

A DISCOURSE ON NONVIOLENCE AS A THEORY OF CHANGE FOR PEACE  
AND CONFLICT

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## **DEDICATION**

To Brigitte, Johnny Jerome, and Jonathan Robert Mack

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

There are many whom I should thank for their abiding support, without which I could not have completed this project. To begin, I should thank the numerous friends, colleagues, cohorts, and well wishers, many of whom wondered with amazement how I had come at this point in my life to embark on such a journey. Then, I must thank my committee. If they gave any concern to such wonder and amazement, it was weighted toward little tolerance for mediocrity. Their insistence that I push harder, then harder, and even still harder for excellence served me well. And, finally I must thank my family. I wonder with amazement how they could be so giving and, too often of necessity, forgiving when my time and attention was stolen away to this endeavor.

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

Conflict Analysis, Resolution/Peace.....	CAR/P
Nonviolent Social Change and Development.....	NSCD
Pragmatic Nonviolent Action .....	PNVA

## **ABSTRACT**

### **A DISCOURSE ON NONVIOLENCE AS A THEORY OF CHANGE FOR PEACE AND CONFLICT**

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Can nonviolence as a collective ontological, epistemological, methodological, and ethical framework cohere as a theory of change relevant to today's global, international, and cross-cultural conflicts? This thesis seeks to frame the discourse on that question, pursuing the answer by critiquing the philosophy of nonviolence, both its coherence and relevance, as a theory of change within the fields of peace and conflict. It will argue that comprehending any logic of nonviolence requires first understanding the dichotomous meanings of violence, and then comprehending them both (violence and nonviolence) as social phenomena impinging on a search for a relevant and responsive nonviolence theory of change.

The goal here is to establish a paradigmatic framework to contextualize the study's objective, identify relevant terms for both violence and nonviolence, and argue that structural violence and conscientious nonviolence are the essential elements for building such a theory, particularly for the fields of peace and conflict theory and

practice. Finally, it will make a case for the development of a nonviolence theory of change, and prescribing it as operative praxis for effecting positive and sustainable peace.

## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

In the fields of peace and conflict both violence and nonviolence have nuanced meanings that may not be immediately evident or wholly understood when one considers their relevance to how human societies change and human development evolves over millennia. This thesis defines these processes as the algorithms of making and sustaining human societies and the human condition and, thus, refers to them as social change and human development. Yet, when asking if the history and values of social change and human development have been inherently violent or nonviolent, the answer seems obvious to some people. They would likely respond that violence has been integral to change and development. Such a response is arguably true. There is ample literature that expounds on how humans use violence to subdue, conquer, overthrow, acquire, control, and organize citizens as societies and societies as national states. Still, there are others who might argue that, while violence has been an instrument of change, its purposes and processes have been evolving over time and are diminishing in relevance. As this thesis discusses, perhaps the most important recent argument in this line of thinking is Steven Pinker's *The Better Angels of our Nature: Why Violence has Declined* (2011). This dichotomy raises the question can a nonviolence theory of change be sufficiently relevant to today's global, international, and cross-cultural conflicts?

Interpreting the posited question regarding the history and values of social change and human development is more than an exercise of syntax; it requires parsing the complex meanings of violence and nonviolence. For example, when examining the formation of national states, most historical studies focus on violence as a *physical* phenomenon, ignoring its structural forms and paying scant attention to nonviolence. With such an interpretation of violence, and absent any serious exploration of the logic of nonviolence, the answer to this question may continue to conjure what appears to be the obvious answer. But, how significant is the role of *structural* violence in social change and human development? Are the very timbers that frame modern societies and fundamental human structures that mediate human interaction essentially violent? The answer to our first question, if posed in this regard, is much less obvious, or even argued in peace and conflict literature today. The point is not whether structural violence exists or has epistemological and methodological relevance. Many authors—such as, Johan Galtung—have expounded on this subject. Rather, the issue is to what extent has structural violence been and *remains* the routinized apparatus (i.e. a quotidian process that is instrumental in effecting and sustaining the social order) in effecting social change and human development?

The same might be said for nonviolence, despite its vague treatment in the literature until recently. As with the concept of violence, one must also parse its meaning to gain a full understanding of its historical relationship to social change and human development. Most people may recognize nonviolent resistance or non-cooperation (often called pragmatic nonviolence) as an obvious factor, but far fewer are apt to see, let alone

understand, the relevance of its conscientious kind (also known as principled nonviolence).

Even more, when these ideas have been severally discussed in the literature, the focus leans toward direct *physical* violence and nonviolent *resistance*, and thus, away from structural violence and principled nonviolence. As well, there is little written on their *collective relationships* and *correlative significance* to change and development. As this thesis will argue, understanding the role of direct *physical* violence and nonviolent *resistance* are meaningful and necessary, but not sufficient to appreciate their relationships and significance, especially if one is to understand and prescribe peace and conflict strategies for effecting positive and sustainable change and human potential. Hence, it is arguable that *sufficient study has not been given to the nuanced meanings of violence and nonviolence when it comes to social change and human development.*

### **What is the Research Project?**

This thesis seeks to frame the discourse on the question *can nonviolence as a collective ontological, epistemological, methodological, and ethical framework cohere as a theory of change relevant and responsive to today's global, international, and cross-cultural conflicts?* It pursues the answer by critiquing the philosophy of nonviolence, both its coherence and relevance, as a contestant for a theory of change. It will argue that comprehending any *logic of nonviolence* requires first understanding the diverse meanings of violence, and then contextualizing them both as social phenomena impinging on a search for a relevant and responsive nonviolence theory of change. This requires first identifying relevant terms for both violence and nonviolence and then

making a case for the development of a nonviolence theory of change for social change and human development, particularly for the fields of peace and conflict theory and practice. This stages the argument that structural violence and conscientious nonviolence are the essential concepts for building such a theory and prescribing it as operative practice for effecting positive and sustainable social change.

First, a frame of the epistemic context of violence and nonviolence must be added toward building a paradigmatic framework. Then an examination of the relationships of violence and nonviolence to change and development in the twentieth century must be completed, since the fields of peace and conflict emerged most prominently in that century's latter half with the work of scholars, such as Hannah Arendt, Franz Fanon, Johan Galtung, and Slavoj Žižek, focusing on the relevant issues of structural violence.<sup>i</sup> This period is further significant because the principle authors of the theory of nonviolence were politically and/or scholarly active. Among them are Mohandas K. Gandhi, Johan Galtung, Martin Luther King, Jr. and Gene Sharp. Thus, our work will review and analyze the work of these theorists.

Second, this work will seek answers to our query by exploring the “thick descriptions”<sup>ii</sup> of violence and nonviolence to establish a framework for evaluating their implications on social change and human development. The framework will focus on a bifurcated approach to both terms parsing violence as physical and structural and nonviolence as conscientious and pragmatic.

Third, giving meaning—that is, framing and sense making—to a discourse on the logic of nonviolence serves two purposes. First, it presents an entry in the public



discourse on the competing ideas of violence versus nonviolence, pragmatic nonviolent action versus conscientious nonviolence, and physical violence versus structural violence. Second, it provides a discussion of the essential elements that comprise the idea's framing, its fundamental value and behaviors. The elements as defined in this study include personalism and human rights, respectively. In the case of personalism, values provide the ethical footings for the framework, while human rights values provide a blueprint for behavior. Together, they specify the "meaning making" for understanding and rearticulating a social change and human development paradigm. With these elements, one can construct a discourse of nonviolence for peace and conflict theory and praxis.

Finally, this analysis of violence and nonviolence will cohere as a paradigmatic context for a nonviolence theory of social change and human development. This approach will articulate a logic of nonviolence with that of violence as a struggle between structural violence and conscientious nonviolence. This struggle will provide a discursive framing and sense-making for future study on the relevance and efficacy of a nonviolence theory of change.

### **Type of Analysis**

To establish an appropriate level of analysis for the study, this thesis finds instructive John W. Creswell's (2009) discussion of three research design methods commonly used today: quantitative, qualitative and mixed. This thesis has determined that both an exploratory and descriptive approach should be employed through use of a qualitative research methodology. The characteristics relevant to this study included

materials (the “data”) collection—which was done by the researcher (Ibid; pp. 175-176). The materials collection activity included both design of text collection instruments and the actual gathering—principally document reviews. It also included inductive analysis, where the researcher moved from the specific to the general. Then, research design was flexible and fluid allowing for modification as the researcher conducted the research. Finally, interpretation was central to the study, particularly the researcher’s (but also, and the reader’s); and a coherent and comprehensive “whole” of the subject was the object of the research, i.e. producing a complete account. These characteristics have instructed and guided the research design in answering the What, Why, and How for “Framing research as critical systematic inquiry” (Sandole 2008; p. 420).

### **Access to Research**

As noted above, the researcher used qualitative methods of research in carrying out the study. In choosing this approach the researcher also elected to employ thematic analysis and grounded theory to investigate the problem, to explicate violence and nonviolence themes, and to identify the essential components of a nonviolence philosophy and method for social change and human development. Thematic analysis is a qualitative research tool focused on identifying specific “themes,” that is, thematic occurrences or patterns in subject data. Such patterns are the “categories of analysis” important to defining a phenomenon” (Fereday and Muir-Cochrane; p. 4). Creswell defines grounded theory as

*a strategy of inquiry in which the researcher derives a general, abstract theory of a process, action, or interaction grounded in the views of participants. This*

*process involves using multiple stages of data collection and the refinement and interrelationship of categories of information (Charmmza, 2006: Strauss and Corbin. 1990, 1998). Two primary characteristics of this design are the constant comparison of data with emerging categories and theoretical sampling of different groups to maximize the similarities and the differences of information.*”<sup>iii</sup>

These approaches were critical to understanding and culling inductively from the selected theorists/practitioner’s utterances and the historical record of their work to determine the extent of their theory of change and how they inhere as a coherent model of meaning making (framing and sense-making) of a metanarrative. Meaning making here means the identification of a problem, staking a position thereon, and determining a solution; and, thus, to that extent and that extent alone, a metanarrative. Hence, to answer the question, does nonviolence as a metanarrative cohere as a theory of change relevant today, one must define the units of analysis to determine what materials are available, what extent must they be examined, and what research methods are most appropriate for carrying out this examination. In other words, these elements provide the framework to determine what is the necessary and sufficient data to conduct the study. To answer this question, the researcher did a review of utterances (that is, writings, speeches, etc.) on nonviolence as espoused by the four theorists arguably most recognized in the twentieth century—Mohandas K. Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Jr. Gene Sharp, and perhaps, Johan Galtung as well as a review of what others have written about them. (Note that Galtung is significant, among other considerations, to the extent that his work is expressly done in

the field of peace and conflict.) In addition, the researcher did similar literature reviews on peace, conflict analysis and conflict resolution, and human rights theories.

### **Who Am I As a Researcher?**

It is important to ask the questions, *Who am I as a researcher* and how does who I am affect the research that I am carrying out? The researcher's background and culture significantly contributes to his analysis and understanding of the philosophy of nonviolence. The researcher's current professional background is in peace and development as founding president of Communities Without Boundaries International, Inc. and his work relating to nonviolence in the United States and internationally, as well as his professional and personal relationships with the King family, The Martin Luther King Jr., Center for Nonviolent Social Change, and Realizing the Dream, Inc. have all shaped his cultural proclivities and intellectual epistemologies regarding nonviolence theory and praxis, versus other theories of the target fields.

### **Why Do This Research?**

In any critical systematic inquiry, the question must be answered, why? Why is this research important? Will the inquiry "advance either (a) a *theoretical/scientific* and or (b) a *practical* agenda" (Sandole 2008; p. 422)? The researcher hypothesizes that nonviolence, as a philosophical framework, epistemological construct, and methodological strategy for social change and human development, represents a logic that is not only necessary and sufficient, but also relevant and efficacious for framing and sense-making of peace and conflict challenges and opportunities. While there is ample *reference* to nonviolence among theorists and practitioners of peace and conflict genres,

the researcher will argue, nonviolence is not generally viewed as being part of the core theory in the latter field. More important, in neither case is there a coherent and clearly articulated *conscientious nonviolence* theory of change. Thus, the researcher believes this study would represent a significant contribution to the body of knowledge of the peace and conflict fields, relevant to both theory and practice. A successful study would then meet Sandole's inquiry prescription to advance either a *theoretical/scientific* and or (b) a *practical* agenda.

### **How Was This Research Carried Out?**

In his treatise, "Critical systematic inquiry in conflict analysis and resolution: An essential bridge between theory and practice, Sandole describes the synapse—"the bridge of fire"—between theory and practice on how to carry out such inquiry. For Sandole, there are four components. They are the type of study, the theoretical setting, the operational setting, and theory revisited. The first three are briefly discussed below.

### **Type of Study**

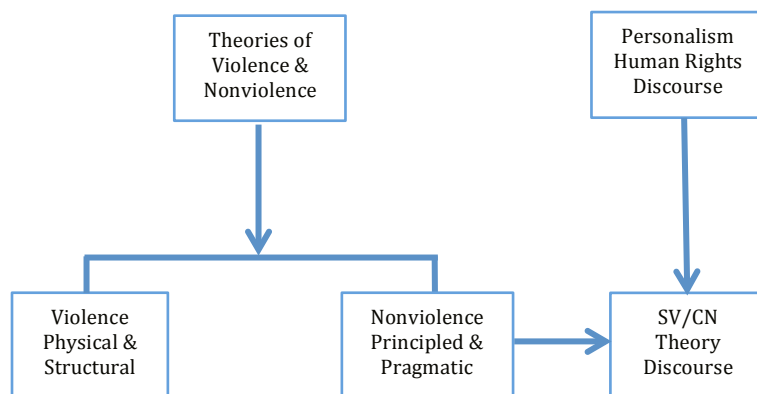
This study incorporates both exploratory and descriptive approaches. First, from the perspective of peace and conflict, there is little, if anything, known about a coherent theory of change for a structural violence and conscientious nonviolence paradigm that would be necessary and sufficient as a peace and conflict construct. Second, enlarging on those elements of nonviolence that are referenced or cited *incidentally* in the peace and conflict fields would expand and add new information on the theoretical and practical relevance of this philosophy and methodology to the field.

**Theoretical Setting**

The following model depicts the researcher's delimiting format of the study question. Creswell notes its "process of research involves emerging questions and procedures, data typically collected in the participant's setting, data analysis inductively building from particulars to general themes, and the researcher making interpretations of the meaning of the data" (Creswell 2009; p. 4) Creswell further notes that qualitative strategy of inquiry includes theoretical lens through which researchers conduct their work and make their reports. Such is true of the researcher. His lens begins with the Advocacy and Participatory Worldview (Ibid; p. 9). With that said, the researcher also holds to the idea that hypotheses and theory emerge from the study itself.

**Operational Setting**

This effort to construct a nonviolence theory of social change and human development involved a thematic analysis of major theories of violence and nonviolence in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, including personalism literature, human rights literature, as well as major 20<sup>th</sup> century theorists on nonviolence. A grounded theory approach was taken to carry out an extensive review of the selected literature categories, collating and coding data collected and identifying relevant themes, and delineating necessary and sufficient components for the study. The insights from this discourse analysis were then used to construct a paradigm for a theory of social change and human development emerging from the concepts of structural violence and conscientious nonviolence, as shown in Figure 1.



**Figure 1 Constructing a Nonviolence Theory of Change**

The researcher carried out an extensive review and thematic analysis of selected literature written by or about Mohandas K. Gandhi, Johan Galtung, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Gene Sharp to gain a thorough understanding of their nonviolence theses. The researcher further investigated the literature of relevant biographers, researchers, and scholars on these subjects. These steps were taken to critique relevant violence and nonviolence history, philosophy, theory, and methodology; explicate how they relate to the delineated discourse; and rearticulate both violence and nonviolence as a collective—ontological, epistemological, ethical, and methodological—framework for the sought after theory of change.

### **A Note About Conflict Analysis, Resolution and Peace Work**

As noted above, theories of change for initiatives carried out to resolve conflict, prevent violence, and foster peace (CAR/P) have not been adequately articulated for

nonviolence. Furthermore, there is ample literature on theories for practice or models for analyzing conflict that are relevant to understanding and rearticulating nonviolence as a CAR/P construct. Yet, little is extant that takes the point of view of social change and human development. Ilana Shapiro (2005) has done some of the best-known work on theories of change (TOC) in conflict interventions. Building on the work of Carol Weiss, Shapiro draws a definition of such theories from literature on the subject as follows: “a *theory of change* refers to the causal processes through which change comes about as a result of a program’s strategies and action” (Ibid). She further explains researchers argue TOCs must hold three basic characteristics. They must be plausible, doable, and testable. She further argues, “While social change is at the heart of many conflict resolution interventions, practitioners rarely reference classic social change models such as dialectical processes, progressive or evolutionary processes, or cyclical models” (Ibid). While this thesis does not intend to exhaust this important subject, it does intend to examine what queries might be relevant to establishing a coherent TOC that is responsive to social change and human development. In addition, while a full discussion of conflict analysis and resolution and peace work is beyond the scope of this thesis, a brief overview of selected models will illustrate the relevant synergy and virtuous affinity between a framework model of CAR/P and nonviolence philosophy. It will also assist analyzing the relationships of violence and nonviolence for framing and sense-making toward a theory of change by rearticulating a thesis through some of the core theories of peace and conflict.



Johan Galtung's models of conflict, violence, and peace is of particular interest to this discussion, as are his framework of direct, cultural, and structural violence, and his concept of peace. Galtung posits a framework where attitudes, behavior, and contradictions interact in varying ways to manifest direct violence (an event) cultural violence (a justification) and structural violence (a process).<sup>iv</sup> (Chapter three discusses each of these forms of violence as Galtung defines them.) He further argues that all three components must be present to have a fully manifested conflict. Galtung, like Martin Luther King, Jr., embraced the concepts of positive and negative peace: "there are two aspects of peace as conceived of here: negative peace which is the absence of violence, absence of war - and positive peace which is the integration of human society" (Galtung 1964; p. 2). Chapter three and four will explore further Galtung's ideas in the discussion of violence and nonviolence, respectively.

John Paul Lederach (1997) argues "conflict is a progression and that peacebuilding is a process made up of various functions and roles" (Ibid; p. 63). In his book *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies*, Lederach draws from a conceptual framework developed by the "Quaker conciliator," Adam Curle,<sup>v</sup> which states that conflict moves linearly through four stages from "unpeaceful to peaceful relationships" (Ibid). The first stage is latent or "hidden," recognizing that people are most often unaware of the power and interest imbalances of others. At this point the relations between the parties are static. Curle posits that a form of education that he calls *conscientization* brings the conflict to the attention of the parties. In the second and third stages, Curle argues that the parties' relations are unstable. Further, in these

stages the conflict is overt. The second stage is a period of confrontation between the parties. The expression of the conflict can take the form of violent or nonviolent (or a combination of the two) confrontation (or action). The third stage consists of their negotiation on the issues that represent the incompatible interests. It is here that parties seek “mutual recognition” through “power balancing” (Ibid). The final stage is dynamic and represents an environment for “more peaceful relations” and “increased justice” (Ibid).

This framework comports well with four of what has become known as the Six Steps of Kingian nonviolence, the “collection of the facts to determine whether injustices exist; negotiation, self-purification; and direct action” (King 1963; p. 79). These steps “are based on Dr. King’s campaigns and teachings, which emphasize love in action” (The King Center 1991). King articulated these four steps as necessary to any nonviolent campaign in his Letter from the Birmingham Jail.<sup>vi</sup>

Protracted social conflict (PSC) is a theory espoused by Edward Azar (1991) from his work in the latter half of the twentieth century. The fundamental premise of PSC, is that it represents “the prolonged and often violent struggle by communal groups for such basic human needs as security, recognition, and acceptance, fair access to political institutions, and economic emancipation” (Ibid; p. 93). The notion of *protracted* conflict refers to long-standing intra-state versus inter-state conflicts. Azar’s argument posits such conflicts often have no identifiable beginning or end. Further, it provides four key pre-conditions conspicuous to these conflicts: (1) at the center of such conflicts is the relationship between the state and intra-state identity groups, which he described as

“disarticulation between the state and society as a whole” (Communal Content); (2) one identity group dominates, subjugating other groups to a deprivation of basic human needs, such as identity, security, and respect (Deprivation of Human Needs); (3) the state government can enable or frustrate identity group aspirations with its ultimate authority to govern using force, if it deems necessary (Governance and the State’s Role); and (4) international networks or “linkages” sustain economic, military, and political dependency and clientage that serve as a virtuous circle between dominant powers and emerging states (International Linkages). Azar’s theory sees development as the pre-requisite for peace in such conflict situations. For him, “peace is development (Ibid; p. 155).”

While Azar’s framework is relevant to post-Cold War global conflicts, perhaps with the exception of (1) the fourth condition of international linkages (which, actually worked in the reverse of Azar’s framework with the geopolitical and economic ramifications of decolonization and the conflagration of the Cold War) and (2) with the notion that such conflicts have no perceivable beginning or end, the US civil rights movement meets the other basic conditions of protracted social conflict. This is perhaps due, in part, to his focus on “the underdeveloped parts of the world.”<sup>vii</sup> King’s explication of the causes of conflict (violence) resonates with Azar’s theory. This is particularly the case in his Triple Evils framework of poverty, racism, and militarism, which are easily recognizable in the state’s role of *de jure* segregation, whether at the hands of the federal government before the passing of the 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the US Constitution or the governments of southern (slave) states who enacted discriminatory and segregationist laws against African Americans after its passing.

One of the pre-conditions for deep-seated (protracted) conflict in Azar's PSC theory can be found in Basic Human Needs theory by John Burton, a one-time colleague of Azar, (1990), and elaborated by Rubenstein (2001) and others (cf. Galtung 1976). The theory, in some significant measure, follows Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory (a psychological approach) and Paul Sites theory (a sociological approach), placing it in the context of social conflict (Maslow 1943, Sites 1991). Burton's Basic Human Needs construct (Burton 1979; p. 55) described essential conditions and/or opportunities that all humans require in order to live a harmonious life in the social context. These "needs" are basic in that, without their satisfaction, a person finds social norms impracticable because they are not effective for her/him. Thus, that person seeks alternative, deviant or disruptive means in order to satisfy her/his needs. Burton identifies identity, security, recognition and personal development as basic human needs. When these needs are not met, with regard to *groups* as opposed to single individuals—that is, social values and/or structures precludes a segment of society from meeting their basic needs—victims are predisposed to collective violence.

Burton's framework recognizes the tension that leads to conflict when institutional/social goals take precedence over individual/human goals. Such social priority places focus on the preservation of social systems and the integration of society rather than the actualization of individuals and the satisfaction of their basic human needs. Warning signs include social unrest that comes from this structural failing, which can be seen in inferior education systems, inadequate health care, substandard housing, and insufficient employment opportunities.

Ideals of personalism and truth exemplify the relationship between this CAR model and King's philosophical framework. For King, nothing is more fundamental to his concept than basic human needs. Indeed, King's Triple Evils—poverty, racism and militarism—directly parallel Burton's needs model of self-esteem, identity, and security. The same may be said of the connection between King's construct and Ted Robert Gurr's (1970) relative deprivation theory.

Gurr's Relative Deprivation (RD) theory offers predictive tools for collective violence. He defines RD as "the tension that develops from a discrepancy between the "ought" and the "is" of collective value satisfaction, and that disposes men to violence" (Ibid; p. 23). He further says RD is the actors' perception discrepancy between their value expectations (VE) and their value capabilities (VC). VE are the goods and conditions of life to which people believe they are rightfully entitled. VC are the goods and conditions they believe they are capable of getting and keeping. Gurr says the emphasis is on the *perception* of the deprivation. This is a function of their *expectations*. He observes that if people have no reason to believe they are deprived or entitled to more than they have, they are not inclined to discontent (Ibid; p. 24). The source of the comparison to what one has and what they believe they should have or deserve is a function of their perceived "legitimate expectation and actuality" (Ibid).

These expectations are driven by "values" generally held by the many in a group as opposed to the "idiosyncratic" want of an individual of that group. *Welfare values* are those that relate to the "physical well-being [economic] and self-realization [self-actualization]" of the individual. Then, *power values* are those "that determine the extent

to which men can influence the actions of others and avoid unwanted interference by others in their own actions.” *Interpersonal values* he defines as “the psychological satisfactions we seek in nonauthoritative interactions with other individuals and groups” (Ibid; p. 26).

Gurr speaks of values “expectations” and “positions.” Value expectations have to do with the value positions a group believes they are “justifiably entitled,” while value position is “the amount or level of a value actually attained” (Ibid; p. 27). These ideas are further explicated through a discussion of expectation and aspiration. The former is, again, what one believes is due one and the latter not (rightfully) due (Ibid).

*Value capabilities* according to Gurr “are the average value positions [the group’s] members perceive they are capable of attaining or maintaining.” As opposed to value capabilities groups also perceive *value potential* as perceived and actual. Perceived potential, according to Gurr, determines the group’s present behavior.

His construct also includes *value opportunities*, which are “personal, societal, and political.” *Personal opportunities* are a person’s inherited and acquired capacities,” while “*societal opportunities* are “are the normal courses of action available to members of a collectivity,” and *political opportunities* “are similar to those of societal, with the difference that they are relative to ability for “inducing others to provide them with value satisfactions” (Ibid; p. 2).

## **Conclusion**

Violence seems to be an intractable staple of human affairs. Studies abound on its role in shaping individuals as groups, groups as societies, and societies into national

states. One might conclude examining the preponderance of the literature across disciplines, and the “system” of colonialism notwithstanding, that regarding human efforts to shape and bring order to societies, violence manifests principally as physical occurrences. Careful study reveals a much more complex phenomenon, where institutions, processes, systems, and policies coalesce as a structural “edifice” that has been termed “structural violence.”<sup>viii</sup> This phenomenon seems heightened with post-colonial or post-independence thinkers.

Recently—when compared to violence—the idea of nonviolence has been proffered as a theory for human relations, particularly as it relates to change and development. As in the case of violence, nonviolence has been traditionally weighted toward a particular kind, when it comes to peace and conflict studies. It too tends toward manifesting as a “physical” strategy or technique of *action* commonly referred to as the “technique approach to nonviolent action” (McCarthy and Kruegler, 1993; p. 2) or pragmatic nonviolence. Less well known, and often dismissed, is the idea of a principled or conscientious form of nonviolence, which has a broader philosophical foundation than the pragmatic technique approach. Arguably more important is its applicability as a challenger to the structural form of violence.

Thus, this thesis seeks meaning making of a conscientious nonviolence and structural violence dialectic as a viable contender for a theory of/for social change and human development. To that end, through qualitative research methods, it will critique the philosophy of nonviolence, both its coherence and relevance. It will argue that comprehending any *logic of nonviolence* requires first understanding nuanced

meanings of violence, and then twiggling both as social phenomena impinging on a search for a relevant and responsive nonviolence theory of change. It will first identify relevant terms for both (violence and nonviolence) and then make a case for the development of a nonviolence theory of change for social change and human development, particularly for the fields of peace and conflict theory and practice. It will then argue that structural violence and conscientious nonviolence are the essential elements for building such a theory and prescribing it as operative practice for effecting positive and sustainable social change (peace). The next chapter will explore the discourse for the paradigmatic framework.



## **CHAPTER TWO: SOCIAL CHANGE AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT: FRAMEING THE DISCOURSE**

Answering the question about the ability of nonviolence to provide a theory of change relevant and responsive to today's global, international, and cross-cultural conflicts requires framing a paradigmatic context that comprehends the relationship between violence and nonviolence and the history and values that attend social change and human development. The researcher posits that a coherent and comprehensive method for conducting the study is to construct a paradigmatic framework to interrogate the meanings and significance of violence and nonviolence and their relationship to social change, human development and peace. Then, the framework may serve as the contextual precursor to the further study of the relevance and efficacy of nonviolence to peace and conflict praxis.

This begs the question, are the history and values of social change and human development inherently violent or nonviolent? Some may ask why such a question is important to this study. Steven Pinker offers one point of view: "The historical trajectory of violence affects not only how life is lived but how it is understood" (Pinker 2011; p. xxi). The researcher finds the best answer in the following quote: "we are what we are today, because of what happened yesterday, and until we have the necessary confrontation with yesterday, our tomorrows will forever be the same." The researcher does not remember where he learned this quote, except that he committed it to recall in

elementary school and recited it during a class discussion that his memory believes was in the fifth grade. A half-century later, he remains convinced of this statement's veracity. Thus, this thesis argues the *history* of social change and human development and the *values* that shape them help to explain human reality: the current "human position"—*where and what humans are physically, culturally, socially, politically, and economically*, but also the algorithms of change and development that make them possible. In other words, understanding violence and nonviolence requires examining them both in a historical context of social change and human development, along with their values, such that one can appreciate how integral they have been and important they remain to the human experience. Those who might object to this approach may assume the ideas of violence and nonviolence in the human experience are "givens:" violence is a foregone conclusion of human reality and nonviolence is an idealist reach. Thus, their reckoning of human relations in regards to social change and human development today may be understood *en medias res*. That is, one need not consider what came before. Such thinking seems to deny the danger and scoff at the peril of missing the important underpinnings of history and the attending values that have brought us to the current human condition—including, for example, its chasms between "those who have and those who don't," and "the West and all the rest." But, more important, absent any effort to alter the present trajectory of the human position/condition formulae, there is no reason to believe that things can or will be different in the future. Thus, this thesis will argue comprehending any *logic of nonviolence* as a theory of change requires also

understanding *violence*, and them both as social phenomena impinging on a search for a relevant and responsive construct for the peace and conflict fields.

An important means of meeting this challenge, then, is contextualizing their (violence and nonviolence) meanings in a paradigmatic framework of social change and human development. Such a context is instrumental to explicate the significance that values and historical footings lend to answering two essential questions: *What is violence?* And, *what is nonviolence?* This thesis will respond to these questions by giving violence both physical and structural meanings, while it will define dualistic notions of nonviolence, which are pragmatic and conscientious. It will also argue not only that the processes of social change and human development have been and remain violent, but also, that the consequences of the “civilizing process” (Elias 1939) essentially place limits on the life chances of some humans, while enabling the chances of others, through cultural and structural operations and systems (Shaw 1993). It will further argue that this paradigmatic framework constitutes not only a historical context for understanding violence and nonviolence, but also that these concepts reflect values systems that inform and instruct social change and human development, which must be confronted—by what Martin Luther King, Jr. called “a revolution of values”—if one is to effect a positive (peace) alternative.

### **A Paradigmatic Framework: Social Change and Human Development**

The history of global and international relationships demonstrates violence has been and is the ever-present staple of tension *within* and *among* national states. In other words, the inexorable change and its attending development of humanity have been

facilitated by conflict of the violent kind. Clearly, the civilizing process has brought physical and social scientific wonders that arguably add significant value to the human lived experience. Yet, when one thinks of social change and human development in the twentieth century, one might envision Marx's proletariat and/or their *lumpen* compatriots—the ordinary nationals of the state—demonstrating their discontent about the inequality or injustice that has made their present lives unbearable and the prognosis for their children's untenable.

Indeed, one way of understanding this darker side of social change and human development is to explore it through the lens of development theory. Thus, one might envision the proverbial picture of Karl Marx, Emile Durkheim, and Max Weber situated in a coffee shop discussing the change/development algorithms and their national and international impact. As they rehearse the nature of the change and development formulae over the past 2500 years and conceptualize their impact on societies and the human condition, their discussion inexorably turns to capitalism. What might be central to this discussion is understanding its seeming resilience and ubiquity—from national, to international, to global—as the vehicle of change and development throughout and across the past two millennia or so.

The roles of violence and nonviolence—both actual and potential—situate the paradigmatic context that may be construed. Literature abounds that discusses the subject of violence in the development of societies, and particularly nation states, but much less so regarding nonviolence. Below, this thesis briefly explores literature on both concepts. While there are other points of departure (for example, the family, the clan, or the

community), its focus is at the level of the state, because it is the national state that monopolizes violence and thus dominates, for the most part, the social, political and economic change *and* development processes of societies. Important to this thesis is the calculus of violence on today's national states, what the states' roles and responsibilities are to their body politic, and the global community, and why they must be held accountable. Thus, the political economy of violence as a function of social change and human development within national states and the attending global and international relationships between them, indeed, argues such violence has been and continues to be an ever-present staple of tension.

This point is not to ignore, as discussed later, the role that those who might dominate (accumulate and concentrate) the powers of government play in the societal theatre. Indeed, those who monopolize or bargain to share the powers of the state also share in its monopolization of violence. Hence, the state is neither an isolated participant nor an autonomous actor. Consider the following quote:

*[T]ransnational firms have forced national states to focus their attention on financial policies and debt collection, to assume responsibility on occasion for the private debts of the corporations, and to reduce through balanced budgets and structural adjustments the health care, retirement, social services and other benefits that citizens won from the states through ongoing struggles. This economic restructuring has led to the steadily increasing concentration of wealth in the hands of fewer and fewer individuals; as a result, the inequitable*

*distribution of wealth that exists now is probably greater than it has been at any time in the last two centuries* (Patterson 1999; p. 151).

This could well be the opening editorial of any major news outlet in tomorrow morning's report. Yet, it is found in the concluding chapter of Thomas C. Patterson's 1999 book, *Change and Development in the Twentieth Century*. Written some fourteen years ago, Patterson's statement still captures the startling state of affairs as the global process of social change grinds its way from just before the last decade of the previous century to just after the first of the current. But, what is *changing* and what is *developing*? Theorists like Patterson have engaged scholarly effort to understand this question. This thesis argues the answer reveals the algorithms of making and sustaining human societies and the human condition, for it is they that are continually changing and developing. Thus, peace and conflict theorists and practitioners alike might labor to cognize the impact of changes in social structures and the development of society as an articulation of humanity's condition as it finds expression in peace and conflict.

Over millennia the notion of change has been an *evolving process*—yielding *social evolution* (defined in this thesis as the evolution of social structures, systems, processes and policies) as the dominant change idea and *social change* as its metonym. As discussed below, Pinker refers to such change as “historical shifts.” Other metaphors for change over the past 2500 years begin with “growth” for Greek social theorists, “cyclical renewal” during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, and “progress” from the sixteenth to the seventeenth century (Ibid; pp. 7-28). The seventeenth century also saw

the idea of the scientific method with Francis Bacon's *New Organon* (Bacon 1960), and his discussion of reason as the process of employing techniques for investigating phenomena and gaining knowledge. Renee Descartes responded with *Discourse on [Scientific] Method* (Descartes 1980). Then Thomas Hobbes provided the century with *Leviathan* (Hobbes 1968)—his critique of human and social development, and the century was capstoned as the birth of modern society. The consequences of such thinking were the ushering in of the eighteenth century with industrial capitalism, bourgeois culture, and the notion of development. Other theorists examined more closely the impact of development of society and the condition of humanity. In *Discourse on the origin of Inequality* Jean Jacques Rousseau (Rousseau 2009) responded to Hobbes' critique asserting that humans in their natural state had virtues—compassion, generosity, kindness and empathy—that are washed away by the tide of modernity's development and social change. Where Rousseau saw no good change in the human condition with development and modernity, Adam Smith (Smith 2000) countered there should be a separation between the narratives of economics, politics, and the moral condition of humankind. Morality (or moral development), then, was and remains part of the equation of change and development. Indeed, the mid-twentieth century development of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) reflects this reality. How the UDHR came to be—who and what was involved in its formulation, what were the rationale and values employed in its development, and for whose benefit—is important to this discussion and will be examined below. First, this thesis will focus closer attention on social change as human development.

Regarding the ebb and flow of social change and development, Barrington Moore (1996) makes the telling statement about humankind: “Tugging and hauling and quarreling and grabbing, along with much injustice and repression, have been the ordinary lot of human societies throughout recorded history” (Ibid; p. 133). Moore’s observation provides contextual commentary on why change and development are inextricably tied together in the formation of nation states. They are processes that affect both mind and society making ontological/epistemological, communal/individual, and structural/operational frameworks for human relations. Thus, the inexorable change and its attending development of humanity have been accompanied by conflict of the violent kind. “Progress,” Moore finds, “has invariably and inevitably required a huge measure of human suffering”(Ibid; p. xii). How and why did societies form in this manner and how does one prevent the pain of human progress, or what Edward Friedman and James C. Scott call “the unnecessarily inhuman costs of progress” (Patterson 1999; p. 47)?

Charles Tilly provides a lucid exposition of the subject and an excellent back drape for staging the framework in his book *Coercion, Capital and European States, AD 990-1992*. Tilly seeks to explicate the formation of European states as a function of the accumulation and concentration of both capital and coercion. His explanation is important to understanding today’s human position/condition construction, given the West’s hegemonic influence over the rest of the global community. Tilly (1992) argues states form interactive *systems* of which the current global framework, according him, began to take shape circa AD 990 (Ibid; p. 4). He observes this formation is the capital and coercion algorithm that accounts for the design of states in varying ways. In doing so,



he rejects explications that formulate internal/external and derivative/independent answers, which yield statist, geopolitical, production modes, and world systems frameworks (Ibid; p. 11). Those states that held a strong capital concentration differed significantly in their formulation as compared to those that held a strong coercion concentration. Still, others held balanced capital-coercion formations that gave its unique shape to national state creation.

Tilly argues through exploitation and domination, European states were formed. This explication suggests those states with high concentrations of capital and coercion, were most successful in becoming national states (Ibid; p. 63). Tilly's argument of capital's contribution to national state formulation sees *exploitation* as a function of a capital accumulation/concentration process that yields surpluses, which capitalists capture (Ibid; p. 17). Important here is his claim that this process results in the formulation of cities: "When capital both accumulates and concentrates within a territory, urban growth tends to occur throughout the same territory" with corresponding regional economies (Ibid; pp. 17-18). The greater the concentration/accumulation, the denser is the polis. His tandem argument sees coercion as the "concerted application, threatened or actual, of action that commonly causes loss or damage of the persons or possessions of individuals or groups who are aware of both the action and the potential damage" (Ibid; p. 19). As one will see below, the coercion is effective both internally (as domestic control) and externally (as warfare). The coercion process produces a certain *domination* that aggregates the polis as state.

The ability of the state to amass armies played a pivotal role in establishing the national state, at the expense of the city-state and city empire. Such ability gave national states the advantage in both political and commercial power. Other forms of societal organization—city, empire, and religious organizations—lacked the critical mass (political, economic, and military) of power accumulation and concentration that national states could wield (Ibid; p. 65). As well, states were better positioned to take advantage of technology, particularly as it relates to war (Ibid; p. 76). For example, with the invention of the cannon in early modernity, monarchs would monopolize military advantage with the power to access and employ the implements of coercion (Ibid). This point is further made today, when one considers the robust and hegemonic technological superiority of the US demonstrated in the prosecution of its conflagrations in Iraq and Afghanistan, and its drone surgical strikes in the “war on terror.”

Further, national states were made as a function of *both* internal and external coercion concentration. Militarization as extra-state war making and intra-state policing helped to solidify the significance and preeminence of the national state over other state forms (Ibid; p. 75) and above any internal challenge to the monopoly on violence. These two became durable structures made possible as a bargained accommodation for the national state’s protection and provision of the “needs” of its citizens. At the same time, and of equal importance to this thesis, they represent an adaptation of political and commercial power sharing with elites that respect class interests. Recall Patterson’s observation on this point. Thus, bargaining and war making became integral means of coercion concentration (Ibid; p. 98).

Tilly argues national states sustain their viability through seven fundamental processes: statemaking, warmaking, protection, and extraction (Ibid; p. 96) comprise the “essential” (and coercive) activities—where the first three are made possible by effectively accomplishing the fourth. Adjudication, distribution, and production complete the heptad (Ibid; p. 97). Each of these processes “impinged on well-defined interests of people who lived within the range of their control” (Ibid; p. 98). Thus, for example, extraction meant a function of requisition and conscription of human and financial capital in return for administrative and structural functions, which was a bargained transaction “pacifying the population” (Tilly 1992, 98).

Tilly’s treatise goes a long way in explicating national state formations. Perhaps more important, his lucid discussion of the capital/coercion alchemy is instructive as a simplified construct for understanding how European states accumulated and concentrated both forms of power and effected a global system that has proven durable into the twenty-first century. Recall the robust and hegemonic technological superiority of the US today. As well, Tilly sheds light on the impact of capital accumulation/concentration in private hands—the power-sharing with elites—on state building and maintenance. Indeed, while his work might infer a relationship, it nonetheless understates the impact that power wields in private hands and the formulation of national states, and its legacy on the global system that endures. It also ignores, and Tilly downplays, the nuances of social class and identity and their impact on state making. For example, the formative role that capital and coercion played since AD 990 has resulted in a normative system and a correlating hegemonic assumption that violence

is somehow natural—that may preclude reformation today, short of revolution—or so might argue Herbert Marcuse, Rosa Luxemburg, and Franz Fanon.

Thus, this contextual paradigm argues that the *processes* of social change and human development have been *and remain* violent, but, more important, that the historical *civilizing process* and its current civilization progeny essentially place limits on the life chances of some humans—physically, socially, psychologically, politically, and economically, while enabling the chances of others, through *routinized cultural and structural* operations and systems. Chapter three will explore this phenomenon further.

To extend an understanding of this darker side of social change and the formation of societies, one must explore it through the lens of development theory. While this thesis will not suffice a full explication of such theories, one might catch a glimpse sufficiently for its purposes by returning to the picture of a contemporary discussion that Karl Marx, Emile Durkheim, and Max Weber hold regarding change and development and their national and international bearing. Marx held the view that society is the natural condition of human beings. His critiques of development and social change see class, production and exploitation as the tools for capitalism's principle purpose of concentrating and centralizing capital. Durkheim held the notion of society as an evolving wonder made by each member of the human family. His concern was about the morality of modern industrial society. Thus, his idea of development and social change centers on institutions (such as community, religion and law), morality, and social behavior. Weber rejects the idea of a social contract, except as each individual responds to life conditions as they find them, as his focus on exchange in the market drives his idea

of development and social change. His concern is capitalism's rational approach to "the provisioning of needs ['irrespective of what need is involved'] by private, profit-seeking businesses" (Patterson 1999; p. 47).

As they rehearse the nature of change over recent millennia and conceptualize its impact on the human condition and society, at the center of their discussion is capitalism. What seems cogent to their discourse is whether such phenomena as international and global market crises are accidental consequences or foundational to capitalism's inherent character. The consequences are three fundamental charges. First is that the internationalization of capitalism and its attendant accumulation and concentration of capital masquerades in the guise of progress through development as social change. Second, these processes fostered colonization, decolonization, imperialism, militarism, wars, and revolutions, with each in their own way constituting forms of *violence*, both physical and structural. A third charge is that such changes are all historical consequences driven by Western actors and their value systems. "The core capitalist states organize the world economy and control the activities of the other states" (Ibid; p. 2). The point is that capitalism's resilience in the hands of elites is hegemonic and formidable.

Such a framing of human development stands in contradistinction to the nonviolent form of social change one might observe and even experience in social movements—particularly those beginning with the Indian movement for independence in the early twentieth century to the Arab Spring of the twenty-first. Though there are alternative views on whether such movements are truly nonviolent, in any regard a litany of social movements over the past century (plus a decade or so) has flowed in fits and

spurts, whether violent or nonviolent, seeking total regime change or redress of social oppression, political repression or economic exploitation. Patterson notes several key elements regarding these sociocultural and political-economic convulsions and surges. First, he sees the then current (1999) and still prevalent international and global crisis as being significantly different from what the world saw between 1920 and 1970 and that period's national liberation and decolonization movements, but not unlike the close of the late nineteenth and the opening of the twentieth century (Ibid; pp. 151-152). That difference is rooted in the centralization and concentration of power, and particularly capital, in the hands of the few at the expense of the many of the world's population. In any respect, contrasting previous global and international change, Patterson argues today's brand bears four distinguishing characteristics. These crises are universal in sphere, global in scope, protracted in time, and steady in process (Ibid). Notwithstanding, (or is it because of) modernity, Patterson argues, these characteristics are more like pre-World War I and their collective impact is perhaps made possible by today's advanced technology and transportation coupled with nation-state economic interdependence and the interpenetration of capitalist market mentality (Ibid; p. 152). They are further indication of capitalism's resilience, as each characteristic militates in its favor. This then is the framework for discoursing the roles of violence and nonviolence in social change and human development.

## **Conclusion**

Human reality, as this thesis defines it, is the social position and human condition: how, where and what humans experience culturally, socially, politically and

economically. Arguably, reality is a function of an evolving process that has been shaped by the dominant values that inform and instruct the change and development processes of the human experience generally (the civilizing process) and societies specifically (the formation of the national state). Historically, in global and international relationships the predominant value has been violence that manifests as the accumulation and concentration of power variously in the hands of government and the society's elites. This process has resulted in and simultaneously been effectuated by durable structures that are supported by resilient systems that maintain the power-sharing framework of the few at the expense of the many.

Thus, arguably defining and measuring the mechanisms of change and development is not enough. One must also identify and assess how the history and values inform and instruct both the change process and its outcomes on the lives of people; that is, assessing how the change and development over history and the values that drive them impinge on human reality (the lived experience)—culturally, socially, politically, and economically—and whether they are violent or nonviolent. Such metrics require clear definitions of violence and nonviolence. As well, they require understanding the role and place that both the state and the person play, that is, their reflexive rights and their obligations to each. To that end, in addition to comprehending statehood, one might explore the meaning of personhood in the human experience as it is informed by human rights theory. First, this thesis explores the history and values of violence and nonviolence and their relationships to change and development in chapters three and four respectively.

### **CHAPTER THREE: VIOLENCE, SOCIAL CHANGE AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT**

The work of Hannah Arendt, Franz Fanon, John J. Mearsheimer, Barrington Moore, John U. Nef, Slavaj Zezek, and recently, Steven Pinker,<sup>ix</sup> provide important insights into the phenomenon of violence. Each of them discusses the nature and role of violence in human history and or values of social change and human development and the national state. As chapter two indicates, the historical trajectory and value frameworks of change and development have been rooted in violence. This violence manifests not only as physical phenomenon, but also as structures, systems, policies and processes that result in the accumulation and concentration of power that favors some while disfavoring others.

The question that concerns this thesis is, in building a paradigmatic context, what does this violence attribute have to do with nonviolence logic? The answer is that it situates that context theoretically where violence is understood as both physical *and* structural phenomenon, each affecting and effecting state-made institutions, systems, and operations. If nonviolence is to be relevant and efficacious in making and sustaining human societies, then it too must be affectively and effectively responsive to the structures, systems, policies and processes that shape them. Before examining nonviolence, examining the work on violence of several thinkers will be instructive.



Their observations will help solidify the argument about violence in all its forms as the underlying value effecting change and development.

### **On Violence**

As discussed above, literature on violence abounds. Samplings that are illustratively important to understanding the idea and to the task of framing a paradigmatic context follow. They include in turn the works of Hannah Arendt, Franz Fanon, Johan Galtung, Steven Pinker, and Slovenian Žižek.

#### **Hannah Arendt**

Hannah Arendt's essay, *On Violence* (1969), provides an important view on the nature of political violence and, how she understands its many forms. They include power, authority, strength, and force. Since politics is the struggle for power and violence is the ultimate power, politics becomes the legitimate use of power, or so argues C. Wright Mills and Max Weber (Ibid; p. 35). But, Arendt is not convinced. She argues, violence always needs justification, but never legitimization. Indeed, she asserts, while it may be justified, violence can never be legitimized. (Ibid; pp. 52, 77). But, she adds, it can be rational (Ibid; p. 79). In this regard, violence is effective in achieving its intended end. This idea is the same as the idiom often attributed to Machiavelli "the means (violence) justifies the end (its intended objective)." But, says Arendt, since one cannot know the future with certainty and thus, cannot preordain the end, the rationality of violence has a short life—"it can remain rational only if it pursues, short-term goals" (Ibid).

Arendt distinguishes violence from power, force, or strength, since it "always needs *implements*" (italics in the original) and the others may not (Ibid; p. 4). These

implements are the stuff of violence, its tools and mechanisms. She observes these means may easily overwhelm the actor's intended end, and that, "means used to achieve political goals are more often than not of greater relevance to the future world than the intended goals" (Ibid). Thus, the means of war have made it untenable. Hence, she asserts that deterrence is the best guarantee of peace because technological capabilities have "now reached the point where no political goal could conceivably correspond to their destructive potential or justify their actual use in armed conflict" (Ibid; pp. 3-4).

Arendt argues violence is natural only to the extent that it is a human emotion. But, she would be quick to add that such emotions must not be subject to political whims. They may be warranted when "our sense of justice is offended;" after all, "in private and in public life there are situations in which the very swiftness of a violent act may be the only appropriate remedy" (Ibid; p. 63). Arendt continues her line of reasoning by connecting violence and power to progress: "I think it can be shown that no other human ability has suffered to such an extent from the progress of modern age, for progress, as one might come to understand it, means growth, the relentless process of more and more, bigger and bigger" (Ibid; pp. 82-83). Arendt sees the propensity of human action toward "more and more, bigger and bigger" to be the cause of another human inclination, which is the accumulation and concentration, even the monopolization of power. This perversion of power becomes violence, since "monopolization of power causes the drying up or oozing away of all authentic power sources" (Ibid; p. 85).

Arendt agrees with the principle notion discussed in this thesis that violence has been the staple of social change and human development throughout history (Ibid; p. 8).

She observes whether politics or economics violence has been the mainstay of national states (Ibid; pp. 8-9). She rejects a definition of violence as “nothing more than the most flagrant manifestation of power” (Ibid; p. 35). When it comes to democratic states, Arendt observes the power of the people’s consent legitimizes the power of *institutions* that govern them. Government then becomes subject to the governed. Power becomes violence when it is used without the consent of the governed. It relies on implements rather than the people. Violence, therefore, trumps power, as long as its implements are sufficient to overcome the measure of power. Hence, when government loses power (of the people) it often resorts to violence. Arendt is quick to note that the cost of violence is power itself. Lost is the source of power, the very people on whom power relies.

Thus, for Arendt, the monopolization of power causes a diminishment of “authentic power sources” (Ibid; p. 85), which leads to violence, since they are opposites and power is the cost of violence. “Neither violence nor power is a natural phenomenon, that is, a manifestation of the life process; they belong to the political realm of human affairs whose essentially human quality is guaranteed by man’s faculty of action, the ability to begin something new” (Ibid; p. 82). The operative word here is “ability.” Violence is the manifestation of human ability to act. How one acts is not determined by some instinctive primordial proclivity, but *conscious* determination. Arendt argues, such determination is the product of the progress of the modern age—i.e. social change and human development. Thus, for Arendt, the change and development dialectic has become a function of the structures, systems, policies and processes that she calls bureaucracy or that type of “rule of an intricate system of bureaus...which could be properly called rule

by Nobody” (Ibid; p. 38). It is violence writ large. It is *routinized* and structural. Her point is that this absolute rule of violence as the *structural edifice of bureaucracy* precludes the power of the people to rule. She defines bureaucracy as “the form of government in which everybody is deprived of political freedom, of the power to act; for the rule of Nobody is no-rule, and where all are equally powerless we have a tyranny without a tyrant” (Ibid; p. 81). One should be certain to observe that this does not mean there are no winners and losers. Tyranny without a tyrant here translates as there is “Nobody” to blame or hold accountable. The tyrant is structural, but, nonetheless, favors and disfavors individuals and groups.

### **Frantz Fanon**

“Man is what brings society into being” (Fanon 1952; p. xv). This statement aptly summarizes the subject of this thesis. That is, it *is* man—at least for the most part, it has been man, and particularly, the European man—who has shaped society. And, that society, with all its antimonies, contradictions, and anomalies, as “man” has shaped it, notwithstanding its progress, has been accomplished through violence. This thesis is not so much about the nature of man or, rather, humans, though it does include that idea in some measure; instead, as discussed below, it is about conflicts in human societies that aid and abet the structural and operational impediments to full human potential. Thus, it is about the relationships of violence and nonviolence in historical change and development. To that end, Franz Fanon (1952) provides a perspective that is instructive.

In his most celebrated works, Fanon, a psychiatrist, sought to analyze how societies and people developed individually and communally as a consequence of racial,

exploitive, and oppressive (colonial) processes. His analysis addresses the violence in both colonial and post-colonial processes. “During the colonial period the people were called upon to fight against oppression. Following national liberation they are urged to fight against poverty, illiteracy, and underdevelopment. The struggle...goes on” (Ibid; p. 51). And, that struggle, again paraphrasing Fanon, is to endeavor to invent humans in full (Ibid; p. 236). So is the history of change and development in Fanon’s *Wretched of the Earth*, the posthumous signature piece of his protest against how human society has changed and developed from colonialism to post-colonialism. As Homi K. Bhabha notes in his forward to *The Wretched of the Earth*, Fanon’s understanding of violence as a historical process in this regard was two pronged. One was the fact of the colonization/decolonization dialectic, while the other was the struggle between global cold war powers often at the expense of other nations (Ibid; p. xv).

Fanon’s vision is a new society and a new humanity (Ibid; p. 239). He argues (with Martin Luther King, Jr.) what must be changed are the values that have informed and shaped society and humanity. The formative values have the effect of empowering and enriching one group of people, while repressing, exploiting, and oppressing others. For him, the process of decolonization is a historical one, indeed, as was the colonization process (Ibid; p. 2). As such, it is the re-creation of humanity. In other words, decolonization gave *humanity* and the human condition an opportunity for re-definition in terms that rearticulate it as all people in all their “totality”—“in full” (Ibid; p. 236).

As Bhabha further observes, Fanon, was concerned about the violence inherent in the dual and compartmental nature of Western values: a Manichean colonial system of

his day and the global system today. It is the great divide of those who have and those who don't, and all of the spatial, political, social, cultural and economic *intricacies* upon which it is framed and sustained. Fanon believed it is violent values that make these systems possible, and that the intricacies are the structures and processes that give them form. Even more, he might argue colonization and globalization are kith in the sense of their kindred consequences on the life chances of both groups, where the former enjoys the lion's share of the earth's goods, while the latter remains its wretched.

For many, Fanon is best known, if misunderstood, as the "first apostle" of violence for social change. This point of view overlooks his own vantage on the violence that makes life untenable for the repressed, exploited, and oppressed. It is true that he advocated (with Arendt and others) violence, if it is perceived as the only recourse for redressing the conditions of those made "wretched" by the violence of the privileged. He argues, the "violent praxis is totalizing...rearing up in reaction to the primary violence of the colonizer" (Ibid; p. 50) for it is the only language the colonizer understands (Ibid; p. 42).

Everybody therefore has violence on their minds and the question is not so much responding to violence with more violence but rather how to defuse the crisis.

What in fact constitutes this violence? As the foregoing has discussed, the colonized masses intuitively believe that their liberation must be achieved and can only be achieved by force (Ibid; p. 33).

Fanon did not so much reject nonviolence, as his vantage point could not see its possibilities. He makes his case in the opening chapter of *The Wretched of the Earth*. His point is that the structures and operations of a capitalist economy constitute the very fabric of society stitched with the history and values that represent the woof and weft of a quotidian process. “Even your nonviolent thoughts [are] governed by a thousand-year-old oppression,” Bhabha says of Fanon’s logic, (Ibid; p. lviii) which “in actual fact [is] a creation of the colonial situation” (Ibid; p. 23). Thus, Fanon, finds no good outcome by the use of nonviolence.

There is a sense of inevitable victory in Fanon’s logic of violence, since the colonizer values the ends of colonialism more than its means: “Persistent jacqueries and Mau-Mau agitation disrupt the economic life of a colony but pose no threat to the metropolis” (Ibid; p. 39). In a tone not unlike that of Martin Luther King’s confidence in nonviolence, Fanon asserts the tensions of international relations “represent a formidable threat to the oppressor” (Ibid). That is, violent means are only as good as they effect their intended end. Thus, in these statements one finds a confidence born of both a global solidarity among oppressed people and the competition of those who would oppress (the reference being that of the struggle then between cold war powers) and the disruption of the very object of the oppression, that is, profit: when the means no longer justify the ends, they are no longer justified. Fanon is not confused about this point. He makes the matter clear:

The basic confrontation which seemed to be colonialism versus anticolonialism, indeed capitalism versus socialism, is already losing its importance. What matters

today, the issue which blocks the horizon, is the need for a redistribution of wealth. Humanity will have to address this question, no matter how devastating the consequences may be (Ibid; p. 55).

He argues the values of the exploited and oppressed people need not mimic those of the oppressors. Thus, the choice need not be between the then competing political economy ideologies:

The basic issue with which we are faced is not the unequivocal choice between socialism and capitalism such as they have been defined by men from different continents and different periods of time (Ibid). [It is that humans in their totality] the most precious asset [that] will allow us to progress faster in greater harmony, consequently ruling out the possibility of a caricature of society where a privileged few hold the reins on political and economic power without a thought for the [world] as a whole (Ibid; p. 56).

The same Manichean values that underwrote colonialism, making exploitation and oppression possible, are those that underwrote slavery to continue the process, and are those that underwrite the chasm between those who have and those who don't inherent to today's globalization processes. For Fanon, they each invoke illiteracy, poverty, and the pathologies of a people in the post-modern dispensation denied full humanity. Therefore, globalization must not be tantamount to a new form of colonization: imperialism. It should be what colonization could not and decolonization would not: truly the creation of



a new humanity, a position whose structures recognize the totality of human potential and a condition whose operations realize the unfettered opportunities for each person to achieve their full potential.

Fanon's prescription for redressing the violence that fosters many to be the earth's wretched inclines toward his professional proclivities as a psychiatrist. While this thesis will not explore that aspect of this important work, it will summarize by stressing his idea that the violence of the social change and human development paradigm denies human dignity and worth. Even more cogent is his notion that the means of violence are only as good as they achieve the desired end, and when they do not, such means lose their efficacy, since the oppressor values the ends of oppression more than its means. The discussion below will return to this idea.

### **Johan Galtung**

Beginning in the mid to late 1960's Johan Galtung embarked on a study of the relationships among conflict, peace, and violence that continues to the present. His seminal contribution to the discourse on peace and conflict is the idea that violence may be defined in several distinct and correlative ways. To understand Galtung's idea of violence one must understand his idea of peace: "any analysis of peace should be subjected to a corresponding analysis of violence" and, logically, vice versa (Galtung 1981; p. 195). In other words, Galtung asserts, "A richer peace concept implies a richer violence concept, as one is the negation of the other," (Ibid). Before discussing this latter point, the following will examine the basics of his taxonomy of violence.

Galtung's view of violence is the condition of a system—a particular state of circumstance(s)—that may be likened to one's physical condition or health. When one's "health system" is in poor condition or an *unwell-state* (Galtung uses the term ill-state), it is in need of a proper diagnosis, a determined prognosis, and an appropriate therapy, if one is to prescribe appropriate therapy and a *well-state* is to be reached. So, Galtung says, is the case with violence. It too is the condition of a system that is in an unwell-state needing the proper treatment and care to restore it to a well-state. Thus, he argues, violence is to peace what disease is to health. His logic further asserts that health and peace are the positive conditions or "well-states" of their respective systems (Galtung 1996; p. 1). Hence, when one's health condition is in an un-well state one's health system is negative. Further, when one's peace condition is in an un-well state, one's peace system is negative. One might conclude that one can experience either positive health or negative health; and, Galtung asserts, one can have either positive peace or negative peace. This relationship between peace and violence is seminal to Galtung's logic.

Now consider Galtung's 1969 definition that "violence is present when human beings are being influenced so that their actual somatic and mental realisations are below their potential realisation" (Galtung 1969; p. 168). Galtung qualifies his idea of "actual" and "potential" realization of one's physical and mental life chances as a matter of what might be an "avoidable" gap between them (Ibid, 169). Thus, he places emphasis on that which causes the otherwise avoidable gap; whether such cause is the result of one's (or another's) direct personal behavior or it is the result of some indirect structural impediment.

From the foregoing one might conclude that Galtung argues the source of violence must be understood in two ways: behavioral (or direct) and structural (or indirect) (Galtung 1996; p. 2). Direct (also called personal) violence requires the behavior of a sender/actor. Such behavior or action represents an event that is intended to hurt or cause harm to the receiver, whether the recipient is another person or a thing. This idea of violence was the traditional definition generally accepted in the field of peace research and action prior to Galtung's 1964 editorial in the then newly launched publication *Journal of Peace Research*. Galtung further argues the source of violence is not always the personal behavior of an actor; it may be a system, policy or process to which the receiver is subject (Ibid). Galtung defines this form as indirect structural violence and argues its effects are political and economic factors on the subject's personhood. In the former case, repression is operative, and in the latter, exploitation is effective (Ibid).

Finally, unlike the human physical or somatic system, where scientists may search for causes, but can never find logic of legitimation for some diseases, i.e. they simply appear as natural phenomenon in the human societal system, such logic, argues Galtung, can be defined as cultural. Hence, one sees in his conflict construct the idea of cultural violence. Galtung asserts in human societal systems, behavioral and structural forms of violence are legitimized as a cultural phenomenon: cultural violence is "those aspects of culture, the symbolic sphere of our existence...that can be used to legitimize direct or structural violence (Ibid; p. 196). Thus, he argues, such phenomena are "aspects of culture" in that they represent the "content" *of* or "carriers" *in* a social system that "justify or legitimize" its violent effects. Both cultural and structural violence, then,

“appear” without direct cause; that is, there is no direct relationship between the violence and its beneficiaries. In this regard, they are neutral neither deriving from intentional nor unintentional affect. In 1990, Galtung updated his definition of violence as “avoidable insults to basic human needs, and more generally to *life*, lowering the real level of needs satisfaction below what is potentially possible” (Galtung 1990; p. 292).

Galtung sees a “causal flow” of each form of violence from cultural to structural to behavioral (Galtung 1996; p. 200). This makes the denial of basic needs a precursor to the petty crime of robbery to meet such needs by the “redistribution of wealth,” albeit through violent means. Such means then might trigger other forms of direct violence as well as structural violence, organized in the former case as police force and in the latter as the prison industrial complex (Ibid). The flow origin from one form of violence to the next may be any of the three types (Ibid).

In any regard, violence breeds violence and to accept violence is violence (Ibid; p. 119). This observation begs the question of the relationship between violence and peace. Galtung answers with a rearticulation of peace having both positive and negative characteristics. Direct violence precludes negative peace, while indirect violence prohibits positive peace. Galtung’s positive peace idea makes the case for a remedy to the malady of the “unseen” and “uncaused” “cancer” of structural violence (or Arendt’s “tyranny of nobody”). This definition invokes the idea of development (recall Azar) as an essential element in his peace and violence construct and the social change and human development dialectic.

In response to his critics who argue that a distinction of violence as direct behavior and indirect structure is counter productive to peace research and action (Boulding 1997, 1998), Galtung argues, “negative peace and positive peace should be conceived as two separate dimensions. One can have one without the other” (Galtung 1964; p. 2). He further asserts that both forms of violence are operative having real-life implications on individuals and groups. They both can limit life chances, and must, therefore, be eliminated, if each and every human being is to have the best opportunity to achieve their full potential. The implication is that absent such opportunity, one’s peace condition is un-well. As is the individual so is the group, and by extension the society.

This argument is essential to Galtung’s logic and the paradigmatic framework. It evokes a double-bottom-line idea for peace research and action, and it invokes remedies for violence that respond to both the necessity and sufficiency of its pathology. Thus, it understands peace in the context of social change and human development or what Galtung (1981) calls “social cosmology.” In his 1981 article Galtung writes, “Peace, however conceived of, is a characteristic of some ... system, hence it will necessarily be colored by the traditions governing concept-formation and system-creation in that civilization’ (Ibid; p. 184).

This reflects back to the health metaphor as one considers the relevance and efficacy of nonviolence. Among the questions important to answer regarding the peace condition is whether a logic of nonviolence and its correlating theory of change can be used as both curative and preventive therapy. In other words, is the same therapy appropriate for both curing violence and negative peace *and* preventing these conditions?

Is nonviolence only used in conditions of negative peace or direct violence, or may it be used as a preventive or *wellness* protocol? Further is this question where the health metaphor breaks down. Like some diseases, is there a condition where a form of violence remaining is “good enough” to declare the “patient” cured? In other words, is reducing violence a *cure* as Galtung suggests (Galtung 1996; p. 2), or must it, like some types of diseases, be fully eliminated? These are important questions for nonviolence, since, as discussed below, it is defined as rejecting violence in all its forms, while actively responding to it. This means that nonviolence is never satisfied. It is a perpetual process in the same vein as conflict. But how does one sustain such a process. Conflict is defined as an inevitable occurrence of the human interaction, but does nonviolence hold a similar characteristic?

### **Steven Pinker**

If violence were an animal it would be a tamed beast, or so says one reviewer of Steven Pinker’s book *The Better Angels of Our Nature: Why Violence has Declined* (2011).<sup>x</sup> This may well be an apt descriptor of violence today: a beast, for sure, but tamed nonetheless. This metaphor is not only apropos to the subject, but, perhaps more so is Pinker’s adept handling of its history in the human experience. The book is an important entry to this study for many reasons that include its dual contribution regarding violence and, indirectly, nonviolence. Pinker’s basic thesis is that the amount of human violence today is lower than at any time in human history. Thus, what is most significant about the study is his success in contextualizing the subject in the frame of social change and human development. Witness Pinker’s assertion that humans moved from anarchy to

civilization in terms familiar to Patterson's characterization in chapter two above (Ibid; p. 35) is a metaphor of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s notion of chaos and community. This observation becomes a nexus for the discussion of King's ideas in chapter six as this quest to construct a paradigmatic framework concludes.

Pinker's work principally focuses on what this thesis delimits as personal and direct violence.<sup>xi</sup> One finds the best indication of what he means by this term in "The Violence Triangle" he constructs to explain the Hobbesian logic of Leviathan (Ibid). In this construct, Pinker sees the essential elements of violence as predation, retaliation, and law. He observes "In every act of violence, there are three interested parties: the aggressor, the victim, and a bystander (or the law—Leviathan). Each has a motive for violence: the aggressor to prey upon the victim, the victim to retaliate, the bystander to minimize collateral damage from their fight" (Ibid). Thus, violence between the aggressor and the victim is war, while that between the Leviathan bystander and the combatants is law. Violence between the aggressor and the victim is what this thesis refers to as direct personal violence, while violence of the law may be a form of structural violence. It is this latter form of violence that the paradigmatic context is principally concerned. Pinker's tract essentially favors the former. In both cases, however, the question arises whether he is correct in his assertion that human beings are becoming increasingly less violent.

Pinker sets out to make his case building a framework for examining the trajectory of direct violence over human history. He argues there are six "historical shifts" that have reduced violence in the human experience. All of which are part and

parcel of the social change and human development paradigm. The first is the “Pacification Process,” which he represents as the transition of groups from hunting and gathering to formal governing as state-run societies and the monopolization of violence. With the “Civilizing Process,” Pinker stresses the rise of Kingdoms and global commerce and their impact on societal order. The “Humanitarian Revolution” is his third historical shift. It represents the 17<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> century ascent of enlightenment. The “Long Peace” is the post world wars period beginning with the end of the World War II, and witnessing the absence of war between great world powers. The “New Peace,” or the post cold-war period, is Pinker’s fifth major “watermark” in time. And, finally, the “Rights Revolutions” are the major struggles for civil and human right of the mid-twentieth century, which began with Western cultures and is still spreading around the world.

Pinker also argues five historical forces have triggered these shifts. The forces include emergence of “Leviathan,” Thomas Hobbes’ articulation of the commonwealth and government run societies, including the monopoly of violence by the state. He identifies the increase in global commerce, which leads, he argues, to more cooperation and less hostility among states. Feminization and the increase of the influence of women on change and development is his third force. Cosmopolitanism as the increased accessibility to ideas and people from increased mobility, literacy, and media is the fourth. Pinker identifies the last force as the “Reason Escalator,” or the accumulating body of knowledge and good judgment through science and technology.

Pinker asserts through these trends and forces human nature has evolved to have biological propensities toward violence and nonviolence (he does not use the term



nonviolence when making this point). While Pinker provides no succinct definition, he does give “reasons people engage in violence,” which are “implemented as intricate patterns in the micro-circuitry of [human] brain tissue” (Ibid; p. 508) and, he asserts, constitutes a neurobiological cause. Thus, he argues motivators of violence are the “demons” of human nature, while the governors against violence are its “better angels.”

Pinker’s point regarding the demons is people learned early in human history the quickest way to satisfy needs and wants is through violence. He asserts this learning process was passed through successive generations and has become part of human biology. His list of five drivers (or motivators) of violence (Ibid; pp. 508-509) are predation—the practical, instrumental, and exploitive use of force as a means to an end; it responds to human desire for things: needs and wants; dominance—the desire for supremacy and status; revenge—the desire to avenge perceived wrong; sadism—the fascination with committing/witnessing suffering; and ideology—the inclination to believe in ideologies.

Pinker also asserts that evolution has given humans certain *faculties for nonviolence* (or behavior that avoids or lowers the amount of violence). They are “psychological faculties that steer people away from violence and whose increased engagement over time can be credited for declines in violence” (Ibid; p. 573). Pinker lists the four drivers (or motivators) from violence (better Angels) as empathy—a sympathy or compassion that manifests as beneficence toward the other; vicariously identifying with their feelings and emotions; self-control—an ability to control impulses; a moral sense—a morality of psychology *vis a vis* of philosophy; i.e. an instinctive collective, if

universal, conscience of what (action) is right and what is wrong; and reason—an ability to employ the rules of logic to learn from “present truth” to “new truth;” i.e. truth for individuals and groups is progressive. This assertion identifies with the Gandhian notion of truth, as chapter six will demonstrate.

Pinker’s treatise is a bold assertion about the trajectory of violence in social change and human development. The facts in his study seem, indeed, probative, though he has many reputable critics. Still, few would argue against the notion that personal, direct, physical violence may be decreased by social order and economic development (that provides opportunity equally to all humanity). But, recalling the above discussions on Galtung and the question how good is good enough, even Pinker admits there is much more to be done. So, how far is far enough to determine that human kind is truly becoming less violent? Does his analysis merely reduce to a notion of evolutionary psychology that renders the individual void of direct violent tendencies and, thus, at the mercy of the indirect machinations that are modernity: violence masquerading in the form of progress? The analysis of this chapter will revisit this question.

### **Slavo Žižek**

The inside front cover of Slavoj Žižek’s book *Violence: Six Sideways Reflections* (2008) raises the provocative question: “does the advent of capitalism and, indeed, civilization cause more violence than it prevents” (Ibid)? With this question, Žižek launches a discussion on violence. He describes two kinds of violence: subjective and objective, where the latter has two types. Together they form three modes: subjective, symbolic, and systemic violence, which is remarkable in its similarity to Galtung’s

framework. He says subjective violence is “violence performed by an agent,” which is “experienced as perturbation of the normal peaceful state of things” (Ibid; p. 2). Symbolic violence is one type of objective violence “embodied in language,” and the second form of objective violence is systemic, which is the violence of political and economic systems (Ibid; pp. 1-2). Žižek argues systemic violence can be both “direct physical violence, but also the more subtle forms of coercion that sustain relations of domination and exploitation, including the threat of violence” (Ibid; p. 9). Indeed, others inform Žižek’s ideas besides Galtung. As observed below, of particular interest to this thesis is where his logic on violence reflects the influence of the French philosopher, Jean-Jacque Lacan (2006) and his ideas of human reality and emancipatory violence. This begs the question whether there is a form of “aggression” that in “excess” mysteriously morphs into violence. This idea raises the question when and where is the line of demarcation from “life-force” aggression to “death-force” violence?

Žižek opines that there is preoccupation with subjective violence too often ignoring the sometimes invisible, but ubiquitous and “anonymous” objective violence. Indeed, for him, subjective violence is visible operating in “reality:” that dimension of the human experience that is concrete and social, while objective violence works in the *invisible* “Real:” the facet of the social abstract “that determines what goes on in social reality” (Ibid; p. 13). He argues the former form of violence is subject to and made possible by the latter, and the history of the latter is inherent as “the normal state;” *its historical context is the algorithm of effecting the construct of capitalism* (Ibid; pp. 12-13). Žižek observes what has come to be called the civilizing process, in large measure, is

what others, such as Kant, Maistre, and Pascal, would call the “founding crime” of state-making (Ibid; p. 116).

Regarding symbolic violence, Žižek asserts things are the way they are not because of any “ontic” reason, or because one declares them *dasein*: to be so. They are because one acts upon what one says, and thus, one’s actions make what one say’s consequent (Ibid; pp. 71-73). He observes that this notion is the point of Heidegger’s idea of essence:

‘essence’ is something that depends on the *historical context* on the epochal disclosure of being that occurs in and through language. He calls this the ‘*house of being*’ (italics applied)

The point is language becomes the determining factor of the reality of the “Real;” it is “the ‘essencing,’ the making of essences that is the work of language” (Ibid; p. 67). Thus, “A fundamental violence exists in this ‘essencing’ ability of language” (Ibid; p. 68). And it is language, says Žižek, “that is the first and greatest divider, it is because of language that we and our neighbours (can) ‘live in different worlds’ even when we live on the same street. What this means is that verbal violence is not a secondary distortion, but the ultimate resort of every specifically human violence” (Ibid; p. 66). This emphasis on language has important implications in many dimensions, including its use to establish the “historical context on the epochal disclosure of being” or narrative. Thus, the power of language may be employed violently or nonviolently. The question is what determines

its character? For example, what is the metric that measures whether the use of language is to affirm or deny the dignity and worth of human kind?

This dilemma is captured in Žižek's question, "Why should Kissinger, when he ordered the carpet bombing of Cambodia that led to the deaths of tens of thousands, be less of a criminal than those responsible for the Twin Towers collapse" (Ibid; pp. 45-46)? The answer, in part, is that states hold the monopoly on violence and the state that can dominate all others, or at least those who would challenge it, can use its *power to dominate* with impunity. Such impunity comes also from its *power to define* the narrative around that use, and its *power to defend* itself successfully with violent means against those who would challenge that use. Thus, in this example one sees Žižek's three modes of violence: the subjective violence of Kissinger's decision and execution in his order, the symbolic violence of the narrative that defines reality, what constitutes "civilized" violence as opposed to the violence of the uncivilized, and the systemic violence of the hegemon, in this case the superpower, that makes it all possible as a function of the "normal." Žižek challenges this normal:

*Is there not something suspicious, indeed symptomatic, about this focus on subjective violence—that violence which is enacted by social agents, evil individuals, disciplined repressive apparatuses, fanatical crowds? Doesn't it desperately try to distract our attention from the true locus of trouble, by obliterating from view other forms of violence and thus actively participating in them* (Ibid; pp. 10-11)?

Žižek argues that capitalism is not “global at the level of meaning... [I]ts global dominion can only be formulated at the level of truth-without meaning, as the ‘Real’ of the global market mechanism” (Ibid; pp. 79-80). He observes what makes capitalism truly global is the accumulation and concentration of global capital in the hands of the few through the “free circulation of commodities” and the unfettered geographical reach it gives them, while the many are precluded from participation in either the geographical or the capital reach. Thus, the true meaning of globalization, capitalist-style, is “the circulation of ‘things’ (commodities)...while the circulation of ‘persons’ is more and more controlled” (Ibid; p. 102). The “Real” truth of the reality of globalization is the accumulation and concentration of capital in the North and isolation segregation of the poor in the South. This is the reality of structural violence: “The fundamental divide is one between those included in the sphere of (relative) economic prosperity and those excluded from it” (Ibid).

Žižek’s three forms of violence impinge on the human experience as a function of personal, inter-personal and extra-personal phenomena. That is, they are subjective, objective, and symbolic, and, he argues, they find expression through the mechanism of liberal-capitalism. One wonders absent these social machinations, where and how each form of violence would manifest in the human experience. Is capitalism inherently violent, invoking all three forms? Are all three forms of violence utilitarian, if essential, ingredients of the capitalism’s ontic character? Or, does it apprehend each form to use as an expedient characteristic in lieu of some other utensil that would serve its longevity?

Does such longevity give capital meaning, not in the Marxian tradition of value of/from production, but value for value's sake, that is, capital for capital's sake?

Still, as with Arendt and Fanon, there is another notion in Žižek's logic where violence is at once natural and justifiable, because it is emancipatory, and thus, justified. The implication is that there are both "good" and "bad" forms of violence, where such determination depends on human liberation in its fullest emancipatory sense: achieving one's full human potential. He states his case by asking how can one wholly repudiate violence when struggle and aggression are part of life" (Ibid; p. 69). His idea is that aggression is a natural part of human existence, both with respect to experiences that are human to human and those exigent encounters that are apart from such binary human interaction. Both engage "life-force verses death-force" dichotomies that are mutually exclusive. This logic begs further consideration of where and how liberal capitalism fits into this construct.

## **Conclusion**

The task of this chapter was to understand violence in the historical context of the human experience. In this regard, the focus is on its relationship to social change and human development. Reviewing the thinking of Arendt, Fanon, Galtung, Pinker and Žižek on the subject helps to frame this context. Each understands violence as a system or systemic phenomenon impinging between or upon, and thus affecting the life chances of societies and their citizens. None of them argue violence is intrinsic to human nature, though Pinker argues it results from learned evolutionary processes. All would agree *it is a decided instrument of human volition as a means toward a desired end*. Thus, one

might conclude, each would hold violence is central to understanding the processes and trajectory of social change and human development.

A summary of their treatises finds that Hannah Arendt provides an important view of violence as a political phenomenon, with its many forms, including power, authority, strength, and force. Her counter-intuitive approach to power and violence places ultimate power of the state in the hands of the people, which they may give through their consent to be governed. Franz Fanon presents an instructive theoretical argument for the use of violence when a people are confronted with seemingly intractable exploitation and oppression. His vision is a re-made humanity. Johan Galtung, Steven Pinker, and Slavoj Žižek propose taxonomies of violence that provide nuanced constructs and vantages for viewing its role in change and development. Galtung posits taxonomy that relates its elements as causes and effects that are mutually reinforcing. Pinker presents a framework to access an exhausting survey of direct violence over human history that concludes human beings are becoming less violent as a matter of the civilizing process. And, Žižek's framework leads to his argument that the civilizing process has produced a political economy that is inherent to structural violence, and increasingly so (Ibid; p. 61). He seconds Galtung's motion of framing violence and thus, punctuates his point that it requires one "to move from the desperate humanitarian SOS call to stop violence to the analysis of that other SOS, the complex interaction to the three modes of violence: subjective, objective, and symbolic" (Ibid; p. 11).

Galtung and Fanon would agree that structural violence is an impediment to one achieving *their* full humanity, or human potential. They both see a "gap" (Galtung 1969)



between what one has and what they might attain. Galtung sees the gap is *within* an individual's perceived reality, while Fanon views the gap as being *between* different individuals' perceived realities. The former is a perceived deprivation from what one thinks they might attain and what they currently have (ability), while the latter is the perception of what one has versus what they should have compared to others (opportunity). Notwithstanding this difference in perception, Fanon would agree with Galtung that the gap, or Galtung's insults to basic needs, is *avoidable*, and Galtung would agree it is *eliminable*. This begs the question in both cases by what means; that is, what is the means by which the gap is closed?

Arendt, Fanon, and Žižek argue physical violence may be a rational choice, when no other means is sufficient. Galtung would reject this option, while Pinker and Žižek are silent on the subject. Still, the authors' make the collective case that a historical context and its attending values are relevant to understanding violence and its relationship to social change and human development. That is, they affirm Tilly's and Patterson's accounts of change and development.

Regarding underlying values, Žižek agrees with Jean-Marie Muller that "the renunciation of violence is the very core of being human," which translates as nonviolence is the stuff of humanity: "it is the principles and methods of non-violence...that constitute the humanity of human beings, the coherence and relevance of moral standards based both on convictions and a sense of responsibility" (Ibid; p. 61). This points to violent acts of volition as "man's inhumanity to man."

Indeed, the historical context and values that attend it provide a paradigm for evaluating violence today. Thus, when Steven Pinker argues human society is becoming less violent his vantage provides a view that would benefit from better focus. Perhaps Žižek makes the best argument in this case: what has come to be called the civilizing process, in large measure is what others would call the “founding crime” or the original sin of state-making (Ibid; p. 116). He opines that there is preoccupation with “subjective” or direct violence too often ignoring the sometimes invisible, but ubiquitous and “anonymous” objective or structural violence.

Perhaps, even more compelling, Arendt, Fanon, Galtung, and Žižek argue that direct behavioral violence disrupts the tranquil life of the social order, which is a view Pinker seems to not see. This begs the question whether Pinker’s notion of declining (direct) violence is simply (Galtung’s) negative peace by another name. The implication is that the declination of direct behavioral violence merely eliminates the overt and more than inconvenient disruptions of the social order for some, while rearticulating and redirecting them as covert structures that impinge on others as repression, oppression, exploitation. Some would argue that this negative peace is the subject of Western ideology or values that favor a privileged, if elitist, approach to change and development, which consequently sustains the status quo.

All the writers connect violence and progress, but Arendt, according to Bhabha, explicitly rejects Fanon’s teleological approach to social change (Ibid; p. xxxv). Arendt’s argument that the means of violence can be so volatile in the hands of humans they can overwhelm their objective purpose may help explicate Pinker’s reasoning regarding the

declination of violence in the civilizing process. That is, the means of direct violence becomes untenable toward sustaining the social order for those who might use it to establish “the tranquil life.” This position is consistent with Fanon’s notion that the privileged value the ends sought over the means used, though both may be inherently violent.

As noted above, Pinker’s bold assertion about the trajectory of violence in social change and human development and the facts that seem, indeed, probative have many reputable critics. Among these are Edward S. Herman and David Peterson (2013).

Herman and Peterson pull no punches in their review of Pinker’s book:

*Steven Pinker’s The Better Angels of Our Nature: Why Violence Has Declined is a terrible book, both as a technical work of scholarship and as a moral tract and guide. But it is extremely well-attuned to the demands of U.S. and Western elites at the start of the 21st century, with its optimistic message that the “better angels” of their nature are taking charge, and its lament over the other peoples of the world, whose “inner demons” and cultural backwardness have prevented them from keeping-up (Ibid).*

So, one returns to the question, how far is far enough to determine that human kind is truly becoming less violent? One way of getting at an answer, and more important to the query of this thesis, is to re-focus Pinker’s definition of violence. As previously noted, he provides a nuanced meaning identified above as personal or direct violence. But, what of structural violence? How would Pinker’s formulae fair if applied to it? Since

he relies on numbers to help make his case, would similar statistical metrics result should his careful study include this re-articulation of violence? For example, Pinker's work makes the case that individuals give up their inclinations, if rights, to personal violence to the state, but does this then create the opportunity, if reality, for an accumulation and concentration of power that inures to a particular group or class of people or that effectively rearticulates and redirects violence as an impersonal, indirect (covert) structural edifice where no one's hands are dirty? Arendt seems to think so.

Pinker says of human, "demons" and "angels" are part of their biological nature and their existence comes from evolutionary psychology and neuroscience. What would these sciences have to say about human nature cause and effect on structural forms of violence? Is structural violence—as, Fanon argues, social constructs—any less a phenomenon of human biological nature that comes from the evolutionary psychology and neuroscience only collectively manifest through state societies? Since states hold a monopoly on violence, does this monopoly apply and the violence manifest in both personal/direct and impersonal/structural forms? And, has the civilization process been mere violence (of *both* kinds) by another name? Are the very reasons why physical violence decreases the same reasons that structural increases, if it does?

To answer these questions, one must first answer, how does one quantify and evaluate structural violence? The ability to answer this question relies on quantifying and evaluating empirical evidence. If Pinker is right even in some, but not all respects, might it be that physical violence was necessary for particular reasons and under certain circumstances that either no longer serve predominant human interests or have

diminished to the extent that they no longer matter (e.g. slavery, colonialism and various other “isms,”)?) Indeed might it be they are counter-productive to a new world order? And, therefore, is the seventh shift or trend needed in Pinker’s progressive peace structural? If so, what would structural peace look like? And, what would the sixth “force” be to drive it? One final question in this line is whether Pinker’s observation regarding evolutionary psychology and neuroscience can also apply to nonviolence? The answer to this question might have significant relevance to the quest for a nonviolent theory of change.

Even more, when it comes to some forms of violence, Arendt asserts means may easily overwhelm an actor’s intended end, and thus, “means used to achieve political goals are more often than not of greater relevance to the future world than the intended goals” (Arendt 1969; p. 4). Thus, the means of war have made it untenable. Hence, she asserts that deterrence is the best guarantee of peace because technological capabilities have “now reached the point where no political goal could conceivably correspond to their destructive potential or justify their actual use in armed conflict” (Ibid; pp. 3-4). This observation has other implications, which beg the question whether Pinker’s point that direct violence has decreased over time reflects the diminishing returns observation made by Arendt. In other words, have the means of direct violence reached a point that it is disruptive to the intended ends? This question raises another and reframes the observation above: has structural violence replaced or at least become more effective in sustaining the status quo once dependent upon direct violence? These questions bring into focus Pinker’s conclusions about violence. When taking violence into its totality, that is,

using, for example, Galtung's taxonomy, restating the previous query, have other forms of violence, and particularly the structural kind, increased as direct violence has decreased? These questions help to shape the paradigmatic framing for a nonviolence theory of change. But, they are only half of the puzzle. The next chapter will look at the history and values of nonviolence on change and development.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: NONVIOLENCE, SOCIAL CHANGE AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT**

There are many definitions of nonviolence and no one person can claim sole authorship of the concept. Still, there are some themes generally central to the major schools of nonviolence thought. Perhaps the dominant characteristics held by theorists are that nonviolence is a philosophy, a principled strategy, and a practical methodology. Theorists and scholars such as Mohandas K. Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Jr., Gene Sharp, Joan V. Bondurant, Johan Galtung, V.K. Kool, and Thomas Weber variously describe these terms. The nomenclature used herein reflects the researcher's point of view that it better apprehends an understanding of the concept's nuanced meaning for this thesis. Chapter six will discuss pragmatic non-violent action and nonviolent social change and development. This chapter will give principle focus to the works of Gandhi, King, Sharp, and Galtung, while it will employ Bondurant, Weber, and Kool to further explicate some of the nuanced ideas of nonviolence.

What is important here is taking the broad view of the concept. For example, Maria J. Stephan and Erica Chenoweth (2011) miss this point in their seminal work, *Why Civil Resistance Works*, as does Steven Pinker in his "Better Angels" treatise, as they discuss the concept's efficacy, when they make a distinction between "conscientious" (or principled) and "strategic" (or pragmatic) nonviolence. As noted below, nonviolence may be understood in these two significant ways, however, bifurcating nonviolence as two

disparate ideas *when discussing its relevance and efficacy* (i.e. viability) as a theoretical construct is at best short-sighted. Certainly one must take epistemological care not to ascribe more than nonviolence deserves in touting the viability of its praxis. At the same time, ontologically, all that nonviolence achieves should be recognized.<sup>xii</sup> In other words, while one might justify discriminating in its application, there is also a legitimate conceptual wholeness in the philosophy of nonviolence that conflates both its principled and strategic ideas.

What, then, is nonviolence? As mentioned above, there are multiple definitions of the idea. The two most applicable to this study may be described as pragmatic (strategic) nonviolence and conscientious (principled) nonviolence (Stiehm, 1968). As with nonviolence generally, these terms are described variously by others, and are used in this thesis solely to apprehend a framework for examining the thesis question. Before exploring these ideas, the discussion following will contextualize the general concept of nonviolence in human history.

The theory has historical dimensions of time, space, and thought that originate in Eastern culture, with both philosophical and religious roots. A quick survey would find seeds of nonviolence in Christianity, Islam, and Judaism. Even before the Abrahamic faiths, Robert L. Holmes and Barry L. Gan (2005; pp. 2-3) note the sayings from the Hindu *Bhagavad Gita* around the fourth to fifth centuries BCE, the *Dhammapada* sayings of the Buddha and Plato's *Apology* about Socrates' defense in 399 BCE, and *Crito* in 360 BCE contain counsels or concepts of nonviolence. Contemporary nonviolence is generally attributed to Henry David Thoreau's *Civil Disobedience* essay (1817). All of



these early ideas of nonviolence influenced theorists and practitioners alike as it found footing in the social struggles of the late nineteenth into the mid-twentieth centuries. It is this latter stage where this study focuses on its current dichotomous meanings.

Pragmatic nonviolent action (PNVA) focuses on action—protest, persuasion, noncooperation, resistance or intervention—that is triggered by conflict and carried out without the use of physical violence.<sup>xiii</sup> It may include coercion (McCarthy and Kruegler 1993; pp. 2-3). Further, PNVA does not work within institutionalized frameworks of social, political, or economic systems and is often described as the technique approach or strategic nonviolence (Ibid). It is independent of belief systems (Ibid; p. 4). Conscientious nonviolence (it is for now referred to as nonviolent social change and development or NSCD for reasons discussed in chapter six) focuses on violence in all its forms as well. Its action may include all the forms of PNVA. In other words, NSCD subsumes PNVA.

Thus, there are two issues that impinge on an understanding of nonviolence and how it is operationalized in the human experience. First, as previously discussed, nonviolence is philosophically a wholistic term that may be operationalized as (1) *a pragmatic instrument rooted in and triggered by conflict* and/or (2) *a conscientious concept that compels human behavior*. Second, these operational terms are often juxtaposed dichotomously, roughly connoting strategic/pragmatic versus conscientious/principled ideas. In the latter case, the issue is, *principally*, ontological, while the former is methodological.

Kool argues, “From the point of view of modern social psychology, the approaches to study nonviolent behavior in the absence of a belief system (the

pragmatic/strategic approach) are more concrete and visible, while they represent the action domain of behavior. According to Hare (1968), *the motivation of activists in such cases is based on a short-term goal to use nonviolence as a tool to resolve a conflict*” (Kool, 2008; p. 12; italics applied). Kool further observes,

*On the other hand, a study of nonviolence in the form of principle raises problems. According to Flanagan (1991), there is no single ethic that binds moral behavior and therefore there is no common purpose moral algorithm suitable for understanding moral problems. In short, a study of moral behavior, as related to nonviolence, is more complicated than what appears to most people as a straightforward, simple relationship* (Ibid; p. 13).

This is an essential point that bares careful reflection to understand its relevance to this study and its application in human relations. Thus, it will be integrally discussed below as framing and sense making for a nonviolence theory of change.

### **On Nonviolence**

Nonviolence as a means of effecting social change and human development is a subject that has not received sufficient attention in either subject category. *As scholars have contemplated nonviolent social change, however, scant attention has been given to its relationship to the collective nature of the development of societies and the societal consequences of development as a holistic theory.* In such regard, this section considers many of the broad themes that arise from a look at the theory of nonviolent social change as espoused by some of its most significant theorists.

While there are many definitions of nonviolence there are some themes generally central to the major schools of thought. As previously noted, the dominant characteristics held are nonviolence is a philosophy, a principled strategy, and a practical methodology. A review of literature reveals there are formal and informal, intentional and unintentional theoretical elements of the nonviolent campaigns that have led to the remarkable changes taking place in societies around the world and throughout the past century or so. Before looking closer at its relevance and efficacy, the following discussion will review the thinking of some of the most prominent champions and theorists of nonviolence over the past century.

### **Johan Galtung**

This thesis has previously discussed Johan Galtung's thinking on violence. As one of the principle founders of the field of conflict analysis and resolution, his work is also significant to a survey of nonviolence. For Galtung, the logic of struggle against violence is found in the "pragmatics of nonviolence" (Galtung 1996; p. 117). He sees nonviolent struggle as measurably effective against both direct and structural violence (Ibid; p. 117). Galtung argues conflict transformation or "a new formation" (Ibid; p. 90) requires overcoming barriers of *conscientization* and *mobilization* (Ibid; p. 93). He defines conscientization as "the element of *consciousness-formation* (Ibid; p. 257 italics his). He observes, "The parties [in a conflict] should emerge from the conflict not only with better social relations, but also as better persons than they were before, better equipped to take on new conflict nonviolently" (Ibid). Thus, like Kool, he sees nonviolence as a tool for conflict resolution.

Galtung's approach to nonviolence raises several questions. What does he mean by "better equipped to take on conflict nonviolently?" What is it about the parties that make them better equipped and what is the *equipment*? What is their behavior? What does it look like? Is it action and, if so, of what type? Is it preventive and, if so, what is its constitutive quality? In other words, is there some form of nonviolence that is conflict relevant, such that it at once follows/informs, anticipates/attends conflict, and precedes/precludes violence?

Galtung makes this compelling point about nonviolence: "there is no beginning and certainly no end...the drama is in the middle" (Galtung 1996, 122). He contends nonviolence is like love: it must constantly be renewed. "There is no such thing as a final victory" (Ibid; p. 122). His point is nonviolence is a process—a *continuing continuance* (or permanent perseverance); that is, it is a way of life, a way of being—of being human being. Thus, regarding the contrast between pragmatic and conscientious nonviolence, Galtung makes the poignant point: "Nonviolence seen only as a bag of tricks, doing little more than making life unpleasant [for the Other], is a very shallow form of nonviolence, indeed" (Ibid).

One of the needs in effecting a world of nonviolence is an inculcation of a nonviolence discourse. Galtung speaks to this idea when he concludes, "nonviolence has to become a part of the common discourse, and more particularly of a less violent political science, in addition to being an increasingly important part of peace studies" (Ibid; p. 124). Since making these remarks there has been significant new work yielding important literature on nonviolence (Coy 2013). Still, understanding nonviolence requires

a framework that does not currently exist. Galtung's construct includes elements that are the timber of the paradigmatic framework, but they are not the framework itself. That is, the current way of thinking about social change and human development follows a narrative—a way of viewing, understanding, and communicating reality—that itself may meet the definition of violence. The fields of peace and conflict are preponderated by this “traditional” language and way of thinking. Žižek observes this point when he queries, “how can one wholly repudiate violence when struggle and aggression are part of life? The easy way out is a terminological distinction between the ‘aggression’ that effectively amounts to a ‘life-force’ and the ‘violence’ that is a ‘death-force’: ‘violence,’ here, is not aggression as such, but its excess, which disturbs the normal run of things by desiring always more and more. The task becomes to get rid of this excess” (Žižek 2008; p. 63). This is the challenge, then, for the peace and conflict fields.

### **Mohandas K. Gandhi**

Mohandas K. Gandhi is central to any search for an understanding of the role of nonviolence and its history and values in social change and human development. Gandhi is commonly regarded as the father of modern-day nonviolence. His work to gain freedom and justice for his people in the late nineteenth century in South Africa and early twentieth century in India showed the way for an army of others who would follow him seeking positive social change. *Satyagraha*, the term Gandhi gave to his nonviolence notion for human struggle, is perhaps most often recognized as his seminal principle. This dialectic idea joins “truth” (*satya*) and “persistence” or “insistence” (*agraha*), making new meaning for the coined-term “soul-force” or truth-force.” In discussing his

idea, Gandhi explains that *satyagraha* encompasses non-nonviolent resistance—a form of direct action that has become colloquial in the language of the various approaches to nonviolence commonly espoused in the genre’s community. Still, Gandhi crafted a creative, if complicated, framework of other terms to give further meaning to his ideas.

Regarding Gandhi’s terminological construct, Joan V. Bondurant observes his ideas are often misunderstood. For example, she asserts *satyagraha* is “equated with non-violence and with passive resistance. In the preface of her 1965 edition, Bondurant observes, “It is rarely understood that Gandhi’s technique of *satyagraha* cannot be equated with civil disobedience, and that it goes well beyond the pressure tactics familiar in forms of demonstration and strike” (Bondurant 1965; p. v). Bondurant further observes, such “acts of symbolic violence, or *duragraha*, may solve some problems and resolve certain conflicts. But in instances where fundamental change is expected, *duragraha* is an ineffective method” (Ibid; p. ix). She further observes, “direct action may weaken both respect for law and confidence in democratic procedures” (Ibid; p. ix). The point is that unprincipled or pragmatic nonviolent action has limitations and connotations that may belie the relevance and efficacy of its principled or conscientious forms.

Bondurant also seeks to clarify Gandhi’s position on the relationships among nonviolence and means and ends with absolute and relative truth. For Gandhi, relative truth is found in the process or *means* of seeking the product or *end* that is absolute truth. In the inevitable chaos of so many “truths,” relatively held from one person to another is the mediation of *ahimsa* or nonviolence. Thus, nonviolence is a means whose end is

community (of truths for Gandhi as opposed to King's "Beloved"). The idea for Gandhi is not negative, but positive: "I accept the interpretation of Ahimsa namely that it is not merely a negative state of harmlessness but it is a positive state of love, of doing good even to the evil-doer" (Ibid; p. 24). In case one misunderstands his idea as passive resistance, Gandhi further expounds: "But it does not mean helping the evil-doer to continue the wrong or tolerating it by passive acquiescence. On the contrary, love, the active state of Ahimsa, requires you to resist the wrong-doer by dissociating yourself from him even though it may offend him or injure him physically." (Ibid; p. 24). Here Gandhi introduces love into his idea connecting it with nonviolence. Such love is active, not passive. Neither is it merely emotional, but rather principle. It is through this principle that action proceeds. Ultimately, argues Gandhi, when it comes to the elements of *satyagraha* "*ahimsa* is the means; Truth is the end" (Ibid; italics in the original).

To summarize these clarifications then, Bondurant posits "Gandhian notions may be stated as Gandhian objectives, Gandhian principles, and Gandhian means" (Ibid; p. 6). Where his objectives were *swaraj* (independence) and *sarvodaya* ("uplift for all"); Gandhian principles include "non-violence, adherence to truth, and dignity of labor"; and Gandhian means, which chiefly include *saytagraha* (Ibid).

It is his idea of *swaraj* that gives this thesis its greatest pause to examine the Mahatma's thinking, for it conveys that Gandhi's principle concern is the object or "end" of his logic: independence—self-rule (or home-rule for the Indian independence movement). In other words, if *satyagraha* is his broader logic's means, then, *swaraj* is its end. Thus, what is important to this thesis is not so much Gandhi's specific critique of

social change and human development, per se, (that is, his view of modern civilization) nor is it his evolving prescription for a remedy (that is, truth, nonviolence, and self-suffering); though, they are essential. Rather, the general trajectory of his ideology is the dignity and worth of personhood and the social, political, and economic structures requisite to respect the correlating rights he believed individuals hold to freedom, justice, and equality. These elements are found in his concept of *swaraj*.

Thus, one must understand Gandhi's view of change and development in order to comprehend the deeper meaning of his nonviolence logic. It is anchored in his broader notion or worldview of civilization. In what many consider his seminal work, *Hind Swaraj*, Gandhi provides his clearest articulation of this worldview, explaining why modern (Western) civilization should be decried. He argued Western values favor "bodily welfare" over "spiritual welfare" (Gandhi 2009; p. 34). He saw this focus as a fundamental flaw in the value system of Western civilization and its algorithms of social change and human development. As Gandhi saw it, chief among the values system is "greed," which renders it perilous and "cruel" (Gandhi 2004; p. 83).

Thus, Gandhi's declared opposition to "modern civilization" concerns what he saw as a value framework that favors some people and disfavors others. In other words, his concern about the Western "civilizing process" is its effects on the masses of people who are denied full human dignity as a result of the accumulation and concentration of power in the hands of a few. Hence, he rejected British civilization, not only because of its oppressive structures, systems, processes and policies, as he viewed them, but also more important, because of the underlying values that support them. Alternatively, as



discussed below, Gandhi held that the values of the Indian people were superior to those of the British (Gandhi 2009; pp. 111-112). This is not to say that he found Western civilization totally errant. To the contrary, he found in it real civic virtues such as the rule of law, notions of equality, and economic development (Gandhi 2009; p. xviii). Still, Gandhi argued progress can not be measured by material gain alone or even primarily; a moral calculus is required. Morality for him precludes the enrichment of the few at the expense of the many. As the following suggests, his concern is consonant with King's: Western civilization seems more concerned with making a living than a life.

Gandhi was ever mindful that the perils and cruelties of modernity are human constructs that, for him, impersonate progress, are devised as the successive iterations of that process by the powerful, and are designs that perpetuate their positions of privilege. For example, what some regard as structural violence Gandhi described as “organized violence.” He argued before Galtung (see Weigert 2004, and Galtung 1969) such violence “has been organized ... on a scale unknown before and manipulated in so insidious a manner as not to be easily seen or felt as such” (Geetha 2004; p. 231). He further argued,

*Let us, too, understand how organized violence works and is on that account far more harmful than sporadic, thoughtless, sudden outburst [of “naked violence”]. Ordered violence hides itself often behind camouflage and hypocrisy as we see them working through the declarations of good intentions, commissions, conferences and the like, or even through measures conceived as tending to the public benefit but in reality to the benefit of the wrongdoer (Ibid). [Such violence]*

*wears the mask of peace and progress so-called (Ibid; p. 231). “Indeed, the test of orderliness in a country is not the number of millionaires it owns, but the absence of starvation among the masses (Ibid; p. 98).*

Thus, one finds in Gandhi’s reasoning the rudiments for understanding structural violence and its relationship to his logic of nonviolence.

Asked what contribution India had made to human progress, Gandhi responded unequivocally, “Non-violence” (Ibid; p. 220). He saw the idea as a fundamental precept of human interaction and civic engagement, for social change and human development. Gandhi’s concept of *ahimsa* (non-violence) came from the deep traditions and cultures of Indian civilization. Bhikhu Parekh observes

*For Gandhi, Indian civilization was essentially plural and non-dogmatic. From the very beginning it had realized that the ultimate reality was infinite and inexhaustible and that different individuals grasped different aspects of it. None was wholly wrong and none wholly right (Parekh 1989; p. 75).*

Importantly, Parekh further explicates the civilizational setting of India as Gandhi experienced it:

*Indian civilization was not only plural but pluralist, that is, committed to plurality as a desirable value, not just a collection of different ethnic, religious and cultural groups but a unity-in-diversity. Since it held that different men perceived ultimate reality differently and that a richer view of it could only be attained by a*

*dialogue between them, it not only tolerated but respected and welcomed diversity and encouraged discussion between its constituent groups (Ibid).*

Unity-in-diversity is core to the calculus of Gandhi's logic. This principle holds together his idea of truth. Individuals have a right to their perception of truth. Each individual must allow for another's truth, if others are to allow for his or hers.

Thus, among those things Gandhi observed as core to the collective cultures and traditions of Indian civilization was religion. He saw India as a "truly spiritual nation" (Ibid). Where the West developed along lines leading to material things, Gandhi argued, India followed the path of those things spiritual. Hence, religion plays a central role and faith is fundamental to his idea of nonviolence. His faith is founded upon his belief in God. Indeed, for him, humanity inheres and coheres on the premise of the existence of God. That is, God Is. Weber observes "The metaphysical nature of the connection between 'Truth' and 'God' is explained by Gandhi in a private letter:"

*In "God is Truth" is certainly does not mean "equal to" nor does it merely mean, "is truthful". Truth is not a mere attribute of God, but He is That. He is nothing if he is That. Truth in Sanskrit means Sat. Sat means Is. Therefore Truth is implied in Is. God is, nothing else is. Therefore the more truthful we are, the nearer we are to God. We are only to the extent that we are truthful (Weber 1991; p. 44).*

Thus, for Gandhi, the ultimate existential meaning of the human experience is to search for God. As he might put it, finding meaning in the human experience is finding truth,

because God is Truth. That said, Gandhi's logic is ever respectful of India's pluralist society. While he held himself a Hindu, "I certainly prize it above all other religions" (Geetha 2004; p. 1952), Gandhi believed that all religions share the principle of truth, which binds all faiths to *a common canon of truth*.

Gandhi's concept of truth—there is an absolute truth, but no one knows truth absolutely—forces a dialectic with faith. His idea of truth must be liberated from any religious or theological dogma, while not alienating another's truth. Thus, Gandhi makes a "fine distinction" between the two ideas: God is Truth and Truth is God, where the latter is *a priori*. Bondurant quotes N. K. Bose's interpretation of this distinction:

"[Gandhi] could easily accommodate as fellow-seekers those who looked on Humanity or any other object as their god, and for which they were prepared to sacrifice their all. By enthroning Truth on the highest pedestal, Gandhi thus truly became catholic, and lost all trace of separateness from every other honest man who worshipped gods other than his own" (Bondurant 1965; p.18). Thus, he could say all faiths lead to the same divine principle: God is Truth, and Truth is God. Bondurant makes the connection of this logic in *satyagraha* when she observes, "Truth in satyagraha leads to an ethical humanism." (Bondurant 1965; p. 32). Now, Gandhi opens his ideology to the spectrum of pluralist beliefs from atheism to humanism to theism and beyond.

Gandhi's concept of God and the human experience make a connection between the metaphysical and the existential: from his belief in self-realization to his reach for self-rule. Indeed, in the introduction to "*The Story of My Experiments with Truth*," he declares, "What I want to achieve—what I have been striving and pining to achieve these

thirty years—is self-realization, to see God face to face, to attain *Moksha*. I live and move and have my being in pursuit of this goal. All that I do by way of speaking and writing, and all my ventures in the political field, are directed to this same end” (Gandhi 2008, xii). H. J. N. Horsburgh says Gandhi's focus on truth as humans perceive it relates to "our beliefs about the nature of human need and the form of community which would satisfy it most fully" (Horsburgh 1968; p. 35). This is an important point as it identifies with human development and the social, political, economic and cultural frameworks (policies, systems, structures, and practices), that define the ways and means societies are constructed and human needs are addressed—i.e., how they achieve their full potential. Thus, Gandhi's idea of "self-realization" is tantamount to King's notion of personalism.

Gandhi's arguments in *Hind Swaraj* for rejecting Western civilization are criticized as idealistic, hyperbolic, and even misguided. Such criticism arises, perhaps, from his youthful reliance on the religious and moral values that would be tempered by the press of experience (Dalton 1993; p. 20-21). Gandhi argues, “just as a free civilization demands ‘mastery over our mind and our passions,’ so freedom for the individual consists of each person establishing self-rule” (Ibid; p. 22). This idea comports with his notion of truth. More important, it foretells the notion discussed in chapter five that sovereignty is to the national state what personhood is to the individual. Where the individual's rights and responsibilities rest in personal self-rule, so the state's rights and responsibilities repose in political self-rule—that is, over a collective territory and population. In both cases, there is an implied moral imperative. Gandhi defined the notion in terms that “Swaraj of a people means the sum total of Swaraj of individuals” (Ibid).

The state cannot be fully what it ought to be, unless the individual (each individual) is unfettered, with respect to the state in achieving his or her potential.

Thus, Gandhi interpreted *swaraj* as a quadrangle notion where truth, nonviolence, political and economic freedom hold the idea as a whole whose sum is greater than its parts. A community or nation based upon these principles would provide for its people an environment of respect, dignity and worth, where the individual is free to enjoy self-reliance: self-determination and self-development. In the end, the fundamental principle for Gandhi is not nonviolence, or self-determination, or soul-force, but truth. Indeed, his autobiography sums up its importance: *The Story of my experiments with truth*. For Gandhi, truth might be absolute, but no one individual holds truth absolutely. Thus, arriving at truth is a nonviolent experiment, a journey whose destiny may never be realized, either by the individual or the state, but whose direction is certain. Like King's, Gandhi's logic of nonviolence is a long, if never ending, journey with an inexorable move toward justice.

### **Martin Luther King, Jr.**

Martin Luther King, Jr. was seized by the historical conjuncture of the mid-twentieth century national and international social change challenges. The cold war struggles of superpowers and angst against (US) American apartheid captured King, thrusting him in the currents of these storms. But, the young preacher-theologian-activist-theorist had recently been well prepared both socially and academically with a culminating doctorate from Boston University. In just three short years beyond a decade, he would become the dominant figure and voice for change and development of that time

in the United States. For the purposes of this thesis what is most important is an overview of his logic relative to social change and human development. To this end, the following will examine a sampling of his utterances and the work of scholars on this subject.

King's logic of nonviolence is rooted in the vision (or *dream*) of humanity in nonviolent (beloved) community. For him, human personality and community form a virtuous circle where community is the collective of human personality, while personality must find unfettered expression or freedom within the context of community. Throughout his short, but impactful life, these principles, *community*, *personality*, and *freedom*, shaped his vision for social change and human development. One might argue, King recognized that social change and human development are teleological implements for constructing the framework of society. Such work is what others might call the civilizing process. King called it "the great adventure of 'community'" (Washington 1968; p. 122). This is how King describes the adventure:

*Whenever Cro-magnon (sic) man, under whatever strange impulse, put aside his stone ax and decided to mutually cooperate with his caveman neighbor, it marked the most creative turn of events in his existence. That seemingly elementary decision set in motion what we now know as civilization. At the heart of all that civilization has meant and developed is 'community'—that mutually cooperative and voluntary venture of man to assume a semblance of responsibility for his brother. What began as the closest answer to a desperate need for survival from the beast of prey and the danger of the jungle was the basis of present cities and*

*nations. Man could not have survived without the impulse which makes him the societal creature he is (Ibid).*

With this teleological view, King's calculus reckons the inevitability of change and development in the human experience and he admonishes that humans must "face the challenge of change" (Ibid; p. 3). His great concern is that its trajectory and the *values* that drive it have come to represent "offenses against the community" (King 1967; p. 184). He sees these offenses as manifest in poverty, racism, and war, which are, as *forms of violence* or "evils," the enemy of the person, since they limit human freedom, deny human potential, and destroy human community (see "World House," in King 1967). Like Gandhi before him, King's logic holds that such *violence* has become the norm of the Western world that embraces an ideology where "We have allowed the means by which we live to outdistance the ends for which we live" (King 1967; p. 169). In other words, making a life is subordinated to making a living. The former is rooted in the idea of the *individual*, while the latter is based on the idea of the *person*.

King's calculus on change and development further counts the dignity and worth of every human being as functions that are both spiritual *and* social. Thus, he argues, human kind is in a condition that requires a "spiritual and moral reawakening" (Ibid; p. 173). This awakening includes recognizing the centrality of human personality to his logic of nonviolence. "Deeply rooted in our *political* and *religious* heritage is the conviction that every man is an heir to a legacy of dignity and worth" (Washington 1986; p. 118. Italics applied). In analyzing the Western world, he argues these values meet the



challenge of change and they are found in the US Declaration of Independence and in the Christian bible. Importantly, King references *both* the ethical norms codified in the nation's constitution and the moral moorings that anchor Christian beliefs. They represent both *conscientious* and *pragmatic* arguments for his logic.

Like Gandhi, King argues that social change and human development have been driven by an ideology that inclines toward privileging some people at the expense of others. He knows that the ideology has a value framework that is at once enabling and sustaining of that privilege. Further, the framework has a language and a culture that perpetuates the status quo. It has an elastic resilience: “[H]istory has proven that social systems have a great last minute breathing power, and the guardians of a status quo are always on hand with their oxygen tents to keep the old order alive” (Ibid; p. 141).

Further, King's logic sees such privileging of the few a violation of the many that evokes an innate yearning for freedom in humans (King 1967; p. 170). This freedom, he argues, is a *birthright* (Ibid), and the cords of this yearning are struck by the so called “progress” of change and development as “the aspirations and appetites of the world have been whetted by the marvels of Western technology and the self-image of a people awakened by religion” (Ibid). He further notes

*[O]ne cannot hope to keep people locked out of the earthly kingdom of wealth, health and happiness. Either they share in the blessings of the world or they organize to break down and overthrow those structures of governments which stand in the way of their goals* (Ibid).

This is the condition King analyzes in the mid-twentieth century. This is the “challenge of change,” which catalyzes, in large part, King’s call for a revolution of values. Thus, the connection between the individual and the community are seminal to King’s logic of nonviolence. He believes there is an inextricable link between individuals that carries through the collective, including the individual and his/her neighborhood and nation, between nation and nation, and between nation and the world community: a calculus rendering his idea of the World House.

King’s World House treatise presents his argument on the role that change and development play in human societies and what must be done to ameliorate their historical consequences. He argues “peaceable power” must be employed (Ibid; p. 184). Such power is “affirmative action” that seeks “to remove those conditions of poverty, insecurity and injustice” (Ibid; p. 189). Such action invokes “new systems of justice and equality” (Ibid). But, affirmative action as an idea may manifest through violence or without it. Decrying any impediment or fetter to the achievement of human potential as violence, King knows his remedy must be consistent with the end he seeks. That end is peace. The remedy must therefore be “peaceable power.”

With this in mind, King defines nonviolence: “true nonviolence is more than the absence of violence. It is the persistent and determined application of peaceable power to offenses against the community” (Ibid). This thesis has already discussed that offenses to community are evils or violence that manifests in poverty, bigotry, and war. They are violent because they are the enemy of the person, since they limit human freedom. But, what is peaceable power? What form of power would meet the metrics of necessary and

sufficient to offset offenses to community? King continues his line of reasoning by referring to “nonviolent direct action,” arguing it must be applied with persistence and determination (Ibid). Thus, for King, nonviolent direct action is peaceable power. But, does King expect nonviolent direct action—protest, non-cooperation, resistance, marching, sit-ins and so forth—to effect complex political, social, economic, and cultural transformations in the very warp and woof of their joint and several systems? In other words, does it alone meet the metrics necessary and sufficient when applied to complex structural violence and the trajectories of social change and human development? King’s answer to this question is “No.” He argues the purpose of direct action is to create the *environment* for change and development. It is a means and not an end. He further argues that what is needed to effect his vision of community is a revolution of values (Ibid; p. 187). Such a revolution is not one effected through the direct action of protest, noncooperation, and intervention. Rather, it is a change in values effected through the algorithms of integration.

To garner a full appreciation of King’s argument, one might examine and understand his logic of nonviolence through the metaphors of segregation, desegregation and integration. But, first, the following will recap this exploration of his logic thus far. First, King’s goal or vision is human community. He describes his vision in terms of a new world:

*a world in which men will live together as brothers; a new world in which men will beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning-hooks; a world in which men will no longer take necessities from the masses to give*

*luxuries to the classes; a world in which all men will respect the dignity and worth of all human personality* (Washington 1986; p. 1944).

King explains such a world would be a fully *integrated* society: “our ultimate goal is integration” (Ibid; p. 118).

In describing the “ethical demands” of an integrated society or community, King declares there are three values that must be present to break down segregation: the “prohibitive” systems that deny people an opportunity to achieve their full potential. These values were identified above as personhood, freedom, and community. King’s challenge is to find a means to effect them in the processes of change and development. He finds in nonviolence both the means and the end of social change and human development. It provides the means to eliminate those impediments to one achieving their full potential, which would require democratic structures, institutions, policies, and practices that frame the social, political and economic dimensions of human activity. Such a vision would also require justice and equality. He argues before Galtung, “True peace is not merely the absence of some negative force—tension, confusion, or war; it is the presence of some positive force—justice, goodwill, and brotherhood” (Ibid; pp. 6, 137, 295).

King understood that desegregation is not enough, because, while it eliminates “legal and social prohibitions,” it stops short of inclusion into the full range of human activity. Such inclusion is what King saw as “the democratic dream of integration” (Ibid; p. 118). Integration, then, provides pathways for full civic life: socially, politically, and

economically. These pathways represent the unfettered thoroughfares for realizing one's full potential. King argues that "segregation represents a system that is prohibitive;" it denies people access to the human activities that apprehend their full potential (Ibid). These activities are rooted in social, political, and economic "rights" that constitute human freedoms. King further observed that segregation denies personhood—"it is diametrically opposed to the principle of the sacredness of human personality" (Ibid; p. 119). Thus, racial segregation is one of the principle "evils," or forms of violence, King sought to eliminate. But, other forms of segregation have survived the movement he led. For example, class segregation, too, holds the same pernicious values that limit a person's life chances.

Now the question arises whether King's analysis of segregation, discrimination, and integration parallels and, thus, may be metaphorical to the logic of nonviolence that reclines in direct action. King argues the purpose of nonviolent direct action is to create the conditions of negotiation. That is, direct action is not an end, but a means. He says the purpose of direct action is creative tension that leads to negotiation (Ibid; p. 291). Yet, one knows that nonviolence for King is both a means and an end. This raises the question what then is the end? In the type, desegregation is a means that leads to integration, an end. Thus, the metaphorical parallel is that direct action is the means that leads to the condition for apprehending the end, which is community. But, what then is the implement or algorithm for apprehending community that is consistent with and parcel to King's principles of nonviolence? He provides the connection in his understanding of

personhood. The basis of integration is the indivisibility of all human kind. Likewise, the “fundamentum” of community is personalism.

King’s brand of nonviolence thus is “peaceable power,” both pragmatic and conscientious. In the former instance, just as in the case of desegregation, a pragmatic approach to nonviolence would not go far enough. Its work of elimination only removes the barriers of what is, but provides no remedy for what might be. It would provide for “sameness” but not “oneness” (Ibid; p. 118). Thus, for King, it would be necessary, but not sufficient. Only in the latter instance could nonviolence root out every vestige of oppression and exploitation. But, together, they represent the necessary and sufficient peaceable power required to create King’s idea of community.

King’s arguments further suggest direct action would *not* be necessary, if the values that establish and sustain societies, institution, policies, and processes are informed by nonviolence principles (personhood, freedom, and community). Strategic direct action may break down or overthrow regimes, but only a revolution of values will create the kind of society (or community) that respects the dignity and worth of human personality (King 1967; p. 186). Thus, for King, direct action (such as a boycott) is never “an end within itself; it is merely a means... [T]he end is reconciliation; the end is redemption; the end is the creation of ... community” (Washington 1986; p. 140).

Change and development processes have lead to the current human condition called modern civilization with all its quality of life accouterments, which is made possible by the progress of science and technology. As King considers them he perhaps thinks in the sobering terms penned by Hannah Arendt: “Progress...can no longer serve

as the standard by which to evaluate the disastrously rapid change-processes we have let loose” (Arendt 1969; p. 30). As King contemplates the challenges for his nonviolence logic and sees that the then current framework for prosecuting the struggle for change and development, he realizes it would not suffice for “the difficult days ahead.” He makes a prescient plea for new strategies that will be responsive this call:

We must rapidly begin the shift from a "thing"-oriented society to a "person"-oriented society. When machines and computers, profit motives and property rights are considered more important than people, the giant triplets of racism, materialism and militarism are incapable of being conquered. A civilization can flounder as readily in the face of moral and spiritual bankruptcy as it can through financial bankruptcy (King 1967; p. 186).

Thus, his call for a revolution of values is necessary in order to realize the dream of the community he seeks. What is the basis of these new values? And, how is such a revolution achieved? The answer to the former question is personhood. A new values framework must be laid that places the person over property and profits. And, to the latter question he observes:

*It evokes happy memories to recall the victories in the past decades were won with a broad coalition of organizations representing a wide variety of interests. But we deceive ourselves if we envision the same combination attacking structural changes in the society. It did not come together for such a program and will not reassemble for it (Ibid; p. 151).*

He does not see such a revolution taking place at the hands of nonviolent direct action alone, nor with the combination of organizations who helped win the movement's gains up to that time. This begs the question, how is a revolution of values achieved?

As he considers the change and development process dominant in the culture, King sees the need to "rise above the narrow confines of our *individualistic* concerns to the broader concerns of all humanity" (Washington 1986; p. 138; italics applied). He wonders what could compel such a redirection of the trajectory from an inner focus of individualism (not to be confused with personalism or the centrality of personality) that places property over people, doing well over doing good, and "chaos" over community, to an outer focus of the other. That is, he searches for a remedy to the "offenses against community" that creates a separation between persons and violates human dignity and worth and prevents the creation of community. This is the challenge that a new coalition and new strategies must forge. This is the challenge of a new paradigmatic framework.

### **Gene Sharp**

Perhaps no description is more apropos than Ackerman and Duvall's claim that Gene Sharp is "the great theoretician of nonviolent power" (Ackerman and Duvall 200, p. 8). This claim aptly captures the life-long work of what has become known as strategic or pragmatic nonviolence. Sharp himself puts it this way: "In political terms nonviolent action is based on a very simple postulate: People do not always do what they are told to do and sometimes they do things which have been forbidden to them" (Sharp 1973; p. 63). This statement is key to understanding Sharp's non-violence concept. First, his focus



is in the *political* realm. Second, he is concerned about *power* relative to that realm. And, third, he wants to apply nonviolent *action* to these terms. Again, Sharp's own words summarize his thesis:

*When people refuse their cooperation, withhold their help, and persist in their disobedience and defiance, they are denying their opponent the basic human assistance and cooperation which any government or hierarchical system requires. If they do this in sufficient numbers for long enough, that government or hierarchical system will no longer have power. This is the basic political assumption of nonviolent action* (Ibid; p. 63).

But, one cannot adequately understand Sharp's work without recognizing his early year's relationship to the work of Gandhi. Indeed, Sharp acknowledges "Gandhi's contribution" of a theory of power to nonviolent struggle (Sharp 1972; pp. 82-87). As Thomas Weber's discussion of the two theorists notes, Sharp began his "pilgrimage to nonviolence" as an ardent disciple of the Gandhian approach (Weber in *Peace and Change* 2003). In the Ackerman and Duvall description, one finds the key term that helps to parse the distinctions between the two champions of nonviolence: Sharp's focus is the effective use of nonviolent *power*. Weber notes, "While Sharp is concerned with social and political freedom, Gandhi's focus is on a search for truth" (Weber 2003; p. 264). Hence these disparate approaches unfold with Sharp's attention to the *pragmatic* use of *power* (the means) to effect desired change by *winning a struggle* with one's opponent (the end), while Gandhi's attention is always turned toward the *principled* approach of

*converting* the opponent (the means), while *searching for truth* (the end).

One of the significant, if unintended, contributions of Sharp's work that adds this discourse on nonviolence is ascribing to these disparate ideas the connotations of "this worldly" versus "other worldly" claims to pragmatic and conscientious nonviolence, respectively. In the former case, pragmatic nonviolence is claimed to be a real-world idea that responds to conflict with a realist approach. In the latter, conscientious nonviolence is perceived as an idealist model with moral motivations.

Weber summarizes Sharp's view of the two ideas:

*[T]he simple assertion that nonviolence must be adopted as an ethical principle "ignores the social reality in which we must operate." As long as violent sanctions are accepted, violence cannot be removed from political societies by "witnessing against it or denouncing it on moral grounds" (this is what he seems to have reduced principled nonviolence to). He states that first, nonviolence must reach the position where it is seen as an alternative form of sanction, and "once that major changeover has been completed," or at least is "well under way," then people can "consider and deal with the finer ethical problems which arise in the application of nonviolent sanctions." In short, be realistic; start with what is most easily achievable (Ibid; p. 259).*

One of the major departures Sharp takes from his early years is from the Gandhian idea of means and ends. Weber notes regarding this departure: "In Gandhi's philosophy the consequences of actions cannot be known in advance, and that is precisely

why the means, over which there is control, must be kept pure” (see Weber 2003, 256).

Weber observes Sharp developed a discomfort with Gandhi’s eccentric and religious behavior and language (Ibid). If nonviolence is to be seriously consumed by a Western audience, Gandhi and his ideas had to be rationalized. But, this required more than stripping away the personal proclivities of Gandhi’s personality, it meant re-articulating the meaning and methods of nonviolent action. Sharp describes the “motives” he believes kindle nonviolent action: “Nonviolent action is thus not synonymous with ‘pacifism.’ Nor is it identical with religious or philosophical systems emphasizing nonviolence as a matter of moral principle” (Sharp 1973; p. 68). Again, Weber describes Sharp’s own transition:

*At first he secularizes Gandhi and his message so that both can be taken seriously. Eventually, because ultimately Sharp’s life work becomes one of promoting his own brand of nonviolence rather than Gandhi or Gandhi’s satyagraha, Sharp more or less abandons the Mahatma (Weber 2003; p. 256).*

Thus, Sharp’s pilgrimage from Gandhian to his own brand of nonviolence is made complete when he breaks from a religious/moral (principled) basis of the idea to the technical/practical (pragmatic) kind, with an approach that, he argues, “enables the rest of the population to adopt nonviolent means without that commitment” (Sharp 1984; p. 11). This break provides Sharp the opportunity to fully develop a typological framework of nonviolent action. Central to his logic is the nature of power. Like Arendt, Sharp sees the consent of the people as the core of legitimate political power. He argues,

*Unlike utopians, advocates of nonviolent action do not seek to “control” power by rejecting it or abolishing it. Instead, they recognize that power is inherent in practically all social and political relationships and that its control is “the basic problem in political theory” and in political reality. They also see that it is necessary to wield power in order to control the power of threatening political groups or regimes (Sharp 1973; p. 7).*

Sharp then defines power:

*Social power may be briefly defined as the capacity to control the behavior of others, directly or indirectly, through action by groups of people, which action impinges on other groups of people. Political power is that kind of social power which is wielded for political objectives, especially by governmental institutions or by people in opposition to or in support of such institutions. Political power thus refers to the total authority, influence, pressure and coercion which may be applied to achieve or prevent implementation of the wishes of the power-holder (Sharp 1973; pp. 7-8).*

Finally, Sharp applies his definition of power in the hands of the people:

*Or political power can be viewed as fragile, always dependent for its strength and existence upon a replenishment of its sources by the cooperation of a multitude of institutions and people-cooperation which may or may not continue (Ibid; 8).*

With this power in mind, Sharp contrasts two types of nonviolence. One typology proffered includes a certain continuum, roughly ranging from passivity to anarchy as

follows: nonresistance, active reconciliation, moral resistance, selective nonviolence, *satyagraha*, and nonviolent revolution—all of which are based on some form of principle (Hare and Blumberg 1968; p. 4). The alternative typology he offers is not particularly rooted in principle and includes passive resistance, peaceful resistance, and nonviolent direct action (Ibid; p. 5). In the latter case, Sharp has famously identified 198 methods of nonviolent action. Thus, the *specific* activities are not the point.

As Thomas C. Schelling's opening statement in the preface of Sharp's classic, *The Politics of Nonviolent Action*, indicates the objective of the study of nonviolence is "to subject the entire theory of nonviolent political action, together with a full history of its practice in all parts of the world since the time of Christ, to the same cool, detailed scrutiny that military strategy and tactics are supposed to invite" (Sharp 1973; p. xix). In other words, the purpose of Sharp's work is to juxtapose *violent action* and *nonviolent action*. Such a task is at once noble and needed. Schelling makes the point that "There is a coherence to the theory" of Sharp's construct. That coherence hones the technical approach identifying a plethora of techniques of resistance: protests, noncooperation, and intervention strategies. These all are intended to disrupt and disable repressive regimes. These all are intended to disrupt and disable repressive regimes. Indeed, many of the social movements witnessed in the latter half of the past century and the beginning of the present one are informed by the theory and application of Sharp's techniques.

The depth and breadth of Gene Sharp's theory of nonviolent direct action provides the broader idea of nonviolence as a concept that is as coherent as it is comprehensive. Its presence may be witnessed and its efficacy measured, as Cenoweth

and Stephan have demonstrated, empirically. Still, Sharp's turn from what Bondurant calls the "Gandhian philosophy of conflict" is more than a move from a value-laden vision; it is a turn toward a pragmatic methodology—or in the language of the genre a *means*—that may be as potentially coercive as it is catalytic in fostering social change. Moreover, it is bereft of its own expressed societal vision beyond what a group does not like, but less so on human development, certain of what is, but less so of what should be.

This begs the question whether there are particular forms of violence that are resilient to the effects of nonviolent action? If yes, then does Sharp's methodology require a constant state of "contentious politics" between those who seek political redress for social and economic imbalances in the body politic, for example, and those who would foster its resilience against such reflexive efforts? *Using techniques that are termed nonviolent to effect change in policies and structures that are nonviolent is not the same as employing values that are nonviolent to evoke and render policies and institutions that are nonviolent.* In the former case, the action is intended to invoke a change in policy and structure. In the latter, the policy and structure are effects of the underlying values. The one is methodologically reflexive, while the other is ontologically prescriptive. The distinction here is between action in search of values and values in search of action. The one is potentially reckless, while the other is perpetually restless.

Sharp acknowledges there is a social proclivity to assume that people are inherently nonviolent (Ibid; pp. 72-73). This notion comports with Galtung's argument for cultural violence. That is, violence is a construct of human invention. But, it is more. Such constructs are based on or proceed from the fundamental values a group adopts.

This is why King argues for a “revolution of values.” But what is the process for effecting such a revolution? Does King have a prescription? Gandhi may answer his “experiments with truth” is the key to unlocking the conundrum. Sharp’s theory provides no answers to this question. In the language of community building and development, pragmatic nonviolence is effective for demolition, but ineffective for construction. And, for the nomenclature of this thesis, it is effective for social change, but less so for human development.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter observes nonviolence may be understood in many ways ranging from a philosophy to a way of life. Within that range are the concepts of a means to an end, and even the end itself. Some theorists and practitioners focus on how social movement and, specifically, collective action might foster change and development. Among this group, nonviolence has been one of the prominent themes. And, among the twentieth century’s most conspicuous thinkers on nonviolence are Gandhi, King, and Sharp. Each espoused an approach to or a *means* based on action for effecting specific change, or carrying out a nonviolent process of human and social development as a general end. For Gandhi, the means for social change (and development?) is a search for truth and the end is a community of truths, in lieu of an absolute truth. For King, the means of carrying out this process is actualizing his nonviolent social change philosophy and the end is community. Gene Sharp provides a means, but offers no specific vision of an end, save the strategic goal of sociopolitical liberation.

While Sharp is concerned about the *process* (or means) for making social change, and it discriminatively, Gandhi and King argue that the process (means) and outcome (ends) are inextricably connected. Sharp sees pragmatic nonviolence as a realistic approach that, if properly understood and applied, may achieve promising results in its name. Some scholars, like Galtung and Bondurant, are skeptical of the sufficiency of pragmatic nonviolence. Others, including Gandhi and King, argue that conscientious nonviolence relies on persuasion and conversion, the willingness of opposing sides to see the argument of the other and to strike a synthesis from dialectic reason, but their prescriptions fail to provide clear formulae on how to effect a shared vision and values among unwilling protagonists. Still, Gandhi and King's construct subsume pragmatic nonviolence in their conscientious ideas, and they provide important materials for constructing a nonviolence framework that is responsive to the social change and human development paradigm. They recognize the significance of values to this paradigm. Sharp's decision to divorce values from the paradigm ignores the very timber with which societies are constructed and sustained. Indeed, such lumber may represent the loadbearing pillars that constitute the resilience of structural violence. King's personalism and Gandhi's self-realization too provide needed ligneous materials for restructuring a new paradigm for social change *and* human development. Chapter six will revisit this issue.

Joan V. Bondurant wrote ten years after Gandhi's assassination and barely five years into the ideas that King and Sharp were both developing. While a full explication of her work is too much for the concluding section of this chapter, her insights provide a



useful means of summarizing the others. She provides a cogent analysis that is responsive to understanding both principled and strategic approaches. Bondurant observes, “a constellation of questions” must be asked in order to fully understand and appreciate its (nonviolence) ideas. Indeed, when comparing the meaning and methods of nonviolence as espoused by its most prominent champions in the last century, questions regarding meaning and method become essential. Again, Bondurant is instructive:

“Questions...must be raised in the interest of developing a philosophy of conflict adequate for our time” (Bondurant 1958; p. vii). Though she was writing in the mid-twentieth century, Bondurant’s words could not be more relevant as the dawn of the twentieth-first century begins its certain yield to the press of today’s demands.

Bondurant’s concerns that strategic nonviolent action (the term was not coined until after her work) may weaken both respect for law and confidence in democratic procedures” (Ibid; p. ix) points to the notion that unprincipled or pragmatic nonviolent action has limitations and connotations that may belie the relevance and efficacy of its principled forms. She observes that too often strategic direct action is used as a short-term tool in response to crisis, overlooking its potential as a systemic edifice. Thus, Bondurant talks about the need to develop “more sophisticated techniques for the conduct of large-scale conflict (Ibid), as opposed to what she calls “the less sophisticated tactics of non-violent pressure.” (Ibid; p. xii). The sophisticated frameworks (structures, systems, policies, and practices) of Western modernity, what might be called the *edifice of democratic capitalism*, require the sophisticated techniques of which Bondurant speaks. The former are the infrastructure upon which social change and human

development have been built and are sustained. This raises the question whether the pragmatic form of nonviolence philosophy, theory and methodology alone can effectively respond to this call. As discussed in the section on the subject, Martin Luther King's logic of nonviolence includes a call for a revolution of values and a restructuring of the edifice that the historical brand of change and development has produced. But one wonders whether his logic of nonviolence offers a prescription?

Finally, Bondurant asserts the world demands a response to conflict that "must be met by a theory of process and of means, and not of further concern for structure, for pattern, and for ends" (Ibid; p. xiii). One might say, then, that the challenge that nonviolence faces today is to be relevant and responsive as a theory of change to today's political, social and economic frameworks by finding "a theoretical key to the problem" of the conflicts they bring (Ibid; p. xiv). This suggests the need for a peace and conflict analysis and resolution (PCAR) theory that would be responsive to nonviolent philosophy and methodologies. But what is the timber of its framework. As previously observed, Galtung makes a good start identifying, arguably necessary elements, but sufficient components remain unidentified.

This brings us to one final observation made by V. K. Kool. Like Bondurant, he recognizes several problems reconciling the polar points of view that nonviolence can be principled or non-principled. From a psychology perspective, recall that Flanagan says principled nonviolence is problematic because "there is no single ethic that binds moral behavior (such as human rights) and, therefore, there is no common purpose moral algorithm suitable for understanding moral problems. But, Kool's observation seems to

fail at taking into account Durkheim's notion of collective conscience. Take for example human rights. The fact that "there is no common purpose moral algorithm suitable for understanding moral problems" for such rights is obviated by a "universal" declaration espoused by states that demonstrate their affirmation of the idea by their signatory action to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). It is true that not all states have signed the UDHR and some have developed alternative or complementing statements. As well, as Aryeh Neier notes, "Despite their shortcomings, most states have ratified the UDHR and its major covenants, which together are "sometimes referred to as the 'international bill of rights'" (Neier 2012; p. 108). Hence, the preponderance of states formally acknowledges some form of universal rights or a common purpose moral algorithm—a *common canon*. The point here is not so much how apposite the algorithm is for codifying a universal moral code. Rather, it is that there is precedence for praxis, which coalesces as a cosmopolitan community of conscience (Durkheim's collective). Might it be though, that a common canon (Kool's "single ethic") can be derived from a theory of nonviolence that provides the algorithms through conflict analysis and resolution similar to those employed in constructing *universal* human rights? Would such algorithms build the needed bridge between the polar points rendering them complementing operations rather than mutually exclusive approaches? And, then, can such a narrative provide the space for a common canon across disciplines and among national states? Chapter five will return to this question.

As previously discussed, one of the greatest challenges for nonviolence as a metanarrative is its definition. Yet, the same must be said of violence. Regarding the

latter, the concept is grossly misunderstood or too narrowly defined, particularly by those who may not perceive immediately its impact personally. For example, Kool makes the following observation about violence: “Unless there is something unusual or life threatening, our lives are routinely shaped in peaceful ways—we park our car without anticipation of loss, take an evening walk without fear of being attacked, and so on. Conversely, a violent *event* (italics applied) disturbs the tranquility of our lives and becomes so salient that it overrides all the peaceful behavior that is going on in normal routine ways in communities all over the world” (Kool, 2008; p. 116). This statement seems to be the order of the day, where the *violence* of poverty, bigotry, and exploitation—the Kingian concepts rearticulated and core to his logic of nonviolence subterfuge policies, practices, systems, and structure that are *routine and normal*. Further study must be given to the definitions of violence and nonviolence as they might apply to the development of peace, conflict analysis and resolution theory and practice. Such study would focus on the relationships between conscientious nonviolence and structural violence.

As discussed below, Martin Green (1986) portends the struggle Tolstoy and Gandhi would contend with as they witnessed the change and development that would take place in their respective countries, and as a result, that which would occur in their own consciences. For their respective countries, the change and development would be toward revolutionary empire as the two countries embraced social construction and nation-building. In their respective lives the change would be toward existential religion as the two champions challenged the trajectory of the new modern system and the

development of ideas to challenge it. Green's point is to demonstrate the settings in which nonviolence became a philosophy for its two champions. To this end, he observes, "The two great differences between their countries were first that Russia was a hybrid state, half in the modern system and half out, by territory, a quarter European and three-quarters Asian; and, second, that Russia was ruled by Russians, India by Englishmen. The conflict that Gandhi could dramatize as being between India and England...had to be felt by Tolstoy as being between Russian peasants and Russian rulers" (Ibid; p. 24). Green's observation shows how both Tolstoy and Gandhi, at the least, intuitively recognized and understood the meaning and purpose of social change and human development together as the motor of capitalism's hegemonic drive and its consequences. This point is cogent in understanding how they employed nonviolence theory and practice as a response.

Given Arendt, Bondurant, and Galtung's concerns about pragmatic nonviolence, McCarthy and Kruegler's definition of nonviolent action, which is proffered by Gene Sharp, begs the question whether such action might be more or less effective should it be rooted in an ethical/philosophical principle framework? In researching the technique, one would want to know its effect(s) with and without the application of a belief system. Further, this definition of nonviolent action must be scrutinized as to the meanings of action, conflict, and violence. And, do nonviolent methodologies under the rubric of principled nonviolence meet the definition of "purposive behavior?" Is the definition of nonviolent action that PNVA offers adequate to amplify the meaning of nonviolence as *necessary* and *sufficient* for the purposes of research, theory and practice? Is there a

difference between *nonviolence* action and *nonviolent* action (i.e. NSCD and PNVA)? Is the former the principled kind, while the latter the pragmatic? In the latter case, Sharp appears to use his definition as the *practical term of art* to distinguish it from a *philosophical term of art*.

Perhaps more important, there does not appear to be a clear and sufficient distinction between (a) strategic nonviolent action as a strategic/tactical means (or tool) for seeking address/redress of specific societal issues, usually related to justice and fairness and (b) nonviolence as a philosophy/methodology as a means and an end for establishing a social order to make the former unnecessary/obsolete. Failure to understand this relationship may well be the cause for a reflexive undervaluing, if outright denial, of the efficacy of nonviolence, in general and its conscientious kind in particular. One challenge this presents to conflict analysis and resolution research is formulating strategies on how to effect the latter. Thus, study should be given to the question whether nonviolent direct action is the only means for securing the social contract and order that is nonviolence. To make the question more practical, one might ask, is the use of the strategic nonviolent action method in such social movements such as the Arab uprisings the necessary and sufficient precursor to effecting the positive, sustainable change that is commensurate with nonviolence? Chapter six will examine these questions. But, first chapter five will reframe this discourse with a closer look at its language.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: SOCIAL CHANGE AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT: REFRAMING THE DISCOURSE**

This chapter will explore framing and sense-making to give this discourse more coherent and comprehensive context. These processes are integral to this discourse and will be further explicated in chapter six. For now, a framing will contextualize meanings for personhood (or personalism) and human rights as the two key elements that comprise the logic of nonviolence. This thesis argues these elements give the idea of nonviolence normative and behavioral features for an operable logic or theory of change. In the case of personalism, values stipulate the moral and ethical footings for the framework, while human rights principles specify a blueprint for behavior. Together, they provide the sense-making—that is, the social psychological and epistemological processes—for understanding and rearticulating social change and human development and a new or alternative paradigmatic framework.

### **Personhood**

Consider a basic axiom: personalism is to the person what sovereignty is to the state. That is, the integrity and freedom of the person is established in personhood in the same way that the identity and autonomy of the state is institutionalized in statehood. The difference is not so much in the nature of each case, but in how each is effected. As noted from the outset of this thesis, understanding social change and human development centers on violence as core to the calculus of the history and values of state formulation

and sovereignty. As argued above, historically, the algorithms and norms of change and development render the state sovereign largely through violence, irrespective of its size or locale. Indeed, the state holds the monopoly on violence. Thus, the state actualizes and sustains its sovereignty through violence. Moreover, *those who monopolize the powers of the state monopolize the power of violence*. But the opposite is true of personhood. As noted in chapter four, some theorists argue it is nonviolence that makes and maintains the integrity and freedom of the person, while violence limits human potential, and denies the dignity and worth of personhood. This begs the question what is personalism.<sup>xiv</sup> The answer may be formulated as a theory of the person.

It seems the *sine qua non* of any endeavor to understand the human experience is to apprehend the essence of what it is to be human. This begs the question whether human essence is an ontological, *a priori* “something” awaiting discovery, reification, manifestation or meaning-making. Or, is the human experience a function to reify, manifest, and meaning-make human essence? This thesis argues personalism gives all human reality meaning, such that reality is *personal* and every person is its highest value. Thus, anything that limits a person from achieving their full potential is violent.

Answering the proposed meaning-making query—is the essence of being human an ontological, *a priori* “something” awaiting discovery, or is the function of the human experience to discover human essence—is an issue chapter six will revisit. For now, one might posit that it is a function of one’s epistemological and existential orientation. That is, *making meaning in the human experience is apprehended through the cognitive tools one’s orientation makes available*. Thus, for example, the anthropologist, the sociologist,



the historian, the theologian, the mathematician, the economist, or the psychologist all see through a window framed by their discipline's canon or theory and methodology. For example, the Christian theologian may argue that the person finds essence in a personal God. Indeed, as discussed below, King (and to some degree, Gandhi), held dualistic ideas of personalism. In the first instance, he believed in a personal God who gives dignity and worth to all humans. In the second, King held the humanist notion that all humans share the same qualitative essence. On the other hand, Gandhi would say, in truth, making-meaning of the human experience (and essence) is likely to be most meaning-full if it is by the tint of them all. But, one might wonder how so many "truths" can possibly be harnessed in a concerted effort that provides societal harmony? In other words, what can bring symphony to a cacophony of truths?

This metaphor makes the point poignant: one must be careful that the accommodation of everything does not become cacophony rendering nothing, but instead the colophony that brings symphony to the various strands of meaning making. As Geertz (1973) would say, "it is not necessary to know everything to understand something" (Ibid; p. 20). Since understanding everything is not possible, how much of something is necessary and sufficient to say one knows enough? The argument is when it comes to theories of the person, knowing enough in large part is establishing criteria necessary and sufficient such that, all things being equal, disparate human experiences—e.g. political philosophies, professional disciplines, and cultural proclivities—can find that common rosin (the colophony) that resonates the pluralistic strands of humanity into a symphonic community (or the Gandhian *common canon of truths*). In other words, they must

recognize and honor the dignity and worth of the person, irrespective of any other human characteristic, such as identity, culture and the like.

Still, another metaphor seems productive to lay a foundation that would be palpable to make the point more clear. Using the example of professional disciplines one can conclude a multidisciplinary approach—across cultures, ethnicities, and identities—provides the metaphor to apprehend a “canon commons” for personhood that is relevant to social change and human development. To wit, each discipline would find meaning in the *consciousness* of human dignity, which would be the fencing around such commons. This raises several questions. First, what is consciousness and its relationship to personalism? Second, if consciousness is merely a matter of schematization, i.e. the ordering of DNA, then from where does the DNA come? The religiously inclined might argue there is a grand Planner/Organizer who sets the combination of DNA that unlocks consciousness. Others more persuaded by humanistic thinking may hold a position captured in the paraphrase of the Greek philosopher Sextus Empiricus: the wheels of evolution turn patiently, but effectively toward consciousness. One might not want to define consciousness as the sole ingredient that gives humanity dignity. After all, studies have shown that other animals possess some degree of consciousness (Sagan and Druyan 1993). But the algorithms that move human kind from inanimate to animate, from non-conscious to conscious, and from a moral to moral is a process that renders every human a *personal* being. While other animals might be able (e.g. trained) to recognize themselves when passing a mirror, they cannot make moral judgments about what they see. Thus, the colophony that gives symphony to a canon commons (of truths) is moral

consciousness that apprehends the notion of personalism as the highest value of human essence and, thus, of the moral consciousness of human dignity and worth. But, a third option for an origin of such consciousness may come as a means of meaning making. To this end, the following discussion returns to a discussion of multidisciplinary professions.

The anthropologist might find expression of this consciousness of dignity through “thick description” of behavior, narrative, and discourse, which interprets the culture of a collective (Geertz 1973). The economist could make meaning through human agency. Finally, the political scientist may find expression in the juridical interpretation of entitlements, where meaning making is a function of basic human rights. In reality, these are not mutually exclusive constructs, since elements of each discipline’s principles and processes may be relevant in the others. In other words, each several part lends itself to the joint symphony or the canon commons. While these frameworks risk oversimplification, they provide the handles for understanding how each discipline might apprehend the ideas that give meaning to personalism as the moral consciousness of human dignity and worth. To illustrate this point, the following discusses these three disciplines as representative of the broader panoply. In doing so, it will seek to relate examples of their respective “canonical” (writ small) frameworks to the posed meaning-making question. These examples may be construed as a type of a global human rights antitype.

### **Personalism and the Canon Commons**

The following discusses three disciplines that represent a broader array in order to relate them as types of canonical frameworks for meaning making toward a conclusion

that personalism is the highest value of human essence and, thus, of the moral consciousness of human dignity and worth. There are cultural, social, political, economic, or religious implications regarding the essence of humanity and the meaning of personalism. These three examples intend to demonstrate the point of a “canonical commons” within and across disciplines that illustrates how humans make meaning of the human experience and essence.

### **The Anthropologist: Culture**

Among the anthropologist’s interest is culture. Where does the notion of different cultural values of personhood fit? Is it complementary or opposed to other canons? Culture is the lens through which one observes and seek understanding of human collectivities. This seems to be the point of Clifford Geertz’s article, “Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture.” His discussion lays the foundation for an introductory understanding of anthropology and the significance of culture. And, his assertion “If you want to understand what a science is...you should look at what the practitioners of it do” draws attention to the role that investigating culture plays for the anthropologist and her field (Ibid; p. 5). Geertz argues culture is the *stuff* of human existence in that it commands the psychological frameworks he calls structures and nodes of meaning that inform and direct normative behavior in a collectivity. Thus, to understand the group one must understand its culture.

For example, Alexander Hinton notes that both Buddhist and Hindu religions, for different reasons and understandings, view persons as having hierarchical natural inequality. Hinton notes “the Buddhist conception of merit and karma [hold] that an

individual's social status reflect[s] the consequences of his or her past actions," thereby giving moral legitimacy to status inequality (Hinton 2003, 158). Similarly, Hindu belief in "potency, power, and hierarchical incorporation" distinguishes "natural inequality" among people (Hinton 2003; p. 158). As Hinton notes in the case of Cambodia, the source and seat of status are socially constructed and operationalized through culture to gender, age, economic status, physical prowess and so on. Indeed one can change their status. Hinton acknowledges, "Though it is often difficult to do, one can enhance one's status in a variety of ways, such as by increasing one's wealth, knowledge, occupational level, political position, influence and merit" (Ibid; p. 159).

One need not agree with Hinton's observations about the two religions to appreciate that he makes no insignificant point about social process, or for Geertz a "thin description." In other words, a thin description might string abstractions from observed behavior or events as if their *observation*—the account, *vis a vis* the discursive interpretation that gets to the "social reality"—is the veracious articulation of social reality. A "thick description," on the other hand, apprehends social reality through a deep understanding culled from the context of the group's behavior through a semiotic approach, which focuses on the symbols and signs imbedded in the fabric of the group's communal actions and relationships (Geertz 1973; p. 14). Geertz argues meaning is made through semiotic culture. It is "through the flow of behavior—or more precisely, social action—that cultural forms find articulation" (Ibid; p. 17).

Judith Butler (1990) notes, "Within philosophical discourse itself, the notion of 'the person' has received analytic elaboration on the assumption that whatever social

context the person is 'in' remains somehow externally related to the definitional structure of personhood, be that consciousness, the capacity for language, or moral deliberation."

Butler further asserts, "The 'coherence' and 'continuity' of 'the person' are not logical or analytic features of personhood, but, rather, socially instituted and maintained norms of intelligibility" (Ibid; p. 23). As in the case of Hinton, one need not agree with Butler's argument (that it would be wrong for a general discussion of identity to precede the specific discussion of gender) to appreciate her point of "socially instituted and maintained norms of intelligibility."

Indeed, this thesis argues any discussion of human identity is posterior to human essence. By her concepts of identity formation, Butler might argue that a particular gender designation socially imposed is or is not essential. But such argument misses the point. It is not gender or any other characteristic of human identity that gives dignity to humanity. Humanity is self-dignifying as it is self-unifying. All humans possess an equal measure of the stuff of human essence.

What Butler, Geertz, and Hinton suggest is that humans find meaning in social interaction whether through discourse, socially constructed identity formulations, or cultural mores and norms. However discursive and diffuse, each of these processes is posteriori to human essence, that is, they describe and even help define the human condition, but not the human essence. The point is the social science *within* their discipline still renders an evident common canonical approach to meaning making and human essence.

### **The Economist: Human Agency**

For the economist, a notion of personalism finds meaning in human agency. That every human should have the unfettered opportunity to achieve her full potential is central to the concept. Given market capitalism's remarkable success as an internationalized economic system and its association with democratic principles, human dignity includes political and civil rights that inure to the person to *participate* in the social, political, and economic activities as one deems in their best interest. Importantly, these are both values and behavior-driven characteristics that are part of the values *within* Western democratic capitalism and its economic discipline's common canon. But, even more fundamental and significant is the right to survival, and that beyond basic human needs to the achievement of human potential.

To that end, in industrialized capitalist economies, dignity takes on a meaning related to basic rights that may not be commoditized, bought or sold, and that represent essentials to a "decent existence" (Okun 1975; p. 19). Prohibition against subjecting such rights to the market places into contention one's freedom and one's rights (Ibid). To understand "decent existence" one might look to the notion of survival. In this regard, Amartya Sen argues "individual agency is, ultimately, central to addressing [deprivation, destitution and oppression]" (Sen 1999; p. xi). He explains

*the freedom of agency that we individually have is inescapably qualified and constrained by the social, political and economic opportunities that are available to us. There is a deep complementarity between individual agency and social arrangements. It is important to give simultaneous recognition to the centrality of individual freedom and to the force of social influences on the extent and reach of*

*individual freedom. To counter these problems, one must see individual freedom as a social commitment (Ibid; p. xii).*

Yet, how does one define survival? Is it mere subsistence, a means of barely sustaining life? This might speak to the question of necessary condition, but not sufficient condition. Does survival merely mean maintaining the biological and/or physiological operations of the human soma? This begs the question of what is dignity or a dignified life? Again, few would argue that every human should not have a right to *make* for themselves, their families, and even their communities a decent life. But, what is the minimum standard that every human should be afforded?

Still, as discussed below, Author Okun sees a problem and wants for solution on the split personality of market capitalism on rights (Okun 1975). He notes four important features to these rights that make them severable from economic systems. First, “they are acquired and exercised without any monetary charge” (Ibid; p. 6). Second, “they are universally distributed,” and thus, render no comparative advantage” (Ibid; p. 7). Third, they are based on performance, falling outside any notion of efficiency incentive (Ibid; p. 8). Finally, rights are bestowed “equally” but not “equitably, and they *limit* personal freedom. Okun notes, “When people differ in capabilities, interests, and preferences, identical treatment is not equitable treatment. He further notes that with rights comes deontology. Freedom of speech has the deontological limitation from yelling “fire” in a crowded theatre. Such limitations, however, constitute “infringements on the calculus of



economic efficiency” (Ibid; p. 10)” Further, as noted above, universal basic rights may not be commoditized (i.e. the buying and selling of such rights).

As he builds his case for a remedy between the equality and efficiency conundrum for democratic capitalism, Okun argues the rationale for universal basic rights is threefold: liberty, plurality, and humanity. With liberty comes the firewall against state intrusion in the private life. Thus, while some freedom is ineludibly given up—the right against commoditization of universal rights is much less to protect the poor or proletariat living on the border of “a decent existence” from desperate acts of last resort that essentialize the ultimate dispossession of their dignity, than the externalities relative to third parties that might be affected as a consequence—*laissez-faire* is otherwise an essential characteristic (Ibid; p. 20).

The principle of plurality recognizes the diversification of the human experience, such that humans are more than Marx and Engel’s men who make meaning of life from their production. Okun notes, “The *institutions* of a market economy ... are as much a part of our social framework as the civil and political institutions that pursue egalitarian goals” (Okun 1975, 5). Institutions define human experience, and thus their meaning making. The human experience is at once the plurality of those institutions and the diversification they represent. The economic system (institution) is only one among this plurality, and should not dominate at the expense of the others. But dominate, market capitalism does.

This leads to Okun’s third rationale for universal rights bestowed by law. As previously discussed, in capitalist economies, human dignity takes on a meaning related

to basic rights that may not be commoditized and that represent essentials for a decent existence (Ibid; p. 19). Okun argues these, “Rights can then be viewed as a protection against the market domination that would arise if everything could be bought and sold for money” (Ibid; p. 12). Thus, “The domain of rights is part of the checks and balances on the market designed to preserve values that are not denominated in dollars” (Ibid). And, for Okun, “the civil and political institutions that pursue egalitarian goals” are as much about “a decent existence” and human dignity, as they are about “the social framework that promotes inequality, which comes from the institutions of a market economy” (Ibid; p. 5). Okun seems to want his cake and eat it too.

As part of the social framework that promotes inequality through economic institutions, civil and political institutions militate both for and against human dignity. That is, the social framework is itself an institution, composed of parts that are at once joint and several, and thus, mutually reinforcing. The same political institutions that make policies and processes to ameliorate inequality make possible the economic institutions that create inequality through policies and processes. In Okun’s words, “the function—indeed, the very life—of the market depends on the coercive power of political institutions. The state uses these powers to establish and ensure rights in the marketplace, directly supply some essential services, and indirectly generate the environment of trust, understanding, and security that is vital to the daily conduct of business” (Ibid; p. 32).

Like the anthropologist, then, the economist, such as Okun and Sen, recognizes the centrality of what it means to be human and the role human agency plays in the definition and operation of societal systems in the human experience. Important to this

discourse is their attribution of agency and human rights to the idea. The following returns to the discussion of rights through the canon of the political scientist.

### **The Political Scientist: Rights?**

While the economist Amartya Sen seems to suggest that human rights are tied to human capabilities, which are tied to opportunities and processes (Sen 1999), the political scientist might rely on rights to convey the meaning of personalism. The American Declaration of Independence asserts that all [humans] are created equal and they have certain inalienable rights; there is plenty argument to the contrary. Moreover, the declaration asserts that self-evident truth is the bases of those “rights,” which are three: life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Is this list exhaustive or are there other rights not therein declared? If there are others, then who determines the list? Even those rights the US independence statement *declares* are challenged by the likes of Edmund Burke when he argues “liberty has to be restrained so that the wisdom of established custom can support prudent social and political institutions” (Hayden 2001; p. 88). Similarly, Jeremy Bentham, argues that such rights are only relevant to the extent that they are prescribed by law (Ibid; p. 118). Jack Donnelly says there are rights all humans hold by their common and indivisible nature (Donnelly 1981, 1). And, John Locke argues that rights are derived from social contract (Ibid; p. 71).

Do rights come from some man-made law or declaration or is a right a natural phenomenon? Jack Donnelly (1981) says “Human rights are the rights one has simply because one is a human being” (Ibid; p. 1). Donnelly sees three major levels in understanding this concept: (1) the nature of human rights—what a human right is, (2)

their source—what or where one might get human rights, and (3) their substance or *specification*—the particular things to which one has human rights (Ibid). Donnelly draws “the distinction between something *being* right and someone *having* a right” (Donnelly Ibid; p. 3). He notes “the word ‘right’ encompasses at least two concepts. “‘Right’s refers to *moral righteousness*, as in ‘It’s just not the right thing to do!’” He notes that ‘right’ also refers to *entitlement*, as in the claim “I have a right to....” (Ibid).

The United Nations 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) explicitly declares *dignity, as an inherent characteristic of human existence, and, thus, as the basis of certain inalienable human rights*. This entry in the Declaration provides a telling commentary on the inextricable relationship between the individual and the global community. It connotes not only the universality of all humankind, but also the unavoidable *commons* in dignity and worth that compel inalienable rights. While the UDHR may fall short of clearly and definitively defining such commons, they become visible through the clouds of globalization, as international communities jockey through the domains of geopolitical, cultural, and global economic space. While, the UDHR represents an ambiguous, if formal, prescriptive of the dignity and worth calculus, there is an informal descriptive framework with formal relationships comprised of processes, institutions, and value systems that directly *affect* the life conditions and, thus, virtually *effect* the life chances of the world’s 7 billion human inhabitants. These are matters of justice and equality.

What, then, is a right and what determines such rights? By whose or what authority are rights granted? And, what is the seat of those rights? In other words, are

one's rights truly *theirs* as tangible and conveyable property and/or exercisable at will or are they merely intangible ideas that are no more than constructs—as in entitlements—subject to interpretation and manipulation by the whim of government, the wishes of the powerful, or the callous of the uncouth? Even worse, are they (rights) no more than figments of the imagination? Further, does having a right also include the *right* to use it; that is, are there times when a right can and cannot be exercised?

Before exploring these questions, a summary of the above discussion on the canon commons framework exemplified in the anthropologist, the economist, and the political scientist follows. Behavior manifest as social interaction—whether through discourse, identity construction, or formulae of mores and norms—culture defines the common canon that shapes the anthropologist's understanding of the person. Further, the economist finds meaning in human agency to provide for the needs of self, family, and community. And, finally, the political scientist might rely on rights that are conveyed through social custom or contract, or that are prescribed by law—whether natural or legislative—conceived as his or her canon. These ideas demonstrate each discipline finds expression, whether implicit or explicit, of the person in some framework, whether formal or informal, that defines a degree of human dignity and worth of each person. Surely, the political scientist and the anthropologist would join the economist to argue that every human has such a right and that conditions necessary and sufficient should be afforded every person to take charge of his or her life. If this is so, then this point illustrates the multidisciplinary canon commons for locating the essence of the person in

the human experience. Furthermore, however discursive and diffuse, it places personalism at the fulcrum the logic.

### **Human Rights and the Canon Commons**

Some of the best critical thinking on human rights over the past century or so approaches the subject variously by concentrating on such issues as globalization, culture, political economy, legality, and so on. Perhaps the single rubric under which they may be focused as a coherent whole is through the lens of social change and human development. The initial framing places social change and human development in the context of violence. Of particular interest now to this discussion is the relationship of the idea of human rights to nonviolence. It is certain that these ideas have substantive ideological kinship. Not the least of these is personhood.

The last section took a view through political, economic, and cultural lenses. In the latter case, Sally Engle Merry assumes an apologist's position for anthropology as she considers the danger in rationalism and/or essentialism in the proclivities of local culture (Merry 2003; pp. 55-77). While society in general must demonstrate tolerance and respect for cultural proclivities of particular identity (or minority) groups, such deference should not be itself essential at the expense of other normative ethical considerations of *the collective global conscience*. The defense is a response to the case study of the 1947 American Anthropological Association statement opposing the then proposed Universal Declaration of Human Rights (American Anthropological Association, 1947).

But, Merry has a more compelling point. Its core concern is the conception of culture and how it is expediently defined and used to rationalize global issues and or local

predilections. In the former case, the “civilized and modern” north/west nations may foster neoliberal policies and practices, particularly globalization and its hegemonic political and economic priorities that rationalize culture (cultural “competence”), while in the latter, south/east “developing” states might favor those that preserve national, ethnic or tribal traditions that essentialize culture (cultural convenience). These positions recognize the tensions—ideological, political, and economic power plays—in the global tug-of-war between nation-states on the one hand and northern and southern hemispheres on the other.

Still, Johan Galtung provides taxonomy of violence that is useful in applying the UDHR human dignity declaration as a universal idea (Galtung 1990; pp. 291-309; 1969; pp. 167-191). What is perhaps most striking in Galtung’s taxonomy is his base definition of violence as that which “*is present when human beings are being influenced so that their actual somatic and mental realizations are below their potential realizations*” (Galtung 1990; p. 168; italics original). Here Galtung—though not a personalist, at least publicly declared—clearly centers his understanding of violence in the middle of the personalist’s argument. He makes the point more directly, “Violence is that which increases the distance between the potential and the actual, and that which impedes the decrease of this distance” (Ibid) Galtung’s point is seminal in assessing and rethinking the unfinished business of establishing a universal system of human rights that addresses “the everybody” and “the whole body,” inclusively somatic and mental, individual and societal. Before exploring these relationships, the next section will discuss some of the issues noted above beginning with the source, nature and location of human rights.

### **The Source, Nature, and Location of Human Rights**

What does it mean to be human? One might best approach this discussion by posing several other questions: what is the origin of the idea of human rights', its nature, and its location? These ideas might otherwise be articulated as human rights' source, substance, and seat. What is the source of human rights? Is it government? Is it nature? Is it the collective human conscience? Is it metaphysical or theological? Consistent with the posed change and development paradigm, Johan Galtung argues the origin of human rights is tied directly to the rise of the nation-state and its constructive contractual obligations to its citizens, where the state grants certain rights to the citizen who in turn accepts certain obligations to the state (Galtung 1994; p. 10).

Michael J. Perry asserts the notion of human rights can only make sense if it is grounded in a religious argument. His contention is human rights have two fundamental elements. First is "each and every human being is sacred," that is, "each and every human being...has inherent dignity and worth" and "is an end in himself" (Perry 1998; p. 5). These elements are the crux of the idea of personalism, which holds that human reality is articulated in personhood, which is given by a personal God. Otherwise, according to Perry, there is no "intelligible" secular basis for self-hood.

Jack Donnelly counters, it is not government, neither is it religious; the argument for human rights can only be sustained, if it is rooted in a constructivist notion, not of what people are, but of "what they might become" (Donnelly 1985; p. 33), that is, what they do. In other words, humans construct their moral reality from a natural need to affirm the dignity of humanity (Ibid; p. 31). Donnelly sees human rights as unenforceable claims. And, he asserts, that is how it should be: "This extralegality implies that the



primary use of human rights [is] to change existing institutions” (Donnelly 1985; p. 21). Thus, the denial of a human right or satisfaction of its claim is institutional or *structural*. “If systematically unenforced rights are to be enforced and enjoyed, [then] institutions (or structures) must be transformed” (Ibid; p. 22). Therefore, enforcement is a function of governmental action: “the right is the claim *as* recognized in law and maintained by governmental action” (Rex Martin. 1980; p. 396 as cited in Donnelly 1985; p. 24). “Without legal recognition we may have morally valid claims, but not human *rights*” (Donnelly 1985; p. 24). This suggests that human rights are “granted” by government. But, Donnelly quickly refutes the point. “Most claims of human rights do have a special reference to government, but that does not mean that human rights are or must be legal rights” (Ibid). He further notes the state cannot be the *source* of human rights; it can only enforce such rights. In other words, states can be the source of the rights of citizenship, but not of being human.

Donnelly further makes the point human rights are *held* primarily *individually*; thus, the *seat* of human rights is the individual *vis a vis* government or the community. There are societal rights, Donnelly observes, that some cultures (he notes predominantly in non-Western, less-industrialized states), subordinate individual rights to. The contrast between the West’s propensity for individual-focused rights and those of other states who hold a societal predominance is reflected in Donnelly’s observation, which is worth quoting in full:

*‘Westernization,’ ‘modernization,’ ‘development,’ and ‘underdevelopment’—the dominant social and economic forces of our era—have in fact severed the*

*individual from the small, supportive community; and economic, social and cultural intrusions into, and disruptions of, the traditional community have removed the support and protection that would 'justify; or 'compensate for' the absence of individual human rights. A relatively isolated individual now faces social, economic and political forces that far too often appear to be aggressive and oppressive. Society, which once protected human dignity and provided each person with an important place in the world, now appears, in the form of the modern state, the modern economy and the modern city, as an alien power that assaults one's dignity and that of one's family (Ibid).*

This begs the question of the substance of human rights and whose “construction” counts as being right on rights. An-Na'im's volume, *Human Rights in Cross-Cultural Perspectives*, argues there are cultural propensities present in every group that impinge on and thus preclude any universal construction of rights that is not based on a cross-cultural consensus. Kevin Avruch adds such sensitivities are not the exclusive purview of culture, since class difference also impedes a universal thesis that is not constructed across social, cultural, religious, and other human relational lines (Avruch 2006; p. 98).

With these observations made, one might find Upendra Baxi's argument persuasive that human rights require the fertile ground of geopolitics, including the formation of global states and the “*praxis* of emancipatory politics” (Baxi 1999; pp. 101-102). In this regard, “people and communities are the primary authors of human rights” (Baxi 2002; p. 101), and they should establish the substance of human rights and

corresponding parameters of state sovereignty with respect to its citizens and the state's legitimation of governance. But what does it mean to be human and how does one find definition consonant among cultures? In other words, what is its common canon? This question brings us full circle to the previous discussion on the multidisciplinary canon commons type and its human rights antitype.

### **Human Rights and Culture**

The question, what does it mean to be human is not resolved with an essentialist answer. Baxi observes that “critics of human rights essentialism remind us that the notion of ‘human’ is not pre-given...but constructed” (Ibid; p. 77), and that as a cultural phenomenon. Thus, different cultures may have different definitions of what a human being is and what being human means. In other words, what it means to be human is one issue; what inures to each individual as rights because of a common essence is quite another. This is a matter of shared essence versus shared values. This problem is further complicated by the hegemonic culture of Western values, “that reduce all humanity to the Euro-American images of what it means to be human” (Ibid; p. 79), and values that define and instruct, legitimize and rationalize behavior.

Further, using the example of the pre-Raj Meriah Wars in the Kond region of India (today the state of Orissa), Avruch makes a point of the British double standard of *consequential* ethics (“whereby good or moral ends can justify the morally questionable means by which they are achieved”) and *deontological* ethics (“wherein ends, no matter how good or moral in themselves, can never justify immoral means”). In the former case, the British used brutally violent tactics against defenseless Indian subjects to foster their

colonial enterprise, while simultaneously expressing outrage in their attempts to eradicate tribal practices of human sacrifice in the region (Avruch 2006; p. 99). His point is to highlight “that universalism and absolutism can never entirely escape the complexities of relativism in the real world where men and women act, in part because judgments—assertions—of universalism and absolutism are, in the end, at least for someone somewhere, inevitably relative” (Ibid; p. 100).

As noted above, Avruch then discusses culture’s plethora of definitions and characteristics, particularly as an “analytical or technical term in the social sciences” (Ibid; p. 102) *vis a vis* a social class or group identity construct associated with “intense nineteenth-century conflict of ideology. He observes the analytical/technical approach favors “the scientific understanding of difference, called ‘cultural analysis’” leading to *relativism*, while the identity/class camp leans in favor of the ideology of “culturalism” or “the idea of using culture to underwrite or legitimize ethnic, racial, or national differences” (Ibid; p. 104). He then turns his attention to cultural relativism versus universalism.

Cultural relativism was first expounded by Franz Boaz, but his student, Melville Herskovits, provided the definition that

*Cultural relativism is in essence an approach to the question of the nature and role of values in culture.... [Its] principle...is as follows: Judgments are based on experience, and experience is interpreted by each individual in terms of his own enculturation* (Ibid; p. 105).

Avruch notes this definition questions “the existence of any ‘absolute moral standards’ that are separate from their cultural (and historical) context, and is “opposed to the possibility of an absolute morality” (Ibid). He observes that relativism has three distinct means, two of which he finds plausible: “Descriptive relativism, referring to the empirical fact of cultural variability in customs, beliefs, values, and so on” (Ibid). “Moral, ethical, or normative relativism, which in its “strong” form “is taken to mean the recognition of difference combined with a requirement to *tolerate* or even *approve* of such difference” (Ibid; p. 106). “Epistemological relativism [which] denies the existence of the ‘really real,’ and absolute reality over and above all the variant cultural constructions of it” (Ibid; pp. 106-107).

Avruch dismisses epistemological relativism as “existentially and morally quite simply insupportable” (Avruch 2006; p. 107). He suggests that descriptive relativism’s recognition of varying moral ideas is subsumed as a “weak” form of moral relativism. In its “strong” position, moral relativism is tolerant, even giving approbation to differences in cultural mores and norms, while shunning universals and absolutes. What is, perhaps, most striking is that it may even make room to deny “a universal ‘human nature’” (Ibid).

Moral relativism stands in rather stark contrast to moral universalism, which holds the idea there is some essential ingredient in human nature, an indivisible least common denominator of human kind. This notion is not to be confused “with what some have called human absolutes,” which “are fixed and invariant, changeless from individual to individual, culture to culture, and epoch to epoch” (Ibid; p. 109). Examples Avruch offers of “universal” (he concedes they may be “variable and contingent”) include human

experiences common to all cultures and societies such as family life or particular proclivity to an economic system such as capitalism. This brings us to the issue of a universal or global understanding of what human rights are and who has a right to them.

### **Human Rights and Human Agency**

Today's technologies, communications capabilities, and open market economies foster globalization that positions human rights and its violations as a function outside the sole machinations of the nation-state. This broadens human rights purveyors of violation and crusaders of remediation as trans-global phenomena (Brysk 2002; p. 5). This position is made possible according to Brysk *et al* who defer to Jan Aart Scholte's definition of globalization as "an ensemble of developments that make the world a single place, changing the meaning and importance of distance and national identity in world affairs (Scholte 1996b, 44, in Brysk 2002; p. 6). Thus, Brysk sees world politics as a complex of the international realm, global markets, and transnational civil society (Ibid; p. 7). Galtung calls it the components of state, capital and people or state, corporate and civil society systems (Galtung 1994; p. 147). These systems represent respectively, intergovernmental organizations, transnational corporations, and international non-governmental organizations (Ibid).

This new reality presents new challenges to citizens and *their* human rights. Among the writers in Brysk's edited volume, Kristen Hill Maher discusses persons who might be excluded from human rights "coverage" as a result of their citizenship status. That is, in "Who has a Right to Rights?" She notes transnational migration, as a fundamental element of globalization, leaves large swatches of people outside the human

rights veil, and even subject to active violations of such rights. In such cases, Maher argues, “universal personhood [is] subordinated to citizenship” (Brysk 2002; p. 21). She provides two “dimensions” of which this relegation is understood. First is the idea that migrants are *illegals* “voluntary criminals, trespassers, and usurpers who have forfeited claims to rights by virtue of individual breaches of contract or law” (Ibid). The second idea is one that favors people of “First World status” over those of the developing world.

Central to this reality is an underlying liberal contractarian logic that contained in Donnelly’s argument above. Membership is a function of citizenship, which is a function of the social contract between state and its consenting subjects or citizens. Maher notes, however, that even within states, such as the US, membership has historically been a tiered notion based upon social/cultural standing within the body politic (Ibid; p. 32). Class and culture logics have been the gatekeeper of immigrants/migrants and even slaves throughout US history. It continues in this century’s globalized world and has become part of its economic framework, as immigrants are at once welcomed laborers and unwelcome invaders. In any regard, Maher’s higher point is the distinction that is made between “deserving citizen” and “undeserving alien”: the citizen is entitled to certain rights and privileges, which the alien, as the undeserving other, cannot claim.

As noted above, Aryeh Neier credits both the establishment of international institutions *and* a bevy of nongovernmental organization’s that represent a global human rights movement for the progress of the human rights idea over the past century. Richard Flak addresses globalization and human rights developments as bi-directional phenomena: Developed World/top down and Developing World/bottom up. For Falk,

top-down globalization represents the international realm consisting of nation-states, multilateral organizations, and transnational corporations whose proclivities lean toward civil and political rights (Ibid; p. 55). The bottom-up is represented by civil society, where interests in globalization's impact on human rights expand to include social, economic and cultural components. As Flak observes, the former direction is driven by a neoliberal focus that exacerbates the wealth gap, while failing to address the misery prevailing throughout the developing world. Thus, today's human rights agendas are very different from those of millennia past. What has transpired is the ebb and flow of social change and human development.

### **Human Rights, Social Change and Human Development**

With this back drape, one may now consider the impact of social change and human development on human rights. First is the observation that what is most significant about the process of change and development in this discussion is that the political, social, cultural, and economic accumulation of the world's benefits in the hands of the too few is rationalized/legitimized as rights, thereby justifying the suffering of the too many. Baxi punctuates this point by declaring "sovereign power constantly negotiates the imperatives of the rule of law in ways that, for example, somehow tender as legitimate the affluence of a few with the extreme impoverishment of many, locally and globally" (Baxi 2002; p. 8). Recall the earlier observation that the state monopolizes the power of violence and those who can monopolize the power of the state can monopolize the power of violence, whether direct or indirect.



Baxi reminds us “that the ‘monoculture of human rights ‘continues the cultural imperialism of colonialism’ perpetuating the belief that the ‘underdeveloped’ cultures are too poor or primitive to promote the good of their people, while imposing the dominant cultures’ notions of human well-being” (Ibid; p. 78). Baxi also notes every society has mores and norms that define what human being means, and thus, what rights attend being human. And, these social constructs are also as diverse as they are rooted in state sovereignty. Hence, when it comes to human rights, there is no truth at once self-evident (declarative) or universal. This first point is complicated by a second: the discursive dissonance of the ontological and epistemological meanings of human rights. Such discord is the post-colonial progeny of Western hegemonic imperialism that is at once geo-political, geo-cultural, and geo-economic, which forecloses any opportunity for a global “metanarrative” of human rights.

Baxi’s assessment of the future of human rights is sobering. The idea of a system that places profit over people as “human” rights logic is absurd. Yet, in the United States, the corporation is indeed a person. Baxi notes, one might argue a new paradigm of human rights that favors capital (and those organizations that monopolize its accumulation) is an inevitable and logical enterprise sense “in the absence of economic development human rights have no future at all” (Ibid; p. 152). He notes “Respect for ‘human rights’ or the right to be human, entails a complex, interlocking network of meanings that has to be sustained, renovated, and replenished, at *all* levels: individuals, associations, markets, states, regional organizations of the states, and international agencies and organizations constitute a new totality that now stands addressed by the

logics and paralogics of human rights” (Ibid; p. 92). This brings us full circle to a closer look at the source, substance, and seat of the idea of human rights and how they cohere in personhood.

### **Personalism: The Connection Between Human Rights and Nonviolence**

From the outset, this discussion is framed in large measure on the notion of personhood and its importance to the idea of human rights. *Theistic-personalism* is the theological belief in a personal God, who gives to every individual personal worth and dignity (Baldwin 2002; pp. 215-216). *Philosophical-personalism* is an ideology most frequently associated with Immanuel Kant. “He posited a dichotomy between price and dignity, whereby ‘something that has a price can be exchanged for something else of equal value; whereas that which exceeds all price and therefore admits of no equivalent, has dignity’” (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy; p. 8). It is an approach that makes the person central to all reality (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 1). As the focal point, each person brings meaning to reality through thought and action. Whether one conceives this construct as theistic or philosophic, personalism recognizes the alchemy of human dignity, worth, and well-being. These elements adhere and cohere in the fundamental makeup of the person. Under this rubric of personalism, contemporary human rights, according to Baxi, is linked to human suffering. Even more, however, “The ‘contemporary’ human rights paradigm...is based on the premise of radical self-determination. Self-determination insists that every human person has a right to a *voice*, a right to bear witness to violation, a right to immunity against disarticulation by concentrations of economic, social, and political formations” (Baxi 2002; p. 31). Such

self-determination does not end there. Personalism demands that human dignity, worth, and well-being find expression in every aspect of the human experience.

Thus, the disarticulation of the person from the economic, social, and political structures and their benefits becomes a violation of the person, and thus, of human rights. As Baxi notes, “modern human rights regarded large-scale imposition of human suffering as *just* and *right* in pursuit of a Eurocentric notion of *human ‘progress’*” (Ibid; p. 35. italics original). Yet, contemporary human rights logic ignores the suffering that comes from global capitalism’s accumulation and concentration of the world’s benefits in the hands of too few, while too many suffer.

Personalism addresses both the *is* and the *ought* of human rights. Baxi describes the former as the question of human nature and the latter as “who counts as human” (Baxi 1999; p 109). Both of which he argues are constructs, i.e. “human nature” and “human rights” (Ibid; p. 118). Regarding human nature and the distinction between the moral/ethical and pragmatic/scientific, Baxi provides a very straightforward and succinct explanation:

*The theistic responses trace the origins of human nature in the Divine Will; the secular in contingencies of evolution of life on earth. The theistic approaches, even when recognizing the holiness of all creation, insist on Man being created in God’s image, and therefore, capable of perfection in ways no other being in the world is. The secular/scientific approaches view human beings as complex psychosomatic systems co-determined by both genetic endowment and the*

*environment and open to experimentation, like all other objects in 'nature' (Ibid; p. 109 fn).*

As noted above, Donnelly refers to rights as having nature (or substance) and source. One might argue, then, that human rights, then, as source, substance, and seat, i.e. their theoretical *nature*, their *origin*, and their *location*. Donnelly posits, "Society plays a crucial role in determining how human potentialities will be realized. Human rights are institutions specifically devoted to the most complete possible realization of that potential" (Donnelly 1985; pp. 31-32). If one is an island unto oneself, then one alone can determine the source, substance, and seat of one's "rights." But, when two or more are gathered, such determination must be mutually and equally beneficial. To deny one, diminishes the *nature* of that one's status, and thus, of her essence. In some real sense, the denied dies, that is, ceases to be "one with." This invokes Martin Buber's I-You and I-It relationships.

As regards source, the calculus of human rights is that of (human) nature: (human) need: (human) necessity or *right*. They are basic and universal. Personalism is the product of this function. Donnelly notes basic needs may be scientifically established, to wit "minimum amounts of food energy, protein, water and other nutrients, shelter, and perhaps companion" make the list (Ibid; p. 29). These are functions of the somatic. But, what about the claim of personalism that appends the right to achieve one's full potential or Donnelly's "full personal development" (Ibid; p. 29)? When it comes to human rights, personalism is inextricably tied to interdependence and interconnectedness.

Baxi observes that traditional language of human rights and suffering favors application to those forms of violence (the subject is human rights violations) in war and war-like circumstances, while ignoring the slow suffering in situations of (negative) peace (Baxi 2002; pp. vi-vii). Thus, current human rights logic and language tends toward physical and psychological, but not structural and cultural forms of violence. Again Baxi, “The emerging standards of international criminal law in war-like situations do not extend to systematic, sustained and planned peacetime denials of the right to satisfaction of basic human needs, such as food, clothing, housing, and health” (Ibid; p. vii).

In the preface of this book, Baxi discusses the dichotomy between human rights as a matter of war and peace and its relationship to human suffering. He recognizes a certain ambivalence to human suffering at the hands of the state in peacetime, which is a function of its sovereignty that is trumped by war: “languages of suffering are not writ large in times of peace as they are in times of war” (Ibid; pp. vi-vii). “Conditions of extreme impoverishment, forced labour, markets for systematically organized rape through sex trafficking, child labour, planned displacement of peoples in the name of ‘development’, for example, represent from the standpoint of the violated the same order of liquidation of human potential as war and war-like situations” (Ibid; p. vii). In this regard, says Baxi, the very language of human rights may result in “the production of human suffering” (Ibid; p. viii). Baxi further notes “The obligation to minimize human suffering [in war and war-like] situations grounded in an order of non-negotiable moral obligations of ‘civilized behavior even in situations of armed conflict, does not attach to

states of peace, even when ‘peace’ appears to millions of people as forms of belligerency by other means” (Ibid; p. vii).

In discussing human rights as a function of governance, Baxi refers to “the rights-integrity of [the] structures of government” (Ibid; p. 9). He observes a state’s capacity to foment “structural violations by virtue of its capacity to reproduce legitimate law. The sovereign power constantly negotiates the imperatives of the rule of law in ways that, for example, somehow render as legitimate the affluence of a few with the extreme impoverishment of many, locally and globally. This form of reproduction of rights and legality often, at least from the standpoint of those violated, combines, and recombines, the rule of law with the reign of terror” (Ibid; p. 8). “Emancipation is realized through human rights, but the relationship is functional rather than definitional; that is, one knows which are the fundamental human rights through learning what is needed to secure emancipation, not the other way round” (Ibid; p. 145).

The idea of Kant’s religious notion “radical evil” or its secular twin in Hegel’s theodicy, places the moral imperative on every human being to challenge the propensities that militate against the logic of personhood and rights and the ideals of a shared humanity and community. This is what makes the language of human rights a moral language.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter argues the history of humanity has centered, in one significant way, on the inexorable change and its attending development of nation-states and their consequences. Among them are the need to realize the dignity, worth, and well-being of

citizens. This need has also led to recognizing a codification of the rights that appertain to the meaning of being human. What gives rise to the need and the corresponding response in this discourse is the impact such matters as nation-state formations, capitalization of the global economy, and the proliferation of new technologies have had on the accumulation and concentration of power, in virtually all its forms, first in the global north, and then among a relatively minuscule number of persons. All of these conditions reflect the consequences of change and development over millennia.

Thus far, this thesis has focused less on the specifics of the rights themselves and more on the theory, principles, and values that scholars have sought to surmise with the formal recognition and codification of human rights over a little more than the past half-century. In addition, it has endeavored to conflate the idea of human rights to that of nonviolence as a preliminary step toward understanding their meaning and relevance to effecting positive social change and human development as theory and practice. Some ideas suggest ample and even robust notions of the person. They give personhood meaning, identity, and even empowerment. Yet, each does so posterior to human essence. Moreover, singularly, they each have criteria that are sufficient with respect to various meaning making characteristics of humanity. Still, singularly they do not go far enough to honor the worth and dignity of the person as a matter *a priori* to the political, economic, social or cultural agendas that predominate their respective interests. Before race, gender, class, ethnicity, religion, intellect, physical ability or any other human characteristic, personalism ascribes to every human an equal measure of the stuff of human ontology. Indeed, these characteristics are critical elements and all may be

necessary, but none singularly is wholly sufficient. Such sufficiency springs from the reality of human personality as it is lived, both individually and collectively.

As noted above, while there is a concept of *theistic-personalism*, that is, the theological belief in a personal Being or God, who gives to every individual personal worth and dignity, such a belief is not required to “authorize” the concept of personalism. There is also the notion of *philosophical-personalism*, which is an ideology most frequently associated with Immanuel Kant. He holds each person has inherent dignity and worth irrespective of any characteristic beyond basic humanity. This is a matter of human potential in the sense that it is such potential *realized* that defines human reality *actualized*.

Thus, the argument follows human value is found in human *being*, that is, in being human, which is an ontological idea that finds *expression* in social, political and economic frames, but is not defined by them. This idea is both a matter of nature and nurture. Personalism’s primacy in the human experience is catalyzed in the very nature or essence of what it is to be human (a matter of cause—ontology). It is realized in each person’s obligation to self and the other that constitutes the notion of nurture (a matter of acceptance—epistemology). Further, it is only fully actualized in the unfettered development and expression of the self (a matter of personality—humanity). That development and expression further operates in the nurture of human relations/interaction—that is, social processes or systems, particularly those that are social, political, and economic. It is indeed dependent upon such processes or systems, which are social constructs. Recall that this thesis demonstrates these processes and



systems find expression through canonical disciplines. Moreover, personalism has the philosophical and operational capacity to subsume the elements that make them pertinent to the moral consciousness of human dignity and worth. Should one aggregate all of the attributes and characteristics of each canon as a collective construct, the criteria of necessity would certainly be met, but sufficiency would fail. Contrarily, inculcating the idea of personalism into their respective canons, would hold the specific focus of their interest, while at the same time, meet the rigors of a moral consciousness of human dignity and worth, yielding sufficiency. The alchemy of necessity and sufficiency in this regard effects *human agency*. In other words, to be relevant and responsive, the posed framework must be effective in empowering individuals and groups to take charge of their own lives, the life of their families, and that of their communities. Chapter six will revisit the issue of human agency.

## **CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION: NONVIOLENCE AS A THEORY OF CHANGE FOR PEACE AND CONFLICT**

Nonviolence is certainly not new to the fields of peace and conflict. Indeed, as previously discussed, there is considerable literature on the subject, perhaps more in the former case than the latter. The goal is a new articulation that situates the idea of nonviolence in a framework that gives scholars and practitioners, policy and decision makers palpable theory for praxis, making it relevant and responsive toward a more peaceful and just world. To that end, this concluding chapter re-articulates the discourse on nonviolence to construct the paradigmatic framework. It proceeds by expanding the meaning making processes begun in chapter five. This task is accomplished through a synthesis of all foregoing chapters. Peter C. Fiss and Paul M. Hirsch's (2005) observation that humans use discourse as a tool for framing and sense making is instructive (Ibid; p. 30). As well, the thinking of Doug Bond is helpful to assist one's meaning making process, particularly as it relates to the discourse on the nuanced meanings of violence and nonviolence. First, discussing the role of meaning making to discourse, or what Žižek observes Heidegger says is "something that depends on the *historical context* on the epochal disclosure of being that occurs in and through language" is helpful (Žižek 2008; p. 67). In this regard, recall Žižek's discussion on language, and how it becomes the means of "essencing" or meaning making.

## On Meaning Making

While there are many narratives scholars use to explain social change and human development (for example, love and visceral bonds have shaped narratives of human relations, especially familial and clan), one might observe that people are predisposed to meaning making through the narrative of the modern world and its structural order. That is, framing and sense making (the elements of meaning making according to Fiss and Hirsch) are the two processes “by which the meaning of events are socially constructed and negotiated” (Fiss and Hirsch 2005; p. 30). They argue *frames* “constitute ‘schemata of interpretation’ that ‘organize experiences and guide action;’” they “[focus] on the process by which actors produce frames of meaning to mobilize support for their respective positions” (Fiss and Hirsch 2005, 30). On the other hand, sense making “emphasizes the social psychological and epistemological process by which actors form an understanding of the situations they find themselves in” (Ibid). In other words, discourse provides a tool to frame and make sense of ideas: identifying a problem, staking a position, and determining a solution. This process may be applied in our efforts to comprehend how people understand social change and human development, and more important, how reframing or rearticulating that understanding may aid in developing relevant and responsive nonviolence theory and praxis. To that end, this thesis is a discursive effort to conceptualize meaning making for a paradigmatic framework that explicates the roles violence and nonviolence play in organizing and maintaining order and peace in human society.

Implied in Fiss and Hirsch’s construct is the notion that *mass acceptance* is required to maintain meaning making. For example, as this thesis argues in chapters two

and three, the current change and development history and values discourse relies on mass acceptance by societies. Such support is present even when it is against the self-interest of the masses in a society—a phenomenon that itself might be a form of violence! This point is illustrated in the theoretical framework argued in Wehr, Burgess and Burgess' edited volume, *Justice Without Violence* (Wehr, Burgess and Burgess 1994). The objective of their study is to analyze when and how nonviolence works; “to add breadth of understanding of the problem of attaining justice without violence” (Ibid; p. 1). The study argues that justice is a function of power, where disparate groups engage in asymmetric power struggles and the dominant groups hold the greater power. Recall the discussion in chapters two, three, and particularly five, where the elite monopolizes the monopoly of power by the state. What is interesting to this thesis is the assertion made by Kenneth Boulding's contribution to the discussion. He argues there are three forms of power: threat, economic, and integrative (Ibid; p. 50). He observes, “It is clear that the use of threat power [to do or refrain from doing something by one party to another, whether directly or indirectly] is much more likely to lead to violence than the use either of economic power (exchanges that tend to be fairly peaceful) or integrative power [power in the form of or arising from negotiated legitimacy]. If most people regard their society and its institutions as basically legitimate [*even when it is against their self-interest*] there is not likely to be much violence, especially political violence” (Ibid; p. 52).

Boulding's observation presents us with two points of interest, which may be framed as queries. The first is if the “most people” in his statement represents a majority

group that identifies as a collective against a minority group it views as the other, then might their very regard not constitute a form of violence against that minority? The second question concerns the implied structural violence overlooked by Boulding's conclusion: Is violence diminished, or even negated, simply because it is not perceived as such by its victim? The issues these questions raise demonstrate the dissonance in the discourse over the meaning and relevance of both violence and nonviolence in general, and particularly, for the fields of peace and conflict. How violence and nonviolence are perceived is the cogent point here. Even the very fields whose purpose is peace and conflict (their theories and praxis) may give meaning (frame and make sense) to the ideas of violence and nonviolence that are more in line with being part of the problem rather than of its solution. Exploring this dilemma next is instructive, since the latter point serves as a powerful example of what might be gained from (meaning making) using the prescribed paradigmatic framework.

### **A Paradigmatic Framework for a Theory of Change**

This thesis argues for a paradigmatic framework that relies on five basic postulates: (1) social change and human development provide a scaffold for understanding the human experience and the algorithms of making and sustaining human societies and the human condition; (2) the historical trajectory of change and development is based on violent values that are coupled with meaning making that frames individualism and property rights as the relevant values, which foster behaviors that are violent, (3) an alternative approach to change and development is nonviolence, where meaning making gives personalism and human rights values predominance,

fostering behaviors that are nonviolent, (4) this new meaning making requires a rearticulated narrative that routinizes nonviolent values and behaviors in social structures that are consistent with the alchemy of means and ends, and (5) there is precedence for requisite processes that is both multidisciplinary in the common canons of professional disciplines and comity in the acceptance of “universal” rights among national states. The challenge for the peace and conflict fields is to develop theory and praxis that is relevant and responsive to this framework.

Recall that this thesis argues the traditional history/values alchemy assumes a realist or pragmatic violent action (PVA) algorithm of social change and human development, which reflexively implies a pragmatic *non-violent* action (PNVA) logic. That is, PNVA is the reflexive progeny of PVA. In other words, PNVA follows realist logic, with individualism and property rights values and behavior, respectively. This seems to be the point of Sharp’s techniques approach to nonviolent direct action and its kinship to Clausewitz’s war values (see Sharp 1972; pp. 495-496). An alternative history/values alchemy that assumes an idealist or conscientious nonviolent action (CNA) algorithm would give a principled *nonviolence* action logic (One might call it nonviolent social change and development or NSCD, as discussed below.). Then, NSCD would be the reflexive progeny of CNA with personalism and human rights values and behavior, respectively. The discourse here is not mere semantics or idealist rhetoric. The goal is not only to determine what is, but what might be and how to achieve it. That is, it compels the query what theory is necessary for a nonviolence praxis?

A reformulation of this algorithm might follow Doug Bond's attributes and behavior construct, rearticulated as values and behavior. In the Wehr, Burgess and Burgess volume referred to above, Bond argues there is a need to "provide the basis for building bridges in our fractured and underdeveloped field (peace and conflict)" (Wehr, Burgess and Burgess 1994; p. 60). He argues, *all* uses of nonviolent direct action, principled or otherwise, for status quo or anti-status quo objectives, may actually encourage, if not ensure, popular empowerment" (Ibid; italics original). To that end, he proposes "A Framework for Inquiry" to assist in reducing confusion and increasing consensus. His construct contains a conceptual mapping of the proposed idea that includes identifying attitudes and behaviors. Among those characteristics necessary to contextually map competing or conflicting interests is *values*, which are among the attributes "that serve to motivate and inform the choice of approach and selection of particular methods of action" (Ibid; p. 61). Behaviors then follow as *routinized* institutions (policies, systems, processes, and norms) and/or direct political action (Ibid). If Bond is right, then this idea has something to offer (1) the posed paradigmatic framework, and specifically (2) understanding the role of how violence has served the change and development process, but more important (3) how reformulating a nonviolence theory for praxis might be contextualized and carried out. Keep in mind, the focus here is in not only on extant theory and praxis, but also on *a new frame and articulation that connects structural violence and conscientious nonviolence*.

### **Structural Violence and Conscientious Nonviolence**

Bond's construct also proposes the idea of mechanisms of change to explicate why some nonviolent action succeeds and others fail to achieve their objectives. Simply stated for the purposes of this discussion, Bond's idea argues, "Mechanisms of change bring about the cessation or closure of the manifest conflict and produce an imminent resolution of the struggle, even if temporary" (Ibid; p. 71). Closely related to mechanisms is the "capacity" and "willingness" of a party to make or accept the desired change target. The function of the capacity and willingness alchemy manifests as the actual accommodation (Boulding's legitimation) or *internalization* of the change target. Bond explains

*The accommodation mechanism of change bespeaks a depth of internalization that is wedded to and reinforced by the ongoing process of interaction; the mechanism yields change that is particularly stable because it is self-adjusting. The disintegration mechanism of change, on the other hand is likely to create volatile situations with virtually no internalization of any change* (Ibid).

The points of Bond's concept most relevant to this discussion are (1) the process for inculcating change, (2) the depth to which it is accepted or *internalized* and (3) the degree to which "on-going interaction" occurs such that "the mechanism yields change that is particularly stable because it is self-adjusting" (Ibid; p. 91). It is here that the reflexivity and complementarity of pragmatic and principled nonviolence actions may be most evident.



Some might argue distinguishing between these two types of nonviolence is a distinction without a difference. The question is not so much are they existentially different, but are they empirically determinable. Thus, this question is not unlike the query whether there is a difference between physical and structural violence. Indeed, violence is violence (whether direct/physical or indirect/structural) in the sense that it has a negative and harmful consequence on the life chances of societies and their citizens. But, how each form of violence is legitimated and carried out, manifests, and is realized in the individual or collective life may be relatively palpable. As discussed above, direct physical violence is overt, instrumental, observable, and affectively perceived. Structural violence may be much less so in each of these regards. Even still, both forms of violence may be simultaneously operative and, in any regard, have a negative effect on personhood. The same notions hold between pragmatic and conscientious nonviolence. They may be concurrently functioning, while their legitimation, instrumental processes, manifestations, and perceived presence by their subjects are realized in dramatically different ways.

This thesis argues structural violence is a *routinized* process embedded in the institutions, systems, processes, and policies of societal means and ends. Thus, structural violence enjoys a certain resilience because of the mutually reinforcing nature of these elements. Its eradication requires equivalent routinized values and behavior, means and ends that are fostered by and foster nonviolence.

### **The NSCD Acronym**

This observation leads to an explication of the NSCD acronym.

Connecting nonviolent direct action to the posed paradigmatic framework as routinized political behavior, one derives a logic of nonviolent social change (whether the goal is changing or maintaining the status quo) that rearticulates the change and development discourse and algorithm by virtue of the values and behaviors of conscientious nonviolence (personalism and human rights). Thus, one might conclude the answer to the question—can the attributes of nonviolence cohere as a theory of change relevant and responsive to peace and conflict—relies on whether one can legitimate meaning making (framing and sense making) to a logic of nonviolent social change and development or NSCD dialectically with structural violence. One might further conclude that the theory's mechanisms must possess the capacity to effect the desired change, and the change process must be routinized in social structures. What are those mechanisms to make (the means) and effect (the ends) routinized nonviolence? This thesis argues they must be value and behavior (means) relevant as well as peace and development (ends) responsive. In other words, the values and behavior of the means will be consistent with achieving peace and development ends.

This thesis further argues careful consideration must be given to whether conscientious (principled) nonviolence can be further parsed in order to determine its relevance and efficacy as viable theory of change. How one understands this form of nonviolence determines, in large measure, how one answers this question. Wehr, Burgess and Burgess' definition of principled nonviolence is typical to peace and conflict. It “generally accepts the value of nonviolence on faith. It neither examines if nonviolence

works nor specifies what ‘works’ might mean” (Ibid; p. 13). But, this thesis argues the *sine qua non* of principled nonviolence need not of necessity rely on a religious or “faith-based” logic. It may find legitimacy in a values-behavior-based notion. Then, the metrics for evaluating what works may be determined based on the both means and ends that are consistent with the prescribed values and behavior.

As argued above, values are a natural phenomenon of the human experience that accompanies the history of human relations, particularly as they relate to social change and human development. Indeed, values have been responsible, in large measure, for the social, cultural, political, and economic frameworks that construct human societies. Human ability to cognize and emote *frames* the values that find expression in human behavior and communication (discourse). Further, values are codified as what is “universally” accepted rights. Recall the common canons in the disciplines and among national states (i.e. the Universal Declaration of Human Rights). They become prescribed values and routinized behavior.

This raises the question whether there is a place for routinized (versus direct) nonviolent action that is situated in the political realm of social change and human development and is not a spiritual or metaphysical dictum. The answer to this question will help to determine the requisite parameters and metrics for an empirical investigation of the logic’s praxis. Such a framework will then give the peace and conflict fields the mechanisms for research, formulation, practice and evaluation of a concept for effecting such a routinized praxis, or Shapiro’s plausible, doable, and testable theory of change criteria.

Is there philosophical precedence for such a paradigm? What would be its criteria? Issues that might respond to these questions among national states and in the global theatre include formal versus informal structures and processes for prosecuting conflict, such as Tract 1 versus Tract 2 interventions, ethical values versus moral norms that inform and instruct behavior, passive versus active behavior or action, coercive versus persuasive strategies, routinized political processes and action versus non-routinized political action, freedom versus justice, and equality versus efficiency objectives.

### **PNVA versus NSCD**

This thesis has shown that violence may be defined as direct and indirect, where definitions simply stated mean the former is its physical form and the latter is structural. As well, it has demonstrated that both forms have been operative in the processes of social change and human development, both intra-nationally and internationally. In addition, it has shown nonviolence may be explicated as two ideas, one as a practical technique and the other as a principled way of engaging human conflict. It may be that PNVA is uniquely qualified and justified for certain types of violence, such as “just violence” (i.e. just war), while NSCD is legitimized for other types. (Gandhi and Sharp’s logics arguably would embrace this latter point, while King’s would not). This argument presents not an either/or, but a both/and proposition to the posed construct, which invokes the metrics of necessary and sufficient. The point here is the framework is responsive to the need for balancing both the realist and idealist approaches to the theorized construct or nonviolence theory of change that is responsive to both physical and structural violence.

### **The Routinization of Conscientious Nonviolence**

Recall that this thesis observes Pinker's central argument begs the question whether there is or can be an evolving "routinization" of non-violent action, which implies a teleological trajectory toward a nonviolent society that is ontological. Or, is he merely pointing us to an apt metaphor of a Hobbesian notion of Leviathan and the question whether it can be tamed? In other words, Pinker may be making the point, even if unintended, that violence of all kinds is antithetical to the nature of human collectivity, where such collectivity establishes the dichotomous chaos versus community in Martin Luther King's logic. In such a case, "Kingian" logic provides his famous aphorism for understanding Pinker's perceived trajectory as the "arch that bends toward justice" (or Gandhi's "orderliness in the universe, ...an unalterable law governing everything and every being"),<sup>xv</sup> notwithstanding the violence that has been the predominant value of social change and human development. King would argue such a transition requires a response to his call for a revolution of values. While the trajectory might lean in the direction of a just and peaceful world, neither King nor Gandhi anticipate the world will rely on a driver that is ontological. Instead, they expect a methodological solution born of human agency. Such a solution would include both pragmatic and conscientious nonviolence.

This framework raises several questions. First, is it responsive to the missing moral algorithm that Kool refers to, which is anticipated in an ethical alchemy? And, like democracy and human rights, is it an evolving experiment, manifested, if catalyzed, by the moral bent, whether King's, Gandhi's or Pinker's? These questions follow the earlier

query about what structural peace or even structural nonviolence might look like. This is the challenge of a nonviolence theory of change.

This point comes full circle to the question whether nonviolence can cohere as a theory of change that is relevant and responsive as praxis in the peace and conflict fields. It is another way of asking can it work? As this thesis observes, this question is a matter of empirical study. There are several works one might sight to respond to this question, including Ackerman and Kruegler (1994), Wehr, Burgess and Burgess (1994), and Ackerman and Duvall (2000), Sharp (2005), and Chenoweth and Stephan (2011). They each provide important contributions to the discourse. Thus, there is now empirical evidence of the significant, if not definite, positive affect of the technical or pragmatic approach; that is, PNVA can positively contribute to the achievement of one's intended objective, such as toppling a regime or dictatorship, and changing or maintaining an issue of the status quo like apartheid or affirmative action. But, what one is much less certain about is the longevity and universality of its applicability in all situations or of the sustainability of the successes this approach might make. As earlier noted, the inherent resilience in political-economic systems might well be beyond the "practical reach" of the pragmatic approach used in social movements. Reasons for the lack of practicability might include movement demobilization: repression, facilitation and exhaustion (Tarrow 2011; pp. 190-191), asymmetric power balance that is unresponsive to available techniques: communication mechanisms may not be adequate to reach essential sympathetic audiences, and so on.

Among the studies intended to demonstrate the relevance and efficacy of PNVA, Chenoweth and Stephan (2011), and Wehr, Burgess and Burgess (1994) are the two works that bear significant relevance to this thesis. In the case of direct or physical violence, one might consider the work of Chenoweth and Stephan who argue this form of nonviolence is positively responsive. They demonstrate that “maximalist nonviolent campaigns” (or PNVA), and particularly nonviolent resistance action, are effective in achieving their goals. Their focus on nonviolent resistance is a laudable and important contribution to the subject, notwithstanding issues that cause one pause. Among them is the argument that many, if not most, “nonviolent movements” are accompanied by *violent* action (Matus 2011; and Roberts and Garton Ash 2009). Further, arguably, PNVA is not effective in addressing violence in all its forms. This point is, of course, different from saying it is not effective in achieving one’s goals all the time; as nothing, including violence, would be expected to achieve such a standard. Nonetheless, as a matter of structural violence, which itself is value laden, PNVA might be necessary, but is insufficient to provide structural answers to structural questions. Moreover, without a theory and metrics, one would be unable to determine whether an emphasis on PNVA applied with the attributes of the principled kind might result with greater success in achieving its objectives.

There is no study that demonstrates a coherent and comprehensive theory of conscientious nonviolence in the peace and conflict fields. Consequently, there is no study that seeks to demonstrate the relevance and efficacy of its praxis. This thesis posits a theoretical framework and a discourse as first steps to that end. But, what would be its

criteria? Doug Bond's definition of principled non-violent action is a typical alternative to the faith-based notion offered by Wehr, Burgess and Burgess. It presumes the principled form is a way of life, which one might rearticulate and give meaning as structural routinization (Ibid; p. 61). The idea of principle invokes the notion of values as a Habermasean ethic, i.e. a matter of ethical persuasion.

### **Fostering a Nonviolence Theory of Change**

This thesis takes the position that questions regarding the relevance and efficacy of nonviolence as a relevant and viable normative or ethical dimension against violence in all its forms can best be answered as a function of human agency. Why such a function is essential can be answered by placing it contextually in the frame of peace and its relationship to social change and human development. To address this issue, one must first establish a working definition of peace. While this definition expands below, for now, one might say *peace is simply the human condition where individuals have the opportunity to achieve their full potential* (human agency). This definition, at first glance, might appear too esoteric for practical application. But, framed in a normative context, the definition takes on connotations of meaning making in the human experience. That is, it beckons the cognitive tools and orientations that give meaning to human rights, civil rights, and economic and social development. These ideas adhere and cohere in a cosmopolitan whole, where both local and global political institutions, moral norms, markets, and cultural expressions find meaning and manifestation in the dignity and worth of the person, that is, personhood and the value of personalism. This is in contradistinction to violence, which denies such dignity and withholds the worth of some



individuals in key areas of sociopolitical and socioeconomic operations. *Nonviolence, then, is central to the collective human experience, the person is its end and human agency is its means.* This is the alchemy of peace and nonviolence. That is, the logic of nonviolence situates how individuals participate directly in the “societal ecosystem,” unfettered by impediments that deny one’s personhood, or achieving one’s full potential.

Our next question then is, can there be peace absent nonviolence? An answer to this question is rooted in the definition of peace as proffered by Johan Galtung in his 1969 article “Violence, Peace, and Peace Research” and before him, Martin Luther King, Jr. in his 1957 article “Non-Violence and Racial Justice” (Galtung, 1969; King, Jr. 1957). Essentially, both would yield an answer in the affirmative as a condition of negative peace: “an uneasy peace” absent of violence (King 1958). Contrarily, a negative response for both would result in a condition of positive peace: “the absence of violence” and “the presence of...justice” (King 1958). Further, if the answer is no, then how one defines both violence and nonviolence is paramount. Even more, nonviolence then becomes not just something that is nice to do, nor something that one should do. It becomes imperative—something that one must do, if one is to achieve positive peace.

As noted at the outset of this thesis, a predominant argument regarding international relations and central to the posed paradigmatic context is the idea that the global scene is anarchic: states fear each other and seek either offensive or defensive measures to preserve, protect, and enhance their position in the global pecking order. That is, they seek their best advantage for security. Such a world finds at tension polar ideas of realism and idealism. This raises the question are violence and nonviolence

necessarily bent toward one and the other of these ideas, respectively? In other words, are violence and nonviolence reflexively related to realism and idealism?

As an ideological matter, the realist/idealist dilemma is what Martin Luther King, Jr. might refer to as the chaos or community alternatives (King 1967). His logic would hold the Hobbesian realist idea that the *real* world is anarchic, one where states (and individuals) must ensure their security by any means necessary, which has a means/end calculus of chaos. In such a world, individualism and property rights reign. Contrarily, he would argue with John U. Nef, the Rousseauian idealist, that the *real* world is, indeed, anarchic, but one where states can ensure their security through reason by “a common community of understanding relating to life as a whole (Nef; pp. 1952, 414),” and has a means/end calculus of community, where personalism and human rights are the dominant values and behaviors. In the former case, the means justify the end. If the desired outcome is achieved, all is well that ends well. In the latter case, the means must be consistent with the end. If the desired outcome is to be achieved, one must be cognizant that in the final analysis violence begets violence. These notions evoke the idea of peace, the positive kind in the latter case and negative in the former.

Further, the realist point of view holds that chaos can be ameliorated by what John J. Mearsheimer calls “The three main liberal theories of international relations.” Mearsheimer says these theories are (1) the claim that prosperous and economically interdependent states are unlikely to fight each other [capitalism], (2) the claim that democracies do not fight each other [democracy], and (3) the claim that international

institutions enable states to avoid war and concentrate instead on building cooperative relationships” [globalism] (Mearsheimer 2001; p. 9). Mearsheimer says

*General theories about how the world works play an important role in how policymakers identify the ends they seek and the means they choose to achieve them. Yet that is not to say we should embrace any theory that is widely held, no matter how popular it may be, because there are bad as well as good theories. For example, some theories deal with trivial issues, while others are opaque and almost impossible to comprehend. Furthermore, some theories have contradictions in their underlying logic, while others have little explanatory power because the world simply does not work the way they predict. The trick is to distinguish between sound theories and defective ones (Ibid; p. 10).*

But, relative to idealist theoretical notions, he further observes,

*Some social scientists argue that the assumptions that underpin a theory need not conform to reality. Indeed, the economist Milton Friedman maintains that the best theories ‘will be found to have assumptions that are wildly inaccurate descriptive representations of reality, and, in general, the more significant the theory, the more unrealistic the assumptions (Ibid; p. 30).*

This raises the question can nonviolence—an idealist notion—be taken seriously as a contender among the theoretical offerings to international relations, specifically, and conflict in general? Maybe not, as a theoretical construct alone. Determining whether

nonviolence has both the necessary and sufficient criteria requires framing it in palpable context to the challenge it faces. A paradigmatic approach as defined herein provides that context. It gives a framework for assessing the potential efficacy and relevance of principled nonviolence as a viable theoretical construct relevant and responsive to structural violence. For example, Kool discusses the relationship between nonviolence and prospect theory (Kool 2008). Essentially, he observes “prospect theory was developed [by Daniel Kahneman] in the context of economic behavior to explain how subjects become risk-averse and what drives them to avoid loss, ignoring the perceived gains” (Kool 2008; p. 21). Might it be that this theory helps to explain the propensity for reduction in physical violence throughout human history as proffered by Steven Pinker? Might modernity heighten risk aversion relative to its attending capitalism, and the accumulation and concentration of power? Keep in mind that the issue in prospect theory is not so much the cognitive system employed (process/means), but the risk avoidance (outcome/end). Thus, risk avoidance is the objective. Pinker further argues that violence has decreased, relative to its physical kind. Yet, the loss of life, its chances, or the quality thereof from structural forms of violence is no less palpable than its physical diminution or denial. This phenomenon is depicted in the rampant poverty, disease, and underdevelopment of people in the global south as well as the increasing disparity between the richest and poorest populations of the world, including the chasm in the middle. Hence, there is something not yet fully addressed in Pinker’s analysis of violence and nonviolence as it relates to people and their quality of life—that is, their potential. Such critical ideas come into vision when shown in the light of this paradigmatic context.

Even more, understanding the relevance and efficacy of nonviolence to the peace and conflict fields requires a similar framing, such that new theories and narratives that recognize this challenge can rearticulate discourse on peace strategies, and conflict analysis and resolution. To that end, nonviolence is too often relegated to its pragmatic kind and then applied in a prejudicial manner to overtly oppressive regimes, such as dictatorships, ignoring any examination of its relevance and efficacy to conflict in democracies and their tendencies toward the accumulation and concentration of power. This raises the question whether or not nonviolence is available to democratic states, international relations, and global conditions that evoke conflict. If regimes of all kinds (including democracies) are to be instruments of humanity's full potential, then by what means should they do so? What should be the processes for constructing and sustaining a free and just society? Should pragmatic nonviolence campaigns reach their objectives (and oppressive regimes are removed), what should be the "strategic" methodology for replacing them? And, how should such replacement be fashioned to ensure similar or new forms of violence do not take hold? Can conscientious nonviolence be responsive to the challenges and opportunities that conflict in today's world brings? If so, what will be the necessary and sufficient criteria that it must possess? This will be the subject of further study, once rooted in this paradigmatic context.

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<sup>i</sup> These authors were selected because of their particular epistemological approach to violence, which lend themselves to explicating its structural definition. They are by no means the only authors one might reference, as many have written on the subject. As a contemporary matter, Galtung provide arguably the most lucid definitions of violence and nonviolence in both peace and conflict literature today. Both Arendt and Zizek offer eloquent explications of violence, where the former argument is rooted historically and the latter philosophically.

<sup>ii</sup> Clifford Geertz, "Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture," *The Interpretation of Cultures*, NY: Basic Books, 1973. Violence and nonviolence find expression through the culture of societies. Culture is the lens through which we observe and seek understanding of human collectivities or societies. This seems to be the point of Clifford Geertz's "Thick Description." Geertz argues culture is the

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stuff of human existence in that it commands the psychological frameworks (he calls them structures) that inform and direct normative behavior in a collectivity. Thus, to understand the group one must understand its culture. That understanding is no pedestrian effort or, for Geertz, “thin description.” Rather, it comes from a deep understanding culled from a thick description of the context of the group’s behavior through a semiotic approach, which focuses on the symbols and signs imbedded in the fabric of the groups communal actions and relationships (Geertz, 1973, 14).

<sup>iii</sup> Ibid, p. 13. The “the groups” that Prof. Palmquist refers to are in this case, individual theorists. Thus, the “participants” in this study are the various theorists reviewed, and more specifically their discourse. Thus, the use of the three qualitative approaches: thematic analysis, discourse analysis, and grounded theory. The

<sup>iv</sup> These simplified definitions serve our purposes for this article, but require fuller explication to appreciate Galtung’s seminal contribution to conflict theory. For a more in-depth explication see Johan Galtung, *Methodology and Ideology, Essays in Methodology*, vol. 1 (Copenhagen: Ejlers, 1977), ch. 9.

<sup>v</sup> A fuller explanation of Curle’s framework is detailed by John Paul Lederach in his book *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies*, (United States Institute for Peace, Washington, DC), 64.

<sup>vi</sup> These steps elaborated by the Fellowship of Reconciliation in their training pamphlet, “An Orientation to the Kingian Nonviolence Conflict Reconciliation Program.” Bernard Lafayette, Jr. and David C. Jehnsen expand them to six, claiming, “The six steps are not abstract methodology, but evolved from the events and movements between 1954 and 1968. For example, Dr. King described four steps in his ‘Letter From the Birmingham Jail,’ roughly corresponding to the FOR’s (Fellowship of Reconciliation) handout of the four steps to nonviolence. (“An Orientation to the Kingian Nonviolence Conflict Reconciliation Program, Bernard Lafayette, Jr. and David C. Jehnsen, p.32)

<sup>vii</sup> Cited in *Contemporary Conflict Resolution*, Oliver Ransbotham et. al., which provides a succinct discussion of Azar’s theory.

<sup>viii</sup> Martin Luther King, Jr.’s understanding of violence embraced this concept. His framework of the triple evils clearly articulates the concept of structural violence, and they are punctuated by his assertion that “True compassion is more than flinging a coin to a beggar; it comes to see that an edifice which produces beggars needs restructuring.” (See James M. Washington, *A Testament of Hope, The essential writings and speeches of Martin Luther King, Jr.* (Harper: San Francisco, 1986) 50-51.)

<sup>ix</sup> Pinker’s recent book on the declination of violence has evoked fresh dialogue on understanding the trajectory of violence in human relations. I address this evocation as a matter of comparison to the traditional narrative that is generally held by the other authors referred to.

<sup>x</sup> Kaufmann, Eric. “Peace in Our Time” *The Better Angels of Our Nature: The Decline in Violence in History and Its Causes* By Steven Pinker (Allen Lane/The Penguin Press 802pp £30) at [http://www.literaryreview.co.uk/kaufmann\\_12\\_11.php](http://www.literaryreview.co.uk/kaufmann_12_11.php)

<sup>xi</sup> In his response to one critic of his book, Pinker succinctly enumerates the types of violence he refers to: “wars among great powers and developed states...civil war and terrorism...other kinds of violence: tribal raiding and feuding, violent personal crime, barbaric practices such as slavery and torture-executions, and violence on smaller scales such as lynching, rape, spousal abuse, spanking, hate crimes, and cruelty to animals.” Found at [http://stevenpinker.com/files/comments\\_on\\_taleb\\_by\\_s\\_pinker.pdf](http://stevenpinker.com/files/comments_on_taleb_by_s_pinker.pdf).

<sup>xii</sup> Some argue the principled form of nonviolence presents problems not easily resolved when studying the idea and applying it as praxis. Among those holding such views, Ronald M. McCarthy and Christopher Kruegler are examples. Their issues the belief that principled nonviolence requires a belief system that is not required of pragmatic. They also hold that principled nonviolence requires a certain point of view mutually held, in some measure, by both sides of a conflict where the approach is applied. They also argue “some assumptions are either unstated or not expressed as researchable problems (McCarthy and Kruegler 1993, 9). This study will seek to respond to these and other issues.

<sup>xiii</sup> For a discussion on strategic nonviolent action see Gene Sharp *The Politics of Nonviolent Action* 1973, A Paul Hare and Herbert H. Blumberg, *Nonviolent Direct Action* 1968, and Peter Ackerman and Christopher Kruegler, *Strategic Nonviolent Conflict* 1994.

<sup>xiv</sup> For a discussion on personalism see Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy. Also, see Rufus Borrow, Jr., 2006. *God and Human Dignity: The Personalism, Theology, and Ethics of Martin Luther King, Jr.* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press.

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<sup>xv</sup> See Harijan, March 23, 1940, *Selections from Gandhi*, N.K. Bose, Amedabad, Narajivan Publishing, 1946, p. 6.