foodstuffs is indicative of the subtler memetic challenge debated under the terms 'cultural imperialism' and 'spiritual pollution'. For Gandhi the distinction was highlighted in 'homespun' (*khadi*) versus imported clothing. To repeat, the argument made here is not focused on the material product but on the meanings which any such product might carry in practice. Indeed Gandhi's *khadi* revolution has long been endangered in India itself by the kinds of economic forces inimical to more appropriate forms of world governance [more]. **The issue is the process whereby individuals can develop viable 'homespun' realities as the most sustainable basis for healthy and meaningful world governance.**

Clarifying the challenge of world governance

The memetic challenge of future world governance for the individual can be clarified by a re-reading of Gandhi's original articulation (in *Young India*) of the challenge for India in 1921 ::

To a people famishing and idle, the only acceptable forms in which God can dare appear is work and promise of food as wages. God created man to work for his good, and said that those who ate without work were thieves. Eighty per cent of India are compulsorily thieves half the year. Is it any wonder if India has become one vast prison?

Hunger is the argument that is driving India to the spinning wheel. The call of the spinning wheel is the noblest of all. Because it is the call of love. And love is *swaraj*. *Swaraj* has no meaning for the millions, if they do not know how to employ their enforced idleness. The attainment of this *swaraj* is possible within a short time, and it is so possible only by the revival of the spinning wheel.

I do want growth, I do want self-determination, I do want freedom, but I want all these for the soul. I doubt if the steel age is an advance upon the flint age. I am indifferent. It is the evolution of the soul to which the intellect and all our faculties have to be devoted. I have no difficulty in imagining the possibility of a man armoured after the modern style making some lasting and new discovery for mankind, but I have less difficulty in imagining the possibility of a man having nothing but a bit of flint and a nail for lighting his path or his matchlock ever singing new hymns of praise and delivering to an aching world a message of peace and goodwill upon earth.

A plea for the spinning wheel is a plea for recognizing the dignity of labour. I claim that in losing the spinning wheel we lost our left lung. We are, therefore, suffering from galloping consumption. The restoration of the wheel arrests the progress of the fell disease. There are certain things which all must do in all climes. There are certain things which all must do in certain climes. The spinning wheel is the thing which all must turn in the Indian clime for the transition stage at any rate and the vast majority must for all time.

It was over love of foreign cloth that ousted the wheel from its position of dignity. Therefore, I consider it a sin to wear foreign cloth.

I must confess that I do not draw a sharp or any distinction between economics and ethics. Economics that hurt the moral well-being of an individual or a nation are immoral and, therefore, sinful. Thus the economics that permit one country to prey upon another are immoral. It is sinful to buy and use articles made by sweated labour. It is sinful to eat the American wheat and let my neighbour the grain dealer starve for want of custom.

My modesty has prevented me from declaring from the house top that the message of non-cooperation, non-violence and *swadeshi* is a message to the world. It must fall flat, if it does not bear fruit in the soil where it has been delivered. We must refuse to be lifted off our feet. A drowning man cannot save others, we must try to save ourselves. Indian nationalism is not exclusive, nor aggressive, nor destructive. India must learn to live before she can aspire to die for humanity. The mice which helplessly find themselves between the cat's teeth, acquire no merit from their enforced sacrifice.

As with British manufacturers of the time, the **modern spinners of exported realities derive much of their viability, if not all, from the manner in which their truths can be made to persuade and seduce individuals to buy into them.** Whether it is the edutainment products of bodies like Time-Warner, the ethical and related frameworks of religious bodies, the scientific worldviews of the many disciplines, the fashion products of design houses, or the strategies and resolutions of intergovernmental authorities, they all derive their credibility and funding primarily from the authority they acquire over the consenting individual. If the individual is drained of any sustaining personal sense of meaning by this process, then Gandhi's analysis is relevant. Is the importance of drugs to sustain meaning in modern life an indication of the degree to which external purveyors of reality have effectively become 'meme-sucking vampires'.

From this perspective, it is understandable why the pro-globalization 'free traders' are currently so extremely threatened by the 'anti-globalizers' that are labelled as 'rejectionists' (nicely recalling Gandhi's rejection of imported cloth). The socio-economic arguments empowering the pro-globalizers are as suspect as were those of the British economists and politicians of Gandhi's India. Gandhi was indeed declared by the British at the time to be a terrorist and arrested as such -- deliberately distorting his nonviolent role. Most ironically one website now points to the fact that recent anti-terrorist legislation confirms this judgement:

In the wake of the September 11th attack on the World Trade Center, the British government has declared Mahatma Gandhi a terrorist. A bill recently passed by Parliament and ratified by the House of Lords re-defines the legal concept of "terrorist" to include anyone who uses non-violent means, or who advocates non-violent means, to disagree with the government or to attempt to alter government policies. Previous legislation already criminalized non-cooperation with police authorities. Gandhi's philosophy of non-violent non-cooperation with unjust government policies would therefore constitute terrorism; under the new legislation, Gandhi could have been imprisoned indefinitely without charge, until he starved to death. [\[more\]](#)

The challenge for leadership in world governance is perhaps best illustrated by a 'rogues gallery' website on 'terrorists through the ages' - that challenges understanding of the distinction between leaders, socio-political innovators and terrorists. It includes Mahatma Gandhi, Nelson Mandela, and the Dalai Lama [\[more\]](#). Curiously the shortlist for the Nobel Peace Prize in 1938 included both Gandhi and Hitler -- between whom it proved impossible to choose [\[more\]](#). That for 2002 included a joint award to Blair and Bush -- although the award was finally made to former President Jimmy Carter despite his responsibility (from 1977-1981), as highlighted by Tariq Ali, for what many define as state-supported terrorism:

- ordering the CIA to organize the killers running the death squads in Argentina to train Nicaraguan Contras in Honduras, notably to fight against the Sandinista government.
- authorising the covert CIA operation in Afghanistan that led to the creation of the mujahedin and giving the green light for Saudi religious, ideological and financial intervention, begun under the leadership of Osama bin Laden.
- re-arming Pol Pot and the Khmer Rouge in Thailand after they were defeated by the Vietnamese.
- leading a campaign in favour of the release of Lieutenant William Calley, found guilty of mass murder in the My Lai massacre in South Vietnam.
- providing support and weaponry supplied to the Indonesian military dictatorship after the brutal occupation of East Timor. [\[more; more; more\]](#)

Given the surreal absurdities of the process, may we expect a future Peace Prize to be jointly shared by George Bush and Osama bin Laden? Or will the Nobel Committee find it difficult to choose between them? There is the intriguing possibility that the years spent 'behind bars' by 'terrorists' such as Mandela and Gandhi are a precise measure of the dimensions of the historical time warp into which their societies are locked -- the number of years that those societies are 'behind the times'.

There is a striking similarity between the legislative steps taken against Indian independence and the current spate of legislation restricting civil liberties in the fight against terrorism. This resulted in the Rowlatt Bills or 'Black' Bills. The first became the Anarchical and Revolutionary Crimes Act (1919). Under the new law, in the name of maintenance of peace, the Government could arrest any person without a warrant and detain him for any length of time without any trial or right to appeal. The law was considered by Gandhi to be a direct attack on the ordinary civil liberties of the people and a clear indication of the autocratic and barbarous tendencies of the British rule in India. [\[more\]](#) The protests he then organized resulted in the notorious Amritsar Massacre (1919) in which unarmed civilians were systematically slaughtered by the British army during a peaceful demonstration. The investigating committee judged it to be: 'a calculated piece of inhumanity towards utterly innocent and unarmed men, including children, and unparalleled for its ferocity in the history of modern British administration'. No compensation was paid to the victims. Modern echoes of this mentality are to be found in the treatment of the Mau-Mau in Kenya [\[more**\]](#), the repression of the Genoa G8 demonstrations in 2001 [\[more\]](#) and in the aftermath of the UN-sponsored intervention in Afghanistan.

The challenge of modern 'rejectionists', to those who put all their faith in globalization (at others expense), is echoed in Gandhi's early question: 'Why must India become industrial in the western sense?' Contrary to the wisdom of the World Bank and IMF, he asserted that 'what is good for one nation situated in one condition is not necessarily good for another differently situated. One man's food is often another man's poison'. Curiously it was not the World Bank economists that invented or demonstrated the viability of the Grameen Bank they eventually chose to support. In a critique of the UNDP's understanding of technology and its efforts to impose GM seeds, Vandana Shiva (*The Seed and the Spinning Wheel: The UNDP as Biotech Salesman: Reflections on the Human Development Report - 2001*)

argues:

Gandhi had said that 'anything that millions can do together, becomes charged with unique power'. The spinning wheel had become a symbol of such power. 'The wheel as such is lifeless, but when I invest it with symbolism, it becomes a living thing for me'

India got her freedom through the symbol of the spinning wheel and policies that recognised that technology is a political and social-cultural construct. It must adapt to people and diverse socio-economic and environmental contexts if it has to serve human development. People cannot be forced and coerced to adapt to technology as an end. With a totally one sided view of the history of technology, the UNDP Technology report refers only to Britain's experience of mechanisation of textiles and describes defense of alternatives as "inertia".

Had Gandhi not resurrected the spinning wheel and handlooms, India would have been trapped in colonised inertia. We would have destroyed our rich and diverse textiles. We would have failed to protect the livelihoods and welfare of our weavers which is once again threatened by globalisation.

The imposition of GM-seed and GM-food through American monopolies could well become the symbolic issue worldwide that is equivalent to that early British policy with regard to prohibiting Indians from manufacturing their own salt [more]. The policy gave rise to the famous Salt March to the remote sea-side village of Dandi in 1930 and to the the Dharasana Salt Factory where demonstrators were viciously beaten before journalists -- completely discrediting any moral authority claimed by the British. Are the pro-globalizers setting their cause up for a Dharasana-type disaster? The civil disobedience campaign it launched was the greatest nonviolent battle by possibly history's greatest nonviolent campaigner. And Gandhi himself saw this as the quintessence of his philosophy in action. The Salt March lesson was heard by many and it changed many -- and continues to be a prime inspiration for demonstrators at pro-globalization conferences [more]. It was also an early lesson to authorities in the need to control the media coverage of demonstrations and of security counter-measures, now so systematically imposed in relation to American military intervention (Gulf War, Afghanistan, Iraq).

The UNDP's approach to technology is to be contrasted with that articulated by Yoav Ben-Dov (*Non-European traditions and 21st century education: Towards the computerized spinning wheel?*):

Gandhi's home industry model was motivated by social and human values. However, in the context of market economy based on material technology, it has its price, as it involved a technological step backwards, from modern technology to pre-modern technology. Thus, although the spinning wheel small-scale industry was more harmonious with the ways of life of traditional Indian society, it found itself in a disadvantageous position when having to compete with the more advanced mechanistic and centralized system of production.

The advent of information technology radically changes this situation. Already today one can see the emergence of a new way of production - the decentralized software home industry, which can successfully compete from remote places and on low budgets. Indeed, like the spinning wheel, a computer with an internet link can function effectively in a village house, but at the same time, it can also be part of an innovative software project. Moreover, in this way, production based on advanced technology can reach the rural areas without necessitating major environmental damage and violent disruption of traditional ways of life. Thus, information technology makes it possible to implement Gandhi's home industry vision without having to compromise the competition edge of up-to-date technology.

The question here is whether this approach, and the much-hyped knowledge-society notion of a 'global village', encourage people to 'spin their own yarn' and sustain themselves in 'homespun' realities. Or is it a more sophisticated weapon of mass distraction and memetic vampirism to be manipulated by those seeking to exploit world governance for elitist ends?

Decolonization of the mind: the process and symbolic template

The concrete results of Gandhi's campaigning are most simply expressed in the independence of India in 1947. The thinking behind the strategy he used is primarily of interest to those advocating nonviolence -- and is widely neglected as unrealistic for that reason. But **the focus on nonviolence also tends to obscure consideration of some of the more personal implications of his initiative that are relevant to the issue of world governance in a society dominated by spinning.**

According to the [Swaraj Foundation](#), in his book *Hind Swaraj* (1908; translated as *Indian Home Rule*; [online version](#)), Gandhi sought to clarify the meaning behind *swaraj*, or self-rule, as being much more than simply "wanting [systems of] English rule without the Englishman; the tiger's nature but not the tiger." The crux of his argument centered on the belief that the socio-spiritual underpinnings of British political, economic, bureaucratic, legal, military, and educational institutions were inherently unjust, exploitative and alienating. As Pinto explicates, "The principal theme of *Hind Swaraj* is the moral inadequacy of western civilization, especially its industrialism, as the model for free India." Gandhi was particularly critical of the deeply embedded principles of 'might is right' and 'survival of the fittest'. But on another level, the call for *swaraj* represents a genuine attempt to regain control of the 'self' -- our self-respect, self-responsibility, and capacities for self-realization -- from institutions of dehumanization. As Gandhi states, "It is *swaraj* when we learn to rule ourselves." The real goal of the freedom struggle was not only to secure political *azadi* (independence) from Britain, but rather to gain true *swaraj* (liberation and self-rule). [more]

The phrase 'self-rule' can be understood by some as relating to political independence whereas to others it can more fruitfully be applied to one's own self. As normally translated as 'home rule', it obscures this sense of personal governance of one's own domain.

Gandhi endeavoured to combine both senses, although less attention has been paid to his thinking in relation to the second or the process of their combination. It is in communicating the multi-dimensional nature of his insight that lies the true merit of the spinning wheel. Mohit Chakrabarti's study (*The Gandhian Philosophy Of Spinning-Wheel*), as reviewed by [S. Narayanswami](#), clarifies some of the dimensions. But a more complete range might perhaps be presented as follows:

some of the dimensions. But a more complete range might perhaps be presented as follows:

- *Technology*: The simplicity of the spinning wheel as a device, its construction, and the cost of materials, makes it an early and archetypal example of what has today come to be valued as 'appropriate technology' :for the most impoverished and isolated.
- *Demonstration*: The process of spinning, and the products it made possible, provided a very visible and concrete example of how people could help themselves under difficult circumstances.
- *Tradition*: The spinning wheel was not an imported foreign gadget but a well understood technology that formed part of the Indian cultural tradition. As such its use reinforced the bonds with that tradition and the sense of historical continuity basic to community.
- *Myth*: The spinning wheel also featured in culture and legend -- and therefore in village entertainment. It has been a theme in poetry. It not only featured in story telling but could be used as a 'conversation piece' to sustain a significant discourse.
- *Education*: The spinning wheel was positioned as an ideal, hands-on educational tool and discipline, notably in impoverished villages, whether as a productive handicraft or through making education self-reliant and self-supporting. Even maths could be taught with it
- *Community*: The spinning-wheel was understood as binding the heart of everyone in society with a common cord of social oneness; the seeds of national and social cohesion were seen to be sown through the music of the spinning-wheel.
- *Mobility*: As a device the spinning wheel was both eminently portable rather than being difficult to transport. As a wheel it could also be associated with movement and transportation.
- *Economics*: It could be argued that *swaraj* and the prosperity of society could be presented and undertaken only through the spinning-wheel as a key handicraft. It was successfully linked to the economics of homespun (*khadi*) and to salt.
- *Politics*: The spinning wheel was most effectively used in a political campaign to overthrow exploitative governance in the interests of distant foreigners using competing, and less appropriate, technology.
- *Nonviolence*: The concept of sacrifice, well-nurtured in the concept of nonviolence, is also at the root of the concept of the spinning-wheel. Through this association worship and work were intertwined.
- *Religion*: This could be instilled by means of the spinning-wheel through what was termed *Sarvadharmā Samanātva*. The value of religion is enhanced because of how its helps to safeguard and enrich the self-respect and self-development of each individual in order to safeguard and enrich national honour and national development.
- *Symbol*: As noted above, anything that millions can do together, becomes charged with unique power. The spinning wheel became a symbol of such power. For Gandhi, 'The wheel as such is lifeless, but when I invest it with symbolism, it becomes a living thing for me'. It could be presented as a symbol of humanism and as an effective vehicle to catalyst both inward and outward development, whether directly or indirectly, through self-help, self-service, self-contentment, and austerity.
- *Marketing*: In these terms, the spinning wheel became an early exemplar of image building -- both politically and with respect to an alternative response to the challenges of ordinary people. As such it also disarmed competitive opponents by its innocence and quaintness.
- *Divinity*: In the cultures of South-East Asia, great importance is attached to circular mandalas and spoked wheels as symbolic of divinity. In this way the spinning wheel, epitomizes man as a divine being consistent with traditional Indian views of self-development. The symbol of Buddhism is the Dharma Wheel, with its 8 spokes representing the Eightfold Path.
- *Chakra*: in the cultures of South-East Asia traditional importance in healing, meditation and philosophy is attached to energy centres within the human being known as *chakras* -- meaning 'spinning energy wheel' in Sanskrit (*charkha* in Hindi). The term was therefore used both for the physical device and the subtle energy centre -- thus constituting a very powerful association in Indian culture. The subsequent use of a 1,000 spoked wheel at the centre of the Indian flag recalls the Sahashrara or Crown Chakra, located at the top of the head, and meaning "thousand petal lotus". In South-East Asia this is understood to accumulate all the energies and emotions from the lower *chakra* points and transmutes them by "fire", burning off residual fears, doubts, and apprehensions opening the energetic body to universal and divine insight.
- *Meditation*: Both use of the spinning wheel and its shape were successfully associated with meditation. It gave physical form to understanding of the Wheel of Life, so important to reconciliation of millions to the difficulties of their daily life. As such it also suggested ultimate emancipation as an individual and social being

Taken singly, any of these dimensions is of significance to some constituency in the governance of a country -- or the world. But many would be considered mutually incompatible or irrelevant -- especially since some relate to the collective challenges of the external, material world and some to the subtleties of each person's inner world. Gandhi's genius lay in his capacity to ensure their interrelationship in a coherent whole, both in practice and in doctrine, that was meaningful not only to the individual but to India as a whole. Here also the spoked spinning wheel could be seen as a way of understanding these many relationships -- effectively as a symbol for governance in which he ensured that significance was invested. A key to his success was that he was also prepared to 'be the solution'. Very challenging for Indian culture, he made central to his initiative a technology typically associated with women. Literally and metaphorically he 'spun his own yarn' -- and introduced a new story to the world. It is interesting to explore how many of these dimensions are reflected in UNDP's understanding of nation building and development -- and how integrated any such initiatives are understood to be.

That Gandhi's undertaking was far from obvious -- or 'serious' from any conventional nation-building perspective -- is clear when the question is asked **what might be an equivalent symbol, appropriate to the many cultures of the world, that would draw together the threads of insight appropriate to world governance?** It is interesting therefore to contrast the spinning wheel with the unspoked circle of 12-stars that is the symbol of the European Union -- and features on its flag in a similar way. In the light of the checklist above, to what degree does the latter symbol 'work' to counteract the acknowledged apathy of European citizens for what many experience as soulless?

Again, according to the [Swaraj Foundation](#):

Deeply inspired by principled and radical critiques of the modern urban-industrial-military paradigm and the consequent alienation of human beings raised by thinkers and activists such as, Leo Tolstoy, John Ruskin, David Thoreau, and Ralph Waldo Emerson, Gandhi firmly believed that only when Indians dispelled their illusions about the 'progress' of modern Western civilization and the superiority of its role models could they move towards real liberation. Thus, on one level, *Hind Swaraj* can be seen to represent a post-modern critique of development. It calls for profoundly questioning and challenging the legitimacy of modern science/technology, the nation-state, the global economy, and factory-schooling - oppressive systems and structures of power which serve to define our existence. Ashis Nandy describes the starting point for a generative (rather than nihilistic) process of decolonization, "Criticism is the main thing [to building another kind of world]. It forces us to admit that no worldview, no ideology, no transformative principle automatically becomes morally acceptable just because, at this point of time, no one has produced a viable or convincing alternative to it. That keeps intact our moral sensitivities and forces us to search harder for new alternatives." We must regain our faith that there are other options for living.

However, this criticism must go beyond simply an institutional analysis if it wishes to be truly generative. Makarand Paranjape argues that decolonization must be "more centered on the Self than on the Other. By decolonizing myself, I mean developing myself and my society fully, realizing our potential, enlarging our capacities - rather than displacing, overthrowing or defeating the Other." *Swaraj* means engaging in processes of self-understanding and self-reflection to rebuild a self-confidence that is free from arrogance, hatred or egoism. We must acknowledge that we are both 'oppressed' and 'oppressors' and seek to understand what roles we play as oppressors and in supporting institutions of oppression. We must also re-evaluate our own wants and needs and seek to understand how these are manipulated and controlled by others. [\[more\]](#)

Gandhi wanted all those who believed in *swaraj*: (1) to reject and wholly uproot the British raj (rule) from within themselves and their communities; and, (2) to regenerate new reference points, systems, and structures that enable individual and collective self-development. This regeneration was to grow from the strengths, perspectives, wisdom and experiences of people living in village India, rather than from cities in Britain, America, and even in India for that matter. Understanding the real 'Self', and its relation to communities and society, is critical to the project of attaining *swaraj*.

'British rule' is here to be seen as equivalent to the kind of colonization of the mind imposed by the spin doctors of governments exporting their realities and priorities through the media to subservient consumers thereof. From this perspective, the Swaraj Foundation points to the current relevance of Gandhi's perspective:

How is this relevant for us today? We feel that South Asia (along with the rest of the world) is experiencing a tremendous crisis, one overwhelming in its scale and pace of growth. While it is easy to get caught up in the symptoms of this crisis (the brutal violence, the enormous inequities, the extinction of cultures and languages, the degradation of the environment), it is equally, if not more, important to understand its roots. We must creatively analyze the content and the consequences of our current economic, political, social, and educational systems, without reverting to a romanticized past of so-called untouched or pristine traditions.

From these critical reflections, we must generate new spaces, systems, and processes - based on moral and holistic visions of human potential and human progress - which can lead us out of the global self-destruction which engulfs us. Throughout it all, we must consider and negotiate our own roles, while asking ourselves how we are either working for solutions or contributing to making the crisis worse. Thus, today, we recognize Gandhi's concept of *swaraj* integral to three parallel action-reflection agendas for the 21st century [\[more\]](#).

Weaving together the threads: warp and weft

In 1921, Gandhi expressed [reservations](#) about his 1908 articulation of *swaraj* that provide a helpful distinction between his initiative towards appropriate governance and what might be termed 'terrorism' by authorities:

But I would warn the reader against thinking that I am today aiming at the *Swaraj* described therein. I know that India is not ripe for it. It may seem an impertinence to say so. But such is my conviction. I am individually working for the self-rule pictured therein. But today my corporate activity is undoubtedly devoted to the attainment of Parliamentary *Swaraj* in accordance with the wishes of the people of India. I am not aiming at destroying railways or hospitals, though I would certainly welcome their natural destruction. Neither railways nor hospitals are a test of a high and pure civilization. At best they are a necessary evil. Neither adds one inch to the moral stature of a nation. Nor am I aiming at a permanent destruction of law courts, much as I regard it as a 'consummation devoutly to be wished'. Still less am I trying to destroy all machinery and mills. It requires a higher simplicity and renunciation than the people are today prepared for.

The theme of this paper calls for another way of framing the individual/collective polarity highlighted regretfully above by Gandhi. It has indeed been the case that the nation-building and development agendas of the past decades have focused on the collective -- to which Gandhi became resigned. But the degree of spin associated with such externalities (explored [separately](#)) raises the question as to whether governance, as currently conceived, is now impossible without a very high percentage of lying to the electorate -- and by the electorate. Striking examples include: the manner in which the European Commission was forced to resign en bloc in 1999 because of corruption [\[more\]](#); the recognition in 2002 by the European Court of Auditors that only 5% of the European Commission budget could be

guaranteed free from financial fraud; the financial fraud associated with the German elections in 2002, etc

There is therefore a case for exploring a different way of thinking about world governance -- partially inspired by neglected dimensions of Gandhi's initiative. The paradigm shift required may perhaps best be illustrated by the classical challenge faced by in the development of the insect -- explaining why insects are not viable beyond a certain size [more; more]. There is a fundamental physiological constraint that prevents oxygen diffusing to the cells of an insect's body if it is greater than a certain size. Evolution had to produce animals with a different distribution system before larger sizes became viable. This may be the challenge for world governance in ensuring that 'oxygen' reaches the 'cells' of society. The systems currently envisaged are all sub-viable -- failing to pass through a 'viability barrier', the democratic equivalent of the 'sound barrier'.

As suggested earlier, the internet may be one key to such a paradigm shift. But another insect metaphor illustrates a constraint. If individuals are encouraged to 'spin their own yarn', this could lead to behaviours analogous to the spinning of a pupal cocoon by a caterpillar. Indeed the term 'cocooning' is already used to describe a certain lifestyle preference in withdrawing into the home [more; more]. This may well obscure any understanding of the kind of **reality-spinning radical philosophy that could represent an individual reframing of Gandhi's *swaraj***. Cocooning, as presently understood, could constitute the beginning of a degradation into a condition in which myriad cocoon-realities are effectively enabled, managed and exploited -- as imagined in the science fiction movie *Matrix*. Admiral Poindexter's Total Information Awareness programme might be a significant step towards this. It is the proactive insights of **enactivism**, as articulated by Francisco Varela (1992) and others, that might best represent the contemporary articulation of the individual (psychic) variant of Gandhi's 'home rule' -- through which 'homespun' realities are woven and worn in engaging with external elements and the world.

The development of this argument can be clarified by stressing the metaphorical distinction between 'spinning' and 'weaving'. Gandhi focussed primarily on spinning -- to enable weaving, but only secondarily or by implication. He thus emphasized the most fundamental part of the process -- namely the production of threads at home. It is interesting that 'thread' has become a highly significant metaphoric term on the internet. It refers to the 'subject thread' held in common by a succession of messages. A thread is defined as a sequence of responses to an initial message posting. This enables the user to follow or join an individual discussion in a newsgroup from among the many that may be there. A thread is usually shown graphically as an initial message -- successive messages "hung off" the original message. A newsgroup participant can contribute to a thread by specifying a "reference" topic as part of the message. In a computer program, a thread is placeholder information associated with a single use of a program that can handle multiple concurrent users who are maintained on other threads. Most of today's operating systems provide support for multithreading whereby many tasks can effectively be handled simultaneously through appropriate management of individual threads [more].

The term 'thread' may also be used more generally in dialogue and conversation, but again there is little attention to the question of how a dialogue or conference might 'weave' threads together (other than through a 'conference programme' or the binding of the proceedings -- *Buchbindersynthese*). Society is made up of myriad spinners, but there are few weavers to produce whole cloth from their activity. Indeed, to a significant degree, there is a sense in which the temporal dimension of spinning stressed in mythic spinning (by the Fates) comes to the fore in internet and other discussions. Threads slide easily through conceptual fingers as time goes by -- with threads gone by readily to be forgotten -- suggesting a kind of Alzheimer society in which collective memory is systematically eroded [more]. Whether on or off the internet, people contribute to a thread over time, but it is only new threads and the newer contributions which remain of primary interest. A thread reflects a progression -- in a way that recalls Gandhi's critique of western understanding of progress through linear time. The thread as an atemporal product is now of far less significance. In this sense the meanings the thread represents are not stable over time. Old threads are of little interest as with older messages on a thread.

What is most surprising is that there is very little attention given on the internet to what might be done with any set of 'threads'. They are sufficient unto themselves as an organizing principal and very little consideration is given to how they might be 'woven' together -- other than listing them in a newsgroup menu. Cross-links between threads are relatively rare despite emerging interest in the 'semantic web'. The theme 'organization of threads' tends to refer to the programmatic challenge of managing threads, irrespective of their content [more]. More interesting insights come from the traditions in which weaving was used to embody insights, as with African *kente* cloth [more; more] .

The possibility of weaving together threads integral to governance as a time-binding exercise to form a 'cloth' is not considered. And yet it is by the cloth and not by the thread that people clothe themselves. In these terms, contemporary governance might even be caricatured as 'threadbare' -- recalling the children's tale of the *Emperor's New Clothes* that now inspires a website critical of modern spin in governance [more].

It is intriguing that every culture is familiar -- especially through women -- with the process whereby threads can be woven together. Basic to that process is a recognition of the distinction between warp and weft. The interaction between these ensures that the threads of different directionality bind together to create some form of stable fabric -- transforming the one-dimensionality of threads into a two-dimensional form in the case of cloth, and into a three-dimensional form in the base of basket-weaving (reflected in nature by nest weaving birds). Warp is the lengthwise or vertical structural elements upon which a fabric is woven by the addition of weft. Weft is the widthwise or horizontal structural elements of a cloth, passed over and under the warp.

Typically discussions give rise to many threads -- especially in democracy. Efforts at their organization usually involve their 'alignment' -- straightening them in some way. In academic terms, a thread can be considered identical with a 'line of reasoning' or argument defined by the 'points' that are made. By contrast, story telling can be considered to be of two kinds. Like the spinning wheel, it is a tool for creating relationships (the threads of community) and like the shuttle, it is a tool for interweaving those relationships to form community.

Governance, through party politics, is above all interested in ensuring that the threads follow a party line. In the Westminster system of parliamentary democracy, it is 'whips' that impose the necessary discipline -- communism used political commissars. **In this sense modern governance is essentially conceived in terms of 'warp' -- the threads of a single directionality -- and every effort is**

made to avoid designing in 'weft' -- namely threads of a contrasting directionality. For a ruling party in a democracy, the ideal case is one in which the opposition has been marginalized and can be ignored. Ironically, however, it is when the threads of primary directionality endeavour to 'avoid' those crossing them that the primary direction indeed gets 'warped'. Dissent is a form of weft that is a radical challenge for governance in designing and weaving the social fabric -- it crosses the line of warp in a most disruptive manner. The 'war against terror' is a concerted effort to design it out. A separate paper discusses [Warping the Judgement of Dissenting Opinion](#). Any form of parliamentary debate can be viewed as an exercise in warping the perspective of opposing views that are consequently obliged to weave their weave through these threads. **In principle it is this interaction of warp and weft that is the essence of the parliamentary democratic process through which the social fabric is engendered.** Indeed a search on the web for 'warp weft democracy' points to various ways in which this is recognized.

In the USA, for example, the poet Walt Whitman offers this insight in *Democratic Vistas* (1871) in which he struggles with the central tensions and paradoxes of American, New World experience in a post-Civil War period as the unleashed force of market capitalism and the dynamic of modern civilization appear to spin out of control, forcing him to ask a very relevant question for today, 'Who bridles Leviathan?':

In saner hours far different are the amounts of these things from what, at first sight, they appear. Though it is no doubt important who is elected governor, mayor, or legislator (and full of dismay when incompetent or vile ones get elected, as they sometimes do), there are other, quieter contingencies, infinitely more important. Shams, etc., will always be the show, like ocean's scum; enough, if waters deep and clear make up the rest. Enough, that while the piled embroidered shoddy gaud and fraud spreads to the superficial eye, the hidden warp and weft are genuine, and will wear forever. Enough, in short, that the race, the land which could raise such as the late rebellion, could also put it down. [\[more\]](#)

In the USA, the metaphor is used extensively in a widely cited comment by Charles Levendosky ([Strong First Amendment tradition relies upon those willing to fight](#), 2000):

The First Amendment is a fabric that weaves through all our liberties. The warp and weft of this fabric protects our right and ability to govern ourselves. And those who would pull out a thread here or cut one out there do not realize they risk unraveling the entire cloth of our freedoms.

As tensions build up between the pro- and anti-war factions in response to Iraq, the British poet Laureate encapsulated the warp and weft of the opposing views in a 30-word poem [\[more\]](#) -- the cloth in which governance of the moment is clothed:

They read good books, and quote, but never learn
a language other than the scream of rocket-burn.
Our straighter talk is drowned but ironclad:
elections, money, empire, oil and Dad. (*Causa Belli* by Andrew Motion, January 2003)

But whilst such metaphoric usage is a most valuable pointer, **the challenge of how actually to weave contrasting threads together is of quite a different order to the imaginative appreciation of the woven fabric.** There is the great danger that the imagined cloth may indeed be taken up enthusiastically as yet newer clothes for the Emperor -- **offered by spinners who have neither any practical idea of how to weave, nor any understanding of the cloth that might be produced, nor of the purposes for which it needs to be designed.** This is exemplified by the original potential of 'networking' in designing new social structures -- which has been totally obscured by its glib metaphoric use in practice. It might be said that the ultimate tragedy for Gandhi, and for India, was the inability to successfully weave together the Hindu and Muslim threads, as warp and weft to each other.

Weaving: the female dimension

It is intriguing that 'terrorism' and responses to it are matters with which men are primarily concerned. Spinning and weaving are traditionally the affair of women. Have women of opposing views and cultural backgrounds on terrorism engaged in dialogue to the degree to which Gandhi engaged with spinning? How, for example, has the uniquely positioned [Women In International Security](#) (WIIS) -- with members in academia, think tanks, the diplomatic corps, the intelligence community, the military, government, non-governmental organizations, international organizations, the media, and the private sector -- exemplified its collective insights in this respect? Has it been able to articulate insights distinct from those of its well-known members, Condoleezza Rice and Madeleine Albright -- perhaps less well-recognized for their representation of the perspectives of women?

The traditional polarization between preoccupations of men and women echoes perceptions that men deal with the affairs of the 'world' and women deal with those of the 'home'. Throughout history men are those first offered education and women are those long deprived of it. It is women who have to play weft to the warp of men as well-documented by Elise Boulding (*The Underside of History: a view of women through time*, 1992). As warp, men arrogantly impose their form of 'global' governance whilst women, as weft, are obliged to weave their way 'locally' through the opportunities offered by the male framework. It is the resulting weave that constitutes the fabric of family and community life through the interaction between male and female -- as more subtly understood by women.

As the obstacle to the will of man -- and on whom the will is often savagely 'worked' -- women are indeed likely to have unique insights into more creative relationships between the dominance of male governance and hegemony and the cross-cutting disruptiveness of 'terrorists'. Of course such insights are honed by centuries of being defined by men as 'evil' -- like 'terrorists' -- and especially given their

'responsibility' for evoking rape. Indeed women continue to have an experience of being systematically terrorized by men as documented by Dee L. R. Graham (*Loving to Survive: sexual terror men's violence, and women's lives*, 1994).

This relationship is most symbolically played out with respect to dress code. Support from American women was obtained for the attack on Muslim Afghanistan because of the imposition of the *burkha* on Taliban women -- who failed to remove it once 'freed' of the constraint. Muslim men are correspondingly incensed by the amount of flesh displayed by American women -- in response to their own menfolk. And yet it has perhaps been American missionaries that have contributed so significantly to ensuring that naked indigenous women in many countries covered themselves -- whilst at the same time belonging to a culture that has exploited the nakedness of women to an unprecedented degree in all areas of male entertainment and recreation. The 'distraction' of men by women in western countries has become a characteristic woven into everyday life -- with women skillfully navigating their perception that men have 'warped' minds.

Cloth is woven through the interweaving of weft threads through the aligned warp. The linearity of the result gives rise to challenges at the ends or borders which have to be appropriately protected (such as by hemming) to prevent fraying. These challenges are to some degree also reflected in the insensitivity of men to outcomes of their initiatives -- the consequences of the 'threads' or 'lines of reasoning' that they promote, however well aligned. Women may well be called upon to 'turn the edges' to safeguard community harmony -- dramatically contrasting with male efforts to 'turn dissenters'. In this sense it could be argued that it is women that are more sensitive to systemic feedback loops than men -- having learnt to deal with consequences unforeseen or ignored by men. It is women that are typically relied upon to ensure the integrity of family life and home -- through caring for the many feedback loops that ensure its sustainability, 'making ends meet'.

Curiously it is men that tend to work with ropes and nets. But it is the capacity of women to deal with loops, rather than lines, that is presumably reflected in their degree of involvement in basket-weaving where the 'threads' tend to circle a sphere rather than being aligned as in cloth. In a basket, the ends of each threaded reed have to be integrated in a way that ensures the unboundedness of the basket as 3-D finite object -- a major conceptual shift beyond 2-D woven cloth. In this sense women carry a special understanding of 'container', whereas men are more focused on 2-D boundaries. The former relates to the sense of the home, promoted as the traditional focus of the woman's life, whereas the latter relates to the sense of extended territorial domain with which men identify so aggressively. It is the cultivation of the quality of hearth and home by women that provides a 'sense of place' that is a point of reference for men engaged in their various pursuits.

It has been argued that the tables and matrices -- through which are the basic form through which strategic arguments are developed for governance -- are severely constrained by their 2-dimensionality. How the edges of such displays can be 'turned' to integrate the feedback loops characteristic of the systems to be governed requires, minimally, a shift to 3-D thinking [[more](#); [more](#)].

The challenge for governance of any world is to integrate the 'male' and 'female' dimensions caricatured above. At present the 'local' sense of place that is so important to quality of life and well-being is related in quite problematic ways to a sense of 'global' through which sundry, unrelated initiatives are pursued. The 'globalizers', travelling the surface of the globe with a 2-D mindset, aspire to reflect their particular local sense of 'home' onto the globe, but do so with total insensitivity to the destruction of localities. As might be expected, such globalization reflects the strengths and weaknesses of the kinds of thinking described as 2-D and linear. It is as yet unable to integrate the functional 'roundness' respectful of the feedback loops required to make the globe a home for all.

Designing and weaving a governable world

In contrasting 'governance' with 'terrorism', is there a case for distinguishing the degrees to which governance actually integrates contrary views? Simplistically, for example:

- Single party governance: This might be understood as a condition in which the warp was dominant and of single colour. Contrasting views would be absent and the integrity of the social fabric was ensured by the tense alignment of the warp threads.
- Dominant party with minor opposition: Here the fabric might be understood as very slightly decorated with contrasting weft threads
- Majority party with rich opposition: Here the dominant warp threads would be woven together with a rich mixture of contrasting minority weft threads. The opposition remains however essentially well-domesticated and 'tame'. The issues raised do not challenge fundamental assumptions in any way.
- Majority warp with 'dangerous' weft: This condition is best reflected in the extremes of avant-garde design which the weft is totally unconventional -- challenging design principles and the received wisdom of governance.

The question is the extent to which the 'wildness' associated with the final category might reflect the wildness represented by 'terrorism'. The British were unable to integrate Gandhi into the warp of their policy for the governance of imperial India. **Is the hegemony of the American Way of Life to be considered as a warp faced with a similar challenge by a Muslim world with other design criteria -- in the 'clash of civilizations'?** It might be argued that America is already a multicultural, multicoloured society -- a pattern echoed in many multicoloured weaves. The thread that cannot be incorporated into the weave must then be excluded as 'uncivilized' and 'terrorist' -- as with the Catholic Church in proscribing (centuries ago) certain musical scales and intervals, castigating the flattened fifth as *diabolus in musica* and the Ionian mode as the *modus lascivus*. Parallel modern examples are easy to find, whether the banning of jazz in Nazi Germany or the Soviet Union's attitude to the music of Shostakovich [[more](#)].

These points highlight alternative interpretations of 'through' in the title phrase of the [introductory paper: governance through terrorism](#):

- **Governance by terrorism:** This might be understood as the cowboy approach, using terrorism to manage the population. In its most savage form it is Stalin's Great Terror. In its subtlest form it is the use of threats by government agents concerning the real

or fabricated dangers of actions by 'bogey men', backed up by the judicious placement of bombs attributed to their intervention. Here 'through' means the use of terrorism to achieve governance and as an instrument of governance..

- **Governance despite terrorism:** This is the best practice of democratic governance inherited from the 20th century, despite the threats of terrorism, and without shredding civil liberties in the defence against terrorist acts. Here 'through' means surviving the challenges of terrorism and without sacrificing civilization to its threats.
- **Governance in the light of terrorism:** This is governance adapted to respond to the issues breeding terrorism. Here 'through' indicates the use of terrorism as an indicator of failure of dialogue that calls for more creative kinds of dialogue to communicate and work with excluded 'others' to remedy their condition.
- **Governance beyond terrorism:** This points to the existence of forms of governance once the immediate conceptual challenges of terrorism have been integrated into a new style of policy-making. In musical terms, this is the nature of music once *diabolus in musica* is no longer perceived as an abomination. Here 'through' means after, or through the terrorism barrier of dealing with the alien modes of behaviour, namely post-integration.

But in the personal relevance of Gandhi's *swaraj*, discussed above, each of these forms is reflected in a personal attitude and behaviour fundamental to personal self-governance and to the management of an individual's personal world. It is these attitudes that engender -- or enact -- the more fruitful collective forms of governance above. The corresponding individual aspects might be tentatively described as:

- **Personal governance by terrorism:** This is the typical approach of using terror to manipulate one's immediate contacts. It may take the macho form (bullying in the workplace, schools, military, etc), but can also be achieved more insidiously through vicious comment. It typically informs ethnic and domestic violence. With children, real or fabricated dangers of actions by 'bogey men', may be judiciously used. It reflects emotional and mental processes that thrive on dominance and subservience. Here 'through' means the use of terrorism to govern one's environment.
- **Personal governance despite terrorism:** This is best practice in the use of interpersonal skills, despite threats of violence, and without sacrificing principles in the defence against such violence. Here 'through' means survival of the challenges of terrorism and without sacrificing civilized behaviour to its threats. It reflects emotional and mental processes that thrive on the (streetwise) art of navigating risky environments.
- **Personal governance in the light of terrorism:** This is a proactive response to the issues breeding violence. Here 'through' indicates the recognition of terrorism as an indicator of failure of dialogue that calls for more creative kinds of dialogue to communicate and work with excluded 'others' to remedy their condition. It reflects emotional and mental processes that thrive on the art of intervening in risky situations and 'turning them around'.
- **Personal governance beyond terrorism:** This points to the existence of forms of interaction once the immediate conceptual challenges of violence have been integrated into a new paradigm. As before, in musical terms, this is the nature of music once *diabolus in musica* is no longer perceived as an abomination. Here 'through' means after, or through the barrier of being terrorized by alien modes of behaviour, namely post-integration. It reflects emergent emotional and mental processes nourished by the pattern-that-connects rather than dependent on polarities.

Part of the challenge is that, **through inability to respond to such issues in the governance of one's personal world, they are projected onto the challenges of world governance.** The challenges of world governance appear complex and multi-dimensional because the challenges in the governance of a personal world are not as simple as might be assumed -- hence their projection elsewhere.

It would be presumptuous to expect closure on the challenges to be explored. The contrasting threads that could usefully be woven together might include insights from:

- **Personality typing**, such as Myers-Briggs (based on Jung) or other more traditional typologies. Myers-Briggs (MBTI) is interesting because of the way in which the types can be considered as individual coloured threads that may or may not be successfully woven together as a result of a Jungian individuation process [[more](#)].
- **Weaving**, especially interactive weave design tools. These are interesting because the software support tools [[Arahne](#); [more](#)] offer hands-on opportunity to explore a variety of woven designs based on selections of warp and weft threads. This is suggestive of variations in the way that personality characteristics (warp threads?) may be combined in response to cross-cutting challenges (weft threads?).
- **DNA** as potential providing a template for the structure of a memetic code in the light of arguments that the understanding of memes is of similar importance and consequence as the understanding of processes involving DNA and RNA in molecular biology [[more](#)]. DNA is especially interesting as a template because of how it illustrates the limitations of genetic code as linear 'text'. It raises the question about the limitations of meaning articulated linearly as text in contrast with the necessary operacy of memes, possibly arising from some equivalent coiling. The recent surprise of geneticists at the need to shift focus beyond the genetic code to protein dynamics may have its equivalent in relation to the operational value of textual meaning.
- **Coiling** (as with DNA or rope), namely the relation between spin and counter-spin in providing structure, robustness and locking. Spin provides stability as explored elsewhere (*Psychology of Sustainability*). This is related to 'goodness of fit' and the "Eureka experience" when a set of mental relationships is felt to 'click into place'.
- **Social constructivism** in relation to **enactivism**. Social constructivists embrace a distributed view of knowledge such that knowledge is located neither in the mind nor in any representation of the mind. Understandings are situated in complex webs of experience, action, and interaction. Knowledge is then a dynamic, evolving phenomenon, a fabric of relations in which one individual is fundamentally entwined with all others in a community. A page of web resources then serves, not as a hub, presuming some privileged position within the discourse, but as a conductive thread, one of many fibers which transforms a collection of unique sites into a 'common woven text'.
- **Experiential encounter with 'cross-cutting' reality**, namely challenges that do not conform to an established line of thought or action: warp crossed by weft. The challenge is how the cross-cutting modality is incorporated experientially into a larger design than that deriving from the established modality -- or the latter's defensive response to that which crosses it. The larger design

may indeed be a dynamic pattern rather than a static one.

- **Forming garments** from woven cloth from within which the external world is encountered. Perceptions of how the garments 'maketh' the person, both for the wearer and for others.
- **Basket-weaving** in contrast to textile weaving, namely the incorporation of a degree of closure to create a container requiring a 3-dimensional design rather than a 2-dimensional one. Threads then tend to run around a sphere and are 'cut' by threads that no longer run orthogonally but at a lesser angle. Warp and weft effectively have a less conflictual relationship.
- **Building of nests and traps by animals:** Nest building, especially by weaver birds that have their particular dynamics in constructing their homes. The kinds of traps spun by spiders are of particular interest to the weaving metaphor explored here, especially since the 'warp' threads are not aligned but radially distributed in a classical spider web. Metaphorically such a web has long been used to describe the operations of 'spy masters' in governance. Many myths relate spiders, some associating them with wisdom [more]. The use of 'spiders' on the world wide web is also of concern to the governance of an emerging information society [more].
- **World-building and worldmaking** literature, notably that relating to construction of virtual worlds, and their interface with real worlds.
- **Basket or textile weaves** as carriers of integrative insights in many traditional cultures. This exploration relates to the whole relationship between 'handicraft' and 'world-making' -- creating and sustaining a 'homespun' reality.

A number of these dimensions may perhaps be usefully brought together through the resonance between three symbolic artefacts, each associated with a different part of the human anatomy:

- **Omphalos:** A hemispherical stone [images], once considered the holiest object at various oracle centers in all the lands bordering the Mediterranean Sea, the most well known being at Delphi in the centre of the Temple of Apollo (the god of light, music, geometry, and harmony, whose nature most closely reflects the highest realizations of the Greek spirit). Zeus was believed to have sent out two eagles to fly across the world and they met at its center, the "navel" of the world, represented by the omphalos. It's main characteristic was its ability to allow direct communication with the gods. The omphalos stone is often shown covered by an unusual net-like pattern -- perhaps the 'flight-path' of the 'eagles'. Paul Ciholas (2002) has explored how two powerful symbols dominated the world of classical antiquity: the omphalos and the cross: one symbolized Apollonian religion; the other stood for the emerging force of Christianity. They clashed, influenced each other, and became entwined.
- **Lingam:** The omphalos, garlanded with entwined flowers, strikingly resembles the lingam, common to Hinduism and Buddhism, and also typically garlanded with flowers. The lingam symbolizes the *axis mundi* or cosmic pillar which unites heaven, earth and the underworld and allows one to experience the unity of the world through its fundamental emptiness. Superficially at least, the garlands 'cross' each other at many points around the surface of the omphalos or the lingam. It is the crossing point that provides the tension that is the focus of the Christian mysteries. The garland loops echo understanding of systemic feedback loops discussed earlier. Both omphalos and lingam have been associated with geodetic marker stones and the Philosopher's Stone of medieval alchemy.
- **Geodesic dome:** This invention of the 20th century [images], much celebrated by the early alternative movement, constitutes a structural breakthrough in encompassing emptiness independently of the normal constraints of gravity. Its structure derives from the manner in which the garland-like structural elements circle around the sphere -- interacting at many points, but without touching (a so-called **kiss-touch**). Its overall structure derives from very fundamental principles of spherical geometry articulated as tensegrity by R Buckminster Fuller [more; more; more] but evident in cell biology [more], possibly in social and community organization [more], and notably explored by cybernetician Stafford Beer (*Beyond Dispute: the invention of team synteegrity*, 1994). Distinctive use is made of it in radar dome and aerospace design. Curiously 'tensegrity' also features significantly in the thinking of Carlos Castaneda [more].

Dynamics of governance

The artefacts above are too easily explored as static symbols. This corresponds to tendencies to respond to the challenge of world government in terms of structures like world parliaments and a panoply of councils that fit comfortably with inherently flawed designs already implemented nationally worldwide [more]. As permutations of the structures of the League of Nations and the United Nations, this demonstrates the absence of any new thinking commensurate with the challenge -- to be exemplified from 2004 by the challenges of decision-making in a 25-nation European Union. Symbolically such proposals readily lend themselves to articulation on a 2-dimensional surface, essentially reflecting what amounts to a 'flat-earth' approach to a 'global' challenge.

The geodesic dome disguises the extent to which its coherence is dependent on dynamics to sustain its integrity. It could be argued that even with the omphalos, it is the 'eternal' flying of the 'eagles' that defines dynamically the integrity of what the symbol represents. In a tensegrity, such pathways might also be explored in terms of the spin and counter-spin currently fundamental to global governance.

It is necessary to look elsewhere to find efforts to articulate the complex nature of the requisite dynamic -- whether in relation to governance of a collective or to that of a person. It is the interlocking pattern of that dynamic which is reified structurally in the static symbols above. The dynamic can be explored in the light of insights from the *I Ching* (or *Book of Changes*) -- classical Chinese tool for governance. It is not its oracular (mis)use which is of interest here but rather the effort to code and understand the variety of changes that are possible in any psycho-social system -- and above all to understand how they interlock to form a coherent whole.

The nature of such dynamics, and their implications for governance, has been explored in a series of studies:

- Interrelationships between 64 Complementary Approaches to Sustainable Development. 2002 (<https://www.laetusinpraesens.org/docs/devching.php>)
- Navigating Alternative Conceptual Realities: clues to the dynamics of enacting new paradigms through movement. 2002

- (<https://www.laetusinpraesens.org/docs/detach.php>)
- Psychology of Sustainability: Embodying cyclic environmental processes. 2002 (<https://www.laetusinpraesens.org/docs/psychsus.php>)
- The "Dark Riders" of Social Change: a challenge for any Fellowship of the Ring. 2002 (<https://www.laetusinpraesens.org/musings/riders.php>)
- Varieties of experience of past-present-future complexes. 2001 (<https://www.laetusinpraesens.org/docs/present/presentt.php>)
- Being Other Wise: dynamics of a meaningfully sustainable lifestyle. 1998 (<https://www.laetusinpraesens.org/docs/othwise.php>)
- Discovering richer patterns of comprehension to reframe polarization. 1998 (<https://www.laetusinpraesens.org/docs/territ.php>)
- From Statics to Dynamics in Sustainable Community. 1998 (<https://www.laetusinpraesens.org/docs/statics.php>)
- Envisioning the Dynamics of Partnerships for Change. 1993 (<https://www.laetusinpraesens.org/docs/partenv.php>)
- Human Values as Strange Attractors: Coevolution of classes of governance principles. 1993 (<https://www.laetusinpraesens.org/docs/values93.php>)
- Patterning Transformative Change: for sustainable dialogue, vision, conference, policy, network, community and lifestyle. 1991 (<https://www.laetusinpraesens.org/docs/ching00a.php>)
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Reinterpreting Gandhi's *satyagraha*

Central to Gandhi's strategy in engendering *swaraj* (self-rule) was *satyagraha* -- commonly understood through its derivatives of non-cooperation, non-violence and civil resistance. *Satyagraha* was experienced by the British through workers strikes, and this continues to be the case. It is fundamental to nonviolent civil resistance.

His interpretation is clarified in his own comments as follows :

- *Satyagraha* is a weapon of the strong; it admits of no violence under any circumstance whatever; and it ever insists upon truth
- *Satyagraha* in its essence is nothing but the introduction of truth and gentleness in the political, i.e., the national life.
- *Satyagraha* is utter self-effacement, greatest humiliation, greatest patience and brightest faith. It is its own reward.
- *Satyagraha* is a relentless search for truth and a determination to reach truth.
- *Satyagraha* literally means insistence on truth. This insistence arms the votary with matchless power. This power or force is connoted by the word *satyagraha*. *Satyagraha*, to be genuine, may be offered against parents, against one's wife or one's children, against rulers, against fellow-citizens, even against the whole world. The only force of universal application can, therefore, be that of *ahimsa* or love. In other words, it is soul-force. [[more](#)]

A question to be raised is whether there are ways of interpreting *satyagraha* that do not rely on a mindset in which his understanding of 'weapon', 'force', 'insistence', 'against', 'reward' or 'reaching' are appropriate. Clearly his prime focus was achievement of self-rule in Indian national terms. Strategically it was necessary for Gandhi and his followers to polarize their initiative in relation to the British as opponents, however non-violently he insisted they were to be treated (as discussed in his [rules for the civil resister](#)). **The question is what is the nature of the mindset that would transcend this polarization and would it engender a different quality of world governance?**

The argument of this paper has explored ways in which the phenomena of society might be considered as dynamically engendered by the mind -- as partially explored by enactivism. It is for the individual to cultivate ownership of this process and its momentary products -- by weaving together the threads produced in the light of ever more significant designs. As a product in its own right -- duly imported into my world -- much of Gandhi's insight into *satyagraha* may indeed be relevant, but the 'opponent' is less usefully identified with 'British imperialism' or 'American hegemony'. Any such reification might be better understood as a phase in that process to which it would be unnecessarily constraining to be attached.

Ironically it is in the best of the philosophy of eastern martial arts that the less fruitful polarizations 'against' an 'opponent' are subtly transcended. It is to such understandings that the world could usefully look in reconciling 'governance' with 'terrorism' [see [Transforming the Encounter with Terrorism](#)]. The paradoxical quality of the mindset adapted to the dynamic dance with the projections of the mind has perhaps been best articulated by Chuang Tzu [[more](#); [more](#); [more](#)]. Robert Cummings Neville says of him: 'Chuang Tzu is among the very few philosophers to admit the world to be as weird as it really is'.

Given the point made earlier about the transition beyond the cocoon-building of the spinning caterpillar, it is appropriate that Chuang Tzu is also known as the 'butterfly philosopher' [[more](#); [more](#); [more](#)] due to his formulation of the following challenge:

There was in ancient China a Taoist called Chuang Tzu who dreamed of being a butterfly. he suddenly awoke and realized that he was not a butterfly: but then, upon reflection, he was not sure. Was it he who had dreamed of being a butterfly? Or was he a butterfly now dreaming of being he? Thus it was that the butterfly became his companion, in dreaming and in waking, to his life reflections, to his zestful, jestful living.. [Kuang-ming Wu. *The Butterfly as Companion*, 1990]

Categorizing him as a skeptical perspectivist, Chad Hansen comments [[more](#)]:

Chuang Tzu had a unique philosophical style that contributes to the tendency to treat him as an irrationalist. He wrote philosophical fantasy rather than direct argument. Western readers interpret this style as signaling a romantic rejecting reason and analysis. The dichotomy, however, is hard to motivate in the Chinese philosophical context. We find no counterpart of the human

faculty of reason (or its logical correlate) still less of the contrast of reason and emotion. Chuang Tzu highlighted the term, *ch'ing* which Buddhist's eventually co-opted to translate 'passion' or 'emotion'. However, it makes most sense in the *Chuang Tzu* as 'reality', or 'the facts'.

A more plausible hypothesis is that he presents his positions in fantasy dialogues to illustrate and conform to his perspectivalism. He puts positions up for consideration as if endorsing them, then reflectively abandons them. He does this either in the form of a fanciful conversation carried on among fantastic creatures (rebellious thieves, distorted freaks, or converted Confucians) or as an internal monologue. In his fantasy dialogues, Chuang Tzu seems to challenge us to guess which voice is really his. Even his monologues typically end with a double rhetorical question in place of a conclusion. "Then is there really any X? Or is there no X?"

Such questions accord precisely with the position in which individuals are now placed in relation to 'terrorism' by the degree of spin practiced in the process of modern governance, as explored in the [introductory paper](#).

These pointers suggest that the way forward with respect to 'world governance', for the individual at least, calls for a radical embodiment of such intercourse with reality. The challenge is how to frame that interface -- as explored by [enactivists](#) such as Francisco Varela. This challenges the western tendency in favour of binary logic (which has so dramatically framed the 'with us, or against us' response to 'terrorism') through eastern insights into four-fold logics -- as explored by Kinhide Mushakoji (*Global Issues and Interparadigmatic Dialogue: essays on multipolar politics*, 1988: [review](#)). The challenge can also be expressed metaphorically in terms of moving beyond what might be termed a tendency to 'harass' reality [[more](#)]. Rather than positioning themselves as victims of ambiguity imposed by spin-doctors, individuals can reclaim their independence as 'worldmakers' by embodying that ambiguity as the requisite complexification of the challenges of governance.

This calls for a more aesthetic approach to the language of governance, beyond the constraints of the sterile prose of treaties and constitutions [[more](#); [more](#); [more](#)]. Of Chuang Tzu's poetic prose, Kuang-Ming Wu states, in what might be a description of a memetic version of DNA:

Many say that the *Chuang Tzu* is poetic; few look into its meaning. The *Chuang Tzu* is poetic in that its thoughts cluster in a web -- one thought points to another which explains it, then the pair point to another, and the movement goes on -- and back. Clusters of thoughts co-mirror, co-imply into layer after layer of meaning. a spiral of thought loops in loops, twisting back to itself only to start over again in a new direction, from a fresh perspective. 'Loop' sounds linear. It is rather a co-deepening co-resonance; to enter its pulsing rhythm is to enjoy life....The 'actuality' that Chunag Tzu describes, however, is an imagined one. He does not describe what has hapened but what had better happen, had better be lived. The reader must himself reconstruct it as he lives it. (*The Butterfly as Companion*, p. 23-25)

Such experiencing of unknown landscapes is that journey where we walk forward, not following a path, but "laying down the path in walking" (Varela, Thompson, and Rosch. *The Embodied Mind*, 1991) [[more](#)]. It is the process, described elsewhere, as [Presenting the Future](#) [Judge, 2001]. The dynamically intertwined complex of being and nothing is expressed by Chuang Tzu through the musical metaphor of 'piping' (*lai*) -- the sound engendered by a hollow pipe in response to an invisible wind. The world is understood as made up of human pipings of the selves freely taking part in the real endless interchanges of identities and responding spontaneously to the pipings of the world.

Chuang Tzu's significance for world governance lies perhaps in his reframing of dependence on method in caring for life. In the west this is perhaps echoed in the work of philosopher [Paul Feyerabend](#) (*Against Method*, 1975; *Farewell to Reason*, 1987) [[more](#)].

Authenticity

In a period when leaders of countries, purporting to defend the values of western civilization, are frequently indicted for fraud or other dubious activities -- or are closely implicated in the activities of associates so indicted -- the authenticity characteristic of people like Mahatma Gandhi, Nelson Mandela or Chuang Tzu provides a striking contrast. They demonstrate coherent ways of being in a world dominated by spin and hypocrisy -- and by leaders who have lost any meaningful sense of honour and invite no respect [[more](#)].

Gandhi's non-cooperation with authority and its realities may then be understood as analogous to Chuang Tzu's non-identification with the experienced realities of the world. In both cases there is an art to engaging with such realities but this does not condition the authenticity that informs this art. There can indeed be accomodation and participation in the differences and divisions of what is experienced. But the integrity of the 'world' so experienced is engendered out of the authenticity of the art through which it is governed. It is through mutual recognition of such integrity and authenticity that a more appropriate form of 'world governance' will emerge.

It is in this spirit that the threads woven loosely together in this paper might be understood. The design is most valuable in terms of richer designs that it suggests. But, in terms of the arguments of this paper, it is itself indeed just another exported product -- part of the ongoing dynamic through which a homespun reality is engendered.

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