Chapter 7

Civilizations, Neo-Gandhianism, and the Hindu Self

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Introduction

This chapter deals with current attempts in International Relations (IR) to deessentialize the concept of civilization—to leave behind what Jackson calls a substantialist (essentialist) approach in favor of an approach that treats civilizations as unfolding processes, projects, practices, and relations (Jackson, 1999: 142). As discussed in the introduction, much current discourse on civilization challenges the view of civilizations as immutable natural essences. At an ontological level post-essentialist civilizational analysis prefers constructivism over objectivism, while epistemologically it is an interpretivist rather than a positivist approach. Civilizations, like cultures, nations, ethnic groups, and identities should be viewed as verbs rather than nouns.

In this chapter I discuss and problematize the use of the term "civilization." I do this by outlining some difficulties with the term as it has been discussed in contemporary literature. In particular I emphasize how even interpretative readings can be used to reinforce static notions of the concept. Some of this criticism is dealt with in postcolonial literature concerned with the hybridity of the colonized in regard to power, culture, civilization, and identity. Here lies an attempt to decolonize the subject by demystifying the experience of cultural others. However, as I show in this chapter, this may contain certain pitfalls. Hence, a number of postcolonialists, such as the neo-Gandhians in India, fall prey to essentializing discourses in their efforts to criticize Western civilizational readings. In their search for a Hindu self, conceptions of "tradition," "culture," and civilization become less than a reification of those structures of domination that they profess to leave behind.

Civilizations and the Postcolonial Critique

The "civilization debate" is by no means an isolated one. Rather, it has been played out in a number of fields within IR theory where mainstream IR has

been challenged by various postpositivist approaches. Without going into the details of these debates, it is enough to acknowledge the contention between rationalist and reflective approaches where the latter have emphasized the importance of studying agents, structures, and institutions as being socially constructed. In the fourth-generation civilizational analysis this is often framed as the processual-relational (P/R) approach. Labels used to describe political constellations—the West, the Orient, Islam—have thus been abandoned in favor of seeing such constellations as discursive constructions that challenge static conceptions of identity, culture, and civilization. Opponents of an essentialist view of civilization and culture often argue that a static view of these concepts disregards unequal power distribution between and within groups, globally as well as locally.

I adhere to this P/R approach, but remain unconvinced about the usefulness of bringing back the notion of civilization even in this interpretative sense. The question that must be raised concerns the extent to which the use of the term may still presuppose, and impose, particular social categories rather than contributing to the analysis of their condition of being. As Hopkins and Kahani-Hopkins (2004) suggest, academic and social scientific concepts may be employed so as to ground particular category constructions, and may limit our analyses and the political projects that may be envisaged. Hence, it is important to be aware of the limitations inherent in "civilizational analyses" if they are to achieve anything other than an understanding of how civilizations have evolved as social constructions. In other words, we may deconstruct the concept to show how particular categories, such as the West, Orient, or Islam, are rendered meaningful in the first place and how they remain powerful legitimators of identity as they are constructed, promoted, and perceived as essential to human beings and to the organization of society. Critical civilizational analyses are also at the core of challenging IR as a discipline that has privileged an Anglocentric worldview where general Enlightenment beliefs, such as reason, empiricism, science, universalism, progress, individualism, freedom, uniformity of human nature, and secularism have come to assume a universal status. However, if the aim is to reconstruct the term itself, I believe we run into a number of problems.

Here Halliday's (1999) discussion of the term "Islamophobia" can serve as a relevant example of the danger involved in reconceptualizing problematic concepts. Halliday (who prefers the term "anti-Muslim" over "Islamophobia") argues that the term "Islamophobia" is problematic as it implies that there "is something out there against which the phobia can be directed" (898). Using the term anti-Muslim, although not unproblematic, has the advantage of avoiding the implication that there is a single entity (Islam) that is targeted (Hopkins and Kahani-Hopkins, 2004). This line of argument is similar to the critique against using a terminology of "the other," which even in critical writings has a tendency to reproduce the stereotypical homogenization of other cultures and people even when seeking to overthrow them (Riggins, 1997: 4).

As a critical line of inquiry it can also be compared to the postcolonial theorist Homi Bhabha's (1990) discussion of Edward Said's Orient. Bhabha is positive to how Said provides a radical critique of essentialist understandings of history and modernity, while he acknowledges that Said's study falls short in providing an account of the so-called Orient. Said, Bhabha notes, fails to investigate the process in which the colonial subject is historically constructed, making orientalist discourse appear monolithic, undifferentiated, and uncontested. Instead of seeing the colonial subject as fixed, Bhabha argues, colonial subjectivity must be seen as a hybrid character revealing the possibility of understanding colonial authority, because "it enables a form of subversion that turns the discursive conditions of dominance in to the grounds of intervention" (Bhabha, 1984: 125–33, see also Keyman, 1997).[1] In this regard Bhabha as well as Chatterjee (1986) criticize those who proceed from a homogenous understanding of the developing world as found in some postmodernist writings. The postmodern dislocation of the subject and its tendency to keep Eurocentrism as its point of reference with respect to the process of othering, is problematic, they argue, as it has been inclined to marginalize racial, cultural, and historical otherness of representation.

Postcolonial criticism entails, in other words, the need to "engender and decolonize IR theory in order to dismantle its Eurocentrism and cultural essentialism" (Keyman, 1997: 194). It is about locating knowledge as a historically created site where the process of othering takes place. Spivak's (1999) suggestion to change the title of an Essex conference in 1992 from "Europe and Its Others" to "Europe as an Other," documenting and theorizing the itinerary of Europe as a sovereign subject, points to an alternative "worlding" of today's "inter-national" relations. In this sense, postcolonial discourse criticizes both the idea of development and the "three world's theory" as part of a Eurocentric discourse of control and subordination. It has a heretical thrust as it intends to "operate a difference and make a new departure through the rupture of what has become institutionalized or normalized as tradition or convention" (Venn, 2000: 48). The aim is to show how Eurocentrism has been and continues to be the prerequisite for how we construct a vision of the Other (Keyman, 1997). The critique of Eurocentrism and universalism, on the one hand, and of the homogeneous understanding of the third world, on the other, thus marks the strategy of postcolonial criticism and its analysis of imperialism.

Postcolonial criticism clarifies the extent to which IR as a discipline attempts to grasp global or universal phenomena, such as "civilizations," almost entirely within one culturally and politically circumscribed perspective (Walker, 1984: 182). It has done so in particular by questioning the idea of the desirability of the nation-state as the form through which self-governance, autonomy, self-respect and justice are to be pursued. This claim has been influenced by poststructuralist notions of anti-essentialism together with its critique of modernity (Seth, 2000). As Chatterjee's analysis of Benedict Anderson shows when he argues that Anderson violates the

concept of imagined (as in imagined communities) by insisting on nationalism's modular quality:

> [i]f nationalisms in the rest of the world have to choose their imagined community from certain "modular" forms already made available to them by Europe and the Americas, what do they have left to imagine? . . . Even our imaginations must remain forever colonized. (1993: 5)

Here, Chatterjee reveals how the official ideology of the Indian state came to rest on a monolithic concept of sovereignty borrowed from modern Europe, thus disregarding both diagonal and horizontal constructions of identity that were the legacy of the colonial past. Chatterjee is thus successful in showing how a national discourse emerged that was able to gloss over "all earlier contradictions, divergences and differences" (1993: 49–51).[2]

Chatterjee's observation illustrates the difficulties international relations theory has had in acknowledging the need to explore difference, not only recognize it in forms of "different" nation-states where the state (or actor) still remains united. In this, much conventional IR theory continues to privilege unity over difference, presuming a sovereign, ahistorical identity. As a result, neither neorealists, nor neoliberals or IR–constructivists have felt the need to concern themselves with "inaccessible" discourses of postcolonialism (or postmodernism). Instead they refer to these as marginal or alternative accounts that can be included or excluded at will, while in reality postcolonial and postmodern scholars pose very challenging and troubling questions to IR–theorists who often remain prisoners of their own conceptions and subjectivity (see McCormack, 2002: 109).

This emphasis on subjectivity brings us back to the discussion of civilization as a problematic concept. If the attempt to open up for differences, contradictions, and alternative imaginings is inherent in the postcolonial critique, then one must also ask questions about postcolonial subjectivity. In this regard it has proved difficult for some postcolonial writers to tell non-essentializing stories about self, largely because they have been unable to traverse the self-other dichotomy. In defining and demonizing the other (e.g., Western civilization), self becomes sufficiently sanctified. In the case of the neo-Gandhians[3] in India, this is certainly the case. In attempting to strike out against both Western monopolies of knowledge and power and against current Hindu nationalist discourse, neo-Gandhians have often found themselves defending *an* Indian civilization.[4] Inherent in this picture is a search for *a* Hindu self that can counter destructive influences from the West as well as deviant versions of this self as expressed in Hindu nationalism.

What this case shows, as discussed below, is the problems we may encounter when culturalism becomes the "other" true story of civilizational analysis. As Desai (2002: 62–63) has noted, culturalism substitutes a right for a left critique of universalism. In this critique, everything that has to do with globalization, modernity, and Western values are bad, while

everything to do with culture, religion, and tradition are good and must be upheld (see also Nanda, 2004).[5] Reinterpreting the concept of civilization does not, in other words, prevent the common abuse of the term. Instead we see in the Indian case how culturalist history is being reinterpreted to give predominance to what I elsewhere have referred to as "hegemonic traditionalists" (Kinnvall, 2004), who take it upon themselves to "properly" define the history and boundaries of the group, community, nation, and civilization.

Telling the "Other" Civilizational Story—The Essentialist Trap

As discussed above, postcolonial scholars have been successful in challenging simple definitions of culture, civilization, and identity. This does not imply, however, that there is common agreement in terms of philosophical inquiry among postcolonial scholars. Similar to other categorical constructions, postcolonial criticism cannot be easily labeled. Bhaba (1994), Spivak (1999), and Hall (1992) are all, for instance, concerned with the hybridity of the colonized in their focus on power, culture, civilization, and identity. Others have given particular emphasis to the idea of the nation-state in the colonial encounter, and to the nation as a subject (Chatterjee, 1986, 1993; Said, 1979). Yet others have explored the shaping of colonial and postcolonial subjectivity, particular in its indigenous and psychological form (Fanon, 1970; Nandy, 1983; Inden, 1986, 2000; Lal, 2000). To this should be added more general accounts that are concerned with how the colonial encounter has affected the ways in which we comprehend the world (Young, 1990; Duara, 1995; Prakash, 1995; cf Seth, 2000).

Here I am particularly concerned with the idea of the nation-state in the colonial encounter as expressed in Chatterjee's writings and the exploration of colonial and postcolonial subjectivity in its indigenous form as articulated in writings by Ashis Nandy and T. N. Madan—two core representatives of the neo-Gandhian perspective, also referred to as the neonativists. Similar perspectives have also been forwarded by scholars such as Vinay Lal and Ronald Inden. The role of the neo-Gandhians can only be understood, however, in relation to the Hindu nationalists' attempts to redefine Indian civilization, nation, and culture and the response among scholars from across the Indian political spectrum. The electoral defeat of the Hindu nationalist party, the BJP (Bharatiya Janata Party), in 2004 has not meant an end of the ideology of *Hindutva* or Hindu nationalist policies and it therefore remains important for illustrating how interpretative notions of civilization and culture can sometimes play directly into the hands of religious (or other) fundamentalists.

Without going too deep into Indian politics and the Hindu nationalist movement, I would like to focus on the ongoing debate in India on how to define Indian history. The aim of the Hindu nationalist movement, or *Hindutva*, has been to construct a chain of events where the past is

connected to the present and where it justifies future actions. In this representation of the Indian past there are no sharp boundaries between "religious fiction" and "material facts" as some empiricist historians would like us to believe. Instead, historical research has often been used to fit the predetermined narrative by making them into "hard facts" (van der Veer, 1996: 143–45). That cultural nationalism is positive and real is, in these accounts, based on two interconnected assumptions. The first is that Hindu nationalism is not a modern phenomenon in India. Instead, its provenance is held to go back to Vedic times and it is therefore enmeshed with the history and culture of the Hindu "race" and Hindu civilization. The second assumption is that the nationalist ideology generated by the anticolonial movement was negative in character and confined to opposing colonialism (Panikkar, 1997: xv), rather than representing the Hindu majority.

Both assumptions ignore the extent to which the colonial encounter involved an essentialized inter-civilizational discourse where primordial notions of Western, Hindu, and Muslim civilizations affected identity constructions in India. Here it is important to emphasize the extent to which the British were instrumental in strengthening religious boundaries by classifying and comparing rates of literacy, population growth, professional occupations, and recruitment to the army according to religious affiliation. As a result religious, national and civilizational identity became equated in the term *Hindutva*, where an Indian was viewed as a Hindu who belongs to the imagined Hindu nation, which as a consequence put other religious communities, such as the Muslims, outside the nation. In nineteenth-century India a colonial society was produced by a colonizing state that was also engaged in creating a national identity at home. Indian nationalisms were formed in resistance to this colonization but were also deeply affected by it. Hence when studying Hindu nationalist discourse of today, we soon discover how Muslim subjectivity is constantly framed in opposition to that of the morally righteous subjectivity of the West and that of the tolerant subjectivity of the Hindus (van der Veer, 1996; see also Kolodner, 1995; Panikkar, 1997). The term tolerance is itself related to the incorporation of Muslim and Hindu populations into a global inter-civilizational discourse, where Muslims, the old rival of the West, are labeled fanatic and bigoted, while Hindus are seen in a more positive light as tolerant.

Hindu nationalists have been able to build upon these essentialized inter-civilizational discourses in the battle for India's history. This battle has been fought in media, in universities, in elementary and high schools as well as in policymaking institutions. In those states controlled by the BJP, textbooks have been written to glorify the "Hindu civilizational past," to revile the policies of the "Muslim invaders," to rename Indian cities and regions (such as Bombay to Mumbai), and to revise the relationship between Hindu religion, national identity, and citizenship (see Smith, 1993). The role of language has been significant in this process as noticed in the early-1990s when All India Radio sent out a directive to its employees regarding the use of Sanskrit. Newspaper translators in the respective languages

including Hindi, Urdu, and Kashmiri, were ordered to use Sanskrit for certain terms, insisting on Sanskrit being a secular language (Duara, 1991). For minorities, such as the Muslims, the closeness between Sanskrit and Brahmanism left a lot to be desired in terms of minority protection.

The most important attempt to rewrite history is, however, the case of Ayodhya—the destruction of the Babri Masjid in 1992—and the Hindu nationalists' claim that it is the actual nativity site of the Hindu god Rama. The mosque itself, which originates from the 1500s, is supposed to have been built on the Hindu god Rama's birthplace between 900,000 and 5,000 years ago, depending on the "priest" consulted (van der Veer, 1996). Hindu nationalists have long argued that the mosque should be demolished and a Hindu temple built there instead. The story behind the claim is that the Islamic ruler Babur should have destroyed the immemorial Hindu temple and erected a mosque on its ruins. As a story it displays a certain historical logic—a linear time-conception and a demand for the reenactment of medieval politics.

By viewing history as linear, Hindu nationalists exhibit a time conception that is highly consistent with positivist-empiricist notions of what constitutes history. This is problematic in at least three ways. First, a linear time-conception provides a simplistic view of historical events as it ignores more complex, often contradictory, historical readings. In doing this, it also aims to provide a single version of the past. Second, it can be argued that linear time-conceptions interpret historical events as taking place in an orderly, either/or, fashion, India is open or closed; Hindu or Muslim; imprisoned or liberated. Few events actually occur in such neat categorizations. Third, linear time-conceptions play into the belief that history, even historical myths and fabrications, can always be verified or falsified—thus ignoring the fact that interpretations of history is constantly playing into current belief and power structures.[6]

In the case of Ayodhya the Indian nation had been founded by Ram and undone by Babur. In terms of medieval politics, the Babri Masjid, and similar sacred places, are seen as symbols of Hindu subjection that makes their destruction a necessary part of the liberation movement of the Hindus. The strategy is to deny creativity to the Muslims (Bhattacharya, 1991: 128). To "prove" their case, Hindu nationalists have supplied a list of more than 3, 000 sites across the country where, they say, Muslim emperors usurped Hindu ground. Even the Taj Mahal has been claimed to be built by a pre-Islamic Hindu movement and then appropriated by Muslim aggressors, rather than being built by a Moghul emperor to commemorate his wife (Misra, 2000; Smith, 1993). Any of these sites could become sites of contestation in the future.

These stories show how any cultural narrative must have supporting "evidence" if its proponents are to convince others. As a result archaeological excavations have been performed at sites described in the two great Sanskrit epics, the Mahabharata and the Ramayana. Excavations at the Ramayana sites, such as Ayodhya, revealed that these sites were younger

than the Mahabharata ones, which posed a certain problem as Rama of the Ramayana is supposed to have existed later than Krishna of Mahabharata. As one archaeologist commented, however, "we will strive and strive with success to make archaeology and tradition about Rama and Krishna meet on the same plane of time" (van der Veer, 1996: 144–45).

The real force of the Hindu nationalists' propaganda stems from their ability to emphasize the objectivity of the archaeological records. The VHP[7] has been especially successful in situating the chronologies of archaeology within a temporal framework that has forced historians and archaeologists into the field by seeking to submit the original field reports to vigorous appraisals where every detail is being relocated to its "proper" context (Shaw, 2000). This attempt to reerect boundaries between archaeology and local tradition has made it possible to construct a single version of Ayodhya's past. By using a number of narrative strategies, such as concocted figures, dates, and names, the myths become authenticated and create an illusion of concreteness. Concretization, as noted by Bhattacharya (1991), goes along with a method of familiarization. By recounting mythic histories about the reigns of Humayun, Akbar, and Aurangzeb, citing a few well-known sources, we are persuaded to believe in the authenticity of the narrative. Attempts to disprove such narrative through archaeological means, thus becomes part of a larger quest for "setting the history right."

The Struggle over History: Neo-Gandhianism and the Search for a Hindu Self

Historians at the left-leaning Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) have been persistent in their attempts to discredit Hindu nationalist and civilizational accounts, publishing pamphlets, books, and newspaper articles. In doing this, however, there has sometimes been a tendency to deconstruct the historical or archaeological base of Hindu nationalists' arguments by appealing to actual evidence and proofs (van der Veer, 1996),[8] thus buying into a "mythical" essentialized discourse through engagement. Some of these scholars, such as Panikkar (1991), a neo-Nehru secularist, have insisted that we must differentiate between "faith" and "facts" and only engage when "facts" are being contested. Neo-Gandhian cultural nationalists, such as Ashis Nandy and T. N. Madan, have argued that such a differentiation is not possible and have instead pointed to the need for properly understanding precolonial religious culture (see Jurgensmeyer, 1996: see also Desai, 1999, 2002; Smith 1996). Nandy has insisted in making a clear distinction between the *Hindutva* type of political ideology and Hinduism, where the latter is regarded as a "faith and a way of life" that permeates Indian culture and civilization. Madan has made similar claims in his hopes that traditional culture can become the basis for a new Indian unity, and Partha Chatterjee has joined this culturalist discourse by launching a new historical nationalist project to "fashion a 'modern' national culture that is nevertheless not Western" (Juergensmeyer, 1996: 133).

This "internal" debate between the neo-Nehru secularist historians and the neo-Gandhians may not always be as separated from Hindu nationalism as it would like to be. By insisting on disproving VHP claims, the neosecularists have difficulties in staying away from the hegemonic narrative provided by the VHP, a narrative that relies on a "mythical" essentialized discourse. The neo-Gandhians, on the other hand, in their search for continuity of a collective memory in order to move constructively from the past to the future, run the risk of glorifying and establishing *a* past that can be verified or falsified. To this should be added those liberal historians, like Brian Smith or Ray Chaudhuri, who claim to stand up for universal principles in their equation of Hindu nationalism with fascism and who accuse more constructivist approaches of providing a relativist "scholarly legitimation for distortions of truth and murderous attempts at ethnic or religious cleansing" (Smith, 1996: 2, see also Juergensmeyer, 1996).

The neo-Nehru secularists and the liberal historians converge in their beliefs in universal values as opposed to the neo-Gandhians' insistence on culture as the basis for particular rights-claims. In this the debate resembles the cosmopolitan-communitarian debate in the West, where the former is focused on either humanity as a whole or on individuals, while the latter is concerned with the political community. This debate is not clear-cut, as liberal-multiculturalist policies in the West have often focused on groups' rights, but with groups being perceived in individualistic terms (see Bauman, 2001; Okin, 1999; Parekh, 2000; Modood, 2005). Policies of multiculturalism and the Indian version of secularism thus share some important characteristics. Both the language of multiculturalism and Indian secularism emphasize how each group in society is said to be protected through the politics of separation rather than integration. This policy often goes together with the liberal emphasis on tolerance and the right to self-assertion and recognition of the group's (often perceived as inherited) identity. As such it corresponds with the liberal belief in politically unconstrained modernization and globalization, and reinforces assumptions of universality and individualism by giving the group homogenous universal features based on rights for the group (Bauman, 2001). One of the main problems with the liberal approach as well as with neo-Gandhian analysis is the assumption that there exists such things as shared cultures (or shared ideologies) (van der Veer, 1996), where each culture has clear boundaries.

When Ashis Nandy and other neo-Gandhians oppose the oppressive and homogenizing values and institutions of Enlightenment, modernity, and colonialism, they praise, instead, an authentic traditional Indianness that has survived both the impact of modernity and the ravages of Hindu nationalism. Nandy here uses the language of critical traditionalism as a discourse of emancipation for colonized (and recolonized in the era of globalization) societies. However, as Desai (2002: 78) points out, Nandy's "critical traditionalism" has profound potential for authoritarianism. "His conception of 'tradition,' 'culture,' or 'civilization' (terms he uses interchangeably) is an elite and conservative, and a Brahminical, one." Authentic

tradition involves the search for a "true" (religious) Hindu self that can resist the onslaught of modernity, secularism, and the Westernized middle classes of India (see Nandy, 1980; 1983; 1997).

Nandy's (1997) argument that secularization as a policy can survive only in nonsecular societies is hence part of an underlying critique against the modern state in India where the humane and tolerant alternative of the real (religious) India must stand up to the "anxieties of a post-colonial society" (Nandy, 1989). This choice of intertwining religion and politics is heavily influenced by independence movement leaders like Mohandas (Mahatma) Gandhi who employed a discourse that often resembled the Hindu notion of dharmic obligation. Gandhi's continued reference to "Mother India" and "Indian civilization" intentionally invoked characteristics of Hindu religious worship, and despite the fact that he was the most fervent champion of Hindu-Muslim unity, he often took a communitarian view.[9] Here Nandy resembles Gandhi in his insistence on justifying and defending "the innocence [of the "nonmodern" or "traditional" colonized cultures] which confronted modern Western colonialism" (Nandy, 1983: ix; cf. Desai, 2002: 81).

What much of Nandy's and other neo-Gandhians works show is how culturalism converge with neoliberalism in its emphasis on "Indian tradition" and "Indian civilization" as containing "true" bodies of thought. But his claims to Indian authenticity also appeals to a leftist audience, particularly in the West.[10] Radhika Desai even insists that Nandy's claims to progressiveness is greater in the West than in India, where many on the left remain skeptical. His fame in the West, she argues, has to do with the fact that he has been promoted by a small group of followers in American and British universities who have elevated him to the "status of an iconoclastic prophet of liberation from the South" (Desai, 2002: 83).

This promotion, Desai maintains, has prevented any serious interrogation into his work. In comparison, Nandy has been criticized more in India. Indian feminists have been particularly outraged by Nandy's treatment of the 1987 incident of *Sati* (widow burning).[11] He blamed this event on "market morality"—a pathology that had come about as traditional way of life began to collapse because of outside forces—rather than on the role of Hindu patriarchal tradition (see e.g., Qader and Hasan, 1987; see also Desai, 2002; Nanda, 2004).

Conclusion

Neo-Gandhians, neo-Nehru secularists, and liberal historians have all been confronted by a number of constructivist historians, such as van der Veer, Juergensmeyer, and T. K. Oommen, who problematize the construction of knowledge and meaning and show how these are always constructed in relation to others and to discourses of power. As van der Veer argues (1992) in relation to the struggle over Indian history-writing—this "internal

cultural debate" is not a "static debate isolated from the larger context of historical change." Instead it is clear that Hindu nationalism, and its concern with an authentic Indian (read Hindu) civilization, has been strong throughout history. However, as van der Veer (1992) notes, there is more than one version of it and these versions have had more or less support at different points in time. But in order to construct a "true" history of the Hindu past, such contrasting versions must necessarily be ignored in favor of an essentialized account of Indian historic events. In this neo-Gandhianism inadvertently converge with Hindu nationalism, despite the fact that Nandy himself has been one of the most outspoken critics of the movement.

Neo-Gandhians, in their search for a Hindu self, have been quite successful in reestablishing boundaries around concepts of self, nation, culture, and civilization although their claims have been to give voice to marginalized groups who have been suppressed through Western discourse and Marxist accounts. Neo-Gandhianism may in this sense be significant of a greater problem inherent in interpretative accounts that seek to overthrow the reductionism of modern science by bringing to the forefront the debate about the concerns and thinking of marginalized people and groups. By highlighting the struggles of the marginals there is a danger of simultaneously valorizing the traditions most responsible for justifying traditional inequalities based on gender, caste, and race, among others. Hence the suspicion of scientific modernity runs the risk of uniting the left's criticism of Western hegemonic knowledge production with the fundamentalist wish to preserve and cultivate local knowledge as embedded in traditional cosmologies, religions, and practices.[12] This, I believe, constitutes an important observation to keep in mind as we are witnessing an increased preoccupation with reformulating, reinterpreting, and reinvigorating the concept of civilization.

Notes

1. See also Aijaz Ahmed (1992) who argues that Said only after the publication of *Orientalism* started referring to non-Western writers, and that even when referring to these authors they were still not treated with the hermeneutic engagement and informed reading that Said offered to Western canonical writers.
2. See also Ullock's (1996) discussion of how Chatterjee challenges a number of Western accounts of nationalism.
3. Neo-Gandhianism emerged in the 1970s in India. It built upon the ideals of Mohandas (Mahatma) Gandhi, but put even greater emphasis on indigenism and a hardening of positions against both liberalism and the Left. Ashis Nandy, active at the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS) in New Delhi, has been one its main spokespersons. Wanting to depart with both liberal descriptions of world politics and "alien" Marxism, such as the dependency school, the CSDS found its feet in the World Order Models

Project, an international group of academics from different "cultures" focused on preferred world political systems. The journal *Alternatives* is its main forum (see Desai, 2002).

4. This search for *one* secure identity in the light of global change is what I elsewhere refer to as the *securitization of subjectivity*, (see Kinnvall, 2004 and 2006) where religion and nationalism constitute particularly powerful identity-signifiers as they are better able to provide answers to existential quests for security than are other identity constructions. Parts of their appeal consist of their ability to rely on *Chosen Traumas* (or Chosen Glories, see Volkan, 1997), as these provide powerful links between past, present, and future action.
5. Compare the debate on multiculturalism as it has been played out in various literatures, such as the cosmopolitan/communitarian debate in normative theory. See for example, Archibugi, 2003; Cheah and Robbins, 1998; Cochran, 1999; Kymlicka, 1995; Parekh, 2000; Sandel, 1982; Shachar, 2001.
6. A number of postmodern/poststructural international relations scholars have shown what happens when we "read" history from a different perspective. Ashley's (1988) use of Derrida's technique of "double reading" to discuss the "anarchy problematique" and Bartelson's (1999) work on the genealogy of sovereignty (proceeding from Foucault) are two good examples of this in international relations theory.
7. Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) is a nongovernmental organization that was established in 1964 to spread "Hindu ethical values" and to establish links with Hindus in other countries. VHP attained national notoriety in the early 1980s when it organized an anti-Muslim campaign following the conversion of over 1000 Dalits, or former untouchables to Islam.
8. Although less so among the Delhi Historians' Groups, represented by a number of scholars based at the Jawaharlal Nehru University, such as Mridula Mukherjee, Aditya Muhkherjee, Romila Thapar, Bipan Chandra, and others.
9. See Kolodner, 1995 and Panikkar, 1997. Kolodner further argues that Gandhi attempted to negotiate a compromise between secular and religious forces by applying Hindu ethical norms of satyagraha (the force of truth) and ahimsa (nonviolence) to the nationalist movement.
10. Meera Nanda (2004, 2005) takes this critique one step further by attacking postmodern, poststructuralist, and postcolonial scholars for running the risk of playing into the hands of fundamentalist movements everywhere. Hence she suggests that postmodernist and postcolonial intellectuals have been irresponsible in picking and choosing those aspects of the non-Western world that help them fight their own battles against modern science, without adequate awareness of the role local knowledge plays in sustaining traditional power structures in non-Western societies. I share many of Nanda's concerns although I remain skeptical of her tendency to group together diverse strands of thoughts, scholars, and activists working in a postpositivist tradition.
11. Refers to a public and ritualized murder of a young widow, Roop Kanwar, in Deorala, Rajasthan. Members of her family wanted to revive a high caste practice. Rather than condemning the perpetrators themselves, Nandy launched criticism against those condemning the perpetrators (Desai, 2002).

12. This does not imply an inadvertent celebration of modernity and the project of Enlightenment or that the historical route of Western science is the only route to take, ruling out alternative pathways. I am deeply sympathetic to interpretative attempts to interrogate historically established structures of power—indeed I find many of these both powerful and convincing. However, I remain skeptical to any standpoint epistemologies that privilege all understandings of marginals as truer, better, or more "authentic."