EUROPE, INDIA, AND THE "EUROPEANIZATION OF THE EARTH"

by

Wilhelm Halbfass
Philadelphia

I.

Looking back at the history of European speculation about and fascination with India, G.W.F. Hegel (1770-1831), a contemporary and careful observer of the beginnings of modern Indian studies, characterized India as a land which had exerted its world-historical influence in a passive manner, by being sought: "Without being known too well, it has existed for ~~centuries~~ millenia in the imagination of the Europeans as a wonderland. Its fame, which it has always had with regard to its treasures, both its natural ones, and in particular, its wisdom, has lured men there."[1] In Hegel's view, the beginnings of modern research and European domination over Asia mark the end of this search for India's mythical wisdom and "philosophy": India cannot teach the West; its tradition is a matter of the past; it has - so he claims - never reached the level of (autonomous) philosophy and science which is a genuinely ~~and uniquely~~ European achievement.[2]

Is Hegel's scheme of historical subordination (his Eurocentric) and his arrogance association of the idea of philosophy with the historical identity and destiny of Europe entirely obsolete? Does it reflect the attitude of his own time and the earlier history

of European interest in India? To what extent has it influenced or anticipated the subsequent development? Has it finally been superseded by the progress of ~~Indian and "Oriental" studies and by the results of objective historical~~ research? But to what extent is such research itself a European phenomenon and part of European self-affirmation? To what extent does it reflect European perspectives and motivations? How, on the other hand, has the encounter with India, the accumulation of information, or the development of speculation, about it, affected the European self-understanding and sense of identity? Has it affected the meaning of religion and philosophy itself? How and why did Europeans become interested in Indian thought? Which questions and expectations did they have concerning India and themselves? ~~How much "search" for "Indian wisdom" has there been, and what is its significance?~~ How did the Indians respond? How did their interest in Europe develop? How did they receive European thought, how did they redefine their own identity in the encounter? What does the European interest in India, and the Indian reception of, and response to, European thought and attitudes tell us about Europe?

Modern Indological research and the systematic exploration of India's religious and philosophical tradition began in Hegel's own time, with the foundation of the Asiatic Society of Bengal (1784), and the works of W. Jones, Ch. Wilkins, and H. Th. Colebrooke. But the encounter between Europe and

and India, as well as the development of interest in, attitudes towards, and images of Indian life and wisdom began much earlier, and can be traced back to classical antiquity. There is certainly no coherent history of this European search for India. Indeed, there are periods of neglect and latency, along with much casual information and random encounters. Yet, there is an identifiable historical path leading to the situation of modern Indological research and of intercultural communication. It is a process ~~a process~~ which accompanies and reflects the development of European thought in general -- a process in which Europe has defined and questioned itself, and in which misunderstandings and prejudices may be as significant as the accumulation of factual truth and correct information.

The most ancient Greek accounts, beginning with Skylax of Karyanda who explored the Indus region between 519 and 516 B.C., associate India with the miraculous and the fabulous. A new era began with the Indian campaign of Alexander the Great (327-325 B.C.). Tradition has it that Alexander was accompanied by half a dozen Greek philosophers, and that he himself engaged in conversations with the Gymnosophists, the naked wise men and renouncers of India. We need not investigate the historicity of these reports. The fact itself that the Greek tradition postulates such an encounter is sufficiently significant.

The subsequent, usually vague and speculative, interest in India was guided by various perspectives. It was an interest

in one's own origins, i.e., the background and prehistory of the Greek tradition, or a search for alternatives and correctives, or a projection of completeness and fulfillment. The stoics saw in the Indian Gymnosophists the practical fulfillment of their theoretical aspirations concerning immunity towards pleasure and passion. ~~and~~ pain. Church fathers like Clement and Hippolytus suggested that philosophy itself, the Hellenic reliance on reason, might have its origin among the "barbarians" of India and Egypt; this argument was meant to undermine the Hellenic pride of autonomous thinking. However, the best-known among the Greek doxographers, Diogenes Laertius (third cent. A.D.), insists that in the ultimate analysis philosophy remains something fundamentally and uniquely Greek, and that there is no Oriental equivalent for the word and concept "philosophy." Indian and Oriental thought as part of the prehistory of Occidental philosophy, ~~i.e., of philosophy per se~~ -- this is a view which we find again prevailing in more recent doxographies and histories of philosophy, such as J. Brucker's Historia critica philosophiae (1742-1744), as well as in Hegel's own work and in most histories of philosophy in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

The Portuguese explorers who reopened the seaway to India around 1500 were not interested in ancient Indian wisdom. Instead, they were looking for "Christians and spices." And the missionaries who accompanied the conquerors and merchants were not interested in learning and listening, but in teaching

and persuading. Yet, it was this very intention of delivering a message which forced them to listen and learn and explore the linguistic and contextual conditions for successful teaching and preaching. It is therefore not surprising that missionaries became the Western pioneers in the study of Indian languages, including Sanskrit, and that they gave the first knowledgeable accounts of Indian thought. The work of the great Jesuit Roberto deNobili epitomizes the missionary achievements in this field.

The motivations and perspectives for the study of India, and Asia in general, were again quite different for the representatives of Deism and the Enlightenment, whose factual information depended largely on the reports of the missionaries. The search for alternatives and correctives assumed a new significance, and in a peculiar, frequently anti-Christian fashion, it was combined with the old motif of Oriental "origins." The idea of God and the fundamental principles of religion were said to be older, more original and less deformed in the ancient cultures of Asia, specifically India, than in the Christian Occident. In a letter to Frederick the Great of Prussia, Voltaire claimed that the Christian religion was totally dependent upon "the old religion of Brahma." In a less pronounced and critical form, the idea of an original Indian Deism appears in the work of some of the early British pioneers of the study of Hinduism in the eighteenth century.[3]

The glorification of India as the country of origins, of primeval revelations, of unadulterated childhood, assumed

mythical proportions in the German Romantic movement. India was not seen as a foreign, alien tradition, but as the forgotten basis and hidden depth of our own, European identity, and it was invoked against materialism, rationalism, and other aberrations of modern Europe. According to the young Friedrich Schlegel, India was the homeland of European religion, mythology, and philosophy, and Sanskrit was the mother of European languages. As late as 1883, Max Müller, the most famous Indologist of the nineteenth century, referred to India as the land of "our childhood," and he said: "We all come from the East -- all that we value most has come to us from the East, and in going to the East... everybody ought to feel that he is going to his 'old home,' full of memories, if only he can read them."[4]

Hegel was one of the heirs, but also the most rigorous critic of the Romantic conception of India. What distinguishes his approach above all from that of the Romantics is his commitment to the present, and his sense of an irreversible direction of history; he does not glorify origins and early stages. The spirit of world history progresses to greater richness and complexity. What has been in the beginning cannot be richer and more perfect. It may be true that India, as part of the Orient, is a land of "sunrise," of early origins and "childhood." But this does not justify nostalgia and contempt of the European present. We cannot and need not return to the Orient: It is, (in Hegel's view,) a matter of the past. According to Hegel, Indian thought is committed to the principle of "substance," pure

undifferentiated being-in-itself; its religions are religions of "substantiality," in which the human individual, the autonomous person, has no value. There is no room for historical progress, for the increasing presence of man; and there is no room for philosophy and science in the full and proper sense.

Hegel sees India from the peak of his own time and his philosophical system which is meant to summarize and consummate the history of European thought. He is aware of the historical conditions of his thought. But this clear and explicit awareness of his historical position and his European identity appears itself as a manifestation of superior reflexivity; and it adds to his historical and cultural self-assurance and the confidence in the hermeneutic potential of his level and context of thought. In his view, his European horizon transcends all Asian horizons. Asian thought is comprehensible and interpretable within European thought, but not vice versa. The question of an adequate standpoint for the evaluation and comparison of different cultural traditions has been decided by the course of history itself, and it has been decided in favor of Europe. European thought has to provide the context and the categories for the exploration of all traditions of thought.[5]

Among the representative European philosophers of the nineteenth century, A. Schopenhauer is associated much more commonly with India than Hegel. We may even say that no other major Western philosopher so signalizes the turn towards India,

combined with a disenchantment with the European-Christian tradition and its key concepts of history, reason, the human individual, the personal God, etc. The notorious incompatibility between Hegel and Schopenhauer is clearly reflected in their attitudes towards India.

Schopenhauer rejected the Hegelian integration of the system and history of philosophy; and he did not recognize a scheme of progress which would have allowed him to construe a succession of cultural traditions and philosophical theories and to subordinate the Indian tradition to the European standpoint. For him, Indian thought was not a matter of the past; and philosophy was not "its time comprised in thought" ("ihre Zeit in Gedanken erfasst"). His approach allowed him to find the same insights in the most diverse historical and cultural contexts. He was convinced that the basic ideas of his own philosophy, i.e., the doctrine of the "world as will and representation" and the idea of the fundamental unity of reality and its apparent projection into spatio-temporal multiplicity, could be found among the Indians, and not just in the form of historical antecendents, but in a sense of truth which knows no historical and geographical restrictions. History was metaphysically irrelevant and without purpose. In particular, Schopenhauer praised the Upaniṣads, the Vedānta and Buddhism, and he welcomed them as antidotes against the theistic, personalistic, progress-oriented spirit of the Christian-European tradition. He predicted that the Indian teachings

would bring about a new and greater Renaissance for Europe. Yet he was also convinced that his own thought provided the definitive and conceptually superior tools to clarify and "understand" the Indian ideas more fully than they had been understood by their originators.

While Schopenhauer proclaimed the concordance of his philosophy with the teachings of Vedānta and Buddhism, he also recognized, although less conspicuously, its factual inseparability from the history of European thought. Indeed, Schopenhauer no less than Hegel is a European thinker of the nineteenth century. His critique of the European tradition, of the ideas of history and progress, shows us the other side of the nineteenth century. It negates, but also supplements the Hegelian consummation of European thought. Schopenhauer, too, was a "son of his time." Yet he showed an unprecedented readiness to integrate Indian ideas into his own, European thinking and to utilize them for his articulation of the doctrine of the "will" and its "negation" which implies a critique of the European confidence in representational and rational thinking, in calculation and planning, science and technology.[6]

Schopenhauer's contribution to the propagation and popularization of Indian concepts has been considerable. His impact upon academic studies of Indian philosophy, with the notable exception of P. Deussen, has been much less significant. And the new Renaissance which he predicted has not taken place.

In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, historians of philosophy generally followed Hegel's example and excluded India from the history of philosophy, and they continued to proclaim philosophy, "pure theory" and "value-free" science as genuinely and uniquely Greek and European phenomena. They denied that the autonomy of thought and the freedom from dogma, myth and tradition, as well as from all practical -- soteriological or utilitarian -- interests which they considered to be the prerequisite of "true" philosophy and science were to be found in India or any other Asian tradition. As already in ancient Greece, "philosophy" and the ability of "wonder" and "theory" were presented as a mark of Europe's identity and superiority.

Towards the end of his life, and a few years before the beginning of the Second World War, E. Husserl once again invoked the spirit of "philosophy," "science," "pure theory": Through these ideas and ideals, Europe would have to rediscover and reassert its unique "teleology" and its "universal human mission" ("menschheitliche Sendung"). Because of its possession of "philosophy" and "pure theory," the European tradition is not just a cultural tradition among others, is not a "merely empirical anthropological" type such as "China" and "India." According to Husserl, Europe alone can provide other traditions with a universal framework of meaning and understanding. They will have to "Europeanize themselves, whereas we, if we understand ourselves properly, will never, for example, Indianize

ourselves." The "Europeanization of all foreign parts of mankind" ("Europäisierung aller fremden Menschheiten") is the destiny of the earth.[7]

Of course, there were those who proclaimed the end of philosophy itself, or its transformation into sociology, anthropology, and so forth. This happened, for instance, in the wake of Comte's "positivism;" and claims and programs of a totally open-minded exploration of the "human phenomenon" were presented which were meant to replace Hegel's historical subordination of non-European traditions with a more objective "coordination" and "comparison" of different cultures. However, in their attempt to "objectify" other traditions, and to explore and understand them in an utterly "positive" and neutral fashion, these programs remain committed to a specifically European orientation,[8] ~~and in their own way they continue and reinforce a Eurocentric and anthropocentric tradition.~~[8]

II.

The changing attitudes towards India and the various manifestations of interest in the Indian tradition are also expressions of European self-understanding, self-affirmation and self-criticism. They accompany and reflect basic developments in European thought and life. There is no parallel or analogous development of Indian interest in or speculation about Europe. There can be no symmetry in the historical presentation of the encounter between Europe and India and their mutual approaches in the areas of religion and philosophy.

Traditional Hinduism has not reached out for the West. It has not been driven by the zeal of proselytization and discovery, and by the urge to understand and master foreign cultures. It has neither recognized the foreign, the other as a possible alternative, nor as a potential source of its own identity. "It has at no time defined itself in relation to the other, nor acknowledged the other in its unassimilable otherness."[9] India has discovered Europe and begun to respond to it in being sought out, explored, overrun and objectified by it. Its initial position in the encounter was that of a target of European interests and expectations. It was not the course of Indian history, nor the inner dynamism of the Hindu tradition that led to the encounter. Europeans took the initiative. They went to India. This is a simple and familiar fact. Yet its fundamental significance for the hermeneutics of the encounter between India and the West is often forgotten.

Again and again, Indians have been exposed to the experience of foreigners and outsiders; again and again, non-Indians, and in particular Muslims and Europeans, have interfered with the course of Indian history. But the Indian role was certainly not always, ~~and not in all respects~~, a passive one. There was, above all, the "missionary" religion of Buddhism which spread Indian ideas over vast areas of Asia and established its own network of intercultural contacts. And there was the remarkable and still enigmatic phenomenon of "Greater India" -- the spread of Indian institutions and cultural phenomena, and

the establishment of Indianized empires in other parts of Asia, specifically in Southeast Asia. But these extraordinary developments remained unrecorded and widely unnoticed in the Indian motherland. In traditional Hindu thought and literature, there has been very little interest in foreign countries, societies, cultures or religions. There has been no accumulation of information about the non-Indian world, ~~no differentiation of xenological understanding.~~ Even with reference to the foreigners in India -- the Muslims and other invaders -- Hindu literature, specifically the literature in Sanskrit, presents us for the most part with a tradition of silence and evasion. There is no sign of active theoretical interest, no attempt to respond to the foreign challenge, to enter into a "dialogue" -- up to the period around 1800.[10]

This period, which saw the full establishment of European power and presence in India, also saw the beginnings of modern Indology, i.e., the scientific exploration and objectification of India's past. The combination of these two events, which is more than a temporal coincidence, had a fundamental impact upon Indian attitudes towards themselves and the "other." Indians took a more and more active part in the European enterprise of exploring India's past, and they began presenting themselves to the world in a new fashion. They took more distinctive initiatives to interpret their identity for the europeans, and to defend and affirm it against them. They began to demarcate themselves against the foreign and to recog-

nize the other in a new sense; but they also tried to comprehend and assimilate the Western ideas within the framework of their own tradition. They responded to the universalistic claims of Western thought with a universalism of their own. They opened, even exposed themselves to the West. But this very openness appeared as a confirmation and consummation of their own tradition, its potential of universality and inclusiveness. Today, the presence of European ideas in Indian thought is far more pervasive than the presence of Indian ideas in the West. What is the meaning of this "Westernization," this apparent intellectual subjugation of India by the West? Is it sheer alienation, or does it conceal an underlying strength and flexibility of the Indian tradition?

The Indians (of the 19th cent.) reinterpreted key concepts of their traditional self-understanding (such as the concept of dharma), adjusting them to Western modes of understanding. By appealing to the West, by using its conceptual tools, they tried to secure and defend the identity and continuity of their tradition. Were they successful? Did they preserve and perhaps enrich their tradition by presenting it to the West? Did they rediscover and reinvigorate their identity in this unprecedented exposure to the other? Did they expose and reveal inherent limitations and weaknesses in the Western tradition? What did they find, what did they miss in European thought and life? What was new and unprecedented in the encounter with the West, specifically the British, as it occurred around 1800?

Hegel's lifetime (1770-1831) coincides with that of a man who, like no other, has been celebrated as the pioneer of the "Hindu Renaissance," as the herald of modernization in India, or, in short, as the "Father of Modern India": Rammohan Roy (1772-1833). Rammohan's role has often been exaggerated; and it has assumed almost mythical proportions. Yet his life and work represent more than just a chronological starting-point for the development of modern Hindu thought. Like nobody else before him, he tried to guide India and Hinduism into the open arena of the "great wide world." He exposed his own tradition to comparisons and contrasts with other religious and cultural traditions, and he invoked Western rationality and science and Christian ethics against what he considered the aberrations of Hinduism. On the other hand, he invoked what he called "the pure spirit" of the Vedas and Upaniṣads against Christianity. He tried to adopt the ethical teachings of the New Testament, without committing himself to Christianity as a religion.[11] This has been a frequent experience and a recurrent disappointment for the missionaries in India: Indians were fascinated by the secular level of achievement which the missionaries represented, the worldly knowledge and skills they brought with them, their social and administrative ideas; they were far less receptive towards the Christian message itself. As a matter of fact, missionaries were the most important transmitters of secular scientific learning and of technical skills in the first decades of the nineteenth century, before the

British formulated an "official" educational policy for India and introduced English as the language of higher education.

The hermeneutic situation which is reflected in Rammohan Roy's use of English, together with his native Bengali and Sanskrit, his cross-cultural horizon of self-understanding, his position between receptivity and self-assertion, "Westernization" and "Hindu revivalism," forms the background and basic condition of modern Hindu thinking and self-definition. Since Rammohan's time, it has become increasingly obvious that the European, i.e., primarily British presence in India was not just another case of foreign invasion and domination, or of cross-cultural, interreligious "encounter." Instead, it was an encounter between tradition and modernity, i.e., an exposure to new forms of organization and administration, to unprecedented claims of universality and globalization, to the ideas of history and progress and human mastery of the earth, to rationalization, technology and a comprehensive objectification of the world. It also meant the advent of a new type of objectification of the Indian tradition itself, an unprecedented exposure to theoretical curiosity and historical "understanding," and to the interests of research and intellectual mastery. It was a presence which was much more pervasive, much more penetrating than any previous domination. It affected the very self-understanding of the tradition and turned out to be inescapable even when it was rejected or disregarded. For it began to provide the means even for its rejection, and for the Hindu self-affirmation against it.

In a broad classification, P. Hacker has divided modern Indian thought and self-understanding, and the Indian attitudes towards the West, into "Neo-Hinduism" (or "Hindu Modernism") and "surviving traditional Hinduism".[12] What distinguishes them are the different ways in which they appeal to the tradition, the structures which they employ to interrelate the indigenous and the foreign, and the degree of their receptivity towards the West. "Surviving traditional Hinduism" is certainly not a mere continuation of the past, nor is "Neo-Hinduism" a total break with it. But traditionalism tries to preserve a basic continuity with the past and to build upon it by making certain additions and adjustments; Neo-Hinduism on the other hand, first adopts Western values and means of orientation and then tries to associate or identify them with traditional ideas, and legitimize them out of the tradition itself. The different degrees to which the traditional Hindu ideas of dharma and darśana are reinterpreted and associated with the Western concepts of "religion" and "philosophy," and the different ways in which they function as receptacles for Western thought, and as devices of apologetics against it, illustrate the general differences between Neo-Hinduism and traditionalism. As a matter of fact, the radical reinterpretation of dharma, with its appeal to modern Western scientific and ethical ideas, and the affiliated claims of inclusion of, and tolerance towards, Christianity and other religions, is one of the characteristic features of Neo-Hinduism. The interpretation

of darśana as a more holistic, "experiential," intuitive Indian counterpart to the discursive and analytical methods of Western philosophy is also symptomatic, and it is often combined with claims to reconcile the dichotomy of science and religion. The European ideal of "pure theory" or "knowledge for the sake of knowledge" is frequently criticized and rejected as vacuous, and as amounting to idle curiosity.[13]

"Neo-Hinduism" is represented by internationally well-known figures, such as Vivekananda, Aurobindo, and Radhakrishnan. "Surviving traditional Hinduism," on the other hand, is documented in popular tracts in Indian vernaculars, or in the writings of Sanskrit pandits. Above all, Neo-Hindus try to "actualize" the tradition; they try to demonstrate its potential for the solution of problems of our contemporary world, of the global political situation, of science and technology. They try to translate ancient religious and metaphysical teachings, above all the non-dualism of Advaita Vedānta, into directives for ethical, social, and political practice. On the other hand, they invoke Indian "spirituality" against Western secularism. In a sense, this indicates the most fundamental dilemma of Neo-Hinduism: On the one hand, it tries to justify and legitimize the tradition in terms of modern Western values and orientations; on the other hand, it tries to affirm it against the modern secularized world, and to preserve it as a potential alternative and cure.

The same dilemma is reflected by various models which were employed to reconcile the Hindu tradition with European science and technology: There is, first of all, a model of mutual supplementation or even exchange, which was prepared by Rammohan Roy himself and popularized by Keshab Chandra Sen and Vivekananda. It postulates that India may import scientific and technological knowledge from Europe, but that it is capable of providing superior religious and spiritual values. Another model, advocated by Aurobindo, Radhakrishnan and others, suggests that Westerners may be (-or have been-) the more competent explorers and masters of the external, physical world, but that Indians are the greater experts of the inner world of consciousness and the self. Thirdly, the claim has been made, most conspicuously by Dayānanda Sarasvatī, that India is the original homeland of true science as well as true religion, and that its active participation in scientific and technological progress is nothing but a rediscovery and reactivation of its own forgotten roots.[14]

In various ways, these models, especially the first and second one, have also played a part in European self-understanding and self-critique, and in the more recent Western fascination with India, and with Eastern methods of meditation.

To close this section, I would like to cite two modern Indian authors who, from the experience of their own thought and life, have articulated the peculiar hermeneutic brokenness

of modern Indian thought with impressive clarity and intensity. Our first author, Nirmala Varmā, was born in 1929 and has published novels, short stories and essays in Hindi. In an essay entitled Atīta ("The Past"), he discusses the deep dichotomy between the traditional Indian understanding of the past and the modern Western orientation towards the future (bhaviṣya), the Western attempts to transform the Indians into "historical men" (aitihāsika manuṣya), and the modern Indian alienation from their living past. He characterizes the development beginning with Rammohan Roy as follows: "Rammohan Roy and the liberal intellectuals of his generation were aware of this dichotomy, but the way which they chose to resolve it was a deceptive one -- it has led us in a direction from whose consequences we have to suffer today. Facing the 'progress-oriented' standards of Western civilization, these intellectuals felt very inferior. In order to free themselves of this sense of inferiority, they tried to revive the greatness of the entire Indian past. They wanted to demonstrate to their foreign rulers that the glory of their by-gone culture could bear comparison with modern European values. But they were also attracted by 'modern European values,' regarded them as a symbol of a superior civilization, and wanted to be accepted and 'respectable' in front of them. On the one hand, the intellectuals of the Bengali Renaissance pleaded for the Vedas and Upaniṣads; on the other hand, they adopted the doctrines of John Stuart Mill and were keen to apply them to their own social order.

On the one hand, they were proud of their own past; on the other hand, they wanted to exchange this pride into European values and thus shape the future of their country. This movement of Indian intellectuals of the nineteenth century is usually called a 'movement of harmonization' (samanvaya kā abhiyāna). It was an external and superficial harmonization, but also a very deceptive and destructive one..."[15]

Our second author, J. L. Mehta (born in 1912), died July 1988 was a professor of philosophy at Banaras Hindu University, but has also taught in the United States. Most of his publications, including a major study of Heidegger, are in English. Again and again, they address the central questions of modern Indian self-understanding. Can modern Hindu thought rediscover and redefine itself in the Westernized world? Should it even try to assert itself, to find or preserve an identity of its own? Is this a matter of choice or of historical necessity? "Can we simply turn our backs on our own past, just discard it, and appropriate the final fruits of Western self-understanding as the inner telos of man universally and as such, or shall we reject the spiritual-philosophical endeavor of the West altogether as of no consequence and seek to entrench ourselves into a specifically Indian philosophizing, in the language of the past and supposedly undisturbed by the alien world of meanings embodied in the English language we employ for the purpose? Or shall we begin to understand both in their mutual otherness, to learn the language of each and so to evolve ways

of thinking and talking which will be truly appropriate to our membership of both worlds, striving in such fashion to transform it into one?"[16]

Elsewhere, J. L. Mehta describes the hermeneutic situation of modern India as follows: "The coming of modernity to India signified not merely the impingement of an alien world of knowledge, ideas, and ideals upon the Indian consciousness, but of a world which was itself rapidly reaching out toward a newly conceived future, as well as spreading out its tentacles to encompass the whole world. Under the colonial origins of his modernization, the Indian encountered 'philosophy' and 'religion' and began forthwith the long journey of reinterpreting his tradition in terms of these Western categories. Most importantly, he began thinking about it in the English language, not just to expound it to English scholars, but as the principal medium of his own self-understanding. Such self-understanding was reflected back in new meanings given to ancient words in the Indian languages and it also expressed itself in the way traditional meanings were themselves embedded in English words. In this interplay between the one and the other, between one's own and the alien, between the present and the past, what was happening to the truth of that tradition and to its manner of speaking to us? Was it being gradually covered up and hidden from our view, or was it being brought now to shine forth, at least in promise, in its real purity?"[17]

III

It is obvious that the conditions of the encounter and Dialogue" between India and Europe have changed drastically during the twentieth century. The two world wars, the end of colonialism, India's independence have affected the identityof the participants in the dialogue. European self-questioning and self-destruction have progressed rapidly. The emergence of America, Russia and Japan as protagonists of the modern world has changed the meaning of "East" and "West". There has been an unprecedented multiplication of channels of international communication and interaction, and an explosion of easily accessible information. In the world of modern technology, "encounters" and "dialogues" have become much easier, but also much more ambiguous, ~~and~~ questionable, and perhaps trivial.

Academic research is only one mode of presence of the Indian tradition in the modern Western world. In addition, we have its presence in the arts, literature, popular cults, methods of meditation, sectarian movements, "transpersonal psychology", the syndrome of "ancient wisdom and modern science", and so forth. Although Indian philosophy is not widely taught in Western departments of philosophy, it is no longer excluded from the historiography of philosophy. Western scientists, physicists in particular, are turning towards Eastern metaphysics of awareness. Buddhism appears as an attractive alternative. There are, moreover, the many ways in which Indians themselves present and interpret their tradition to the West. Are the boundaries finally dissolving? Has there been a genuine "fusion of horizons"?

Has the historical imbalance of the encounter, the political and ideological subjugation of India by the West, been corrected? Is the Indianization of the West catching up with the Westernization of India?

What has happened to Hegel's verdict that the Orient has been superseded by the Occident, that India is a matter of the past? What has happened to Husserl's claim that the "Europeanization" of mankind is the destiny of the earth, and that Europeans who understand themselves properly will never "Indianize" themselves? Are the Europeans abandoning their unique universal and global mission, i.e., the mission of philosophy, science, "pure theory"? Or have they discovered the limits of this mission and its "universality"? Was the expansion of European ways of understanding the world and mastering nature, was the globalization of European science and technology only an episode? Will the "Europeanization" of the earth be reversed? Are other cultures and traditions, and India in particular, ready to provide alternatives?

In the modern planetary situation, Eastern and Western "cultures" can no longer meet one another as equal partners. They meet <u>in</u> a Westernized world, under conditions shaped by Western ways of thinking. The medium, the framework of any "dialogue" seems to be an irreducibly Western one. But is this factually inescapable "universality" the true <u>telos</u> of mankind? Could it be that the global openness of modernity is still a parochially Western, European horizon? Or was Europe itself

somehow left behind by the universality which it had inaugurated? Did it help others to gain freedom and distance from their traditional foundations and limitations, while it remained committed to its own historical roots and - paradoxically--within its "traditional" horizon? Is the alienation, the loss of an authentic "traditional" self-understanding which Europe has inflicted upon non-European cultures, perhaps something enviable?

In a sense, Europe itself has been "superseded" and left behind by the modern Westernized world which it had inaugurated. It is certainly no longer the master and protagonist of the process of "Europeanization". The direction of this process, the meaning of progress, the significance of science and technology have become thoroughly questionable. The doubts and questions which had already been raised by the Romantics, Schopenhauer and others and which determined their interest in India have become much more urgent. ~~The search for alternatives now appears as a matter of life or death.~~

Europe is turning towards those non-European traditions which it tried to master, supersede, "understand" and "explain"; it tries to enlist them as allies against developments initiated by itself. The West is turning towards the East for new inspiration, or even for therapy. Can it expect help from those ways of orientation, those modes of awareness of which it tried to deprive others? Can it retrieve and adopt for its own future what it once tried to supersede and relegate to the past? How would this differ from or relate to, the Neo-Hindu attempts to "actualize" ancient Indian teachings for the present? The Neo-Hindus tried

to appeal to the modern West; they tried to validate traditional Indian ideas by reinterpreting them, and by adjusting them to the needs and expectations of the modern Westernized world. Should this be avoided? Should we focus instead on what is not appealing to modernity, and on dimensions of the tradition which have been disavowed or disregarded by its modern advocates and "actualizers"? Should we adopt Nirmala Varmā's critique of Rammohan Roy and his Neo-Hindu followers, who tried to impose the European notion of "history", and the Western orientation towards progress and the future, upon the Hindu tradition? Should we, can we abrogate this orientation which has come to dominate the Westernized world as well as Europe itself?

Whatever the nature of the current crisis may be--we cannot return to the past, and ~~we~~ (Westerners) cannot escape into foreign traditions and ways of orientation. The teachings and methods of the past and of Eastern traditions cannot speak and function in the modern Westernized world as they did in the past or in their own traditional contexts. It does not help to invoke (ancient) Eastern methods of meditation, or the cultivation of inner awareness, against objectification, instrumentalization, consumerization, if these methods are supposed to function, and be useful, within the basic constellation ~~of the~~ modern world, if they are supposed to be part of those developments against which they are invoked. No calculated importation and application of Eastern ways of thinking, or methods of meditation, will enable (the Europeans) ~~us~~ to reverse history, or to change the basic conditions of a world which is dominated by

science and technology. The recent history of Indian spiritual movements in the West illustrates this simple truth: In their application within the modern Western world, the Indian methods and teachings become parts and manifestations of this world, and the constellation of science and technology.

Just as E. Husserl, M. Heidegger has referred to the "complete Europeanization of the earth and of mankind", ("vollständige Europäisierung der Erde und des Menschen"), and he agrees with Husserl in crediting only the Greek-European tradition with a genuine concept of philosophy.[18] But unlike Husserl, Heidegger does not present such "Europeanization" as a proud and unambiguous achievement. Science and technology, the main constituents of Westernization, are the ultimate expression and consequence of those ways of representational, objectifying, "metaphysical" thinking which began in ancient Greece. Philosophy in its genuine, i.e., Greek-European, sense is the mother of science and technology, and of the "Atomic Age". There is no non-European philosophy of this kind, "neither Chinese not Indian".[19] We have to go back to the Greek sources of the modern world. (According to Heidegger, we have to understand its origination out of certain fundamental constellations and decisions of early European thought. This Western self-exploration, this "dialogue with the Greek thinkers", has "hardly been prepared", and yet it is only the prelude to "the inescapable dialogue with the East Asian world." Are we ready for this dialogue? Neither the language of "science", nor that of "metaphysics", nor that of "historical understanding", can provide the proper medium for a dialogue in which all these ideas themselves will have to be

questioned. We have to transcend "what is European" ("das Europäische"); we have to reach "beyond Occident and Orient." Yet for the time being there is no escape from the predicament of "Europeanization", i.e., the global, universal domination of the Greek-Western "scientific" way of thinking.[20]

To conclude this presentation, I want to refer once more to an Indian thinker whom I have quoted before--J.L. Mehta. In a remarkable response to Heidegger's notion of the "Europeanization of the earth", he accepts the challenge of "belonging, irretrievably and inescapably, to this 'one world' of the Ge-Stell", i.e., of the global presence of Western science and technology, and he adds: "... there is no other way open, to us in the East, but to go along with this Europeanization and to go through it. Only through this voyage into the foreign and the strange can we win back our own self-hood; here as elsewhere, the way to what is closest to us is the longest way back".[21]

For Indians as well as Europeans, the "Europeanization of the earth" continues to be inescapable and irreversible. For this very reason ~~Just therefore~~, ancient Indian thought, in its unassimilable, non-actualizable, intensely meaningful ~~unretrievable~~ distance and otherness, is not obsolete.

Notes

1. G.W.F. Hegel, Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Weltgeschichte, vol. 2: Die orientalische Welt, ed. G. Lasson, Hamburg 1968, p. 344: "Es lebt seit Jahrtausenden allgemein, ohne dass man es genauer gekannt hätte, vor der Vorstellung der Europäer als ein Wunderland. Der Ruhm, den es immer gehabt hat in Ansehung seiner Schätze, sowohl der natürlichen, als auch besonders seiner Weisheit, hat die Menschen dorthin gelockt."

2. This presentation is largely based upon my book Indien und Europa: Perspektiven ihrer geistigen Begegnung, Basel/Stuttgart 1981, as well as on its revised and enlarged English version: India and Europe: An Essay in Understanding, Albany 1988.

3. See The British Discovery of Hinduism in the 18th Century, ed. P.J. Marshall, Cambridge 1970.

4. F.M. Müller, India - What Can It Teach Us? London 1883, pp. 29ff.

5. See India and Europe, ch. 6.

6. See India and Europe, ch. 7; and my forthcoming article "Schopenhauer im Gespräch mit der indischen Tradition" (Schopenhauer Commemoration Vol., Munich 1987).

7. See E. Husserl, Die Krisis der europäischen Wissenschaften und die transzendentale Phänomenologie, ed. W. Biemel, The Hague 1954, pp. 14; 320 ff.