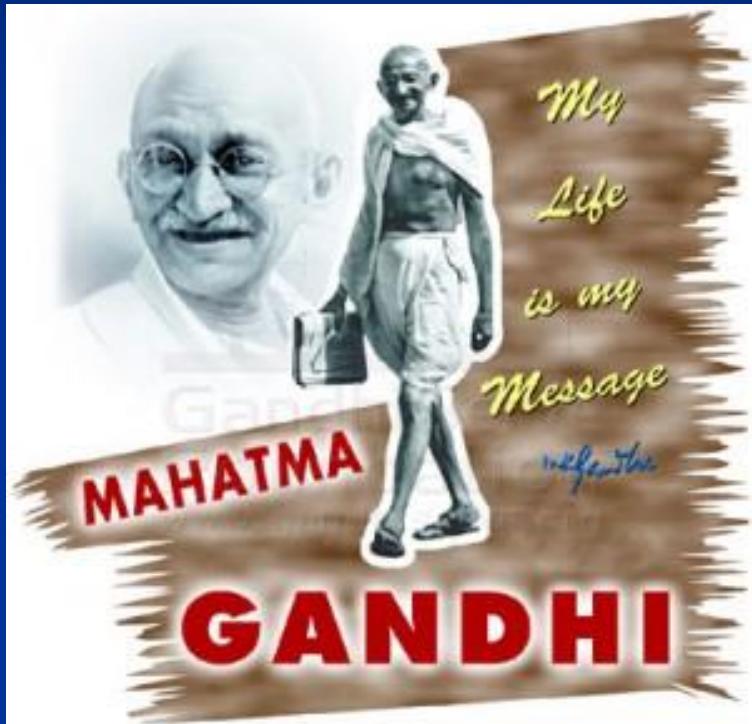


Gandhi's Visions In Our Current World



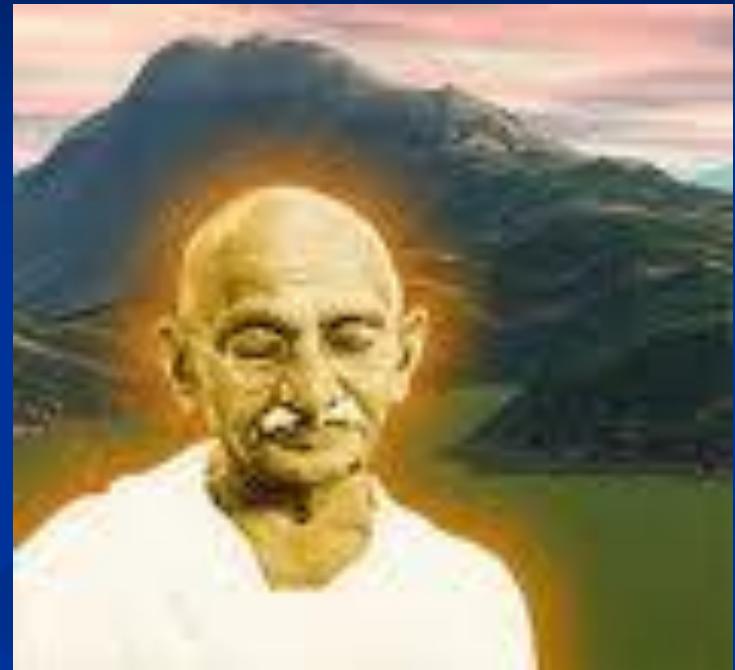
"Non-violence is the greatest force at the disposal of mankind. It is mightier than the mightiest weapon of destruction devised by the ingenuity of man."

V. V. Raman

Miami University, September 30, 2010

Who was Mahatma Gandhi?

Born in Porbandhar in 1869, committed to India's independence, he is known as the Father of the Nation.



“Everyone who wills can hear the inner voice. It is within everyone.” G

Recognition

Countless people in India and beyond recognize Gandhi as a great human being.



“Glory lies in the attempt to reach one's goal and not in reaching it.” G

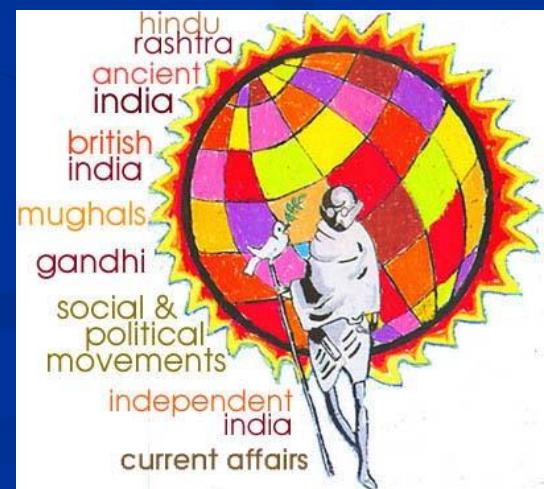
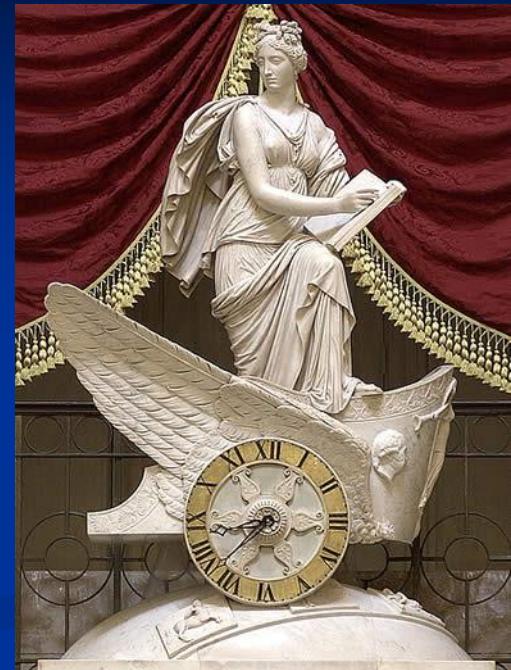
On History

History is more than a record of facts.

It informs, inspires, and teaches.

Historical figures may be a pride or an embarrassment.

Debunking heroes, though interesting, is not helpful.

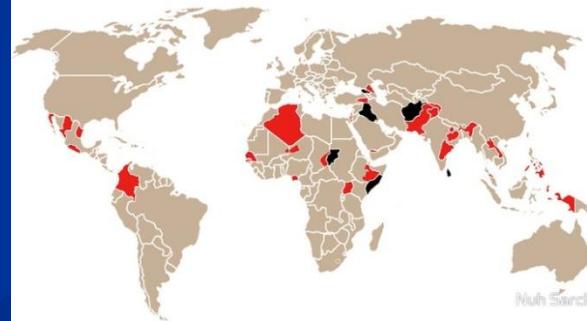


World in Chaos and Confrontations

Our present world is plunged in more confrontations and mutual animosities than ever before.



major wars and
other conflicts



“Intolerance betrays want of faith in one's cause.” G

Problems in the World

Aside from ancient unhappy contexts of wars and poverty, today there are problems in practically every sphere economic, racial, environmental....



Intergroup Conflicts

Conflicts are between individuals, groups, nations, etc. , both parties convinced they are in the right, and are the good fighting the evil.

“I claim to be a simple individual liable to err like any other fellow mortal. I own, however, that I have humility enough to confess my errors and to retrace my steps.” G



Image © Silka - Wilka 5/2002
Characters © Disney



War and Peace

Our instincts incite us to self-assertion, greed, irrational demands from others, and also to propagate what we believe to be the right course for all.

“I am prepared to die, but there is no cause for which I am prepared to kill.” G



Approaches to Lessen These

Harsh punishment of the other
(War).

Persuasion of the opponent to
one's side (Diplomacy).

Appeal to the intrinsic
Goodness of the opponent
(Gandhi).



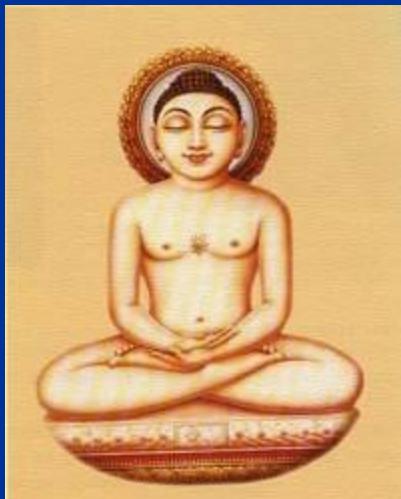
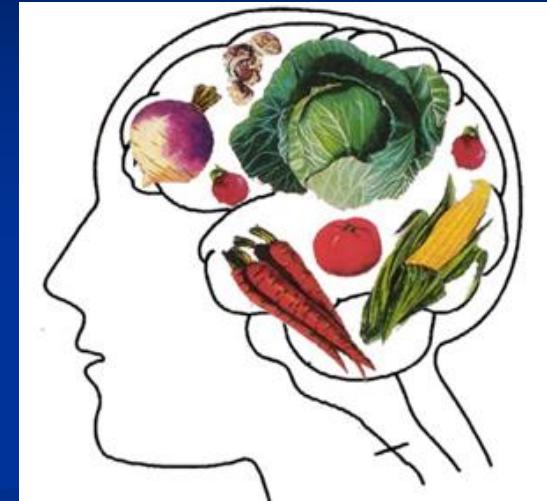
I believe
that a man is
the strongest
soldier for
daring to die
unarmed. G



Ahimsa (Passive) : Non-Violence

We will not resort to physical violence under any circumstances.

No killing of animals for food.
Act kindly. This idea is explicit in Jainism.



“A vow is a purely religious act which cannot be taken in a fit of passion. It can be taken only with a mind purified and composed and with God as witness.” G



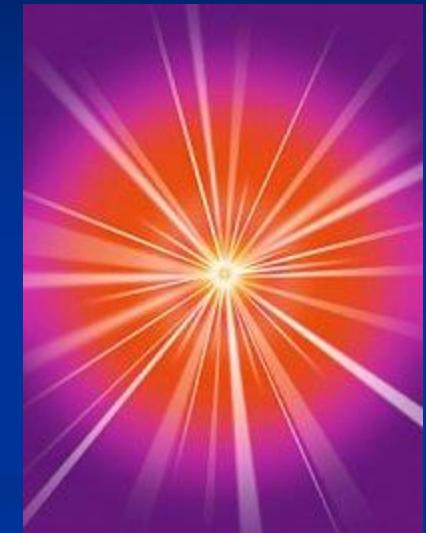
Active Ahimsa: In Conflicts

Being non-violent
towards one's
enemies.

Trying to understand
their position.

Appealing to their
intrinsic goodness.

“A weak man is just by
accident. A strong but non-
violent man is unjust by
accident.” G



Up to a Point

When moral transgressions and injustice are involved, there will be no tolerance of the opponent's ideology, but only efforts to change it.

“A principle is the expression of perfection, and as imperfect beings we can't practice perfection, we devise every moment limits of its compromise in practice.” G

ENOUGH
IS
ENOUGH

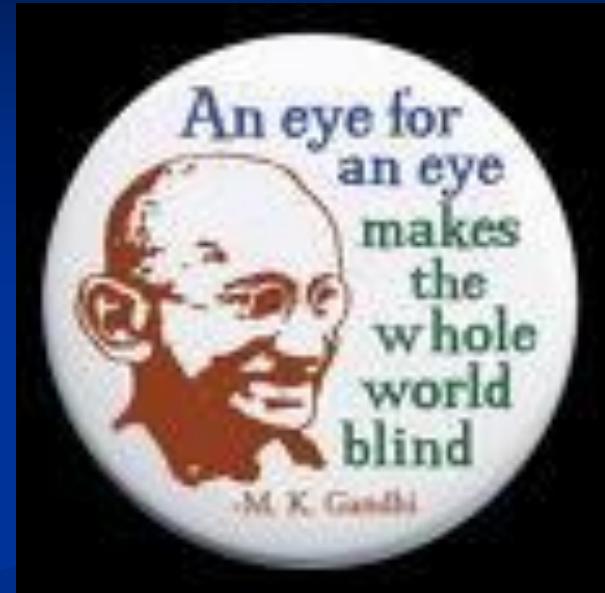
I LOVE THIEVES
BUMS
WHORES
TERRORISTS
ABUSERS

I LOVE CHEATERS
LIARS
HOMOSEXUALS
DRUNKS
PERVERTS
MURDERERS



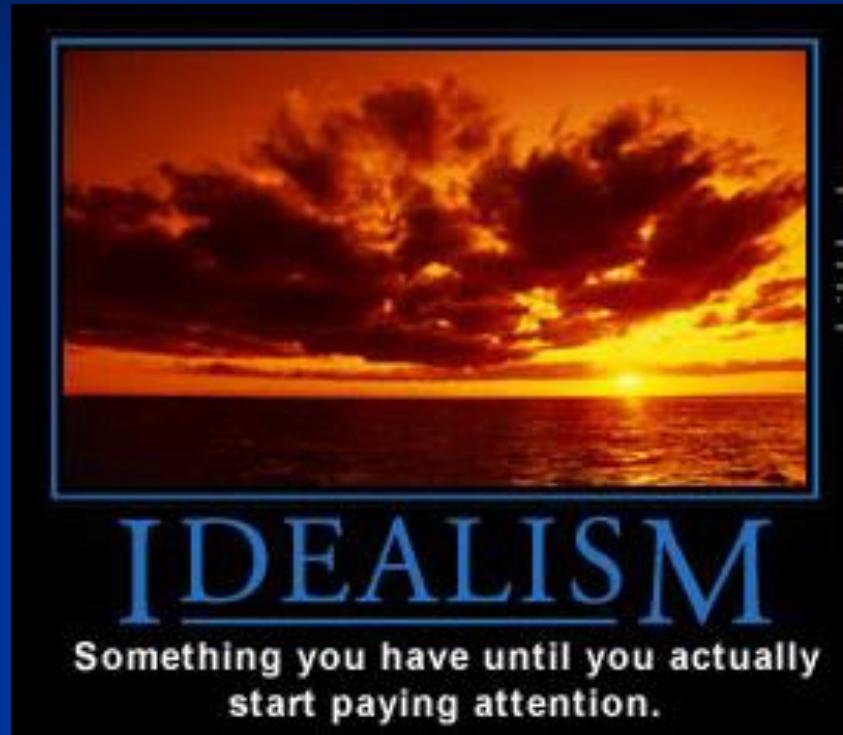
Value in trying Ahimsa

"Eye for an Eye" has been tried before. Returning good for evil is also ancient. It has been used only in interpersonal conflicts. Gandhi applied it in inter-group context.



Ahimsa as an Ideal

Civilization survives
and evolves only as long
as there are people
committed to higher
values and ideals.



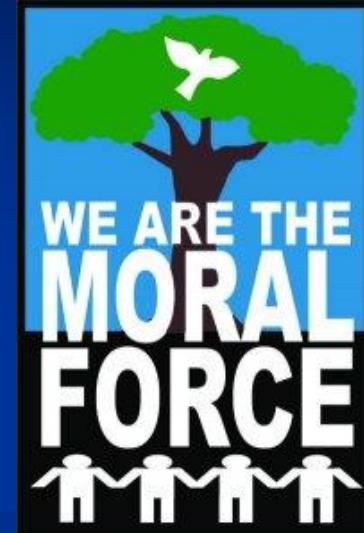
“A small body of determined
spirits fired by an unquenchable
faith in their mission can alter
the course of history.” G

Satyagraha: Moral Force

The goal of the struggle is not to achieve a personal victory, but to establish social justice.



“All compromise is based on give and take, but there can be no give and take on fundamentals.” G

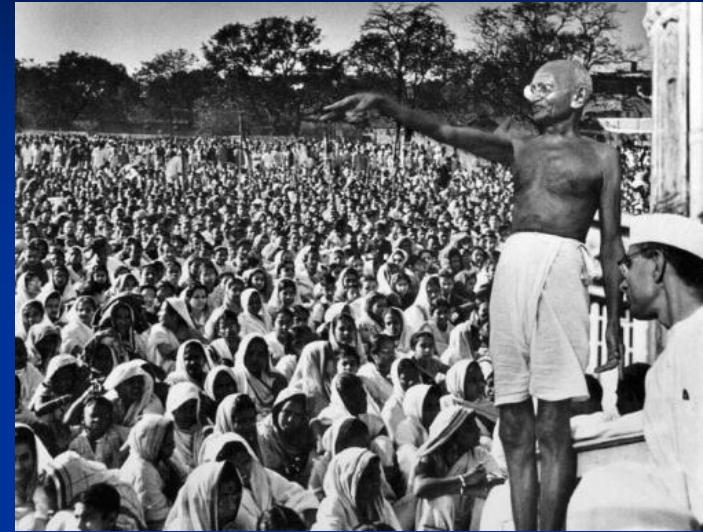


Successes of Ahimsa

Gandhi and Indian independence.

Martin Luther King and Civil Rights in the U.S.

Nelson Mandela and the removal of apartheid.



“An unjust law is itself violence.
Arrest for its breach is more so.” G



Tolerance

Conflicts often arise from our inability to see the other person's point of view, whether in religious, political, social, or moral issues.

Tolerance is an effort to overcome this constraint.



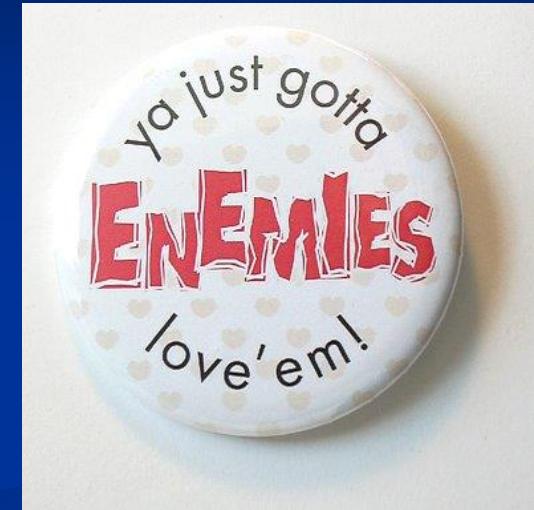
“An ounce of practice is worth more than tons of preaching.” G

Active and Passive Tolerance

Passive Tolerance:
Believe and let believe.

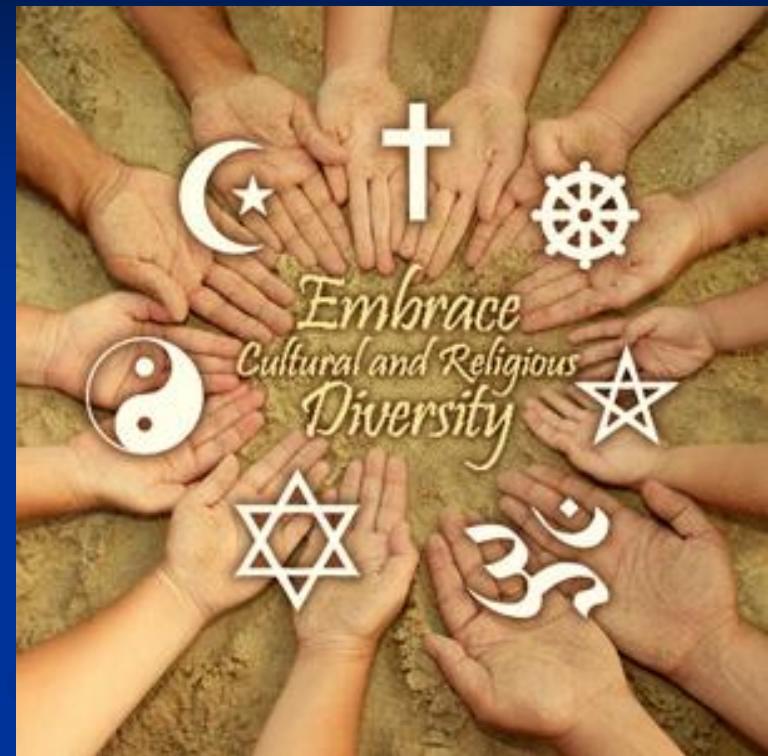
Active Tolerance: Make
an effort to
understand, learn from,
and teach the opponent.

“It is easy enough to be friendly to one's friends. But to befriend the one who regards himself as your enemy is the quintessence of true religion.” G



Religious Tolerance

It is important to be faithful and loyal to the religious beliefs of one's own tradition, and also to allow others the same freedom.



“Each one prays to God according to his own light.” G

Gandhi's Attitude to Technology

(a) Dehumanization from industries. (b) Trans-plantation of alien culture.



“I object to the craze for machinery. . . . Men go on *saving labor* till thousands are without work and thrown on the streets to die of starvation. . . . Today machinery helps a few ride on the backs of millions.” G

Environmental Crisis

A direct consequence of unbridled technology.

Gandhi wanted to promote cottage industries: later called appropriate technology.



“As human beings, our greatness lies not so much in being able to remake the world - that is the myth of the atomic age - as in being able to remake ourselves.” G

Gandhi and Modernism

Gandhi was against modernism:

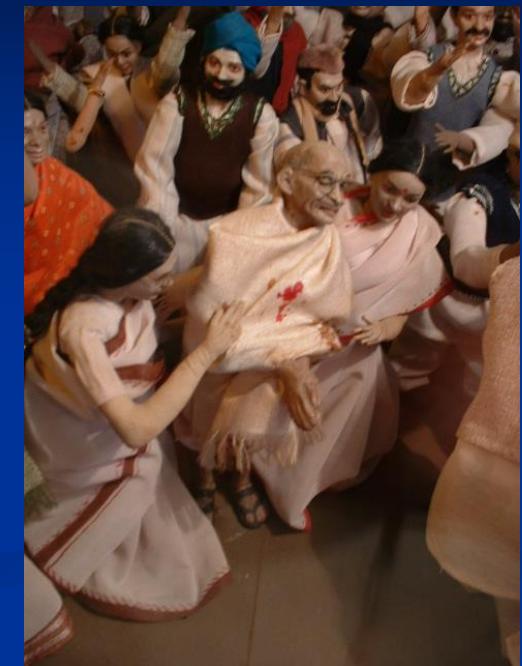
- (a) He was afraid of uprooting India's ancient culture.
- (b) He feared the masses would think West was superior.



“A nation's culture resides in the hearts and in the soul of its people.” G

Paradox: Gandhi Bashing in India

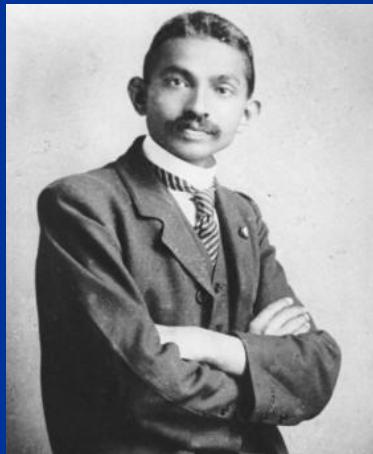
Gandhi is no longer a hero in India. Strong anti-Gandhi sentiments are due to the feeling that his excessive tolerance towards Muslims has hurt to Hindus.



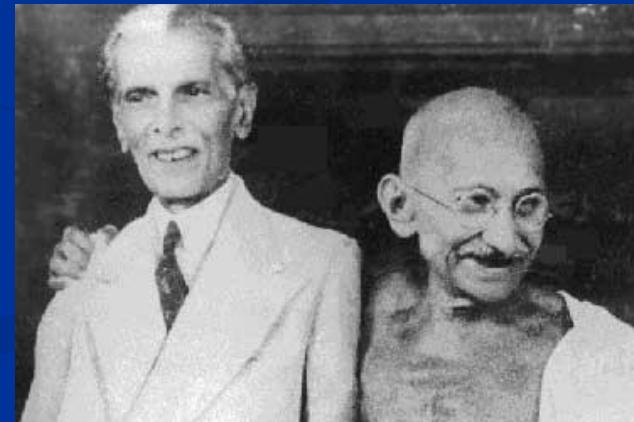
“Before the throne of the Almighty, man will be judged not by his acts but by his intentions. For God alone reads our hearts.” G

Multifaceted Gandhi

Gandhi was a lawyer, politician, philosopher, social activist, strategist, saintly person, idealist, preacher, and experimenter with Truth.



“But for my faith in God,
I should have been a
raving maniac.” G



Concluding Thought

“You must not lose faith in humanity. Humanity is an ocean; if a few drops of the ocean are dirty, the ocean does not become dirty.”

- Long after the dust and debris of hate and hurt settle down, the visions of Gandhi will be celebrated as worthy symbols of whatever is noble in the human spirit, and his message will shine bright in the firmament of human ideals. For then, we would have realized a state in which planetary peace will not be just the silence of guns, but will the embrace of all with love, caring, and compassion, and harmony among peoples will be based on social justice and mutual respect.

You are invited to look into

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Varadaraja_V._Raman

<http://people.rit.edu/vvrsps/>

<http://acharyavidyasagar.wordpress.com/>

Ahimsa with Lawless Opponents

With opponents who don't adhere to law, ahimsa may not always work when one demands redress of grievances.

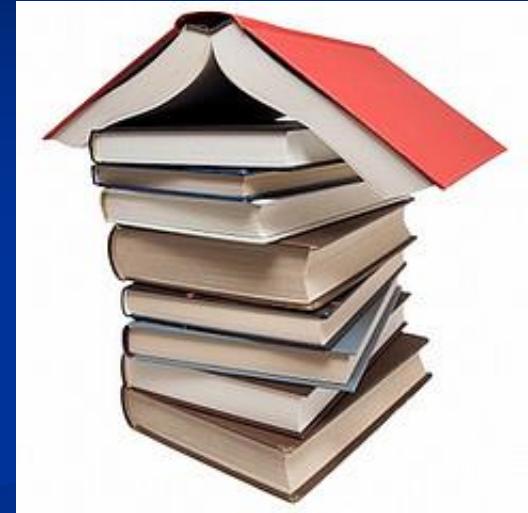
Violence will succeed only if one abandons the framework of law and civilized principles.

“I object to violence because when it appears to do good, the good is only temporary; the evil it does is permanent.” G



Context of Non-violence

Ahimsa can work as long as the opponent is still constrained by a framework of law and civilized behavior.



“I look only to the good qualities of men.” G

Historical: Conquerors in History



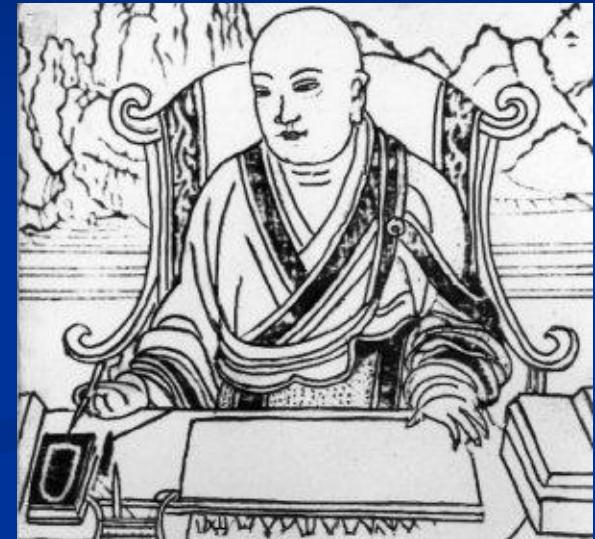
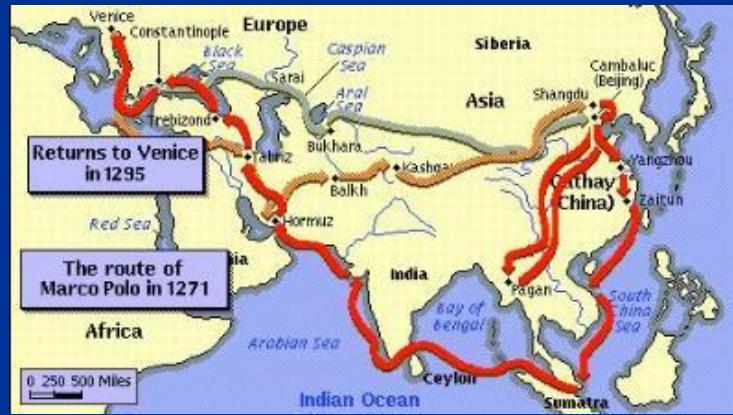
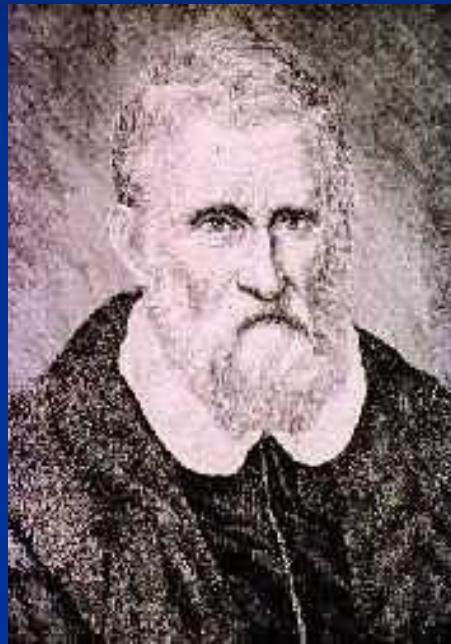
Genghiz Khan of Mongolia and Alexander of Macedonia are among the Greats of History. They killed hundreds of people.

Historical: Trade in the Ancient World



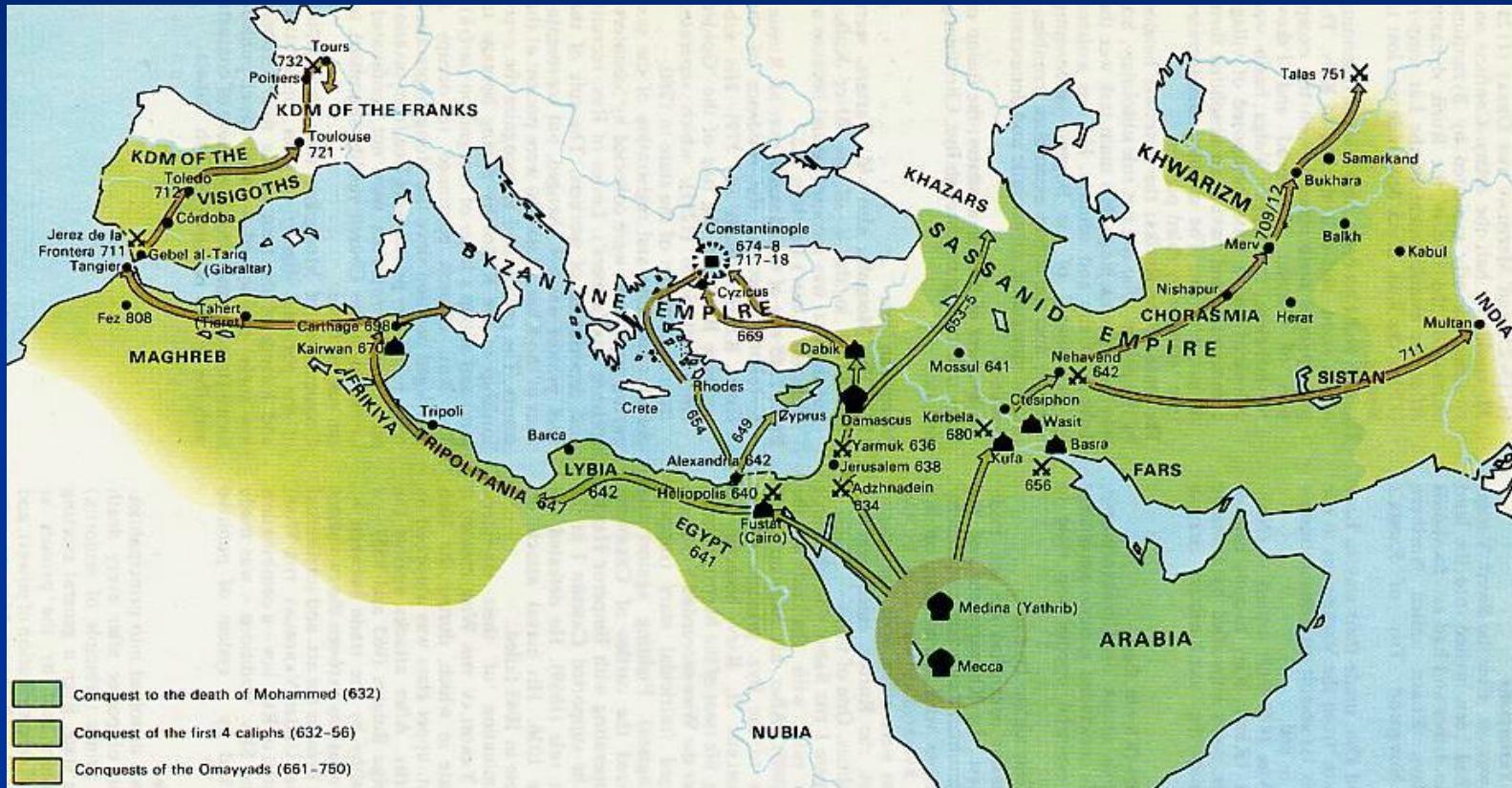
You never learn a trade until you learn
the tricks of the trade.

Historical: Travelers in the Ancient World



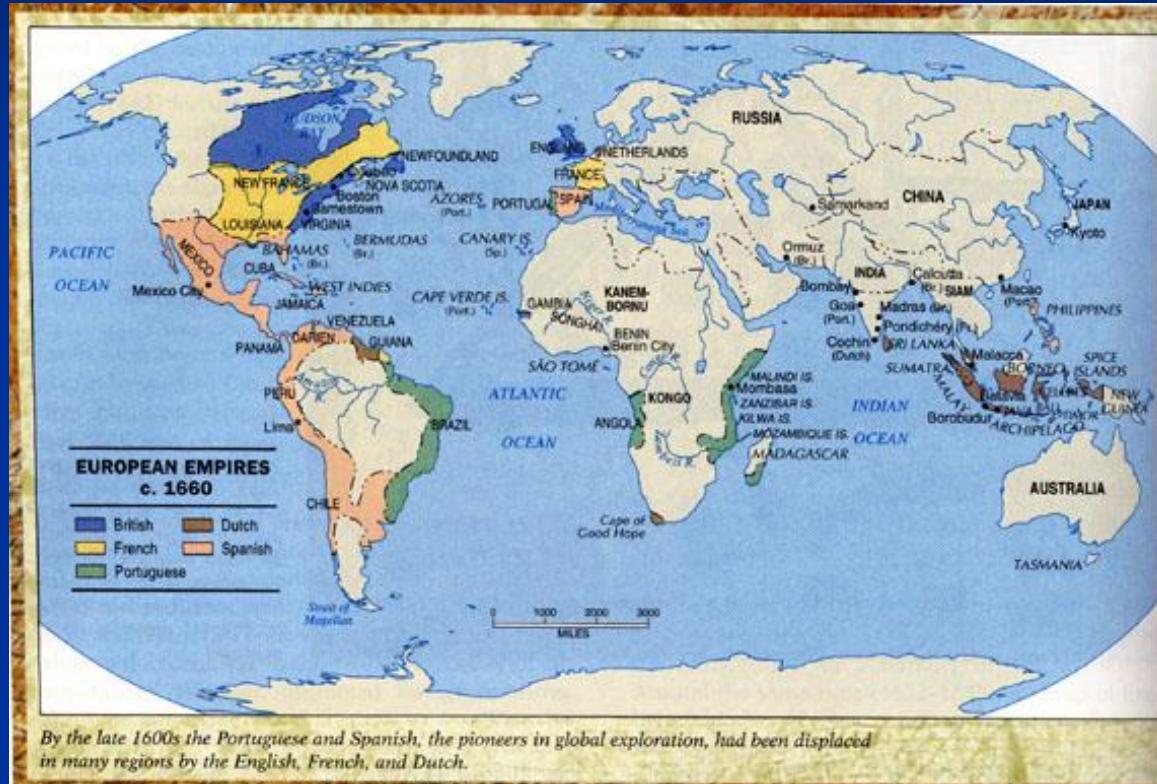
In spite of the hardships there were travelers like Marco Polo and Hieun Tsang.
The world is a book. Those who don't travel read only a page.

Historical: Arab Imperialism



Empires have been built, and people's cultures transformed by bringing the message of God

Historical: European Imperialism



Colonialism: a territory gets a raw deal in exchange for raw materials.

Historical: British Imperialism



When under-sea cables from Britain broke, a London Newspaper announced:
The world has been isolated.

Political: Diplomacy



To say nothing, especially while speaking, is the art of being a diplomat.

Diplomacy is the art of diving into trouble without making a splash.

Political: Wars



When diplomacy fails, another mode of interaction starts between nations.

Political: Signing Treaties



Actions speak better than words,
especially in sign language.

Political: United Nations Organization



What the United Nations
needs most are united
nations.

Economic: Trade



A man is known by the company that keeps him.

Economic: Banking



The only international language is the one
in which money talks.

Every day currencies worth billions of \$
are being exchanged between nations.

World Trade Organization



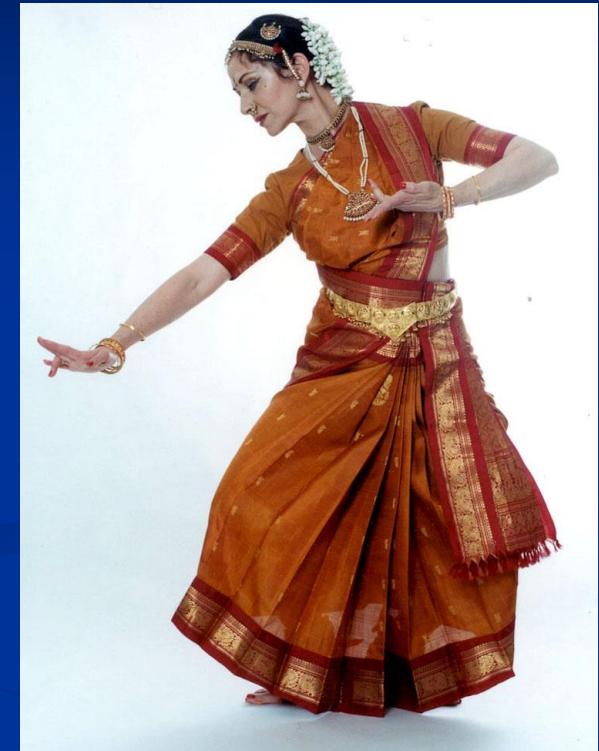
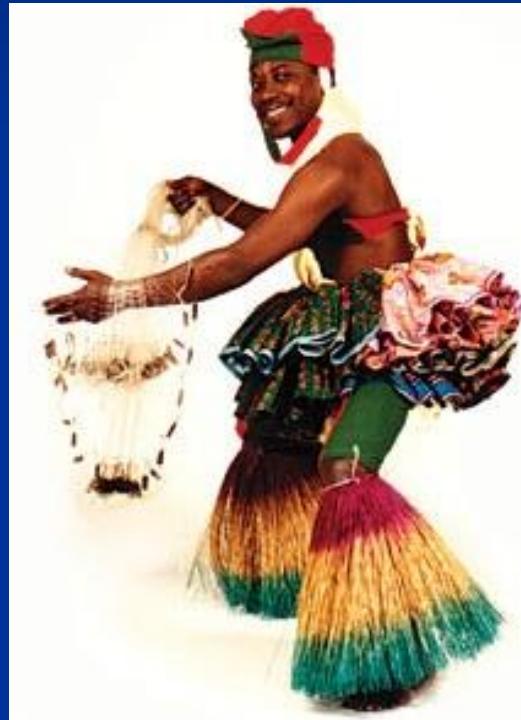
UNO came first, and WTO (not TWO) was second.

Cultural: Music

Some performers
take pains with
their music,
others give them.



Cultural: Dance

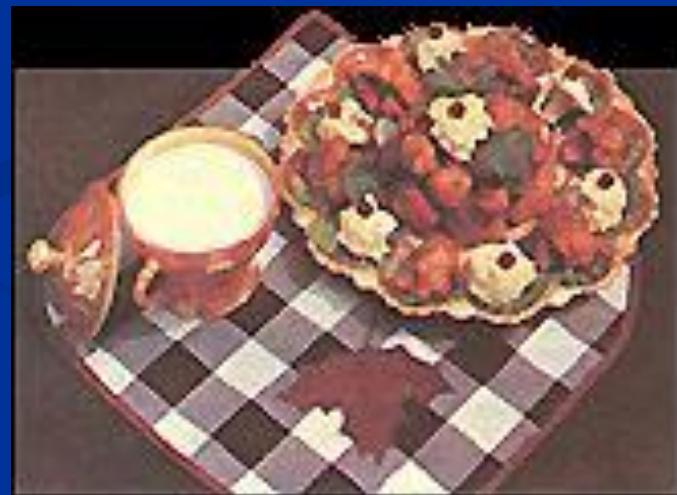


Some modern dances are so lively you exercise everything except discretion.

Cultural: Cuisine



Travel isn't
as broadening
as all the rich foreign foods.



Cultural: Dress



Half the world does not know why it takes the other half so long to dress or to dress so long.

Cultural: Languages

The many ways of saying

XÈXIE "Thank You" SPASIBO

GRACIAS

Merci

Arigato

Grazie

Mahalo

Danke

Dhanyaawaad

WA-DØ

Asante

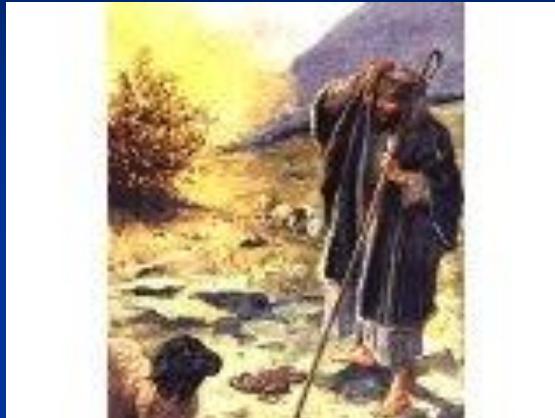
The only language no one speaks like
a native is Esperanto

हिन्दी عربی עברית にほんご

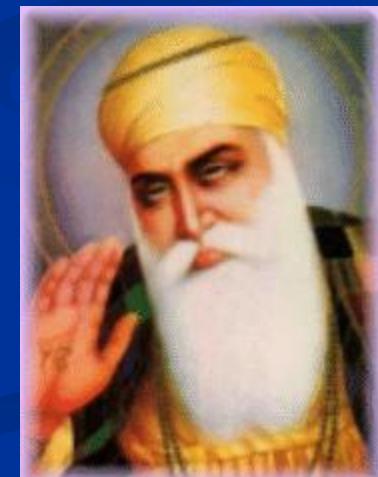
Русский 한국말 ไทย 中文

intənæʃənəl fənetik ælfəbet

Cultural: Religions

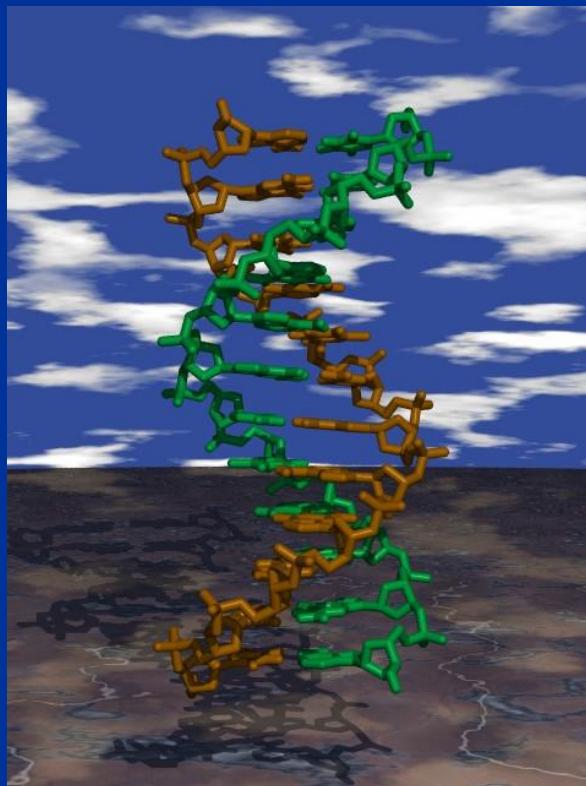


Man is the only animal who has got the true religion - several of them.

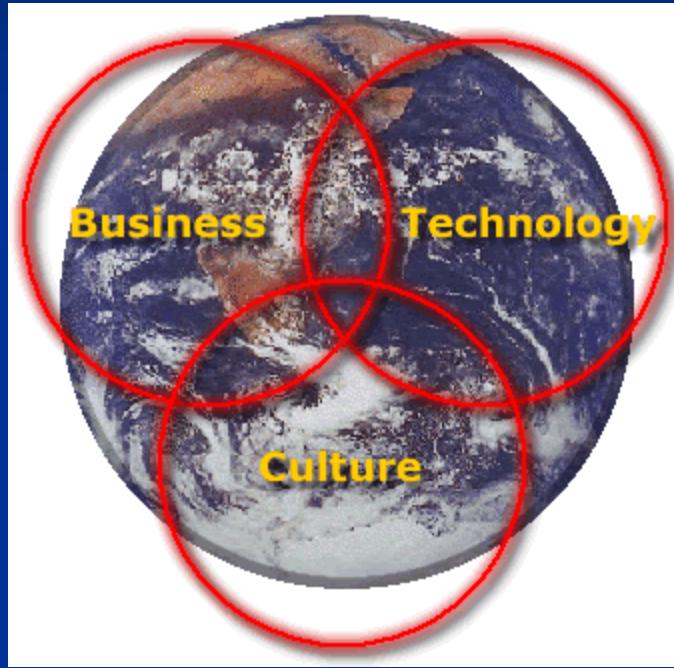


Science

Science is what you know. Philosophy is what you don't know.

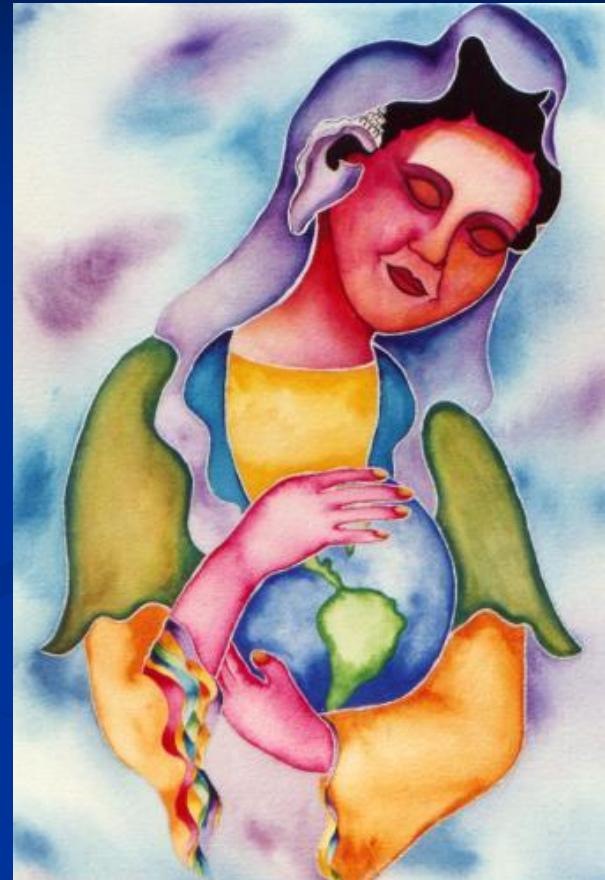
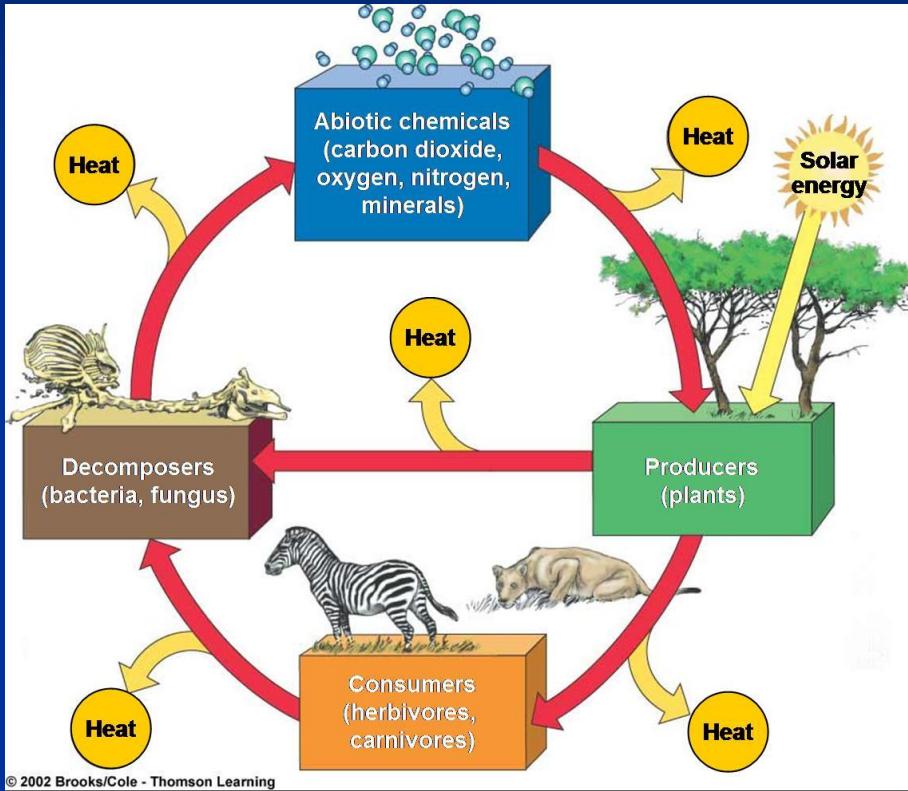


Reason for Internationalism Globalization



You see McDonald wherever you go,
see Made-in-China in all Wall-Mart
goods, and outsource even prayers.

Reason for Internationalism: Ecology



Economists are concerned about today, ecologists about tomorrow.

Reason for Internationalism

Ethical: Caring and Compassion



Those who are blessed with more should care for those who have less.

Reason for Internationalism: Enrichment

When we interact with and learn from people of other nations and cultures our own lives are immeasurably enriched.



Reason for Internationalism: Hope for Peace and Harmony



In our steadfast pursuit of peace, we humans have always stuck to our guns.

Internationalism

As we mature, our visions expand and our capacity for caring and loving can expand too. But there is a tension between self-centeredness whose lowest form is greed; and altruism: whose highest form is internationalism.

