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THE EU AND INDIA IN THE POLARIZED WORLD

Abstract:

The paper explores basic political relations between the European Union and India which are at theoretical level almost “terra nullius”. The paper starts from the present epochal situation and enters the realm of EU–India geopolitics from the perspective of Gandhian moral practice on one side, and challenges presented by the impact of Coronavirus politics on the other. Our question is – on which platform is strategic negotiating between the EU and India possible? Despite their Lisbon summit in 2000 as well as virtual summit in 2020, it is obvious that until today the EU and India could not find a common denominator. Our idea is that the missing link of a better understanding partly lays in the new perspective that may be unexpectedly found from the Balkans’ point of view. Only unprecedented cognizance today may set up the roadmap for the times to come.

Key words: India, Europe, the Balkans, Gandhi, Coronavirus, corporation, moral energy.

Introduction

When we today consider geopolitical matters in the polarized world, it is necessary to invoke complex epistemological perspectives in order to prevent political consideration to be a part of intellectual conjecture and submissive to ephemeral ‘political correctness’. It is even more necessary due to piling up different artificial circumstances surrounding the postmodern world that shuffle things in a new manner – artificial intelligence, climate change, corona pandemic, transition from analog to digital culture, ecological disasters, flow of migrants, extinction of living species... This is an incomplete list, yet enough to understand that this paper is not a political science article in a narrow sense, but an attempt to open a wider horizon including elements without which political science is impossible or reduced to abstraction. This analysis does not follow

strictly current literature on the subject; first of all because there is an indicative absence of relevant theoretical contributions to this EU–India scientific field, and second, because most of existing papers are occasional and apposite, and often overloaded with prejudices and hidden interest wrapped into theory. The misunderstandings of Europe towards India have been best expressed by Hegel's *Philosophy of History* where India is a poor rudimentary beginning of self-consciousness which long ago was surpassed, having flow of history crowned in the European culture after that. Hegel as well as some other modern theorists still watch India through colonial eyes and they are generally not capable of seeing obvious things and relations because they are wrapped into cellophane of comfortable historical illusions.

There is of course a dialog between the UE and India, but there is still no catharsis or relaxation of real historical issues that are not resolved but only surpassed. At the beginning of the 16th century unlike Europe with only around 15% GDP, India and China constituted much of the the global economy – up to around 60% (Hickel 2018). With regard to that, India made one quarter of global GDP when Britain came to India, and only 4% when they left (Kohli 2020: 438). British severe monopolization of Indian production and export, as well as import, made it possible for the Empire to obtain enormous wealth fostering its industrial and technological revolutions. Had it not been for Indian opulence, Britain would have never gained its economic dominance (Petrović and Stevanović 2018). This became clear when the economist Patnaik Utsa calculated that \$45 trillion were gained from India during the period 1765–1938 which is 17 times more than British annual GDP today (Banarjee and Chandrasekhar 2019). This shows a yawning gap between India and Europe, but not only in the economic sense. Maybe because of all of that Europe and India have distant historical identities. The EU identity has risen from the European Coal and Steel Community, and India has been born in a search for the time lost in endless fights for freedom against colonial rule, that was topped by Mahatma Gandhi's moral victory over power of the British Empire, Portugal, and France.

Therefore, it is not easy at all to write about the EU–India relations. That subject, surprisingly below the geopolitical theoretical horizon, challenges established views shielded with many visible and invisible layers. It perforce meets dyed-in-the-wool habitual misconceptions which even today follow colonial cognitive patterns. Therefore, leaving such a reductive cognitive realm may offer some different perspectives of a more sensitive approach to global issues. Such almost standalone analysis may naturally provoke reaction of standard Hegelian worldview proponents. Maybe even stronger because this time in the EU–India game we put the Balkans as some kind of geopolitical observatory, commonly recognized as blind spot and passive receptor of geopolitical impacts. But that triangle makes a non-Euclidian geopolitical

geometry of curved space that enables new angles and new horizons of interpretation and forecasting.

For our consideration it is not important what the EU formally is, whether it is a single state or an aggregate of states, is it a cultural or rather a political concept. But although it might be seen as some kind of protean entity that changes from day to day, it has rules and regulations, and its own short or long history, depending on the angle of view. It is not easy to describe accurately such a conglomerate of willingly joined states and nations in the adequate political dress code. It is also difficult to make a true difference between the EU, Austria-Hungary, Soviet Union, or Yugoslavia with their known historical destinies. It seems that behind them lies the same idea and therefore similar realization. Hence, it is a kind of scholastic question whether the EU is a bloc, or some kind of political aggregate because it is certainly a cultural and political phenomenon regardless of its organization and structure. This is enough for comparison to India that is also assembled by different states with long known and unknown histories.

India of course has a different identity which is more than a simple sum of assembled states. It has a prior personal, historical, and transcendental ground. Because of that it is insufficient to see it in the frame of old vocabulary of 'developed – undeveloped' narrative. It is vague what exactly means to be 'developed' today when observing India since it rapidly becomes one of the most strategically significant countries in the world. The 'rise of India' is above economic categories and it is obviously very complex. Moreover, it happens in the post structural world with cranky criteria in ethics, law, or economy that may set up the place of one country within the imaginary stairways of 'civilization'.

Frankly speaking, now it is not clear at all what is the exact meaning of the concept of civilization. This concept is more and more blurred since there is intensive movement to erase pillars of Western civilization from the education curricula. Numerous academics say classics should be cut from university syllabi: Plato and Aristotle, for example, are under procedure to be erased,¹ Odyssey is already removed,² Christianity is long ago only superstition which should be replaced by supreme being of computer, in certain countries history is studied back only to XVIII century,³ in some instead of learning to write by hand children are provided with tablets and there is a higher demand of the use of digital tools in general pre-school teaching activities (Otterborn et al. 2019).

¹ <<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/21/opinion/should-we-cancel-aristotle.html>> 16.02.2021.

² <<https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2021/jan/6/great-works-of-literature-not-immune-to-cancel-cul/>>; <<https://www.wsj.com/articles/even-homer-gets-mobbed-11609095872>> 16.02.2021.

³ See for instance <<https://sputniknews.com/society/201909271076901615-outrage-over-swedens-absurd-plan-to-delete-ancient-history-from-school-curriculum/>> 16.02.2021.

Contrary to that, it is not possible to imagine removing Mahabharata or Ramayana from the Indian culture. The latter every year celebrates the victory of Rama over Ravana, good over evil, as the glorification of Light. Because of that and the symbolic power of holy cows, India farmers during the recent months of protests in New Delhi have been capable of surmounting the Indian administration's bill that economically neglects traditional culture and opens the gate for corporative agriculture.

In principle, when the concept of civilization is discussed, it should be known what its ideal is since civilization is impossible without an ideal. At the moment it seems that Europe does not have an ideal, except some tautological one that it is the ideal for itself. Ideal of India is clearly defined through, for instance, victory of Rama for the sake of Good, which happens in time, as the state holiday, and out of time, as the cultural heritage and vow. Certainly, Hinduism and its values are the core of India, although there are many other cultures in India. Likewise, in France there are many nations but it is not hard to know which culture is named French. Despite deep religious and social differences there is indisputable Indian identity. The civilization must be ideal or it does not exist. Narrative about the world 'as it could be' without knowing what the ideal is may only be the blind way. Ideal of India is for sure corrupted by the world 'as it could be', but it still exists despite all calamities, clashes, inequalities... Favorite haughty objections to India are with regard to its inequalities. Maybe India has differences are inequalities, but there is no society of equality in the contemporary world. Moreover, the concept of equality is a hollow word at the moment when 1% holds 90% of everything that exists and does not exist in this world.

We are considering India as a unique subject in the postmodern world with waving criteria where only power is left as a solid point of order. That situation is amplified by egregious mishandling of the Kosovo situation. Western policy has been a debacle when NATO in 1999 intervened in Serbia with air strikes without legal ground for that. At that moment it had no exit except assertion that the Kosovo situation was unique and set no international precedent whatsoever. Prominent members of the policy communities in the EU echoed that argument. Therefore, it has been inevitable that essentially every country in the world implicitly becomes a unique case where no general benchmark or criteria could be univocally implemented. It is enough to have one single case of uniqueness for the international law to decay. Enormous India is in front of us and in the state of decay of all criteria we can only try to understand the overall capacity that India has in the present moment. India is without any doubt unique and empathy for its uniqueness is not a matter of glorification but an attempt to deliberately understand what is going on in this critical moment.

The EU in the Indian Mirror

Almost simultaneously in the center of global events was placed the scene of unexpected and very strange global processes induced by the intensive stream of migrants and even more intensive flow of a Coronavirus. Two turbulent fluxes are historically so close that at first glance they seem as the two sides of the same coin. They managed to suppress usual political topics and open a process of shaking of traditional political culture and institutions. Even public monuments reminiscent of the West's history were under attack⁴ and after that the monumental institution of the US President was questioned and suppressed. It is as if the takedown of the monuments and institutions was the basic consequence of the migrants/virus pandemic. There is of course an obvious difference between migrants and viruses, but in the political sense they bear the same meaning.

The torrent presumably spread from present to history, penetrating deeply into the past. Just as people have died from the Coronavirus now, people in the past, sculpted as monuments, also began to suffer from it too, as well as people from the future deprived of traditional institutions. This situation where Coronavirus lockdown resembles the resurrected and multiplied Berlin Wall, imposes a different way of thinking about the relationship between European and Indian culture, or, more general, between Western and Eastern world. Is there one world or we have many worlds broken by troubled waters of disease and migrations?

As it has been already noticed “the importance and continuing relevance of India’s historic connections with Europe can never be over emphasized” (Benaglia 2016). Therefore, it is surprising that there have not been many comparative studies on Europe and India. Reasons for that are deeply rooted in the past and a bunch of respective interpretation could be raised for that. But basically, it is the fact that through centuries Europe used to suppress Indian cultural heritage as one of the main sources of its identity building. From philosophical assertions that early Greek philosophy, the beginning of European cognitive mind, has nothing in common with ancient Indian philosophy, to the moral strength of Mahatma Gandhi movement, unseen in European culture, European cultural politics oversaw all of that in order to preserve notion of its autonomous being and superiority of its way of life. Therefore, the relationship between Europe and India is not an ordinary theme. It has a clear political

⁴ In Great Britain, several monuments have been removed during the George Floyd Movement, for instance a statue of Robert Milligan, John Cass, Robert Clayton... Among many monuments that have been removed, in India in the city of Bangalore the monument of Sir Mark Cubbon, British army officer, was moved to the High Court in Karnataka to Sri Chamarajendra Park on June 28, 2020 due to the public pressure.

dimension since the EU–India relations officially “had first begun in 1963 when India set up diplomatic relations with the then European Economic Community”. But that dimension was obviously not enough since the next step in dialogue took place only after several decades. “The EU–India summit of 2000 in Lisbon heralded a new era in EU–India relations. It was the first time the European Union decided to have summit-level dialogue with India” (Wülbers 2011: 1). Apart from that and the fact that the EU is India’s largest trading partner, “India–EU political dialogue remains a paper tiger... And cultural exchanges through film festivals, dance programs, joint book fairs, etc., are at their minimal level” (ibid.: 2). After that the European Union and India agreed on a Strategic Partnership in 2004, but despite declarative will and India’s bilateral relations with many countries in Europe, that document has shared the same destiny as Lisbon’s and has not led to certain accomplishment. Similar has been repeated in the 15th EU–India Summit that took place virtually under the title *EU–India Strategic Partnership: A Roadmap to 2025* on July 15, 2020. At the end of Summit’s document encompassing 118 items, the most interesting and illustrative is the final (unnumbered) note: “*A Roadmap to 2025 gives rise to no financial commitments and does not create any legally binding rights or obligations under domestic or international law*”. This statement has not left much room for doubt that twenty years after, things are at the same place as in 2000. It is some kind of a reluctant partnership with no common denominator for building anything that drafts real roadmap to the future. Therefore, it has been already noticed that “*media reports prior to the Summit observed that ‘in the public eye and in strategic circles in New Delhi, the value of the EU as partner has been constantly underestimated before, since it is not a traditional hard power, many could not imagine a role for Europe in dealing with the security pressures New Delhi is facing’*” (Klossek et al. 2020).

Roughly speaking, India does not recognize the EU as a real partner. The EU can barely see itself in the Indian mirror. Reasons for that most probably lie in two centuries of Indian slavery under British East Indian Company and British Raj, and about one century of the ensuing similar corporative process called ‘technological development’ with its forced peak in the overall Coronavirus lockdown social degradation. The two regions of the world are still basic anthropological and civilizational opposites. This is the reason why that subject is not frequently present in the scientific journals. Any kind of such study is a real challenge which faces deeply rooted prejudices, multilevel cultural controversies and numerous social antinomies that should be realized and explored seriously. Unfortunately, at the moment we have no philosophical and social methodology that could unequivocally encompass European and Indian way of thinking regarding essential matters.

Geopolitics of Knowledge and Dream

At this point we need to meliorate geopolitical approach by rising general question about anthropology of strategic encounter of the EU and India. Present Europe is a result of the unprecedented development of science and technology, the very basis of European societies. That knowledge and 'economy of knowledge' is *sine qua non* of European social dynamics and its influence spreading. Basically speaking, "*from Descartes and his first cognitive machine, which produces esse through cogito, to numerous subsequent machines created in industrial, digital, and other revolutions, science has been forced to look for a method of keeping together the mechanically divided world. A machine is the embodied revolution, because the world has to be created continuously; the immediate presence of the world disappeared and continuous efforts have to be made to interpret and unite it through various concepts. The Cartesian cognitive machine, regardless of the proclaimed goals, even today, creates fragmentation as its real product, division of the world into parts, separation of the man from the world*" (Petrović 2006: 660).

But we should be aware that 'knowledge' does not have only one linguistic and cultural sense in the EU and India. The term 'science', which denotes knowledge that could manage and change the world limited to its material substance, is widely accepted and it has its social institutions in India as well. Parallely to that in India are present various forms of social practices based on the ancient Sanskrit word 'Veda'. It means 'knowledge' that is not restricted to the physical world and technological intervention in natural and social realm. Vedic knowledge is not determined to the world of laws and probabilities; it is oriented towards eternal, not temporal essences, and towards the advancement of spiritual awareness rather than material progress. Veda and Science are two distinct aspects of knowledge, but we could not say that Vedic knowledge is the matter of the past. Deep ethical crisis of technological science, unable to solve critical problems of humanity, at least the case of the Coronavirus, demands search for the alternative paradigmatic ground for scientific work. Moreover, we are now at the end of the Enlightened philosophical and scientific optimism which considered Vedic knowledge as some outdated level of understanding.

If we search for the real platform, we should be sensitive enough to learn that we are in the middle of one breaking moment where past, present, and future are disturbed and distorted equally. It faces us to the world in its identity and at the same time to the infinite multitude of inconsistencies hidden in boundless time and vast space. Answers are very far from us, since it is not certain at all, whether we are able to raise a right question, or whether we have the right knowledge to do so. We are encompassed with a continuous series of fast changes and different approaches that blur the picture. A whole world is before us, but the construction of its historical patterns is uncertain. Therefore, when we try to get distant Europe and India closer, it is necessary to have a look

not only at political and social matters, but rather at the basic anthropological experiences. They, above all, if we look in a more Indian way, rest on the revolution of the Sun rising in the East and setting in the West. If it did not rise, we would be in eternal coldness; if it did not set, we would melt in heat. Probably everything is in circulation and all human forms repeat the Solar cycle, even culture itself.

If we shift our focus that way, searching for some EU–India inner balance, such an approach might look surprisingly out of the mainstream social theory and global politics since the UN, besides many *days* devoted to this and that, has not yet proclaimed the Day of the Sun. But the crisis in the time of Corona is so deep that we are forced to see a true *enscertum*. It is not easy since we were persuaded by the European culture of Enlightenment, that history is autonomous human achievement with weak relations to the natural and cosmic environment. It flows on and on and it does not repeat. But contrary to that, Indian cultural pattern is based on cyclicity. It more or less considers that without celestial revolution, all human revolutions, whether ideological or technological, could not help us at all, even in the attempt to make our knowledge more penetrative. Cluttered with ephemeral events, we fail to recognize cycles surrounding us. The awareness of cycles is Indian culture in its essence, and lateral politics is only the frail foam formed at the surface of changes.

Culture does not come out of nowhere; it follows the waves of changes, repeats old themes in a new manner, describes old processes by new words, follows, predicts, and forms continuous circulations as the Sun being born and dying every day on the same path. There we may find the origins of the basic course of politics, largely belonging to ancient India, Chanakya's *Arthashastra* and Ashoka's Society of the Nine Unknown Men, and via Plato's *The State* extended to the modern Europe, still proud how well it has reinterpreted the surface of Plato's political theory in Machiavelli's *Prince* or Hobbes's *Leviathan*. The world we live in might have long ago begun in India, and is being completed today in Europe, or rather the European Union because our theme requires us to notice a fine contrast of Europe and its Union.

It might seem strange, but Europe has become a world power owing to its dream of India. Dreams of India and all the fantastic images following them in reality have been centuries-old impetus of European history. Wondrous news on India has been passed from mouth to mouth, from city to city, from century to century. India awakened the numb European imagination inducing it with legends of fabulous wealth to discover and conquer. The European man dreamt of distant India – herder as the Arcadia of shepherds and shepherdesses, merchants as the affluence of goods, emperors as the palaces of gold, soldiers as the conquer of the land which defeated Alexander the Great himself... The priests turned to the most read book of the European Middle Ages, *Barlaam and*

Joasaph, the Christianized version of the legend of Buddha and his life. “*The marvelous underlined India’s difference and otherness, while simultaneously providing a strategy to understand this otherness.*” (Nayar 2005: 214). The European travelogues since the 16th century onwards testify to the fact that “*the sense of wonder modulates into a more organized negotiation, as a quest for specific information and as means of providing this information*” (ibid.:1). In short, the discovery of India “*required investigation rather than imagination, even though its wealth had been the subject of European fantasy for a long time before the first voyages*” (ibid.: 2). A rare exception from this practice of ‘inquiry’ of the Indian territory is the travelogue by Serbian Prince Bojidar Karageorgevitch⁵ who went to India at end of the 19th century searching for its spirituality and culture, for what had been left from its pre-colonial period. “*On the other hand, the foothold to the novel by Karageorgevitch is deep foundation; not newness, exotics or material opulence, impression rather than classification*” (Stevanović 2017: 34-36). In India, he sensed “*there was dreaminess in the land – an anticipation of fairyland to which the music seemed the prelude*” (Karageorgevitch 1899: 286). It is clear that India was also the land of dreams for him to, but that dream was not enrooted in colonial strives or idle crave for the exotic.

Consciously or not, searching for India, Europe has driven itself to, at one point, after the fall of Byzantine in XV century, start conquering the whole world. Owing to that dream, Columbus embarked on the quest for India and discovered America. America is found as a fake India in which European culture projected its dreams about material wealth and utopian fulfillment. In its mind, even today there is no essential difference between America and India. The native inhabitants of America are still called Indians for its true phantasmagoric identity is India. If we accept the metaphor of Sigmund Freud that 9/10 of personality consists of unconsciousness, and only one tenth is consciousness, we may symbolically say that 9/10 of Europe is in fact India. Only by one tenth of its being Europe tries to be its own self, which means rational mind. And paradoxically, what has been its greatest strength – the dream of India – it rejected in the enlightened ideology of rationality considering dreams as superstitions having no place in public life. There is no social institution regarding dreams since Europe has replaced them with technology. By its rational means, technology aims to turn reality into virtual dreams and history into (virtual) utopia. Thus, in its mind India has been expelled and finally replaced by America as the phantasm of technology. But that is the seed of its

⁵ Bojidar Karageorgevitch (1862–1908) was the great grandchild of Karageorge, the First Serbian Uprising leader and forerunner of the Royal Dynasty of Karageorgevitch. In 1897 he went to India, spent seven months visiting more than 35 places and travelling about 11000 km from the Himalayan north to the end south. Subsequent to that experience, in 1899 he published a travelogue in French and English about India and its culture. The book stands as one of the most accurate and trustworthy foreign portrayals of 19th century India.

fall for technology is merely the fallen Indian dream, a knowledge without enlightenment. Such a technological utopia that in the name of order creates entropy around, seems so convincing that even India itself tends to believe in it, implanting chips into animals and thinking about technological control of personality. It seems they have forgotten that the holy computer will never replace holy cows, *silent divine creation*, as Gandhi called them (cf. Petrović 2015). Supercomputer is essentially more a matter of superstition than holy cows, because although artificial intelligence tends to replace all life forms, it will never be able to give milk. Holy cows of India and mad cows of Europe make so obvious and clear difference that is hard to miss. On one side artificial intelligence, and its current paragon robot Sophia⁶ that has been granted citizenship, and on the other rivers Ganges and Yamuna that by India's state decision became legal personalities with full capacity of civil rights.⁷

The Balkans and Planetary Geometry

This brief anthropological insight seemed necessary to make geopolitical understanding more open and less reductive so that the theme itself does not overshadow us with its magnitude. It also justifies our place in it. This point of view gives also a pretext and an apology why we approach such a colossal question from the perspective of a small, barely noticeable part of the Globe on the southern border of Europe, such as the Balkans is, and Serbia as its even smaller center. The reason for outlining such a diagonal is quite simple – it removes the barrier between knowledge and dream, making understanding more fluid and imaginative, and among large and small as the base of any anthropological shallowness. Coronavirus is also small, but it has enough magnitude to be a prism for the social reversal and the new worldview. In fact, there is no big or small, but only the relative point of view as the most important ratio. The courage to think from a diverse point is often rewarded with the new, surprising acumens.

People and nations without the true courage to rise above the standard prejudices tend to superficially look at each other until they grow the forest of differences in which they cannot find the way anymore. Europe has particularly

⁶ Sophia is the first robot citizen in the world. As a creation of Hanson Robotics based in Hong Kong, Sophia (a delicate robot designed to look like Audrey Hepburn) gained high level of planetary popularity partly induced by the decision of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to grant the robot citizenship in 2017. See for instance <<https://www.forbes.com/sites/zarastone/2017/11/07/everything-you-need-to-know-about-sophia-the-worlds-first-robot-citizen/#6f67f65346fa>> 20.07.2020.

⁷ However, subsequently the Supreme Court finally decided the rivers are 'not living entities'. <<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-40537701>>; <<https://swachhindia.ndtv.com/ganga-and-yamuna-are-not-living-entities-rules-supreme-court-9716/>> 20.07.2020.

strived to distinguish itself from other parts of the world it has been 'discovering' during the past centuries. "It is only with the rise of Europe to global predominance that an idealized European territorial state became the global archetype" (Agnew 2008: 181). But solemn monuments are nowadays shaken forcing Europe to discover itself finally. In its self-consciousness there has always been enough room for the caste-like hierarchy of civilized and primitive, cultured and wild, rational and superstitious, modern and traditional, developed and undeveloped nations. All those verbal expressions have changed from time to time, but kept the same essence of supremacy.

There is some sense of implicit caste society in European history that is somehow inverse to Indian caste system. The divergence lies in the fact that caste of untouchables is in India at the bottom of society, while in Europe the untouchable is its elite, isolated from the other social plenum. The European untouchables created concept of history as the border line, ideological defense from the *other*. The *other* mostly were 'non-historic' nations having all the features which Europe has overcome by the notion of history tailored for conquering needs of its untouchables. For Europe, one of the 'other' *pariah* countries is Serbia, as the very center of the Balkans, into which it projects all the characteristics it does not want to see in its history. The reason for this is the centuries-old resistance of Serbia to European projects of 'civilizing' owing to which many nations across the 'discovered' world have forever disappeared. Serbia has somehow been among the greatest disturbances of the colonial projections that Europe often called history since from 19th century it has stood against the tides of ideological crusading.⁸

Maybe due to its location on the southern borders, on the crossroad of eastern and western ancient Rome, where it has been in the vicinity, but never belonged to it, Serbia has always been the problem for European political architects that have continuously imposed some new orders. It has always unintentionally disturbed colonial happiness of Byzantine, Ottoman, Austro-Hungarian, German, Soviet, and today the EU empire. When observed from a long-time distance, it seems that it is exactly its historical work, which it has not given to itself, and which has nothing to do with its apparent 'small' size. Although the European Union has conditioned, economically and culturally destroyed it for decades, still nowadays trying to split it into parts, it has nevertheless preserved its angle of view. The angle depends neither on size nor

⁸ At the present moment the concept of history is endangered because migrants and viruses have no clear history and therefore they cross all the borders and obstacles. History, of course, thinks that it has enough power to manage that torrent, but that is not so surefire. Spirit of time is always on the side of the subject who brings more entropy, disorder into the system. That was happening many times in the past.

on distance. That is why we dare to discuss the Union and India, as a kind of planetary geometry, from the perspective of the Balkans.

If such a view from the Balkans is possible, is it relevant too? Do we consider that our theme remains within the existing knowledge or the view from the Balkans can add something that has previously eluded our insights? The European Union and India are great powers, but when something has to be truly understood, let us repeat once more, it is not about the size, but the angle. Due to small changes in the angle of the Earth's axis, seasons change. It is true that Mahatma Gandhi had English educational background, but he looked at things distinctively, from a different angle. We know the same facts, but from the Balkans they look distinct like the events we have experienced during the day acquire particular meaning in dreams. And India is the land of dreams, in fact the greatest dream Europe has had. The Balkans is important not because of its relative size and the 'role' in world politics and economics. It is significant because of pure contrast to the EU and indirect indicator of its limits. Balkans has a different dream quite distant to the European dream of power and colonization.

But why such opportunity should be given to the Balkans to express its different viewpoint when such possibility, a singular angle of view, Europe with its universal history has not given even to great cultures of Asia that are always, compared to it, lagging behind in 'development'. The right to its own dream Serbia, the core of the Balkans, won in 1804, only fifteen years after the French Revolution, raising the second social revolution in Europe. More importantly, it was the first anticolonial revolution in the world. It was raised by the nation's own strength in the time of complete colonial darkness where no one even thought about liberating themselves from the imposed 'history' and 'civilization'. That revolution overthrew the Ottoman Empire, and it could not have been possible if Serbia had not had its genuine viewpoint.

Where did Serbia, surrounded by colonial Europe, get an independent angle? Where could the strength come from if not from the vast area of dreams, from pre-historical or a historical? Belgrade, the capital of Serbia, presumably has one among the longest continuous cultural history of today's metropolises. From the Vinča culture which has been flourishing since 5500 BC until today, here at the same place, at the confluence of the Sava River into the Danube, which resembles the Yamuna merging into the Ganges, life continuously lasts despite all the destructions, as if Vishnu had spilled the drop of immortality potion there too. Despite Belgrade has been, according to the known sources, 39 times ruined, it has always been literally born out of ashes. The glory of the most devastated metropolis probably belongs to it as well. Only in the 20th century it was three times destroyed, the last time in 1999, when attacked by the 19 countries of NATO, mostly members of the European Union. Surely, it is difficult to dispute the right to the own viewpoint to such a place and therefore

it was named The Tower of Holy Wars and Hill for Thinking, but The Door to the East as well. When one is being ruined so often, willingly or not, it has to start looking at the world with their own eyes.

Geopolitics of Moral Energy

India and Serbia, one big, the other small, are simply the frontiers of Europe. The borders of Europe are where freedom is. The world's anticolonial fight for freedom started with Serbian uprising in 1804 and was gloriously completed with great Gandhi's victory in 1947. This relation has become obvious when Gandhi's moral victory has been praised at the highest level by Serbian Orthodox Church. The Church has a strict canon allowing only those in the past centuries proclaimed as saints to be portrayed in the frescoes of the church. There are no exceptions. Except one – Mahatma Gandhi. His fresco is along all the other saints in a Serbian Orthodox Church in the city of Bar on the Adriatic coast (Petrović 2017). Gandhi is accepted and elevated to the sublime height of the symbol of a religion. And not the one he belonged to, Hinduism, but the one territorially distant, yet spiritually the closest. That is a great precedent for we will not find Gandhi as an icon in any other temple of any religion. We will not find him even in Hindu temples. It is in fact the ultimate fulfillment of Gandhi's idea of tolerance among religions. Gandhi, liberating the entire India from colonial slavery, magnificently completed all the efforts of the liberation of all the revolutions across the world, and gave people hope that their fate was not dust and ashes, but the glow of truth and freedom. In the 20th century there was no experience like the one of Gandhi's that bestirred other nations to the path of freedom. He convinced them that peace was stronger than violence, ethics was greater than force, and personality more powerful than the empire.

The missing link in negotiations between the EU and India is of moral nature. If the EU does not recognize a moral basis of politics and bilateral relations, all negotiations will be futile. In that sense India is closer to the Balkans, that is the bridge between the EU and India, because it historically, symbolically, and anthropologically, under complex circumstances, translates moral into political energy by its continuous resistance to empires and their colonial agendas. The EU–India debate must have more moral than political dimension. It is not, of course, a modern approach, but modernity is over and postmodernity does not offer ground for any reliable achievement. Moral quality, usually considered premodern, is today of better value than the rational structure of modernity.

In this context we should bear in mind that India, on the firm moral basis in a year's time, managed to unite itself, while Europe has not been capable of it for decades. The question is: why is the European Union in 2020 still waiting to finally unite Europe as India has done on its territory seven

decades ago? It cannot excuse itself on the grounds of American deep state and corporative colonialism, that America appoints its political elite, because America is Europe itself, its dream, materialized India. India seemed to have been late in historical processes, at least that is the image Europe had, but now it becomes clear that all the time it has been ahead. This can be clearly seen by the speed of Indian integration. While India has in one historical moment, in only one year united 565 states into one state, which now looks like a political miracle, the unification of Europe is a never-ending process because it wants to unite around twenty states into one corporation.⁹ That is the same as the attempt to feed cows, herbivore, with animal meat. It is unnatural; it simply does not work despite all the appetite for profit, and the results are inevitably mad cows.

Simply speaking, political efficiency of India unification is related to its different anthropology. For the defense of the republic, personalities are necessary. Political life is not first of all a matter of democracy, but of republic as the basic social value and achievement, and India is at the moment far more republic than the EU. In a nutshell, the strength of India is in the great personalities who have managed to form the republic and do something for common wellbeing. The strong personalities who were not concerned with politics as a craft, as an opportunity for another privatization, but as a possibility for the enlightenment and moral perfection. Those who united India: Gandhi, Patel, Ambedkar, Nehru and many others at some point experienced personal metamorphosis, were reborn and as liberated personalities entered fight with the empire simultaneously fighting their own selves (see for example: Menon 1957; Hamilton 1999; Pandey 2001; Krishna 2008; Fischer 2010, Dalton 2012; Keer 2018; Guha 2015). Such persons the European Union has never had and that is why it has built a corporative form without moral energy. Even if it had had them, they were never given the right to speak. Rationality and cynicism are somewhat useful, but they can never bring freedom and enlightenment. Hence the European Union could not complete the unification. We may find the main reasons for that in its lack of moral energy; it perceives unity only as an impersonal political process in which there is only need to sign contracts, obey the rules, and fill out forms. It is perceived that *“the key challenge consists of theorizing the processes through which individual emotions become collective and political”* (Hutchison and Bleiker 2014: 492), but the very problem may be the lack of personal energy powerful enough to initiate the collectiveness.

⁹ In 1947 Minister of Home Affairs Sardar Patel was the main political architect who brought all 565 princely states under India during one year of negotiations only. This is an incomparable example of a fast peaceful integration of many states with distinctive cultural identities and long political histories. This politics is essentially effectuated by Gandhi's principles and it shows immense socio-political power of India.

Contrary to that, very fast unification of India was a result of high moral energy released from Gandhi's work based on Indian heritage, philosophy and religion. His point was to dominate one's own moral energy of freedom. He achieved not only political, but above all cultural victory over the British Empire as he unleashed the moral energy of a personality in the maelstrom of political events. That is why personality is no longer lonely in this world. Contrary to common misconceptions, only a personality can change the world by finding a way to identify itself with it. Gandhi's inner struggle was reflected through his moral character in the fight for this world that he would not have won had he not already conquered himself. His greatness is in the fight for the moral identity of the personality he has assumed the weight of this world in (cf. Gandhi 1956). Such a liberation movement has outplayed the power of European military and cultural arms by the powerful weapon of philosophy of *satyagraha*, devotion to truth, *ahimsa*, nonviolence, and *swaraj*, self-rule.

Ahimsa was created in response to the massacre of the peaceful protesters in Amritsar and the Rowlatt Act that gave the East India Company military authority to combat non-violent liberation activities. Gandhi's response to British violence was nonviolence. Doing that non-linear way, the community acquires unbeatable unity: it becomes a personality. As a personality, Gandhi decided to start weaving and sewing his own clothes. The essence of *ahimsa* is not any political ideology, but a free hand and a free mind as an opposition to mechanical being since "in the mechanical philosophy prevailed the concept of autarchic efficiency... Instead of secular epistemological unity, the emphasis is put on the division and discreteness, as well as the suppression of the traditional apprehension from the active horizon of contemporary science and technology" (Petrović 2006: 659). If the mind and the hand are technologically divided, subdued and unfree, they end up accepting and justifying the violence. Observed from Gandhi's perspective, technology is pure violence. In his rebellion, he declared the end of technology as an experience of false liberation, and the return of the free hand and thoughts on which synergy the personality rests.¹⁰

This may be well understood if we compare Gandhi with Karl Marx, the ideologist of economic liberation. This liberation was of violent nature, because Marx had no awareness of the personality, only of the classes whose conflict placed them on the ground of violence and dictatorship. If violence is a principle of history, as Marx said, then *ahimsa* is either a historic or prehistoric dream. While Marx slyly delayed the end of history for an indefinite period of

¹⁰ His initial thoughts on civilization and technology were first expressed in the book *Hind Swaraj or Indian Home Rule* he wrote in 1909 by hand. The book was written in his native language Gujarati and when the following year he tried to translate and publish it in English, the British banned it as a revolutionary text.

communism, *ahimsa* would be the end of history here and now. Regarding the history of India, Marx knew only what he had read in Hegel, who refers to a British who claimed that all Indians are lying. In his main study that aspires to be some sort of final judgment on history, Hegel considers India to be at the lowest stage of spiritual development and asleep. The truth is maybe the reverse; India today despite all its turmoil looks like a land full of energy of awakening, and Europe seems to be in a somnolence called history. That is why Gandhi also appears as a sort of summary of the whole history in which its illusory colonial nature is exposed. Gandhi's self-awareness and personal freedom are convincingly affirmed in the most unexpected way. In the midst of the political strife, he goes on strike against himself. When his supporters burnt down a police station and killed the police officers, he started a hunger strike against himself as a poor teacher. Europe has not seen such an act since the time of Socrates doing the same thing saying he himself knows that he knows nothing. Gandhi knew that road to victory is only through power over oneself. By symbolically offering his self for sacrifice, he returned the country to the path of *ahimsa* making it the moral skeleton of contemporary India. Upon such a metamorphosis, India has experienced its own self and fulfilled the harmony of inner and outer energy.

The EU and Virtual Reality

It is a notorious fact that Europe despite all its progress does not have its *Gandhi*. Instead of personalities it has families. Enlightenment's disconnection from traditional roots, overemphasized rationality, and adoration of mechanics, as well as the consequent low moral energy prevented the appearance of a European 'Gandhi'. What is therefore the fate of the culture with low moral energy? Simply and inevitably to be virtual. In other words, low moral energy pushes culture from reality to virtuality. When the Berlin Wall fell in 1989, it seemed that Europe would unite really soon. It was as if all the energies had been focused into that direction, but just as easily scattered. Europe has a colonial instinct and cannot run away from it. Under the guise of unification, it has tried to paradoxically colonize itself. The countries on the East of the Europe were supposed to be the prey of the states on the West with the same arguments that kept India in slavery for centuries – they were less civilized, or translated into a bit newer European language – less democratic. They were put into the hell of political and social transition to be softened, melted, and infused into the corporative templates. It is really difficult to unite if you simultaneously want to liberate and subjugate yourself. Following its latent colonial instinct, the European Union could not perform real but virtual integration. The nations of Europe have been forcefully pushed into the *image* of unity. Under the increasing number of corporative demands, they have been deprived of the right to moral life and real selfhood. None of the enlightened

fathers – founders of India have tried to colonize any of Indian states so that the others would live better. India is a very big and incredibly multifaceted country, but its instinct is not imperial, nor corporative, but republican.

Although the corporative unification under the Vatican could not have been achieved in Europe even in the Middle Ages, the European Union has decided practically to be a corporation with commissioners appointed without the participation of the public. The EU ideology is technology, the secret knowledge of power, which seemingly solves real problems but whose main interest is virtual reality production. If technology is understood as the utopia of “better” future and not as a means of solving problems, then the state necessarily becomes a corporation. Therefore, in the attempt to unite, Europe displays its virtual nature which is the source of all future problems. The European Union probably cannot do the other way because its politics, stemming from loyalty not to free people, but to unlimited capacity of technology, is by its nature postmodern. The only real objective of postmodern politics is the deconstruction of all the forms of cognitive, ethic, social, cultural, political, and natural life which is more or less obvious in the socialization of the Coronavirus. Such postmodern Union cannot be a true republic, but only a corporation. Republic and corporation are the two irreconcilable political entities and the attempt to unnaturally unite them leads to deconstruction and global existential cooling, disappearance of diversity of life and its distinctiveness.

The migrant crisis started at the beginning of 2015 when, without any apparent reason, the Shqiptars’ population of Kosovo began to move towards the European Union in masses, although they were not forced by Serbs which in 1999 was the excuse for the attack by NATO. The only reasonable explanation is that behind the migration was again the Union because the process, as by some command, was soon stopped instantly. Before long, it was clear that it was just a rehearsal and then the real migrant flood occurred. Immediately the weakness of the European Union which has no answer before the flood of a million of migrants coming from Asia or Africa, with a veiled threat that there might be 10 million more, and, not impossibly, even 100 million, became obvious. The problem is that now the Union does not know who to negotiate with, except, by habit, with itself (cf. Petrović and Kamčevski 2019). In Serbia, which has negotiated joining the European Union for decades, it is well known that all the dialogs with it are always the image of a political process and are a priori doomed. There is always the need to talk at two levels, first with national states comprising it, and then with the EU supranational corporation that has its special intentions principally different from the state interest. Between public and private interest, the European Union opts for the private and hidden. By that, every time it loses the determination of a state and becomes a political corporation. Hence, it is not about negotiating with two

subjects but two distinct, utterly contrasted political substances. The corporation, even willing to do so, cannot meet the needs of the state whose only objective can be merely public wellbeing.

Looking that way, the Coronavirus case is a product of decay of the state. The Coronavirus implicit target is the state itself, as the primal form of the human community. Hit by the Coronavirus, state could not maintain common good but only, under different excuses, abandon it in an accelerated runaway from the sinking boat while desperately trying to get some plank that would firmly embrace at the endless sea. The case of the Coronavirus started in China in 2019, as unexpectedly as Kosovo migrants' wave in 2015. After 2015 barbed wires in Europe were soon erected and in 2020 protective masks were imposed to prevent viruses to come inside. This is the same reaction, the same instinct and the same behavior with the same effects. All these coincidences mean that the state goes virtual inevitably transformed into corporation. These are signs of one same migration from the analog to digital world with no borders in geography as well as in morality.

In such circumstances it seems that the EU itself does not exactly know if it is a state or a corporation. That dilemma used to lead it towards different political antinomies and anomalies which inevitably every political construction transforms to deconstruction. It already started to go virtual and deconstruct itself by bombing the Balkans, Yugoslavia and Serbia, in 1999. The result of the bombing was the disappearance of Yugoslavia, the biggest utopia created in the 20th century in Europe. The Union has been completely determined by its attitude towards Yugoslavia created according to the same principles it itself was later formed by. But by demonstrating power, the European Union did everything to disintegrate it, unaware that thus it exactly shows how it would end in the same way. The final result of breaking up Yugoslavia may be the emergence of the virtual postmodern state of Kosovo. It is the best expression of the postmodern politics of deconstruction, the true mirror of postmodern Europe, a corporative quasi-state according to whose model the European Union wants to adjust itself. Only that way may its strong identification with Kosovo be explained because it sees its true nature in it. But Kosovo is a sharpened knife which cuts the Union virtually and which it cannot stop because the deconstruction initiated in Kosovo continued to spread across its borders. According to Kosovo's scenario the creation of other quasi state formations has been also practiced, such as the Islamic State that has only empirically extended the destruction which ideologically takes place in the foundation of postmodern politics (Petrović, Wilczyński and Kamčevski 2017). Before that deluge politicians in the Union know nothing except to surrender or to build a barbed wire fence and try to buy a little more time. What is then the future of a virtual postmodern Union? Briefly, virtual division. According to the scenario from the Second World War, after sudden Brexit now the division of

the European Union follows. Yet, not the real one anymore, for the Union is also not real, but virtual.

How the Virtual EU Division will Look Like?

The European Union is already divided between its false Indian dream, America, and crude Asian reality in the form of Russia, the only one it failed to civilize and shape according to its colonial model. Between the attractive and repulsive force, it would find itself torn which would politically be expressed as a new division. The strong gravitation of those forces the Union cannot withstand. The catastrophe (Ancient Greek *καταστροφή* / *katastróphē* – overturn, reversal of what is expected) silently and unprecedentedly came with Coronavirus that instead of one Berlin Wall immediately built endless number of walls that surrounded individuals as well as whole states. The Berlin Wall dividing Europe actually does not exist anymore, but now there is a wall separating real from the virtual world. Dividing of the European self is strongly amplified by the appearance of Coronavirus that makes social and political polarization sharp and harsh. This main role of the virus is to be the pivot point of the almost magical instant transition where the open analog world becomes digital cave. Since the analog problems of this world are insoluble, the Berlin Wall of political transition appeared unsuccessful, the only possible offer is to bid for a chimeric digital perspective. Those believing in virtuality are now clearly on one side, and those defending reality on the other.

Instead of the Berlin Wall we now have lockdown and social distance that put people into invisible prison. The only contact to the world is mediated through digital technology. Technology became the real master of religion, education, creative industries and almost entire economy. Therefore, the historical sense of that virus is not medical or epidemic, but above all political since it changes, amplifies and accelerates all social processes. Its enormous impact is the first sign of the low moral energy. It is the new very fast transition from one order to another, entropy of movement from hot to cold reservoir. It is the catalyst and collider of all social processes where all gaps in the political structure after the Berlin Wall shutdown are widened and deepened with no reliable predictions about their end.

The demolition of the Berlin Wall was a political helter-skelter, because no one was honestly ready for the unity. Without that wall Europe is apparently united, but it was at the same moment separated from Asia and it lost balance with it. *“The fall of the Berlin wall was supposed to signal the advent of the single world of freedom and democracy. Twenty years later, it is clear that the world’s wall has simply shifted: instead of separating East and West it now divides the rich capitalist North from the poor and devastated South. New walls are being constructed all over the world...”* (Badiou 2008: 38). But now no one can prevent united invasion of the Asian refugees and the

Asian Coronavirus to come back to Europe. Ironically, the wave of refugees, and maybe of Coronavirus, is not managed by anyone but the Union. By bombing, it has induced the Mediterranean and East who under the onslaught began to move. Bombing obviously makes the population more movable. It can be seen in Libya, Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, and many other countries. The designed outcome of the first movement was the break-up of Yugoslavia. The result of this second, which is in progress, is that the river of migrants has practically divided Europe into two parts. The one refugees want to go to and the one they do not. The first is Western Europe, and the second the Eastern Europe. They do not want to go to Serbia, Poland, or Estonia... Hence, they practically repeat and confirm the division into two Europes which existed in the time of the Berlin Wall. It is obviously still there, but is now virtual, and the river flowing between the divided parts is more difficultly bridgeable since COVID-19 slows down social dynamics and seals different social strata. The division will not be a concrete wall, but elusively virtual and more powerful. It will be a carousel wall which will constantly change and move, repeatedly occupying new political courses, mutually incompatible; but the rationale of the border will always be similar to itself.

For the EU in present circumstances the only shelter is the virtual world. Coronavirus accelerates that process. In contrast to that, it is not difficult to understand political power of India. Although the Coronavirus strongly affects its real politics, despite all the difficulties and unpredictable consequences of the lockdown it will persist as a genuine republic, public ownership, and not a corporation. It has some kind of 'immune system' due to its severe experience of the corporative power. It seems simple, but it is not easy at all to preserve the republic and not to silently transform it into the corporation. The preservation of the republic is the most solid sign of 'immunity' of 'social cells' since the problem of Coronavirus lies as a part of the natural process of republic turning into corporation by aging and social entropy increasing.

What is then the exit for Europe before the temptations of the European Union? Quite simple – India. It has to dream of its perennial Indian dream again. Dream cannot be colonized, but, as in any psychoanalysis, one should return to the root of the problem. And it was at the moment when Columbus embarked on a quest to conquer India. The Gods ironically offered America as a replacement. He did not even notice it. Like today's European Union which does not see that material America cannot replace spiritual India. Therefore, at the balance of history it is inevitable that at the same moment when America is going to fall, India is going to rise. The issue will start to unravel only when Europe gathers strength and embarks on a real quest of India which it has lost with Columbus. Or to make the conclusion simpler, once it realizes that the Sun will never rise in the West. In that context Gandhi's endeavor for contemporary societies may be symbolically equivalent to the

rising of the Sun. In this elevated context the next EU–Indian summit might have better prospects for the future if it would perhaps take place at the Confluence in Belgrade where the main downtown street is named Terazije (The Balance).

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Unia Europejska i India w spolaryzowanym świecie

Artykuł przedstawia podstawowe relacje polityczne między Unią Europejską a Indią, które na poziomie teoretycznym pozostają niemal „terra nullius”. Artykuł wychodzi od obecnej sytuacji międzynarodowej i rozwija sferę relacji między Unią Europejską a Indią z perspektywy praktyki moralnej Gandhiego z jednej strony, i wyzwań jakie stwarza obecna pandemia Koronawirusa z drugiej. Podstawowe pytanie badawcze brzmi, na jakiej platformie możliwe są strategiczne negocjacje między Unią Europejską a Indią? Pomimo szczytu UE-India w Lizbonie w 2000 r. i wirtualnego szczytu w 2020 r., podstawy realnej współpracy nie zostały wypracowane. Autorzy wykazują, że przyczyną tego są odmiennie cechy cywilizacyjne obydwu regionów, a zwłaszcza postawa Unii Europejskiej, będąca dziedzictwem epoki kolonialnej, oraz jej korporacyjna, a nie republikańska natura. Postawa ta jest sprzeczna z wartościami cywilizacji indyjskiej i jej polityki odwołującej się do “energii moralnej”. Proponowanym kluczem do rozwiązania problemu polegającego na braku możliwości porozumienia odmiennych cywilizacyjnie partnerów, ma być zupełnie nowa perspektywa, jaką oferuje bałkański punkt widzenia.

Słowa kluczowe: Balkany, energia moralna, Gandhi, India, koronawirus, korporacja, Unia Europejska.