



Research Paper

## Post-Modernist Gandhi: A Study of Gandhism and Gandhigiri and People's Perceptions

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### ABSTRACT

There are many leaders who have been much influential in Indian politics throughout history. Gandhi, due to his dedication to human principles and a way of life, would unquestionably rank at the top of any list of leaders. Gandhi's philosophy has had an impact on people from all walks of life even 60 years after his departure. This research aims to comprehend the beliefs and philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi as well as the ways in which his speeches affected the public. Gandhi's worth and ideas have never been in doubt, but whether or not they are applicable now has always been up for debate. The popularity of a 2006 Bollywood film which is centred on a man named "Munnabhai" who adopts "Gandhism" and practices his values to reconcile, negotiate, and win over hearts, gave this phenomena a new name: Gandhigiri. This is the first case of its kind, and it contains a wealth of information for the masses to grasp and comprehend the lessons Gandhi and his philosophy teach.

**Keywords:** Gandhism, Gandhigiri, Swaraj, Modernization, Post-Modern Gandhi, Gandhigiri and Popular Discourse, Gandhismvs Gandhigiri, Means and Ends,

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### I. Introduction

#### Gandhi and His Thoughts

Gandhi's key ideals were Truth, Non-Violence, and Satyagraha. Let's take a quick look at what Gandhi meant by these three notions.

#### Truth, Non Violence, Satyagraha and Swaraj

Gandhi referred to the concepts of truth (Satya) and nonviolence (Ahimsa) as positivistic and absolutist, respectively. In his memoirs, he equates ultimate truth with factual and moral truth. But in the practise of ahimsa, it is assumed that a mystical force of non-violence is felt as ultimate truth and has the power to persuade the adversary to change their perspective. In other words, he conducts the mystical power of saving both oneself and others via his practise of truth. This is a traditional Vaishnava ritual where the devotee is saved by surrendering oneself through the right behaviour. Gandhi argued that positivist and absolutist notions, respectively, are truth and nonviolence. In his memoirs, he equates ultimate truth with factual and moral truth. However, in the practice of ahimsa, a mystical energy of nonviolence is thought to be experienced as ultimate truth, capable of causing the opponent's heart to change. In other words, via his practise of truth or transparent good action, he gains the mystical power of self- and other-salvation. This is a mediaeval Vaishnava method in which the devotee is "saved" by surrender through correct conduct. However, as a political theory, this strategy did not always result in the opponent's heart changing. As a result, we see Gandhi's unsatisfactory interactions with many Hindus, as well as Muslims, Christians, the British, and communists.<sup>1</sup> Mahatma Gandhi was a proponent of the Ahimsa (nonviolence) cult. He, too, believed in the ultimate victory of nonviolence over violence, as did the Buddha, Christ, and Chaitanya. Force or violence, he believes, is a form of insanity that cannot be sustained. 'As a result, force or violence will eventually yield to nonviolence.' He declared war not only on British imperialism, but on all forces of iniquity, deception, and injustice across the world. Gandhi's nonviolence philosophy is based on the concept of Satya, or Truth. According to Gandhi, truth is multifaceted and cannot be grasped in its entirety by a single individual. He thought that everyone carries fragments of the

Truth, but that in order to pursue the bigger Truth, everyone needs the pieces of other people's truths. As a result, he believes that conversation with opponents is essential for understanding motivations.

Gandhi contends that it is perhaps evident from the foregoing that it is not possible to seek and attain Truth without ahimsa. He believed that Ahimsa and Truth are so inextricably linked that it's nearly difficult to separate them. They resemble the two sides of a coin, or a smooth unstamped metallic disc, respectively. Nonetheless, ahimsa is a means to an end; truth is the goal. Ahimsa is our greatest duty since the means to be means must always be within our reach."<sup>2</sup>

Satyagraha, which loosely translates as "insistence on truth" (Satya "truth"; Agraaha "insistence") or "holding on to truth" or "truth power," is a philosophy and practise that falls under the umbrella of nonviolent resistance or civil resistance. Satyagraha is a Sanskrit word that combines the words satya (meaning "truth") and agraaha (meaning "polite persistence" or "holding firmly to"). Satya comes from the word "sat," which means "to be." Truth is the only thing that exists in reality. Truth, in the sense of satyagraha, thus encompasses a) truth in speech as opposed to deception, b) what is real as opposed to nonexistent (asat), and c) good as opposed to wicked or bad. This was crucial to Gandhiji's knowledge of nonviolence and faith in it. Satya, or truth, is the foundation of the universe. Asatya, which means lie, also means nonexistence, and satya, which means truth, also means what is. It is impossible for falsity to win if it does not exist in the first place. And truth is something that can never be taken away. In short, this is the known as the doctrine of satyagraha."<sup>3</sup>

The notion of satyagraha, according to Gandhi, sees means and ends as inextricably linked. The methods employed to achieve a goal are encased in and related to that goal. As a result, attempting to seek justice using unjust means or attempting to obtain peace through violence is incompatible. And therefore, Gandhi put emphasis on Means and not Ends, and contends that 'means are everything and important than ends.'<sup>4</sup>

It's worth noting that ahimsa and satyagraha are inextricably linked. Satyagraha is a term that is sometimes used to refer to the entire principle of nonviolence, in which case it is virtually the same as ahimsa, and other times it is used in a "marked" sense to refer to mostly obstructive direct action for instance, in the form of civil disobedience. Civil disobedience is the refusal to obey certain laws or governmental demands in order to influence legislation or government policy using nonviolent techniques such as boycotting, picketing, and tax avoidance. Means are vital in civil disobedience, and Gandhi concentrates on pious means to achieve his goals. If the means are not righteous, the ends will be unproductive and short-lived.<sup>5</sup>

Anthony J. Parel summarizes his concept of Swaraj and says that the concept of Swaraj has several different implications for Gandhi. He uses it to refer to national independence on occasion, and he also uses it to refer to an individual's spiritual freedom on other instances. He uses it as synonym to liberty, autonomy, political freedom of individual, nation's economic freedom, individual's freedom from poverty, self-realization, self-governing, freedom from alien authority and so on. Anthony J. Parel divides these multiple meanings into four categories for analysis: national independence, individual political freedom, individual economic freedom, and individual spiritual freedom or self-rule.<sup>6</sup>

### **Gandhi as Post-Modern Thinker and his Idea of Truth**

Many scholars have questioned Gandhi as a postmodernist thinker because of his criticism of modernism. Post-Modernism is the rejection of what Modernism has proposed<sup>7</sup> and therefore in this term Gandhi can be termed as postmodernist. Lloyd I. Rudolph in his 'Post Modern Gandhi,' elaborated on this aspect and described Gandhian ideas as postmodernist. He contested Gandhi's earlier label as a "traditionalist," by arguing that Gandhi used to oppose both upper-caste Hindu rituals and the high modernism of the Indian National Congress led by Nehru.<sup>8</sup> Precisely, the perspective of Gandhi is more relevant in the postmodern era. Thus, a detailed discussion of 'postmodernist Gandhi' can explain why certain ideas of Gandhi have been revived in the contemporary period via popular mass media (like TV, movies etc) as well as new media. Gandhi was a harsh critic of western civilization (a synonym for modern civilization) and stated that those who support modern civilization are intoxicated by it.<sup>9</sup> He compared the delusional situation of modern civilization to a sleeping man who is dreaming. A dreamer believes what he sees in his dreams, but it is not reality. He argued that a man believes in his dream while he is dreaming; he is undeceived only when he is awakened from his sleep. A man toiling under the curse of civilization is like the same man who is dreaming. He further says that what we usually read are the works of defenders of modern civilization, which undoubtedly has some very brilliant and even some very good men among its adherents. We are hypnotized by their writings. As a result, we are drawn into the vortex of modern civilization one by one.<sup>10</sup> This critique of modern civilization is more relevant today, in the age of postmodernism. He even stated that colonization of India is merely a result of modern civilisation. He believed that India was under British rule not because of British strength, but because India allowed them to rule. He believed that their presence in India was made possible by the adoption of English civilization.<sup>11</sup>

According to Gandhi, the entire situation is an obvious result of the process of modern civilization. India is being ground down, not under the British heel, but under the heel of modern civilization.<sup>12</sup> Thus Gandhi

observed that Civilization is such a disease, and we must be very wary,<sup>13</sup> he was referring to his time and era, i.e. the modern era or modernism. Gandhi was confident in his principle and contends that blindly following modernism would be a mistake for Indians. While discussing his vision of India, Gandhi kept the specific context of India in mind. He believed that India would have to chart its own course. It will not be able to achieve its goal by imitating or following England or any other country in the world and cautioned to avoid copying England to save herself.<sup>14</sup> However, he asserted that modern civilization, not the English, was to blame for the erasure of Indian culture.<sup>15</sup>

The printing press played a significant role in the Renaissance and the subsequent era of modernism and therefore the criticism of Gandhi for the press is significant. He used the context of the press to criticize the British Parliamentary system. He emphasized the negative influence of the press on it. He believed that the press was dishonest because it was biased, one sided and only served the interests of certain groups. The British take their cues from their newspapers, which are frequently deceptive.<sup>16</sup> Interestingly, he also expressed his dissatisfaction with the media's frequent shifts in viewpoint. He worried about this trend and said that views swing like the pendulum of a clock and are never steadfast.<sup>17</sup> His concept of 'contextual truth' is at odds here. As many intellectuals<sup>18</sup> have pointed out, his criticism of modernism did not stem from the contemporary concept of 'postmodernism,' but rather from traditionalism. Nonetheless, he was quite confident about the specific Indian context' when implementing any British-based idea. However, it is difficult to tell whether his belief in 'context' stemmed from his 'arrogance' of 'superior Indian civilization,' his skepticism of modernism, or both. Gandhi also criticized industrial machinery. He was not a fan of the modernists' overzealous enthusiasm for industrialization. The post-independence Nehruvian era's primary goal and ambition became industrialization. Following Nehru, other leaders followed in his footsteps in terms of industrialization of the country. Gandhi's anti-machinery stance was not entirely based on his traditionalist viewpoint. He criticized the over-enthusiasm of industrialization by observing the plight of workers in industrial societies. Previously, men could only work in the open air as much as they wanted, he explained. Thousands of workers now congregate for the purpose of performing maintenance work in factories or mines. Their plight is even worse than that of beasts.<sup>19</sup>

Gandhi warned that "If the machinery craze spreads in our country, it will become an unhappy land."<sup>20</sup> In his writing, he expressed his views on industrialization without relying on the arguments of any particular ideology or school of thought. His criticism, however, was influenced by some of his traditionalist beliefs. 'Machine is the chief symbol of modern civilization; it represents a great sin,' he said. Precisely, he observed the glorified industrialized European society from the perspective of the society's poorest working classes and attempted to articulate their experience and 'their truth' about the situation. However, post-independence India completely ignored his ideas about industrialization and machines. In present scenario, the current government is planning to build the smart city and have started Swaccha Bharat campaign. Gandhi is portrayed as the ambassador of the Swaccha Bharat campaign.

The dream of smart city does not reflect Gandhi's vision of India. Gandhi considered the modern city to be an outcome of the modern era. He saw it as a byproduct of modernism. He warned that the big cities were a useless encumbrance, and people would not be happy there, with gangs of thieves and robbers, prostitution and vice flourishing, and poor men being robbed by rich men.<sup>21</sup>

Lloyd I. Rudolph described Gandhi's rejection of objective knowledge and master narratives as a foreshadowing of postmodernism.<sup>22</sup> Gandhi identified himself as a karma yogi, believing that humans are only capable of knowing partial and contingent truth.<sup>23</sup> He believed in context and pluralism as a result of his perception of truth. In his writings, he expresses his views on pluralism. Regarding Dadabhai and Gokhale's opposing views on many issues, he stated, 'It is a bad habit to say that another man's thoughts are bad and ours alone are good, and that those holding opposing views are enemies of the country.'<sup>24</sup> However, the origins of his concept of idea pluralism can be found primarily in religious texts. He adhered to *anekantavada*, commonly referred to as "the concept of many facets or many pointedness," which is a branch of Jain philosophy.<sup>25</sup>

As a result, this philosophy sees the 'ultimate truth' as a multidimensional phenomenon. Gandhi's perspective on ultimate truth is highly conflicting. He believed in the existence of an ultimate truth as well as numerous forms of truth. To describe Gandhi as a postmodernist thinker is a clear case of misunderstanding of his thought, to quote Ajit Kumar Jha, 'the idea of ethical relativism is one of postmodernism's foundational beliefs. Gandhi believed in ultimate truth, having spent his entire life experimenting with it.'<sup>26</sup> Rudolph summarized that Gandhi's notion of truth was based on the idea which perceives truth to be God or equal to God. Therefore, Gandhi trusted that knowing 'absolute truth in the form of objective truths and universal laws' is something which envies the God.<sup>27</sup> Thus, Gandhi termed the truth diamond with many facets, each of which reveals a portion of the truth which cannot be seen in its entirety.<sup>28</sup> Gandhi summarized truth which has multiple meanings and forms.<sup>29</sup> Gandhi was tolerant and had respect for diverse viewpoints on every issue or ideas because of his understanding of truth. He was a believer and a religious individual and at the same time had tolerance for other religions and sects. The critiques of Gandhian philosophy including some of his supporters were confused on his notion of Truth and God. Therefore, several thinkers criticized his position as hypocritical.

For example V.S Naipaul says that we cannot philosophically and intellectually cannot relate or correlate ourselves with Gandhian Philosophy because as Naipaul suggests that Gandhi was an indigent man, inconsistency in ideas and he was opportunistic.<sup>30</sup> On the other hand Bhikhu Parekh says that Gandhi's 'Critique of modernity' illustrates how modern culture ignored the soul which favored the body and misunderstood the nature and limits of reason and logic, and had no understanding for the individual swabhava (nature), or psychological and moral composition of a person. Because modern society was driven exclusively by profit, it industrialized manufacturing without regard for wider moral, cultural, or other ramifications. Without someone in command, modern economic life took on an unstoppable pace of its own. It turned people to helpless and passive bystanders, and it amounted to a new kind of enslavement.<sup>31</sup> However, we can say that the modern period is more accepting of his beliefs and ideas. In today's postmodern period, his concept of various faces of truth is more important and relevant.

### **Why Gandhi and His Thoughts are Important?**

During pre-independence period, before arrival of Gandhi, there existed two types of anti-British leaders. One being the extremists, who were influenced by the ideas of LalaLajpatRai, BalGangadharTilak and Bipin Chandra Pal, the second were revolutionaries who wanted to achieve independence through violence. Gandhi came to India in 1915 and in 1917, he started a movement named the Champaran Satyagraha. Through this Gandhi entirely changed the technique of freedom movement. And the Britishers were clueless on how to deal with Gandhi and his movement. Because earlier the Britishers were following Lord Macaulay's policies.<sup>32</sup> For the extremists and other revolutionaries, they used to follow the policy of constitutional bargaining and for militant revolutionaries, they used the extra constitutional powers, like encounters, sending them in jail, unfair trials etc.<sup>33</sup> The Britishers were not facing any big challenge but Gandhian Satyagraha and non-violence came as a threat for them and the Britishers started facing the problem on how to deal with Satyagraha? Primarily Gandhi's Satyagraha was not in favor of constitutional bargaining and neither had it supported the violence. This is the importance of Gandhi in freedom struggle.<sup>34</sup>

The same notion of Satyagraha is seen in various movies. The first movie on Gandhi was released in the year 1963 titled 'Nine Hours to Rama'. But this movie focused more on Nathu Ram Godse's last nine hours before assassinating Gandhi than life, ideas and movements of Gandhi. The year 1982 saw first of its kind movie by Richard Attenborough's titled 'Gandhi', this Hollywood movie was a big hit and was dubbed in various languages including Hindi. This year marked a change in Hindi cinema as well and various Indian directors and producers started making movies on Gandhi as leading character or Gandhi as a character of significant value. Some prominent movies are *Sardar* (1993) directed by Ketan Mehta, ShyamBenegal's *The Making of the Mahatma* in 1996, Jamil Dehlavi's *Jinnah* in the year 1998, Tirolok Malik directed *Dr. BabasahebAmbedkar* in 2000, *Netaji: Subhash Chandra Bose: The Forgotten Hero* in 2004 directed by ShyamBenegal. These movies were made within the criteria of documentary films which had limited or no commercial features. On the other hand, Indian cinema had movies like *Hey Ram* released in 2000, *The Legend of Bhagat Singh* (2002), *Mane Gandhi KoNahin Mara* (2005), *LageRahoMunnaBhai* (2006), *Gandhi, My Father* (2007), *Papilio Buddha* (2014) are some of the movies which got commercial treatments and appealed the masses in different ways.

The film *LageRahoMunna Bhai* (hereafter LRMB) does not look to the past for inheritance, heritage or tragedy. The film isn't even aiming for a utopian future. The film focuses on a specific aspect of a historical figure in the context of a specific time and place. Surprisingly, the film's new narrative was well received by the general public. When a film or any popular art form can instill the vibe and experience of the present, it receives widespread acclaim from the general public. But, before we get into the movie, we should analyze Gandhian philosophy of truth and Gandhi as a post-modern thinker in the context of today's world.

### **Gandhism and Gandhigiri: Cinema and Popular Culture**

In 2004, Raj Kumar Hirani made his directorial debut with Sanjay Dutt as Munna Bhai, real name, Murali Prasad Sharma, a new film hero who is a gangster. *Munna Bhai MBBS*, the first movie of the *Munna Bhai* series, portrayed the main protagonist Munna who cures the patients with love and compassion after an unsuccessful attempt to do an MBBS. *Munna* appealed to a wide range of audiences as well as critiques. The success of the first movie encouraged the producers and director to launch a sequel.

LRMB is a fairy tale about a lovable local gangster who is motivated by love and aspires to be a history professor and a Gandhian thinker. Unlike other films based on Gandhi and his thoughts, LRMB employs a novel narrative technique to promote Gandhism through a patriotic humorous genre. The film perfectly reconstitutes history in contemporary age of globalization, industrialization, rapid urbanization and ignorance of downtrodden, helpless people. The movie's evolving ideas make it flawlessly compatible with present popular cultural space. Without any jingoism of a patriotic picture or a documentary style storytelling method the movie gave a cinematic tribute to Gandhi, LRMB put Gandhian principles at the forefront and managed to avoid the squabbles that erupted between historians of various schools of thought.<sup>35</sup>

The movie's idea of Gandhigiri gained popularity almost immediately after its debut in 2006, and this chapter attempts to comprehend and summarize Gandhigiri in the current situation. However, the chapter does not adequately address Gandhigiri in light of the present concept of postmodernism as articulated by Lloyd I. Rudolph, discussed above. Thus the chapter is an attempt to evaluate and comprehend the present phenomenon in light of main characteristics of contemporary era where many contemporary intellectuals have studied, admired, and criticized Gandhi and his thought.

For example, AsisNandy claims that following Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi's death, "four Gandhis" survived. The first is the statist Gandhi, the second is Gandhians who is quite loveable and grandfatherly' but 'boring', the third is the 'Gandhi of the ragamuffins, eccentrics, and unpredictable' who is more hostile to Coca-Cola than Scotch whisky and considers local versions of Coca-Cola more dangerous than imported ones and the fourth is the mythic Gandhi that no one really takes seriously.<sup>36</sup> When considering the film LRMB and its 'Gandhigiri,' AsisNandy's observation about Gandhi is significant.

The statist version of Gandhi is prominent throughout the film, but the 'boring' version of Gandhi is mentioned and the mythological form of Gandhi may be seen in few scenes. The 'Gandhi of Ragamuffins', on the other hand, does not appear in the film. So, in essence, the Gandhi of the LRMB is a populist Gandhi. Munna's Gandhi may not be a distant and historical figure, but rather someone with whom the modern masses can identify.<sup>37</sup> The film does not discuss Gandhi's socio-economic concepts or the underlying values of Gandhian ideology. It makes no mention of Gandhi's fundamental and unique views, such as the village economy, critique of contemporary technology, the concept of 'Ram Rajya,' or any other part of Gandhian socio-economic principles that are extensively studied and propagated by Gandhi himself, in his various speeches and works. On the contrary the movies portrays few statements which has nothing to do with Gandhian philosophy and can be termed as anti-Gandhian statements.

Munna Bhai, the main character of the film, declares in a dramatic sequence that he "thought he would make the country great like the imported one," however, "we ruined everything." Gandhi's vision of India is completely at odds with this claim. In his book 'Hind Swaraj' Gandhi outlined his vision for India, criticizing the importation of values, ideas, and western technology. He chastised the prevalent view of the country's material growth based on the standards of Western industrialized nations at the time. We want English rule without the Englishman, he said. You want the tiger's nature but not the tiger itself; in other words, you want India to be English. And when it becomes English, it will be known as Englistan rather than Hindustan. This isn't the Swaraj I want.<sup>38</sup>

Munna Bhai, in another scene, says to the elders of 'Second Innings Home' that Gandhi liberated the country from foreigners, but the people of the country had forgotten his ideals. This is a political remark made in the film, and it's worth noting that it happens before Munna's hallucination and before he reads the literature on Gandhi. The comment alludes to Gandhi's socio-economic ideas, but it's a "total no-no" in today's consumer economy-driven India. 48 One member of the 'Second Innings Home' responds to Munna Bhai's speech by saying that the country's position is not so awful and that India is developing. Munna becomes angrier as a result of this remark, and loudly says, "To hell with this development." There are pipelines, but no water; there are bulbs, but no power; there are more potholes on the road than automobiles; you can't stroll down the sidewalk because there are stores nearby; and there are trains, but your name is on a waiting list; if your ticket is verified, the train will be cancelled.<sup>39</sup>

This comment has nothing to do with Gandhi's vision or ideas. This assertion is simply a popular middle-class narrative concerning the country's underdevelopment. These stories of the daily struggles of regular people resurfaced during Anna Hazare's anti-corruption movement in 2011. The country's corruption was portrayed as the sole cause of the country's underdevelopment in that movement. Another component of the film is the protagonist's language. The film does not use 'refined and popular' vocabulary when discussing Gandhi. Gandhi was a man who strove to understand the mood of the common people by living among them. Language is a crucial factor to comprehend and communicate with a group of people. A specific language conveys a specific perspective. Gandhi, on the other hand, became an entity that only existed in the polished and sophisticated languages of many people. Gandhi has just recently become a "model" for modern moral activism.<sup>40</sup> After Gandhi's death, Gandhi's anti-imperialism, anti-racism, and nonviolence positions asserted themselves as alternative politics. Regardless of ideologies, political affiliation, or belief, the moral superiority of these popular beliefs has received widespread acceptance around the world. A puritan moralistic entity, on the other hand, is more exclusive. In that sense, his entity grew more exclusive. However, in the film LRMB, Gandhism is taught by Munna, in 'Taporí' language which is a Mumbai slum dialect.<sup>41</sup>

"In a spectacular manoeuvre of communication talent, the street-smart Mumbai tapori vocabulary, studded with slangs, is used to build quick communication with the audience, especially among GenNext,"<sup>42</sup> "Abhijat Joshi, the writer of the script, outlined the rationale behind the decision and said that they wanted to highlight Gandhi's other side, which is intelligent, witty, lighthearted, and imaginative."<sup>43</sup> The language aided them in accomplishing this goal. Gandhi was understood and narrated in the film by a language spoken by

'goons' and 'dwellers of the slum' locality of the city. The vocabulary of a few 'outcasts' defined and described Gandhism, and the people accepted and appreciated it. Only the current way of thinking is capable of appropriating this phenomenon. The pluralistic and fractured viewpoints that characterize today's worldview are emphasized. This worldview is based on the postmodernist idea that singular vision of reality can be considered as the truth because all viewpoints are subjective.<sup>44</sup> The film portrays Gandhism from the perspective of the comprehension of a local goon which was not mortifying, and this aspect of the film was well received by the general public. Post-Modernism is an opportunity for the world to be re-encharmed, as the film LRMB clearly states.<sup>45</sup> Gandhigiri is a long-term endeavor to re-engineer some ideas and principles that have been regarded outmoded. The film clearly states that if no one cares about Gandhi's beliefs and ideas, it is nothing more than an archive or a monument. The film claims that the history remains inaccessible unless modified to match present notions.<sup>46</sup> In the perspective of Gandhian ideology, "history is just knowledge to be skillfully employed as and when needed," rather than 'history as ideology.'<sup>47</sup> While the security guard of Lucky Singh smacks Munna Bhai in a hilarious scene from the LRMB, he provides another cheek for slapping, as Gandhi said, "If someone slaps you on one side of your face, turn the other to him." When the guard hits him again, Munna smacks him in the face and claims Gandhi say nothing what to do if someone slaps second time. Munna tells Circuit to aim a gun at the astrologer in another scene to demonstrate that astrology is nothing more than a superstition. As a result, in the film, the protagonist Munna Bhai employs a limited set of Gandhian concepts as a strategy for dealing with or confronting specific problems. The Gandhi of LRMB was accurately defined as a pragmatic art of living'.<sup>48</sup> From faraway myth, he is now part of modern folklore, re-engineered in a new capacity as agony aunt and management consultant.<sup>49</sup> According to the Frankfurt School's definition of mass media is a cultural industry, LRMB is unmistakably a product of mass culture.<sup>50</sup> However, the fact that 'Gandhigiri' has a cult following after the film demonstrates its 'pop culture' (or popular culture) appeal.<sup>51</sup> 'Pop culture' is not limited to the dimension of mass production and consumption of entertainment products. Popular culture is, in this sense, a more 'personal' process. Popular culture can spread not only through the media, but also through other types of human connection. The concept of 'Gandhigiri' was coined by the film, although its appeal was not limited to the film alone. Many people became aware of 'Gandhigiri' or engaged in 'Gandhigiri-inspired movements' without ever seeing the film. In 2006, for example, 2,000 farmers in India's Vidarbha region protested with flowers to persuade a bank to disperse loans under the influence of Gandhigiri.<sup>52</sup> Medical students from the King George Medical College undertook a 'ShramDaan,' or voluntary activity, in the same year, inspired by the film, and planted many tree saplings.<sup>53</sup> People in Lucknow protested a liquor trader by presenting him with flowers, just like Munna Bhai.<sup>54</sup> The demonstrators in an American Customs and Immigration Services office were influenced by 'Gandhigiri' in 2007.<sup>55</sup> The film LRMB successfully branded Gandhian ideology as 'Gandhigiri,' and as a result, the brand 'Gandhigiri' gained rapid recognition in popular culture. The brand Gandhigiri is the message in post-liberalization India.<sup>56</sup> However, this type of 'Gandhigiri' only lasted a short time before vanishing from the public sphere's memory. So, "post-Modernism is pop-culture," as the adage goes, "defined by the superficiality of society and the person being inauthentic and in a perpetual state of change, and the image/representation has assumed dominance over the physical."<sup>57</sup>

## II. Conclusion

It would be inaccurate to suggest that the creator of the LRMB intended for 'Gandhigiri' to be a planned and conscious postmodernist attempt; nonetheless, certain parts of postmodernism can eloquently explain the phenomenon of 'Gandhigiri.' These factors explain why Gandhism was depicted in LRMB as 'Gandhigiri,' and why 'Gandhigiri' gained rapid popularity across the country. The effort put forward by LRMB to use a comedic treatment for an apparently serious issue like Gandhism was greatly appreciated. This depiction of Gandhi appealed to his contemporaries. Gandhi was a traditionalist who opposed modernism. As a critic of modernism, many of his views are appealing to post-modernists today. India, on the other hand, is not a postmodern society. However, many characteristics and effects of modernism are viewed with skepticism and suspicion by the general public. The LRMB's depiction of 'Gandhigiri' offered a desired remedy to the frustrations produced by the Indian version of modernism. Rather than delving deeper into Gandhi's theory, the film 'reengineered' several Gandhian notions to utilize as a strategy to combat some of the issues that ordinary people confront in their daily lives. The movie portrayed Gandhi as an iconic critic and problem solver for the public's dissatisfaction with modernism. Gandhi, not Gandhism or Gandhian philosophy, became the message through 'Gandhigiri.' The film demonstrates that Gandhi's context is still relevant and powerful enough to inspire both optimism and contempt. The entire phenomenon is a denial of Gandhi's political and societal oblivion, which is widely held.

At a time when India is undergoing tremendous societal upheaval, it's not surprising that Gandhi may be explored not just in the realm of text literacy but also in the realm of visual narrative. Even in the new cultural landscape, a figure like Gandhi is an inspiring and motivational figure. Gandhi has emerged as a forceful voice in the filmic universe, answering concerns that Indians are confronted with on a daily basis.

Filmmakers have bravely reconstructed the Gandhian ethos to cater to the audience set in a dynamic ethico-cultural environment as a tool for reforming mankind in the current age of globalization and digitization. The Gandhi who has been brought back in visual narrative by finding fresh meaning for the message is not a political Gandhi, but a Gandhi who acts as an inner conscience and moral guide. The public display of Gandhism's transition into Gandhigiri has resulted in the emergence of a Gandhi-adherent cross-section of society. As a result, this study has looked into the possibilities of portraying the remarkable leader Gandhi, as well as the development and reconstruction of his principles, in order to reach out to the masses using new nomenclature in visual narration.

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<sup>1</sup>See, Erikson, Erik H.(1969) *Gandhi's Truth: On the Origins of Militant Non-Violence* (New York: W.W Norton).

<sup>2</sup> T. Balasubramanian and V. Venkatraman (2021), "Mahatma Gandhi's Thought on Satyagraha: The Technique of Non-Violent Protest in India," *Bulletin Monumental*. Vol. 22. Issue. 8. p. 320. Accessed Via: <http://bulletinmonumental.com/gallery/31-aug2021.pdf>. Dated. 22/8/2021.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Anthony J. Parel (2000), "Introduction," in Anthony J. Parel (Eds) *Gandhi, Freedom and Self Rule* (Lanham Md: Lexington Books).

<sup>7</sup> D.F. Nel and J.H. Kroeze, (2008), "Information Technology as an Agent of Post-Modernism", *CogPrints*. (June. 2). Accessed Via: [http://cogprints.org/6207/1/Nel\\_and\\_Kroeze\\_-\\_IT\\_as\\_an\\_agent\\_of\\_post-modernism\\_080909.pdf](http://cogprints.org/6207/1/Nel_and_Kroeze_-_IT_as_an_agent_of_post-modernism_080909.pdf). p. 5.

<sup>8</sup>Lloyd I. Rudolph (2006), "Postmodern Gandhi", in Lloyd I. Rudolph and Susanne Hoeber Rudolph (eds.), *Postmodern Gandhi and Other Essays*, (New Delhi: Oxford University Press). p. 3.

<sup>9</sup>M.K. Gandhi (1938) *Hind Swaraj or Indian Home Rule* (Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House). p. 31.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid. p. 31.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid. p. 62.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid. p. 38.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid. p. 41.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid. p. 29.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid. p. 30.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid. p. 29.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Many intellectuals regarded Gandhi as a conservative or traditional thinker rather than a postmodernist, emphasizing Gandhi's orthodox outlook. Prof. N.A. Nikam, for example, classified him as a "Discoverer of Religion," Prof. D.D. Ranade as a "auto-mystic," and Dr. R.R. Diwakar as a "spiritual seeker."

<sup>19</sup> M.K Gandhi (1938). *Opp. Cite*. p. 32.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid. 88.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid. 57.

<sup>22</sup>Lloyd I. Rudolph (2006). *Opp. Cite*. p. 4.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid. p. 5.

<sup>24</sup> M.K Gandhi (1938). *Opp. Cite*. p. 19.

<sup>25</sup> John E. Cort (2000), "Intellectual Ahimsa Revisited: Jain Tolerance and Intolerance of Others", *Philosophy East and West*, (July). 50(3). p. 324.

<sup>26</sup> Lloyd I. Rudolph (2006), *Opp, Cite*, p. 6.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup>Stephen Hay (1978), "Jaina Goals and Disciplines in Gandhi's Pursuit of Swaraj," in Peter Robb and David Taylor (eds.) *Rule, Protest, Identity, Aspects of Modern South Asia*, (London: Curzon Press/Humanities Press). pp. 120 -131.

<sup>29</sup>Lloyd I. Rudolph (2006). p. 6.

<sup>30</sup>V.S. Naipaul (2007). *A Writer's People: Ways of Looking and Feeling* (New Delhi: Picador). p. 170.

<sup>31</sup> Parekh, Bhikhu (1995), "Gandhi Legacy," *Annual Lecture Delivered at SOAS, University of London* (October. 6). Accessed Via: <https://www.gandhiashramsevagram.org/gandhi-articles/gandhi-legacy.php>. Dated. 22/8/2021.

<sup>32</sup> "Chapter 6-1843-38" *Macaulay's Indexed Page*. Accessed Via: [http://www.columbia.edu/itc/mealac/pritchett/00generallinks/macaulay/1834\\_1838\\_biog.html](http://www.columbia.edu/itc/mealac/pritchett/00generallinks/macaulay/1834_1838_biog.html). Dated. 22/4/2021.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Pandey, Anurag (2021), "Why Socio-Religious Reform Movement in India," Paper presented in a National Seminar, organized by *Society of Social Sciences* (June. 20). Accessed Via: <https://www.societyofsocialsciences.com/programs>. Dated. 9/7/2021.

<sup>35</sup>Arunabha Ghosh and TapanBabu (2006), "LageRahoMunna Bhai: Unravelling Brand Gandhigiri", *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 41. Issue No. 51. (December. 23). p. 5225.

<sup>36</sup>AsisNandy (2020), "Gandhi after Gandhi: Four and Counting," *The Beacon* (March: 10). Accessed Via: <https://www.thebeacon.in/2020/03/10/gandhis-after-gandhi-four-and-counting/>. Dated. 12/9/2021.

<sup>37</sup>Arunabha Ghosh and TapanBabu (2006). *Opp. Cite*. p. 5225.

<sup>38</sup> M.K Gandhi (1938). p. 25.

<sup>39</sup>Arunabha Ghosh and TapanBabu (2006). *Opp. Cite*. p. 5227.

<sup>40</sup> David Hardiman (2003) *Gandhi in His Time and Ours* (New Delhi: Pauls Press). p. 297.

<sup>41</sup>Arunabha Ghosh and TapanBabu (2006). *Opp. Cite*. p. 5226.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> D.F. Nel and J.H. Kroeze, (2008). Opp. Cite.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Shiv Visvanathan (2006), "Brand Mahatma," *The Times of India*, New Delhi.(September. 23). Accessed Via: <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/edit-page/brand-mahatma/articleshow/2018970.cms>. Dated. 22/9/2022.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> According to Frankfurt School, The 'contents' of a 'cultural industry,' such as radio, cinema, television, or the press, are referred to as mass culture.

<sup>51</sup> Pop culture differs from mass culture. The 'production aspect' is recognized in mass culture, but the 'consumption aspect' is considered in 'pop culture' or 'popular culture.'

<sup>52</sup> Zubair Ahmed (2006), "Gandhi-Style Protest by Farmers." *BBC News* (October. 12). Accessed Via: [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south\\_asia/6044476.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/6044476.stm). Dated. 24/9/2021.

<sup>53</sup> "Let us Do Gandhigiri," *SRIJAN*. Accessed Via: <http://srimca.edu.in/SRIJAN/Srijanoct2006/GeneralArticles/LetusdoGandhigiri.htm>. Dated. 24/9/2021.

<sup>54</sup> Sharat Pradhan (2006), "Lucknow Citizens Go Gandhian on Liquor Merchant," *rediff.com*. (September. 21). Accessed Via: <https://www.rediff.com/news/2006/sep/21sharat.htm>. Dated. 25/9/2021.

<sup>55</sup> News18 (2007), "Gandhigiri Works: Green Card Seekers make US Change Heart," (July.18). Accessed Via: <https://www.news18.com/news/india/gandhigiri-works-green-card-seekers-make-us-change-heart-269337.html>. Dated. 25/9/2021. See also, ChidanandRajghatta (2007), "Gandhigiri Works: US to Give more Green Cards," (July. 18). Accessed Via: <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/us/gandhigiri-works-us-to-give-more-green-cards/articleshow/2215001.cms>. Dated. 25/9/2021.

<sup>56</sup> Arunabha Ghosh and TapanBabu (2006). Opp. Cite. p. 5227.

<sup>57</sup> D.F. Nel and J.H. Kroeze, (2008). Opp. Cite.