CHAPTER SEVEN

THE THIRD WAY VERSUS THE THIRD WAY
In the last paragraph of Chapter 5, I clarified that I am using the expression 'politics in command of the economic' in the sense of the collectively arrived at idea of 'the good' dominating the way we produce and distribute. In the light of the discussion in chapter 6, it can be argued that the political language or discourse prevalent in a society at a particular time defines, in a contentious way, the goals, the hierarchy of values, etc. of that society and that it is by restating, clarifying, revising this discourse in terms immanently derived form it, that we can give some content to the idea of 'the good' which is supposed to dominate, guide our material sphere. With this purpose, I will present in this chapter the views of Gandhi and Nehru which, I think, have determined the features of the political discourse in post-independence India. I will then take one idea from this discourse, indicate briefly how it can be developed in a way which blends crucial insights of Gandhi and Marx. Finally, I will point out some problems which must be sorted out if the interpretative method being constructed here is to be used rigorously.

Modern India and the Philosophy of the Middle Way:

In his book on Nagarjuna, David Kalupahana says that the essence of the Buddha’s teaching was to strike the middle position between absolutistic philosophical and practical
extremes in the Indian tradition: between the Upanishadic theory of permanent existence and the materialist theory of non-existence; between self-mortification and self-indulgence. Throughout the history of Buddhism, various sectarian rivalries and controversies between different schools have revolved around the question of what the authentic middle path is.¹

Pramit Chaudhuri, discussing the earlier formulations of economic strategy for development in independent India complains about the all-inclusiveness of the goals of planning as stated in the various plan documents. In a footnote he cites from D.D. Kosambi’s The Culture and Civilization of Ancient India:

"The logic advanced by the brahmins took good care to avoid all reality. The end result is seen in the philosophy... [which] threw out the proposition that "A thing is either A or not - A"....This ability to swallow logical contradictions wholesale also left its stamp upon the Indian national character...."

It seems that what Kalupahana regards (respectfully) as the central teaching of Buddhism and Kosambi regards (scornfully) as the cleverness of Brahminism, is also the temperament, or the dominant feature, of the major ideological positions in modern India. Whatever the cultural, historical reasons for this, and whether it is a strategy or a mere tactic, it does seem that the influential positions in our public life have tended to present themselves as a synthesis of the opposites or as soberly avoiding the extremes. This can be
seen from the example of three large issues, particularly in the post-independence India: the relationship of tradition and modernity; the choice between capitalism and communism; and the developmental strategy of either industrialization (with emphasis on heavy or basic industries) or emphasis on agriculture and village industries) (This last is of course a somewhat problematic example. It puts together, rather inaccurately, at least two different contrasts - the one between industry and agriculture, at the level of economic strategy primarily, and the other between industrialized society and simple rural life. Moreover these contrasts overlap with, become part of, the controversy between the other two contrasts in an unpatterned way. But there is still some point in identifying it this way, as a separate contrast, because theoretical and political positions tend to get polarized at the two ends of industry - agriculture axis).

Of course, we have groups, and even parties, emphasizing one over the other, or maintaining a sharp distinction between the two sides of each of the pairs mentioned above and taking a clear side. We have (or have had) Forum for Free Enterprise, Farmers' organizations, various Marxist - Leninist or Maoist revolutionary groups, Sarvodayavadi's and so on. But the dominant - dominant electorally or in terms of the mass following - positions have always been the ones which strike the middle path, combine the virtues of both sides of each of the oppositions, and the 'one-sided'
groups merely react to such successful middle positions. It is not insignificant that even in the current upswing of pro-liberalization views the Prime Minister’s speech at the Davos annual meeting (February 1994) of the World Economic Forum spoke of India’s desire to follow its own middle path in economic matters.

Before turning to this ‘philosophy’ of the middle way it must be pointed out that the three large themes mentioned earlier – (tradition – modernity, capitalism – communism, industry – agriculture) – delimit, define the overall thematic field, they provide the criteria for various arguments, and all major issues are raised and discussed in terms of these large themes. This is true of the issue of the relationship between the State and Civil Society also.

Coming back to the ‘middle path’, it is important to appreciate that in fact there is nothing called the middle path, that several thinkers, or parties, or groups can claim that theirs is the genuine synthesis of the extremes. What is agreed is that we as a nation cannot unquestioningly follow any of the major economic philosophies, or that we can neither throw away our civilisational heritage nor insulate ourselves from the influences of modernity. But even with this agreement, it remains open to define India’s stance and as a result there can be more than one competing ‘middle’ positions.
I want to propose the hypothesis that Gandhi’s and Nehru’s political-economic views can be seen as two competing formulations of the middle path, that the developments of at least the first two decades favored the Nehruvian middle path, and that in the absence of any other formulation of the middle path winning a broad support, these two formulations will remain the norm or the guide to which participants in various debates over public issues will keep returning to. In the remainder of this chapter I will not try to substantiate these claims but instead I will provisionally assume them to be plausible and proceed to juxtapose the views of Gandhi and Nehru. To repeat, it is these views which provide the frame for the influential Indian perspectives on the State and Civil Society.

Indian Tradition, Culture and Religion:

Nehru says in his Discovery of India that he started on his voyage of discovery when he felt that the roots of the present lay in the past and that he might understand the present better in tracing those roots. But the present never left him even when occasionally he got lost in musing over some distant event.

His approach to the past, he says, was never that of a historian or a scholar. Unless it was an aspect of the living present, the past always left him cold and indifferent. The point of this remark is clarified in the next paragraph when Nehru says that the past can be a
suffocating, over-powering burden, particularly for ancient civilizations like those of India or China.  

"India must break with much of her past and not allow it to dominate the present. Our lives are encumbered with the dead wood of this past; all that is dead and has served its purpose has to go."

Of course, Nehru hastens to add, we cannot forget 'the ideas that have moved our race', 'the wisdom of the ancients'.

"It is not this that we have to break with, but all the dust and dirt of ages that have covered her [i.e. India] up and hidden her inner beauty and significance...." This dust and dirt of ages is religious dogmas and superstitious social customs. Religion relies on emotion and intuition, science on observation and testing. Science may not have taught us anything about the ultimate purposes and its method may not be applicable to every occasion. And yet,

"Realizing these limitations of reason and scientific method, we have still to hold on to them with all our strength, for without that firm basis and background we can have no grip on any kind of truth or reality".

Talking of the arrested growth of India, Nehru laments that in concentrating exclusively on the questions of eternal reality, India lost its dynamism, its adaptability, 'fell behind in the march of technique' and that is where the Western nations overtook India. We must learn from them;
but they too need to learn from us:

"India, as well as China, must learn from the West, for the modern West has much to teach, and the spirit of the age is represented by the West. But the West is also obviously in need of learning much and its advances in technology will bring it little comfort if it does not learn some of the deeper lessons of life...."

Beside India's excessive spiritualism and decay, the other major theme of the Discovery is India's cultural unity. Whatever the outward difference, all Indians have the same moral and mental qualities, they all have the same national heritage. This unity has always allowed a great diversity of customs and beliefs. Nehru speaks of Kabir and Guru Nanak as emblems of India's synthetic, tolerant culture. This is not a Hindu culture, but an Indian culture. Hinduism is not, and has never been a single set of practices, beliefs, rituals and scriptures. It is vague and amorphous. The correct word for India would be 'Hindi' derived from 'Hind'.

Gandhi did not think it was impossible to say what Hinduism is. In two formulations somewhat different from each other he said:

"In a concrete manner he is a Hindu who believes in God, immortality of the soul, transmigration, the law of Karma and Moksha, and who tries to practice Truth and Ahimsa in daily life, and therefore practices cow-protection in the widest sense and understands and tries to act according to the law of Varnashrama."
"If I were asked to define the Hindu creed I should simply say: search after truth through non-violent means... Hinduism is a restless pursuit after truth..."

Interpreting the Gita as the 'Gospel of selfless action', Gandhi explained its teaching thus: when there is no hankering after the fruits of our action, there is no temptation for Himsa. The Gita teaches us how to act in a non-violent way: perform your duty without any attachment.

Where Nehru found no unity of principle, Gandhi saw Truth and Ahimsa as the cardinal values of Hinduism. While Gandhi derives his creed of non-violence and his precept of bread labour from the Gita (this latter with much straining and pulling of the relevant verses from chapter 3)¹⁵, Nehru merely mentions various interpretations and chooses to emphasize the ethically motivated call for action that he hears in the Gita. But interestingly he affirms that there is something in the Gita, which is of eternal significance [because] it seems to be 'Capable of being constantly renewed',¹⁶ and thus Nehru not only underlines the non-sectarian character of it but also claims, on behalf of the modern Indians, the interpretative right to our spiritual heritage.

Nehru's history of India is the factual, empirical history. Gandhi looks more to the allegorical accounts from Puranas.
and searches for their moral teaching. In his study of the
country’s past, Nehru finds that India’s worldly failures
were due to its excessive spiritualism and religious dogmas;
for Gandhi India’s spiritualism was its greatest strength —
spiritualism which lay hidden behind the ordinary peasant’s
crude exterior — and the West’s technological advantage no
advantage at all. In spite of these differences —
differences, sometimes, of only emphasis — both Gandhi and
Nehru stressed pluralism and tolerance in religious matters,
refused to be taken in by the glitter of the modern West,
denied intrinsic religious sanctity of any long-enduring
custom and instead, one way or the other, made the ‘good
sense’ of the contemporary Indians the crucial criterion for
discriminating between aspects of our traditional heritage.

For Nehru reason as intellect, as scientific rationality,
was precious but he was also aware of its limits. He almost
echoes Blaise Pascal’s famous remark from Pensée that
reason is not reason if it does not know the limits of
reason. But he would not go as far as Gandhi and say that
he believed the Bihar calamity to have been an effect of our
sin against the oppressed castes. In fact, faith figures
in Nehru far less prominently than it does in Gandhi. While
Gandhi too drew a line between intellect and faith, he
claimed to draw sustenance from his faith in the eternal law
of God. But, he clarified that

“To ask anybody to believe without proof, what is
capable of proof would be unreasonable...”

241
What he insisted on was that reason be guided by heart (of which faith is the function), or else it will go astray.  

Understandably, then, Nehru's enthusiasm for science and technology has a guarded response in Gandhi: he welcomes the scientific discoveries and inventions provided that they are not 'mere instruments of greed'.

**Industrialization:**

Nehru was appalled by the extent and the acuteness of poverty in India and he was convinced that greater production through planned industrialization alone could solve that problem. Besides poverty, it was also India's general backwardness which could then be overcome. It was precisely this removal of poverty for which Gandhi opposed industrialization. The use of machines is alright when there are too few people to be employed, relative to the work to be accomplished. When there are millions who have no work or are underemployed, introduction of machines leads to a loss of jobs. He clarified that what he objected to was the craze for machinery and not machines as such.

"Men go on 'saving labour' till thousands are without work and thrown on the open streets to die of starvation. I want to save time and labour not for a fraction . . . but for all." 

His constructive programme of reviving Khadi had the same objective of providing work and supplementary income to the
The cardinal facts to realize are that there is already terrible forced unemployment among the toiling millions in that they have no work for at least four months in the year... And the revival of Khadi would add to their incomes. Spinning is already known to thousands and its revival will be easier than introduction of any complicated machinery of mass production.

Gandhi insisted that he was not against all machinery, but against that which involves exploitation of people and hardship to the worker. When asked whether he was against that industrialization which concentrated production and distribution in the hands of the few, Gandhi answered:

“You are right. I hate privilege and monopoly. Whatever cannot be shared with the masses is taboo to me. That is all”.

But he also felt that the process of industrialization always results in inequalities and exploitation. “Industrialism” is nothing but a control of the majority by a small minority: “there is nothing attractive about it”.

“Industrialism depends entirely on your capacity to exploit, on foreign markets being open to you, and on the absence of competitors.”

“To make India like England and America is to find some other regions and places on the earth for exploitation”.

243
Nehru thought that the roots of the inequities of the modern society lay in the evil of capitalist exploitation and that greater production made possible by industrialization would lead to new problems unless it was guided by the goal of welfare of the whole people, unless this goal had the backing of the government behind it. He did not agree with Gandhi and the Gandhians that the evil was in industrialization as such and remarked that 'in poor country there is only poverty to distribute'. His thinking on economic strategy is reflected in the Second Plan which aimed at laying the foundations of industrial economy. This strategy has been often criticized for allegedly ignoring agriculture and thus reversing the natural order of stages of development. But, as Sukhmoy Chakravarty clarifies, the strategy was based on the eminently reasonable point that given the proportion of the country's population dependent on agriculture, agriculture itself could not have developed without the necessary inputs from industry on a large scale.

Gandhi's objection to industrialization, as we have seen, was on a different plane. He too was keen on ridding the rural India of 'poverty, penury, misery, dirt and dust' and did not propose a return to 'the old absolute simplicity'. What he envisioned was a reorganized, predominantly rural life, in which, 'brute and material force will be subordinated to the spiritual force'. He was willing to
entertain heavy machinery even in this simple, rural life:

"The heavy machinery for work of public utility which cannot be undertaken by human labour has its inevitable place, but all that would be owned by the State and used entirely for the benefit of the people." 

He did not even mind electricity (with villagers plying their implements and tools on the State-provided power) and factories producing machines, and ship-building; but such factories should be nationalized. Such key industries may even be centralized. But he remained consistently opposed to the mass-production of those things which can be produced on a small-scale in villages without difficulty. Seen thus, cottage-industries and big industries can certainly co-exist harmoniously if the big industries are so planned as to help the village industries.

Nehru was also in favour of their co-existence but on very different terms. The big industries, 'based on the latest technical achievements', must predominate. The cottage industry has a complementary role, fitting in where it can.

Capitalism and Communism (Socialism)

Both Gandhi and Nehru considered Indian culture as particularly suited to socialism. In the Discover, Nehru argued that there was no admiration for wealth and profit-making in India; people may get envious of the materially successful but their respect goes to those who
have made sacrifices for the well-being of the community. Gandhi argued that our tradition has always taught real socialism. 'All land belongs to God (Gopal), where then is the boundary?' And Gandhi proceeded to answer: man has created the boundaries of property and he can also remove them.

Gandhi was however reluctant to use State force for the confiscation of land from the Zamindars and for the redistribution of wealth. He thought that though State ownership was a lesser evil than private ownership, the attempt by the State to suppress capitalism violently produced a violent State. and Gandhi said he regarded increase in the State power as the most frightful thing: even the violence of private ownership was less injurious than the violence of the State. He warned that if the capitalist and the Zamindars did not voluntarily surrender their riches, the 'awakened but ignorant, famishing millions' will plunge the country into chaos which even the armed forces will not be able to avert.

In a speech to the Lok Sabha (December, 1952), Nehru echoed these views:

"It is clear that so far as this country is concerned we cannot attain this ideal [of classless society] by conflict and violence... because however high our ideals and objectives may be, if we try to attain them by methods of violence, matters will be very greatly delayed"."
India is a big country and violence will be met with violence, leading to chaos.

In 1938 Nehru regarded nationalization of the instruments of production and distribution to be 'inevitable' and earlier, in 1931, the resolution on economic policy at the Karachi Congress (pushed through by Nehru) had spoken of the nationalization of key industries and services as 'a very short step in the socialist direction'. By the 1960s the goals were scaled down: now Nehru spoke of increasing production, 'through all means at our disposal' and of preventing concentration of economic power and wealth.

What may have happened in the mean time was that Nehru was seized by the pragmatic and practical 'spirit of the age' of which he spoke in the *Discovery* (and to which Partha Chatterjee shrewdly draws attention). Following Fabian Socialists, Nehru came to emphasize the criterion of directing the economy for general welfare more and more in place of 'doctrinaire' insistence on nationalization of the means of production. He admonished communists that 'socialism is more than mere logic'.

"The emotional appeal to socialism is not enough. This must be supplemented by an intellectual and reasoned appeal based on facts and arguments and detailed criticism... We want experts in the job who study and prepare detailed plans."

Thus planned economic development with rapid industrialization came to replace his early 'theoretical'
insistence on nationalization.

Planning and the 'Third Way'

The thinking in India on planning and on economic policy goes back to the period of the Great Depression (1929-33). Tomlinson tells us that industrial licensing regulations grew out of the circumstances of the Second World War, when the imperial government introduced a system of licensing capital issues. There was immediate apprehensive reaction from the Federation of Indian chambers of Commerce and Industry. Nehru says in his *Discovery* that the famine of 1943-44, which affected the Eastern and Southern parts of the country, was so severe that it jolted some industrialists out of their narrow concerns and they came together to formulate and propose a plan for India's overall economic development. After independence, the government was keen to seem to be addressing itself to the problem of poverty alleviation, and the widely shared view that the free-market policies of the British imperialism had produced poverty, seemed to require close monitoring of the economy by the State. No wonder, therefore, that by 1951, several major instruments of the State control/restrictions of foreign exchange, import-export, agricultural prices, etc., were in place.

But this policy of extensive State control of the economy did not establish itself unopposed. Francine Frankel gives an account of the virtual power struggle within the
Congress over the issue of economic policy, Nehru stood for 'socialism', planning, land reforms, etc., and the proponents of various privileges and free-market policies were championed by the then Deputy Prime Minister Patel. There were differences between the two over their respective spheres of responsibility and authority. Nehru’s proposal for establishing a planning commission was resisted. Wartime price controls on food grains, sugar, cotton, and cloth were removed, and through a series of ad hoc policies, favourable atmosphere for private investment was created. The condition adopted by the constituent Assembly in 1949 kept the goals of egalitarian social order in the non-justifiable Directive Principles, land reforms were placed in the State List, and despite Nehru’s pleas, the compensation clauses of the Zamindari Abolition Acts were brought under judicial review. The Nehru-Patel struggle extended to the control of the Party and the 1950 controversy over the presidency of the party showed that Nehru, even with the support of Gandhians, was yet far from predominant.

But eventually Planning Commission was created (1950); earlier, the Industrial Policy Resolution (1948) had declared the government’s intention to create a public monopoly in certain key industries; the 1951 Industries (Development and Regulation) Act provided for the public sector as a permanent agent of industrial development and required of every new proposal for setting up or expanding industry in the private sector that it took a license form.
the central government; and the final version of the First Five year Plan (1952), reflecting Nehru’s preferences, allocated substantial amount of funds to the development of basic industries. Moreover it sought to establish the principle that

"...in relation to land (as also in other sectors of the economy) individual property in excess of any norm that may be proposed has to be justified in terms of public interest, and not merely on grounds of individual rights and claims".54

It, however, conceded that radical land redistribution was not possible to achieve at present. Going back on the radical attack on private ownership on land characteristic of the Congress Agrarian Reforms Committee Report(1949), it proposed instead a seemingly Gandhian community Development Programme.55

The Community Development Programme was supposed to revive and build upon the still surviving communitarian values in the village and establish cooperative and Panchayat institutions in each village. The idea was not only farm improvement and constructive work; it was expected that over time, the passive rural masses will be awakened and then there will mount pressure from below for social change in villages. Francine Frankel summarizes the objectives behind the programme well:

"The community Development Programme was assigned the task of creating in the mass of the rural population an awareness and desire for the implementation of new principles of social justice
based on equality and participation, which would find organized expression in the cooperative and panchayat institutions."

In face of this desire for change, the agrarian structure would give in, or so it was believed. Inaugurating the first Community Projects (October, 1952) Nehru said:

"...we are now talking in terms of a big revolution, a peaceful revolution, not of turmoil and the breaking of heads. It is in this manner that we shall transform our country. Peacefully, we shall remove the evils of our country and promote a better order".

Thus, out of the din of the conflicting positions by Sarvodayis, Gandhian Socialists, Conservatives, etc., emerged the position best associated with Nehru. It recognized the need for both social justice and economic growth. It claimed that its strategy of peaceful but far reaching social change (especially in the agrarian relations) combined with rapid industrialization, encouraged and monitored by the State, would achieve social justice through democratic means and greater production without the socially harmful consequences of laissez-faire capitalism. 58

The 1947 All-India Congress Committee’s resolution had said:

"Our aim should be to evolve a political system which will combine efficiency of administration with individual liberty and an economic structure which will yield maximum production without the concentration of private monopolies and the concentration of wealth and which will create the proper balance between urban and rural economics. Such a social structure can provide an alternative to the acquisitive economy of private capitalism and regimentation of a totalitarian state" 59 [Emphasis added]
With the launching of the First Five Year plan and the first Community Development Project, the Nehruvian middle path between capitalism and socialism, the so-called 'third way', suited to the 'Indian genius' emerged as the most influential position on some of the most vital issues including that of the State-economy relationship.

I have presented briefly the Gandhian and the Nehruvian 'middle paths' because any formulation of the State-Civil Society relationship must take place within the field defined and delimited by these attempts at reconciling disparate and even conflicting goals. They reflect India's dominant concerns and preoccupations and it is only by recalling them, revising them, clarifying them that a new conception of Civil Society can be inserted in the prevailing discourse. The conceptual-theoretical choice we have is limited to the two positions: Gandhian and Nehruvian. It is by 'restating' or further developing any one of these two that we can hope to 'reproduce and change' the political language of our nation.

The Satyagrahi Samajwad of Acharya Javdekar can be cited as an example of a development of the Gandhian middle path. Javdekar took from Gandhi the ethics of non-stealing, non-hoarding, truthfulness, non-violence, bread labour, but rejected Gandhi's opposition to industrialization; he proposed an invaluable distinction between a band of
dedicated social workers (Satvagrahis) who will strive to bring about. Social change (through non-violent struggle and personal example) but will not assume power, and the State machinery which will merely protect the gains of the social revolution brought about by the Satvagrahis. In developing Gandhi’s notion of Asteya, Javdekar used Marx’s analysis of the generation of surplus-value through the exploitation of the worker, and thus provided Gandhian socialism with the support of empirical analysis; at the same time, by continuing to use the traditional Indian notion of asteya he built into the very concept exploitation the non-Marxian idea that voluntary restriction of needs is indispensable for individual good life and also for a just social order. Gandhi’s point was that if everyone worked voluntarily, there would be no wage-slaves, and our needs would be limited by our capacity to work. The deeper insight here is the self-restraint that the experience the body labour, done with attention and care, gives, transforms man into a non-violent person.

Javdekar retains these insights and assimilates to them the critique of capitalist exploitation from the tradition of Marxian socialism. The upshot of this synthesis, not articulated by Javdekar himself, is that we have here a two-fold critique of forms of forced labour. The Gandhian critique (as we can develop from Gandhi’s ideas) would be that because there is a division between those who work and those who do not, that work is a drudgery, it is hateful,
and needs are plenty. I do not see nor experience any organic relationship between my gratification and the labour that produces objects of pleasure to me. My gratification remains selfishly mine, it becomes my preoccupation and labour comes to have a purely instrumental value. Seen instrumentally, its nature and its consequences for the worker are immaterial to me as long as I can command it. Indifference or violence is bred because labour is avoided, minimized, and degraded. Labour has a civilizing function. But lest this should be 'misinterpreted' to give authority to anybody, to the State for example, to force bread-labour on people (without any intention of accumulation to be sure), we are reminded by the Marxian critique of capitalist exploitation that the genuine freedom from exploitation consists, not just in being free of the constraints of private appropriation, but in being an equal and free member of a community of producers.

We learn thus form a certain version of Gandhian socialism that labour civilizes, but for it to civilize us, we have to civilize it first. This insight can be placed in the emerging conception of Civil Society; the elements or features of this conception can be presented as follows:

1. The impressive body of Marxist literature\(^6\) - both theoretical and empirical - on the class-bias and class nature of the State persuades us to be suspicious of the State's claim as the promoter of general interests.
2. However, given the typically modern (capitalist) split between the ruling class and the governing class, and the role of the State as the main agent of development in the decolonised societies, the State’s claim to universality must be understood as an indispensable myth operative in most societies in the modern world. It is therefore possible to organize progressive politics around this notion, exploiting the myth, and pressurizing the State to live up to its self-image.

3. Such politics will have as its objective, humanizing of the various inhuman forms of labour and forcing the State to dominate the economy through planning and other measures. The words ‘humanizing’, ‘inhuman’ are deliberately vague. They are meant to be abstract, or empty, the content being filled by specific cases, circumstances, and strategic compulsions. The only way to give normative orientation to politics without falling into voluntarism, utopianism or without inviting the violence of a doctrinaire position is to restrict the task of philosophical theory to conceptualizing regulative abstraction. The idea of civilizing the forms of labour or that of collective determination of the process of production is such a regulative abstraction. It guides the progressive political effort without specifying the end-state. This has two advantages: first, the content of the ideal can be provisionally specified — it is politics marked by realism and moderation; second, it prevents any order from being seen
or claimed as final. Such politics will be both radical and non-violent.

Today, with the oppressive weight of the tragedies of the failed revolutions, and with the sophistication in the means of violence making it impossible for large number of people to participate in any prolonged revolutionary violence, progressive politics must remain non-violent and moderated. And the moderation of politics acknowledges that the ideals, perceptions and aspirations of people are stimulated as well as limited by their circumstances.

4. Hegel gave us the insight that our institutions and practices are what they are because of the significance they have for us. Of course he presented these meanings as attributes of Geist and not as conscious, intersubjectively held interpretations. But this crucial interpretative dimension that Hegel alienated away to Geist can be reclaimed and can become an important mode of politics. For example, we have an Act which seeks to regulate industrial development, or one which prohibits employment of children in hazardous industries, or the practice of planning, or the institution of Pollution Control Board, and each of these has a significance which we must articulate, elaborate, and in the process, change. As Taylor pointed out, when our interpretation of what we are doing in a certain act or practice changes, the practice becomes vulnerable to change.

5. In the history of European reflections on Civil Society,
there have been two strands. One is the normative strand, best identified with Locke, which says what Civil Society as a systematic protection of the life and liberties of persons is supposed to be. Civil Society here is an ideal, a norm. Whereas in Marx and Gramsci we find an analytical-empirical notion of the Civil Society, Civil Society as it exists.

The notion of Civil Society I am trying to derive uses the term both normatively and empirically. It realizes that any actually existing Civil Society is structured by systematic domination, forms of oppression, opacity, etc. Against this it uses the norm of an economy controlled and contained by the State and reforming the forms of labour it houses.

Civil Society, in my proposal, is thus both a project and a dark reality. It can be made increasingly more sensitive to human needs through political pressure brought to bear upon it and upon the State.

I have tried in this chapter to indicate how some of the Hegelian - Marxian and Gandhian ideas can be brought together to construct an empirical-normative conception of Civil Society in India. This attempt is made possible by the refutation of the idea of universal social science and the attendant designative use of terms. The refutation comes from interpretative social science. The synthesis is meant to be political and contentious. It is supposed to facilitate a certain intellectual /discursive and practical
politics which can be organized around the notion of Civil Society. But in the process of bringing together elements from two traditions, we can also enhance our awareness of our tradition, or our prevailing discourse, through a 'perspicuous contrast' with a different tradition.

However such exercise does not necessarily involve a relativistic stance towards ideas from different traditions. I have indicated my criticisms of various arguments by Hegel, or Marx, or Rousseau by selectively citing from their commentators. Such examination is not only consistent with the overall hermeneutic orientation being followed here, but it is even required because we have set out to appropriate from different sources.

**In Lieu of Conclusions:**
There are some problems which however remain unresolved in this study.

1. Is Quentin Skinner's method of finding out the illocutionary force of the utterances by the concerned agents useful for a constructive exercise like this? The success of the method depends on the non-strategic nature of the communication. When there are multiple and competing genres/conventions/discourses and the speaker wants to exploit this plurality by making his utterance multivocal, it is difficult to say what the intention of the speaker is since s/he may have had the motive of making his utterance yield several different
interpretations. Since political communication tends to be strategic in this sense, 'understanding' the force of the utterances made by public figures - leaders and statesmen - may not be always possible.

2. I have used words like 'acts' 'practices' etc., (particularly in chapter six), without defining them. But some clarity about these terms is necessary if the hermeneutic social science is to be rigorous. (Rajeev Bhargava attempts such clarification in his work on methodological individualism).

3. Since the hermeneutic approach I have taken here concedes that our practices are only partially constituted by our self-understandings, a possibility of explanatory theory of another kind remains open. It is therefore necessary to see, taking up concrete examples, how the interpretative and non-interpretative explanations fit in with each other.

4. What Taylor and Connolly have given us is not a method strictly speaking; they have presented what they perceive as the essential nature of language or political concepts. In the process they have put in doubt the idea of (universal) social science and the designative use of terms that such a social science involves. These reflections and criticisms of Taylor and Connolly enable us to take up the creative exercise of revising and borrowing concepts, insights, etc. But, at a lower level of abstraction, the problem of method remains; granted we are free to engage in conceptual revision and borrowing,
but once we start doing it, the question how to avoid arbitrariness comes back: how best to use the freedom we have?

I have tried in this chapter, in a very rudimentary manner, to devise specific interpretative strategies. First, I identified the dominant style of Indian political thinking ('the middle way'); then I presented two rival formulations of this kind of thinking; then I mentioned that one of these formulations emerged, in the mid-fifties, as predominant; finally, I briefly mentioned Javdekar's Satyagrahi Samajik as a third formulation of the 'middle path', capable of challenging both, the established but threatened Nehruvian formulation and the new, ('liberalization' oriented), formulation (which has been on the horizon for quite some time).

The method implicit here is to identify the style or the motifs typical of one's society, and to use it to challenge the established variant by reviving and revising an older, subjugated variant (Gandhian socialist formulations of the 'Third Way' in our example).

But are there any theoretical - philosophical reflections necessary here to legitimate this specific method? If yes, how far and in what way are they compatible with the 'enabling' reflections of Taylor and Connolly (chapter 6)? This study is aware of the importance of these questions but it has not taken them up for discussion.
NOTES AND REFERENCES


4. Ibid., p. 36.
5. Ibid., p. 509.
6. Ibid., p. 509.
7. Ibid., p. 512.
8. Ibid., p. 54.
9. Ibid., p. 507.
10. Ibid., pp.61-2.
11. Ibid., pp. 241-5.
12. Ibid., p. 75.
15. Gandhi bases his interpretation on the translation by Sir Edwin Arnold of the verses 12, 13 and 14 of Chapter III of The Gita. The Arnold translation of the verse 14 is as follows "By food the living live, food comes of rain, and the rain comes by the pious sacrifice; and sacrifice is paid with tithes of toil." Thus it is from a controversial translation of the word Karmamudbhava that Gandhi derives his doctrine of bread labour as sacrifice. See Gandhi, Young India, in V.B. Kher, (ed.), Economic and Industrial Life and Relations (EILR) Vol.1, (Ahmedabad, Navajivan Publishing House, 1957), pp.99-100. See also M.K. Gandhi, The Gospel of Selfless Activity or The Gita according to Gandhi, edited by

18. Gandhi, Young India, in The Essence of Hinduism, n.13, p.111, also see p.118.
23. Gandhi, Young India, Ibid., pp.4-5.
27. Gandhi, Young India, in Khadi, n.22, p.19.
32. Gandhi Young India, in EILR, Vol.II, n.20, p.27.
33. Gandhi Young India, in EILR, Vol.II, n.20, p.27.
38. Nehru, n.2, p.408. However, elsewhere in The Discovery of India, Nehru is more positive about village industries. He says "In India especially it will be necessary to have, in addition to the big industries,
co-operatively controlled small and village industries. Such a system of democratic collectivism will need careful and continuous planning and adaptation to the changing needs of the people." Nehru, n.2., p.522.


44. Jawaharlal Nehru, 'Planning and Development', quoted in Frankel, n.39, p.93.


46. Usha Mehta, Ibid., p.17.


52. Tomlinson, n.50, p.300.

53. Frankel, n.39, ch.3.

54. The First Five Year Plan, Frankel, n.39, p.100.


58. On the paradox of accommodative politics and radical social change, see Frankel, n.39, especially, ch.1, 3, and 11.


60. S.D. Javdekar, **Samajvad ane Sarvoday: Tulanatmak Vivechan** (Pune, Sulabh Rashtriya Granthamala Vyavasthapak Samiti, 1957).


63. For a comprehensive survey of the entire range of the Marxist analysis of the State, see Bob Jessop, The Capitalist State: Marxist Theories and Methods (Oxford, Martin Robertson, 1982).

64. This is Charles Taylor’s expression. It refers to the interpretative method he suggests in his ‘Understanding and Ethnocentricity’; see Charles Taylor, Social Theory as Practice (Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1983), pp.40-45.

65. Bhargava contrasts practices with individual or collective actions. For e.g. a cabinet decision to send troops to the Gulf is for him a collective act whereas rational decision making is an example of a social practice. See Rajeev Bhargava, Individualism in Social Science, (Oxford, Clarenden Press, 1991), see especially the last part.