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Understanding

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Understanding's the humanity;
Understanding's a divine option;
Understanding's a caution, kind tender warmth;
Understanding's the decency, a mystery;
Understanding's the etiquette, a politeness;
Understanding's the civility, a consideration;
Understanding's a formality, a custom;
Understanding's a regulation, a mandatory;
Understanding's a necessary, an essential;
Understanding's a conception, an idea;
Understanding's an appreciation, a respect;
Understanding's an admiration, a regard;
Understanding's the adulation, the worship;
Understanding's the devotion, a loyalty;
Understanding's the spirituality, an observance;
Understanding's a dedication, a commitment;
Understanding's the perseverance, a determination;
Understanding's the worship, the homage;
Understanding's the awe, the wonderment;
Understanding's the veneration, the devotion;
When 'he' mis-understands, understanding's a sin;
A fight to 'understanding' and a 'submission' to 'acceptance';
Understanding's the humility between the two.

Understanding's the sympathy, a support;
Understanding's a pity, an emotion;
Understanding's a notion, a belief;
Understanding's an opinion, the concept;
Understanding's a sense, the feelings;
Understanding's the feelings, it's a care;
Understanding's the understanding, it's a concern;
Understanding's the tender, it's a kind-hearted;
Understanding's the reasoning, it's a thoughtful;
Understanding's the supportive, it's a concerned;
Understanding's a belief, it's a standpoint;
Understanding's an acceptance, it's a realization;
Understanding's the acknowledgement, it's an acceptance;
Understanding's a salute, it's a noticing;
Understanding's the awareness, it's an appreciation;
Understanding's so gentle, it's the mercy;
Understanding's a love, it's an attachment;
Understanding's the gentleness, it's the approach;
Understanding's so sensitive, it's the charity;
Understanding's a promise, it's the vow;
Hold within those 'misunderstanding' I pledge;
Makes 'me' no 'deference, makes no conflict;
Understanding's a bonding between the two.

Ah! He shouts and he frightens a soul;
Makes 'him' more energetic, still confusing;
Understanding a fondness, it's an intuition;
He never knew what he's up to, delivering speeches;
He takes and he talks thousands and thousands;
'Believing' and 'impression' all gone murky;
'Understanding's the misunderstanding so conflicting;
He won and I lost; confusing and all mix-up;
Understanding's an agreement, it's the gentleman's agreement;
Fancy and decorate himself, so tough I elaborate much;
Oh! Man disagreeing and alternating and falling out;
Mis understanding a mis conception, it's the mistake;
Understanding's the intelligence, the ability of the two.

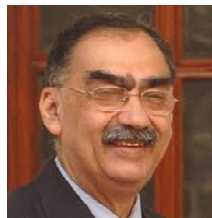
Alternative societies

By: Bruce Sterling

If one abandons the odd notion that the passage of time must make things worse or better, the spectrum of possibility expands dramatically. Science fiction writers have spent much effort conceiving societies that are neither perfect nor horrific but excitingly different, alien to human experience. Robert Heinlein's greatest popular success, the novel *Stranger in a Strange Land* (1961), paints the fate of a prophet and social reformer who was raised by Martians. A Martian human has no earthly shibboleths, so the story's weird hero cuts briskly through almost every pious human custom relating to sex, death, religion, and money. For obvious reasons, Heinlein's work was a countercultural icon in the 1960s. Many SF writers, like Heinlein, took particular pleasure in upsetting the most basic tenets of the human condition. John Varley's *The Ophiuchi Hotline* (1977) is an archive of methods to shatter old human verities: characters die and are reborn as clones, change sex with ease and alacrity, make backup tapes of their personalities, and undergo drastic acts of surgery—all in a space-dwelling society that accepts such things as normal. William Gibson's *Neuromancer*, mentioned above, was widely noted for its intense depiction of a postnational world order ruled by feudal global corporations. Artificial intelligences, owned by the wealthy few, are hugely powerful entities, yet they pass almost unheeded over a seething, fractured society of outlaw geneticists, information criminals, colourful street gangs, and orbiting Rastafarians. In Neal Stephenson's *Snow Crash* (1992), a future globalized society has abandoned conventional land-based government and reformed itself along the lines of electronic cults and mobile interest groups. The Mafia delivers pizza, the CIA is a for-profit organization, Hong Kong is a global franchise of capitalist Chinatowns, and life online is often of more consequence than real life.

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With Rahul's Resignation, Will Congress Finally Extricate Itself From the Gandhis?



By: Vivek Katju

Courtesy The Wire

That the Nehru-Gandhi family completely dominates the Congress party is indisputable. That position is not going to change with Rahul Gandhi owning responsibility for the party's crushing 2019 Lok Sabha electoral defeat and giving up its presidency. Sonia Gandhi's election as the Congress parliamentary party chairperson, Priyanka Gandhi's continuance as a party general secretary and, finally, Rahul Gandhi himself making it clear in his resignation letter that he will continue to be an active party member all show that the party will remain family controlled. Thus, will Rahul's successor be expected to perform the same role for the family that Manmohan Singh did as prime minister leading the UPA government – manage affairs but accept the family's primacy and its intervention whenever and wherever on whatever issue it chooses? Viewed in this light, there would be 'accountabilities' of different kinds for different sets of party persons. Rahul Gandhi would lose party presidency but not his determinant, if for some time maybe recessed, influence in party affairs. However, if the chief ministers of the three states – Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh – give up their offices and senior party persons give up their party posts, their influence will drastically decline. All this can be ascribed to the basic nature of the party in its present avatar and this itself can be traced back to five decades ago – to the tumultuous year of 1969 when the

Congress party split. Indira Gandhi was expelled by party veterans but she succeeded in projecting her group as the true Congress, the vehicle of the National Movement which, after independence, under Jawaharlal Nehru, laid the foundations of modern India. Indira Gandhi also gradually made it a completely family-centric organisation. During the Emergency, she allowed Sanjay Gandhi to play a pivotal role in party affairs and also intervene in government processes at will. It is true that lobbying for children began much earlier; Motilal Nehru proposed to Mahatma Gandhi that Jawaharlal Nehru should be considered to preside over the Lahore Congress session in 1929. That session became historic for the party adopted the Purna Swaraj resolution under Jawaharlal's leadership and inspiration. Like his father before him, Jawaharlal agreed to make Indira Gandhi the president of the Congress. She became head of the party in 1959. This was a time when there were innumerable party veterans who could have been accorded the distinction of leading the party. Certainly, Jawaharlal was the tallest leader of the party yet it did not then become an entirely family-centric affair for then there were leaders who had gone through the baptism of the national movement and had large followings and national status because of their political work. Thus, at Nehru's death the party chose Lal Bahadur Shastri as prime minister. The decision to make Indira Gandhi prime minister after Shastri's death in 1966 was determined more by a desire of party veterans to keep Morarji Desai out than get Nehru's daughter in. The situation became completely different after the party split in 1969. The majority of the group that remained with Indira Gandhi became her personal loyalists and after the 1971 election victory no one came forward to credibly challenge her. The imposition of the Emergency too witnessed no opposition from within the party and even senior leaders let Sanjay Gandhi ride roughshod over



them. It was only after the declaration of the 1977 elections that Jagjivan Ram and Hemavati Bahuguna among others revolted that the situation changed. They had read the writing on the wall regarding the popular revulsion in the north against emergency excesses. Some Congress members left the party when Indira Gandhi was in the wilderness after her defeat in 1977 but she continued to be its leader as did Sanjay Gandhi. The party returned to power in January 1980. When Rajiv Gandhi filled the vacuum left by Sanjay's sudden death in an airplane crash that year the party demonstrated that it had become a total family-centric affair. After the reverses of the 1989 election Rajiv Gandhi did not leave the field. He did not accept responsibility the way Rahul is doing now. What happened after Rajiv's death is fresh in popular memory to need to be recalled. The significant lesson that emerges is that the party continued to centre around the family legacy even if Sonia Gandhi had distanced herself. That family centredness has only increased in the past two decades. It will not go away unless the Gandhi family completely disassociates itself from the party, indeed, from politics itself. Even if some party members were to revolt or leave, as some are currently doing, it will not change the family's position. Rahul Gandhi has eloquently stated his commitment to the party's ideology and his determination to carry on the struggle against the political

principles of the BJP and the Sangh parivar. Will his resignation assist the party in this struggle? This is unlikely for the party will still look to the Gandhis, especially Rahul for final signals on all significant matters. The family will have to decide on the manner of how to take on the government. Yes, day-to-day party affairs may be left to a non-Gandhi party president but he/she would hardly be able to decide on fundamental issues – especially those connected with the party ideology or electoral strategy. Will Rahul be able to bring in a culture of accountability by resigning himself? The people will remain sceptical for they would feel that his stepping down is a formality and that he will retain the substance of authority even if he gives up the position of party president. Does all this place Rahul Gandhi in a difficult situation? The answer is in the affirmative. But then this situation itself is inherent in the nature of all family-centric enterprises. Rahul Gandhi wants the party to radically transform itself. But the question is, has Rahul Gandhi thought through all aspects of his resignation especially if his resignation would assist the party's transformation. It does not appear to be so. The great reverse of 2019 provides him an opportunity to show that the transformation in his political persona is not illusory. Vivek Katju is a former Indian diplomat who served as India's ambassador to Afghanistan and Myanmar, and as secretary, Ministry of External Affairs.

Contd. from yesterday issue

REVOLUTIONS OF THE MIND

THE EDUCATION SYSTEM WE NEED



It should be noted that when one age is superseded by another, the former age continues. Thus the Agricultural, Industrial, Information and Knowledge Ages are still with us. The advantages of our current superseding age is that finally we will be able to think intelligently about Knowledge, Technology, Information, Industry and Agriculture – a type of thinking that has been solely lacking, as our environmental, economic, educational, business, health, crime, corruption, conflicts and wars, and social irresponsibility performances indicate.

Let me come in with the education system we have till today. The British ruled India during the Industrial Age. No doubt, they left with us a western education system but the education system of the Industrial era. Although there were a few Englishmen who wanted to spread education for its own sake, the government was chiefly concerned only with its own concerns. There was a huge demand for clerks and other administrative roles in the company's functioning. It was cheaper to get Indians rather than Englishmen from England for these jobs. This was the prime motive. We were educated in the industrial era education system. We were trained to be clerk, who obeys instructions, not thinkers. We were made to believe in limitations, that's how we were

provided with instructional system of education. This instructional system of education kills creativity and we most of the time end up as human robots, not thinkers. A change is needed, it must happen now. We are till today focusing on learning of facts, memorizing them and reproducing them in an exam. This system may give life, but without inner sense of fulfillment as we fail to test the intelligence of the child to realize their true human potential. The current pedagogic processes must change from enabling the child to learn to helping the child learn how to learn. For this reform to happen a mere change in the textbooks or using a tech-visual app is not enough. Looking at global perspective of education, education model of the 19th and early 20th century is build up for 20% professionals, 30% merchants and office workers, and 50% physical labourers. While our present needs is the development and achievements of higher taxonomic and cognitive levels of competency. To achieve this, our school should emphasize beyond reading, writing and arithmetic. These promote restrictive thinking, and this way the school tries to mold a child; a child born to become an artist was molded to a doctor; another child born to be a footballer was molded to be an advocate. This

way the true human potentials of an individual is killed; they became an artist, a doctor, a footballer or an advocate however not a successful one! They don't enjoy what they do and throughout their life they end up confusing themselves. "Everyone is a potential Leonardo da Vinci before a limit is placed on his/her thinking abilities". A child should only be nurtured, not molded. Leonardo da Vinci was the best in the world during his time at art, science, aerodynamics, architecture, mathematics, engineering, physiology, anatomy, drawing as a specific subjection, invention, geography, physics, aquanautics, futuristic thinking, aeronautics, archaeology, and philosophy. He was a poet, played stringed instruments, wrote songs and sang. He was also a great physical specimen – the most poised and integrated individual whose hobby just happened to be ambidexterity. He wrote with both his left and right hands in mirror images. He was the best at integrating mind and body. He defines his integrated approach to thought as, "Learn to study the science of art and art of science." Such integrated thought process of Leonardo da Vinci which promotes the freedom to think independently without limiting the brain needs special attention in our education system today.