

**Tribhuvan University**

May 2019

**African Modernity in Nelson Mandela's *Long Walk to Freedom***

– Bharat Kumar Karki

**A Thesis Submitted to the Central Department of English, T.U.**

**In Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the**

**Degree of Masters of Arts in English**

**By**

**Bharat Kumar Karki**

**Roll No: 161**

**T.U. Regd. No.: 6-2-214-19-2012**

African Modernity in Nelson Mandela's *Long Walk to Freedom*

**Central Department of English**

**Kirtipur, Kathmandu**

**May 2019**

## Acknowledgements

Firstly, I would like to acknowledge my indebtedness and express my warmest thanks to my respected supervisor, Dr. Komal Phuyal who made this work possible. I extend my sincere gratitude to him for his precious time, love, motivation, friendly guidance and scholarly advice throughout the thesis writing without which the work was out of reach.

Besides, I am also grateful to the Head of the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University, Professor Dr. Anirudra Thapa for his leadership in the overall thesis writing. Moreover, the thesis has also been benefited from the innumerable suggestions from my dear friends, Bhupendra Limbu and Sushma Basnet.

Finally, I am indebted to my father, Jagat Bahadur Karki and mother, Krishna Kumari Karki for their parental inspiration and I am also thankful to my little sisters, brother along with my friend, Sima Khatri for their regular support and love that remained driving for the success I have ever achieved.

May 2019

Bharat Kumar Karki

## Abstract

*This research paper delves into Nelson Mandela's autobiography Long Walk to Freedom (1994) as primary text and explores the way in which anti-apartheid movement in South Africa made European modernity interact with South African culture and introduced its own style of modernity from the perspective of multiple modernities proposed by Israeli sociologist S.N. Eisenstadt. It closely observes the democracy, subjectivity and social change in South African cultural context. In addition to S.N. Eisenstadt, it also brings some theoretical concepts from Dipesh Chakravarty, Enrique Dussel and Peter Wagner to substantiate the textual analysis. Eisenstadt assumes that modernities develop differently in different historical and geographical contexts. Akin to Eisenstadt Chakravarty argues that there are distinct modernities in differing cultural backgrounds. Besides, rejecting Enlightenment values as defining features of modernity Dussel proposes "Liberation Philosophy" to emancipate people of periphery from the Western suppression. And stressing on uncertainty of modernity Wagner sheds lights on change and progress in modernity. South Africans borrow democratic practices from their own forefathers to widen their subjectivities and pay the price of torture, hatred and discriminations of colonial era with love, brotherhood, inclusiveness and unity leading South Africa to a unique modernity.*

**Key Words:** African Modernity, Subjectivity, The Apartheid, Democracy, Social Change

## African Modernity in Nelson Mandela's *Long Walk to Freedom*

This research paper takes African freedom fighter Nelson Mandela's (1918-2012) *Long Walk to Freedom* (1995) as primary text and explores the way in which Nelson Mandela and the anti-apartheid movement led by him present an example of African modernity out of the interaction between South African cultural practices and European or Western modern values. At that time, Africa was under the rule of the Afrikaners who were originally Dutch and African National Congress was an opposing force fighting against the rule for even before Mandela's birth. However, African National Congress was lacking any vision and dynamic leadership to challenge the apartheid system. Mandela himself had so many confusions about the aims of African National congress when he was a young member of it. Later on, he learnt the lesson of negotiation among the opposing forces which were fighting for their superiority. He never took step for taking revenge against those at whose hands he had suffered his entire life. This paper basically looks at those shocking efforts for negotiations between the oppressors and the oppressed and between different races and ethnicities through the lens of alternative modernities.

This research observes the ways African Modernity is formed after the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa. As the world comprises multiple cultures, traditions and historical experiences, there may emerge innumerable modernities. Western style of modernity cannot be transcendental idea to govern all the modernities. Since modernity is not a static idea, the theoretical concept of singular modernity contradicts with the core value of modernity. The essence of modernity

also demands multiplicity and openness in the formation of multiple modernities. South Africa also develops its own style of modernity as it interacts with Western White, native Africans and Indians. Feeling of cooperation, unity in diversity, horizontal relationship even between the traditional ruler and their subjects cannot be looked down. This research paper also makes other people conscious to search for their own local values and mix them with national and international values to create sustainable modernity.

Modernity is a dynamic concept. It embraces reason, logic, change, newness and progress as its fundamental values. However, Alternative modernities is a theoretical perspective that believes in multiple such modernities and opposes singularist and universalist perspective of modernity. It assumes that modernities develop differently in different cultural and temporal contexts. Although there are some common beliefs, every modernity marks departure from another modernity. Moreover, the perspective of alternative modernity also challenges the imposition of western as modernist values on non-western modern values. Ideas related to change, progress, inclusive democracy are some central concern of every modernity. But, when these values interact with local values, culture, tradition and history, certainly new ideas of modernity emerge in each interaction.

Mandela opposed the apartheid rule, dedicated his entire life for those African people who were treated as second class by the Whites and finally led his country to an inclusive democracy. The democracy he wanted to exercise in South Africa was a foreign political value first exercised by the Europeans. However, Mandela and his party blended western democracy and local African ethnic identities such as Zulu monarchy by providing the right of self-determination and political autonomy in their respective homeland. Along with that he also included nine local languages except

Afrikaner and English in the interim constitution of South Africa. On the other hand, some provinces like Zululand were provided with extra political rights than other provincial states. These all the instances hint that Mandela introduced an alternative modernity in South Africa.

Mandela was born on 18 July 1918 in Thembu Dynasty that was ruling family in Transkei. His original name was Rolihlahla and later he was named as Nelson Mandela by his school teacher. He fought against apartheid government in South Africa and finally overthrew the apartheid and got an opportunity to serve as the president of South Africa. He was also awarded with the Nobel Peace Prize in 1993 for his unwavering struggle for inclusive democracy and peace. His biography, *Nelson Mandela: The Herald of Freedom*, introduces him as follows:

Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela (born 18 July 1918) served as President of South Africa from 1994 to 1999 . . . Before his presidency, Mandela was an anti-apartheid activist, and the leader of Umkhonto we Sizwe, the armed wing of the African National Congress (ANC)... Mandela served 27 years in prison, spending many of these years in Robben Island. Following his release from prison on 11 February 1990, Mandela led his party in the Negotiations that led to multi-racial democracy in 1994. (9)

Therefore, Mandela was a freedom fighter, people elected president of South Africa and a Nobel Peace Prize Laureate. He spent his twenty-seven years of more productive age in prison in the struggle against the racist ruling system. But he was never corrupted by the feeling of revenge against the oppressors, rather he played a significant role as a negotiator among the diverse South African Society.

*Long walk to Freedom* (1994) is Nelson Mandela's autobiography. He began writing this autobiography when he was in the prison of Robben Island which covers

his life from childhood to presidency. Similarly, this book can be considered as entire story of anti-apartheid movement in South Africa because it provides details of every character and event that contributed to the struggle. Thomas de Monchaux comments on the autobiography as: “But the book also paints a picture of Mandela's life before and after that period of long imprisonment, and reveals a sense of the patient, persistent, observant, distant, and wry man behind the national symbol” (287). This statement also summarizes the most important events as well as the turning point in Mandela’s life. This autobiography is concerned more with the society and history of South Africa rather than the personal record of Mandela.

*Long Walk to Freedom* was written when Africa was colonized by Dutch White rulers called Afrikaners. Native people were denied equal education, voting rights and even the ownership of land. They had to carry passes to travel even inside their own country. The rulers used to justify their mission as a mission of civilizing native people. Internationally, Mandela was born just after Russian revolution in 1917 AD and during the massive World War-I (1914-1918). As a young boy he also experienced involvement of South Africa in the World War-II (1939-1945). Similarly, he also observed Communist revolution in China in 1949. Mandela’s life also experienced the Cold war between the Soviet Union-led communists nations and United States of America-led countries of the west and Vietnam war. The cold war effects were also playing important role to provoke the anti-apartheid directly or indirectly. The Western interest to prevent communist influence in Africa was also involved in the rise and fall of anti-apartheid movement. Similarly, the independence of South Africa’s neighbouring countries and rise of radical Marxist government were also crucial things in the movement.

Mandela started writing this autobiography in his fifty-seventh in 1975 when

he was passing his life imprisonment in the prison of Robben Island. He tells us that he had connection with Thembu royal house and also clarifies that he was not the heir to the throne. He was born at Mvezo, a tiny village at the bank of Mbashe river in the district of Umtata, the capital of Transkei. Mandela's father was chief by blood and custom and was not only an advisor of the king rather he played decisive roles in nominating Jongintaba as the chief of Transkei. Nelson was his name given by a teacher in the school. After his father's death when he was small, he was offered a guardianship by Jongintaba leading life towards an unexpected direction. While adapting himself with the life of Great Palace Mandela also learned traditional Thembu leadership skills from the environment of the Great Palace.

Many critics have examined the Long Walk to Freedom. Many of them have analysed it from the autobiographical point of view and some of them have analysed it from the historical perspective. Critics have mostly been attracted to Mandela's sacrifice for bringing democracy. Similarly, some of them have analysed Mandela as a figure above than the status of normal human being. Munzhedzi James Mafela has examined the *Long Walk to Freedom* that it is not only the narrative of a person's experiences rather it carries the combination of political, cultural and educational change in South Africa. Likewise, Keith Somerville presents Mandela as a symbol of struggle against racism both inside and outside South Africa. On the other hand, Martin Legassick found that Mandela lived more for others than for himself, which he had learnt in Robben Island. According to Legassick. Similarly, Havidan Rodriguez finds that Nelson Mandela's convergence with ANC, anti-apartheid movement and international force turned the apartheid down and led to democracy. Another scholar Thomas de Monchaux compares Mandela with 16<sup>th</sup> US president Abraham Lincoln, who abolished slavery from United States of America and moved a step to ensure



human rights for all. Mark O Hatfield shades light on Mandela's unwavering dedication for the anti-apartheid movement despite his ups and downs in personal life. Willie Henderson analyses Mandela's critical and objective personality. And Elleke Boehmer calls *Long walk to Freedom* a convergence of Mandela's personal story and history of South Africa which was yet to be built.

Critics have called Mandela as true leader who can liberate people from unbearable trouble, defeat divisive ideologies and bring different faiths of people to join hand in hand for a prosperous, democratic and harmonious nation. For instance, Thomas de Monchaux presents Mandela as an emancipator and negotiator among various thoughts, ideologies and origins of people. He shades light on the part Mandela played in a play when he a student I Fort hare, although Mandela had played the role of Lincoln's assassin. He compares Mandela with Abraham Lincoln, US president and liberator of African Americans from racial discriminations. Throughout this article Monchaux focuses on Mandela's role as a freedom fighter. Monchaux compares Mandela with Lincoln as, "Both men have been called great emancipators and fathers of their nations; Mandela, like Lincoln, is attempting to bring a democratic nation together out of a land that has been fragmented by racism, regionalism, and violence" (286). Therefore, Monchaux wants to present Mandela as a political leader who led South Africa to a common ground the citizens of different backgrounds.

Beside Mandela's leadership, some critics treat *Long Walk to Freedom* as a representative voice of entire South Africa, which tells the different facets of south African culture and lifestyle. For example, Munzhedzi James Mafela focuses on the representation of South African culture in *Long Walk to Freedom*. For Mafela, *Long Walk to Freedom* is not only a story of personal experience rather a collective story of South African people. According to him, this autobiography covers every cultural

aspects and lifestyle of African people. Although Mandela is talking about his own experience as a Thembu boy, his experiences has so much commonality with the living standard of South African people living under the apartheid regime. The exploitation of their natural resources, deprivation of human rights, racial violence and imposition of Western culture in the name of superiority was almost the same. Mafela analyses the autobiography as, “Besides revealing the oppression he and his people experienced, the narrative reveals many cultural matters such as those affecting the institution of marriage, running a homestead, the life of a boy in a rural area, the role of women in the family and kinship relations” (99). Therefore, Mafela highlights the way Mandela represents African culture from upbringing of a country boy to kinship and relations that are completely different from Western culture.

Alongside, some critics centre around Mandela’s courage to dominate his individual and family matters for the sake of national and humanitarian ethos. For instance, Mark O Hatfield’s review “The Indispensable Man” focuses on Mandela’s strength to overcome different family tragedies and long separation from family members for the shake of democracy. Mandela had to leave his first wife for his dedication to the anti-apartheid movement. Besides he also lost his mother and a son during his life in prison. Along with that he also suffered tuberculosis because of cold in prison cell. Despite those many challenges he never gave up the struggle. Hatfield reviews the book as, “Mandela endured decades of incarceration, the crumbling of two marriages, heart-wrenching separations from his family (including, most poignantly, the death of his mother while he was behind bars), and about of tuberculosis brought on by damp prison cells, and emerged from it all, remarkably, with malice toward none” (169). This is what tells us Mandela’s persistence and patience for dismantling the apartheid regime and introducing the democratic society.

Mandela suffered so much physical and mental torture both from family and outside but continued his journey to justice, humanity and right.

On the other hand, some of the critics have analysed Mandela's days in Prison in positive sense that it taught them good skills that a true leader needs to have. They find that torture and interaction with people from different origins taught Mandela the value of unity among diversity. For example, Martin Legassick examines the *Long Walk to Freedom* and concludes that Nelson Mandela dedicated his entire life for others rather than for himself. Legassick is also closer to Somerville in the sense that Mandela gathered knowledge for struggle and leadership from the prison. And the leadership skills he learned in the prison of Robben Island are found throughout the story in the autobiography. Legassick's comment on the *Long Walk to Freedom* and Mandela's personality goes like this, "It seems it was also through his experiences on the Island that there was consolidated in Mandela that generosity of spirit, the ability to get into the mind of and to live for others that percolates from one end of the narrative to the other" (446). It says that imprisonment gave Mandela so much about leadership skills and courage, along with the tortures, to dedicate his priceless life for others.

Moreover, some other critics have stressed on the favourable national and international environment that helped Mandela to introduce more harmonious and democratic South Africa. This shows that Mandela was a key figure but many other factors have significant amount of contribution at the last moment of the struggle. For instance, Havidan Rodriguez sheds light on Mandela's good co-operation with other leaders of the movement, common people and the international community. Such a good combination of Mandela with other stake holders led South Africa to eliminate of the apartheid and pave the way for inclusive democracy. It ensured the

participation of different communities into the different institution of South Africa:

Similar circumstances emerged in South Africa, with the convergence of African National Congress (ANC), the leadership of prominent figures such as Nelson Mandela, anti-apartheid movements and protests, and international pressures aimed at elimination of apartheid, leading to the development of a process leading towards democracy and democratic participation in South Africa. (395)

Although so many factors contributed to overthrow the apartheid, Nelson Mandela's name is highlighted as a prominent figure in the movement. Mandela's initiation led the anti-apartheid movement to the summit.

On the other hand, critics also pose Mandela more than a common individual. His fame across the world despite state's continuous suppression of voice is counted as Godly position. Because of his unyielding stand for truth and justice, his voice easily crossed the concrete walls of different prisons and even the nation's border. For example, Keith Somerville locates Mandela above human beings. Though he was imprisoned for almost three decades, his enthusiasm and dedication for democracy were never confined. During the imprisonment, he kept on gathering support and sympathy from around the world. As Somerville examines the autobiography, "He became more a myth than a man. The power of example reached out from his cell on Robben Island, and later Pollsmoor Prison, to encourage resistance and struggle within and among South African exiles and to demand and receive the solidarity of millions around the world who supported the fight against racism and repression" (60).

Therefore, Somerville's idea tells us that Mandela was an extraordinary personality, who connected himself around the world crossing the walls of prison

through his vision for inclusive democracy. The imprisonment made him stronger to gather national and international support for the anti-apartheid movement.

Many critics have read this text as a personal narrative that reveals the formation of inner content of subjectivity on the part of the author. The author's personal quest to free his nation also represents the melting down of two layers in the formation of subject: personal and the political. The political Mandela arises from the personal endeavour to free the nation from the British rule. For instance, Elleke Boehmer opines that *Long Walk to Freedom* is a convergence of personal account of Mandela and his nation which was yet to be built and also believes that people outside and inside Africa regard him as an incarnation of the nation. In this way, Boehmer takes this autobiography as a text that has national history along with a personal story. Boehmer opines:

Long Walk to Freedom emphasises in particular the convergence between the individual life and the story of the coming-into-being of the nation, here specifically the story of anti-apartheid resistance. This convergence indeed confirms the convinced view of South Africans and non-South Africans alike that Mandela or Madiba ('old man', a customary term of respect) is in fact an incarnation of the nation. (72)

Boehmer focuses on the historical side of Long Walk to Freedom. His account of this autobiography regards it historical piece of the nation rather than a personal record because it carries national issues more than personal issues.

Furthermore, critics have also examined Mandela's selfless and unbiased eyes towards truth. Neither he raised voice only of his community nor looked upon other community with hatred and feeling of revenge, rather he accepted the value of every South African in nation-building. Willie Henderson shades light on Mandela's critical

behaviour to every person and institution. According to him, Mandela's treatment to any other was not guided by biases, rather he always examined things on the basis of the system they were functioning in. He saw fault in the system and mind set, not in the race itself. For him, Mind set matters more than the skin colour and origin. As Henderson analyses Mandela's personality, "Mandela's respect for others, his thoughtful judgements and generosity, the positive as well as critical statement about Afrikaners, the careful consideration of his relationship with the communists, his sense of outrage and of discretion, of himself and of his public duty, are all embodied in the writing" (293).

In this respect, Mandela looks an objective man who judges things on the basis of their effects rather than biases. He does not judge other in a wholesale manner, rather looks into small parts that are important.

Many critics have examined *Long Walk to Freedom*, but nobody raised the issue of emergence of African Modernity marking breaks from unjustifiable, irrational and inhuman apartheid rule. Munzhedzi James Mafela has examined *Long Walk to Freedom* that it is not only the narrative of a person's experiences rather it carries the combination of political, cultural and educational change in South Africa. Likewise, Keith Somerville presents Mandela as a symbol of struggle against racism both inside and outside South Africa. On the other hand, Martin Legassick found that Mandela lived more for others than for himself, which he had learnt in Robben Island. According to Legassick. Similarly, Havidan Rodriguez finds that Nelson Mandela's convergence with ANC, anti-apartheid movement and international force turned the apartheid down and led to democracy. Another scholar Thomas de Monchaux compares Mandela with 16<sup>th</sup> US president Abraham Lincoln, who abolished slavery from United States of America and moved a step to ensure human rights for all. Mark

O Hatfield shades light on Mandela's unwavering dedication for the anti-apartheid movement despite his ups and downs in personal life. Willie Henderson analyses Mandela's critical and objective personality. And Elleke Boehmer calls *Long Walk to Freedom* a convergence of Mandela's personal story and history of South Africa which was yet to be built.

The above discussion on available resources on the author and text proposed for the study reveals that so far African modernity has not been dealt in the text. Various critical remarks as cited above show this text has been read autobiographically, psychologically, historically and politically. However, *Long Walk to Freedom* has not been viewed from alternative modernist perspective. The present research paper analyses *Long Walk to Freedom* from alternative Modernist perspective. And it explores the ways Mandela followed to introduce African model of modernity that differs from European modernity.

Generally, tradition means something that is not recent phenomena and is understood as an opposite to modern or something different from existing time. Every culture has certain beliefs followed from long back. Despite contradictions on whether to let them unquestioned or replace them with contemporary systems, a faction in every society believes it to have importance in present context too. Liberal faction of community always wants to break it down, whereas conservative faction wants to implement it in present situation. Therefore, tradition is a belief, custom or way of doing something that has existed for a long time among a particular group of people. It means tradition is a shared belief in a particular community that is followed from long back. On the other hand, modernity is opposite to tradition. Modernity is a set of recent ideas and beliefs. It covers various aspects of society. Therefore, modernity can be defined as the condition of being new and modern. This means modernity is

something that differs from what was in the past. The interaction of Western modern values with traditional African beliefs forms the African Modernity, which follows rationality, progress and newness along with South African values such as hearing the voice of minority, self-determination, patience, monarchy within republicanism and equal respect for all regardless of colour, race and origin.

Basically, Present research paper borrows theoretical concepts from Israeli sociologist S.N. Eisenstadt's (1923-2010) *Multiple Modernities*. Along with that it also borrows some ideas from Argentine-Mexican critic, Enrique Dussel's (1934-) *The Underside of Modernity*, Indian historian and critic Dipesh Chakravarty's (1948) *Habitations of Modernity* and German social and Political theorist Peter Wagner's (1956) *Theorizing Modernity*. In the course of textual analysis it also brings some ideas of modernity and alternative modernity from the texts of other critiques who have written about modernity and challenged the universalist or singularist perspective of modernity to validate multiple modernities developed in different places of the world.

S.N. Eisenstadt refuses the Eurocentric concept of modernity. He does not own the belief that modernity was solely European and should expand throughout the world. He vehemently challenges the hegemonizing concept of European and North American modernity. Modernities develop differently in different societies which are influenced by cultures, traditions and historical experiences of the respective society. Even though some societies presented themselves as anti-modern and anti-European, they were actually modern. For Eisenstadt, modernity is not a static idea rather it is constituted and reconstituted when and where necessary. According to Eisenstadt, 'Multiple Modernities' is the concept that opposes the classical theories of modernization. It also critiques the sociological analysis of Karl Marx, Emile



Durkheim and Max Weber. According to them modernity is a European project which will ultimately prevail all over the world. Unlike them, Eisenstadt finds that hegemonizing concepts of western modernity were challenged worldwide as various nationalist and traditionalist movements arose. The movements termed the anti-modern and anti-western themes as sharply modern. (1) This tells us that Eisenstadt refuses that universalist concept of modernity and valorises multiple modernities in distinct social, cultural and historical contexts.

Similarly, Enrique Dussel's 'Liberation Philosophy' aims at liberating the oppressed people of periphery. He also critiques the imposition of Enlightenment values in modernities. He also does not accept the Western capitalism and expresses the voice of the periphery in his 'Liberation Philosophy'. According to Dussel, Liberation philosophy challenges the imposition of enlightenment values as the key concepts of modernity. Liberation Philosophy wants to reshape the eurocentrism and developmentalist fallacies. Dussel critiques Foucault, Lyotard, Vattimo and Nietzsche as destroyers only. While critiquing them he praises them for supporting to dismantle the European values as universal values to be owned by all. However, he terms Liberation philosophy as not only the destroyer of the Eurocentric modern values but also the re-constructor of new orders distinct from Europeans. (4) Conceptually Dussel is also close to Eisenstadt's multiple modernity because he does not believe in single modernity regulating different modernities developing in their distinct localities. Rather he validates all the modernities developing distinctly in their own ways.

Dipesh Chakravarty's assumption is that modernity is not easy to define as Western philosophers often do. He gives Indian instance and claims that India is a democratic country where election is free, fair and timely. However, Indian people

still believe in religion, god and magic. He calls that that is not being pre-modern or anti-modern. In India, even the lowest class of people are given proper space in modern institutions. This is how modernity is not a universal concept to be defined with some frameworks (xx). Chakravarty also critiques the Western values prevailing all over the world as the standard for modernity. And he supports the idea of different modernities in their respective social, cultural and historical grounds.

Furthermore, he supports his argument of different modernities by giving an example of Indian rebels against the 'Sati' custom. Before the westerners had influenced them culturally, Indians themselves had the idea of changing superstitious beliefs rooted in the Indian society into modern rational values. As Chakravarty claims,

. . . The attempts of Akbar and other Muslim rulers to stop sati are well-known. There is also indirect but obvious evidence in the fact that most widows did not have to become satis. Similarly, we know of attempts before Vidyasagar's to get young widows remarried. It cannot, therefore, be argued that people had to wait for the coming of either the British or Western /modern ideas of cruelty in order to attain the capacity to be revolted by torture and oppression. (104)

The concepts of change and consciousness were existed in all the societies. People of different societies themselves had tried to modernize their societies in their own way as per the demand of the time. But the hegemonizing concepts of modernity remained indifferent towards other attempts and presented themselves as the owner of entire modernity which Chakravarty challenges.

Wagner stresses on the autonomy of an individual. That means one should not be guided by the rules set for others. Moreover, Wagner's call for setting own laws ultimately means liberation from all the chains set by others in different context

cannot be modern all the time. Wagner's focus on autonomy and self-rule opens way for multiple modernities. As Wagner mentions,

This aspect is most strongly – and affirmatively- emphasized in the modernity-centred discourse about identity. If agentiality is understood in a strong sense as to capacity to give oneself one's own laws, then continuity and coherence, i.e. identity, of the person must be presupposed. On emphasis on this capacity to autonomy- is at the same time a basic ingredient of the discourse of modernity in philosophy and political science . . . (72)

As autonomy and self-rule is at the centre of modernity, it does suit any kind of theoretical insights from outside, rather it sets its own rule as per the need of the society. Which means singular modernity ruling over all other modernity does not match with the basic concept of modernity itself.

Anti-apartheid movement led by Mandela ended apartheid rule and established democracy which made South Africa a modern state. It followed the supposed to be basic universal modern values along with introducing its own modern norms and values which are unique for other parts of the world. Mandela's learning of democratic values from his own ancestors, giving different rights to different states to protect the native cultures and language and keeping monarchical provinces even within a republican nation tell us that there is a unique form of modernity or democracy which is unique for other nations. Despite suffering from the racial government led by the Whites for a long time, the vast majority under the leadership of Nelson Mandela and ANC respected the minority Whites and gave sufficient space in South America. Moreover, South Africa has exercised its own form of ruling system along with borrowing some useful ideas developed in different countries of the world. Though modernity means change, newness, progress, reason and logic, every

society has its own special features which may not seem suitable for another society.

South Africa practices unique democracy learned from its ancestors. People crushed under the grinding mill of apartheid are liberated to widen their subjectivity and the social change is also so practical that majority of people living under the inhuman racial rule are ready to move together with their White brothers and sisters for harmonious and developed nation. Despite its own unique features of modern state, it shares some commonality with modernities evolved in different corners of the world. The modern values developed outside South Africa blended with typical African cultures shapes African Modernity. So, this research paper closely analyses the African Modernity on the basis of Democracy, Subjectivity and Social Change found in Mandela's *Long Walk to Freedom*.

In *Long Walk to Freedom*, Mandela presents an example of a distinct democracy. It was not the complete copy of the system of supposedly motherlands of democracy rather a set of filtered African native values mingled with the universal norms of democracy. Although apartheid was rooted with the objectives of civilizing the African who were supposed to have primitive life, democracy was already there with the practice of hearing everyone's voices regardless of social, economic and political status. Decisions concerning local affairs used to be taken not by the majority decision but by the frequent debates and discussions and the voices of even a single person used to be incorporated in such decisions. Since the concerns of everyone was equally heard, the meetings used to be generally longer than those which were practiced elsewhere.

Anti-apartheid movement in South Africa marks departure from the conventions of democracy in the sense that it has introduced democracy in unprecedented way. Before the success of the movement there was hierarchy among people and access to

the mainstream of social and political activities were determined by colour of their skin a person had. The blacks were deprived of voting rights, property rights and access to education and health care. They were compelled to carry passes to travel even within their country. As per the experience of Nelson Mandela:

It was the crime to walk through a White only door, a crime to ride Whites only bus, a crime to use Whites only drinking fountain, a crime to walk on a Whites Only beach, a crime to be on the streets after 11 p. m., a crime to not have a pass book and a crime to have the wrong signature in that book, a crime to be unemployed and a crime to be employed in the wrong place, a crime to live in certain places and a crime to have no place to leave. (139)

These unequal provisions were changed after the establishment of democracy.

Although Black leader came into power, voice of every minority was justly heard without any biases and equal respect to every culture was secured. Therefore, uplifting the status of people from inhuman suffering to respected citizen can be called as an example of modernity. D.V. Kumar opines that modernity is, “As an idea, it represents a radical rupture with the past. It privileges progress, science, optimism and universality. It critiques superstitions, blind faiths and pessimism. It encourages us to adopt alternative ways of looking at the world and its possibilities” (241).

Moreover, S.N. Eisenstadt provides validity to multiple modernities. Although he accepts Western modernity as base for other modernities, he refuses the idea of single and universal modernity. For him, Western beliefs only cannot be called as modern values (2). However, after the end of apartheid, people were freed from all the superstitious beliefs and racial faiths that kept people in darkness of inhumanity for centuries. It dismantled the discriminatory provisions veiled under the democracy, which only the privileged people could enjoy. End of apartheid showed up hope for

people of each colour, background and faith introducing the essence of all modernities although the path was different.

Although the term democracy was introduced by Europeans, the spirit of democracy can be found in South Africans too. Ruling system is largely affected by the social, cultural and religious factors. However, hearing the voice of everyone before taking any important decision can't be denied as an essence of democracy. In Africa, there was not the system of electing rulers, but the rulers were responsible to the people. They used to hear people's voices before taking decisions and people's interest was always at the centre of their rule. As Mandela remembers his childhood in Mqhekezweni,

I watched and learned from tribal meetings that were regularly held at the Great Place. These were not scheduled, but were called as needed, and were held to discuss national matters such as a drought, the culling of the cattle, policies ordered by the government. All Thembus were free to come and a great many did, one horseback or foot. (19)

This paragraph clarifies that there was already democracy in South Africa. People of different social and economic background were heard. Their views were incorporated in decision making process. Turkish philosopher Arif Dirlik comments, "Modernity has assumed different form and content in different historical and cultural contexts, where it is assimilated or "translated" to the very conditions being transformed under its impact" (10). This shows that modernity does not remain the same all the time and everywhere. It is subject to change. It changes as time and space demands. Modernity developed in a certain part of the world may not be fit in another part. Modernity developed in one historical context may not be appropriate for another. Therefore, South Africa had its own modern values since the very beginning of its civilisation

though unheard in the outer world.

On the other hand, some unique democratic values were practiced in South Africa. People were given unprecedented freedom for the protection of their personal rights as well as communal rights. South African constitution had ensured different provisions of internal self-determination as per the needs of various communities. Varying degrees of rights were awarded to the people with the positive intention of promoting native cultures as well as protecting minorities. For instance, as Nelson Mandela tells his experience of incorporating the voice of group demanding for some extra rights for the Zulus, “Now Chief Buthelezi knew the election would take place no matter what. On 19 April Chief Buthelezi accepted the offer of a constitutional role for the Zulu monarchy and agreed to participate” (602). Spatio-temporal location has so much impact upon culture. Different cultural groups have their own creations which cannot be easily transferred to another culture. Therefore, modernity is produced differently in different cultural foundations. In Komal Phuyal’s words, significance of cultures in formation of modernity is:

Culture as a collective body of human endeavours to shape the structuring principles of society plays a vital role in constitution of modernity. Historico-politico-economic reality as performed in one location cannot be repeated in other situations on the historical situatedness differs, whereby causing the diversity in human behaviour and their practices. (7)

This shows that modern democratic norms and values cannot be universal. They can be changed, revised and reproduced as per the need of the society. Similar to the idea provided by this theoretical concept South Africa has devised its own modern democratic principles to incorporate the voices of diverse population, settle the disputes among different communities and to promote its own native values.

Similarly, according to S.N. Eisenstadt, modernity changes political legacy sets new political order and processes. Existing political conventions are dismantled to replace them with new orders. Besides, it also opens every possibility for new changes to occur. And right to challenge the old systems is secured (5). Different provinces have been given different degrees of rights. Some provinces have been granted rights to exercise monarchy and internal self-determination as necessary.

Finally, since the western values have interacted with African local values, democracy seems a bit different in South Africa. South African democracy is not indifferent to the voices of minorities in the name of majority rule. Borrowed from their own tradition it hears everyone with keen interest and makes them participate in the decision-making process widening the ownership of the decision. Self-determination to some provinces and different degrees of power as per the need of the country is also a significant feature of South African democracy. The provisions may seem uneven to the people of other part of the world, but is a useful tool to govern the local affairs.

Before the end of the apartheid and establishment of democracy, vast majority of South African people except the Whites were denied even the basic human rights and confined within a narrow social, political and economic sphere. Means and resources along with political power were unjustly distributed. Blacks and Coloureds had no rights over the means of production and the natural resources of the country. Notwithstanding, the antiapartheid movement dismantled all the illogical walls and widened everyone's subjectivity to the level that sons and daughters of slaves could become the head of the state. It also created warm environment to flourish the cultures of all the people presently living within the boundary of South Africa. It also guaranteed respect for all the cultures and traditions.



The Blacks who were denied as equal human beings ultimately got victory over the inhumane apartheid rule. Even the names of African children were regarded unfit for getting education in schools conducted by the White missionaries. The teachers used to change African students' names. In the first day of his school life an African boy Rolihlahla finally became Nelson in school. He was made forget his originality and imposed an English name. But, the reason behind it was just the Westerners mindset that Africans are inferior to them. According to Nelson Mandela's memory of first day in school:

On the first day of school my teacher, Miss Mdingane, gave each of us an English name and said that thenceforth that was the name we would answer to in the school. This was the tradition among Africans in those days and was undoubtedly due to the British bias of our education. The education I received was a British education, in which British ideas, British Culture and British institutions were assumed to be superior. There was no such thing as African culture. (13)

Such a controlled person's accession to the powerful presidency is not an ordinary achievement. It is one of the key elements of modernity to be widened regarding one's social and political personality. Shading light on the importance of 18<sup>th</sup> century Enlightenment D.V. Kumar says that, "Some of these assumptions and expectations such as reason, science, progress, empiricism and secularism, as and when they are realised, were supposed to contribute significantly to the enhancement of human condition by ushering in the era of modernity (241)." Therefore, one of the key elements of modernity is to enhance human condition. In *Long Walk to Freedom*, Mandela has ascended to a full citizen from a segregated second-class human being often deemed as less than a human being. A man deprived of fundamental rights for a

human being has turned to be head of the state. Not only that, every segregated citizen has come to the mainstream of South Africa.

Besides, before the end of the apartheid, the Blacks could live only in the areas allocated by the apartheid government. The Bantustan policy introduced by the government further deprived the Blacks from their property right and limited in eight Bantu states. People living in supposedly White areas were forced to leave their land and seventy percent of population was settled in only thirteen percent of the total land. As Mandela mentions:

The immorality of the Bantustan policy, whereby 70 percent of the people would be apportioned only 13 percent of the land, was obvious. Under the new policy, even though two-thirds of Africans lived in so-called white areas, they could have citizenship only in their own 'tribal homelands'. The scheme neither gave us freedom in white areas nor independence in what they deemed 'our' areas. (217)

In reality, modernity means life based on logic and liberation from all kinds of illogical beliefs that rule the society. Moreover, modernity does not accept deprivations. In modernity, people's rationality is valued than tyranny. As Phuyal claims, "The idea of liberty at the heart of modernity promotes human potential to break free from all illogical chains of traditions (2)." In *Long Walk to Freedom* also, African people were deprived of their own land and properties. They were confined within a certain area and were denied even the basic and minimal rights. Peter Wagner claims that human beings set their rules to conduct their lives by themselves. No external factors should guide their lives. And also says that modernity is not about certainty. It keeps on changing as demanded by the context it develops in (4). But the onset of democracy liberated them from those all kinds of deprivations and ensured

equal rights for all which widened their personality.

Education is the core thing that develops one's personality and makes competent in every sector of society. The apartheid government in South African was intended to stop the social progress of African natives. Therefore, to keep Africans away from education was major weapon to continue their rule and education was not supposed to be received by the Blacks in the apartheid South Africa. As Mandela states:

Yet even before the nationalists came to power, the disparities in funding tell a story of racist education. The government spent about six times as much per white student as per African student. Education was not compulsory for Africans and was free only in primary grades. Fewer than half of all African children of school age attended any school at all, and only a tiny number of Africans received high school certificates. (155)

In modernity, people have common goal and equal rights provided by the constitution of their respective countries. They are owner of equal opportunities to develop their personalities. About the commonality of people of modern state Andreas Eshete says, "Indeed, it is striking that it is only in the modern age that we are all contemporaries. Modernity is the era where humanity shares a common destiny (6)." Although, South African Blacks before the democracy was established could not share equal opportunities and deprived of their natural rights, democratic system guaranteed them equal opportunities for all and made them owner of the resource their nation owned. It ended the discrimination in education and opened the door for blacks for the enhancement of their inner talent and freely compete for their desired posts.

South African people had no choice of living in their desired areas. They could settle only in the place government had permitted them to live in. Coloureds could

live only in the areas separated for Coloureds and Blacks could live in Blacks-only areas. They were not permitted to live in White-only areas. Even inside South Africa, free migration of people was strictly censored and areas were divided on the basis of races and colours of people. However, people of all the races and originality got freedom with equal respect within the boundary of South Africa. As Mandela proposes his idea of developing mutual trust among different communities, “I reminded people again and again that the liberation struggle was not a battle against a system of repression. At every opportunity, I said all South Africans must unite and join hands and say we are now one country, one nation, marching together into the future (606).” Since boundaries between different communities were broken, people were free to choose their destiny. According to S.N. Eisenstadt, some basic features of modernities are inclusion of marginalized communities into the mainstream of politics which finally took the society to erase all the illogical boundaries between the margin and the mainstream. Along with that freedom of man was central theme of modernist project. The unheard voice of marginalized communities was justly heard. (6) This shows us that unjustly demarcated communities were mingled together to make a whole south Africa. The restricted communities got opportunities to be an indispensable part of the nation with full dignity and unprecedented respect in their land.

Subjectivities under the apartheid rule were confined within a narrow space both physically and mentally. People could not reside in the place of their choice and travel freely within the boundary of their own land. Their settlements were racially separated and had to carry passes to travel from one place to another of the same country. Nevertheless, democracy not only uprooted the chains of discriminations but also make them join their hands for peaceful and prosperous South Africa opening

every door of opportunity for every citizen. Degrees of dignity were widened enough to make them the citizens of a modern state.

In *Long Walk to Freedom*, as it forgets the bitter experiences and imagines a harmonious society African modernity develops with remarkable lessons for Multicultural societies. People of all the colour, faith and origin are justly treated by the South African constitution. African modernity prospers for gradual economic prosperity. It calms people down with the confidence that if segregations are side-lined in right time, other changes including economic progress are sure to happen. Social reforms are base for economic transformations. If people of all the origins have feeling of ownership upon the nation, desired development is possible by utilizing the available natural and human resources. So, Mandela and ANC put aside the universal practices of majority rule and prioritize peace with accommodation of voices of various communities residing in South Africa.

Nelson Mandela's autobiography presents African type of modernity by presenting the people as the key actors in producing and implementing their imagination in the form of rule for themselves which they realize through social change. Initially, representative of South African people Nelson Mandela had illusion that playing with nature is the real freedom one can enjoy. But, later on the consciousness among people due to the social change taught him that real freedom is far away from their imagination. Slowly and gradually awareness was widespread among African people. However, the consciousness did not have any feeling of revenge and hatred. The freedom struggle led by Mandela respected even the oppressors and incorporated their voice too in the constitution. Mandela's comment upon the oppressors' treatment is: "A man who takes away another man's freedom is a prisoner of hatred, he is locked behind the bars of prejudice and narrow-mindedness.

I am not truly free if I am taking away someone else's freedom, just as surely as I am not free when my freedom is taken from me. The oppressed and oppressor alike are robbed of their humanity" (611). In modernity, human emotions are overpowered by reason and logic. Human creativity based on logic is always at the centre. Junqing Yi and Lingmei Fan argue that, "The process of a human being transforming from the unrestrained and spontaneous way of existence to the free conscious way is a significant event in the history of human society. It is a major factor in the operation of modern society, a source of creativity and vitality, as well as a driving force" (8). Therefore, human beings who operate their life on the basis of hatred, revenge and aggression cannot be the part of modern society. Those who abide themselves by rationale are modern beings. In *Long Walk to Freedom*, Mandela and his followers do not have the feeling of revenge and hatred rather they are so conscious to make their society inclusive and democratic which is the feature of modernity.

Once the Black were not counted to be human beings to enjoy natural rights finally became equal citizens to the white and voted for the national and provincial assembly members for the first time in South African history. Beside that they also got an opportunity to be led by a Black in national level. After the election was held and ANC gathered majority vote, South Africa became nation of everyone regardless of colour and nationality. It became nation of nations. Mandela's expression after his inauguration as president of South Africa is: "The ceremonies took place in the lovely sandstone amphitheatre formed by the Union Buildings in Pretoria. For decades this had been the seat of white supremacy, and now it was the site of a rainbow gathering of different colours and nations for the installation of South Africa's first democratic, non-racial government" (607). Modernity always marks breaks from tradition. Established patterns are broken down and replaced with new and logical ideas.

According to Andreas Eshete, “Modernity, thus, marks the decline or end of religious and traditional authority, including the authority of the past. Nietzsche’s declaration that God is dead or what Weber famously called “the disenchantment of the world,” or Marx “the holy profaned”, and is nowadays named “secularization”, is a defining mark of modernity” (3). Therefore, change in perception is one of the essential parts of modernity. Black people were deemed lower than human beings before the democracy was introduced. If the Blacked had followed the same patterned and reversed the racial relationship there would not have been modernity. Mandela’s accession to the chair of President is the vivid signal of end of traditional authority and beginning of new modern hope.

People had high expectation from the new political system. But the political parties were so reasonable that they promised only what that was possible within a certain time frame. They also promised to guaranteed the basic needs people were deprived of. They could have made high commitments to gather excessive support from people. Instead, they had long-term thought to lead South Africa to a progressive nation. Mandela’s view in election campaign is: “Often, I said to the crowds, ‘Do not expect to be driving a Mercedes the day after the election or swimming in your own backyard pool. I told our supporters, ‘life will not change dramatically, except that you will have increased your self-esteem and become a citizen in your own land (599).’” As modernities are different in different parts of the world, there are different standards of social change. According to Dipesh Chakravarty, Gandhian notion of modernity is:

The Gandhian modern was, thus, in relation of both affinity and tension with the modernity of the citizen of European political theory. With the latter, the Gandhian modern shares a concern for public health, freedom of speech and

inquiry, and civic awareness. Yet it does not fulfil the condition of interiority that the discourse of rights both produces and guarantees for the citizen of the modern state. (62)

This is how, although there are varieties in modern values; freedom, self-respect and public welfare are common features of modern state. Mandela also focused on the same idea that democratic values are more important through which other changes can be achieved gradually. He does not shower his people with unfulfillable dreams rather tells his people to be reasonable, hardworking and patient.

Unlike other social movements South African anti-apartheid movement did not fall under any extreme political ideology rather it borrowed various ideas from opposing ideologies whenever necessary to move ahead in the struggle. Neither it followed the communist path nor extreme nationalist path. But, the movement walked through its unique way of co-operation and tolerance. As Mandela forwards his political philosophy, “I was first and foremost African nationalist fighting for our emancipation from minority rule and the right to control our own destiny. But, at the same time, South Africa and the African continent were part of the larger world” (113). Although modernity is taken as a European concept, its roots have reached far away and long back from its onset in Europe. As Enrique Dussel opines, despite having its sources in non-European societies modernity is conceived as a European concept. It is not a constant concept, rather it changes as it interacts with non-European societies. After 1492, except European other concepts were taken to be marginal and paid less importance. But, actually modern cultural practices are products of frequent dialogue with other cultures (132). Therefore, African modernity also interacted with so many other cultures to be established. It borrowed theoretical concepts of other political and philosophical movements. It focused on African



nationality and end of minority rule, but never closed the door for negotiation with other differing ideologies like communism and extreme African nationalism.

As South African people achieved democracy with local practices and widened their subjectivities, they became much focused on social changes together with gradual economic progress. The changes were unique in the sense that revenge, hatred and racial tensions were disposed under brotherhood and unity of the oppressed and the oppressors on the ground of peaceful, prosperous, happy and inclusive South Africa. Voting rights robbed off on the basis of colour of skins were given back to vote their representative of any colour or origin who works for the betterment every citizen. Leaders also called their common citizens to stand on the ground of practicality leaving the high dream of economic prosperity overnight.

To conclude, Present research paper deals with democracy, subjectivity and social change taking textual evidence from Nelson Mandela's autobiography *Long Walk to Freedom*. This research paper finds that Mandela learned democratic values from the ruling system of Transkei decisions concerning local affairs used to be taken after a long discussions and hearing voices of everyone present in the meeting which means although not paid much attention democracy was in practice differently in South Africa. After the end of apartheid South Africa has widened the subjectivity by opening up the previously confined opportunities for every citizen. Mandela and African National Congress fought against the inhuman and irrational apartheid system. Social change in South Africa stepped forward differently as it preserved African nationality coupled with respecting cultures of all the communities regardless of their population, colour and origin. Which means that modernity is devised differently as per the need of circumstances rather than following established rituals. African modernity focuses on the idea of integrity and inclusiveness rather than

majority rule. Hearing the voices of even a single citizen with keen interest is unique to Established European modernity.

Modernity forms and manifests through democracy, subjectivity and social change. The political imagination is both product of human endeavour and human subjectivity. The interaction of human beings with political system results in social change leading to collective welfare through democracy which also means participation of everyone in creation of political system and process. As cultural identities of all and personal freedom is ensured, democracy in South Africa has become well functional. Since boundary of ownership over the system of rule and nation is widened, African modernity has become a rainbow by best managing the ethnic and cultural diversity in South Africa. All the unjust demarcations are erased with brotherhood, co-operation and consensus.

Since modernities develop distinctly in different geographical locations and cultural contexts, present research paper is equally relevant to other nations as well. Especially those countries which are culturally diverse and unable to manage ethnic diversity due to the implementation of political ideologies evolved in the land far away from their locality and long back will be highly benefited from the theoretical concept of multiple modernities. Each country can devise its own modernity by blending their local values with universal practices of modern state. No society is perfect in itself but every society possess something valuable that should be marked and best utilized for common welfare. Application of ideological frameworks developed in different circumstances may not be beneficial all the time for all the societies. Therefore, every society must be open enough and flexible to think upon the established norms and values to reconstruct them in a way that befits their soil.



## Works Cited

- Boehmer, Elleke. "The Hero's Story: The Male Leader's Autobiography and the Syntax of Postcolonial Nationalism." *Stories of Women: Gender and Narrative in the Postcolonial Nation*, Manchester University Press, Manchester; New York, 2005, pp. 66–87.
- Chakravarty, Dipesh. *Habitations of Modernity*, University of Chicago Press, 2002.
- Das P.K., and M.K. Singh, editors. *The Herald of Freedom*, Mahaveer Publishers, 2012.
- De Monchaux, Thomas. "The Brown Journal of World Affairs." *The Brown Journal of World Affairs*, vol. 2, no.1, 1994, pp. 287-293.
- Dirlik, Arif. "Thinking Modernity Historically: Is "Alternative Modernity" the Answer?." *Asian Review of World Histories*, 2013, pp. 5-44.
- Dussel, Enrique. *Underside of Modernity*, edited and translated by Eduardo Mendieta, Humanities Press, 1996.
- Eisenstadt, S.N. "Multiple Modernities." *Daedalus*, vol. 129, no. 1, 2000, pp. 1–29.
- Eshete, Andreas. "Modernity: Its Title to uniqueness and Its Advent in Ethiopia: From the Lecture What is 'Zemenawinet'?." *Perspectives on Ethiopian Modernity.* *Northeast African Studies*, vol. 13, no. 1, 2013, pp. 1-18.
- Hatfield, O Mark. "The Indispensable Man." *Journal of Democracy*, vol. 6, no. 4, 1995, pp. 165–69.
- Henderson, Willie. "'The Struggle Is My Life': Nelson Mandela's Autobiography." *African Affairs*, vol. 95, no. 379, 1996, pp. 288–293.
- Kumar, D.V. "Engaging with Modernity: Need for a Critical Negotiation." *Sociological Bulletin*, vol. 57, no. 2, 2008, pp.240-254.
- Legassick, Martin. "Myth and Reality in the Struggle Against Apartheid." *Journal of*

*Southern African Studies*, vol. 24, no. 2, 1998, pp. 443–458.

Mafela, Munzhedzi James. “The Revelation of African Culture in Long Walk to Freedom.” *Indigenous Biography and Autobiography*, edited by Peter Read et al., vol. 17, 2008, pp. 99-108.

Phuyal, Komal Prasad. “Modernity: Approaches and Assumptions.” *Literary Studies*, vol. 27, 2013, pp. 57-66.

Rodriguez, Havidan. “A Long Walk to Freedom and Democracy: Human Rights, Globalization, and Social Injustice.” *Social Injustice*, vol. 83, no. 1, 2004, pp. 391-412.

Somerville, Keith. “The Long Walk to a New South Africa.” *The World Today*, vol. 51, no. 3, 1995, pp. 60-61.

Wagner, Peter. *Theorizing Modernity*, Sage Publications Ltd., 2001.

Yi, Junqing, and Lingmei Fan. “Dimensions of Modernity and Their Contemporary Fate.” *Frontiers Philosophy in China*, vol. 1, no. 1, 2006, pp. 6-21.