

The Western Satyagrahi

Thoreau and Gandhi on engaged radical/nonviolent/transformational citizenship

By Pablo Ouziel

Introduction

This paper explores the thought and practice of Henry David Thoreau in an attempt to reconceptualise revolutionary practices of citizenship in contemporary Western societies. The premise of the paper is that within Thoreau's spiritual/ethical¹ practices of the self, there exists the opportunity to revolutionize the theory of revolution, in a way which overcomes our constrained political freedoms while doing justice to the increasing complexity of democratic politics. It is the argument of the paper, that Thoreau's contribution to radical political thought, helps shed light on some necessary conditions for effectively exercising citizenship within a Western contemporary context, and thus, offers new dimensions of political freedom which can challenge ingrained legal, political, economic, military and social norms.

Although as Western political theorists we are indebted to Mahatma Gandhi for having crystallized a theory and practice of nonviolence (*satyagraha*²), it would seem beneficial for us to acknowledge the parallels of Gandhi's work with Thoreau's Western contribution. It could be argued, that attempting to build strong nonviolent foundations within contemporary Western societies by drawing too heavily upon Gandhi's work, can act as a 'reverse orientalist' move, which rather than enticing, detracts Western citizens from nonviolent practices – due to the cultural abyss separating contemporary Western lifestyles from those of India's colonial past. For this reason, considering the fact that Gandhi himself expressed his indebtedness to Thoreau, and understanding that a close reading of Thoreau's key works shows his firm commitment to what Gandhi described as *satyagraha*, as western political theorists, we can contribute tremendously to Western nonviolent struggles by resurfacing the Western nonviolent tradition – to which undoubtedly Thoreau is one of the most important contributors.

¹ Ethics here is understood as modes of being in the world with others or, more simply, 'interbeing'. Definition used by James Tully in a Postcolonial ethics lecture on Gandhi given on September 28th 2010 at the University of Victoria. This lecture hereafter cited as (Tully 2010)

² Saty-agraha (nonviolence) can be literally translated as Truth/Being – being open to, being moved by, holding on to Soul-force (Tully 2010)

Anthony Parel argues that the secular end of *satyagraha* can only be reached if spiritual means have a role. He also states, that the confluence of the secular and spiritual in Gandhi's work separates it from Thoreau's non-spiritual alternative. In addition, in his introduction to *Life Without Principle*³, Joseph Wood Krutch describes Thoreau as a defiant individualist. Yet, Howard Zinn, in his introduction to *The Higher Law: Thoreau on Civil Disobedience and Reform*⁴, locates Thoreau in the tradition of popular cooperativist activism. And Thomas Merton, in *Choosing to Love the World*⁵, shows how although surrounded by a climate of decaying individualism in Western societies, Thoreau's non-individualist solitary practices, granted him the maturity necessary to keep alive the spiritual and intelligent consciousness necessary for true unity among men.

Inspired by Zinn's and Merton's work, and contrasting Thoreau's life-project with that of Gandhi, this paper argues for the non-individualist Thoreau, and highlights his contemplative activism, and the integrity and fullness of his secular and spiritual development. Through the analysis presented, the paper hopes to make apparent Thoreau's work as a *satyagrahi*⁶, who renounced the blessing of every convenient illusion that absolved him from responsibility to his inner truth and social reality, and whom through revolutionary means, withdrew his cooperation with US imperial expansion. An exemplary, radical/nonviolent/transformational move, from which many lessons can be drawn by Western citizens seeking to effectively exercise citizenship in the early days of the 21st century. In order to present arguments defending this understanding of Thoreau, the paper is structured into the following sections:

Section one, *Satyagraha and swaraj: Gandhi's communion with Thoreau*, begins by presenting the influence of Thoreau's work on Gandhi through an analysis of Gandhi's own comments regarding Thoreau. The section then moves on to explain the problem of translating Gandhi's work into a Western socio-political context, and following from this, explains what Gandhi means by *satyagraha* and *swaraj*. The

³ Thoreau, H.D. (1962) 'Life Without Principle' in *Walden and Other Writings*. New York: Bantam Books. Hereafter: **LWP**.

⁴ Thoreau, H.D. (2004) *The Higher Law: Thoreau on Civil Disobedience and Reform*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. Hereafter: **HL**.

⁵ Merton, T. (2008) *Choosing to Love the World: On Contemplation*. Boulder: Sounds True. Hereafter: **CLW**.

⁶ A *satyagrahi* is a practitioner of nonviolence.

section concludes with a presentation of Thoreau as a *satyagrahi*, and an explanation of the different context and social reality lived by the two thinkers.

Section two, *Thoreaudian engaged, radical/nonviolent/transformational citizenship*, starts by presenting Thoreau as a non-individualist contemplative activist, guided by spiritual/ethical practices of the self. This is an attempt to open a dialogical exchange with his critics. The section then moves on to explain Thoreau's challenging of ingrained legal, political, economic, military and social norms, and it ends with an explanation of what Thoreau meant when he spoke of revolution.

Having through sections one and two gained an understanding of the communion between Gandhi and Thoreau, and of Thoreau's ethical practices of the self and their potential for expanding our political freedoms, the paper concludes with section three, *Chaos or Community*⁷, which presents a bleak analysis of current affairs. In this section, the paper calls attention to the importance of the way of the *satyagrahi* within our current Western political climate. It is the argument of the section, that if indeed, we as Western citizens are to overcome the dark cloud which hovers over our present democratic claims, we must begin to exercise our spiritual/ethical responsibility in citizenship. This is a move that requires engaging in nonviolent non-cooperation in opposition to the tyrannical practices of our current governments.

Satyagraha and swaraj: Gandhi's communion with Thoreau

Across the globe Gandhi is far better known and popular than Thoreau. This is because his struggle for Indian independence helped to crystallize a theory and practice of nonviolence, which in essence, made it possible for those seeking to end injustice, to find nonviolence a viable option when considering strategies for liberation from tyranny. From Martin Luther King Jr.'s civil rights campaigns to the recent uprisings in Egypt's Tahrir Square, Gandhi has been an inspirational force for most popular nonviolent struggles waged throughout the 20th century and the early days of the 21st. Yet, despite the fact that in popular imagery Gandhi's *satyagrahis* marching unarmed and determined towards their violent opponents constitutes the essence of nonviolence, for those who have carefully read some of his work a more

⁷ Title inspired by the subheading of the book by Martin Luther King Jr. *Where Do We Go From Here: Chaos or Community?* Boston: Beacon Press (2010). Hereafter: CC.

holistic and constructive theory of nonviolence permeates out of his writings. It is in these writings that we obtain a clear understanding of what it is that Ghandi means when he speaks of nonviolence, what he calls *satyagraha*. It is also from his writings that we learn about the spiritual dimensions of this way of being, and we acquire a true understanding of the ethical underpinnings of such counter-practices. Counter-practices, which seek to enact in one's everyday conduct and activities the just relationships among humans and nonhumans that one is fighting to achieve⁸. It is also from his writings, that we gain a clearer understanding of what it is that he is fighting for when he speaks of *swaraj* (self-rule), and we are able to identify the true similarities between his thought and practice and that of Thoreau.

Clearly for those seeking justice through just means, peace through peaceful means, and democracy by democratic means, Gandhi presents an inspirational model of integrity, so it is not the aim of this paper to discard his work by presenting a Western alternative in the person of Thoreau. Rather the aim is to contribute to the global *satyagraha* struggle by inspiring Western citizens to recapture their own western nonviolent tradition. It seems to me this is an important move, because for many citizens in the West and in particular those involved in social movements for change, the context in which Thoreau operated and his social reality, are much easier to relate to than that of Ghandi in colonized India. Therefore, when seeking to make an argument for the way of the *satyagrahi* as the only just and democratic way for paradigmatic change in Western societies, it seems to me, that Thoreau offers an invaluable starting point. Especially when we acknowledge the fact that Gandhi used Thoreau as a source of inspiration for his own movement.

In *Globalizing Gandhi: Translation, reinvention, application, transformation*⁹, Sean Scalmer explains how during the late 1950s and early 60s, as British Pacifists tried to introduce Gandhian thought into British activism with the aim of promoting civil disobedience, they encountered the problem of translating Gandhi's work into a language which could effectively be transmitted. This, he explains, is due to the fact that in order for an alien and foreign behaviour to be comprehensible when introduced into a new context, "it must be restated in the local idiom"¹⁰. This restatement, he

⁸ Tully 2010.

⁹ Scalmer, S. (2007) 'Globalising Gandhi: Translation, reinvention, application, transformation,' in *Rethinking Gandhi and Nonviolent Relationality: Global Perspectives* edited by Ganguly, D. and Docker, J. New York: Routledge. Hereafter: **GG**

¹⁰ GG, p. 142.

argues, is the way to make the unknown familiar, and therefore, the unfamiliar possible.

One of the main problems that Scalmer claims British pacifists encountered through this translation process, was that Gandhi's protest was mistranslated through the distorting lens of 'Orientalist hyper-difference', a form of reverse Orientalism which posited such a great gulf between the Indian and the British, that it suggested "that a British version of 'Satyagraha' would be frankly impossible"¹¹. From this perspective, Gandhi's personality confused Western activists because his mystic Eastern methods were incomprehensible, and in the end Gandhi was seen as a "strange little brown man"¹² who frankly had little to offer. In many ways, even today it seems appropriate to claim that the popularized Gandhi that most Western citizens know –that is, the Gandhi presented by Hollywood in *Gandhi* the movie – still remains in the eyes of most, an Oriental Sage too Saintly and different for emulation.

Faced with such mistranslation, and in my mind, in serious need of nonviolent exemplars in the Western world – to combat, as Gandhi rightly points out, the "despotisms and the ever-growing militarism under which the nations of the West are groaning and are being almost crushed to death"¹³ – as Western political theorists we can contribute tremendously to Western nonviolent struggles, by restating *satyagraha* in the local idiom. That is, by presenting nonviolence through the lens of Western *satyagrahis*. Thus, Thoreau offers a useful point of departure, especially when we consider – as it is revealed by Gandhi himself –, that the foundations of Gandhi's work are built upon a prior translation of Thoreau's example. Of course Gandhi's translation of Thoreau's spiritual/ethical practices of the self and his contemplative activism do not simply imitate Thoreau, but instead reinvent his ways as Gandhi experiments in his own political, social and spiritual context making new discoveries. Nevertheless, the essence and goals of Gandhi's practices remain comparatively similar to those of Thoreau, keeping the two in close communion.

¹¹ GG, p. 143.

¹² Ibid., p.143

¹³ Gandhi, M.K. (2008) *The Essential Writings*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 310. Hereafter: **EW**.

It is from Gandhi himself, that we learn how a friend sent him Thoreau's essay *On the Duty of Civil Disobedience*¹⁴ during the early days of his nonviolence campaigns in South Africa. He says that it left a deep impression on him due to its convincing and truthful narrative, and that after reading it, he was convinced Thoreau was the teacher who had given him scientific confirmation for the work he was carrying out¹⁵. Wanting to learn more of Thoreau, he then ventured into reading *Walden* and other short essays by him¹⁶, and in relation to *Walden*, he says that he read it Johannesburg in 1906 and that it influenced him "greatly"¹⁷. Regarding *On the Duty of Civil Disobedience*, the essay was actually paraphrased and published in 1907, in *Indian Opinion* (the newspaper established by Gandhi), and in the same year an essay contest was organized around it under the title *The Ethics of Passive Resistance*. Indeed, Gandhi feels so strongly about Thoreau's essay that he claims it inspired the name for his movement¹⁸.

What is most revealing about the communion between Thoreau and Gandhi in regards to their spiritual/ethical practices of the self and their political projects, is that *Hind Swaraj*¹⁹, which is according to Anthony Parel, Gandhi's seminal work²⁰, is in Gandhi's own words a continuation of the work of other nonviolent practitioners including Thoreau: "Whilst the views expressed in 'Hind Swaraj' are held by me, I have but endeavoured humbly to follow Tolstoy, Ruskin, Thoreau, Emerson and other writers, besides the masters of Indian Philosophy"²¹. In fact, when Gandhi ventures into a description of *Swaraj*, self-rule, he describes the ideal State as one with no political institutions, and attributes this wisdom to Thoreau: "That is why Thoreau has said in his classic statement that that government is the best which governs the least"²².

Although we have Gandhi's own acknowledgment of his indebtedness to Thoreau, if one were to ground his or her argument for the communion between the

¹⁴ Thoreau, H.D. (1849/2010) *On the Duty of Civil Disobedience*. Elegant Ebooks. Available online at: <http://www.ibiblio.org/ebooks/Thoreau/index.html>. Hereafter: **DCD**.

¹⁵ Hendrick, G. (1956) 'The Influence of Thoreau's Civil Disobedience on Gandhi's Satyagraha', *The New England Quarterly*, Vol. 29, No. 4 (Dec. 1956), p. 462. Hereafter: **IT**.

¹⁶ EW, p. 28.

¹⁷ IT, p. 463.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 463.

¹⁹ Gandhi, M.K. (2009) *Hind Swaraj and other Writings*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Hereafter: **HS**.

²⁰ HS, p. xi.

²¹ IT, p. 471. Hendrick is quoting Gandhi in *Indian Opinion*, April 2, 1910, p110.

²² EW, p. 102.

two by equating civil disobedience with *satyagraha*, it would be a mistake. This is revealed by the fact that Gandhi makes clear that *satyagraha* is not merely civil disobedience. Therefore, in order to argue for this communion, we must understand first what is *satyagraha*, and the role that civil disobedience plays in its practice. Only then, can we determine whether Thoreau's spiritual/ethical practices of the self, follow the principles of the *satyagrahi* as outlined by Gandhi. Although Thoreau is well known for his essay on the duty of civil disobedience, we will see in the following section of the paper that the essay studied in conjunction with his other works, reveals the traits of the *satyagrahi*. Nevertheless, first we must turn to identifying these traits as Gandhi understood them.

To Gandhi, civil disobedience is simply one branch of *satyagraha* – what he identifies as a relentless search for truth pursued by strictly non-violent means. *Satyagraha* to Gandhi means, that any political mission must be truly spiritual and that those acting politically in a Gandhian way must have awakened first their inner spiritual power. Gandhi suggests this is necessary in order that all practices abide by the ethical norm of conquering “hate by love, untruth by truth, violence by self-suffering”²³. This, Gandhi tells us, is a practice of being, which is known by some as soul-force, by others as truth-force or love-force, inaccurately by others still as passive resistance, but to him it means *satyagraha*. The evidence for which, lies in the fact that despite persistent violence in our world, the universe has not yet disappeared²⁴.

In *Seeds of Destruction*²⁵, Thomas Merton suggests that Gandhi is basing the ontological underpinnings of *satyagraha* on the idea that truth is the inner law of our being, “a philosophical wisdom which is common to Hinduisim, Buddhism, Islam, Judaism, and Christianity”²⁶. And this, it seems to me, becomes apparent when Gandhi tells us that he only worships God as Truth, that truth to him is an immaterial quality which can only be defined as pure consciousness²⁷, and that to him “truth and non-violence are... faces of the same coin”²⁸ – observation, which leads him to conclude that “non-violence is the end of all religions”²⁹. *Satyagraha*, for Gandhi is

²³ Ibid., p. 311.

²⁴ HS, p. 89.

²⁵ Merton, T. (1964) *Seeds of Destruction*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux. Hereafter: SD.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 231.

²⁷ EW, p. 46.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 61.

²⁹ Ibid., p. 197.

the force of the courageous and responsible, those who are willing to sacrifice the self for truth – a force, which is superior to the force of arms, because through its alignment between means and ends, it obtains reform by internal rather than external means.

A *satyagrahi*, for Gandhi, is the person whose faith in truth gives him or her the strength to pursue truth without self-interest, and who without concern for the self “continues resistance till the end without fear of death”³⁰. It is clear to Gandhi, that one fully committed *satyagrahi*, one who is willing for truth, to “seek arrest and imprisonment, as a soldier who goes to battle seeks death”³¹, has already won the battle of Right against Wrong³². Gandhi sees *Satyagrahis* as people whose mature thoughts allow them to reach *swaraj* – who learn to rule themselves and who break their enslavement by refusing to obey unjust laws. People whose “patriotism is not an exclusive thing”, but instead, is always “consistent with the broadest good of humanity at large”³³. Individuals who have left behind the outward ceremonials of organized religion and have instead embraced the “the highest impulses that man is capable of”³⁴. The *satyagrahi*, is an individual willing to lose all his money rather than give up the fight for truth, and who works towards “substituting the struggle for existence by the struggle for mutual service”³⁵. This he or she does, by striving through truth and nonviolence for self-sufficiency, and by working incessantly towards promoting the simplicity of village life³⁶.

The active *satyagrahi*, in Gandhi’s mind, is a law-abiding citizen who respects the law when government breaks it, and for whom revolution is “a state of peaceful rebellion – a refusal to obey every single State-made law”³⁷. According to Gandhi, this is an act, through which the *satyagrahi* seeks to enact the just relationships of communion he or she wants to see in the world, and which is aimed at remaining a true defender of noble traditions handed down from generation to generation. These traditions, for Gandhi, reveal the unconstitutionality of cooperating with the injustice of tyrannical government³⁸, and lead *satyagrahis* to stop their collaboration, ethically

³⁰ Ibid., p. 328.

³¹ Ibid., p. 357.

³² Ibid., p. 359.

³³ Ibid., p. 19.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 50.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 90.

³⁶ HS, p. 150.

³⁷ EW, p. 358.

³⁸ EW, p. 349.

and without cruelty, because they understand that “real rights are a result of performance of duty”³⁹. Nevertheless, despite this immediate self-sacrificing act, *satyagrahis* aware of the fact that change takes a long time; are never in a hurry in expectance of results, for “they know that to impregnate people with good requires a long time”⁴⁰.

It is these spiritual/ethical practices of the self, which Gandhi finds characteristic of the *satyagrahi* that it seems to me, form the core of Thoreau’s life-project. Yet, because of the different context and social reality, few researchers seem to identify the communion between the two. The main difference as I see it, being that Gandhi was born into a people colonized by the British as British imperialism was beginning to crumble, whereas Thoreau was a privileged citizen of a rising Imperial power. A different context, which allowed Gandhi to inspire a mass nonviolent movement in his own lifetime, while Thoreau’s impact would only truly be felt many years after his death. First, with the inspiration he provided to Gandhi in the struggle for Indian self-rule, and later through the civil rights and peace movements in the United States; movements that managed to enact with critical mass, the nonviolent civil disobedience preached and practiced one hundred years earlier by Thoreau.

It seems to me, that what makes Thoreau’s example useful for many political theorists and peace and justice activists in the West, is that unlike Gandhi, he really chose to fight against a system from which he obtained privilege – a State organization that aided by his silence was destroying other nations and was unjustly discriminating against minorities within its own borders⁴¹. Gandhi on the other hand, was being treated unjustly himself, let us remember how he relates the time when he is thrown off the train in South Africa for complaining about Indians not being allowed to sit in first class.

Pointing out this difference between Gandhi and Thoreau, does not intend to take away any truth from Gandhi’s cause, it is equally truthful and just to fight injustice when it affects oneself, as it is to fight it when it affects others⁴².

³⁹ HS, p. 81.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p.48.

⁴¹ Thoreau’s specific focus was on the Imperial war against Mexico and the question of slavery within the United States.

⁴² I acknowledge the fact that Thoreau is the victim of injustice when he is forced by the state to comply with laws with which he does not agree. Nevertheless, what I am trying to point to in this distinction between Gandhi and Thoreau, is that those laws which Thoreau actually rejects, are laws which materialize in oppression against others rather than directly on himself, whereas the laws which

Nevertheless, there does seem to be an important difference in the fact that while both are seeking the end of tyranny, one seeks to stop being an oppressor, while the other wants to stop being oppressed. In my mind there is something deeply spiritual about fighting for and with the underdog, and this is exactly the reason why I think Thoreau is important today for people in the West, because as Thomas Merton rightly points out in *Seeds of Destruction*, “the greatest responsibility of all rests upon the citizens of the great power blocs which hold the fate of other nations in their hands”⁴³. This is the reasons I choose to lean on Thoreau when seeking to inspire others, in hope that he may offer citizens in the West who are supporting – through their silent cooperation – the internal and external tyranny of their governments, a way to recapture their inner-self, and thus tap into the powerful and benevolent force of spiritual/ethical practices of the self latent in all human beings.

Thoreaudian engaged, radical/nonviolent/transformational citizenship

In the introduction by Howard Zinn to *The Higher Law: Thoreau on Civil Disobedience and Reform*, we learn that Thoreau is living in Concord, a town close to Boston, as the place is becoming the centre of antislavery agitation in the United States. Inspired by this growing hub of activism, and indeed acting as one of its chief promoters, in order to protest the government’s support of slavery, for six years the young Thoreau has refused to pay his poll tax. These are the six years prior to the beginning of the Mexican War.

In 1846, with military activity against Mexico already started, and amidst Thoreau’s two year seclusion from modern life living in a hut at Walden Pond, enjoying nature and writing *A week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers*⁴⁴. Thoreau ventures into Concord for a huckleberry-picking party, where he encounters the local constable who demands payment of the poll tax. Thoreau refuses, is arrested, and taken to the town jail. He only spends one night imprisoned, because either Emerson or his aunt pay the tax against his will – he never finds out with full certainty which of the two has actually paid.

Gandhi objects to are laws oppressing him directly (at least this is true of Gandhi’s beginnings as an advocate for nonviolence).

⁴³ SD, p. 97.

⁴⁴ Thoreau, H.D. (1962) ‘A Week in the Concord and Merrimack Rivers’ in *Walden and Other Writings*. New York: Bantam Books. Hereafter: **WC**.

This event leaves a deep impression on Thoreau, and a year later, having left Walden he gives a lecture at the Concord Lyceum entitled *The Rights and Duties of the Individual in Relation to Government*. Following this event, he keeps working on the theme and continues lecturing on it around the country, until in 1849 it is printed under the title of *Resistance to Civil Government*. Later known as *On the Duty of Civil Disobedience*, the essay continues today to inspire millions of people around the world seeking justice in a nonviolent way. Nevertheless, despite its popularity, the essay only partially reveals the full breadth of Thoreau's thought and contemplative activism, which becomes much more apparent when studying *On the Duty of Civil Disobedience* in conjunction with his other works.

As Zinn rightly points out, once a reader has had a chance to read Thoreau in depth, he or she cannot describe him as simply political, as this “does not do justice to the breadth and depth of Thoreau's ideas”, which look “beyond the immediate subjects of contention to ask the fundamental questions pondered before and after his time by the world's greatest thinkers”⁴⁵. An in-depth reading of Thoreau's work, makes it apparent that his thought is not only political, but spiritual and cooperativist, in that it does not seek denunciation for personal gain, but aims instead for the common good through both non-cooperation with injustice, and the development of a constructive program aimed at practicing alternative forms of citizenship. Nevertheless, perhaps because of a lack of in-depth knowledge of Thoreau's work, Gandhian scholar Anthony Parel sees Thoreau's philosophical writings and political acts, as secular and unspiritual⁴⁶, and Joseph Wood Krutch, describes Thoreaudian logic as a form of defiant individualism⁴⁷ – both, claims which in my mind negate the truth of Thoreau's life project, and thus, should be dialogically contested. It is after all non-individualist spiritual/ethical practices of the self, which this paper argues, form the foundational underpinnings of Thoreau's radical political thought.

⁴⁵ HL, p. ix.

⁴⁶ Parel, A. (2010) *Hind Swaraj and Modern Indian Political Theory*. Paper given on October 23, 2010, at a plenary session of the annual meeting of the Association for Political Theory, Reed College, Portland.

⁴⁷ LWP, p. 367.

In my opinion, it is the American active contemplative Thomas Merton⁴⁸, who best identifies Thoreau as a contemplative activist that has developed the spiritual or mystical dimensions of the inner life to the fullest as the centre of gravity for his activism. In *Choosing to Love the World*, Merton makes clear, that the independent voice of Thoreau, must be placed side by side with the voices of the “Christian saints, or the voices of Oriental sages like Lao-Tse or the Zen Masters”⁴⁹. It is Merton who laments the death so long ago, of a man with such good sense⁵⁰. It is he, who describes Thoreau as the hermit and prophet of non-violence⁵¹.

It is this non-individualist Thoreau that Merton manages to understand, the Thoreau seeking a moral renewal, ethically, physiologically and spiritually; the Thoreau who offers a human and hopeful light, and fresh air which clears the obscurity and smog of justified injustices, that is of interest when thinking about reconceptualising revolutionary practices of citizenship in contemporary Western societies. It is this Thoreau, who although coming from a different spiritual tradition, and experiencing a different context, can be said to be a co-conspirator with Gandhi in the search for a spiritualization of political life and politicization of spiritual and ethical practices of the self. It is this Thoreau, whom we find elevating himself above his material surroundings and controlling his own destiny by living in accordance to truth, justice and love. This is the Thoreau who can help Western political theorists break their complicity with a system of domination and oppression, which embraces the violence of the current status quo.

The individuality of this Thoreau, seeks the universal common good, it is he, for whom, as Jane Bennett rightly points out, “the ideal self is autonomous only with regard to conventional social life; he is very much intertwined with the cosmos”⁵². This is the Thoreau that rather than being interpreted as an individualist acting only for himself and by himself, is behaving as a *person*, as a human-being finding “reason for existence in the realm of truth, justice, love and liberty”, and seeking “to

⁴⁸ Thomas Merton – a monk of The Abbey of Gethsemani in Nelson County, Kentucky – is known for his reflections on the connections between eastern and western religious practices and his contributions to the non-violent civil rights and anti-war movement in the US.

⁴⁹ CLW, p. 115.

⁵⁰ SD, p. 293.

⁵¹ SD, p. 74.

⁵² Bennett, J. (1990) ‘On Being a Native: Thoreau’s Hermeneutics of Self’, *Polity*, Vol. 22, No. 4 summer, 1990), p. 566. Hereafter: **BN**.

collaborate with others in building a world of security and peace”⁵³. The solitary, who far from enclosing himself in himself, becomes every man, who “dwells in the solitude, the poverty, the indigence of every man”⁵⁴, reminding humanity of its true capacity for maturity, liberty, and peace.

Thoreau, is the man who when accused of being an individualist, points out that he simply “hears a different drummer”⁵⁵. He is a man trying to nurture his originality, independence, strength and fertility, by avoiding the “ungenial regions of tradition and conformity, or the lean and sandy soils of public opinion”⁵⁶. A man who believes that in order to succeed together, we must first succeed alone, and who thus explains to his friends, that at times, it is important to “withdraw religiously into solitude and silence, the better to prepare ourselves for a loftier intimacy.”⁵⁷

In essence and practice, Thoreau is a contemplative, a man who renounces his advantages and illusions, and takes on higher and more permanent responsibilities. He is a man who goes into solitude (hence his two year stay at Walden) not to *get* at the root of existence, but to *be* at the root of existence. A solitary, that has made the decision “to disagree completely with those who imagine that the call to diversion and self-deception is the voice of truth and who can summon the full authority of their own prejudice to prove it”⁵⁸. Thoreau the contemplative activist, personifies not the “shallow ‘I’ of individualism” but the “deep ‘I’ of the spirit, of solitude and love”⁵⁹, whose protest is a matter of rigorous spirituality, deep and interior, intimately personal, and first of all critical of itself – hence his refusal to pay his own poll tax. This is the *person* that clearly permeates through Thoreau’s work, the man in communion with Gandhi, who offers new dimensions of political freedom that challenge ingrained legal, political, economic, military, and social norms. Challenges that we now explore, in order to better understand how it might be possible to apply Thoreaudian logic to the problems of our own time.

⁵³ SD, p. 164. Here Merton is quoting from Pope John Paul II in *Pacem in Terris*, to define what it means to be a *person*.

⁵⁴ Merton, T. (1966) *Raids on the Unspeakable*. New York: New Directions Publishing, p. 18.

⁵⁵ Thoreau, H.D. (1975) *The Best of Walden and Civil Disobedience*. New York: Scholastic Book Services, p. 244. Hereafter: **BW**.

⁵⁶ HL, p. 191.

⁵⁷ Gandhi quoted in **BN**, p. 563. Although this is a Gandhi quote, it is used here as something Thoreau would say to his friends. This is because in his writings there ample comments along these lines, and applying Gandhi’s words to Thoreau’s recurrent actions emphasizes the communion between the two.

⁵⁸ CLW, p. 113.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 114.

Thoreau's challenging of ingrained legal norms

For Thoreau, the key question regarding laws is whether one should obey them when they are unjust. If we acknowledge the lack of justice, should we strive to change the law, obeying it until we have succeeded, or should we at once transgress it? The answer he gives to this question is that “we should be men first, and subjects afterwards”⁶⁰, and thus, our obligation as men is to do at any time only what we think is right. This is because a common and tragic outcome of an undue respect for the law, according to him, is “that you may see a file of soldiers, colonel, captain, corporal, privates, powder-monkeys and all, marching in admirable order over hill and dale to the wars, against their wills”, indeed, “against their common sense and conscience”⁶¹. For Thoreau, freedom does not come from law it is indeed free men who must strive to make law free, and those who work towards this end are indeed “the lovers of law and order, who observe the law when the government breaks it”⁶². This action, Thoreau justifies in the same way as Gandhi, through his understanding that the most sacred laws of society can never be higher than those more sacred laws of one's being, which as he rightly points out will never be in opposition to any just laws the manmade legal system places upon its subjects. If the State is a free state and the court system is truly just he will fight for them, but if they are not, he must refuse his allegiance and express contempt for its courts⁶³.

For Thoreau, the true judge is not he or she who determines the fate of a fellow human being in the courtroom, but the person whom from a love of truth expresses a true opinion. And since those passing judgment in the courts can only understand manmade law, in essence the lover of truth “finds himself constituted judge of the judge”⁶⁴ – a truly important role, in a world where law protects property and the body, but does not keep humanity in communion.

Thoreau's challenging of ingrained political norms

Thoreau considers that what people refer to as politics is superficial and inhuman and, therefore, he does not feel associated to it in anyway. As Gandhi pointed out, for Thoreau the ultimate ideal is a society with no government, thus he

⁶⁰ DCD, p. 5.

⁶¹ Ibid., p. 5.

⁶² HL, p. 98.

⁶³ Ibid., p. 106.

⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 98.

embraces the motto “that government is best which govern not at all”⁶⁵; but he considers himself a practical man and is therefore willing, unlike absolute anarchists, to ask not for no government at all, but at least for a better government. This he justifies by the mere fact that he considers his country’s government a terrorist organization⁶⁶, which in the name of order, forces its citizens to support its oppression through a process which is at first immoral but which quickly becomes unmoral⁶⁷.

For Thoreau, the American revolution either never happened or it failed, he agrees that the country has freed itself from a political tyrant, but he understands that tyranny remains in the economic and moral spheres, and wonders whether this false democracy is all that citizens can aspire to: “Is a democracy, such as we know it, the last improvement possible in government? Is it not possible to take a step further towards recognizing and organizing the rights of man?”⁶⁸ For Thoreau, the key to an enlightened and free State, is that it should recognize the “higher and independent power” of its citizens, from which “all its own power and authority are derived”⁶⁹. And since he does not consider this to be the case, when people rejoice about freedoms in America, he simply asks: “Is it a freedom to be slaves, or a freedom to be free, of which we boast?”⁷⁰

In the end, for Thoreau, an unjust government can only end up becoming “the laughing-stock of the word”⁷¹, and although he makes it clear that he always looks for a pretext for conforming to his government’s rule, he cannot avoid seeing it as a government without integrity that harasses him to obtain his support – a support which it demands through coercion and which materializes through compulsory taxation. A situation, which he defines as “taxation without representation”⁷² that he is not willing to accept.

The core problem of the State, as Thoreau understands it, is that those who serve it, serve it with their heads and without making moral distinctions, and thus, when thinking of a cure for such a condition he sees the need for the whole institution

⁶⁵ DCD, p. 3.

⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 4. The original quote is as follows: “If one were to judge these men wholly by the effects of their actions, and not partly by their intentions, they would deserve to be classed and punished with those mischievous persons who put obstructions on the railroads”.

⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 11.

⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 27.

⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 27.

⁷⁰ LWP, p. 383.

⁷¹ HL, p. 96.

⁷² LWP, p. 383.

to retreat into solitary contemplation – “why not keep its castle in silence, as I do commonly?”⁷³, he asks.

Thoreau’s challenging of ingrained economic norms

“This world is a place of business. What an infinite bustle!”⁷⁴ Thoreau says of the world of his time. It interrupts his dreams, he says, and what he would welcome would be seeing the world enjoying a day of religious observance and abstinence from work – but the drive for civilising progress does not welcome such rest. Through this capitalist mindset, a speculator felling trees and killing the soil is “esteemed an industrious and enterprising citizen”, while the person walking the woods out of love for them “is in danger of being regarded as a loafer”⁷⁵. In addition to this, most methods of making money are immoral and personal virtue is not gained by the interest gains on capital. For Thoreau capitalism is gambling: “What difference does it make whether you shake dirt or shake dice? If you win society is the loser”⁷⁶. Faced with the crude reality of such a system, Thoreau only has one solution. Instead of digging for gold in some faraway land, he must dig for gold within himself, and work on whatever might contribute to the community “whether the community pay him for it or not”⁷⁷.

Thoreau is working towards the construction of a society in which making a living is not “merely honest and honourable, but altogether inviting and glorious”⁷⁸. If this is not possible, then he doesn’t consider it living. For Thoreau, it is clear that we must earn our living by loving, and it is better to starve than to lose our innocence in the process of getting our bread⁷⁹. Yet, regarding economic matters a person must not only concern him or herself with the capitalist enterprises and their immoral ways, but must also be weary of the fact that every year the government presents its tax-bill and if one disagrees and is not willing to pay, the authorities take away his or her property – reality, which makes it “impossible for a man to live honestly and at the same time comfortably in outward respects”⁸⁰, and which leaves the moral citizen with only one

⁷³ Ibid., p. 385.

⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 369.

⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 369.

⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 374.

⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 371.

⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 373.

⁷⁹ Ibid., pp. 372 and 377.

⁸⁰ DCD, p. 16.

viable option. Living simply, growing one's own food, being self-sufficient and always ready to move, while creating the conditions necessary to counteract the oppressive nature of these 'civilizing' politico-economic practices⁸¹.

Thoreau's challenging of ingrained military norms

Although rejection to war is a persistent theme in Thoreau's writings, and indeed, it is together with slavery the main objection he has to unjust government when he advocates civil disobedience, there is little he explicitly says about the military as such. Nevertheless, the fact that he emphasizes that people must stop war "though it cost them their existence as a people"⁸², clearly reveals that to him the accepted military norms of his State have no moral or ethical standing. For Thoreau, the only basis for true ethics is the recognition of the life of every living-being as sacred. Indeed the one time when he does openly address military men, he tells them that "[o]nly the defeated and the deserters go to the wars, cowards that run away and enlist"⁸³. It is not nonviolent civil disobedience that is cowardly according to him, but the violence of war. The patriot, for Thoreau, is not the individual who marches off to war but the honest man who rejects such meaningless, unjust, and devastating action.

Thoreau's challenging of ingrained social norms

The first challenge Thoreau poses to social norms, is to the idea of liberty, when he accuses many of his fellow countrymen who tied to a whipping-post free one hand and use it "to ring the bells and fire the cannons, to celebrate *their* liberty"⁸⁴. This act, he describes as common nonsense instead of common sense. In consonance with this view, he also criticises the lack of responsibility shown by citizens who although opposed to war and slavery do nothing about it, except regret, hesitate, sometimes petition, and then vote in hope that right will prevail – and act, which to him leaves "right to the mercy of chance"⁸⁵.

In Thoreau's eyes, it is those who despite disapproving of the actions of government "yield to it their allegiance and support, [that] are undoubtedly its most

⁸¹ HL, p. 191. The original quote is as follows: "If we would indeed reform mankind by truly Indian, botanic, magnetic, or *natural* means, let us strive first to be as simple and well as nature ourselves."

⁸² DCD, p. 8.

⁸³ BW, p. 241.

⁸⁴ HL, p. 95.

⁸⁵ DCD, p. 9.

conscientious supporters”⁸⁶. It is they, who are the biggest obstacle to reform because in their fear of losing the protection granted by government to their property and self’s, chose to keep silent. He sees himself different to these citizens who through their prejudices and superstitions sacrifice nothing for humanity – who instead of acting on their inner light, simply pray to save their souls. He sees them as servants of tyranny and not of humanity, and asks of them that perhaps they might “for once and at last, serve God... by obeying that eternal and only just CONSTITUTION”⁸⁷ written by God and not by man.

Although concerned about the actions of government, Thoreau’s biggest concern is with the lack of principle of those citizens, who in adulation of the noblemen forget to construct those much needed and “noble villages of men”⁸⁸. Of course Thoreau is concerned about the lack of moral teachers, as he observes preachers and prophets using their pulpits to justify injustice. But instead of calling to them, he calls out to the laymen, in hope that they might stop looking for guidance in the legislatures and churches, and thus dissolve their union with them until these institutions are exercising their duty⁸⁹. This is the principle of noncooperation with evil, from which Thoreau develops his concept of revolution detailed below.

The Thoreaudian revolution

It is Thoreau’s spiritual/ethical practices of the self, which revolutionize the theory of revolution. A revolution, which is guided by four distinct, yet interlinked pillars of his spiritual faith: truth, justice, love and communion. Indeed, for Thoreau all of us alive are only “youthful philosophers and experimentalists”⁹⁰, none of us having lived a whole human life. Yet, because “[w]e are older by faith than by experience”⁹¹, faith is the only reform that we need, and we can obtain it by relating ourselves to a universal fact like the rising and setting of the sun – an act of nature, which will remind us of man’s own constitution waiting “to be obeyed, to restore him to health and happiness”⁹².

⁸⁶ Ibid., p. 11.

⁸⁷ HL, p. 103.

⁸⁸ BW, p. 92.

⁸⁹ HL, p. 104.

⁹⁰ BW, p. 249.

⁹¹ HL, p. 41.

⁹² Ibid., p. 20.

It is for Thoreau this understanding of nature and of man, which leads us (humans) to a spiritual understanding of our responsibilities to both, and which makes us understand the importance of truth. Truth, according to him, is the only thing always in harmony with itself⁹³ – once we have it, justice follows because a deep understanding of truth does not allow us to pursue our own contemplation while sitting on another man’s shoulder. Thoreau is convinced of the fact, that with truth there is no room for false justification: “[I]f I have unjustly wrestled a plank from a drowning man, I must restore it to him though I drown myself”⁹⁴. Indeed, politically this materializes in the fact that if my government imprisons people unjustly, then I, as a just man, can only find a true and honest place inside its prisons. It is there that I will be able to abide with my honour and stop sitting on another’s shoulder. That is why after refusing to pay his poll tax and going to prison, Thoreau makes the following claim: “I felt as if I alone of all my townsmen had paid my tax.”⁹⁵

Having presented truth and justice as pillars of his spiritual faith, Thoreau introduces love, the force, which according to him “can make a paradise within which will dispense with a paradise without”⁹⁶. And he makes it clear, that only those who love are able to understand the “value and magnanimity of truth”⁹⁷. This is the spiritual truth, full of justice and love, which allows for communion – a friendship at the deepest level, which is beyond words, and beyond speech, and which allows friends to live not merely in harmony, but to live in melody⁹⁸. For Thoreau, this communion is key in our growth as a species, because being the state of the just dealing with the just; its magnanimous sincerity makes us honest and saintly heroes able to trust each other – making our lives divine and miraculous⁹⁹.

So it is, that with these interlinked pillars of his spiritual faith in place – truth, justice, love and communion – that Thoreau ventures into a definition of what a revolution actually is. A revolution which begins by being the truthful change one wants to see: “any man more right than his neighbours, constitutes a majority of one already”¹⁰⁰. This is because although it might seem like a small beginning, what is

⁹³ DCD, p. 25.

⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 7.

⁹⁵ Ibid., p. 18.

⁹⁶ HL, p. 47.

⁹⁷ Ibid., p. 189.

⁹⁸ WC, p. 76.

⁹⁹ WC, pp. 76 and 77.

¹⁰⁰ DCD, p. 13.

done properly once remains alive forever. But this courageous and solitary act of being a revolutionary, Thoreau does not feel is a lonely act, because through it he enters into communion with the universal and with those people before him and those who will follow, who through spiritual/ethical practices of the self oppose injustice and work for, and with truth. For Thoreau, the essence of the revolution is acting from principle in the performance of right – act that changes us by dividing “the individual, separating the diabolical in him from the divine”¹⁰¹.

In terms of the need for revolution in his particular historical moment, Thoreau understands that everyone agrees on the right of revolution when a government’s tyranny has become unbearable. Yet, he sees his fellow countrymen justifying why it was right before and it is not appropriate now¹⁰². And to them he points out, that based on the country’s reality of slavery and imperial war “it is not too soon for honest men to rebel and revolutionize”¹⁰³. Therefore, in order to offer what he identifies as the most peaceable revolution possible, he suggests nonviolent, non-cooperative, civil disobedience – a revolutionary practice that will have succeeded when “the subject has refused allegiance, and the officer has resigned his office”¹⁰⁴.

Thoreau shows urgency in regards to this personal revolutionary act, nevertheless, like Gandhi, he understands that “[r]evolutions are never sudden”¹⁰⁵ and that true revolutions evolve as silent unperceivable acts whose accomplishments take centuries to materialize. A situation which does not worry him, because he understands that in these spiritual/ethical matters time is of no importance: “What is time but the stuff delay is made of?”¹⁰⁶. In the end, Thoreau the revolutionary is satisfied doing his part by being the change he wants to see and by educating his fellow countrymen in the process¹⁰⁷ – an exemplary, radical/nonviolent/transformational move which does justice to the ever-growing complexity of democratic politics. But the problem which should be of concern to present day Western Political theorists regarding such a courageous act, is whether western citizens are hearing this truth, for

¹⁰¹ Ibid., p. 11.

¹⁰² Here Thoreau is referring to people of his time accepting the American revolutionary war of 1775 as justified, but refusing to acknowledge that revolutionary change is needed at the time when he is writing.

¹⁰³ Ibid., p. 7.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., p. 15.

¹⁰⁵ HL, p. 195.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., p. 41.

¹⁰⁷ DCD, p. 22.

as Thoreau rightly points out, in communion it “takes two to speak the truth, – one to speak, and another to hear”¹⁰⁸.

Chaos or Community

“I am surprised to see men going about their business as if nothing had happened. I say to myself Unfortunates! They have not heard the news”¹⁰⁹. That is what Thoreau feels in regards to the majority of his fellow citizens when pondering on the social reality he is experiencing. And in essence, this is how I feel today in the Western world, when I acknowledge the abysmal state of our legal, political, economic, military and social realities, while our governments pitch to us the wonders of our democratic freedoms and a large proportion of the population complies with their view.

This inability and lack of courage to grasp the slightest bit of truth about our situation, sometimes makes me lose hope; because this barbarity seems to reveal a contempt for truth and an ability for hypocrisy and self-deception, that reminds me of Tolstoy’s words: “their hearts are so hardened, that seeing they see not, hearing they do not hear, and understand not”¹¹⁰. If things are to change, and we as a community are to be the change we want to see, we must understand as Martin Luther King Jr. rightly pointed out, that the ultimate tragedy is not in “the brutality of the bad people, but the silence of the good people”¹¹¹.

As a collective, we seem possessed by our dogmatism and our scientific progress. We have allowed our military might to dictate the path of our development, and we are destroying others and ourselves. We hear our governments and legal experts speak of universal jurisdiction, justice and peace, and watch them point fingers at others while they disregard their own doctrines, and all we do is cringe and comply, knowing that all of it in its current form is absurd.

As a collective we abdicate our responsibility and with it we throw away our freedom, our truth, and our spiritual/ethical values. And this is where Thoreau comes in – as Howard Zinn rightly points out – with his great insight, that without the actions of citizens on behalf of justice, there is a moral emptiness in government¹¹².

¹⁰⁸ WC, p. 77.

¹⁰⁹ HL, p. 107.

¹¹⁰ Tolstoy, L. (2006) *The Kingdom of God is Within You*. Mineola: Dover Publications, p. 308.

¹¹¹ King, M.L. (2000) *Why We Can't Wait*. New York: Signet Classics, p. 48.

¹¹² HL, p. xxviii.

With his essay on Civil Disobedience, Thoreau reminds us of the true universal principle of human rights, and the farce of accepting the absolute legitimacy of government – pointing out the importance of not giving a blank check to it if we are to be truly democratic. He reminds us of the need to take sides. We are either for or against racism, for or against poverty, for or against war, and for or against injustice – we cannot remain neutral on a moving train¹¹³. This is the insightful Thoreau we must popularize if as citizens of the West we are to educate ourselves – in thought and practice – about exemplar practices through which we can salvage ourselves from this violent and static apathy, which is no more than hoping against hope¹¹⁴.

Thoreau's nonviolent civil disobedience – this protest beyond manmade law – holds the key for the effective exercising of citizenship, as Western citizens in the early days of the 21st century come to terms with our tyrannical and imperial reality. This is the revolutionary move that might spare us total war, if like Thoreau, Gandhi, Tolstoy, King, Merton or Zinn, we apply ourselves to it with full dedication while in parallel constructing alternative forms of nonviolent, self-sufficient and cooperative forms of citizenship – forms, which encourage human/human and human/nonhuman communion.

This nonviolent civil disobedience and its parallel constructive programme, what Gandhi defined for us as *satyagraha*, and what Western *satyagrahis* like Thoreau have abided by as the principle of their spiritual/ethical practices of the self. Presents to us an exemplar we can follow with out imitating¹¹⁵ in order to propel a much-needed paradigmatic change in Western societies. Mild reform will not work! Only revolutionary action can alter the current trend of escalation of threats to our existence as a species.

¹¹³ This phrase is inspired by the title of Howard Zinn's book, *You Can't Be Neutral on a Moving Train: A Personal History of Our Times*, Boston: Beacon Press, 2002.

¹¹⁴ Hoping against hope (to hope with little reason or justification), the phrase is taken from a letter from Mahatma Gandhi to Madame Edmond Privat, on December 2nd 1947, one month prior to Gandhi's assassination. In regards to the bloodbath taking place in India, in the letter Gandhi hopes that the nation will come out not by imitating the West, but by taking the best from the West and becoming the hope of the 'whole aching world'. He writes the following: "I must confess that this is hoping against hope, for, we are today swearing by the military and all that naked physical force implies" (EW, p. 373).

¹¹⁵ When speaking of following with out imitating, I am thinking of *satyagrahis* in the same way Nietzsche sees Schopenhauer as the antidote to the depressing social reality he observes, who as a deliverer is able to show the way to oneself, to those who follow without imitating. Nietzsche, F. (1874/1914) 'Schopenhauer as Educator', in *The Complete Works of Friedrich Nietzsche*, edited by Oscar Levy, New York: McMillan Company.

When we see our governments increasing the surveillance of our societies and waging war on nonviolent dissenters, when we witness the incessant military build up and the persistent starting of unjustified wars, or the never ending baling out of economic criminals while the rest of us are left stranded. When we see our politicians justifying the carrying out of extralegal assassinations, and parallel to that, we see them giving blank checks to corporations that are blatantly destroying our planet. When we see all this, we become indignant and outraged. And as we hear an 82 year-old linguistics professor reminding us of the fact that this is the time to be active and engaged because of all the threats that we face; in particular two which while being escalated threaten species survival – the threat of nuclear war and the threat of environmental disaster¹¹⁶. That is when we are reminded of the need to withdraw our silent support.

When we do finally acknowledge our own responsibility in the wellbeing of all, we stop our collaboration with tyranny and our constructive programme begins. It surfaces hidden tensions in society and it is difficult – letting go of privilege is often challenging –, but it is the only true way of being constructive. As Thoreau rightly points out, when devoting time to my own constructive projects, “I must first see, at least, that I do not pursue them sitting upon another man’s shoulders”¹¹⁷. This is how the *satyagrahi* – the non-violent, non-individualist contemplative activist –, through his or her spiritual/ethical practices of the self, revolutionizes the theory of revolution in a way that does justice to the increasing complexity of democratic politics.

While massive conflict and collective unreason continue, the Western *satyagrahi* overcomes his constrained political freedoms and makes a choice between nonviolent coexistence and violent coannihilation. In the end, he or she is making the choice Martin Luther King Jr. thought necessary between chaos and community¹¹⁸. It seems to me, that future generations will be thankful to these *satyagrahis* courageous enough to choose community over chaos – revolutionaries who like Thoreau, through truly democratic principles withdraw their support to the current tyranny and imperial expansion of Western nation-states and construct an alternative reality.

¹¹⁶ Noam Chomsky and Jeremy Paxman interview for the BBC. Available online at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xyWDzFgw2es&NR=1>

¹¹⁷ DCD, p. 10.

¹¹⁸ CC, p. 202. The original quote is as follows: “We still have a choice today: nonviolent coexistence or violent coannihilation. This may well be mankind’s last chance to choose between chaos and community”