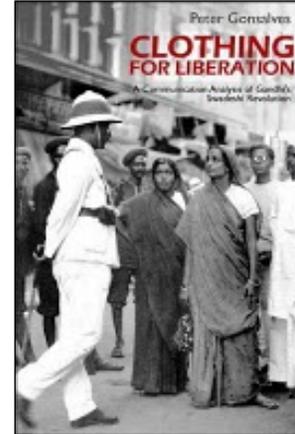


Peter Gonsalves, **Clothing for Liberation: A Communication Analysis of Gandhi's Swadeshi Revolution**, New Delhi: SAGE Publications, 2010, 163 pp., \$32.09 (hardcover).

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Peter Gonsalves' *Clothing for Liberation: A Communication Analysis of Gandhi's Swadeshi Revolution* posits that Gandhi's communication style—through dress, daily interactions, and speeches—subliminally united an Indian nation. The author builds on works by Roland Barthes on semiology (*Systeme de la Mode*), Victor Turner on comparative symbology (*The Anthropology of Performance*), and Erving Goffman on symbolic interaction theory (*The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*). Gonsalves' book suggests why linkage of the three theories is necessary to fully understand Mahatma Gandhi's Swadeshi Movement and how this understanding, in turn, leads to what he calls "Gandhian Symbolisation."



The term *Swadeshi* means "one's own country," signifying that Gandhi's movement would enable native Indians to first become self-reliant and ultimately free of British rule. The use of the *khadi*—the cloth which Indians spun and wove—served as the tool of self-sufficiency. Being capable of spinning and weaving their own clothes allowed Indians to bring revenue to their economy, without involving England in the process. Eventually, this self-reliance spilled over into a movement that led to India's independence and its liberation as a nation.

Gonsalves' main goal is to show how people create symbols through daily interactions. With Gandhi as the focus, the author shows that symbols are not remote, but are spread through cultures and reach masses to both good and bad effect. He first summarizes Gandhi's life and leadership style, and then correlates the Swadeshi Movement to the theories of Barthes, Turner and Goffman. This, in turn, leads to his Gandhian approach to symbolization.

Semiology is the science of signs and symbols and how we use them in our lives. *Systeme de la Mode* offers a close look at how semiology deals with fashion. Barthes highlights the difference between "real" and "represented" cloth. Real cloth is the actual, tangible material, while represented cloth encompasses the material's meaning and how we value it. Gonsalves uses Barthes' analysis of semiology in fashion to take a closer look at how clothing played a role in India's colonial life before and during the Gandhian period.

During the pre-Gandhi period, British manufacturers realized it would be beneficial to create clothing that would catch the eye of Indian consumers, yet none of the revenue from sales of this clothing entered Indian pockets. The Swadeshi Movement created jobs for Indians, enabling them to produce their own clothing, rather than import expensive British products. Gandhi encouraged Indians to capture the

power of clothing, mirroring Barthes' real cloth theory. Gonsalves shows how Gandhi changed the stereotype of what Indian clothing meant and made cultural attire far more valued. In doing so, India become more self-reliant and reaped economic benefits.

By creating a new representation of cultural Indian attire, Gandhi made clothing both a symbol and a source for major change in India. Gonsalves shows how cultivating a higher value and transforming the stereotype can lead to greater meaning and connotation of a symbol.

The author next turns to Turner's comparative symbology, which revolves around symbols in real-life time frames in relation to other symbols and their impact on others. In essence, symbols can have multiple meanings and affect different actors in different ways. For example, when India was deciding on its flag design, the diverse symbols being considered affected various people. Some groups felt excluded, while others viewed a design as too religiously oriented. Gandhi's proposal to make the *khadi* the symbol of Indian identity-in-unity also prompted both positive and negative interpretations. Gandhi thus encountered opposition and support for his different symbols and their representation. Gonsalves illustrates Gandhi's ability to diplomatically address issues pertaining to all symbols that Gandhi created.

Finally, the author examines how Gandhi transformed himself into a living symbol. Drawing on Goffman's theory of symbolic behavior, Gonsalves illustrates how personal interactions through appearance, social setting, conduct, and other factors can create a permanent symbol of how one interprets someone else. Credibility can be determined by contrasting expressions we give with impressions we give off. Through day-to-day interactions, one's words can be measured against one's actions. Evaluating the symmetry of what one says and later does is a determinant of the level of credibility one is seen to have. Gonsalves shows that Gandhi strove to equate all that he said with how he expressed himself to increase his perceived credibility. By fashioning himself as a symbol and an example for others to follow, Gandhi created a symmetry and transparency with which others could view him as an exemplar. He spoke wisely, but it was his actions that spoke louder, enabling him to be a more credible leader.

Gonsalves uses the analyses of Gandhi by other authors as a foundation to create what he calls a Gandhian Approach to Symbolization. He claims this is a step on the way to a new theory of communication through symbols. He describes Gandhi as a man who, through symbols, knew how to eloquently move people toward sociopolitical change. Gandhian symbolization is thoroughly analyzed to show how past events spurred changes that persisted. His theoretical framework helps explain why Gandhi was unique and his Swadeshi Movement successful. By introducing all the various attributes to Gandhian Symbolism through the theories of Barthes, Turner, and Goffman, the author creates a fascinating and new insight of who Gandhi was, and how he used symbols to speak to and move masses.