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The Anticolonial Ethics of Lala Har Dayal's *Hints for Self Culture*[1]

J. Daniel Elam

This paper is part of a larger project that revisits interwar Indian anticolonial writing with greater attention to its literary and philosophical craft. Anticolonial thought has been traditionally conceived of as pragmatic and practical: writing with the singular political goal of removing the colonial regime in a particular national setting. In some cases, anticolonial writing has been considered to provide a rudimentary analysis of the colonial situation. Subsequently, it has been neglected in favour of more aggressively literary colonial writing, or narrowly defined postcolonial theory which emerged later in US and UK academies.

Nevertheless, there exists a small but active conversation about the possibility of resuscitating literary and philosophical models from twentieth-century anti-imperial texts (Young 2001, Gandhi 2006, Parel 2009). These have offered new protocols for reading anticolonial texts as literature. They have, in addition, illuminated the ways in which these anticolonial thinkers could be put into provocative conversation with ethical and political philosophy. By promoting anticolonial writing as literature and/or philosophy, such dialogues highlight the dispersed

[1]I am indebted to Professor Mahesh Rangarajan for his support throughout my research in Delhi. This paper also benefits from the excellent discussion following my presentation at Nehru Memorial Museum and Library on 05 June 2012. Bart Scott, Anndrea Ellison, and Dinyar Patel all provided additional insights; I am grateful for their assistance. The remaining faults are all my own. Please send correspondence to J. Daniel Elam *jdelam@u.northwestern.edu.*

genealogy of modern literary and philosophical thought, which allows us new resources towards re-conceiving ethical, political, and aesthetic practices.

Accordingly, this paper focuses on the ethical writings of Lala Har Dayal, a Punjabi anticolonial activist who worked from London, San Francisco, Uppsala, Constantinople, and Berlin from 1907 to 1939. Har Dayal has posed significant trouble for scholars seeking to render him part of the Indian nationalist movement for a few reasons. First, not only is his life marked by incredible international itinerancy, but his role as the founder of the California-based Ghadr party meant that his influence extended across and beyond the British Empire. Second, the strange trajectory of his political thought troubles any easy categorization. He was sometimes violent, other times pacifist; sometimes nationalist, other times internationalist. Third, although he was considered a major threat to the British Raj for nearly his entire career, he spent most of his life not actively agitating against British rule.

After leaving Delhi for graduate work in the UK in 1905, Har Dayal's travels aligned him with the India House collective (Madame Cama, Shyamji Krishnavarma, V.D. Savarkar) in London; Emma Goldman and US anarchists in California; Hindu-German conspirators in Berlin; and academics across the Atlantic Ocean. His prolific writing career is overshadowed by the infamy he gained as the founder of the Ghadr party. He wrote frequently throughout the 1910s and 1920s for the Calcutta-based *Modern Review,* edited Ghadr publications, served as a correspondent for Madame Cama's multiple periodicals, published several books on his travels and educational philosophy, and kept up rich correspondence with friends he accumulated around the world.

Although the Ghadr party was a major – if still frequently overlooked – contribution to the Indian independence movement, a reevaluation of Har Dayal's writing is necessary to appreciate the richness of his contribution to global leftist thought during the early decades of the twentieth century. His writings are rarely anticolonial in the sense that they present a straightforward project of independence (though some of his

writing does focus on this). Instead, they demonstrate a preoccupation with the ethical and pedagogical implications of anticolonialism and from what Leela Gandhi has called, in another context, 'promiscuous alliances' (Gandhi 2006) that anticolonialism abroad quickly made. As such, Har Dayal participates quite centrally in an assemblage of leftist thought that included but was not limited to: anti-imperialism, anti-sexism, anti-racism, anarchism, internationalism, spiritualism, as well as the flotsam and jetsam of the intellectually vibrant revolutionary spirit of the interwar period in Europe and the US.

The Most Dangerous Indian Agitator[2]

Born in 1884 in Delhi, Har Dayal grew up in a wealthy family who recognised in him the potential for academic and civil service success. He enrolled at National College, Lahore and in 1905, on a Bodleian Scholarship, St. Stephen's College, Oxford University. A few months short of finishing his degree, however, Har Dayal renounced the degree and the scholarship on the grounds that he could not accept the patronage of a government who occupied his country illegitimately. He left Oxford for London, where he joined Shyamji Krishnavarma at the India House in Highgate. He wrote for the collective's publication, the *Indian Sociologist* until 1909, when the group moved its headquarters to Paris. He edited (and probably wrote most of the articles for) Madame Cama's periodical, *Bande Mataram,* but the Calcutta-based *Modern Review* published his significant work. His essays in *Modern Review* ranged from psychosocial analyses of British rule in India to experimental pedagogical theories.

He left Paris in 1910 for Martinique and Algiers, and left there for the US by 1911. He worked briefly at Harvard University before moving southwest to the University of California at Berkeley. By this time he had stopped writing for *Bande Mataram*, but continued to publish semi-

[2]William C. Hopkinson, Canadian secret agent in San Francisco to Criminal Intelligence Department, Delhi: "Of all the Indian agitators who have visited the States and of all those whom I have a knowledge, I am led to believe that Har Dayal is the most dangerous". (National Archives of India; Home Department, Political B, June 1913, 5-17).

regularly for the *Modern Review*, including essays on life in America. In 1912 alone, he published essays on women's rights in the West, Indian life in California, and what P.C. Joshi considers to be the first major reflection on Karl Marx by an Indian thinker (Joshi 1975).

In 1914, after lecturing at Stanford University and organizing Indian and radical student organizations in the Bay Area, Har Dayal founded the Hindu Association of the Pacific Coast. The Association's publication, *Ghadr* would overshadow the original name of the organization. Arrested on trumped-up charges and deported, he toured Berlin and Constantinople in 1915, leaving behind enough of a paper trail to be named in the Hindu-German Conspiracy Case. He witnessed from Turkey the failed *Ghadr* of the passengers aboard the *Komagatu Maru*. After publishing a travelogue, *Forty-Four Months in Germany and Turkey*, in 1916, he moved to Sweden to live a life largely off the record for ten years.

Har Dayal appealed multiple times to return to the British Empire with amnesty. He never received it, though he returned 'at his own risk' to London in 1926. (Home Department files suggest the British were uninterested in bringing charges against him but equally uninterested in telling him that). He enrolled in the Ph.D. programme at University of London and graduated in 1932 with a thesis on Buddhism. In 1934, he published *Hints for Self Culture* to critical acclaim and good sales. In 1938, he left the UK for the US in hopes of returning to India; he died in Philadelphia in 1939.

It is an easy project to divide Har Dayal's life into stages, a model that differentiates the 'revolutionary Har Dayal' with the 'ethical Har Dayal' and thus provides his biography with a semi-cathartic 'ethical turn'. This makes sense of the seeming disjuncture between his writings for *Bande Mataram* and his *Hints for Self Culture*: the former are aggressively political and the latter is, in the words of the British Raj, 'carefully theoretical'[3]. This mode of biography ignores the fact that his essays for

[3]National Archives of India, Home Political 1934 (35/10/34).

Modern Review were equally 'carefully theoretical', and even if this was politically prudent, they still reflect sensitive cultural analysis. Even by 1916, Har Dayal was a recognized (if controversial) philosopher: he makes an appearance in Lala Lajpat Rai's *Young India* (1916) under 'Hardayalism'. It also produces a superficial reading of *Hints for Self Culture*. In other words, it creates a divide between the political and the merely philosophical, which renders the philosophical apolitical. Thus they ignore the continuation – though not an uncomplicated one – of Har Dayal's thought and writing which reflected and refracted the nuances and debates of *fin de siècle* and interwar philosophical production.

But neither is it my goal to promote Har Dayal as unique nor unitary writer of anticolonial ethical thought. His biographers, eager to assert the importance of his role in the independence movement, have resorted to awarding him primacy of thought. Thus, they point to essays in *Modern Review* that provide a surprisingly similar analysis as Gandhi's *Hind Swaraj*, except a few years earlier. Instead of awarding Har Dayal philosophical superiority over Gandhi on intellectual property grounds, I want to point to the ways in which both thinkers – and their multitudinous interlocutors – participated in, and thus reflect, the richness of early twentieth century global leftist thought. Har Dayal's writings are especially good at demonstrating the conversations in which they are a part, and they do provide a considerably more slant take on anti-British thought. His transnational itinerancy, his determination to align multiple leftist movements, and his lifelong dedication to critical cultural and philosophical analysis make Har Dayal's writings a singularly provocative body of thought to which we might return in search of an ethics of anticolonialism. In this spirit, I suggest that we read Har Dayal's final published work as an ethico-political guide that suggests a mode of acting in the world which produces recalcitrance against the ethico-political failures of colonialism, imperialism, and racism, as well as the opposing but equally suspect forces of nationalism, self-centred asceticism, and liberalism.

Hints for Self-Culture

Hints for Self Culture was published in 1934 to critical acclaim, and sold well in both the UK and India. Har Dayal attempted to stop its circulation in India, but at the request of the publisher and permission of the Home Department, shipments of the book reached Delhi by 1935. Har Dayal believed it to be his *tour de force* publication, representing his life's work. The book is divided into four main sections: Intellectual Culture, Physical Culture, Aesthetic Culture, and Ethical Culture. Each of those categories is divided further to encompass a comprehensive account of ethical behaviour: knowledge of science, history, psychology, economics, philosophy, sociology, languages, comparative religion, exercise, diet, art, architecture, sculpture, painting, music, dancing, oratory, and poetry. The final section, 'Ethical Culture', is an extended reflection, building on the required knowledges, of the 'Five Circles' of ethico-political action.

The book opens with a dedication to young Rationalists and a plea for the maximum acquisition of Knowledge. The chapter follows with a catalogue of advice. One should own as many books as possible, and participate in societies that discuss and exchange them. To cultivate self-culture is to cultivate first a 'mental self-culture', devoid of 'frivolity, cupidity, and superstition' (p.6). Thus the book's first section is dedicated to the practice of intellectual self-cultivation: the practice of rational scientific inquiry balanced with an appreciation for realms beyond those explained by science. The study of history takes up the majority of this chapter. Har Dayal proposes a study of history which is universal in scope and cosmopolitan in spirit (pp. 45, 49); consisting of 46 outstanding periods of universal time (beginning with Egypt and ending in the League of Nations). Har Dayal rejects, on the other hand, universal comprehensive laws of history: including progressive narratives, development theory, or cyclical patterns. Beyond this, one should learn economic theory in relation to ethical questions; one should learn multiple languages toward the development of Esperanto; one should study comparative religion in order to understand religion's contribution to society but one should avoid religious practice.

Har Dayal's notes on physical culture follow; this section was most widely criticized by his peers when the book was published. The section offers guidance about exercise, diet, and general healthy lifestyle choices, including suggestions on what to eat, how to eat, where to live, and how often to smile. At fewer than fifteen pages, the section is the slimmest of all. Nevertheless, it seems an obligatory section for the genre.

Aesthetic Culture follows, which is a counterbalance to scientific knowledge. Great art represents a universal Humanity against mediocre art, which remains loyal to nationalist and communal interests. Great art is thus inherently social and therefore an ethical stance (pp. 148-150). The best art – precisely because it is the most social of all the arts – is architecture, which Har Dayal argues should be studied with great rigour. Good music is also wonderful because it creates us as social beings; jazz and other forms of 'vulgar' music, on the other hand, is to be avoided because they are distractions. Dancing to good music is to be appreciated; dancing to bad music is to be avoided. Oratory is a skill to be developed in relation to ethics so that it may produce good citizens. Similarly, poetry is to be appreciated insofar as it features both excellent style and honourable themes.

Having established the required educational grounds for the construction of an ethical self-culture, Har Dayal shifts to the final and longest section of the work. Because ethical behaviour is, for Har Dayal, inherently social, there is a direct relationship between cultivating self-ethics and cultivating state-ethics. In his sense, personal ethics includes self-discipline, development, and dedication. Discipline is about destruction (p. 183) because it is about the eradication of bad elements; development is about construction because it concerns the 'enrichment of Personality' (p.183) towards self-mastery; and dedication refers to the self-sacrifice one makes to the service of Humanity.

Similar to classical ascetic practices, Har Dayal's ethical self-care involves cultivating oneself in the context of others: 'Character is developed in a social *milieu'* (p.193). In the realm of the social, the ethicist realises that ethics cannot be an Ideal (p. 192) but rather is an individually practised,

historically specific, mode of action. Sociability, therefore, is the single most important guiding virtue. The highest virtue within sociability is Friendship (p.198): 'Friendship is useful for ordinary purposes…. But the highest use of Friendship lies in the mutual encouragement and inspiration for the development of Personality…. Thus can Friendship be the handmaid of Ethics' (pp.198-199). Sociability, for Har Dayal, must not be restricted within a single species: Har Dayal's ethics demands kindness to animals, though not the requirement of vegetarianism.[4]

For the cultivation of progressive movements, which is the social realisation of personal ethics, avarice is the most dangerous of all vices. 'Avarice robs the world of many potential prophets, reformers, and revolutionists…. Avarice is thus the enemy of all new movements, without which human society would stagnate' (p. 229). Rather, it is only through personal service that ethical behaviour is realized. Har Dayal thus demands that one 'serve mankind as fully developed men and women, and not merely as soulless machines for the manufacture of pictures, poems, inventions, theorems, speeches, books, laws, or constitutions' (p. 242). Beyond the reach of personal service, a person should devote herself to the study of economics and politics as the 'higher orbits' (p. 240) of ethical life.

Personal ethics is in the service of the 'Five Concentric Circles' beyond the self: (1) the Family, 'the smallest sphere of activity in the service of Humanity' (p. 260) which Har Dayal defines quite narrowly as the single life-partner one maintains; (2) the Relatives, which include our mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters, and so on; (3) the Municipality, which is territorially and politically defined but has a historical tradition and demands that you act within it as a 'citizen' (p. 280); (4) the Nation, which is geographically, linguistically, and ethnically defined and based on local homogeneity; and (5) the World-State, the universal ethical, social, and political utopia rooted in the cosmopolitan and 'universal sacrament of

[4]Curiously, however, this practice makes up - precisely, 'speaking arithmetically' - only two percent of ethical behaviour. Intra-species sociability makes up 98 percent of Har Dayal's ethics. (p.238).

friendship' (p.305) within and through an appreciation of inherent difference. The World-State, to which ultimate service is due, will be the realization of the universal inseparability of Economics, Politics, and Ethics. There will be one language, a single currency, no religion, equal distribution of global wealth, and enforced global itinerancy. It will require that everyone practice self-sacrificing hospitality. It will be ruled by four political principles: democracy, liberty, equality, and fraternity (p. 329).

And thus Har Dayal concludes: 'Do your duty within the nation-state today, but do it in the spirit of a world-citizen of the future. Eschew all hatred and contempt for other nations and races. Study world-history, travel as often as you can, learn a world-language, read world-literature, cultivate the society of foreigners and strangers, and thus make yourself and your friends worthy of world-citizenship…. Your children and grandchildren will rejoice in the light and warmth of the Sun that shall illumine the Earth in the days to come, the serene and spacious World-State, one and indivisible' (pp. 362-363).

Cultures of Self-Culture

Hints for Self-Culture is, to some degree, a synthetic work. In it, we can see the strands of popular and influential nineteenth-century European philosopher and intellectuals. Har Dayal does not hide them. In his essays on education and modern philosophy for *Modern Review* in 1912, Har Dayal proposed a synthesis between Eastern and Western thought. He solicited Indian students to come to the US and learn European philosophy while retaining Indian philosophy: to know only the former while forgetting the latter was aiding 'the social conquest of the Hindu race' (1908), but to know only the latter while ignoring the former would be to ignore the rich conversations about the possibility of civilization occurring between them. Shruti Kapila (2007) has shown the importance of nineteenth-century liberal philosopher Herbert Spencer on Har Dayal's thought. Spencer was useful for his critique of the imperial state, even though his arguments against the bureaucratic imperial state were in order to promote 'non-universal' individual liberty (Kapila 2007, pp.113-114).

Har Dayal, along with his colleague Shyamji Krishnavarma, took up Spencer quite seriously in the 1900s, but Har Dayal largely abandoned the thinker in the 1910s, dismayed with the philosopher's desire to live above the fray of ethical and political problems. Nevertheless, because of its anti-imperial stance and insistence on individual liberty, Spencer's liberalism found an unlikely seat in intellectual anarchist circles. In that spirit, Har Dayal was a lifelong advocate of his selected works.

Har Dayal's *Hints for Self-Culture* also demonstrates the radical ethical and philosophical break that occurred after the horrors of World War I. The philosophical fallout from the war offered a *tabula rasa* on which radical political thought (on both the left and right) could imagine a new world and a new human. Philosophers in Europe and the US (most famously Husserl, and perhaps most notoriously Heidegger) set to work on rebuilding, from the 'crisis of the European man', new univeralisms and new humanisms. The radical academic left was particularly interested in turning to non-Western cultures for clues. A US debate from 1925, for example, featured Indian and African suggestions for 'a new civilization' (Maeterlinck, 1926). Har Dayal was in communication with these thinkers and writers in the US from Europe; in the UK and Sweden, he was in daily conversation with minor philosophers and intellectuals. In a letter to a friend in the US following World War I, Har Dayal mourned the 'dismal state' (Van Wyck Brooks collection) of nationalism in the twentieth century. In short, *Hints for Self-Culture* emerges from a vibrant and vigorous transatlantic debate among radical leftists in the 1920s and 1930s.

Hints for Self-Culture generally participates in a popular genre of public intellectual writing: the self cultivation guidebook. Of the most successful and exemplary guides was John Stuart Blackie's, Greek professor at Edinburgh, whose book *On Self-Culture* was published in 1891. The organization of Har Dayal's and Blackie's guides are exactly the same: a section on intellectual and aesthetic culture, a section on physical culture, and a final meditation on ethical culture, which builds off the earlier chapters. The differences between the two, are notable and draw out what makes Har Dayal's a singularly provocative contribution – and

challenge – to the genre. Blackie's reliance on logic and reason against emotions, for example, is countered by Har Dayal's appeal to emotions produced under the conditions of aesthetic experience. This produces an altogether short section on aesthetics for Blackie; Har Dayal's is a much longer meditation on art, experience, and sociality. Blackie's section on physical culture is proportionally longer than Har Dayal's section, with particular points on rigorous exercise and proper weight maintenance.

This focus on the individual body may foreshadow to the final section of Blackie's *Self-Culture*, which stands in stark contrast to Har Dayal's ethical behaviour. Har Dayal makes no mention of shunning idleness – though any decided acolyte would never find time to relax. Blackie, on the other hand, promotes perpetual work and labour in order to avoid 'wreck and ruin' (p.48). Thus for Blackie, ethical self-cultivation produces good individuals. The highest attainable goal is 'genuine individual nobility' (p.52): to nurture 'the kingdom of Heaven within you' (p.52). Har Dayal's ethical goal, on the other hand, is rooted in the inherent inextricability of social relationships and can be judged only by the future socialist utopia of the World-State. Recall that World-State – equally utopian as the kingdom of Heaven – is rooted not in individual nobility but the sanctity of friendship. Though other suggestions are the same – avoid prejudice, shun vanity, refuse narrow-mindedness – the resultant difference of structure between the two books is huge. Where Har Dayal shuns overzealous education by promoting reading groups and cooperative learning, Blackie is a bit more straightforward: 'Don't cram…. Learn to think first' (p.22), he coldly instructs us. Where Har Dayal's personal ethics demand dedication to others, Blackie's ethics demand 'obedience' (p.43).[5] Both are practices of renunciation for others, but Har Dayal's 'dedication' is hardly subservient whereas Blackie's 'obedience' is fully so – and in the name of State, Church, and Order.

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[5]Har Dayal: "If all the children obey and imitate their parents, Mankind is lost…. Old men and women are, as a rule, mere bundles of antiquated prejudices and reaction-patterns, living fossils fit only for a museum of Sociology". (pp.276-277).

This is not to unsympathetically dismiss Blackie's *Self Culture* in favour of Har Dayal's *Hints,* but it does demonstrate in contrast how Har Dayal used the popular genre of the self-cultivation guide to reimagine a global society. In other words, if Blackie's goal was to instruct us on how to be most ethical in the world we inhabit, Har Dayal's goal was to instruct us on how to be most ethical in order to change the world we inhabit. How might we work on ourselves, Har Dayal asks, in order to fundamentally change the society in which we live? Moreover, how might we simultaneously improve economic and political conditions – those higher orbits beyond the self and its relations – while reconstructing, in the inherent murkiness of sociality, new notions of ethical subjectivity?

But let us not overstate this particular case before examining another self-cultivation guide, one about which Har Dayal wrote extensively throughout his life. Giuseppe Mazzini's republican tract *Duties of Man* (1860) had promoted a similar model of concentric circles leading from the individual to his family, town, nation, and world. Man's duties were first and foremost his 'cosmopolitan duties': fulfilling, in and through (but also over and above) the nation-state, a service of purity, education, revolution, and liberation. Mazzini proposed that man's cosmopolitan duties required him to recognize his inherent 'association' - an interconnectedness with humanity from which the individual could not remove himself. Rooted in this intersubjective (to use an anachronistic term) association, men were to commit themselves to strict educational practices, dedicate themselves to the raising of families, unify their nation-state on the grounds of ethnicity and tradition, purify their nation-state along the same lines, and, having done so, commit themselves to the project of unifying those nation-states under a common, universal God.

Before it was used as a guiding philosophy to unify Italy under Mussolini, *Duties of Man* offered Indian anticolonial agitators on the left and the right provocative models for education, nationalism, and revolution. Har Dayal cites the book in his essays on Indian education (1908-1909) and in his pamphlets on revolutionary structure (1912), as well as in *Hints for Self-Culture* itself. Har Dayal, unlike V.D. Savarkar, wrestled with

the implications of Mazzini's notions of nationalism and purity even as he promoted certain strains of Mazzini's thought. In an essay written while in California, Har Dayal proposed to mitigate Mazzini by relying on a longer history of nineteenth century Italian nationalism: 'after Mazzini, Garibaldi; after Garibaldi, Cavour' (quoted in Brown p.76) – after education, revolution; after revolution, reconstruction. (This sentiment defined, for Lajpat Rai, 'Hardayalism', a philosophy that lacked, in Rai's opinion, sincere interest in the last phase.)

While Har Dayal focused on education and revolution in Mazzini's works, he was remarkably quiet on notions of purity and ethno-nationalism. Har Dayal makes no mention of hygienic purity in *Hints for Self-Culture*, a notable absence given its appearance in most contemporaneous ethical manuals (and widespread interest in public health). Indeed, for Har Dayal, most things cannot be left to concerns of purity alone: vegetarianism is the purest of all diets, but such purity is not necessarily ethical (pp. 237-238). For Mazzini – as well as his most notorious readers - purity and nationalism were tightly tethered. Har Dayal expressed sympathies with Savarkar along the lines of revolutionary action, but the two mostly disagreed over Savarkar's Hindu nationalism.[6] Not only does Har Dayal reject exclusionary nationalism, his ethics require xenophilia – a love for difference – rooted in the messiness of international travel and interaction.

Among other differences,[7] the basic guiding principle – Har Dayal's belief in friendship versus Mazzini's belief in association as the fundamental organizing principle for a universalist utopia – provides the crucial difference between the two works. A person maintains friendship and sociality: it is semi-voluntary and requires constant work. A person is born into 'association': it requires no work except acknowledgment, but it demands

[6]Though not entirely: Har Dayal appears occasionally sympathetic to theories of 'Muslim invaders' in his early writings. Nevertheless, his relationship with the Khalifat movement, and the *Ghadr* party's efforts to unite Sikhs and Muslims with Hindus against the British, suggest that he was not a loyal follower of Hindu nationalist historiography.

[7]One of which should certainly not go unrecognised: whereas Mazzini and Blackie claimed that they were instructing men to become fathers and citizens, Har Dayal instructs men *and women* to become *friends* and citizens.

constant duty. Association, for Mazzini, requires the abdication of the self. Friendship, for Har Dayal, provides a form of mutual care: not only of the other person, who is owed your dedication and service, but also of yourself. Through friendship, one receives necessary critiques and support in order to take better care of one's self.

Har Dayal maintains a position beyond Blackie's liberalism and Mazzini's proto-fascist republicanism. In so doing, he articulates a semi-socialist utopia grounded on two claims: that we are inherently, social and intersubjective beings; that ethics, while being inherently social and intersubjective, might be accomplished by a process of working on the self.

Anticolonialism as a Way of Life

The British Raj found the book generally innocuous, except for the extended sections on communism. Judging that it carefully eschewed politics in favour of a philosophical-ethical stance, they allowed it to circulate in India. British Raj bureaucrats needn't have been particularly astute readers – and better for Har Dayal's book that they weren't – but their collective decision does suggest a strange misreading on their part. It's true that Har Dayal makes no explicit statements about India or even colonialism, and this coupled with the recantations of his Ghadr past in order to return to Delhi might lead us to believe either that he had sincerely abandoned his revolutionary past or that he was acting expediently. I think either produces inaccurate readings of *Hints for Self-Culture*, even if it does intersect with an anticolonial politics from a peculiar angle.

At the same time, the Raj's conclusions might help us make better sense of why Har Dayal, like many of his anticolonial contemporaries (including M.K. Gandhi), have not been widely taken up as serious philosophers. Even as contemporary European leftist theory goes once more in search of new universalisms (Rancière), or at least utopian political formations (Hardt and Negri), it has neglected to venture into the murky territory of the multitudinous voices of earlier leftist political thought. Such a formation's reliance on solidly political grounds fails to recognize when

'carefully philosophical' writing quietly gives voice to reimagining a new world. Ethics, imagined in this case as preciously minor, is left behind in the altogether political search for another cosmopolitanism. As Leela Gandhi (2011) has written, if anticolonial writing is an easy victim for 'consignment to rudimentary schoolroom of ethics' (p.36) by contemporary French political thought, then it is from that better vantage point that we can rethink its possible micropolitical offerings.

In other words, British bureaucrats (then) and French philosophers (now) both fail to recognize the contribution of anticolonial writing to a new politics when they read it as merely ethical. They even fail to take Har Dayal at his own word when he writes that ethical self-culture becomes (or perhaps already is) political self-culture when practiced self-consciously. Precisely because it begins in the uncharted space of two selves aiding each other in self-care, Har Dayal's World-State has such tiny, anarchistic beginnings that it passes under the noses of those looking for political organization. In this sense, Har Dayal's Self-Culture practices were not unlike M.K. Gandhi's ascetic practices: ethical practices of working on the self that create recalcitrance against the organized colonial power.

Hints for Self-Culture isn't quite a *Ghadr*: it's considerably quieter. But that isn't to say it's only (to borrow a phrase from a different context) 'politics on a lower frequency' (Gilroy 1993). If the *Ghadr's* politics were liberation from the illegitimate regime, *Hints'* ethics offers us a model of freedom. The distinction is Foucault's. If liberation is the hypothesis that 'all that is required is to break these repressive deadlocks and man will be reconciled with himself' (Foucault 1998: p.282), freedom is the defining of 'admissible and acceptable forms of existence or political society' (p.283). While liberation is political and important, the defining of practices of freedom is, for Foucault, ethical and necessary.

By launching ethical critiques in the face of a political atrocities, anticolonial thinkers – and their anti-racist, anti-patriarchal, and anarchist colleagues – made it possible to imagine a new world not merely built on the foundations of the old. The political failures of colonial regimes could not be solved merely be new people claiming old seats of power. If the

civilizing mission had created a European human and its 'white-but-not-quite' replicas, anticolonial thinkers needed to imagine (a la Fanon) what it would mean to construct a new human altogether. This meant imagining a new universal ethics, which meant imagining not merely liberation, but freedom. 'For what is ethics,' Foucault reminds us, 'if not the practice of freedom, the conscious practice of freedom?' (p.284).

Hints for Self-Culture offers us a model of ethics as the practice of freedom: taking care of the self. Against a disciplinary technology of the self that promotes processes of governmentality through juridical order, an ethical technology of the self requires a self-care towards a self-mastery – a process that is neither self-indulgent nor fully ascetic.[8] For Foucault, this meant a constant practice of working on the self that produced knowledge not only of the self but also of its possible conduct. 'Only the free man and woman,' Har Dayal writes in a similar vein, 'can walk erect, and speak the truth, and rise to the full stature of Humanity' (p.351). To take care of yourself, as an ethics, is to produce a truth about yourself and thus your possible practices. It is to produce new acceptable forms of existence and society.[9]

Through hospitality and friendship, Har Dayal writes, one is able to receive the honest critiques necessary for self-cultivation. This act made it possible to reconstruct the self with new self-masteries and a new recalcitrance towards old forms of injustice. Har Dayal's *Hints for Self-Culture,* then, suggests one possible conception for how a practice of freedom might be enacted. Foucault was reluctant to claim any one model of ethical behaviour superior to the others - though he seemed particularly drawn to the model of self-care he identified in Western antiquity. We might notice a similar reluctance in his seemingly unlikely Indian counterpart:

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[8] A note on the difference, for Foucault, between *askesis* and asceticism: "*Ascesis* [against asceticism]… is the work that one performs on oneself in order to transform oneself or make the self appear which, happily, one never attains". (p.137).

[9] Michel Foucault: "To take care of the self is to equip oneself with these truths: this is where ethics is linked to the game of truth". (p.285).

'These short hints on Self-Culture,' Har Dayal meekly writes in the dedication, 'are not exhaustive, but only suggestive' (viii). Nevertheless, Har Dayal's demand that we live simply but also well, that we interrogate and craft ourselves under constant supervision of friends, and that we 'take care of [our] body' (p.131) offers us one set of ethical practices towards re-conceiving new humans, and in turn, re-conceiving a new world.

Michel Foucault doesn't serve here to illuminate the metaphysical claims in Har Dayal's writings. Rather, the juxtaposition of the two writers highlights the dispersed genealogy of modern philosophical thought, which allows us new resources towards re-conceiving ethical and political practices. The two thinkers are, in that sense, inextricably linked.[10] The two also remind us, against contemporary political thought, that the 'rudimentary schoolroom of ethics' is not such an awful place to be. We might prefer to remain in this ethical lineage, especially the one brought to us by interwar leftist anticolonial thought,[11] and turn to it in search of a new cosmopolitan imagination.

'World-State' is admittedly a bad name for a utopia, but we might turn to its foundations to reimagine, once more, the possibilities of a new minor universalism. From the underside of the civilising mission – and also from the underside of 'the crisis of the European man' – it articulates a project that cannot yet be recognized as political. It works both under the noses of colonialism and nationalism, and beyond their imaginative sight. The conscious practice of freedom, perhaps via a care of the self, thus remains anarchistic in a strictest sense: in the absence of the state, it is the art of not being governed. Or perhaps it is the art of being governed differently: an anarchistic ethics thus produced allows us to reimagine the possible range of conduct for a new society; and, for a new society, a new human.

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[10]See Leela Gandhi, 'The Pauper's Gift', *Public Culture,* 23.1 (2011), (pp. 27-38).

[11]A lineage extended by Cold War era decolonial thought: Fanon, Memmi, Cesaire, and the Afro-Asian Conference at Bandung.

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