Enlightenment
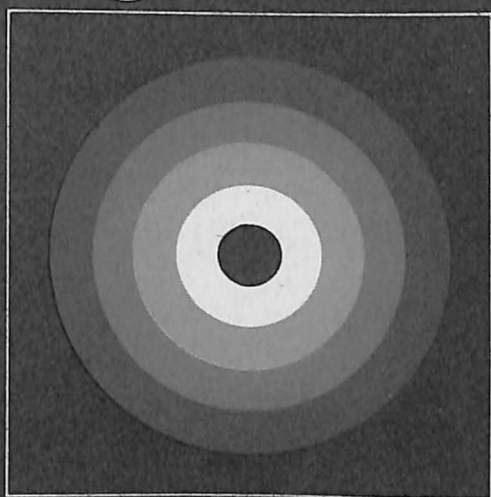
East & West

LOS MAR GREGORIOS

ENLIGHTENMENT: EAST AND WEST

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*Pointers in the Quest for
India's Secular Identity*

PAULOS MAR GREGORIOS

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INTRODUCTION

Enlightenment is a word we use in two technical senses. The more familiar meaning is that of a cultural-intellectual process that emerged in Europe in the eighteenth century and is now spreading to the rest of the world. It was not so much a personal experience of individuals as a socio-economic-political process. Many individuals made original contributions to the process. The basic idea was the abandoning of socially held irrational dogmas and beliefs, in order to pursue that which was rational, universal and readily demonstrable. The overthrow of the authority of tradition and the enthronement of critical rationality in its place were perhaps the central movements in this process. We shall examine this basically European and modern concept of Enlightenment in a historical-philosophical context.

The other meaning comes largely from the Indian tradition, though its essence can be located in all traditions, including that of Europe and the West. The paradigm case is that of Buddha, more than two-and-a-half millennia ago. This is a process which begins or occurs in the 'individual' consciousness of one person, which then can spread, not as a social process but as a person-to-person transmission of an experience. The very word Buddha is not a proper name, but literally means the Enlightened One, and the idea in higher Buddhism is that every person should become a Buddha—an Enlightened One. A *bodhisattva* is an Enlightened One who seeks that all be enlightened.

Both concepts refer to a process in the human *psyche*, which of course has consequences in the external world. Both are psychosomatic experiences, since experience itself is psychosomatic. For how can there be any experience without a *psyche* and a *soma* which is the subject of that experience? We do not want to say they are experiences in the human consciousness, since many Buddhists would argue that the Buddhist experience of Enlightenment is beyond consciousness, *prajñāpāramitā*. There are Western writers who seek to differentiate between ordinary experience and the experience of 'mystical' or transcendent enlight-

enment in terms merely of 'states of consciousness'. They would try to reconcile the two kinds of enlightenment we have mentioned, in terms of a unifying consciousness in which there are several levels or states. Altered states of consciousness or ASC has now become a technical term to denote the state of the mind in non-ordinary experience. Talk about states of consciousness or levels of awareness is insufficient for reconciling the two types of experience, as we shall see in a more detailed study. Some Buddhists define *nirvāṇa* precisely as the cessation of consciousness—how then can it be simply a level of consciousness?

Can critical rationality, the essence of the modern European Enlightenment, and the transcendental or mystical experience of 'religious enlightenment', which seems universal, but is also fundamental to the Indian identity, be conceptually reconciled and related, even dialectically? Such is the drive in the present enquiry.

In order to begin to answer the question, we shall first look at modern European Enlightenment in a historical and philosophical context. At the second stage we shall look briefly at our paradigm case of transcendental enlightenment and some developments in Mādhyamika Buddhism, seeking to relate the rather universal phenomenon of 'mystical experience' to it. We shall then assess the nature of the problem in relating the two types of enlightenment in the context of the need for a universal framework for a diversified world culture, in which the religious and the secular can coexist in creative dialogue and interaction with each other. This has also much to do with the modern conflict between science and religion.

This study on Enlightenment—East and West—is not meant as a contribution to historical knowledge. It depends heavily on the existing fund of detailed scholarship and builds on it. Neither is it meant as an idle bit of speculative reflection on the two apparently contradictory concepts of enlightenment. The drive behind this study is specifically Indian, though others may profit from it. The context is India's quest for an integrated and authentic national identity. In order to understand who we are as a nation, we need to understand more deeply the meaning of the European impact on our civilisation. Western civilisation has been and still is the single most powerful outside factor in shaping our

identity as a nation. We need to understand that civilisation and come to terms with it. The European Enlightenment of the eighteenth century marked the full flowering of that civilisation; we make that our starting point for an understanding of Western civilisation and of the pressures, pulls and constrictions which that civilisation exerts today on our national identity.

The idea and experience of religious enlightenment is taken here as constituting the fundamental source of creativity for Indian culture and the Indian psyche. This is a position which may be questioned by scholars who regard the basic Indian genius to be secular rather than religious. Such questioning should be welcomed, particularly in the India of today. We are under pre-sure to abjure our religious heritage and to pursue, for the shap-ing of our national identity, the secular, rational, humanist, socialist orientation shown by the European Enlightenment of the eighteenth and following centuries.

This study seeks no final formula for the reconciliation of the two concepts of enlightenment, one forming the basic source and matrix of Indian culture and identity, and the other manifesting the full flowering of Western civilisation and its values and orien-tations. Neither is this primarily an attempt to reconcile the apparently conflicting outlooks of science and religion. Yet, by putting both science and religion in a larger cultural-historical context, this study may show the way towards a new framework for the symbiosis of and healthy mutual criticism between the two. Even if this outcome is merely a by-product of this study, it will have a universal significance, not only for the Indian national identity, but for all nations who face the problem of a conflict between the rational scientific outlook and the more holistic cultural spiritual outlook.

Even in an avowedly secular and professedly atheistic culture like the one being developed in the Soviet Union for the last seventy years, the need for such a holistic humanism is keenly felt. The wave of 'New Thinking' initiated by the CPSU under the leadership of Mikhail Gorbachev seeks some of the answers we are seeking in this study. One dares to express the hope that the liberal secular non-socialist Western nations will also find some pointers in this study.

Here I put on record some of my many debts—to the Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Shimla and its Director, Professor Margaret Chatterjee, for granting me a three-month fellowship which enabled the writing; to those who gave me their good fellowship at the Institute; and to all who have helped, with the typing, with ideas, with guidance.

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PAULOS GREGORIOS

THE QUEST FOR IDENTITY:
INDIA AND EUROPE

History attests the fact that Europe created world history. It is in-
to that history, into the vortex of European civilisation, that all
nations are now inescapably drawn: Asia, Africa, Latin America,
North America, Australia, the islands of the Pacific and the
Caribbean.

We in India are no different. We can boast about our ancient
civilisation, millennia older than that of Europe. But when under
Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's inspiring leadership our nation chose
an identity, it was that of a 'sovereign, democratic, secular,
socialist republic'. Every one of those five words has its origin in
European civilisation and history; we have difficulty even in
translating these concepts into any of the Indian languages. To-
day especially, when the dreaded spectre of communalism rears
its ugly head, threatening once again to divide our nation on the
basis of religion and region, we cling desperately to the Nehru-
vian heritage and commitment to a 'secular nation'. We are
menaced by both communalism and regionalism, but it is the
first that frightens us more. Communalism is fired by religious
fanaticism, while regionalism is driven by geographical parochial-
ism. We see clearly that religion is a much more powerful and
explosive source of emotion than geography is or can be.

We wish to hold on to the concept of geography or region as
a basic political principle. Otherwise there would be no sense in
seeking a specific *Indian* national identity. India is, after all, a
geographical region, and we know that at present that geogra-
phical region, with its history, culture and interests, has to be the
basis of our Indian identity. We are thus reluctant to abjure
geography as a political principle; so we readily make concessions
and adjustments to regional demands from within the country.

When it comes to religious adherence, however, we totally and
vehemently deny religion as a political principle, though in

practice much of our politics remains communal, based on religious or caste adherence. Our founding fathers did not fully abjure religion as a political principle. We recognise the scheduled castes as worthy of preferential treatment, not on the basis of their economic condition but their religious adherence. Our presidential orders and Supreme Court decisions have upheld the anti-secular principle that a member of a religious minority caste loses all his privileges when he changes his religion, from Hindu to Christian or Muslim. Vote-banks and candidates are still assessed on the basis of religious or caste adherence, and politicians claiming to belong to the most secular parties have no compunctions about this anti-secular approach.

While theoretical opposition to mixing politics and religion is fairly widespread in the nation, it is the cultured elite, the privileged classes trained in a Western system of education, who are most concerned about our secular identity as a nation. On the one hand their Western training makes them feel more at home in a secular than in a multi-religious atmosphere. On the other hand, they are unconsciously apprehensive that if a non-secular, non-Western identity prevails, they may lose their position of privilege. And their training makes it easy to affirm secular values as universal. Little do they realise that by doing so they are being sucked into the vortex of a world-dominating Western civilisation within which there is little chance of independent steering or piloting.

But even among the elite, there is very little philosophical or fundamental reflection about what 'secular' or 'socialist' really means. Most are satisfied with slogans like 'no mixing of religion in politics', 'equality before the law', 'distributive justice', 'human rights', and so on, without sharing the European experience and reflection which led to the formulation of these concepts and slogans.

If there is an elite culture, it is comprised of three basic streams:

(i) civil servants, academics and professionals;

(ii) the rising business and commercial elite to whom 'success' is the highest criterion of morality; and

(iii) those who desire, because it is possible, to get a larger

share of the material product and thus to enjoy a higher level of bourgeois comfort and gratification.

It is such an elite that passionately postures in favour of a 'secular identity', often while secretly extending patronage to one's own religious group if such patronage will yield reasonable public relations value.

For the masses of our people, particularly in rural regions, this much vaunted quest for a secular identity sounds hollow and appears inauthentic. The exception is where the communist parties have been at work for some time, and have sought to create a new identity to replace the religious or communal identity—namely, the proletarian identity and the corporate unity of the dispossessed and the marginalised. In the Indian rural base, this new proletarian-peasant identity has made only limited headway—in Bengal, Kerala and Andhra Pradesh mostly. Where the communal identity is dominant, that is, in the Hindi-Hindu belt, or among the Islamic and Sikh minorities with their growing sense of being overwhelmed and marginalised by the majority community, religious self-understanding (Islamic or Sikh) seems a more powerful mobiliser of people than the proletarian-peasant identity.

The four large minority communities, i.e., the Muslims, Sikhs, harijans and tribals, seek to resist two perceived forces to upkeep their own identity. On the one hand there is pressure to co-opt them into a Hindu culture, against which they must affirm their Muslim or Sikh or dalit or tribal identity. On the other hand, they see the advance of a secular identity as a threat to the religious or tribal identity which they feel is essential to maintain as their own. The harijan-ness or dalit-ness of the harijans or dalits, for instance, is impossible to maintain without a religious identity.

It is in this context that we look at India's quest for a new secular identity and Europe's quest for a more acceptable, more united, less condemnable European identity. For Europe too is not as sure of its identity today as it was in the days when European cultural superiority was hardly questioned. Such questioning as existed was either from the Chinese sense of traditional cultural superiority, or from the Arab perception that they were

being overwhelmed by European civilisation though in the past their civilisation had been superior to that of Europe; or from the more ambivalent, smug, sometimes obsequious, sometimes assertive, but usually backward-looking Indian civilisation. The European civilisation had hoped that secularisation was an inexorable and irreversible process and that therefore all religious and cultural resistance to it would be overcome by the oceanic power of modern science and the technology based on it.

Things do not look that simple any more. No nation or region in the world is so sure of its identity any more. In the process of uniting the world and upsetting non-European identities, European civilisation has lost its own nerve. Reason, having revolted against authority and tradition, comes to feel something lacking in itself, something that makes its once majestic stance of self-sufficiency now look weak, pathetic and on the verge of a breakdown. The European Enlightenment which came with a blaze of light that blinded with its intensity, is now giving way to the twilight that warns of the night's approach. The State, on which the Enlightenment placed much hope to reshape human beings to order, has failed to deliver the goods. Education, the other pillar of hope of the Enlightenment, also has failed to bring enlightenment. Logic and experiment or rationalism-empiricism, which is the heart of modern science, cannot lead us into the heart of truth, it now seems. Science and technology, the new messiah, seems to have been captured by the demons of war and profit and threatens to engulf humanity in a global catastrophe. 'I love that philosophy which raises up humanity', Diderot had said; but today philosophy runs away from humanity and its concerns, to play trivial games with language and logic. Europe is bewildered, though she finds that hard to admit.

It is in this context that India seeks a secular identity, patterned on European values too easily assumed to be universal. We still pin our hopes on a State-initiated programme for entering the twenty-first century as a technological nation. We formulate dreamy, impractical educational plans to reach that goal in a little more than a decade. Meanwhile, Bofors, Bhiwandi and Bhopal blister our eyelashes and make vision confusingly blurred. The Himalayas get progressively denuded, our cities fester with poverty and pollution, and our countryside languishes in lethargic

stagnation. Politics falls prey to aristocratic privilege, patriarchal leadership, regional parochialism, linguism, communalism and a scramble for power that brooks no moral reins.

Still we talk about a secular identity based on European liberal values as the antidote to all our problems. What else can we do? Where else are we to look? To China? To Japan? The suggestion here is, let us look everywhere, but let us concentrate first on two aspects: on the European Enlightenment from which we seek to derive our secular-liberal values; and on our own Indian understanding of Enlightenment—the way initiated by the greatest genius India has produced and whom the world has received as a great light, Sri Buddha. Let us look at our own tradition of enlightenment, be it Hindu or Buddhist, and see if it can still shed some light on our path. Let us understand the dialectic between these two understandings of enlightenment. Perhaps we will end up more confused than before. But out of darkness light may spring forth—not the twilight that ushers in the night, but the one which marks the dawn.

India's quest for an identity and Europe's quest for its identity are not isolated from each other. The twain must meet at a crossroads from which all of us can find new paths forward. Neither India nor Europe is final. It is humanity that must find its way. India must not blindly follow Europe's way, but should learn from its successes and its errors; this may help not merely to find our own independent way, but also to be a small beacon that lights the path for all nations and regions of humanity to find their various ways.

So if we sometimes look at Europe's way a bit harshly, it is neither to condemn nor to feel superior. There seems to be no way forward without learning from Europe and thankfully receiving much of what that little continent has contributed to humanity. In receiving that with gratitude we do not want to cease being ourselves. We must receive also from our own not so inglorious past, and share that with all—Europeans included.

It is to this end that we embark on a look, not merely at the European Enlightenment, but also at the European psyche which has experienced that Enlightenment. That way we might help Europe escape that 'decay of the West' that her prophets of

gloom, from Oswald Spengler to Jean-Paul Sartre, have predicted for centuries, and perhaps save ourselves from walking into the same gloom and darkness. Before we do so it may help to be clearer about what we mean by *identity*, secular or otherwise. What does Indian identity or European identity mean?

WHAT IS IDENTITY

In the English language the word 'identity' has two meanings—in fact, two meanings which seem to be contrary to each other. Paradoxically, if everything is identical with everything else, then there is total identity among all, but each has no identity of its own. To illustrate, let us take a trivial example. Let us go to an automobile factory that has gathered together in one place five hundred Maruti 800 cars, right off the assembly line, all painted white, ready to be shipped to dealers. There are no features that obviously distinguish one car from another. All are identical. Yet no car seems to have an identity of its own. The engines are the same, the bodies are the same, the paint (white) is the same. Only on very close examination, by looking under the hood, do we see a metal tag attached to each engine on which there is a number. This number is not the same in all cars. Each car has a specific number of its own, which distinguishes it from the others. But the number of the engine does not by itself constitute the identity of the car. The specific identity of each car is constituted by two factors taken together—that which it shares with the other white Maruti 800s, and that which is its own specificity, its engine number.

The Greeks used to call identity *hypostasis*, a word which was wrongly translated into Latin as substance (*substantia*). Every *hypostasis* or *mūrtarūpa* shares its nature or *phusis* with others connatural to it; these common aspects of its nature are the shared or common characteristics—*ta koina*. That which the *hypostasis* does not share with others is its *idiotēs*, its specificity, its particularity, its distinctive it-ness which is peculiar to it alone.

A second example may make the point clearer. Take three Indian persons, Arun, Ahmed and Avtar Singh. All three are human beings, and human nature is common to all three. In fact, all three being Indians, they also share this Indianness with other Indians. When they are in India, this Indianness hardly

counts as part of the specific identity of Arun or Ahmed or Avtar Singh. It is part of the *ta koina* of each, not the *idiotēs* of each. But when any one of them is outside India, as part of an international crowd, the Indianness shifts from *koina* to *idiotēs*, the unshared element. When the three are together Arun's Hindu-ness, Ahmed's Muslim-ness and Avtar Singh's Sikh-ness are not shared; they mark part of the specific identity of each. Each of them has a hard core of individual personality which he shares with no one else. Arun can never be finally identical with Ahmed or Avtar Singh. This particular personality, or *character* as the Greeks used to call it, is never duplicated—like the engine number of a car. Whether at home or in the office, sleeping or waking, in India or abroad Arun is Arun, Ahmed is Ahmed, Avtar Singh is Avtar Singh! We try to make the name as close as possible to an engine number, though there may be thousands of Aruns, Ahmeds and Avtar Singhs. The name is not the specificity. We can always ask, which Arun, which Ahmed, which Avtar Singh ?

Identity, then, is composed of what is common and what is specific. But the content of the commonness and of the specificity shifts in different situations. In one case one may have a large number of characteristics that belong to one's specific identity—a tall white man among the pigmies of Africa would have a large area of specificity which he does not share with others. India shares much with other nations, which is part of her identity as a nation. But she also has a core which she does not share with others. The core shifts depending on whether you are in the United Nations, or in the Non-Aligned Movement or in a South-East Asia regional group.

This commonality and specificity, which together constitute identity, shift and change with the relational context in which the identity is being exercised. If only one person is concerned, without any relation to others, the question of identity does not arise at all. Relation is the essential element in identity. Relation as a constituent of identity, however, is very complex. There is first, relation of origin; second, relation of each to its own past— a past which is also full of relations; third, relation to the future as hope and commitment; and fourth, present relations and interactions which are in constant flux. Identity is not defined

by self-understanding; yet self-understanding, also constantly in flux, is an integral part of one's identity.

In the case of our nation, the commitment to a secular identity is important, but it is only one of the factors—the future-orientation factor (third relation). Such commitment to a secular identity cannot become operative without relation to our origin, our past, our self-understanding and our present relations. Jawaharlal Nehru seems to have been unaware of this complex nature of our national identity. He saw it mainly in terms of a future commitment, and even went so far as to demand 'a clear break with the past'. The past may be retarding, but the past is not abandonable. In Western liberalism there is often a misplaced hope of creating a future unrelated to the past. Nehru shared this wrong hope with his fellow liberals in the West. We know now that the past is not dead and that it cannot simply be divested or revoked or broken away from.

Tradition is a continuity. Even when we consciously seek to abandon or break tradition for the sake of a new future, that break can only be partial. Tradition stays with us, for it is in that stream of tradition that we are swimming all the time, often oblivious to the forces within it that affect our course and our perceptions. Nehru was obviously mistaken in his vain hope that a clear break with the past was possible. Nehru, as also his grandson Rajiv Gandhi, was perhaps unaware of the fact that the future is a function of the past and the present, and that the identity of a nation cannot be fashioned anew, out of whole cloth as it were. We simply cannot choose science and technology and a few arbitrarily chosen values, and by shaking them together, get a new identity for our nation.

All nations and peoples have, at critical moments of their history, sought to break with the past and forge a new identity. In fact the European Enlightenment itself represented this seeking for a new identity to face a new situation. The supposed break with the past, being essentially of the nature of a reaction, retains some elements of that which is reacted against, as our study will show.

Europe, despite many breaks, has a continuing identity and the European Enlightenment has to be seen in that historical continuity. It is that basic self-understanding, and the many

historical upheavals that it has survived, of course, accepting major modifications in that self-understanding, that we have to come to terms with. The European Enlightenment is the last flowering so far, of Europe's basic self-understanding. It is the thread of this self-understanding that helps us to see the Enlightenment of the eighteenth century as a stage in a process which goes back to Europe's very beginnings of civilised existence. Whether this last flower of Europe has already begun to go to seed is a different question, which we shall not ignore.

The question of identity, particularly national identity, as a matter of commonality, specificity and relational structures needs a little more analysis, before we go on to discuss Europe, her identity, her self-understanding. In the relational nature of identity we have already isolated several levels—relation to the past, relation to the future, relation to the present, relations within each nation as well as among nations. Let us begin with the fundamental structure of relations, namely, the present. When we wish to get to know a stranger, our first questions are regarding his name, age, profession, work, family, present mission, etc. All these are aspects of the present. Then we go into his past, his birth-place, upbringing, experiences, and so on; and after this we are better equipped to look at his future commitments, what he is up to, what motivations drive him, and so on. All three—his present, his past and his future—are part of the person's identity.

With a nation the structure of relations is much more complex. If we take India or Europe as a single entity with a common identity, mere statistics about its geography, resources, population, languages, government, etc., do not give us a full picture of the identity of this entity. The present of a nation is not static, and cannot therefore be adequately characterised in terms of statistics alone. We need to know more about the dynamic forces at work in that nation. Tensions between various groups in the Indian nation or within the European social fabric are of fundamental importance for our understanding. These tensions have their roots in the past and have important implications for the future. Equally important are India's or Europe's relations with the outside world, perceived commonality of interests, perceived conflict of interests, alliances and hostilities, prejudices and predispositions against or in favour of other nations, apprehensions,

threats, competition for higher esteem among nations, and so on. These are all decisively significant aspects of a nation's identity. We do not have space here to deal with all these aspects of the present in detail. There is one aspect, however, which we can ill afford to ignore: the tension between the identity of the people and the identity of the ruling class. To what extent does the ruling class project the people's identity, or suppress aspects of it? This is important for an understanding of Europe as much as of India.

RULING CLASS IDENTITY AND PEOPLE'S IDENTITY

These two identities are rarely the same in a nation. Most often there is a conflict between the interests of the ruling group and those of the people. The former try to convince the latter that whatever they are doing is in the interests of the latter. In actual fact the interests of the ruling class dominate, and they forge the national identity in terms of their own interests.

In our nation, this has become an acute problem. We did not have the sub-structure necessary to involve our people in a national debate about the Indian identity before our Constitution was formally promulgated. Only a minuscule part of our elite took part in formulating these goals. The dalits or harijans were well represented by the able lawyer Dr. Ambedkar, who played a pivotal role in the framing of the Constitution and in writing into it special privileges for the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. Unfortunately, the tribals had no such able advocate to formulate tribal rights and privileges. Even if they had had such an advocate, he would have found it very difficult to make the non-tribal founding fathers understand the peculiar nature of tribal aspirations. Harijans are socially under-privileged—sometimes even more so than the tribals. But harijan aspirations are not generically different from those of Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, etc. They all want prosperity, wealth, security, comfort and commodities; at least they think they do. Not so the tribals. For them the highest values are cohesion within the tribal community, closeness to land and nature, living in harmony with one's surroundings, and so on. But their value-aspirations were never written into the Constitution. The special privileges they were given were intended to integrate the tribals into the 'mainstream', an integration which most sensitive tribals now deeply resent.

Similarly, our rural masses have aspirations which are very different from those of our urban elite, who decide policy for our nation. But these rural masses had not been sufficiently conscientised to enable them to perceive their own real interests; nor did they have spokespersons who could force a hearing for their aspirations. The end result was that the ruling urban elite decided the orientation of our national Constitution and national identity. To have a nation's goals formulated by the common people rather than by the ruling elite is by no means easy. We have, as a nation, allowed our Constitution to be formulated by the ruling groups and it is their perception of national identity that it proclaims.

A fresh and more democratic formulation of our national goals and orientation will have to emerge out of an extended public discussion in which all sectors of our society can participate. It will take quite some time before we can get the substructure for such a debate in place. Meanwhile, we will have to spend an equal amount of time in reassessing and reappropriating our variegated cultural heritage. Only when our relation to the past and our relation of commitment to the future of our nation can become the common possession of the masses can we set forth on the pilgrimage to our national identity.

Now is the time of preparation for that task.

WHAT IS EUROPE—ADVENTURE AND EXPANSION

There is no easy way to characterise a continent with centuries of history. Europe has been pulsating with life for the past 2,500 or more years and any attempt to put a label on all that history can only be misleading. The best we can do is to look for Europe's competent spokesmen and question them about European self-understanding. We shall later do the same with some of India's spokesmen and spokeswomen.

Like the eighteenth-century Enlightenment, the entity called Europe has also had shifting boundaries and seldom anything like a distinct or united identity, or enduring geographical boundaries. Both the Enlightenment and Europe are notions in people's minds—not tangible entities. So our approach to both have to be very general. If we fall into the Enlightenment trap of defining entities in terms of their precise boundaries and limits, we will make the mistake of regarding a flow as a thing, of mistaking a torrential river for just a long lake. In seeking to understand Europe, we shall therefore use fairly broad brush-strokes, to evoke a dynamic image rather than to describe a static entity.

We repeat: To look at the eighteenth-century European Enlightenment as an independent phenomenon contained within certain boundaries of time (the eighteenth century) and space (Western Europe) is basically to misunderstand it. Time-wise, we have to be aware of its antecedents in European culture and psyche. That psyche and culture are products of Europe's historical experience. But historical experience shows frequent encounters with non-European peoples and cultures. It is hard to separate European history from world history.

European thinkers, as we shall see soon, would like to think of Europe as the creator of world history. But to a much larger extent than Western thinkers are generally willing to concede, Europe was shaped by non-European cultural elements. In a

sense Europe is a creation of world history more than vice-versa. For us in India it is important to see Europe in the perspective of world history. This chapter cannot hope to do so in any sufficient measure, but it indicates certain features of that perspective.

EUROPE'S SELF-UNDERSTANDING—SARTRE AND DE ROUGEMONT

Europe is even today seeking a common European identity and finding it difficult to agree on its content or contours. Europe as a geographical area, a continent attached to the Asian mainland, separated from Africa by the Mediterranean and from Asia by the Urals, has never coincided with any form of Europe as a political entity. Even today it does not. Europeans have run many seminars and studies to establish the nature of and criteria for a common European identity. So far they have largely failed.

One of the clearest and most concise statements of European self-understanding we have on the contemporary scene is in *The Meaning of Europe*[1] by the Swiss professor, Denis de Rougemont. De Rougemont takes into account both Europe's understanding of itself, and non-Europeans' misunderstanding of Europe. For example, he cites Raghavan Iyer (an Indian currently teaching at Santa Barbara), who at a 1962 conference convened by the *Fondation Furopéenne de la Culture*, cited all the wrong things which under-developed countries pick up from Europe:

> the gospel of inevitable material progress, an aggressive nationalism that reached the level of scarcely veiled racial hatred, Benthamite utilitarianism, militant collectivism and messianic socialism, liberalism of the Hayek variety, the worship of military and political power, a bureaucracy by now ineradicable, the multiplication of new wants, consumption on a colossal scale, a passion for strange things, claims to exclusivity in religion, ideological fanaticism, arrogant atheism, the cult of cynicism, and unbridled cultural philistinism.

Professor de Rougemont says that this is an impressive list of Europe's vices as experienced by developing countries, but attri-

[1]Denis de Rougemont, *The Meaning of Europe*, Original French, Editions de la Baconniere, Boudry, Switzerland, 1963; English translation by Alan Braley, Sidgwick and Jackson, London, 1965.

butes these impressions to the fact that the Europeans who go out of Europe are not the best specimens of European culture. As if Raghavan Iyer in Oxford was assessing Europe on the basis of his experience of European tourists he had met in India!

The Swiss professor obviously regarded himself and his hearers in the aula of Geneva University as better specimens of European culture than tourists or colonialist Europeans! And he was lecturing during the beginning of the 'Soaring Sixties', when European optimism was very high—an optimism which the professor shared. In an appendix to the published lectures (four lectures in the *Studium generale*) he lashes forth against poor Jean-Paul Sartre for having written a favourable preface to Frantz Fanon's *Les Damnés de la Terre*.[2] Frantz Fanon said, 'For centuries, Europe has crushed nearly the whole of humanity in the name of a so-called spiritual adventure',[3] and also, 'Europe was literally created by the underprivileged nations'.[4] Obviously Sartre endorsed these statements of Frantz Fanon. De Rougemont accuses Sartre of being a near-traitor, for he seeks to fill Europeans with a sense of guilt and shame, in the hope that shame is an incentive to revolution. Sartre, in this sense, stands at the opposite pole from de Rougemont. Though it would be useful for us to compare these two divergent self-understandings of Europe, and then to check these assessments against some hard historic data, we shall not attempt that here, except to briefly sketch the main differences:

The phrases that de Rougemont quotes from Sartre are:
(i) Europe is done for.
(ii) She is in grave danger of collapse.
(iii) She is in her dying convulsions.
(iv) She is leaking everywhere.
(v) She is at rock-bottom.
(vi) This is the end.
(vii) We [Europeans] are all in chains, humiliated and sick with fear.[5]

[2]Frantz Fanon, *Les Damnés de la Terre*, Paris, 1964; *The Wretched of the Earth*, New York, 1965.
[3]Denis de Rougemont, op. cit., p. 121.
[4]Ibid, p. 124.
[5]Denis de Rougemont, op. cit., p. 120.

This was written in the early sixties, when Sartre was already moving away from the failure of his existential quest, towards the *Critique of Dialectical Reason*;[6] moving beyond the individualist, subject-object dualist and aestheticist standpoint to a more politically active socialism. Sartre had a capacity to be self-critical of Europe, which Denis de Rougemont could never claim. Denis de Rougemont is a Europist, an anti-communist and an anti-third worldist; but he represents a strong West European line. At the other pole, Sartre stands for human freedom rather than for Europe's greatness, having gone through individualist existentialism, and on his way to a more activist revolutionary socialism which he never seems to have reached. Sartre had seen what France had done to Algeria, and could not take the position which de Rougemont adopted, that the European colonisation of the rest of the world was largely due to the backwardness of the non-European countries.[7]

Having lost his hopes for the liberal West and for the Marxist East which had been ruined by Stalinist excesses, Sartre turned to the non-European world as a zone of hope. His preface to Frantz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* was a strong affirmation of solidarity with the non-European world. There he said (quite apart from de Rougemont's out-of-context excerpts):

> We know that it [the non-Western world] is not a homogeneous world; we know too that enslaved peoples are still to be found there, together with some who have achieved a simulacrum of phoney independence, others who are still fighting to attain sovereignty and others again who have obtained complete freedom but who live under the constant menace of imperialist aggression. These differences are born of colonial history, in other words, of oppression. Here the mother country is satisfied to keep some feudal rulers in her pay; there, dividing and ruling she has created a native bourgeoisie, sham from beginning to end; elsewhere she has played a double game; the colony is planted with settlers and exploited at the same time. Thus Europe has multiplied divisions and opposing groups,

[6]Jean-Paul Sartre, *Critique de la raison dialectique*, Vol. I, 1971; Vol. II, 1972.

[7]Denis de Rougemont, op. cit., p. 121.

has fashioned classes and sometimes even racial prejudices, and has endeavoured by every means to bring about and intensify the stratification of colonial societies.[8]

Sartre's *Les Sequestrés d'Altona* had already begun to see Europe as its own enemy. His adaptation of Euripides' *The Trojans*, written around 1959, says the following:

Men of Europe
You despise Africa and Asia
And you call us barbarians, I believe
But when vainglory and greed
Throw you on our land,
You pillage, you torture, you massacre;
Where are the Barbarians then?[9]

Sartre however does not help us to understand Europe so much as de Rougemont. The French philosopher's sophistication, focusing on *praxis*, created existentialism as a philosophy, dealing with the plight of the European individual caught in the mesh of World War II; by 1960 that mesh was replaced by a new one that came to the surface—the colonialist and neo-colonialist nature of Europe. Sartre saw that from the perspective of France in Algeria, but was by his own formation incompetent to look at Europe in all its involvement with the world. He saw Frantz Fanon doing something like it, and wrote a passionately approving preface to *Wretched of the Earth.*

Europe produces so many self-understandings. That of Denis de Rougemont, precisely because of his parochialism and naivete, comes close to what is the problem with Europe's self-understanding; it drives Europe to such madness in its dealing with itself and with the outside. Thus it is that we take the Swiss professor's four lectures as our starting point in surveying the nature of Europe, of the European Enlightenment of the eigh-

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[8]Jean-Paul Sartre, 'Preface' to Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth, Les Damnés de la Terre*, op. cit., pp. 9-10.

[9]Euripides, *Les Troyennes*, adapted by Jean-Paul Sartre, Paris, 1965, p. 130; cited by Ronald Aronson, *Sartre: Philosophy in the World*, Verso, London, 1980, p. 211.

teenth century, and the civilisation emerging from that Enlighten-
ment as it seeks to engulf the world.

In his first lecture de Rougemont tries to define European in
functional, rather than causal terms. He does not want to examine
history to see what made Europe what it is; if he does touch upon
history it is to illustrate the function of Europe in the world, the
effects it has in uniting, civilising and creating the world.

> I wish to speak to you about Europe, not as a cause to defend
> or a larger homeland to glorify, but as an adventure of deci-
> sive significance for the whole of mankind. By Europe, I mean
> that part of the world which made 'the World', since it was in
> Europe that the idea of 'the human race' was born; in fact
> Europe was the *sine qua non* of a truly universal history, some-
> thing in which we are well and truly involved in this second
> half of the twentieth century; so that henceforth, for practical
> purposes, the future prospects for Europe are inextricably
> bound up with those of the civilisation brought into being by
> her actions, propagated by her without thought of consequen-
> ces or any unified plan, and which she no longer owns, though
> some of its vital secrets remain in her keeping. I have only four
> lectures in which to establish this central thesis, this definition
> of Europe in functional terms as the 'creator of the world.'
> This means defining the phenomenon of Europe by its effects
> whereas up to the present attempt has always been made to
> explain Europe by causes which, according to the author or the
> theory consulted, might be geographical, climatic, economic
> or demographic.[10]

Europe, according to de Rougemont, has three features unique
to it:

1. Europe discovered the whole of the earth, and nobody ever
came and discovered Europe.
2. Europe has held sway on all the continents in succession,
and uptill now has never been ruled by any foreign power.
3. Europe has produced a civilisation which is being imitated
by the whole world, whilst the converse has never happened.

[10]Denis de Rougemont, op. cit., p. 11.

These facts, so simple and obvious that most historians, it seems to me, have so far neglected them, point to something unique. This phenomenon of Europe is without precedent or parallel in history.[11]

This sense of Europe being the elect of God, of Europeans being the messianic people, 'the valuable part of the terrestrial universe, the pearl of the Globe, the brain of the vast body', is shared by many others—e.g., Paul Valéry, Hegel, and even the *Géographie Universelle*) published in Paris in 1816:

> When it left the hands of nature, our part of the world had not received any title to that glorious pre-eminence which now distinguishes it. A little continent with few territorial riches.... Only our borrowings have made us rich. Yet, such is the power of the human mind, this region whose sole natural covering was that of immense forests has become inhabited by powerfull nations, covered with magnificent cities and enriched with the spoils of the two worlds. This narrow peninsula, which appears on the map as no more than an appendix of Asia, has become the metropolis of the human race.[12]

This centrality of Europe is not wishful thinking or an illusion, says de Rougemont. His reasons:

(i) If you divide the globe into two hemispheres, one containing 94 per cent of the world's population and 98 per cent of its production (there is only one line which divides it this way) the pole of this hemisphere would fall in Europe around Nantes (France), Berlin (Germany) or Greenwich (Britain), depending on your particular perspectives. This is a measurable concrete fact. '*Europe is actually the centre of the world*', geographically.[13]

(ii) Europe is also the centre of the world, historically. '...it is Europe which made the world, in the sense that she discovered it, explored it, awakened it and set it on the road to unity by creating first of all its network of exchanges and centres of production and then the first world-wide institutions.'[14] Non-Europeans could not

[11]Ibid., p. 12.
[12]Denis de Rougemont, op. cit., pp. 13-14.
[13]Ibid., p. 37.
[14]Ibid., p. 38.

have created the League of Nations or the United Nations and they did not do so. It is Europe's rhythm of expansion and absorption, systole and diastole, which created world history.

(iii) Europe has manifested greater capacity to take its natural environment and transform it into a largely human creation. Everywhere in Europe we see the land cultivated, urbanised, full of small towns, castles, factories, roads, railways, canals; the cafe and the press, the town hall and the church, the school and the market in each small town.

(iv) As far as thinking goes, the most important thinkers of even the USA are Europeans. Europe is the home of all new ideas, hopes, processes. In art and culture, in science and techno- logy, in culture in general, Europe leads the world. It is Europe which produced Einstein, Marx, Hegel, Freud, Michaelangelo, Shakespeare, Goethe, Dante, Beethoven, Mozart—a list that could go on *ad infinitum.* Russia has won till 1961 only 9 Nobel prizes; even the USA only 52; while Western Europe scored 147! Even Russian Marxism was invented by a German!

De Rougemont goes on to argue that Europe is now getting united, after World War II, beginning with the Hague Convention of May 1948. This could be the prelude to world unity. For Europe to unite is a necessary condition for a world civilisation.

This self-understanding of Europe can be questioned, lampoon- ned, laughed at. But Professor de Rougemont expresses in a clear way the most dominant element in Europe's self-understanding. Others like Spengler, Toynbee, Sorel, Sartre, these guilt-ridden, 'sickly, and mealy-mouthed *mea-culpas*', as de Rougemont calls them, are defeatists, enemies of the true nature and function of Europe—i.e., to be the creator and uniter of the world.

According to de Rougemont, Europe's withdrawal (1945-62) from colonial domination has done two things. First, it has made Europe even more prosperous than in the colonial period. To the learned professor, this is evidence that Europe's wealth was not derived from its colonies; if that were true, Europe should have been in abject poverty once it lost its colonies. De Rouge- mont is not an economist, and probably has never heard about the phenomenon of neo-colonialism: the new system by which not only Europe, but most of the market economy commercial- industrial elite sucks wealth out of the less advanced countries

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without any direct colonial political control. Or if he has heard of it, he would not recognise it as truth.

Second, the professor points out to us that the withdrawal of European colonial powers has only made the former colonies more European than before. He cites India as the classical example. In a section entitled 'India Without the British' he tells us that 'altogether independent India wants to be more British, which means more Western, than ever she was as a part of the Empire'.[15] And he is right in stating that as a fact. The conclusion he draws is that the whole world is destined to be European in its civilisation.

We come back to Denis de Rougemont's opening affirmations, that the basic character of Europe is *adventure* and *expansion*,[16] adventure in expansion, and expansion by absorption from other cultures themselves. And now in the second half of the twentieth century, Europe is in orbit; it will encircle the world with its civilisation if only Europeans will realise this and do the needful.

But Europe is more than 'adventure and expansion'. It is also a 'besieged bastion'.

THE BESIEGED BASTION

Charlemagne's (AD 768-814) Christendom, while claiming to be universal, expressed a 'bastion concept' as underlying Europe's spirit of adventure and expansion. The Carolingian Renaissance was a real *renovatio*, a renewal of the idealised Roman Empire of the past. In the psyche of Latin Christendom, this spur to renewal came from a sense of besiegement. Western Roman Catholic Europe, three centuries after the fall of the Western Roman Empire in the fifth century, felt herself threatened and challenged by the two flourishing empires of Eastern Orthodox Byzantium and the Muslim Syrian Ommayyad (AD 660-750) and Abbasid Iraqi (Baghdad) Caliphates (flourished 1258).

The Muslims were a closer and more perceptible threat. Omar's (AD 634-644) meteoric rise to power, conquering Syria, Palestine, Egypt, Cyrenaica and Iraq from the Byzantine Empire, subduing Persia and Armenia, made the West shudder in its aware-

[15]Denis de Rougement, op. cit., pp. 98-99.
[16]Ibid., p. 19.

ness of its own weakness; though the rumblings were still rather far away in the seventh century. When the Ommayyad Caliphs spread their empire towards the East, capturing Afghanistan, Turkestan and north-west India, Western Europe sighed with relief. When North Africa fell in 698 and the following years, however, the shudder and the sigh gave place to near panic, for these areas were part of the old Roman Empire. The granaries of Europe were now in the hands of the 'heathen'.

The Ommayyads of Damascus were replaced by the Abbassids, who shifted the capital of the caliphate to Baghdad (Iraq) in 762. One of the Ommayyads had, however, gained control of Spain by 756, and proclaimed himself independent emir of Cordova. Islam was too close, in fact it had come inside Europe. The Mediterranean was no longer *mare nostrum*, our sea. It was fortunate that the emirate of Cordova was not supported by the Abbassid Caliphate, which was too powerful for Western Europe to tackle.

On the other hand, Byzantium had inherited the glory of the Roman Empire. It was by far richer than Western Europe, having inherited the fertile lands of West Asia and enjoying a degree of trade and commerce with Asia, Africa and Scandinavia which continued to enrich it. Besides, both Byzantium and the Caliphates had inherited a richer measure of culture from the ancient civilisations of Greece, Egypt and West Asia. Western Europe, on the other hand, remained basically barbarian, with little of trade and wealth and even less of culture and the arts.

The natural reaction was hatred of both the heathen Muslim and the 'heretic' Eastern Orthodox. They could rejoice only when the enemies fought each other or fell apart within, such as when the emir of Cordova repudiated the authority of the Abbassid Caliphate, or when the Saracens attacked Constantinople in 673 and 677. This 'besieged bastion' mentality was one factor that spurred on the Carolingian Renaissance. There are parallels between this and the spurring of the Maurya Renaissance by Alexander's invasion of India in the fourth century BC. Also similar is the Chinese renaissance of the Mao era, spurred by a sense of being besieged by the USA and the Soviet Union. In India the Bengali Renaissance of the eighteenth century was spurred by the British invasion. In Hinduism today, a sense of being besieged by Islam and 'Christendom' (which includes Christianity and

the now secular Western civilisation) spurs it to seek a Hindu renaissance which many Hindus would regard as an Indian renaissance, since for them Hindu means India and India means Hindu.

But renaissances spurred by a bastion-and-besiegement mentality have always proved to be short-lived, usually lasting about three generations or less. This was true of the Maurya Renaissance, of the Bengali Renaissance, and also of the Carolingian Renaissance. One reason for the ephemerality of these renaissances seems to be the failure to integrate a cultural renovation with greater socio-economic justice. The Chinese or Maoist renaissance was perhaps a major exception in that it focused on greater socio-economic justice, but made huge mistakes in the domain of culture (some of the major excesses of the Cultural Revolution).

Part of the bastion mentality is the attitude of desiring that one's enemies destroy each other, thus leaving to one's own nation supreme power and unquestioned sway. This was most evident in the Chinese renaissance/revolution; it was equally evident in Western Europe's attitude towards Byzantium and the Caliphates. It is a temptation for India also, in relation to the Soviet East and the American West, that the powerful Christians, Communists and Arabs fight each other—a temptation which Nehru resisted by his fundamental internationalism.

The second European Renaissance used a typical attitude of besieged cultures—to take the forms and some of the content of the enemy culture and use them for one's own cultural renewal. So much the better if those enemy cultures are in process of disintegration. Islam began falling apart in the tenth century. Revolts spread everywhere in the caliphates; theological disputes broke up the unity of Islam. Rationalism of the Aristotelian type entered Islam around the ninth century and was itself the cause of major cleavages and tensions. Islam was influenced by Buddhism and neo-Platonism which led both to the flourishing of Islamic philosophy, and to the formation of mystical sects and movements.

It was out of this Islam and out of Byzantium that Western Europe received the basic elements of its classical Renaissance in the fourteenth century. It was perhaps also spurred by the

famine of 1315, and the outbreak of the bubonic plague (the Black Death) in 1347, which wiped out a third or more of Europe's population. Does India need a catastrophe of this magnitude to make it go back to the springs of creativity?

In Western Europe leadership had by this time shifted from the Frankish rulers of the Holy Roman Empire, to the true inheritors of ancient Rome's imperium, the popes of Rome. The papacy held the Western empire and its Christendom together. Its main method of facing the crisis was to conceive Greeks and Muslims as major enemies and to use against them the religious institution of the Crusades. The real purposes, which became evident, were plunder and territorial expansion on the one hand, and diversion of attention from the extreme injustice and misery at home on the other. It was Pope Gregory VII (Hildebrand) who began to arm Christians to fight against the 'heathen' in the Holy Land, 'to rescue God and His servants', as D.H. Lawrence put it.[17] Both the pious and the criminals of Europe set out together as champions of Christ. The lords and the poor, the clergy and the laity, the middle classes and the miserable outcasts, all were united in one adventure—Europe's expansion into the world—which lasts till this day. All of Europe, Anna Connena, the daughter of the Byzantine emperor tells us in her memoirs, was loosened from its foundations and hurled against Asia first and then against the whole world. The popes inspired and organised this expansion of Europe, through the nobles and the people—an expansion which became the bearer of the spirit of Europe. In the beginning the popes were heroic and even virtuous. As their power increased self-indulgence, profligacy, tyranny and greed replaced these qualities.

The besieged bastion mentality then takes on the defence of religion and of God as the sacred task of Europe. This gave moral justification to Europe's psyche of adventure and expansion, and for its aggression against the cultures and religions of non-Europeans.

[17]D.H. Lawrence, *Movements in European History*, Oxford University Press, 1971. The book was written for secondary school students in England. It is an admirable summary, from a British point of view, of Europe's exploits of adventure and expansion.

THE RELIGIOUS MISSION OF EUROPE

The Carolingian concept of the Holy Roman Empire as Christendom came to full flower only when the Roman Catholic papacy became a civil monarchy. By the eleventh century the popes had already developed an economic stranglehold on Europe. Popes 'protected' monastic foundations against taxation by lay lords and princes, and received annual sums by way of tax and tribute from these foundations. It was not a big sum in the beginning, but the principle was important. The most notorious of these papal taxes was of course 'Peter's Pence'—one penny per household for the pope. England, Denmark, Norway, Sweden and Poland paid the 'Pence', though the cardinals and clergy pocketed a good share of it. The popes occasionally demanded, and got, gifts from prelates. By the thirteenth century, popes charged a sort of income tax to the European clergy. One pretext for this was financing the Crusades; another, financing a war against Frederick II who defied the papacy. Popes often received gifts for the appointment of cardinals and prelates all over Europe.

In 1198 Rome had a new pope, Lothar Conti, who took the name of Innocent III (1198-1216). He established economic authority over Europe on a more systematic basis. In the 'Empire' as well as in France, the new pope took an active part in succession disputes, and thus extended papal civil power over the nations of Europe. The pope became a king-maker in Europe. Innocent III chose emperors, forced French and English kings to become his vassals, and launched three crusades. Papal power grew. The curia in Rome expanded. Papal legates were permanently present with most kings. The papal courts became the authority over the princes of Europe. Innocent recovered papal lands that had been taken away by princes. Popes began issuing 'indulgences' or certificates for the forgiveness of sins, and getting paid handsomely in return.

Popes fought wars against European princes like the Holy Roman Emperor Frederick I and Frederick II, and subdued them. The most important activity of the popes was, of course, to organise wars in the name of God, against 'infidels' (Muslims) and 'heretics' (Eastern Orthodox). In the name of God Christians fought Christians, plundered and looted cities and homes.

Innocent III was pope when Catholic Crusaders conquered Constantinople on 12 April, 1204, and looted the city for three whole days. 'Harlots [conceivably Christian?] besported themselves in the sanctuary of Sancta Sophia, and the value of the booty officially declared to the commanders was 800,000 silver marks'.[18]

Did Europe's great spiritual leader, Pope Innocent III, see anything wrong in all this? Yes, of course. But he did very little about it. The booty, both holy and unholy, was transported to the West, and helped to power the Renaissance and the Enlightenment. At the same time Europe suffered pangs of conscience, for, it must be remembered, this was also the time of great spiritual luminaries like St. Francis of Assissi (1182-1226) and his companions.

Innocent then turned his ire on the 'heretics' within Western Europe itself—the Cathari, the Albigensians, the fore-runners of our present-day Jehovah's Witnesses, and the inheritors of the Persian dualist heresy of Manicheeism. Innocent preached the Fourth Crusade against the Albigensians. Truth has to be defended by military power—that is part of the credo of Europe. Of course, the European Enlightenment revolted against this too; but it is still part of the European psyche. Use arms to crush heresy, and in the process make yourselves rich: the massacre at Beziers, the Minerva *auto-da-fe* (1210), killing and plunder in the name of God and truth.

The pope then set himself up as the vicar of Christ or the viceroy of God. All would receive their authority from the pope, be it prince or prelate. Since Christ was Lord over the Church and the world, so was His vicar. God had two swords—civil authority and ecclesiastical authority, and both were given to the pope; he gave it to whomsoever he chose. Even today popes reflect such a self-understanding in addressing the United Nations or sending *nuncios* to secular states like India.

The basis of the modern Christian missionary movement, which is in some way a characteristic expression of the psyche of Europe, had been laid. Pope Boniface (1294-1303) laid down the doctrine that 'it is necessary for salvation that everyone be subject to the Roman Pontiff'—kings, priests, the laity, Buddhists,

[18]R.H.C. Davies, *A History of Medieval Europe*, Longmans, 1957, p. 348.

Muslims, Hindus, whoever they are. The Renaissance, the Reformation and the Enlightenment were all various types of revolt against such domineering claims of Europe's official church.

The climax of Europe's mission for world domination came with the discoveries of America, Africa and the new trade routes. The pope it was again, who drew a line across the globe, and assigned the two halves to Portugal and Spain to keep them from getting at each other's throats. For the glory of God Portuguese missionaries looted and set fire to Hindu temples in India. For the sake of the 'free world' Hiroshima and Nagasaki in Asia suffered the holocaust power of the West.

The same missionary movement also brought modern education, social reform, Western medicine and many institutions that were later taken over by Asians and Africans. Whether religious or secular, European values, European culture, European political institutions, European science and technology must transform the world, redeem it and unite it.

How little Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru saw this ambiguous character of Europe! How too easily he gave in to the plan to remake India on the model of the West! How sad we still do not see it! One does not want to refrain from singing the praises of Europe where such praise is legitimately due. Since there seems to be no shortage of bards in India to sing that praise, we shall refrain from doing so. There is so much to be learned from Europe; yet, perhaps there is more of Europe's teaching to be unlearned.

WHY THIS CONCERN ABOUT THE EUROPEAN ENLIGHTENMENT

The two basic movements generated by the Enlightenment—Marxism and liberalism—today make strident demands on India's identity as a nation, her political economy and cultural development. Our leading intellectual elite are products of these two ways of approaching reality; yet we feel a certain amount of unease in following either path, and wish to evolve a third way—a mixed economy; social-democratic ideology; a nostalgic, imprecise and unrelated affirmation of Indian heritage and culture.

The stamp of Jawaharlal Nehru, a son of the Indian brahmin aristocracy who wanted to identify himself with the people, but also a son of the European Enlightenment, wavering between its liberal and Marxist versions, has been impressed on our cultural identity both during the freedom movement and during the first quarter century of our independent national development. The stamps of Gandhi and Tagore have also been impressed on our infant national identity, but the impressions are feeble and vanishing. These two were also deeply influenced by the European Enlightenment, but in them there is always an element that transcends that Enlightenment. Both were against traditional, ritualistic, organised religion, and in this they were very much influenced by the Enlightenment, which came to them through English education (in Tagore's case, less formal), participation in an elite culture (in Gandhi's case only for the first part of his life), and above all, through world travel. Both Gandhi and Tagore were more sensitive to the problem of being swept away or crushed by the 'juggernaut' of European Enlightenment liberalism. Both made a conscious effort to resist that road-roller in their own specific ways, to affirm a cultural identity which cherished certain non-Enlightenment 'spiritual' ways. Among the ruling elite, however, the Nehruvian rational, liberal, Enlightenment line triumphed.

This liberal Enlightenment line of Nehru is difficult to assess and evaluate. There is one line of assessment from the other aspect of the Enlightenment—the Marxist branch. The Indian communist line of attack, which came mainly from M.N. Roy, was justified in many respects, but has subsequently fizzled out. The main criticism was that the Nehru line was bourgeois reformist, not radical proletarian revolutionary. That still remains a valid criticism, but Marxists in India seem to have decided to accept Nehru as a symbol of cooperation with the progressive forces in the country, and as a front for opposition to reactionary religious vested interests. Marxist intellectuals in India have yet to come to terms with the true nature of the European Enlightenment and its twin children, liberalism and Marxism, one representing the interests of the bourgeoisie and the other supposedly that of the toiling masses, the peasants and the proletariat. Of course, Marxism has brought some values of the Enlightenment to the masses, though only in some regions of India.

The Gandhian line, which owes so much to some of the values of the European Enlightenment (through Tolstoy and Ruskin, among others), has failed to strike roots in our elite Indian culture. It has been faulted for what is understood, or perhaps misunderstood, as opposition to untrammelled industrial and economic development, and as commitment to a primitive, pre-industrial, pre-modern, rural agrarian society of simple living. Nehru held, as a typical son of the European Enlightenment, that politics should 'entirely be based on clarity of thought and reasoning and has no room for vague idealistic or religious or sentimental processes which confuse and befog the mind'. Gandhi, on the other hand, was precisely what Nehru did not want politics to be—idealistic, religious and sentimental. Gandhi like Socrates, was led more by his inner voice than by reason. Nehru was allergic to this kind of religious sentimentalism. Nehru accused Gandhi of being anti-modern, wanting to go back to the good old days of the self-contained village community.[1]

Gandhi's religion was neither traditional nor conventional. At that point Gandhi too was a child of the Enlightenment, though more of the Rousseau than of the Voltaire type. He was influen-

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[1] Jawaharlal Nehru, *Discovery of India*, The Signet Press, Calcutta, 1946, p. 486.

ced more by the European nineteenth-century romantic reaction against industrial development, than by the eighteenth-century Enlightenment itself. His Western mentors were Tolstoy and Thoreau, Emerson and Ruskin, Carlyle and Shelley.

Gandhi's thinking, however, did not fall within any of the usual Western categories. His basic orientation was the moral and spiritual emancipation of the people of India, and political freedom was mainly a means to such emancipation. The main sources for moral and spiritual renewal were to be sought in Indian traditions—in the *Gītā* and the *Quran* and the *Bible* and the *Granth Saheb*. If Nehru was basically reason-oriented, Gandhi was faith-oriented, though these are also Enlightenment categories. Gandhi wanted to transform human persons through the grasp of Truth (*Satyāgraha*) and Love (*Ahiṃsā*), categories that do not easily fit into a Western liberal framework. Gandhi abjured power politics and advocated a pure politics based on the fundamental principles of truth and love, self-control, freedom from ambition and power-seeking, voluntary poverty and a simple way of life in common with the people. Nehru, as an Enlightenment liberal, accepted power politics, was prepared to compromise principles for reason of expediency, and fixed his goals—not as truth and love, discipline and unselfishness, but as food and clothing, housing and transportation, health and education. Nehru's line won out and the Gandhian line has largely faded away.

Tagore's line was different from Gandhi's. His mind was more poetic, less activistically inclined, and his religious consciousness was infinitely more universal in its appeal and concern. He had come to terms with the West in a peculiarly Bengali Brahmo Samajist way, and later reacted against that artificial way of reacting. Tagore was no nationalist in the narrow sense. In fact he regarded such narrow nationalism as 'barbarian',[2] and a 'menace'.[3] He speaks of World-Man, Super Man, Infinite Man,[4] Eternal Man,[5] and Universal Man,[6] in his comparatively unknown

[2]'Nationalism in India', in Rabindranath Tagore, *Lectures and Addresses*, edited by Soares, Macmillan, London, 1962, p. 105ff.
[3]Ibid., p. 108.
[4]Rabindranath Tagore, *Man*, Andhra University Series, No. 16, Waltair, 1937, p. 9.
[5]Ibid., pp. 9, 52 and 56.
[6]Ibid., pp. 12, 23 and 40.

lecture, *Man*, delivered at Andhra University. While Nehru wanted to 'construct' a progressive Indian society, Tagore aspired after 'creation' or creativity. A nation, according to Tagore, has to be a 'poem', not a construction.[7] He had less confidence in science than Nehru had:

> And yet science does not show any sign of vacating her seat in favour of a humanity or submit to any curtailment of her jurisdiction after her own proper work has been finished. The powerful races who have the scientific mind and method and machinery have taken upon themselves the immense responsibility of the present age. We complain not of their law and government, which are scientifically efficient, but of the desolating deadliness of their machine domination.... We feel the withering fierceness of the spirit of modern civilisation all the more because it beats directly against our human sensibility; and it is we of the Eastern hemisphere who have the right to say that those who represent this great age of great opportunities are furiously building their doom by their renouncement of the divine ideal of personality.[8]

In totally ignoring the Gandhian and Tagorean paths and embarking on a quest for a secular identity for our nation, based mainly on Western liberal values, we have embarked on a path which we will have to leave sooner or later, after much damage has been done to our national psyche. The sooner the better; we should *now* look for other possible conceptions of our identity and of our path as a nation.

If we now seek to understand the quest of our fellow human beings in the European culture for their common identity, it is only to draw some lessons from the observable perils and benefits of that path, without condemning Western civilisation as a whole. It is also because we need to understand the European Enlightenment, whose children we have become.

The reason why we are concerned here about the European Enlightenment is primarily this. European liberalism and

[7]See Tagore's lecture on 'Construction versus Creation' in *Lectures and Addresses*.
[8]Ibid., pp. 75-76.

Marxism—children of the European Enlightenment—are the prevailing lines guiding the destiny of India. The reaction against these lines, unfortunately, remains largely reactionary. Instead of learning from the best in Tagore and Gandhi, the anti-Western line of Hindu, Muslim and Sikh fundamentalisms displays obscurantist, fascist, intolerant and fanatical trends which frighten us. Ideas like Hinduraj, Jehad and Khalistan raise their ugly and menacing heads. Is there an alternative between Enlightenment liberalism-Marxism on the one hand and reactionary, communal and backward-looking anti-diluvianism and chauvinism on the other?

Our present prime minister, Rajiv Gandhi, seems to be aware of this problem. In his inaugural address at the Diamond Jubilee celebrations of the Indian Philosophical Congress (Hyderabad, 1985), he posed two questions before Indian philosophers:

(i) Is there an intrinsic conflict or contradiction between the technologically advanced society which is India's declared goal to build by the twenty-first century on the one hand and the precious values of India's cultural heritage on the other?

(ii) If we have to be selective about the values we need to incorporate in a technological society, which are the values we should choose?

Rajiv Gandhi, after having given the philosophers of India the task of dealing with these questions, went on to answer them himself in much too cursory and simplistic a manner. The questions themselves need to be analysed and the assumptions behind them exposed, before we can begin to answer them. One such assumption is that technology and values are independent and autonomous; a second assumption is that they can be put together by arbitrary choice; third, that the state can do this through legislation, education and funding; fourth, that perhaps that all this is independent of political economy and its structure of power distribution. All these are assumptions which can be questioned.

Our study of the European Enlightenment must then unravel some of these problems and assumptions, so that we can find our way towards an authentic Indian identity, integrating our responses to the various issues. We need to integrate with that identity, not what we arbitrarily choose from our own heritage,

e.g., *niṣkāmakarma,* or action without attachment to its fruits, and *sthitaprajña,* or being unruffled and unbeaten by situations that tend to overwhelm us and make us lose our cool. These are the two values that Rajiv Gandhi picked up from our heritage for integration into the technological society. We would need then to understand deeply our own traditional experience of enlightenment which does not seem to fit too easily with the rational, liberal, secular, Marxist European Enlightenment system.

Our study of the European Enlightenment is not an academic exercise intended to add to our store of knowledge. It is an analysis which has later to provide the basis for synthesis at a higher level and yield a structure and programme for our quest for an Indian identity. With that purpose in mind we go back to an understanding of the background of the European Enlightenment.

EUROPE AND INDIA: IDENTITIES IN INTERACTION (EARLY PERIOD)

Our first contact as a people with Europe is perhaps lost in history. Rabindranath Tagore, in his *Sadhana*, tries to show the main difference between India and Europe on the basis that the Indo-European people came from the same central Asian or Caucasian stock, one branch going east and the other west. The common features of our language structures are indeed impressive and suggestive. Similar common aspects can be discovered in our mythical lore as well. On the borderline between myth and history is the legend of Dionysus having come to India and settled down here.[1]

As far as history goes, the first contact we know of with Europe is that of the Greek admiral Scylax of Caria, employed by the Persian emperor Darius (522-486 BC) to explore the course of the Indus river in fifth century BC.[2] Aristotle also refers to Scylax.[3] He seems to have left written accounts of his voyages in India, which accounts Herodotus and Aristotle used. If so, he was perhaps the first Greek writer on India. Aristoxenos of Tarent, a contemporary of Aristotle (384-322 BC) tells us that Socrates (died 398 BC) met an Indian at Athens who engaged in a philosophical discussion with him.[4]

Apart from these stray individual contacts, the major encounter was through the invasion of Alexander. Alexander (356-323 BC) had been trained by Europe's great *guru*, Aristotle, in medicine, ethics and politics, as well as in philosophy and the occult. Part of the *guru's* ethical teaching was on how to treat the Indians and barbarians in general. 'Be a *hegemon* (uniting captain)

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[1]Arrian, *Anabasis*, VIII (*Indica*), 5:8.
[2]Herodotus, *Persian Wars*, IV:44.
[3]Aristotle, *Politics*, VII:14.
[4]F. Wehrli (ed.), *Fragments*, in *Aristoxenos, Pt II* of his *Die Schüle des Aristotles*, Text and Kommentar, 1945.

to the Greeks, and a *despotēs* (tyrant) to the Barbarians. Treat the former as friends, and the latter as animals and plants',[5] was in effect Aristotle's advice to Alexander as he set forth on his Asian 'adventure and expansion'. With due addition of sophistication, that attitude of Europe towards the rest of the world has persisted through the ages.

Alexander is in many respects the personification of Europe. Plutarch (AD 46-120) tells us[6] that from childhood the two things that attracted him most were action and glory, not pleasure and riches, though he became addicted to excessive drinking and debauchery later in his short life (like Jesus, he lived 33 years). As a young man he was austere and impetuous. He used to get angry with his father, Philip of Macedonia, for not allowing him to do any of his great exploits. He ascribed to his father jealousy on account of the son's greater prowess and passion for pre-eminence.

At the age of 16 Alexander began his exploits—taking towns inside and outside Macedonia by storm, massacring or driving out people from them, and re-peopling them with people from other nations. The first such exploit by the sixteen-year old affected the Maedi people, whose capital he re-peopled and re-named Alexandropolis. When he was 20, his father Philip was murdered, perhaps with some complicity from his mother and himself; he succeeded to the kingdom of Macedonia.

The first thing he did after enthronement was to set out on an expedition of 'adventure and expansion' westward and southward, sacking and razing cities and massacring people or selling them as slaves. Plutarch tells us that after a bout of extreme cruelty, he would show great magnanimity and generosity to some at least of the conquered people. The characteristic image of Europe not only as 'adventure and expansion', but also as 'cruelty and condescension' was always manifested by Alexander. The sack of Persepolis, the capital of Persia, was an orgy of violence, arson and plunder.

5R.D. Milns, *Alexander The Great*, Robert Hale, London, 1968, p. 24.

6Plutarch, *Lives of the Noble Grecians and Romans: Alexander*; English translation, *Great Books of the Western World*, Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1952, p. 542.

But there was another streak in Alexander, narrated by Plutarch.[7] After his Theban victory, all Greek philosophers and nobles came to pay homage to him. He hoped to see among them the famous Diogenes (the Cynic from Sinope), who however did not come. Alexander set forth in search of him, and found him lying on the grass, basking in the sun, alone. Alexander approached him, along with the great company of nobles and philosophers. Diogenes barely stirred at all this tumult, but just raised his head a little to look at Alexander. Alexander asked him with the haughty, yet respectful condescension of an impetuous young conqueror who wants to be respected also for his kindness and generosity: 'Is there anything I can do for you, Diogenes?' Diogenes replied, 'Yes, I would have you stand away from between me and the sun'. Plutarch says that Alexander was so impressed with this reply that he said if he were not Alexander he would choose to be Diogenes. This is also characteristic of Europe—the nostalgia for the humble wisdom of the East, without losing the power and domination of Europe.

At the gate of Asia he battled Darius's huge Persian army, and massacred 20,000 foot soldiers and 2,500 horsemen, if Plutarch and Arrian and their sources are to be believed. Then, after having reduced most of the Asian cities on his path, he faced Darius's huge army of 600,000; his own army was 30,000 foot and 4000 horse strong, according to Plutarch. This was Europe's disciplined technical skill facing Asia's massive bulk. Alexander fought Darius hand to hand, and was wounded in the thigh. But Darius was overcome, lost 110,000 of his army and fled. Alexander took over Darius's richly furnished tent and an enormous amount of Persian wealth. The young victor apparently said to his friends. 'This, it seems, is royalty'. It was poor Europe encountering rich Asia, the reverse of what it is today. Alexander seized from Babylon, Susa and Persepolis a sum of 180,000 talents.[8] To understand the magnitude of this 'absorption' which helped Europe's 'expansion', we have to take into account the fact that this was 180 times the total annual revenue of Macedonia (1000 talents a year) and 450 times that of Athens (400 talents a year).

[7]Plutarch, op. cit., p. 546.
[8]R.D. Milns, op. cit., p. 137.

It was not only money that Europe gained out of this encounter. The conquest of Babylon gave occasion to Callisthenes, who accompanied Alexander, to pick up Chaldean astronomy. This astronomy took many centuries to mature fully, but Callisthenes was able to transmit what he learned to Ptolemy (Claudius Ptolemaeus, AD 100-178), the great Alexandrian astronomer, through Hipparchus (130 BC). Ptolemy's *The Great Astronomer Al-Magest)*, was the basis of all scientific astronomy and mathematics in Europe until Copernicus turned it upside down and Kepler drew a new map of the universe. Without Ptolemy and Copernicus Descartes could not have drawn his mathematical model for mental processes, nor could modern science, based on the aziom that all movements in nature are regular or governed by rules which can be discovered, have come to flower in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Europe also gained many ideas for further expansion from this adventure. The wisdom of Asia laid the moral foundations for Europe's personality. As even Denis de Rougemont would admit, it was 'the concentration of the religious and cultural values of the Near East into the Western peninsula' (i.e., Europe) that formed 'a primary original culture' in Greece in the first place. The adventurous expansion of Europe through Alexander once again drank deeply at the wells of Asian culture, in order to prepare for its further expansion.

The most important single achievement of Alexander's nearly seven-year sojourn in India was the breaking of the Babylonian-Persian screen that had separated Europe and India for centuries. It also made possible, therefore, more Greek or European adventurist-expansionists coming into India.

Alexander only occupied some parts of north-west India. He began his reluctant retreat from India in 326 BC, more due to the unwillingness of his weary army to endure the rigours of the Indian landscape and climate than because of Indian military superiority. Alexander left behind him three vassal kingdoms or *satrapies*. King Ambhi (the Greeks called him Taxiles, from his capital, Takshasila) had a kingdom extending between the Jhelum and the Indus in present Punjab. Raja Abhisara and Raja Urasa (Greek Arsaces) had their kingdoms in the upper valley of the river, in present Kashmir. The two Alexandrias he

built on the Indus seem to have left no trace. Arrian[9] tells us that in one of them, on the Chenab-Indus junction, he settled some of his mercenary troops, no longer fit for active service, and some neighbouring tribesmen. He camped here on his way back from India.[10] He also left other troops—Thracians and select ones from his other brigades—to garrison the whole *satrapy*. The other one, Alexandria Bucephala, on the east bank of the Jhelum, survived up to the first century AD.[11]

Alexander, as far as our historical knowledge goes, introduced the European beachhead into our culture and history. We also learned something from him—not his enormous courage and capacity for stunning exploits; not his capacity for large-scale massacre of men, women and children wherever he fought; not his enormous greed or his showy generosity. The young boy Chandragupta'(Plutarch calls him Androcottes),[12] who used to go and watch Alexander, learnt from him how to build an empire. Soon after Alexander left Chandragupta Maurya expanded (322 BC) the kingdom of Magadha all the way up to the Punjab and annexed practically all the Greek garrison towns Alexander had established. Chandragupta built an empire, for the first time and perhaps the last, extending beyond the borders of the Indian sub-continent. Seleucus, who had inherited the old Persian-Macedonian *satrapies*, tried to hold on to Kabul (Paropanisadai), Herat (Aria), Kandahar (Arachosia-Gandhara) and Baluchistan (Gedrosia); but he could not. Chandragupta annexed these territories and ruled over the first large Indian empire, which included parts of Iran, and extended from Afghanistan to Bengal.

This is how India learned from Europe, and in fact, did much better than Alexander who had had only a corner of what later became the Maurya Empire. Unlike Alexander, Chandrgupta had a unitary government. Unlike Alexander, Chandragupta was a king who willingly abdicated his throne, in favour of his son Bindusara, and ended his days in a monastery (Jain?). It was from the Greeks that we learned empire building; but the Maurya

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[9]*Anabasis*, V, 29:3.
[10]*Anabasis*, VI, 15:1, 2.
[11]*Periplus*, 47.
[12]Plutarch, op. cit., 62, p. 570.

Empire of Chandragupta, Bindusara and Ashoka was no imitation of the empire of Darius or Alexander.

If Europeans think, with Denis de Rougemont, that Europe created the idea of universal humanity and unity of the human race, let them read the edicts of Ashoka. If Indian Hindus think that the idea of tolerance is their creation let them look to Ashoka, who did not simply tolerate religions, but critically supported them, stopping religions from narrow self-exaltation and from caricaturing other religions; supporting all three religions alike—Hindu, Jain and Buddhist—when they were willing to serve all people without discrimination. India still has much to learn, in its quest for a national identity, from the great Ashoka (295-232 BC). Only Hindus had difficulty claiming him to be their own, for he was too tolerant of the heretical Bauddhas and Jainas. Though Ashoka was a Buddhist the Jains regarded him as one of their own. He transformed the concept of *yuddhavijaya* ('victory in war') into *dharmavijaya* ('victory of righteousness'). He wrote to sister nations asking them to walk in justice and righteousness. From Buddha and Ashoka went forth spiritual forces which transformed not only China, Korea, Japan, Siam (Thailand), Burma and many other Asian countries, but also Europe in a radical way. To that we come later.

THE SECOND EUROPEAN WAVE

The second European wave which overthrew the first Indian empire of the Mauryas was much more extended and pervasive in the sequence of interaction it generated. Demetrius conquered the Maurya Empire and set himself up as 'King of the Indians' (200-180 BC).

Demetrius came the same way the two former conquerors (the Persian Darius and the Macedonian Alexander) had come, crossing the Hindu Kush. But while the latter two had ruled for a very short time and over a very small part of the Indian subcontinent, Demetrius came as far as the Maurya capital of Pataliputra (modern Patna), and set up a rule that lasted for several generations. True, Demetrius modelled himself after Alexander, whom he regarded his ancestor. But he also learned from the Mauryas. Besides, the University of Takshasila had already spread an amalgamation of Indian, Babylonian, Greek and

Persian knowledge. The coins of Demetrius, as also the edicts of Ashoka, were bilingual, inscribed in Prakrit-Kharoshti and Greek. He abandoned old Aristotle's maxim that only Greeks were to be treated as humans. Demetrius learned to respect Indian culture, religion and spirit.

Demetrius is probably the king Dattamitra mentioned in the *Mahābhārata* as king of the yavanas. Menander was his general, who probably led the advance on Pataliputra, while Appollodotus led the thrust into Rajputana. Our *Yuga Purāṇa*[13] describes the yavana invasion in no flattering terms.

How did Demetrius and Apollodotus (called Bhagadatta the Yavanaraja in the *Mahābhārata*) and Menander (Milinda) succeed where Alexander had failed? What troops did these Greeks bring from Bactria or elsewhere to carry out such an extensive invasion? It appears that the main troops in the second Greek invasion consisted of native Indians, and that Buddhist India was not as hostile to these second set of invaders as the Hindus of the north-west had been to Alexander's forces. The *Yuga Purāṇa*, which faithfully reflects the brahmanical point of view—not only anti-yavana, but also anti-Bauddha and anti-sudra—states that the yavanas, the Bauddhas and the sudras reacted against brahmanic domination in north India. Is it not significant that the general of the Greek army, Menander, soon became a Buddhist? Is it possible that the agreement between Seleucus and Chandragupta permitted inter-marriages of yavanas and kshatriyas, thereby tacitly absorbing the yavanas into the kshatriya caste of India? And was not Buddhism itself largely a kshatriya religion ? Of course, Buddhism has no caste system. But its origin and early support came from the kshatriya caste. Is it

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[13] *Yuga Purāṇa* is part of *Gārgī-Saṁhitā*. Parts of the text with translation have been published by K.P. Jayaswal in his 'Historical Data in the Gārgī-Saṁhitā and the Brahmin Empire', *Journal of the Bengal and Orissa Research Society (JBORS)*, XIV, 1928. The *Saṁhitā* itself is dated variously from the first to the third century AD. The *Yuga Purāṇa* gives an account of the yavana invasion in the form of a prophecy, and is probably based, according to Dr. Jayaswal, on a chronicle from the second half of the first century. It is believed to be the earliest of the Purāṇas and historically most valuable. The document is of Madhyadesa origin, and is written from a brahmanical standpoint which despises Bauddhas, sudras, yavanas and Śakas. In Pataliputra itself Buddhism was deeply entrenched.

possible that many Greeks had inter-married with kshatriyas and Buddhists and settled down in India as Indians, from the time of Alexander and Chandragupta? Can we suggest that most of the Indian troops used for the second Greek invasion came from this 'foreign-mixed' element in India? At this stage these can only remain questions worth investigating.

In any case, archaeology and numismatics have shown us the wide Greek presence in India. Greek coins bearing the effigies of Apollodotus, Demetrius and Menander have been unearthed by Cunningham in lower Punjab, Sind, Gujarat, Karnal (Haryana), Pushkar (near Ajmer), Roh, Amarkot, Bajaur, Mathura, Bundelkhand, Taxila, Broach, and many other places throughout north India.[14]

It is also important that during the confusion caused by the Greek invasions, several other non-Indian people migrated from Central Asia towards the Indo-Gangetic plain—the Sauviras, the Abhiras, the Malavas, who were only semi-Indian, and had no sympathy for the brahmins.

The Sanga king Pushyamitra, who murdered the last Maurya and seized the crown, was a brahmin. The brahmins were not always as tolerant as our myths try to make them. Pushyamitra was a fanatical brahmin who sought to restore Hinduism to Ashoka's India by the most violent methods.[15] Buddhists were mercilessly oppressed by him; it was thus natural that they supported the Greek invasion as a God-sent salvation from the repressive brahmin rule of this south Indian. Sir William Tarn suggests that the title *Soter* (Saviour) which both Appollodotus and Menander have on their coins, was approved by the Buddhists. 'Apollodotus and Menander were *Soteres* (or Saviours) because they professed to come to Indians as saviours, to "save" them from Pushyamitra. It was entirely a political matter; but it happened that the people to be "saved" were in fact usually Buddhists, and the common enmity of Greek and Buddhist to the Sanga king threw them into each other's arms'.[16]

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[14] W.W. Tarn, *The Greeks in Bactria and India*, Cambridge University Press, Library Ed., p. 165.
[15] W.W. Tarn, op. cit., p. 175.
[16] Ibid., p. 175.

It is also possible that Ashoka had some Seleucid blood in him, his grandfather Chandragupta having married one of Seleucus' daughters. The Greek invaders could then claim to be wreaking vengeance on Pushyamitra, the 'foreigner' from the south, who had killed the last descendant of Ashoka and usurped his throne. How difficult it is for us today to believe that while for the brahmin the yavana was a *mlechcha* and a foreigner, and the south Indian brahmin a saviour, for the Buddhists of Ashoka's empire, it was the south Indian Pushyamitra who was a foreigner and usurper of the throne!

V.A. Smith in his *The Early History of India*[17] gives a long list of brahmin persecution of Buddhists. The *Aśokāvadāna*, a quasi-historical Acts of 'Ashoka' from the second century BC, written in Sanskrit, gives a gruesome account of Pushyamitra's exploits. He supposedly destroyed all or most of the 84,000 Buddhist *stūpas* built by Ashoka, went to Sialkot and massacred all the Buddhist monks. Whether the story is true or not, Buddhists had no reason to appreciate brahmin rule. Menander, the Greek invader, became a Buddhist and protector of Buddhists, especially after the other two Greeks, Demetrius and Apollodotus died. Menander ruled (166-145 BC) a vast Greek empire in India, a horseshoe stretching from Broach to Mathura (Muttra). His official capital was Sialkot.

The contacts between Europe and India did not begin in the sixteenth or nineteenth century. The Greek kingdoms in India left a lasting European impact on India, and trade routes kept the traffic open between the two cultures.

THE CULTURAL INTERACTION

We now sketch the barest outline of the cultural contributions India and Europe made to each other during this early contact of the fourth to first centuries BC. Academic scholars recognise only direct borrowings. The peoples of India and Greece were too mature in their respective civilisations to need such direct borrowing. What scholars have difficulty in recognising is the stimulation that one advanced culture provides to the other.

Let us take the realm of dance and drama as an example. As

[17]V.A. Smith, *The Early History of India*, 3rd edn., Oxford, OUP, 1914; 4th edn., 1924, p. 214, note 1.

far back as we can go in our history we find the dance form as a part of our culture, in our mythology—yes, in fact the dance belongs deeply to our bodies and souls. It is probably older than painting and sculpture, poetry and drama. In fact for us *nātya* and *nṛtya* go together in our body-soul coordination. The Sanskrit root *nṛt* and the Prakrit root *naṭ* are perhaps the same. From the first we get our dance or *nṛtya* and from the second our *nātya* (acting) and *nāṭaka* (drama).

Siva is the great dancer, embodying in his *tāṇḍava*, the dynamic *ṛta* (rhythm, order) of the Vedic cosmos. The dance falls in tune with the cosmic process and moves in consonance with it. If Bharata wrote *Nāṭyaśāstra*, it was only as an encyclopaedic, compendious compilation of what already existed in the tradition.

The Greeks had their drama, with more chorus than dance. They had their mime theatre which was more primitive. The *yavanikā*, the stage curtain, is both in word and fact the Greeks' contribution to our culture. *Yavanikā* means that which belongs to the yavana, the Greeks. But Greek drama, staged in the amphitheatre, never used a stage curtain. The stage was in the middle—always open to audience participation in mind and spirit, if not in body. The Greek and Roman mime theatre, on the other hand, did use stage curtains (*siparium*) and we can assume that this mime theatre did come to India; since mimes were common in the Seleucid empire,[18] they must have come down to the Indian Greek kingdoms.

Not all Greeks were philosophers; Greek philosophy was always an elite preoccupation. The Greeks who left their homeland always carried with them two expressions of Hellenic culture—the epics of Hesiod and Homer and the plays of Euripides, Aeschylus, Sophocles and Aristophanes. Alexander himself, when he was in upper Asia, ordered some books to be sent to him. According to Plutarch, one Harpalus sent him 'a great many of the plays of Euripides, Sophocles, and Aeschylus'.[19] These were the true bearers of Hellenic values—much more than Greek philosophy.

There can be little doubt that the Greek cities which Alexander, Demetrius and Apollodotus built each had a theatre. Without a

18Tarn, op. cit., p. 383.
19Plutarch, op. cit., p. 544a.

theatre a Greek *polis* cannot exist.[20] And if the Hellenic plays were enacted in these theatres, it is beyond doubt that many of the Indians, at least those who knew some Greek, went to see them. It also seems natural that in the second and third generations, as the number of Greek-speaking people dwindled, Prakrit versions of these plays were produced.

Indian drama, such as it existed at the time of Alexander or of Demetrius, seems to have been limited to temple ceremonies; the royal court, and a few religio-philosophical discourses such as we have in some of the Vedas or in Asvaghosha. Already the *Bhagavadgītā* has a very dramatic context. In Asvaghosha's Buddhist philosophical dramas we can detect a measure of Greek influence, a sort of mix of Platonic dialogue and Euripides' and Sophocles' serious plays.

Indian drama came to fruition much later than the first and second Greek invasions. And when it is in full flower, with Kalidasa's *Śakuntalā* for example, it is no pale or plastic imitation of the Greek play. Its personality is radically different. The forms have much resemblance, but the content is so breathtakingly original and refreshing that Goethe had to cry out, after having experienced a German or French translation of *Śakuntalā* in 1791:

> Will ich die Blumen des Fruehen, die Fruechte des spaeteren Jahres
> Will ich, was reizt und entzueckt, will ich, was saettigtt und nahrt
> Will ich den Himmel, die Erde mit Einem Namen begreifen,
> Wenn ich, Sakuntala, dich, und so ist alles gesagt.[21]

> (Wish I the blossoms of springtime, and the fruits of the later year
> Wish I, all that pleases and amuses, wish I all that satisfies and nourishes,
> Wish I in one name Heaven and also earth to grasp
> Then I take you, Sakuntala, and all is said)

A good question to ask would be, why this hidden outburst of creativity in India in the early centuries of this era? Why, in the

[20]Tarn, op. cit., p. 384.
[21]Cited by Masson-Ourssel et al., op. cit., p. 311.

first four centuries of the Christian era, soon after the new culture was brought into India by the Greeks, this upsurge of Asvaghosa (*Śāriputra prakaraṇa*), Bhasa (*Pañcharātra, Swapnavāsavadattā, Pratijñāyaugandharāyaṇa*), Sudraka, (*Mṛchchakaṭika*), Visakhadatta, (*Mudrā-rākṣasa*) Kalidasa (*Kumārasambhava, Mālavikagnimitra, Śakuntalā*) Kalhana (*Rāja-taraṅginī*), Bharata (*Nāṭyaśāstra*), and later Harsha, Bhavabhuti, Bana, Varahamihira, and others? Why this extraordinary creativity that gave birth to great epics of world standards, the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata*, the *Jātakas*, the *Upaniṣads*, the *Pañchatantra*, the *Hitopadeśa*?

This period of creativity in India lasted a good ten centuries at least. It followed two great events of long duration, that shook up the soul of India, namely, (i) the rise of Buddhism and Jainism as a reaction against the brahmanical misinterpretation and misuse of the *Vedas* and the *Upaniṣads*, and (ii) the Greek invasions and the opening up of trade and cultural exchange with the Persians, Greeks, Romans, and Arabs which had a new impetus when the Babylonian-Persian screen between India and the West was broken through by the invasion of Alexander.

There was interaction between the various cultures—Persian, Greek, Middle Eastern,[22] Central Asian and Indian—and it is out of that ferment that India emerged as a fabulous land: the land of immense material wealth, but also an inexhaustible source of culture, wisdom and spiritual insight. The European quest for an identity of adventure and expansion acted as the catalysing factor in this ferment. India received from all,. but also gave back with immense generosity.

Part of that give and take was in the realm of philosophy and religion. What India gave, it does not hold as its own. For it was given without receipts or accounts, without hoping to be repaid. It was given so that those who receive may live. To that give and take we now turn, without a knowledge of which neither the European nor the Indian psyche can be fully understood.

INTERACTION IN RELIGION AND PHILOSOPHY

The mutual impact of India and Europe through the centuries in the religious-philosophical realm was indeed much greater

22Through Christians and Jews and later through Muslims.

than is generally recognised on either side and than what can be clearly documented. These contacts certainly pre-date Alexander in the fourth century BC. Arrian, not always a critical chronicler, in his *Anabasis Alexandrou*, tells us about the descendants of the Greek god Dionysus whom Alexander met on his Asian expedition. Dionysus, son of Zeus, was believed to be the founder of the city of Nysa (*Nusa*).

> In the country between the rivers Cophen (Kubha, Kabul) and Indus, was situated the city Nysa, founded by Dionysos; they say, Dionysos founded it, when he subdued the Indians, whoever this Dionysos was, and whenever or wherefrom he marched against the Indians. For I cannot gather whether the Theban Dionysos started from Thebes, or from the Lydian Tmolos, and led an army against the Indians, fighting these war-like peoples unknown to the Greeks of that time, subduing, of all these peoples, only the Indians. But then one should not be too precise a judge of the exploits of the ancient gods of whom our myths speak.[23]

Nysa is where modern Jalalabad is located. Does this myth which Arrian (AD 96-180) recounts have anything to do with the so-called Arian migrations of the Indo-European peoples into India, the most decisive event of early Indian history, which neither the a-historic Indians nor the history-minded Europeans can adequately document? Most of the gods of the Greeks are deified historical heroes. If, according to the myth of Europe, Zeus, the god of the Greeks abducted the West Asian princess Europa, daughter of the Tyrian king, and if according to the myth of Dionysos, Zeus' son Dionysos led a campaign to India, these myths might have some historical basis in the pre-historic wanderings of the Central Asian peoples who migrated to Greece and from where hero-conquerors went back to Persia and India in search of booty and glory.

However we are on firmer ground when we come to the time of Zoroaster, Buddha, Jaina Mahavira, and Confucius—i.e., the sixth and fifth centuries BC. In north Indian history, this is the

[23]Arrian, *History of Alexander*, Book V:1-2, Loeb Classical Library, Cambridge, Mass., 1933; reprint 1966.

period of struggle between Magadha, where Bimbisara or Srenika (582-544), ruled with his capital at Rajagriha (Rajgir), and Kosala where Prasenajit ruled, but which again Bimbisara's son Ajatasatru captured and annexed. Brahmanism was not many centuries old at this time, in these parts at least. It had been brought by Indo-Aryan conquerors who came from Central Asia, and had not yet fully taken root. It was still very much a foreign religion, the religion of the invaders. The Aryans were a minority and brahmanism was a minority religion.

The community within which the Buddha (Sakyamuni) was born, the Sakyas, were centred about present-day Nepal, with its capital in Kapilavastu. These Scythian people were also 'foreigners' who had recently come from Central Asia. Buddhism too seems to have been a minority religion, in the beginning limited to the Mongoloid people, akin to present-day Nepalis, Tibetans, etc., totalling not more than a million.

Sind, which is most of what the Greeks knew as India, became a Persian *satrapy* under Darius I. The Iranian religion of Zoroaster had already made inroads, but did not take root in Sind.

Thus, the foundations of European (Greek) as well as Indian cultures, received liberally from 'foreigners'. Without that give and take, neither the European identity nor the Indian identity such as we know it today, could have taken shape. To deny these debts is no mark of nobility. To acknowledge these openly liberates us to give and to receive without guilt or self-recrimination.

Plutarch also tells us an incident from the fag end of Alexander's career in India when he had already started his retreat by river cruise. He was irritated by the stuborn unwillingness of his Macedonian troops to go any further with the conquest, and was in an altogether bad mood.

He took ten of the Indian philosophers prisoners who had been most active in persuading Sabbas to revolt, and had caused the Macedonians a great deal of trouble. These men, called Gymnosophists (i.e., naked philosophers), were reputed to be extremely ready and succinct in their answers, which he made trial of, by putting difficult questions to them.[24]

24Plutarch, op. cit., pp. 571ff.

This gesture of arresting philosophers rather than arguing with them was perhaps part of the adventure and expansion of the European spirit. The game that ensued was no philosophical dialogue, but a showing off of the captor's superiority over his prisoners.

Alexander put one question to each of the ten philosophers, with the pleasant warning that if the answer of any one of them was not pertinent, he would be put to death. The eldest among them was to be the final judge as to which ones were not pertinent. The game went as follows:

Alexander to Philosopher 1: Which is more numerous, the living or the dead?

Phil. 1: Certainly the living, since the dead do not exist.
To Phil. 2: Which produced the largest beasts, the earth or the sea?
Phil. 2: Certainly the earth since it contains the sea also.

To Phil. 3: Which is the most cunning animal?
Phil. 3: That animal which has not yet been discovered by man.

To Phil. 4: What argument did you use to persuade Sabbas to revolt?
Phil. 4: I said to the king: One should either live or die nobly.

To Phil. 5: Which is older, night or day?
Phil. 5: Day is older, by one day.
Alexander: That is not satisfactory.
Phil. 5: Strange questions get strange answers.

To Phil. 6: What should one do to be exceedingly beloved?
Phil. 6: One should be very powerful, without making oneself too much feared.

To Phil. 7: How can a man become a god?
Phil. 7: By doing that which is impossible for men to do.

To Phil. 8: Which is stronger, life or death?
Phil. 8: Life, because it supports so many miseries.

To Phil. 9: How long is it decent for a man to live?

Phil. 9: Till death appears more desirable than life.

To Phil. 10: *the eldest, the judge*: Now give your sentence.
Phil. 10: Everyone has answered worse than the other.
Alexander: Then you shall die first, for giving such a sentence.
Phil. 10: Not so, O King. You said the one who gives the worst
    answer should die first, and I am the judge, not you.

The story ends with Alexander giving gifts to all the ten and
dismissing them. This was no philosophical or religious dialogue,
but simply a game which Alexander obviously enjoyed. Alexan-
der then sent his philosopher, Onesicritus the Cynic to go and
interview the most reputed among the gymnosophs, the one called
Calanus or Kalamos and to bring him to Alexander. Onesicritus
went to see him and asked him to explain his philosophy and then
to come to Alexander. Calanus, whose real name according to
Plutarch was Sphines, asked Onesicritus to take off his clothes
and to sit naked if he wanted to learn. He also told him that it
did not matter whether he came from Alexander or from Jupiter
himself.

Thereupon Onesicritus went to another yogi called Dandamis,
who received him with much more civility. The Greek told the
Indian about Pythagoras, Socrates and Diogenes. According to
Plutarch, the Indian was very impressed, but told him that the
Greek savants and sages erred only in one thing, namely in hav-
ing too much respect for the laws and customs of their own small
country.

Finally the king of Takshasila himself persuaded Calanus to
appear before Alexander, not by threat but by fervent plea.
Calanus gave some advice to Alexander on how to govern his
empire, but there was very little philosophical discussion, it
appears. Much later Calanus gave Alexander an object lesson in
philosophy. According to Plutarch, whose source was probably
Alexander's admiral Nearches, himself an eye-witness, Calanus
came to his own funeral pyre on horseback, and quietly saying
his prayers, ascended the funeral pyre and went into meditation,
while his disciples set fire to the pyre. He covered his face,
but stirred not when the flames began devouring him. He thus
showed Alexander how to die at least, if not how to live. Plut-

arch adds that the same was done by another Indian who came with Julius Caesar to Athens, more than two centuries later.

Whoever Calanus and Dandamis were in terms of their real Indian names, the former at least seems to have been a Digambara Jain. The other philosophers may have been Buddhists, Jains or Hindus. It is quite possible that many yogis and monks had contacts with the Greek philosophers in Alexander's entourage, and learned something of Pythagoras and Socrates, Plato and Aristotle, Diogenes and others. It would appear that while some Indians listened to these with respect, they found them in no way superior to their own tradition. The influence of Greek philosophy on India was quite minimal, at least so far as Alexander's invasion was concerned. Indian thinkers may have become better acquainted with Greek philosophy in the second and first centuries BC, during the period of the Greek kingdoms of India ruled by Demetrius, Menander and their successors. It is indeed interesting to note that while during this period many Greeks, including king Menander, embraced the Indian religion of Buddhism, there seems to have been no interest on the part of the Indians to follow Greek philosophical schools. There is every reason to believe that the Indian rejection of Greek philosophy was based on some knowledge of it. Indians showed considerable respect for Greek philosophy but found no occasion to replace their own with it.

This sense of self-sufficiency and superiority seems to have stayed with the many Indians who travelled to the West in subsequent times, following the Buddhist missionary expansion during and after the Ashoka period. In the romance of *Apollonius of Tyana* (Apollonius was a historical figure who died around AD 97), written by Philostratus the Elder (died AD 225), we find the story of Apollonius, a Syrian Greek philosopher encountering some Indian sanyasins. The Greek asked the Indians whether they 'knew themselves', since according to the Greek there was nothing more important. The Indian reply was, as reported by the Greeks: 'If we know all things, then of course we must first know ourselves, but we could not have attained wisdom had we not ourselves been first known to ourselves'. Whether the words are accurately reported or not, the attitude seems to be authentically Indian.

In summary we can repeat that in so far as the religious-philo-sophical impact went the effect of the Indian tradition on the Europeans was infinitely greater than that of the latter on the former.

EUROPEAN ENLIGHTENMENT AND MEDIEVAL CHRISTENDOM

THE EUROPEAN ENLIGHTENMENT: BEGINNING AND END

Despite volumes of literature on the subject the concept of enlightenment is far from clear. We can, however, delineate certain elements, which need to be further clarified. The Enlightenment was certainly no mere intellectual achievement, devised and promoted by academic scholars. One should resist the temptation to analyse the European Enlightenment purely in terms of ideas. At the least the following will have to be taken into consideration; we cannot do justice to these in this book.

1. The propulsions of the inherited spirit of Europe as a cultural entity.

2. The socio-economic background and the conflict between the feudal aristocracy, the commerce and industry middle class, and the toiling masses, peasants and proletariat.

3. The religious and spiritual history of European Christendom.

4. The repudiation and overthrow of religious, specifically ecclesiastic authority, and along with that the authority of tradition and custom.

5. New ideas about man and nature, truth and authority, expressed in literature and the arts.

6. New forms of government, law, morality, order in the struggle between individual and society.

The attempt to fix dates to the beginning and end of the European Enlightenment has proved futile.[1] The process cannot

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[1]Some have sought to identify the year 1660 as the beginning of the European Enlightenment. There is a measure of truth in this since 1660-1789 was a great period of State-making in Europe, a fundamental reassessment of the basis of State power, centralised government and civil authority. But the republic of Florence had already developed the two big trading companies of Bardi and Peruzzi before 1338, and had developed economic

be limited to one geographical area like France, or one parti-
cular century like the eighteenth. While the Italians speak of
Illuminismo, the Germans about *Erklaerung*, the British about
Enlightenment, the Swedes of *Lärdom*, the Slavs about *Prosvesh-
chennii* and the Czechs about *Osvicenske*, the French alone
seldom use the word *Eclaircissement* for the total process. They
prefer to speak about the *siecle des lumières*, referring to the
eighteenth century as the 'century of lights'. In India, while we
can translate the European concept of renaissance as *navoddhana*,
we have no term for what the Europeans call enlightenment,
unless we coin a new one like *antardīpana, antarprakāśana* or
Bodhoddīpana. But these would not quite convey the meaning
the Europeans attach to their concept, which refers to a parti-
cular period (largely the eighteenth century), to a socio-cultural
process and to the rise of new ideas and new ways of looking at
reality. Our comparable Buddhist concept is *samyaksambodhi*
(the harmonious illumination of consciousness).

It would be a mistake, in any case, to regard the European
Enlightenment as having some kind of abrupt beginning, at a
particular point of time, or as having come to an end at another
point of time. It can be understood only as part of the continuum
that is Europe. Europe has been in the process of readjusting
itself to what was regarded as the Enlightenment. The search
for new light is still on. As we approach the end of the twentieth
century, the notion of enlightenment itself is very much disputed.

THE COLLAPSE OF SCIENTISM AND THE OLD AGE
OF THE ENLIGHTENMENT

The main questioning of the notion of enlightenment has come
from the Philosophy of Science. Modern science is indeed the
cherished and lauded product of the European Enlightenment.

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power that could hold kingdoms to ransom. The guilds of Florence had also
developed countervailing power by the 1330s. George Holmes, in *Europe:
Hierarchy and Revolt 1320-1450*, Fontana/Collins, 1975/1984, pp. 68ff., cit-
ing the Florentine chronicler Giovanni Villani (early fourteenth century),
tells us the 'Lana' or Wool Guild of Florence had at that time over 200
workshops which supported 30,000 people. The impact of this new commer-
cial-industrial bourgeoisie on the political economy of Europe long ante-
dates the West European revolutions of 1660 and after.

There was a time when people argued that modern science was potentially capable of knowing all that was knowable, and also that scientific knowledge is the only valid knowledge. These two arguments constituted what is pejoratively called scientism, especially by those who regarded art, literature, poetry and music, and (for some) religious insight, as valuable sources of knowledge. For many others, inter-personal knowledge, which does not fit into any of the above categories, was also valid; in practice, often more valid than scientific knowledge.

The English-speaking countries were more influenced by scientism than say the German-speaking nations. The Vienna Circle, the main source-spring of modern scientism, was located in a German-speaking country, but its pervasive influence began only when some of its members migrated to British and American universities and developed analytical philosophy. G.E. Moore and Bertrand Russell may have been moved more by Frege than by the Vienna Circle, but the Vienna Circle became an important influence on the latter. There is no need to elaborate on the contribution of Frege through symbolic or mathematical logic, the attempt to quantify knowledge itself and to give scientific certainty a secure foundation in logic, without the intervention of subjective elements. In a sense we can say that Frege's 1879 essay, *Begriffsschrift* (88 pages), was the high point of the Enlightenment. This calculus of propositions, which analyses propositions not in terms of subject and predicate, but in terms of function, argument and quantification through a symbolic mathematical language, had an enormous influence on scientism.

Scientism became so dogmatic that its own refutation from within, which came as early as 1930/31, got very little attention from scientists and philosophers of science till more recently. Kurt Goedel's first essay, 'Some Mathematical Results on Completeness and Consistency', was published on 17 November 1930. There he showed, in a one-page note, that any given system of knowledge S, based on logical arguments or based on the *Principia Mathematica* of Whitehead and Russell, cannot be complete (*entscheidungsdefinit*) in itself, for the modes of inference used are not formalised in the system itself.[2] He elaborated the

[2]See the English text of this note in Jean van Heijenoort (ed.), *Frege and*

argument, based on mathematical logic, in his second essay, 'On Formally Undecidable Propositions of *Principia Mathematica* and Related Systems I'.[3] Here he enunciated his basic theorem:

> Theorem IX. *Let* k *be any recursive consistent class of formulas then the* SENTENTIAL FORMULA *stating that* k *is not* k *PROVABLE*; in particular, the consistency of *P* is not provable in *P*, provided *P* is consistent (in the opposite case of course, every proposition is provable [in *P*]).

In the light of A.M. Turing's 1937 work, more precisely and more adequately defining the general notion of 'formal system'. Kurt Gödel added his Note of 28 August 1963, that a general version of this theorem can now be given, namely: it can be proved rigorously that in *every* consistent formal system (i.e., not only that of *Principia Mathematica*) that contains a certain amount of finitary number theory there exist undecidable arithmetic propositions and that, moreover, the consistency of any such system cannot be proved in the system.[4]

The final consequence, after Sir Karl Popper's heroic efforts to defend the 'objectivity' and 'verisimilitude' of scientific knowledge, came at the Cambridge seminar on the Philosophy of Science in 1965, where Popper, Kuhn and Feyerabend as well as others confronted each other and thrashed out the issues. Popper tried to hold on to the Tarskian (and classical Greek) conception of truth, as a correspondence, in a meta-mathematical language of logical relations, between statement and fact, both being denoted by mutually commensurable signs. Paul Feyerabend asserted his position that there is no such thing like a fixed scientific method, and that philosophers and scientists would be inhibiting science by imposing a method on it. All that can be attempted is a creative interaction between theory and practice, and there is no purely formal argument by which truth can be demonstrated. Claims to a special position of privilege made by Western science and rationalism are undemo-

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Hegel, Two Fundamental Texts in Mathematical Logic, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1970, pp. 86-87.

3Ibid., pp. 87-107.

4Ibid., p. 107.

cratic, Feyerabend argued.[5] In his later work Feyerabend raised two questions characteristic of the New Left intellectual:

> A. *What is science?* How does it proceed, what are its results, how do its standards, procedures, results differ from the standards, procedures, results of other fields?
> B. *What is so great about science?* What makes science preferable to other forms of existence, using different standards and getting different results as a consequence? What makes modern science preferable to the science of the Aristotelians or to the cosmology of the Hopi?[6]

While on question *A* a consensus answer has hardly begun to emerge, question *B* is seldom asked. The superiority of modern science is assumed, not argued for, says Feyerabend. He would argue that the scientific establishment is showing some of the same basic attitudes of the Roman Catholic Church's medieval scholasticism and dogmatism.

> The assumption of the inherent superiority of science has moved beyond science and has become an article of faith for almost everyone.... The power of the medical profession over every stage of our lives already exceeds the power once wielded by the Church. Almost all scientific subjects are compulsory subjects in our schools.... Modern society is 'Copernican' not because Copernicus was put up for a vote, discussed in a democratic way, and voted in with a simple majority; it is 'Copernican' because the *scientists* are Copernicans and because one accepts their cosmology as uncritically as one once accepted the cosmology of bishops and cardinals.[7]

Feyerabend's argument is that science, which helped liberate humanity from the tyranny of religion, has itself now become a tyrant and oppressor. 'The very same enterprise that once gave man the ideas and the strength to free himself from the fears and

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[5]This point of view has later been further elaborated by him in Paul Feyerabend, *Science in a Free Society*, Verso, London, 1978.

[6]Ibid., p. 73.

[7]Paul Feyerabend, op. cit., p. 74.

the prejudices of a tyrannical religion now turns him into a slave of its interests'.[8]

Feyerabend's position is of immediate interest to India's quest for a secular identity. He says:

A rational-liberal (-Marxist) society cannot contain Black culture in the full sense of the word. It cannot contain a Jewish culture in the full sense of the word.... It can contain these cultures only as secondary grafts on a basic structure that is an unholy alliance of science, rationalism (and capitalism).[9]

If this is even partly true, can a Hindu, Buddhist or Jain culture live, except as secondary grafts, in a secular Indian society? Those who would respond by saying that there is a great gulf between the scientific-rational and the magical-mythical, and that we have to make a conscious break with the latter, and enthusiastically adopt the former, as Nehru wanted us to, are making some assumptions totally contradictory to the other principle which governs our projected national identity—namely the democratic priciple.

It must be difficult for the Indian children of the European Enlightenment—both Marxist and liberal—to see the assumptions behind their position, namely:

(i) that scientific rationalism is so demonstrably true that other approaches have no legal right to existence, since they would be false;

(ii) that scientific rationalism has nothing to learn from other alternative traditions; and

(iii) that scientific rationalism must be the basis of society and the basis for education, the polity and State activity, and therefore be imposed by law (compulsory education) on the people.

Feyerabend may be extreme in his questioning of the dogmatic and domineering nature of science, and I have the feeling that a great humanitarian soul like Nehru would have been responsive to these arguments, had they been cogently presented to him.

In any case the Enlightenment has already entered its old age, which should normally mean a loss of physical vigour and an

[8]Ibid., p.75.
[9]Ibid., p. 78.

increase in wisdom. I think both are true of the Enlightenment since the seventies. There is on the one hand a sense of feebleness, an inability to assert itself, and an awareness of limitations. On the other hand the children of the Enlightenment are alive, and though not quite well, still capable of creativity. The three older children are modern science/technology, democratic institutions and critical rationality. We are not likely to see in the near future the last days of either science/technology, critical rationality, or democratic institutions of government and decision-making. These children will continue to grow, but they can no longer live on the basis of the dogmatisms of yesterday like:

(i) Science is the only way to knowledge and truth and all other knowledge is either false or nonsense.

(ii) Critical rationality of the individual is absolute, and is able to make sense of reality without reference to any tradition or external authority.

(iii) Present processes of democratic decision-making are the result of a social contract which no one can question.

With the reservations about these and other dogmatisms we need to cherish and foster the three children of the European Enlightenment. These now belong to humanity, and constitute no privileged preserve of Europe. But in each local cultural situation, these three children will wear particular garbs; they will also have to learn from other children of other cultures and of other collective experiences and traditions.

Overcoming the Enlightenment dogmatism today demands critical awareness of the three children, but also their adoption into our own psyche, consciousness and tradition. We cannot afford to be anarchistic and abandon these three—science/technology, democratic government and critical rationality. All three will have to be taught new languages and eating habits, provided with new suits of clothing, and generally acculturated within our own national heritage.

The Enlightenment, precisely at the time when Indians are beginning to come to terms with it, seems to go downhill in Europe. The more the pity then that we still cling to the values of an Enlightenment which the West is in the process of abandoning, in our attempt to forge an Indian national identity and in

seeking to overcome social evils like communalism and regionalism which tend to break up our national unity.

The European Enlightenment is culturally conditioned by geography and dated by the movement of history. In Europe the new tendency is to be critical. It is now widely recognised that Europe itself was not fully engulfed by the Enlightenment. Blake and Chateaubriand, De Maistre and the Roman Catholic Church, Burke and Fichte, and many other contemporaries reacted negatively to the Enlightenment, though each in his own individualistic fashion.

Today, with the rise of the New Hermeneutic with Hans-Georg Gadamer (*Truth and Method*), and the prolific writings of Juergen Habermas, we have come to recognise that the Enlightenment was based on unexamined prejudices—prejudices against tradition, authority, the subjective, and finally prejudice against prejudice itself. It is now seen clearly that there is no such thing as a non-subjectively objective knowledge; that scientific knowledge is only operationally successful knowledge, not proved knowledge; that all of us bring a great deal from our biology, culture, history and even geology to our perceptions (the *Wirkungsgeschichte* or effective history of the perceiver, which limits his *horizon*); that the validation criteria for the physical sciences, social sciences and critical sciences have to be different from each other; that science itself is a tradition, based on authority as well as experiment and reason; that modern science is only one way of getting at reality, and certainly not capable of seeing more than a part of that reality; that there is no foundation to the Enlightenment concept of religion as something beginning in primitive ignorance and fears of the natural elements; that the former claim of science to be the arbiter of all truth is something of which science ought to be as ashamed as the medieval Catholic Church.

Let us, however, also take a look at the positive achievements of the European Enlightenment. There is no need, after all, to throw out the baby with the bath water.

THE EUROPEAN ENLIGHTENMENT: A POSITIVE ASSESSMENT

One positive gain of the European Enlightenment is still valid today—its affirmation of human autonomy and responsibility.

There is no law, tradition or authority to which the human entity is to be subjugated, whether it be the authority and tradition of the Christian Church, or any other religious or secular body. This is not 'humanism' in the sense in which it is often used, and to which many of our de-religionised Indian elite subscribe without deep examination, a humanism which is itself largely a product of the European Enlightenment. As a system of thought or as a 'philosophy', it does not stand very well in comparison to critical rationality, which is the Enlightenment's privileged instrument. The Buddha was not a humanist, but he affirmed the human in his own way. What we have to take over from the European Enlightenment is not 'secular humanism', but the affirmation of the human.

The difficulty begins when we seek to ground this affirmation of the human on some coherent philosophic principle. Why is the human important? Religions like Christianity and Judaism would answer, 'Because humanity is created in the image of God' The Vedic-Vedantic tradition would also view the significance of the human in terms of its God-given role, or, as in extreme Vedantism, in the total identity of the human with the divine.

In secular thought the centrality of the human can be affirmed only on two grounds: (i) the human being is the most highly evolved (in terms of complexity-differentiation and integration-self-direction) of all the organisms that we know of; and (ii) it is a matter for observation that the human being has now become a sort of captain of the ship of evolution, in so far as human beings have acquired this enormous capacity to destroy the whole of the evolutionary process or to guide it to some freely chosen fulfilment.

The eighteenth century European Enlightenment had no agreed basis for assessing the significance of the human. They were, however, unanimous, perhaps a bit over-zealous, in affirming the human over institutions. This was particularly evident in Germanic thought. English thought was often more circumspect in affirming the human, giving equal value to 'law and order'. As Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), a dignified and reflective German participant in the eighteenth century upheaval, put it in his brief but seminal work, *Answer to the Question: What is the Enlightenment?*:

Enlightenment is the coming out of Man from his self-imposed immaturity. Immaturity is the unwillingness (*unvermögen*) to serve one's own understanding without direction from another. This immaturity is self-imposed, because Reason itself languishes, not in lack of understanding, but only of resolve and courage to serve oneself without direction from another. *Sapere aude*! Think boldly, take courage, your *own* Understanding to serve: This is therefore the motto of the Enlightenment.[10]

In other words, the Enlightenment did not discover reason. It only exhorted reason to grow up and get away from the tutelage of authority and tradition.

The conflict between reason and authority is at least as old as the classical Greek philosophers and the Jain and Buddhist traditions in India, which started out by repudiating the authority of the Vedas. In the pagan Roman Empire reason was kept under control by the laws and by the gods. Jesus himself was accused of flouting the authority of the law of Moses; centuries before that Socrates had been killed for flouting the laws of the ancients and for denying God. Once you revolt against religious authority there is little else than human reason on which you build your case to justify the revolt, though you may quote authorities other than what the authorities are quoting.

If we are to grasp the meaning of the European Enlightenment as revolt against authority, we must have some idea of what is meant by authority, and the way it functions in life. The English word authority comes from the Latin *auctoritas*, which can mean also 'author-ships'. We have no equivalent to this in Indian languages and concept structures. In the Western context it has a specific origin in medieval Christendom. *Auctoritas* comes from *auctores*, which means authors. In the medieval Catholic Church, particularly in the Holy Roman Empire of Charlemagne, it was the duty of the clerics to give 'authoritative' delineations of what the will of God was on any particular issue on which the Church

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[10]Immanuel Kant, '*Aufklärung ist der Ausgang des Menschen aus seiner Selbst-verschuldeten Unmündigkeit*, in *Berlinischer Monatsschrift*, December 1783, p. 516; cited in Ehrhard Bahr (ed.), *Was ist Aufklärung: Thesen und Definitionen*, Reclam, Stuttgart, 1986, p. 9; English translation by Paul Gregorios.

or the State had to legislate. To this end, the Scriptures or the Bible were not adequate, because they did not say anything precise on many issues. In fact, on some issues one could produce mutually contradictory affirmations from the Bible.

It became necessary thus, to add to the authority of the Bible the pronouncements of certain select authors or Church Fathers. These were the *auctores*, whose 'authority' gave support to a particular theological argument in early medieval Christendom. As we shall see later, the clergy became the custodians of this 'authority'; they knew what authors said what. And if they could not find an author who said what they needed, they could co-opt an author as 'Father' (as Ephrem the Syrian of the fourth century was co-opted in the twentieth century to support the dogma of the Immaculate Conception). They could also invent an author out of thin air when absolutely necessary, (*'Pseudo-Isidorean Decretals'*, *'Donation of Constantine'*, etc.).

The Fathers of the Church, interpreted by the priests of the Church, then became the divine authority, to which the responsibility of human beings was merely to submit. It is against this authority of the clergy who acted in the name of God to oppress the people and to deceive them that the Enlightenment was a legitimate reaction. As we examine this medieval Christendom in some detail, it will be useful to keep in mind the Indian question. Did we in India develop similarly oppressive clerical institutions in the past? Was the sixth century BC revolt of Jainism and Buddhism a revolt against such clerical authority? Have we as a nation ever revolted against such authority since the sixth century BC? What is the nature of divine authority held by priests today—Christian, Muslim, Sikh, Hindu? What should be the form of a popular movement of repudiation of such authority and of reaffirmation of the human?

Keeping these questions in mind, let us look at the development of early medieval Christendom under Charlemagne, since the European Enlightenment and the secular movement were reactions against clerical authority in European Christendom.

MEDIEVAL CHRISTENDOM: THE ANTIPODE OF THE ENLIGHTENMENT

The foundations of medieval Christendom as a religious-cultural-political entity were laid by Charlemagne in the eighth century. There is no way to understand either secularism, or the European Enlightenment of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries which produced it, without coming to terms with its antipode—that outwardly monolithic structure which was European Christendom.

The background of medieval Christendom rests on a number of factors: first, Augustine's (AD 354-430) idea of the Kingdom of God or the City of Heaven (*Civitas Dei*) as opposed to the Earthly City (*civitas terrae*); second, Europe's lingering memory of and nostalgia for the glory of the ancient Roman Empire; and third, the rise of the Roman Catholic papacy as a spiritualised surrogate for the ancient Roman Empire in holding Europe together.

Some understanding of the Carolingian Renaissance is essential to the perception of the nature of both secularism and liberalism. Charlemagne's concept of a renewed Roman empire with a Christian king deriving his authority from God, is the clearest case we have of what is the opposite of secularism—a theocracy which was called *Christianitas* or Christendom. The notion of such a theocracy has its basic foundations in a misreading of the Christian concept of the Kingdom of God as interpreted by Augustine of Hippo (354-430)[1] and Pope Gregory I (Pope 590-604).

[1]Augustine was from Tagaste, now on the eastern border of Algeria, most likely the descendant of a Roman family settled in North Africa. Trained as a rhetorician, in law as well as letters, he became a master of Latin prose and a poet of some distinction. He was also a philosopher, who began with a study of Cicero's *Hortensius*, but took his philosophical foundations from neo-Platonism during his stay at Rome and Milan. He was baptised as a

Augustine's *City of God (De civitatis Dei)* was both a critique of the existing Roman Empire, which he regarded as the City of the Earth (*civitas terrae*), and an exhortation to the people to shift their loyalty from the earthly city of the Roman Empire to the heavenly city of the Kingdom of God. In the second part of the *City of God*, he made the great distinction between the world and God, which became a basic structure for European thought throughout the ages. 'That the world is, we see; that God is, we believe'.[2] This distinction between natural knowledge and revealed knowledge is the beginning of a great deviation in human thought, of which secularism is one of the consequences.

The *City of God* and the *City of the Earth* are two parallel developments in history, and both are dynamic as Augustine saw them. He divided the human race into two streams or parts:

This [human] race we have distributed into two parts, the one consisting of those who live according to man, the other of those who live according to God. And these we also mystically call the two cities, or the two communities of men, of which the one is predestined to reign eternally with God, and the other to suffer eternal punishment with the devil.[3]

It is this posing of the human and the divine as being diametrically opposed, and the consequent denigration of the human in order to exalt the divine, that led to the secular-liberal-humanistic revolt centuries later. The implication in Augustine's conceptual framework is that what is of human origin is by necessity evil, and what comes from God alone is good. And even when those who do not believe in God live a virtuous life, Augustine saw in that virtue only vice:

Christian in AD 386 and became bishop of Hippo in 395 or 396. The *City of God*, his politically most influential work was begun in 413 and appeared serially for some 13 years. Apart from his voluminous letters and sermons, he wrote 132 works, some of the errors in which he corrected or revised in his last work *Retractation*, around AD 426.

[2]Augustine, *City of God*, Book XI, Chapter 4; English translation by Marcus Dodds; Reprinted in *Great Books of the Western World*, 18, Encyclopaedia Britannica Inc., 1952.

[3]Book XV, Chapter 1, ibid., pp. 397-98.

It is for this reason that the virtues which it (the pagan soul) seems to possess, and by which it restrains the body and the vices, that it may obtain and keep what it desires, are rather vices than virtues so long as there is no reference to God in the matter.[4]

It is this way of thinking, rejected by his contemporary Christians, but incorporated into official Roman Catholic teaching by Pope Gregory I, which became the foundation of European civilisation. When Charlemagne made it the official doctrine of the Frankish State, the foundations for that concept of Christendom against which secularism-liberalism reacted were fully laid.

THE CAROLINGIAN RENAISSANCE: A BRIEF SKETCH

A study of the first major West European Renaissance and its principles and methods can be of great use to us in India, if we can observe both what was good in it and what was wrong. Here we shall look at it briefly as background to the development of the secularism-liberalism which we are now trying to adopt as the ideological core of our new Indian national identity.

Charles the Great (in Latin Charlemagne)[5] was the son of Pepin, who had declared himself 'King of the Franks' in 751, taking over power from the Merovingian dynasty in Western Europe by a *coup d'etat*. The son, Charles (768-814), transformed himself from 'King of the Franks' to 'Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire', a second Constantine, equal to the Byzantine emperor, and a sort of universal magistrate, promoting Christianity and thereby establishing the City of God (*Civitas Dei*) on earth. His 'empire' was confined to parts of Western Europe, excluding present Scandinavia, Britain, Spain, Portugal, Italy and Greece and parts of West Germany. Spain and Portugal were under the Muslim emirate of Cordova, while North Africa and West Asia were under the Muslim Abbasid caliphate. The Eastern

[4]Book XIX, Chapter 25, *Great Books of the Western World*, op. cit., p. 528b.

[5]On the Carolingian Renaissance the best and most perceptive treatment (except from the perspective of the plight of the poor) is still the Birckbeck Lectures (1868-69) by Prof. Walter Ullmann: *The Carolingian Renaissance and the Idea of Kingship*, Methuen, London, 1969. The present writer is very much indebted to this work.

or Byzantine Roman Empire ruled over Asia Minor and Greece, and also over south Italy, while north Italy was ruled by the Lombards, and Britain and Scandinavia by a large number of different kings. Charlemagne's 'empire' was thus not very large, comprising present-day France, Switzerland, Austria, West Germany, and parts of Czechoslovakia, Eastern Europe and the Low Countries. What mattered was not the size, but the creation of what later came to be called 'Christendom'—the Christian Empire, which sought to build the City of God in Europe and later to extend it to the rest of the world.

It was mostly a 'rural empire', the urban population being limited to one to two per cent. Its economy was far from prosperous. There was little trade with the outside.[6] The administration was tough: a large number of federal lords or *seniores*, puting the poor to work and making them produce for the lords' comfort, caring little for the toiling and indigent masses. What was of significance was the concept of the 'City of God' and the 'people of God'—the *Civitas Dei* and *populus Dei* of Augustine of Hippo, and the divine ruler anointed by Christ's vicar, the pope. Latin was the uniting language, and the infrastructure of the State was feebly feudal, compared to the powerful and influencial infrastructure of the Church. No emperor or lord could rule if the Church excommunicated him. It was the *renovatio Romani imperi*, a renewal or rebirth of the Roman Empire, but .the emperor, though claiming to be Christ's co-ruler, as Constantine did, was entirely at the mercy of the pope, the bishops and the clergy.

Technically the State supported religion (Latin Christianity), and the emperor was Tutor of the People (though by no means co-equal with them), but in fact power resided ultimately in the pope and the clergy. The Church was the custodian of truth, and determined what was the will of God. The emperor's job was merely to implement that will. If Charlemagne was Tutor of the People, Pope John VIII was Rector of Europe. The ruler was a minister of God, anointed by the pope and therefore deriving his authority through the latter. Laws could be enacted by the State,

[6]On this see Prof. F.L. Ganshoff, 'The Middle Ages' in Ernest Barker, George Clark and P. Vaucher (eds.), *The European Inheritance*, Vol. I, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1954/55, pp. 326ff.

but only in consonance with the canon law of the Church. The blood right (German *Geblütsrecht*) of kings gave way to divine right or right by divine unction. The *seniores* or manorial lords, endowed with large tracts of land by the State, were the civil rulers; but they were largely illiterate and interested only in luxurious living. Real power lay with the ecclesiastical elite, the cleric-scholars who used the parish and the pulpit as instruments of their power.

There was no separation of sacred and secular; neither of Church and State. The Carolingian State was identical with the Carolingian Church, with its Latin Christianity, fully furnished with precise dogma which provided the basis for political philosophy, detailed canon law (which was the basis for civil law) and a spirituality which regarded life in this world (including civil life) largely as preparation for the next world.

There was no parliament. Diets, parliaments and legislative councils were born from the matrix of the ecclesiastical councils— royally invoked assemblies where clerics and civil servants met together. The clergy were the experts, the *periti*, and their word was final when it came to interpreting the will of God for the empire. The emperor and the civil servants were there to implement that will. The concept of 'authority' becomes central; that is, the Church declared finally what the official 'authors' (*auctores*) (e.g., Tertullian, Cyprian, Jerome, Augustine, Boethius, Cassiodorus) of the ancient Latin Church taught. Charlemagne's law 184 (*capitulare* 184) cites what the divine authors teach as the highest authority: *divina auctoritas docet*. The ecclesiastical councils were royal instruments to settle disputes about the teaching of the ancient authors or authorities. From the first Council of Aachen in 816, for the next 100 years, there was a spate of such councils, many of which the Roman Church still regards as authoritative.

Charlemagne's son Louis I summoned four large councils in one year—at Mainz, Paris, Lyons and Toulouse, all in 829. In these councils the common people had no participation or representation. Two classes of people attended—the clergy and the laity. Laity here did not mean the common people theoretically exalted as *populus Dei* or people of God; in medieval Catholic terminology laity meant the corpus of manorial or feudal lords,

who were also civil officials. The clergy were the teachers—the *ecclesia docens*; the laity, even the nobility, were learners—the *ecclesia dicens*. The clergy always came up with a tailored theology fitting the need of the hour, doctoring up the doctors, and when proper authority for a particular decision seemed lacking, creating such authority so that the people need not be in doubt about the will of God. In practice this meant the creation of a large number of notorious forgeries—the *Pseudo-Isidorean decretals*, the *Donation of Constantine, Dialogues of Gregory the Great*, the *Benedictus Levita* and so on. These were necessary to eradicate customs and practices which had the authority of tradition, to undermine lay authority, to induce total obedience, and to perfect the domination of the Church as the final authority, including the right to excommunicate and depose kings, courts and civil officials. The throne and the altar formed a new and well-integrated symbiosis and even synthesis. But the altar managed to have always the upper hand. And the people were always at the bottom, their responsibility being simply to work, to pay and to obey.

It is in the slow reaction to this pattern that European secularism emerged and the Enlightenment blossomed forth.

THE PROTEST GROWS: RENAISSANCE AND REFORMATION

For reasons of space we have to be brief in outlining the revolt against European clericalism and tyranny, in which secularism-liberalism had its origins. The tyranny of the European Church was always a mixed bag. It produced the Inquisition and the Crusades; it massacred its poor;[1] but it produced a St. Francis of Assissi, a real friend of the poor and the most authentic preacher of Christian love that the European Church ever produced.

The Age of Faith was passing and the Age of Reason beginning—for the elite. The poor, on the other hand, resorted to apocalyptic and pentecostal outbursts, protesting against tyranny and injustice, but deeply religious almost to the point of fanaticism. Every single such movement was suppressed by massacre initiated by the Inquisition and implemented by the lords.[2]

The papacy itself was temporarily divided. In 1378 the 'Babylonian Captivity' of the Church began with the setting up of Clement VII in Avignon as rival to Urban VI in Rome, and each called on the European nations to obey him and not the other. They reviled each other, excommunicated each other and preached crusades against each other, leading to a diminishing of the prestige of the papacy.

The institution of Church councils of Charlemagne's time was revived and an attempt was made to subordinate the two popes to its authority. But the Council of Pisa in 1409 failed to subdue or replace or reconcile the popes. As the popes fought each other,

[1] The 'Poor Men of Lyons' was a sect that existed at the beginning of the thirteenth century in southern France, and began living according to the Bible which the Church had hidden from the people and which they had discovered. They were regarded as enemies of the Church and were massacred in part in 1209 by Simon de Montfort, Earl of Leicester, and later in the Crusades. D.H. Lawrence, *Movements in European History*, Oxford University Press, 1971, p. 170ff.

[2] Ibid., pp. 169ff.; especially the French Peasants' revolt in 1320.

the nobles joined them on either side and fought with real wea-
pons. The people suffered and revolted but their protest was al-
ways suppressed. The popes continued to make money by the sale
of indulgences, or certificates saying that sins were forgiven and
that therefore people could go to heaven. The Church became the
chief exploiter and tyrant.[3] As the quarrel between the popes
weakened the tyranny of the Church, the nobles and the clerical
princes of the Church tried to save the power of the Church
through the ecclesiastical councils.

By the beginning of the fifteenth century the Roman Church
had three popes—Gregory XII (1406-1409) was senior pope in
Rome, but was opposed by his cardinals. His rival Benedict XIII
ruled in Avignon. The Council of Pisa in 1409 excommunicated
both and elected a new pope, Alexander V, who reigned less
than a year before he died. Alexander was succeeded by John
XXIII, but the other two popes refused to accept their excom-
munication.

The councils represented an attempt on the part of the Euro-
pean nobility and clergy to control the papacy and to consolidate
their own power. The common people, or at least many among
them, hated both groups—the popes with their religious-political
power structure, and the nobles and higher clergy who concen-
trated in themselves the feudal power. The famines of 1315-17
had killed at least ten per cent of the people of Europe, who were
already living at the extreme margin of poverty. Further, the
Black Death killed a third of Europe's population. In some
areas (e.g., Ile-de-France) the population was halved between
1348 and 1444, in one century. Toulouse had 30,000 people in
1335; it was reduced to 8,000 by 1430. Villages were deserted—in
some parts of Germany 40 per cent of the medieval villages dis-
appeared in that century.[4]

Europe was in a depression. Agricultural labour was scarce and
production decreased alarmingly. Extreme shortage of supply of

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[3]The annual income of one of the popes—Gregory XI (1370-1378)—was
about 200,000 to 300,000 gold cameral florins annually; see George Holmes,
Europe: Hierarchy and Revolt, Fontana/Collins, 1975/1984, p. 89. About a
quarter of this came from the revenue of the papal states in Italy, and the
rest from leves and benefices charged to bishops and princes. Ultimately,
the money came from the toiling masses.

[4]George Holmes, *op. cit.,* pp. 108, 109.

labour did not always lead to an increase in wages, as the famous law of supply and demand requires. George Holms gives the following analysis of the rural population of Picardy in the late thirteenth century:

Very rich nobles and clerics	—	3 per cent
Large farmers with up to 7½ acres	—	16 per cent
Small plot peasants who could support themselves	—	36 per cent
Wage labourers	—	33 per cent
Beggars and occasional labourers	—	12 per cent

Landlords found it difficult to control their labour. Where wages went up agriculture became less profitable. The relations of production in a feudal system began going hay-wire, as trade, commerce, industry and the professional services developed. We have to omit here a fuller discussion of these economic changes which were fundamental to the other protests and disturbances.

There were three kinds of upheavals that paved the way for the rise of secularism-liberalism: (i) socio-economic revolts; (ii) new political ideas; (iii) upheavals in culture, ideas, the arts and religion.

(a) The Socio-Economic Revolts

The English Peasants' Revolt of 1381 was sparked off by new attempts to shift the tax burden from the rich to the poor, based on the assumption of the rich that the labour shortages and wage increase had disadvantaged them and benefitted the poor. The French peasants had revolted even earlier, in May-June 1358. However, their revolt was anarchic and violent, not as much backed by an awareness of basic human rights as the English revolt was. The Paris bourgeoisie, under Charles of Navarre, had suppressed the revolt and massacred the peasants.

The *ciompi*, or labourers, carding wool in Florence, revolted in 1378. The weavers of Bruges and Ghent (present Belgium) took part in a series of revolts in 1379-82. The *Maillotins* rose in revolt at Paris in 1382. All these were proletarian revolts by wage-earners and the *petit-bourgeoisie*, or artisans, tailors, dyers, weavers and other employees who did not belong to the major guilds—the *Popolo Minuto* (the Small People).

The peasant revolts (both French and English) were directed against the feudal aristocracy and the land-rich Church institutions. The second set of revolts, by wage-earners, were directed against the rising bourgeoisie, the members of the major guilds, as well as against factory-owning capitalists. These latter were also revolts against the tax-structures which sought to tax the poor more than the rich.

(b) New Political Ideas

Politics kept the people out. Political decisions were made by popes, cardinals, princes, nobles, and the clergy, with a few professionally trained lay lawyers participating. In Italy, Marsiglio of Padua (1275-1342), Dante Alighieri (died 1321) in Florence, Padua and Ravenna, Francesco Petrarca (1304-1374) and many others gave literary form to the discontent of the poor and the aspirations of the bourgeoisie. Dante's *Divine Comedy* was an apocalyptic vision of judgement and renewal; but his vision was global in scope and philosophical-symbolic in articulation, while dealing with very earthly and mundane realities. Though a friend of the lords, he was also a friend of the poor, and of all people with predicaments and problems.

Petrarch was more politically specific. His main line was to refute the accepted line, starting with that of Augustine himself, which held that paganism was all darkness and that Christianity alone brought light. Petrarch believed that ancient Rome stood for the highest of values. Without repudiating Christianity, he reintroduced the Roman civilisation as a new norm, saying that it was the fall of Rome that plunged the world into barbarism— a line later taken up by Nietzsche and Gibbon. Petrarch's *Secretum* was a manual of anti-Augustinianism and anti-clericalism, which inspires many to this day. It is a literary work, not a philosophical one—hence its greater popularity.[5] Petrarch's

[5]This is a point of great importance today. Ideas of great significance can best be disseminated not necessarily in works of philosophy or the social sciences, but of good literature, good art, good music, and so on. Humanism, even Nehruvian humanism is basically anti-philosophic, and prefers 'a practical idealism for social betterment' rather than a philosophically constructed political theory. Nehru was weak both in consistent philosophical theory, and in seeing literature and the arts as means of acculturation and idea dissemination. Probably we today need *both* theoretical investiga-

model was Cicero, not Aristotle. He saw no use for Greek language or Greek philosophy; Latin was good enough. Rome was the norm, not Greece—but the Rome of the Empire, not the Rome of the popes.

Marsiglio (Marsilus, Marcellus, Marcel), a university man, wrote his *Defensor Pacis* (*Defender of the Peace*) in 1324. He also, like Petrarch, saw the papacy as an enemy of humanity and peace; he denounced its claims to temporal power and its greed in no uncertain terms. His weightiest and most creatively positive idea was that of the sovereignty of the whole body of citizens in a city-State—what we may today call national sovereignty. In his scheme of things the papacy and the clergy were completely cut off from all temporal power. The Church or the hierarchy had absolutely no political power apart from the city-State.

One can say that the theoretical foundation for a secular State was laid by Marcellus of Padua in the fourteenth century. The theory was constructed on largely Aristotelian categories and arguments. But it shook up Italy as well as Europe, and the papacy felt threatened. Unlike Dante's world government which was monarchical-religious, Marcellus advanced a theory of several city-States, each sovereign and independent and free from religious or royal constraints.

Marcellus, a devout Christian, is also extremely significant for his two-pronged attack on kingship and on temporal power exercised by the clergy. Marcellus inaugurated the new republican non-monarchical system, with roots in classical Greek democracy. It was a system of power centred on the new bourgeoisie and the growing professionals, rather than on the feudal nobility or clerical hierarchy.

Florence, the home of all these innovators, as well as of others like Giotto the painter and Boccaccio (*Decameron*), poet and

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tions about political and economic norms *and* the promotion of art and culture to disseminate ideas. 'Seminars' on the 'secular' seldom get very far in either direction. Petrarch turned away from fundamental philosophy, away from logic, metaphysics and natural philosophy to practical politics and philosophically ungrounded ethics. Nehru was essentially Petrarchian in his tastes as well, though he may have never read Petrarch. In turning away from philosophy and religion Petrarch was able to appeal to the lay intelligentsia, the elite of the rising bourgeoisie.

classicist, soon became the embodiment of these new bourgeois values. The second European Renaissance had begun. It was in many ways a reaction against the first Carolingian Renaissance five centuries earlier.

The power of a renaissance is always pervasive, and not limited to ideas. Art, poetry, literature, sculpture, music, drama, language, philosophy—everything burgeons into fresh blossom, drawing new vitality from the same sap of the cultural tree. Dante the poet, the painters Giotto and Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519), the sculptor Donatello (1386-1466), the architect Brunelleschi (1377-1466)—all represent different facets of the *Resorgimento*, the new vitality.

The revival of the Greek language and literature as well as philosophy played a large role in preparing Europe for the Enlightenment. Plato came back, and along with that, not only neo-Platonism, but also Aristotle in the guise of neo-Platonism.

The rise of the university played a key role in the second European Renaissance of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Bologna and Padua in Italy were among the pioneers. Paris and Montpellier in France, Oxford and Cambridge in England, Prague (1347), Cracow (1364), Vienna (1365), and Heidelberg (1385), in central Europe, all began to flourish simultaneously with the Renaissance. The failure of the Indian university to be a genuine source of intellectual and cultural renewal can be identified as one of the main factors inhibiting the Indian identity from flowering and bearing fruit.

It is interesting to note that modern science not having come to birth, the main authorities in the fourteenth century universities were Aristotle and the Bible, or natural philosophy and revelation; in other words, knowledge and faith. The difficulties in reconciling the two gave great stimulation to thought. Courses in the faculties of the arts and theology often came into conflict with each other. The best reconcilers became famous: Albertus Magnus, Thomas Aquinas, Bellarmine. The British were always sceptical of such easy reconciliations, and began to question them with astute logic. William of Ockham (Occam), the Franciscan at Oxford, had to flee the university in 1324, when his relentless questioning became unbearable to the authorities.

Perhaps the most interesting English thinker, at least to me, is

John Wycliffe, also of Oxford. Not because he was a great Bible translator and a great logician. He had the courage and the temerity to say that if God had given any authority and power to anyone, it was neither to the king nor to the priest, but to the common people. Wycliffe was no Occamist. But he was an ardent advocate of the common man as endowed with power and grace from God.

The medieval (and perhaps perpetual) conflict was triangular—between king, priest and the people. The first two loudly, and with the help of theological and metaphysical arguments, laid claim to a divinely endowed authority. The people, on the other hand, had neither organised political power, nor sophisticated intellectual arguments to make their claim heard. Wycliffe provided them with the latter, but the political power of the Church condemned him and cast him out. The papal curia in 1377, on their return to Rome, took it as their first job to declare Wycliffe's views as heretical, since they contradicted the foundations of ecclesiastical and imperial authority. This condemnation served only to make Wycliffe's ideas better known, especially on the continent. At the Council of Constance (1415) these ideas were condemned once again, this time more vehemently.

The university world thus came to be divided among three groups—the Averroists or Aristotelians, the Occamists and the Wycliffites. The academic debate was a reflection of the triangular conflict in political-economic power. The Averroists, like Thomas Aquinas, defended the power of the Church. The Occamists, in a sense, represented the power of the rising bourgeoisie fighting clerical and feudal authority. The Wycliffites advocated the power of the powerless—i.e., the common people.

The question of the Indian university as an instrument of renaissance and reformation seems to me to be a crucial aspect of the search for an Indian identity. So long as higher education is regarded merely as an 'investment' in economic development, or as an agency to produce trained workers to run the system, our universities will not be able to play a creative role in the shaping of our national identity. The university must become a place where students, teachers and the public together seek to thrash out the main issues confronting our society. This seems a

necessary condition for the renewal of Indian life, which we all so ardently desire.

(c) *The Upheavals in Culture, Religion and Institutions*

It would indeed be platitude to say that without the Renaissance and the Reformation there is no European Enlightenment.

The Renaissance introduced a set of values and criteria that opposed and rivalled the inhuman and oppressive values of medieval Christendom. In art, literature and politics, giant strides were made, using re-interpreted Greek (and sometimes Latin) models, concepts and value systems. What is often forgotten, however, is that the Renaissance itself has its background in Europe's trade relations with the rest of the world, and the resulting enormous flow of wealth into the European states. Neither Venice nor Florence could have risen as they did in culture without the 'adventure and expansion' of European trade and commerce with the rest of the world.

The Reformation was an open revolt against medieval authority centred in the pope and the Roman Catholic magisterium. But it too was powered by the new wealth of the bourgeoisie, which in turn was powered by trade expeditions, the crusades and conquests. If Milan, Venice, Genoa and Florence, the four principal Italian states of the fifteenth century had not developed as huge commercial centres, bursting at the seams with the wealth of Asia and Africa, the Renaissance would hardly have taken place; and the Reformation followed the Renaissance. Florence, Padua, Venice and Rome developed a mercantile class, whose power was sometimes pitted against the Church, sometimes allied with it.

Humanism was patronised by the bourgeoisie and created by them. Cosimo de Medici was perhaps the richest man in Florence, its virtual ruler, but also the most informed non-professional with a great interest in classical literature and art. Cosimo supported the new thought and the new art expression with liberal magnanimity.

The bourgeoisie was also under compulsion to create a new political and social philosophy in order to assure its place in society, which previously acknowledged only the sovereignty of prince and priest, not of ordinary human beings. But 'the

ordinary human being' whose dignity and rights the social philosophy of the Renaissance affirmed was the 'ordinary man of property', i.e., the bourgeoisie. What is good for the propertied class should become the ruling value for all humanity. As far as the masses are concerned, 'law and order' is more important for them than liberty. The legislators, who are the free bourgeoisie, will lay down the pattern of that law and order. The people's responsibility is to be subject to the law-and-order State. Here the authority of the Church is subtly replaced by the authority of the 'free citizen' with his adjudicable 'human rights'. Never mind the fact that the masses are largely unable to have access to the decision-making bodies or to the courts that grant justice at great financial expense to the victim of injustice.

Parliamentary democracy became the institution through which decision-making power in the political economy shifted from the feudal lords and the ecclesiastical clergy to the new power-and-wealth centre, the bourgeoisie. The law is always just, and it is 'democratically' enacted by the 'citizen', the English equivalent for *bourgeois*. What is commanded by the State is just, good and right, as Thomas Hobbes was to teach. Behemoth is mass society, the powerful sea-monster of the Bible, difficult to control. But Leviathan is the State, to whom iron is straw and brass is but rotten wood. Leviathan is the State created by the bourgeoisie to control the Behemoth mass society, for the latter's own good ! Of course the masses have freely shosen to submit to the State. 'We make a commonwealth...by the act of our submission; and there can be no obligation on any man which ariseth not from some act of his own.'[6]

We in India have adopted the Western democratic State as our ideal and norm, without subjecting it to too much psycho-analysing. We accept John Locke's *An Essay Concerning the True Original Extent and End of Civil Government* as the common man's political bible—a bible which he seldom sees or reads, but whose ideas, adequately distorted, form the basis of his own perception of the State. We forget the context in which that bible was written—the context of a new rising power-group called the bourgeoisie or urban middle class, and their need to establish, justify and enforce their power. The principles are noble—

[6]Hobbes, *Leviathan*, p. 111.

Salus Populi Suprema lex, 'the healing (salvation, welfare) of the people is the supreme law', but that healing is done by a State which equates the interest of the people with that of the bourgeois system.

In fact, however, the State remains a great deceiver. It claims to be the high seat of power and authority, but power resides largely not in the people, but in the concealed hands of their oppressors. The modern State, which we have borrowed from the European Enlightenment, is a mask of the mighty. When people want justice, they take the State to be responsible for the prevailing injustice, and direct their blows against it. The real wielders of power go on making more money comfortably, and controlling the State to serve their interests to the maximum possible. The media continue to serve the same interest by making the State the focus of interest, thus managing to turn people's attention away from their real oppressors. This too we need to re-examine and find creative alternates, which the European Enlightenment has not so far provided.

The Protestant Reformation

There is no parallel to the European Protestant Reformation in the annals of Indian religious history after the sixth century BC. Buddhism and Jainism were in a sense reformations protesting against Hindu clericalism and ritualism. But since then we have had no massive purification movement within the Hindu culture. One reason may be that we in India never had the type of theocracy that Charlemagne's Christendom and later the Roman papacy developed.

The pressure for reform within the Roman Catholic Church is probably as old as Roman Catholicism itself. But the outburst of 1517 was specifically caused by the new alliance of the bourgeoisie and the papacy. Pope Leo X (1513-1521) was one of Lorenzo de Medici's sons, and his predecessor Julius II (1503-1513) was another iron-willed Machiavellian power-despot. Pope Julius led troops in person to fight for the papal states. He was also a patron of the arts and architecture. The Medici pope, Leo X, was also a patron of the Renaissance culture. He strengthened the University of Rome by appointing several professors of Greek and Hebrew, reorganised the rich Vatican library, and began building the Cathedral of St. Peter. The papacy was trying to take hold of the bourgeois Renaissance by the horns in order to

tame it and use it in the interests of papal power, which by now was the symbol of European 'adventure and expansion', untrammelled by too many moral or religious inhibitions—a bid for naked world power in the name of God.

Whatever real religion there was in Europe had to go underground, into the mystic movements or the more vital monastic communities. For many Europeans the Church (Roman Catholic) was anti-God, anti-Christ, anti-human—an instrument of the devil. Martin Luther was both monk and mystic, but above all a fighter against the devil. All he did was stick his 95 theses, an open challenge for debate on theological topics, to the castle church door at Wittenberg. The haystack immediately caught fire and medieval Christendom was aflame.

The North European bourgeoisie flung the gauntlet of defiance against the South European bourgeoisie's alliance with the papacy, which alliance was now exploiting the north. German wealth was being drained into the papal coffers. The German and French languages were being suppressed by the papal Latin. The northern bourgeoisie were no longer children. They had their own new wealth, acquired through trade and commerce. They had developed new political organisations of the middle class, like the knightly 'Society of St. George's Shield', though always with an emperor at the top. True, the Italians, Spaniards and Portuguese had discovered the world, plundered it and enriched themselves. But north-western Europe was not willing to be left behind. They had their own Ghent and Flanders, Bruges, Deventer and Utrecht, commercial centres brimming with the wealth of Asia and Africa.

In this conflict between north-western bourgeois Protestants and southern feudal-bourgeois Catholics, the casualties were the peasants, whom Luther regarded as vermin. The Protestant Reformation was primarily a bourgeois religious revolt. The peasants, even when they wanted to, were not permitted to join, and were therefore forced to develop other-worldly, apocalyptic views, later inherited by fundamentalists. Luther's appeal was to the 'Christian Nobility of the German Nation', and it was with the support of princes, nobles and the bourgeoisie that Protestantism established itself in Europe.

What was most significant was that authority was wrested

from the papacy and given to the princes and the bourgeoisie. Luther declared the religious equality of all Christians (this is heightened by bourgeois anti-clericalism), but failed to affirm the political, economic and juridical equality and freedom of all human beings. Luther enjoined unreserved obedience to the non-papal authority of the State and the local pastor who 'proclaimed' (*Verkundigung*) the word of God. When peasants began revolting, Luther issued the *Earnest Exhortation for All Christians, Warning Them against Insurrection and Rebellion* (1521). He thundered against the peasants who revolted again in Swabia and Franconia. He even had the temerity to say that emancipation from serfdom and slavery was not in accordance with the 'Gospel'. In his notorious *Against the Robbing and Murdering Hordes of Peasants*, he called upon princes and rulers and 'everyone who can, [to] smite, slay, stab, secretly or openly, remembering that nothing can be more poisonous, hurtful or devilish than a rebel'.[7]

The Protestant Reformation was an aborted protest. It broke the grip of papal tyranny and the despotism of the medieval European Church, but the emancipation of man had to come from patently non-religious sources.

[7]H.E. Jacobs (ed.), *Works of Martin Luther IV*, Philadelphia, 1915, p. 249.

EUROPE'S ADVENTURE AND EXPANSION: THE PORTUGUESE IN INDIA

Having seen and tasted the wealth and splendour of the Orient, Europe set forth again on another adventure of expansion, that of trade and commerce, with the Venetians leading the way, and the rest of western Europe following. Again the adventurers brought back much wealth, not only by trade and commerce, but also by plunder and piracy. In the course of this trade adventure, seeking less conflicting (with the Arabs) routes to the East Indies, Columbus came upon the next possibility of expansion—he 'discovered' the Americas. Even while the crusade adventure and the trade adventure were continuing to expand, the great adventure of colonial and missionary expansion began. The pace of adventure and expansion quickened; the ruthlessness of plunder and piracy became more intense.

The colonial expansion of Portugal and Spain was also a religious expansion. Every band of conquistadores contained a *missionarius*, a Roman Catholic priest, whose job it was to plant the cross (later statue) of Christ on the highest hill, thus annexing the whole region not only to the world that Europe was now creating, but also to the empire of the Roman Catholic Church, thus providing a salve of conscience to the predator's ravenous greed and bestiality. Even the Protestant Denis de Rougement tries to make out of Christopher Columbus' serendipitous discovery of America a European civilising adventure:

Everything about him seems to me to illustrate the basic traits of our Europe at once, legendary, historical, physical, pagan and Christian—the mythical man, the sailor, the treasure-hunter, the missionary and crusader. His very name was Colon (Colombo in Italian)—colonist—and his first name Christopher

(Cristoforo in Italian)—Christ-bearer—in truth a carrier of world's history![1]

The Portuguese once again exemplified the psyche of Europe as adventure and expansion. The first encounters between Vasco da Gama and the Zamorin of Calicut show us some humorous aspects of the European psyche at the end of the fifteenth century. The journal (from 8 July 1497 to 2 June 1498) kept by Alvaro Velho, a crew member on the *Sao Rafael* (one of the three Portuguese ships that came to the Malabar coast), was published by the Hakluyt Society in 1898. The common people of Calicut received the foreigners with friendliness and curiosity. As Vasco da Gama came ashore and set out to meet the Zamorin (*Samoothiri*) in a palanquin provided by the latter,

the road was crowded with a countless multitude anxious to see us. Even the women came out of their homes with children in their arms and followed us.

When we arrived they took us to a large church, and this is what we saw: The body of the church is as large as a monastery, all built of hewn stone and covered with tiles. At the main entrance rises a pillar of bronze as high as a mast, on the top of which was perched a bird, apparently a cock.... In the centre of the body of the church rose a chapel, all built of hewn stone, with a bronze door sufficiently wide for a man to pass, and stone steps leading up to it. Within this sanctuary stood a small image which they said represented Our Lady. Along the walls, by the main entrance, hung seven small bells. In this church the captain-major (i.e., Vasco da Gama) said his prayers, and we with him.

We did not go within the chapel, for it is the custom that only certain servants of the church, called *quafees*, should enter. These *quafees* wore some threads passing over the left shoulder and under the right arm, in the same manner as our deacons wear the stole. They threw holy water over us and gave us some white earth [obviously *vibhuti*] which the Christians of

[1]Denis de Rougemont *The Meaning of Europe*, Editions de la Baconnicre, Boudry, Switzerland, 1963; English translation by Alan Braley, Sidgwick and Jackson, London, 1965, pp. 21-22.

this country are in the habit of putting on their foreheads, breasts, around the neck, and on the forearms.... Many other saints were painted on the walls of the church, wearing crowns. They were painted variously, with teeth protruding an inch from the mouth, and four or five arms.

Obviously this was Europe's encounter with a Hindu temple, and the *quafees'* were Brahmin *poojaris* with their *upanayana* or sacred thread. But the Portuguese took it to be a Christian church, and the *vigraha* of Gauri or Kali or some other *devi* the foreigners took to be the statue of the Virgin Mary.

In the series of intrigues between the Portuguese, the Arab traders, the Zamorin of Calicut and the raja of Cochin, we see a picture totally different from the brazen invasions of Alexander eighteen centuries earlier. Here the main tools used by Europe to subdue the Indians was a combination of lying and intrigue, making the zamorin fight against the raja, using the raja of Cochin to fight the zamorin, and finally launching an all-out attack on the people, capturing all ships in sight, cutting off the hands and ears and noses of all the crew, tying their feet together, beating them on their mouths and knocking off their teeth, and thrusting the teeth down their throats with staves. 'They were then put on board (their ships from which all valuable cargo had been plundered), to the number of about 800, heaped one on top of the other, and covered with mats and dry leaves; the sails were then set for the shore and the vessel set on fire'.[2] Vasco da Gama, in the name of a superior civilisation, was seeking to strike terror into the hearts of the barbarians. He also sent the severed hands and ears and noses of the 800 in a special boat to the zamorin, with a letter asking him to make a curry of it and eat it.

Vasco da Gama returned to Lisbon with ten large ships laden with enormous wealth which had been captured from the barbarians of Malabar. The result was that King Dom Manuel of Portugal ordered another expedition to get more of that barbarian wealth. This second expedition came in 1503, and in another brutal assault, conquered many of the small princedoms on the

[2]F.C. Danvers, *The Portuguese in India*, Vol. I, 1894; reprinted by Frank Gass, London, 1966, p. 85. This is an eye-witness account by a Portuguese.

Malabar coast, killing princes and the people with indiscriminate cruelty. The lands were plundered, and the towns and villages burnt. Only the raja of Cochin remained an ally, and he gave the Portuguese permission to build a fort in Cochin. From this fort further expeditions were sent, to pillage and plunder. Affonso de Albuquerque joined the Portuguese forces as captain-general; he later became the viceroy of India. It was he who shifted the capital from Cochin to Goa.

The missionary priest of the conquistadores, Padre Rodrigo, located the local Eastern Orthodox Christians in Angamaly and Quilon, and the first thing he did was to take away one of the three crosses in their church as a souvenir to Portugal.

Vasco da Gama left Lisbon on his third major expedition on 22 April 1504, equipped with 13 of the largest ships ever made by Portugal. It went back to Lisbon in two years with the enormous wealth of Malabar in the form of spices, rubies, pearls and so on. Arab trade with India also received a major blow in its unequal counter with the superior war technology of the Portuguese.

It was the fourth expedition, led by Dom Francisco de Almeida, that succeeded in setting up Portuguese rule in India, with Cochin as the headquarters and Almeida as the first viceroy. The Portuguese 'discovered' Ceylon (Sri Lanka) by accident, entered into a treaty with the king of Sinhaladwipa, and planted a cross in Colombo.

Every year dozens of such expeditions arrived in India from Portugal, some of which took part in the continuing wars with Indian kings and in the plunder-raids into India. They went back with full cargoes of Indian wealth. Albuquerque also went on expeditions to other countries like Ceylon and the Malaccas. F.C. Danvers, whose work is based on Portuguese documents, tells us that Albuquerque wrote to his king, Dom Mannuel, about the capture of Malacca as the latest addition to the Portuguese dominions, and he in turn informed Pope Leo X. The pope presided over a public thanksgiving in Rome marked by pomp and splendour, and splendid processions to the churches of Santa Maria del Popolo and San Agostino; Christendom had triumphed over heathendom when Malacca was rescued from the hands of Saracens, Moors and assorted pagans for the greater glory of God! Soon after, Tristao da Cunha, who had participa-

ted in one of the expeditions to the East led a large Portuguese embassy to the pope, the Master of Christendom, to present to Christ's vicar some of the trophies of the Eastern conquest.

Among these were an elephant of extraordinary size, two leopards, a panther, and other uncommon animals. Several Persian horses, richly caparisoned, appeared also in their proper habits. To these was added a profusion of articles of inestimable value: pontifical vestments adorned with gold and jewels, vases and other implements for the celebration of sacred rites, and a covering for the altar of the most exquisite workmanship.[3]

Albuquerque carried gifts to Lisbon (though the ship was wrecked en route) of such opulence as Europe had never seen before.

...besides many women skilled in embroidery work, and several young girls and youths of noble family from all the countries... as a gift to Queen Donna Maria...castles of woodwork, orna- mented with brocades...very rich palanquins for his personal use, all plated with gold and large quantities of jewellery and precious stones...a table with its feet all overlaid with plates of gold...[4]

When we think of the European Enlightenment we have to think of more than the ideas or spiritual values which came from Asia to Europe. The motor of Europe as 'adventure and ex- pansion' was power, plunder and the pepper trade. In fact Europe cannot be fully understood except in terms of its trade relations with Asia and Africa. If Europe grew out of its arrogant and parochial, at times savage, barbarism, the trade routes made the greatest contribution to that growth.

These trade routes and trade existed even before Alexander, though at the dawn of history Indo-European trade was controlled by the Arabians and Phoenicians, the latter largely confined to the

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[3]F.C. Danvers, *op. cit.*, p. 236.
[4]F.C. Danvers, op. cit., p. 239.

Mediterranean. The Phoenicians used the Red Sea route but scantily, confining themselves to the Mediterranean coast of Europe and Africa, with Tyre and Sidon as their posts. The Arabs vied with the Assyrians, Greeks and Romans and new routes were opened both overland and, with the Portuguese, around the Cape of Good Hope in South Africa. The Jewish kingdoms of David and Solomon prospered because of trade with Asia and Africa. David conquered the harbours of Elath and Ezian-geber on the Red Sea. In alliance with Hiram king of Tyre, David developed the trade routes Tarshish and Ophir, despatched fleets piloted by Phoenicians, sailed to and got a share in the Arab trade with India and the east coast of Africa. That was part of the secret of the wealth of David and Solomon. The Eastern trade route was also the source of the European life-blood. Carthage and Byzantium were originally flourishing trade centres which pumped in the wealth of the East into Europe.

With Alexander, the Phoenicians become the main traders. the Greeks following the path of the Phoenicians and the Arabs. He established Alexandria in Egypt as a trading centre. His invasion of India, if it achieved nothing else, opened up trade routes to Persia, Babylon, India and Central Asia. From that time on, Europe's wealth and prosperity has depended to a large extent on Asian trade. The Renaissance, the Reformation and the eighteenth century Enlightenment, the three main processes which shaped modern Europe, owe more to this factor than is often recognised. Whether it is the rise of the Roman Empire or the flourishing of Venice and Florence, it cannot be understood apart from this flow of wealth from Eastern trade.

Europe's great hostility to the Muslim Arabs arises from the fact that the Islamic caliphates were able to obstruct this flow of wealth from Asia to Europe. The age of exploration and the discovery of the Americas, of Asia and of Africa by Europe was a consequence of this obstruction, for Europe was forced to seek alternate routes to Asian wealth, by sailing west, or by sailing around the Cape of Good Hope. Before the rise of Arab power, Hippalus, the commander of a Greek ship plying the trade route to India, had discovered the monsoons.

In India the main trading centres were on the west coast of south India, for spices like ginger, pepper and cinnamon;

precious stones were also available in this market. Mouziris (Kodungallur) in Kerala was the main port in ancient times. By the time the Portuguese came to India, the port at Mouziris was badly silted, and other seaports arose, mainly Cochin, Quilon, Calicut and Cannanore, with Goa to the north and Sri Lanka to the south.

In thinking of the Indian identity we do not normally take into account one particular aspect of that identity—namely that the north-west and the south-west of India have had centuries of interaction with the European, Arabian and Central Asian peoples. The mentalities of the people in these areas have therefore become different from those of the people of the Gangetic plain or central Deccan, who were comparatively isolated from these encounters. Part of the problems in Punjab and Kashmir has its roots here.

Europe's 'adventure and expansion' was thus not merely something inborn in the European psyche, but very much the consequence of economic habits and drives. India, however, in its trade relations with Europe, has always vacillated between two attitudes—one, of cosmopolitan openness and receptivity to all peoples and cultures, and two, the seemingly innate incapacity to be as ruthless and as skilful in war as the marauding traders and invaders. Even to this day the situation has not fundamentally changed. The world's largest markets are in Asia, for that is where the majority of the world's people live. Asia too needs trade with the West for its own growth and survival. But the terms of trade have always swung with the balance of power, which has most of the time tilted in favour of the West.

Today the interaction between India and the West is still at bottom a matter of trade relations and of the terms of trade. The imperial-colonial system, developed before and during the (eighteenth century) Enlightenment had as its main aim the control of trade and markets to ensure a flow of wealth from the colonies to the West. Since the middle of the twentieth century, with former colonies beginning to be politically independent, a new system of power has been set up by the West to ensure that the flow of wealth from the globe to its centre continues. This centre is now not just Western Europe, North America and Japan, but also a group of people in all nations and countries whose interests

are linked with the interests of the West. There is no way to establish an Indian identity, except in some measure of peaceful confrontation with those who hold the power and always manage to tilt the economic balance in their favour.

We cannot establish our identity except in relation to the West and to other nations. There is no way of isolating ourselves from the pervasive neo-colonialist system. Its tentacles are everywhere —in banking and finance, in information dissemination, in academia, in science and technology, in culture and ideology. The Indian identity should therefore emphasise not so much the secular, as the gaining of autonomy, freedom and justice in all relations—cultural, economic, social, political, ideological and intellectual.

We cannot also establish this identity of ours without taking into account the conflict between the three spiritualities—Buddhist-Hindu-Jain, West Asian-Muslim and Christian-secular-Western. We have a cherished myth that all religions have always lived together in harmony and concord in India. This is a convenient and useful myth, but like all myths, contains both a partial truth and the distortion of it.

RELIGIOUS ASPECTS OF THE WESTERN IMPACT

In our national memory the Portuguese invasion of India in the sixteenth century evokes but faint and vague images. It seems necessary, however, to take another look at this experience of ours, seeking to be fair and objective in assessing what actually happened.

The four main actors in the drama of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, mainly on the west coast of south India, were:

(i) the Hindu kings of the Malabar coast,
(ii) the Indian Muslim power, typified by Kunhali Marackar and Adil Khan connected with the Arab trade,
(iii) the Western Christian Portuguese invaders, and
(iv) the Indian Christian (Eastern) traders who handled most of the spice trade.

The Portuguese, in order to establish themselves in the spice trade, had first to break the near-monopoly of Muslim Arabs on that trade. As we have stated before, the Arab states had disrupted the trade between Europe and India, and the breaking of that civilisation's hold on India was a central purpose of the

Portuguese. The British, the Dutch and the French did not have to do it, for the Portuguese did it for them and the three others simply came into the inheritance.

Looking at Indian history from a purely northern perspective has caused us to obscure this decisive aspect of our history. Long before the Goris and the Ghaznis and the Mughals came to the north, Muslims had established themselves in India, mostly in the south, and especially on the west coast of south India. However, these Arabs came to India long before the rise of Islam. They established relations with the Indians, settled down, and intermarried. They were mostly Christians before they became Muslims, and lived as Christians in India before the second century. Jewish traders came to Kerala at the beginning of the Christian era or earlier. They were followed by groups of Christian settlers from West Asia. The immigration of a large colony of Christian Syro-Palestinians under Thomas of Cana in the fourth century is probably the best known instance of such settlement.

Christianity came to north-west and south-west India in the first century. The 'apocryphal' *Acts of St. Thomas*, which can be dated back to the second and third centuries, speaks of Gondophorus as the Indian king who welcomed St. Thomas, one of the apostles of Christ. Until the coins of Gondophorus came to light in our own century, we were inclined to take the *Acts of Thomas* as pious fiction. Gondophorus was a Parthian prince who ruled Gandhara and Takshasila in the first century, until he was deposed by the Kushan king, Vima Khadphises II (ruled AD 40-78).

There is now every reason to believe the substance of the *Acts of Thomas*: that King Gondophorus became a Christian and his nobles and people followed suit. Christianity in the first several centuries of our era was not a European religion. It had spread widely in the Roman Empire; it also had millions of adherents outside that empire in the first three or four centuries. Outside Europe, there were the churches of Nubia and Ethiopia, as well as of Egypt and North Africa. In Asia, Georgia and Armenia, Edessa and Syria, Arabia and Parthia, as well as India had very large Christian communities. The Indian church later established connections with the Persian church, which by the seventh and

eighth centuries had spread into Central Asia, China and India with hundreds of dioceses. At the time of the coming of the Portuguese the Indian church was mostly confined to the Malabar and Coromandel coasts and parts of the north-west coast. In the first, second and third centuries Christian communities must have flourished in Parthia and north-west India as well. Though total evidence now seems scant, there is need to investigate with less bias the evidence that exists, particularly in Persian and Arabic, about this once great Asian Christian church.

The Christians of Malabar had a very ambivalent attitude towards the Christians of Portugal and Spain whom they encountered in the sixteenth century. The Portuguese Christians were themselves divided into two schools, both arguing their case eloquently with King Dom Mannuel of Portugal. The first Portuguese viceroy in India, Dom Francisco de Almeida, was a man ahead of his times, and did not want the political colonisation of India. He preferred to keep free of the intrigues among the Hindu rajas and Muslim kings and pirates. Almeida was only interested in the establishment of trading centres, and in wresting Indian trade from the Arabs. In other words, he wanted to follow the Arab policy of maintaining Arab-controlled commercial centres in India, with the foreign support of the sultans of Egypt and Turkey. It is this policy that the West has had to adopt finally: no political colonisation, but keep a firm hold on trade relations, defending them with the military power of western Europe and America. Almeida argued for no Portuguese military presence on land, but to concentrate on naval power to protect Portugal's commercial interests. Today the West has naval power, air power, and nuclear power to protect its trade interests, but no territorial forces in most countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America. It was this neocolonial system which came into force after the former colonies became politically independent that Almeida wanted to establish, to protect and monopolise Indian trade.

Albuquerque, on the other hand, in a letter to King Dom Mannuel dated 1 April 1512, took the colonialist view:

If it be the wish of our Lord (i.e., the Christian God, PG) to

dispose the commerce of India in such a manner that the goods and wealth contained in her should be forwarded to you year by year in your squadrons, I do not believe that in all Christendom there will be so rich a King as your Highness, and therefore, do I urge you, Senhor, to strenuously support this affair of India with men and arms, and strengthen your hold in her, and securely establish your dealings and your factories; and that you wrest the wealth of India and business from the hands of the Moors, and this by good fortresses, gaining the principal places of business of the Moors, and withdrawing from great expenses, and you will secure your hold on India, and draw out all the benefit and wealth there is in her, and let this be done at once.[5]

Albuquerque modelled his ideas on his knowledge, limited as it was, of Alexander's conquest of India 18 centuries earlier. He wanted an Eastern empire for Portugal, for this nation of about a million people then; that empire would belong also to Europe and bring glory to her and to the pope and to Christendom. Portugal would thus maintain the glory and the power of Europe as adventure and expansion, as the privileged centre of the globe to which the wealth of the world has naturally to flow, through trade and plunder.

The Portuguese wavered for some time between the two options, colonialism and neo-colonialism. They finally disregarded the advice of Almeida (neo-colonialism) and accepted that of Albuquerque (direct colonialism). They held on to India for a while and managed to transfer a good deal of her wealth to papal Europe and to Portugal. Subsequently they lost out to the British. But where Portugal failed, Europe did not. Britain—more advanced in war technology and political diplomacy—came to her rescue—Europe continued to hold India for centuries and to suck her dry, through the British this time. The British were cleverer; they tried direct colonialism for a century and a half, and when they found it would not work much longer, they shifted to neo-colonialism, which meant co-opting other European and American partners into the sucking process. The

[5]Danvers, op. cit., Introduction, p. xxxii.

European bourgeois Enlightenment and scientific-technological revolution continued to be financed by India and other colonies even after they became politically independent. As far as Europe was concerned, political independence could be granted to the former colonies, so long as the trade routes remained open and the flow of wealth continued unchecked.

THE ENLIGHTENMENT SPREADS AND COMES TO INDIA

The eighteenth and nineteenth centuries—the age of the European Enlightenment—coincide with the climax of European culture and power. The individual names and their ideas which sparked off the Enlightenment are important. It is a long catalogue which cannot be fully listed or summarised. In the eighteenth century alone we have Locke and Leibniz, Newton and Pope, Vico and Montesquieu, Maupertuis and Voltaire, Linnaeus and Buffon, La Mettrie and Hume, Rousseau and Diderot, Helvetius and Condillac, d'Holbach and Adam Smith, Kant and Lessing, Burke and Condorcet, Herder and Goethe, Paine and Jefferson, Franklin and a dozen others, just writers and thinkers, not to mention artists, sculptors, litterateurs, poets, musicians, and so on.

We should not forget that this period coincides with the period of decline of Catholic Christian missionary activity and the rise of the Protestant missions. The Catholic missions encountered the great Asian-African cultures, which not only offered them stiff resistance, but in some respects also seemed to be superior to European civilisation. The programme of 'cultural accommodation' adopted by them on realising that the strategy of cultural aggression was failing, brought back to Europe an enormous amount of Asian wisdom. By 1775 Catholic missions were at a low ebb. So was the imperial political power of Spain and Portugal, which was gradually being taken over by Protestant powers like Holland and England as well as Germany.

Meanwhile the steam engine had begun to roll, and the Industrial Revolution was in full swing. Mercantilism was dying and Adam Smith's *Wealth of the Nations* was published in 1776. With the publication of Darwin's *Origin of the Species* a century later, the world became a market place, nature itself being open to a free-for-all, winners takers. Only the fit survived. But freedom was not for everybody. Till 1828 the British parliament was not

open to non-Anglican dissenters. Neither were the universities of Oxford and Cambridge till 1871. Till 1779 Roman Catholics were forbidden to worship in public in England. The Enlightenment and the freedom it brought was most invidiously distributed, even among Europeans.

It spread, however, Scotland, for example, spread its ideas through two channels—thinkers like Andrew Fletcher placed a high value not on freedom, but on independence, especially from England; meanwhile, ordinary educated people spread the ideas of the Enlightenment through coffee house conversations. The Indian elite could take a lesson here. Why do we have so few serious thinking groups among our intellectuals, who show off in public with a prepared speech, but are hardly forthcoming in small group discussions? Coffee house conversations were the matrix for many of the ideas of David Hume, for instance. For Hume the happy man is gregarious and responsive to the ideas of others, and was to be found in clubs like the Select Society and the Honourable Society, which debated the main issues of life both publicly and in personal conversation. Even parliaments had to take the views of these coffee houses seriously. They were the self-appointed watchdogs of the country's independence and the freedom of the people. Adam Smith and David Hume owed much to these small clubs.

In the Netherlands there were foreign thinkers like Pierre Bayle, Descartes, Locke, Shaftesbury, Collins, the Huguenots, Leclerc and Basnage, all of whom were refugees who settled in that country. No country benefited from fugitives like the Dutch did. Others like Voltaire, Diderot, and Montesquieu enjoyed their travels in this country called the *Provinces-Unies*, where you could say what you pleased and still keep your head.

In the Italian states Naples led the way, with the young priest Antonio Genovesi arguing for academic freedom and the unification of Italy for economic reasons. Gianbatista Vico's *Scienza Nuova* had been published as early as 1725, but escaped proper notice till much later. Filangieri's *La Scienza della Legislazione* (1780-85) made a great impact on the Italian *Illuminismo* and attracted the attention of Benjamin Franklin. The Italian *Illuminismo* deserves special attention on our part. This Enlightenment was both hard-nosed and mystical, rational but not anti-religious. Filan-

gieri opens his 1785 book with a paragraph that could not be more contemporary two hundred years later: 'What are the only aims of European governments nowadays? Armaments, artillery, well-trained troops. Every single discussion in the cabinets is directed to one problem alone: *What is the best means of killing most men in the shortest possible time*?'[1]

In Italy, as in Scotland, the *caffe* was the great vehicle of the Enlightenment. In Milan, then under Austrian rule, the Verri brothers started a journal called *I Caffe* (lasted only two years), which became the major vehicle of the ideas of the Enlightenment. Cesare Beccaria's *Dei Delitti e Delle Pena* (*Of Crime and Punishment*—did Dostoievsky get his clue from this title?) became a bestseller; it exposed the inhumanity of the penal system, the torture, the burning, the cruelty inflicted on the poor. In the Italian Enlightenment the element of compassion dominated over the element of reason. Voltaire and Jeremy Bentham took up Beccaria's work and popularised it all over Europe.[2]

The special character of the Italian *Illuminismo* was the large role played by clergymen and the ex-clergymen in promoting it, and its connection with Freemasonry and mysticism. It never broke officially with the Church and tried to remain as an internal reform movement within the Church, based on new knowledge and rational thinking. Ferdinando Galiani, one of the leading Illuminists, remained a pious Catholic priest to the end—a monsignor and a mitred abbot. Karl Marx studied his economic writings; in fact Marx paid attention to no other Italian writings.

In Germany the *Aufklaerung* was more tempestuous. The Germans openly used the word and discussed its meaning (see reference to Immanuel Kant and Moses Mendelssohn earlier). The *Berlinische Monatschrift* raised the question in 1783, *Was ist Aufklaerung*? (What is the Enlightenment?). From December 1783 on many replies appeared in the *Monatsschrift*, Immanuel Kant being among the first to respond. Kant put freedom (*Freiheit*) and maturity (*Muendigkeit*) at the centre. This was possible only

[1]Cited by Owen Chadwick in 'The Italian Enlightenment', in Roy Pastor and Mikulas Teich (eds.), *The Enlightenment in National Context*, Cambridge University Press, 1981, p. 95.

[2]It is interesting to note that the words 'Socialismo' and 'Socialist' were first used by the critics of Beccaria to indict his thought as anti-Christian.

by making reason the supreme element. Kant's prose is unchar-
acteristically impassioned: 'When the question is asked: do we
live in an enlightened epoch (*Aufgeklaerten Zeitalter*) then the
answer is: No, but rather in an epoch of Enlightenment (*Zeital-
ter der Aufklaerung*)'. For Kant, not to need a mentor or external
authority in thinking, in willing and in feeling is the key to the
Enlightenment. So long as religion depended upon scripture or
revelation, man was still immature. A 'religion within the limits of
reason' alone could make him free. And that would be the test of
human maturity. In art and science, Kant thought, we had already
become free and mature. Only in religion did this external depen-
dence remain.[3]

The Germans generally agree that the *Aufklaerung* is a daring
adventure of the mind, fearless of light and shunning only dark-
ness. Herder (1744-1803) put the emphasis on humanity: '*Men-
schheit, Menschlichkeit, menchenrecht, Menschenpflichten, Mensch-
enwuerde, Menschenliebe*' (humanness, humanity, human rights,
human obligation, human worth, love of humanity or human
love).[4]

For Moses Mendelssohn, the Jewish religious philosopher (1729-
1786), the Enlightenment meant the theoretical education of
human beings. He raised an interesting problem which should
get our attention in India today. If enlightenment is a form of
education, can it not be used to deceive the people? Can the State
decide how its citizens should think? Catholics and Protestants
were divided on this issue. The consequence was that in Germany
there were two Enlightenments, so to speak—a Catholic one and
a Protestant one.

Protestants were in general positive to the idea of rationality as
the way to truth, and lay intellectuals adopted the values of the
French Enlightenment as the basis for a new Protestant lay theo-
logy free from the trammels of dry dogmatic Lutheran orthodoxy
which had developed in the seventeenth century. It became a sort
of official theology of Protestant liberalism.

Emperor Frederick the Great of Prussia initiated the public
debate by instituting in the Berlin Academy a prize for the best
answer to the question: 'Is it useful to deceive the people?' (*Ist*

[3]Immanuel Kant, *Was Ist Aufklaerung?*, Reclam, 1986, pp. 9-17.
[4]Kant, op. cit., p. 37.

der Volksbetrug von Nutzen?).[5] It became central theme of German intellectual life for a decade. The end result was that the prize had to be divided between a negative answer to the question and a positive one. The issue has to be re-opened in India today, for it is most topical and difficult to resolve. How much information should the government give to the people, and how much should it hold back from them? Can the State make a decision on the basis of information to which the people are not privy, when that decision affects the people?

The negative view held that all information should be shared, because salvation of the people demands full information and clear rational thinking on their part. Mendelssohn's insight was that misuse of the Enlightenment could lead to stubborn passions, irreligion and anarchy (*Hartsinn, Egoismus, Irreligion and Anarchie*).[6] He formulated the famous German distinction between *Mensch* and *Buerger*, between the human being as human person, and the human being as citizen. The rights and obligations of a human being and those of a citizen are not co-terminous, though they do often overlap. Enlightenment is for the human being, not just for the citizen.

The debate in Germany spread from the scholarly journals to the newspapers. If in Italy and Scotland the coffee house and the small club were the media for dissemination of the Enlightenment mode of thought, in Germany it was the newspaper that did it. Scores of new newspapers began in eighteenth century Germany, and their main purpose was more to bring the debate on the Enlightenment to the people, than to give them news. The publishing trade made capital out of the debate.

The Protestant theologian Andeas Riem published his protest anonymously: *Ueber Aufklaerung, ob sie dem Staate—der Religion—oder uberhaupt gefaehrlich sey und seyn koenne* (*About Enlightenment—Is it, or can it be, dangerous to the State—to Religion, or in general?*[7]) Defining the Enlightenment as a daring adventure of human understanding (*ein Beduerfnis des menschlichen Verstandes*), he raised such questions as: Does the Enlightenment

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[5]See on this debate, W. Krauss (ed.), *Est'il utile de tromper le peuple?*, Berlin, 1966.

[6]Reclam, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

[7]Ibid., pp. 29-36.

have any limits or none? Does it help or hinder the State? The answer given was again a compromise that excluded the masses. True (*Wahre*) Enlightenment and Relative Enlightenment became the key terms, so that only the burgers who ran society need to be truly enlightened.

The middle class character of the German Enlightenment was the matrix of Western liberalism. It was to be limited to 'rulers, nobles, diplomats, officers, scholars, clergymen and artists—in other words primarily the functionaries of the State and their masters'. The journals and newspapers that spread the Enlightenment in Germany affected mainly the *gebildete Staende*, the educated class. Education, or *Bildung* became the key. '*Bildung macht frei*' (education makes free), said Johann Heinrich Mayer. The educated classes often understood this to mean that education was the ladder for social climbing into the privileged class of the 'free'. The 'League of the Enlightened' was to be the ruling class. Very few of these 'enlightened' ones rejected religion outright. It was good for the masses to keep them under subjection, and so ought to be respected, though for one's own personal consumption, one might create an *ersatz* religion that gives you personal satisfaction, mostly an 'inner', 'spiritual', pietistic one. Piety was welcomed as a support to domination by the Enlightened elite. And no State could exist without a ruler, a chief, a helmsman, a captain. The people in the ship of the State had to obey the captain, but not revolt against him. If anyone did not like the ship, he could emigrate, not rock the boat. 'Revolution' was the danger that the Enlightenment was to be most worried about. That then was also the limit to the Enlightenment. If the ordinary masses were enlightened, the State would face the danger of revolution, which was to be avoided at all costs.

So in the university, which of course was the inner sanctum of the 'educated class', the *gebildete Staende*, the main concern was about the scientific development of a political order which would prevent revolution and maintain law and order. Herder said Germany was the *terra obedientiae*, the land of obedience. The French were anarchistically inclined; the Germans had therefore to tame the French Enlightenment, and keep it within limits.

Among the enlightened in Germany, Protestants dominated. Catholics remained by and large hostile to the new *Bildung*

(education) of the *Aufklaerung*. But a minority within Roman Catholic Germany used a moderate *Aufklaerung* to challenge the dominance of scholasticism, dogmatism, counter-reformation and Jesuitry in the Catholic Church. It first expressed itself in the architecture of the churches, shifting from the gothic to the baroque, and then reacting against the extravagance of the latter. Catholic Germany took its cue for the Enlightenment, not from Catholic France, but from Protestant Germany, particularly from its universities—Leipzig, Jena, Halle, Goettingen and so on. If German Catholics looked outside Germany, it was to Italy, where the *Illuminismo* was not anti-religious. Catholic Germany took in the Enlightenment from elsewhere, suitably altered it through its universities to suit the interests of the prince-bishops and the ruling elite, including the Benedictine and Dominican monasteries and the secular clergy. When the Catholic city-states of Mainz, Trier, Cologne and Wuerzburg wanted to have a restrained movement of the enlightened they chose the Italian name *Illuminati*. This band of the Catholic enlightened comprised, at the end of the eighteenth century, 17 per cent clergy, 42 per cent officials and state employees, 8 per cent merchants and tradesmen, 10 per cent soldiers, 6 per cent lawyers, $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent doctors, the rest being professionals, artists, writers and journalists. It was again confined to the *gebildete Staende*, the educated class.

The Enlightenment in Europe was thus far from universal or uniform. Among the French the flavour was anarchical, satirical, playful, pleasure-seeking and sometimes downright cruel. Erudite but not academic, practical but not pragmatic, it had two aspects—the *esprit philosophique* and the *esprit revolutionnaire*. The first restructured in thought the categories of human life and existence, i.e., religion, ethics, aesthetics, politics, economics, mores, laws and approaches to the self. The second paid attention to restructuring outer reality, to build a society of organic unity, to establish the forms of democracy, to pave the way for scientific and social progress, to regulate the behaviour of humans in a spirit of freedom and tolerance, to help people overcome darkness and find happiness. The French Enlightenment was a scheme for a total break with the past, such as Nehru envisaged later, and a daring adventure to forge a future made to order by enlightened philosophers, free from tyranny and fanaticism.

Their war-cry was 'Reason, Tolerance, Humanity' rather than 'Liberté, Egalité, Fraternite'. As Condorcet put it, the French Enlightenment was an 'attack on the total economy of society, to change all social relations, and to penetrate down to the very last links of the political chain' (*l 'economie toute entière de la société, changer toutes les relations sociales, en pénétrer jusqu'aux derniers anneaux de la chaine politique*'.[8]

It had a logical clarity that is amazing in its lucidity. It starts from the simple and obviously self-evident principle, 'Man is a sensible creature, capable of forming rational thoughts and acquiring moral ideas'. This is Leibniz and Descartes, made intelligible to the ordinary people by Bayle, Fontenelle, Voltaire and Montesquieu. Add the doctine of progress (Condorcet), and the concept of organic unity (Voltaire, Diderot, Rousseau, the Encyclopaedists), and you have the making of the French Enlightenment ideology.

It was this French ideology, which owes much to English thought and practice, which spread throughout Europe, taking different shapes and forms. It spread alike to Prussia and Russia. Europe was becoming *l'Europe française*, a French Europe with French culture unifying it on the basis of the values of the Enlightenment ideology, and getting it ready for its last great adventure and expansion—the colonialist movement of France, Britain, the Netherlands, and to certain extent the Germans, Italians and Slavs out into the world. In that imperialist-colonialist adventure of expansion, Europe used the Enlightenment ideology, along with its supposed children, science/technology and the liberal ideology, to impress the world with its cultural superiority, to castrate other cultures and civilisations, to conquer and dominate the world, and in that process, almost unwillingly, to unite the world.

LIBERALISM: THE CHILD AND INHERITOR OF THE ENLIGHTENMENT

The origins of liberalism seem more difficult to trace than those of the Enlightenment. The word comes from 'liberty'—*libertas* in Latin, *eleutheria* in Greek. Liberty in Graeco-Latin culture is

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[8]Cited by Ira O. Wade, *The Structure and Form of the French Enlightenment*, Vol. II, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1977, p. 383.

that which distinguishes the free citizen of Athens or Rome from a slave. Sophocles in his *Antigone*[9] had sung praises of liberty. Augustine's concept of *libertas* was not so lofty: while he repudiated slavery as contrary to nature, he preferred a peaceful order (law-and-order) to individual self-affirmation. 'When men are subjected to one another in peaceful order, the lowly position does as much good to the servant as the proud position does harm to the master'.[10]

We would do well to start our brief discussion of liberalism with John Stuart Mill's (1806-1873) *On Liberty*, leaving aside Kant and Hegel, Montesquieu and Hobbes, Milton and Dante, and many others. Mill was an employee of the East India Company, as was his father, the historian of India, James Mill. J.S. Mill was also an economist and a political activist (one of the founders of the Women's Suffrage Society of the 1860's).

Mill took the discussion of liberty out of the abstract, metaphysical freedom-necessity debate and put it in the context of political economy. He spoke, not about freedom of the will, but about civil or social liberty. This was a most important development in Western thought. The struggle is no longer between freedom and necessity, but between liberty and authority. Liberty in classical Greek dramatists and philosophers meant freedom of the free citizen from tyranny through limits imposed on the tyrant (e.g., Alexander, Caesar, etc.) (i) by a code of ethics for the ruler, and (ii) by the constitutional requirement to consult the body politic before taking certain important decisions. Tyrants often disregarded (ii), and the story of Western political liberalism is the history of the effort to get (ii) implemented.

According to Mill, the struggle of the people succeeded only when the following democratic principle was established—that rulers were to be elected by the people and removed by them at their pleasure; the principle of elective, responsible, temporary, multiple rulership. This democratic principle is now part of our Constitution. It was Mill again who clearly stated the principle of safeguards for the minorities against the 'tyranny of the majo-

[9]131a-142d.

[10]Augustine, *City of God*, xix:15; reprinted in *Great Books of the Western World*, 18, Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1952.

[11]John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty*, ch. I, *Great Books*, Vol. 43, *op. cit.*, p. 269.

rity'[11] and protection for the individual citizen 'against the tyranny of the prevailing opinion and feeling; against the tendency of society to impose, by other means than civil penalties, its own ideas and practices as rules of conduct on those who dissent from them; to foster the development, and if possible, prevent the formation, of any individuality not in harmony with its ways, and compels all characters to fashion themselves upon the model of its own. There is a limit to the legitimate interference of collective opinion with individual independence; and to find that limit, and maintain it against encroachment, is as indispensable to a good condition of human affairs as protection against political despotism'.[12]

The snag of course was in deciding where that 'limit to legitimate interference of collective opinion with individual independence' can be marked off. Mill's essay, *On Liberty*, tries to state that limiting principle clearly:

> The object of this essay is to assert one very simple principle, as entitled to govern absolutely the dealings of society with the individual in the way of compulsion and control, whether the means used be physical force in the form of legal penalties, or the moral coercion of public opinion. That principle is, that the sole end for which mankind are warranted, individually or collectively, in interfering with the *liberty of action of any of their number*, is self-protection. That the only purpose for which power can be rightfully exercised over any member of a civilised community, against his will, is to prevent harm to others. His own good, either physical or moral, is not a sufficient warrant. He cannot rightfully be compelled to do or forbear because it will be better for him to do so, because, in the opinions of others, to do so would be wise, or even right.[13]

That is the Charter of Individual Liberty, the cornerstone of liberalism. Clearly it is a product of the breakdown of feudalism and the rise of the bourgeoisie, for in a manorial system the principle would not work. In the feudal system loyalty and obedience are the prevailing values, whereas here it is individual liberty—

[12]Ibid., pp. 269 a-b.
[13]Mill, op. cit., p. 271b.

laissez faire (leave him alone, let him do what he likes), free enterprise. As Mill put it: 'Over himself, over his own body and mind, the individual is sovereign.'[14]

Mill would also admit that this does not work for children— children in age, or children in civilisational development.

> For the same reason, we may leave out of consideration those backward states of society in which the race itself may be considered as in its non-age.... Despotism is a legitimate mode of government in dealing with barbarians, provided the end is their improvement, and the means justified by actually effecting that end. Liberty, as a principle, has no application to any state of things anterior to the time when mankind have become capable of being improved by free and equal discussion.[15]

Mill laid down the foundation for the liberal concept of individual human rights:

> This, then, is the appropriate region of human liberty. It comprises, first, the inward domain of consciousness; demanding liberty of conscience in the most comprehensive sense; liberty of thought and feeling; absolute freedom of opinion and sentiment on all subjects, practical or speculative, scientific, moral or theological.[16]

I do not know how much Nehru read of John Stuart Mill. Mill's was a conscious reaction against Catholic and Protestant views about human liberty, both of which had their origin in Augustine, and had been differently interpreted. Mill singled out the Calvinistic view for attack. He caricatured Calvin as saying that the only faculty a human being needed was the power to surrender oneself to the sovereignty of God,[17] and that human use of any other faculty could only lead to sin.

The assertion of individual liberty in Western liberalism has two facets: one directed against the conformist or totalitarian force of society and tradition, the other against an assumed will

14Ibid.
15Ibid., p. 272a.
16Ibid., p. 272b.
17Mill, op. cit., Ch. 3, p. 296ff.

of God to which the human will, being sinful, was inevitably always opposed. Mill offered, as an alternative to the supposed Christian ideal of 'self-denial', the Greek ideal of self-development, or as he called it, citing Sterling, 'pagan self-assertion'. The liberal affirmation of individual liberty thus has an anti-Christian or at least anti-Augustinian ring to it, which brings liberalism close to secularism. Mill associated creativity and originality with individuality and non-conformity.

> Genius can breathe freely in an atmosphere of freedom. Persons of genius are *ex vi termini* more individual than any other people.... The initiation of all wise or noble things comes and must come from individuals; generally at first from one individual.[18]

Mill cited China as an example of a stagnant society because it tries to make all people alike. Europe is progressive, because Europe allows individual freedom to flourish.

Liberalism is an ideology which does not define its premises. Its primary import is negative—to deny external control by political tyranny or dogmatic domination—hardly a sufficient basis for directing life or choosing national goals.

ENLIGHTENMENT: LIBERALISM COMES TO INDIA

Among the institutions (and through them the values and thought-patterns of the West) that Britain imported into India, the most potent one was its educational system. When this system of Western education was introduced there were two conflicting points of view. One was the Indological or Orientalist orientation prescribed by the eminent Sir William Jones and his school. The other (the one that came to be adopted) was Lord Macaulay's view that what India needed was English education.

The emphasis in the first view was on what was regarded as 'classical' education, i.e., the study of Persian, Arabic and Sanskrit. These were considered 'noble' languages. Sir William Jones (1746-1794) had obviously not been brainwashed by the values of the European Enlightenment and liberalism. He recommended that ruling class Englishmen study these languages—Persian, a langu-

18Ibid., p. 298.

age 'rich, melodious and elegant. . . . spoken for many ages by the greatest princes in the politest courts of Asia', Sanskrit, with its 'wonderful structure; more perfect than Greek, more copious than Latin, and more exquisitely refined than either', Arabic, 'without which their [Englishmen's] knowledge must be very circumscribed and imperfect'.[19]

Upper class Indians, with Raja Rammohun Roy as their chief spokesman, preferred English education. Roy wanted the British to employ 'European gentlemen of talent and education to instruct the natives of India in mathematics, natural philosophy, chemistry, anatomy and other useful sciences, which the natives of Europe have carried to a degree of perfection that has raised them above the inhabitants of other parts of the world'. The study of Sanskrit, according to Rammohun Roy, 'can only be expected to load the minds of youth with grammatical niceties and metaphysical distinctions of little or no practical use to the possessors or to society. The pupils will there [in the Sanskrit school] acquire what was known two thousand years ago with the addition of vain and empty subtleties since then produced by speculative men such as is already commonly taught in all parts of India'.[20] In his memorial address of 1823 to the Governor-General in Council (Lord Amherst), from which the above quotations are taken, he begged the English to 'promote a more *liberal and enlightened* system of instruction, embracing mathematics, natural philosophy, chemistry, anatomy and other useful sciences'.

It was the bourgeois ideology of Enlightenment liberalism that the bourgeoisie of India wanted, for their model for emulation was the successful European. Why blame the English or poor Thomas Babington Macaulay? Our elite wanted it then; our elite wanted it in 1947; and our elite probably still want it. They believe, with Raja Rammohun Roy, that our heritage is useless and that questions like 'In what manner is the soul absorbed in the Deity?', 'What relation does it bear to the Divine Essence?' are but idle speculation. Macaulay's judgment simply coroborated that of Raja Rammohun Roy. Macaulay 'never met with any Orientalist who ventured to maintain that the Arabic and Sanskrit poetry could be

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[19]Wm. Theodore de Bary (ed.), *Sources of Indian Tradition*, Vol. II, pp. 38-39.
[20]Ibid., p. 41.

compared to that of the great European nations'[21]. 'Literature now extant in that [English] language is of far greater value than all the literature which three hundred years ago was extant in all the languages of the world together. Nor is this all. In India, English is the language spoken by the ruling class.' According to Macaulay, English was the language not only of England, but of 'two great European communities which are rising, the one in the south of Africa, the other in Australasia'; he did not mention America.

Macaulay then goes on to cite 'historical instances of a great impulse given to the mind of a whole society—of prejudices over-thrown, of knowledge diffused, of taste purified, of arts and sciences planted in countries which had recently been ignorant and bar-barous.' The two instances are the European Renaissance of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, when Greek and Latin studies were revived in Europe, and the European Enlightenment, 'which may be said to be still before our eyes.' He was referring particularly to Russia, where the Enlightenment had recently come. 'There is reason to hope that this vast empire [of Russia], which in the time of our grandfathers was probably behind the Punjab, may in the time of our grandchildren be pressing close on France and Britain in the career of improvement. . . . The languages of Western Europe civilised Russia, I cannot doubt that they will do for the Hindoo what they have done for the Tartar'.[22] He did not say that the Russians also used the Russian language.

Macaulay agreed with the Orientalist school on one point:

I feel with them, that it is impossible for us, with our limited means, to attempt to educate the body of the people. We must at present do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern; *a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect.* To that class we may leave it to refine the vernacular dialects of the country, to enrich those dialects with terms of science borrowed from the Western nomenclature, and to render them by degrees fit vehicles for conveying know-ledge to the great mass of the population.[23]

[21]Theodore de Bary (ed.), op. cit., p. 45.
[22]Theodore de Bary (ed.), op. cit., p. 47.
[23]Ibid., p. 49, emphasis added.

Macaulay was absolutely right. He did what he thought right. We have inherited the class he helped produce. Nehru was one of that class. And that class still leads our nation—'Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinion, in morals, and in intellect.'

The Enlightenment reached India just a generation after it spread in Europe. The ideology of the European bourgeoisie became the ideology of the Indian ruling class. The role of Alexander Duff, the Scottish Missionary in that process was central.

The Life of Alexander Duff, D.D., L.L.D.[24] by Dr. George Smith, first published more than a hundred years ago, is a book that deserves the attention of those who seek to understand our educational system and how it shapes our identity. Duff was no shoemaker's son like William Carey. A graduate of Perth Grammar School and St. Andrews University, he had the best education available in Scotland in his day. He was well versed in Greek and Latin, logic and natural philosophy, and was taught by the celebrated Thomas Chalmers. Duff was the best student in the university; as a student he established the Students Missionary Society and became its librarian.

Surviving a nasty shipwreck, Duff arrived in Calcutta in 1830, with letters of introduction to Lord Dalhousie, commander-in-chief of the Indian armies, and Lord William Bentinck, the governor general of India. He was then 24 years of age. Here is what his doting biographer says the tall, handsome, young man with a flashing eye and restless determination wanted:

The young Scot had vowed to kill Hinduism and this he could best do by striking at its brain. Benares, Poori, Bombay more lately, might have been its heart; but Calcutta was its brain. Let others pursue their own methods in their own places, he would plant his foot down here, among the then half-million eager, fermenting Bengalis, feeling after God if haply they might find him with Western help.[25]

[24]George Smith, *The Life of Alexander Duff*, Hodder and Stoughton, London, 1879, in 2 octavo volumes; republished in 1880 in a second edition; a Canadian edition in 1881 William Briggs, Toronto; three US editions (A.C. Armstrong & Son) from 1880-1881; an abridged fourth edition by Hodder and Stoughton, London, in 1900.

[25]ibid., 1900 ed., pp. 47-48.

What George Smith, Duff's biographer, refers to as 'others' pursuing their own methods, included William Carey, Marshman and Ward in Serampore promoting oriental studies, the 'Muhammadan College' set up by Warren Hastings in 1780 to provide Koranic education to Muslims, and the 'Benares Sanscrit College' set up to promote 'Hindu laws, literature and religion'. Duff's line was to destroy oriental religions by the direct teaching of the English language, literature and values, integrated with a form of Anglican Christianity.

Smith tells us that at that time only less that 5000 Indian children went to school at all in the city of Calcutta. Of these, he says, only 500 learned English. Among the English-speaking dignitaries of Calcutta we hear of Dwarkanath Tagore, the trading partner of the British, and Prasanna Kumar Tagore the landlord-lawyer. Duff sought allies in this community to complete his project; in his biographer's words, 'nothing less than the destruction of a system of beliefs, life and ancient civilisation of the highest type, based on a great literature expressed in the most elaborate language the world has seen'.[26] An Indian ally was needed to complete this project of undermining the Indian civilisation in order to win the Indian people for Christ. John Wilson (founder of Wilson College in Bombay) put it this way:

We shall, with the blessing of God,
devote our time and strength to the
preparing of a mine, and the setting
of a train which shall one day explode
and tear up the whole from its lowest
depths.[27]

Alexander Duff found this Indian ally in the great Raja Rammohun Roy—a rebel against orthodox Brahmanism, a social reformer who became Buddhist, studied Persian, Sanskrit and English and became as confused as our modern-day liberals. Rammohun gladly served the British and regarded them as India's liberators rather than enslavers. At fifty he retired from the service of the British and set up home in Calcutta (in 1814) and initiated the

[26]George Smith, op. cit., p. 56.
[27]Italics original, cited by George Smith, ibid., p. 57.

Brahmo Samaj—dedicated to Vedic monotheism, and to anti-ritual reformation in Hinduism. Rammohun Roy was a mixture of Erasmus and Zwingli within Hinduism.

Rammohun agreed with Duff that English was the best medium for imparting knowledge to Indians, not Bengali, Persian, Arabic or Sanskrit, in all of which he was proficient. He offered the Brahmo Samaj hall to Mr. Duff to lecture in; he had rented it at five pounds a month, but had later managed to build a Brahmo Samaj temple at his expense, and could easily spare the rented building for Duff's use. On 13 July 1830, Duff opened his new school in the rented building, and Rammohun was present at the opening to tell the Brahmin students that there was no harm in reading the Bible, the 'Christian Shaster'.

Duff's new school was a great success. Hundreds of students had to be turned away each year for want of accommodation. English literature, European history (secular and ecclesiastical), grammar, the Bible and a course in political economy incorporating the teachings of Adam Smith—this was the core curriculum.

We in India have learned to associate our educational system with the name of Lord Macaulay. Few know how much Macaulay was indebted to Duff. Macaulay was a great legislator—the author of the Reform Act of 1832, which caused the revision of the charter of the East India Company in 1833. Duff's work inspired Macaulay, and the revision of the charter removed all obstacles to British missionaries freely entering India. Duff, though younger than Macaulay, was the latter's mentor. It was Duff's triumph as the leader of the Anglicist (use of English language and culture) cause over the Orientalist advisors of the governor general that inspired Macaulay to write the famous 'minute' of 2 February 1835, which tolled the demise of Orientalism in the Indian educational system.

That was a significant debate at the time, more than a 150 years ago, and it became decisive for the shaping of the present Indian identity, especially the identity of our elite leadership. The biographer of Alexander Duff, though completely partisan with the Anglicists against the Orientalists, gives us some interesting historical facts and insights.

There were three groups, it seems, who can be characterised as follows:

(*i*) Anglicists—those who believed, like Duff and Raja Rammohun Roy, that only English literature, science and values, imparted through the English language, could undermine the conservative backwardness of Indian society and launch it on the road to progress and modernity.

(ii) The Orientalists—those who believed that the Indian identity was rooted in Sanskrit, Pali and Persian and wanted to revive and promote the study of these languages and their literature as the best means of quickening the Indian identity and promoting an authentic Indian culture for the Indian people.

(iii) The Vernacularists—a smaller group of thinkers, mostly British, who thought that English would be as bad as Sanskrit or Persian or Arabic, which were not the language of the people, but only of the elite. Dr. Marshman (Junior) at Serampore and Mr. Brian H. Hodgson believed that all these languages, including English, 'would add to the mystery of administration' and would alienate the people from access to it.

The Anglicists had as their leaders Duff, Macaulay, and the latter's brother-in-law Charles Trevelyan who, after four years in Delhi, came to Calcutta in 1831, and completely identified himself with the programme of Duff to undermine Hinduism through English education. But power was in the hands of the Orientalists. The money allotted for public instruction was in their control. The Anglicists called them 'Brahminisers'. Their leaders were Hon'ble H. Shakespears, a colleague of the governor general; Mr. H. Thoby Prinsep, secretary to the government, and a great scholar in Arabic and Persian; William Hay Macnaughten, secretary to Lord William Bentinck, the governorgeneral, and master of many Indian classical and contemporary languages both southern and northern; and Mr. T.C.C. Southerland, secretary of the Government Committee of Public Instruction.

In 1834 Macaulay became president of this committee. He was already 'Law Member' of the Court of Directors of the East India Company, and as such, the most powerful legislator. Macaulay's 'Minute' of 2 February 1835, which is often quoted by our specialists in education, was written to divert the control of education funds granted by the British parliament in 1813 and at that time controlled by the Orientalists, into the hands of Angli-

cists. Duff's biographer refers to this 'Minute' as 'the first charter of intellectual liberty for the people of India, the educational despatch of 1854 based on Duff's evidence before a parliamentary committee being the second'.[28]

It should be recognised that the Orientalists were basically conservatives, and deserved the epithet of Biahminisers, because they wanted to keep the caste system intact. This meant that education would primarily be given to Brahmins. The Anglicists, on the other hand, were bold social reformers, most of them Christian missionaries who regarded the caste system as opposed to God's will. They therefore freely admitted non-Brahmins into their classes, provided they qualified and paid the fees.

The decree of 7 March 1835, penned by Macaulay and proclaimed by the governor general, actually originated in the mind of Alexander Duff. It stated clearly the view of the governor general, 'that the great object of the British Government ought to be the promotion of European literature and science among the natives of India, and that all the funds appropriated for the purposes of education would be best employed on English education alone'.[29] The decree also stated: 'It has come to the knowledge of the Governor General in Council, that a large sum has been expended by the committee on the printing of oriental works; his Lordship in Council directs that no portion of the funds shall hereafter be so employed'.[30]

Duff was not quite satisfied with all this. He vindicated the decree, but it fell short of his own ideal. Macaulay was a Whig, not a Tory. Neutrality in religion was part of his Enlightenment creed; hence there was no provision for Christian teaching in the decree. But Duff was a Christian missionary. For him it was a crime to 'sacrifice' Christianity for the sake of 'worldly expediency'. Yet he was prepared to use the decree as an aid to spread Christianity. In a pamphlet he said:

> If we are wise in time, we may convert the act of the Indian Government into an ally and a friend. The extensive erection of a machinery for the destruction of ancient superstition we

[28] George Smith, op. cit., p. 95.
[29] Cited by George Smith, op. cit., p. 96.
[30] Ibid., p. 96.

may regard as opening up new facilities, in the good providence of God, for the spread of the everlasting gospel, as serving the part of a humble pioneer in clearing away a huge mass of rubbish that would otherwise have tended to impede the free dissemination of divine truth. Wherever a Government seminary (sic) is founded, which shall have the effect of battering down idolatry and superstition, there let us be prepared to plant a Christian Institution that shall, through the blessing of Heaven, be the instrument of rearing the beauteous superstructure of Christianity on the ruins of both'.[31]

The difference between Macaulay and Duff lay here. Macaulay's interest was to destroy Hinduism in order to overcome Indian resistance to colonialism. Duff's was to destroy Hinduism in order to plant Christianity in its place. Naturally, as far as the colonial government was concerned, it had to be Macaulay's line that prevailed. But the intention of both was to destroy Hinduism through English education.

The Orientalists sought to hold their own line by reviving Ayurveda at the Government Medical Institution established in Calcutta in 1822. They thought that, if education was going the Anglicist way, they could at least have an Orientalist medical system. Duff and his colleagues protested and agitated. The governor general, on 28 January 1835, abolished the Calcutta Government Medical Institution, and set up a new college for Western medicine. Thus the new Medical College in Calcutta opened on 1 June 1835, and soon became the largest medical school in the world with thousands of students. It was Duff's campaign that thus spread western medical education all over India, in Bombay, Madras, Lahore and Agra. The Orientalists lost their case in medicine too.

The third area where Duff pioneered was in literature. He wanted English literature to inform the literature in the Indian languages. Hence he started a Bengali department in his school. As George Smith puts it, Duff 'determined that Western truth and English benevolence should reach the masses and fertilise the literature of their mother tongue'.[32]

[31]George Smith, op. cit., p. 98.
[32]Ibid., p. 106.

It is useful today to attempt an assessment of the degree to which Duff's scheme has succeeded. Clearly the success is not total. It seems, however, to be substantial. Hindu culture in India has taken a reeling blow from the impact of Western culture. As always, that impact has been both positive and negative. In terms of setting up a social reform movement in India it was positively successful. Many inhuman practices like Sati were stopped. Indians got a new source of authority in the guise of the Western liberal tradition, which gave them the necessary courage to violate and disobey dicta which were regarded as sacred and backed by Hindu scriptural authority. Health, education and government became accessible to the people on a new scale, though only to a larger elite. Social and religious taboos which kept our people separated from each other began to be broken without compunction.

A good question to ask is whether such unity as India achieved during the colonial period could have been achieved without the medium of English education which people like Duff, Wilson and Macaulay imposed on our elite. What kind of a nation would we have been if we had followed the Orientalist line in preference to the Anglicist line in the education of our elite during the colonial period? Would the Indian National Congress have been formed in the way it was? Would Jawaharlal Nehru have risen to prominence as he did? Perhaps such questions lead only to idle and unprofitable speculation. But they do have a relevance both for understanding where we are, and for charting our future course as a nation.

The present author feels, again on the basis of speculation (though not so idle) that an Indian elite competent in the cultures of Europe, Persia, Arabia, India and China would have been a much more vital and creative group than the elite we inherited in 1947 and the elite we have created since then by an almost exclusive and certainly narrow English education.

English education thus achieved its purpose partly—to make Indians more malleable to colonial domination by culturally castrating them. The mine that Macaulay laid, on advice from Wilson and Duff, has exploded. Hindu traditional practices have lost their hold on our elite. People in India have been made docile enough to be shaped after the image of the Western liberal.

Duff, as a Christian missionary, wanted the capitulation of Hinduism and Hindus before 'Christ', not before the colonial masters as such. The colonial masters were to be used for bringing India under submission to Christianity. Here, Duff's intention seems to have achieved only a very limited realisation. Even those sons and daughters of our elite who went to the elite Christian schools and colleges and there assimilated the values of the Christian gospel as the British saw them, did not formally embrace Christianity in large numbers. Some did become Christians: the names of Raja Sir Maharaja Singh and Raj Kumari Amrit Kaur come to mind among the leading Indian Christian converts. But even these did not come from a traditional Hindu background. Most of the Hindus who went to Christian schools remained nominal Hindus, though they imbibed many values from British Christianity and the European Enlightenment.

They were nominal Hindus in that many of them gave up Hindu religious practices, including temple worship and *bhajans* at home. At the conscious level these Anglicised Hindus regarded it a matter of cultural pride to remain Hindus and to keep the fundamental Hindu identity. But their ways of thinking and responding had been moulded largely by their Western education. While keeping their Hindu identity, they also pledged allegiance to a 'secular' identity which Nehru had shaped for them. The same happened to the elite among Muslims and Sikhs.

Thus, the educated elite of India nurtured a major identity crisis in their souls for several generations. It is this conflict that has now broken out as communalism of various brands, including the majority communalism of the Hindus. Many among the Hindu elite especially feel that they have to regain their virility and get rid of the castration induced by English education. This desire for virility is only a camouflaged yearning for identity. Precisely because that yearning arises out of a castrated identity, it takes devious channels—agitating to replace English with Hindi, seeking to ensure the Hindi belt control of the Indian political economy, pursuing quick roads to a superficial Hindu religious revivalism, organising the RSS and Hindu political parties and so on. Meanwhile the Sikhs, Christians and Muslims seek to establish their identity in equally devious ways, leading to communal clashes and religious riots.

It is easy to blame politicians for using religion for political ends and thereby causing communal conflicts. But the question that fails to be tackled in our seminars, journals and books is the conflict between 'secular identity', 'Indian identity' and 'communal identity'. It has to do with the nature of national identity, and the conflict between the identity of the elite and that of the people.

The idea of a 'clean break with the past', espoused by the Anglicists and our national leaders (especially Nehru) alike, now needs to be re-examined in the context of an Indian identity. That identity cannot be based on a history that begins with the freedom movement. Strangely enough, there is more recognition of this problem in an avowedly 'atheist' country like the Soviet Union than in 'Arsha Bharata', which inherited the heritage of the *ṛṣis*. The Soviet Union faced this problem first under Stalin, confronted by the massive Nazi invasion of Russia half a century ago. The history of the Bolshevik revolution was hardly 25 years old when the invasion began. That short history was inadequate to inspire the Russian peoples to put up a heroic resistance. Stalin had to restore awareness of Russia's historic resistance to invasions like those of the Tartars and the Monghols. This was a resistance centering around the Russian Orthodox Church, its monasteries and bishops. The atheist government and party did a skilful job of reviving these memories through literature, ballet, plays and movies. In that process the Soviet Union had to even use the Church to appeal to the people and Patriarch Alexis of Moscow, previously Metropolitan of Leningrad, became a hero of the resistance.

Today, *perestroika* or 'national restructuring' sees the problem in the same light. Though the Soviet Union is not under foreign invasion, it is facing encirclement of an even more dangerous nature from the forces of capitalism and imperialism. The only major way of tackling this constricting and potentially strangulating encirclement is to make the Soviet Union economically and culturally strong. Again it is realised that the key factor in restructuring the economy to make it strong and restoring cultural vitality to the nation can be nothing but the human factor and the people's identity.

The history of the Bolshevik revolution is today three times

as long as it was at the time of the Nazi invasion of 1939; but 70 years of history is found to be insufficient to provide identity and to create cultural creativity. Today there is a readiness to recover the pre-revolutionary past in a less arbitrary way. The desire is to promote a more unbiased assessment of that past than has been available. No nation made a cleaner break with the past than the Soviet Union in 1917. But what the leadership now sees is that without the awareness of what is good in that past, the Soviet people cannot become creative.

In India, English education was the instrument for effecting a 'clean break with the past'. But subsequently we have also discovered the need to reconstruct the past with which we were supposed to have made a clean break. Much of that reconstructed past, in the form of the Indian history taught in our schools and universities remains biased and made to order. We have suppressed much of our Buddhist and Jain heritage in order to promote a cooked-up vision of India as perennially Hindu in religion and culture. We have largely failed to acknowledge our debts to Central Asian, West Asian and Greek civilisations and cultures.

A more honest assessment of our past, a more balanced awareness of our cosmopolitan and international contacts, and more direct access to other than Anglo-American cultures seem to be three essential elements in reviving, restoring and restructuring Indian identity. Deliverance from the castration by Enlightenment culture through English education will not come by drumming up a false awareness of our past as exclusively or even predominantly Hindu, especially when that Hindu past is itself interpreted in a distortedly one-sided fashion.

ENLIGHTENMENT: THE EASTERN APPROACH

We take the Buddhist perception of enlightenment—*samyagsam-bodhi* in Indian traditional understanding—as a starting point and paradigm case for an Eastern or Indian value-ideal. One could also have chosen the Hindu conception of *siddhi*. We have no clear idea which is older. The reasons for our fairly arbitrary choice of *sambodhi* rather than *siddhi* will become clearer as we go on.

Just as the European Enlightenment was a reaction to medieval Christendom, the Buddhist Enlightenment was a reaction to a Vedic system that had become corrupt, priest-ridden, and ritual-laden. It was also an affirmation of man as humanity, a protest against a 'divine' that had become oppressive because of the power of the priests who claimed to be agents and mouthpieces of God.

The European Enlightenment took a long time to overthrow the oppressive God and put in its place the human *psyche* (which literally means *soul*) in the robe of reason. The Buddhist Enlightenment *started out*, two thousand or more years before the European Enlightenment, with a 'bracketing', in Husserlian terms, of the whole notion and reality of God. What is more noteworthy is that Buddhism from the beginning also denied the central notion of the European Enlightenment, the primacy of the human *soul*. Buddhism not only denied the soul's primacy, but went even further in *denying the very existence of a soul* (which it did not do in the case of God).

This is the great parting of ways between the Buddhist and the Brahmanic traditions. The *anātmavāda* of Buddhism, so funda-mental to all forms of it, was perhaps the boldest step that Buddhism took in the history of the evolution of human thought. It would almost appear that the basic tenet of Brahmanism, namely seeing the status of the *jiva* in relation to *brahman* and

the universe, (in other words, *ātmavāda*) was a conscious reaction to Buddhism's denial of the very existence of the human soul, the *anātmavāda* or *nairātmyavāda*. We do not see the soul to be as central in the Vedas as it later became in the Upanishads.

Religions often develop in reaction to each other. In Europe, as the Protestant Reformation challenged many of the dogmatic positions of the Roman Catholic Church, the Catholics reacted with the Counter-Reformation in which doctrines were drawn up in a more conservative fashion as consciously opposed to Protestant positions. A similar development seems to have occurred in Buddhism and Hinduism. In the West the nature of the Church, the papacy, priesthood and the sacraments were the main issues on which both sides went to extremes, the Protestants denying the basic validity of these institutions and the Catholics reaffirming them in a dogmatic-legalistic manner.

In Brahmanism and Buddhism the central issue was between *dravya* (substance) and *paryāya* (modes, or accidents). Jainism, for example, thought that the Brahmanists over-emphasised the substance view (*dravyārthika-naya*), while the Buddhists went to the opposite extreme of denying substance and putting too much weight on the modes or qualifications or predicates or accidents (*paryāyārthika-naya*). The Jainas took the middle course and emphasised the equal reality of *dravya* (substance) and *paryāya* (predicate); the two are essential to each other; the one does not exist without the other: *Dravyaṃ paryāyaviyuktaṃ paryāya dravyavarjitāḥ; kva kadā kena kiṃrūpā dṛṣṭā mānena kena vā.*[1] The Jaina compromise was rejected by both the Buddhists and Brahmanists. It is a view which certainly has commonsense validity, and in developing an Indian philosophy today, the Jaina view will have to be given serious consideration.

The other conflict between Buddhism and Brahmanism was on the issue of affirmation and negation. Brahmanism was basically affirmative minded, even slightly positivistic and categorical (*vidhimukhena*, parallel to Greek *kataphatic*), while Buddhism delighted in negations (*niṣedha-mukhena*, or *apophatic* in Greek). Brahmanist thinkers affirmed the authority of the Vedas, though they

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[1]*Sammati-tarka*, Gāthā I, cited by T.R.V. Murti, *Studies in Indian Thought*, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1983.

were, like the Protestants in the West, selective in their choice of texts to uphold as authoritative. Buddhism denied altogether the authority of the Vedas (unlike Protestantism and Catholicism, but more like the European Enlightenment) and depended, again like European Enlightenment liberalism, on the adequacy of reason, of the empirical-logical approach to truth. The logic certainly was not the Aristotelian logic of non-contradiction and the excluded middle. It was a highly sophisticated dialectical logic, based on a penetrating analysis of human experience. This dialectical logic developed in contention with the more positivistic logic of the dualistic Sāṅkhya, the realist Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika and the non-dualist Vedānta systems, but also absorbed many aspects of the latter systems.

Buddhism, in all its divergent schools—Sarvāstivādins (Vaibhāsikas), Sautrāntikas, Vijñānavādins, Abhidhārmikas, Mādhyamikas, Prāsaṅgikas—affirmed the non-reality of the individual soul *(pudgala nairātmya. Anātmavāda,* as far as metaphysics is concerned, is the binding thread among the various schools of Buddhism. It is in contention with this *anātmavada* that the various Brahmanical schools, Sāṅkhya-Yoga, Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika and the Vedānta developed their systematic thinking about *jivātman* and *paramātman.* Today in India, under the influence of Brahmanical dogmatism, *ātmavāda* has come to be generally accepted, except among some sceptics influenced by Western rationalism. Since *ātmavāda* has a great deal to do with a person's understanding of oneself and his choice of what is worth striving for (personal success, individual salvation, etc.), we will need to take up the issue between *ātmavāda* and *nairātmyavāda* as central to our self-understanding and the identity we aspire for as a nation.

The other issue which divided the various schools of Brahmanism and Buddhism is often improperly formulated as that between realism and idealism. Realism and idealism are Western categories. The commonsense meaning of realism is to deal with the present situation in the light of hard facts rather than preconceived notions or ideals. Idealism, in commonsense language, means a commitment to high ideals, despite all the facts of the case. To take a simple example, a group of people in India may regard it realistic to maintain ourselves in a state of military preparedness for war with Pakistan or China. This is based on

the fact that border wars have recently broken out between India and these countries. Another group, though not the government, may, due to a commitment to the lofty ideal of *ahiṃsā*, plead for total disarmament in India. Philosophically, however, these understandings of realism and idealism do not fit.

These are Western categories, and cannot be blindly applied to our own thought. In Western philosophy realism has at least three meanings. As opposed to nominalism, realism holds that universals (e.g., tree, flower, country) are real, and not merely names of a *genera* of entities. As opposed to idealism, realism affirms the reality only of discrete objects and is close to materialism. In art socialist realism is a commitment to the struggle of the poor for liberation, and therefore to art which exhibits that struggle.

Since neither nominalism nor idealism in the Western sense forms part of our Indian tradition, there is danger in trying to fit our systems into these Western categories. The Enlightenment in Europe was basically realistic, in the sense that European thinkers took objects as they appeared to us in their phenomenal plurality as given. Immanuel Kant saw that as the phenomenon becomes a noumenon in consciousness, something remains left out—the *ding-an-sich*, the thing-in-itself. But even for him the basic plurality of objects and their discreet and real ('real' comes from *res*-thing) objective existence were not in doubt. This is of course a commonsensical point of view and not genuinely philosophical. Philosophical Buddhism started out with this commonsense realism—just as Sāṅkhya, Nyāya and Mīmāṃsā of the Hindus did.

But Buddhist realism from the beginning was dynamic and did not posit static entities existing independently, or as discrete multiple diverse elements (*dharmas*) in their mutual interaction arising in relation to consciousness. The kind of realism that prevails in the Indian mind today is a commonsense realism, akin more to that of the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, than to any of the Buddhist systems. We take commodities as real. Our developmental thought concentrates on economic development, the measurable increase in the products of our labour. Like the Nyāya system we take our linguistic habits as sufficient foundations for our doctrines in this regard. The different discrete objects have their

own *svabhāva* and are distinguishable from each other. We can specify them by their distinct names and other qualifying adjectives: a horse is not a cow; this horse is not that horse, etc. Each has its own *viśeṣa* and therefore they have different ways of linguistic reference; this implies the specific and discrete existence of a multiplicity of objects. This way of thinking, unexamined and unphilosophical, constitutes an important avenue for exploration before we settle on an Indian identity based largely on the European Enlightenment model. And a study of Buddhist realism may well point the way towards a genuinely enlightened view of world reality—at least one that is more true than the superficially Vedantic popular notion that the world is 'illusion', equating that dubious word with the profound concept of *māyā*.

Buddhism as a conceptual system was of course a secondary development within a way of life initiated by the Buddha. It certainly did not start out as a conceptual system as opposed to prevailing systems of thought, if any such system existed in the sixth century BC in India. It was a movement of spiritual dynamism, which had more than conceptual force. Conceptually it reacted against the authority of the Vedic scriptures, against the *ātmavāda* of the Brahmins and against the *karma-mīmāṃsā* of rituals, as these existed at that time. But its main motive power was spiritual rather than conceptual.

It would be a misunderstanding of the Buddhist notion of enlightenment or *samyagsambodhi* to see it as an intellectual repudiation of scriptural and theological-canonical authority and its replacement by unaided reason. That description would partly fit the European Enlightenment, but not the Buddhist Enlightenment. Even if the Buddha claimed to reject the authority of the scriptures and tradition and to depend on his own unaided reason, he came to be the originator of a tradition and an authority for all Buddhists. Reason was not enthroned in solitary authority by the Buddhists as was the case in the European Enlightenment.

Buddhist reason had to operate along a particular path laid down as axiomatic by Buddha himself. Many elements in that path were chosen out of existing categories and ways of thinking in Brahmanism. For example, the central Buddhist concept of *nirvāṇa* is not without parallels in the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika school of the Hindus. The latter's concepts of *apavarga, mukti,*

and *mokṣa* refer to a sort of annihilation of all *samsāra* and rising above it to the Absolute Bliss or Super-consciousness which is *niḥśreyasa*. The characterisation of *samsāra* as *duhkha* is also part of the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika way of thinking.[2] The four 'basic truths' of Buddhism can be traced in the main Indian systems of Sāṅkhya, Nyāya, Yoga and Vaiśeṣika.

Buddhism is not a set of doctrines. It is a particular perception of the fundamental problem of humanity, and a practical course of action to solve that problem. The fundamental problem of humanity is *duhkha*, wrongly translated as 'suffering', and more correctly as unrest. The attitudes, perceptions and disciplines that will lead to emancipation from *duhkha* constitute the essence of Buddhism. The perceptions relate mainly to the causal chain that generates *duhkha*, not to a set of doctrines. *Duhkha-nirodha* (cessation of unrest) demands perception of *duhkha-samudaya* (origination of unrest), and knowledge of *duhkha-nirodha-gāminī patipada* (the path that leads to cessation of unrest).

Dogmas and doctrines may bring some knowledge, but not real enlightenment, real emancipation. Doctrines are for the ordinary mind. They are at best crutches for the lame to walk towards true emancipation, which lies beyond the ordinary mind and beyond conscious reason, the instrument of the European Enlightenment. Buddhist *bodhi* is *prajñāpāramitā*, transcending ordinary consciousness—not arising from conceptual construction, nor capable of being conceptually described. The Pali canon denotes the world of our ordinary perception thus:

> *imasmim sati, idam hoti*
> *imassauppādā, idam uppajjati*
> *imasmim asati, idam na hoti*
> *imassa nirodhā, idam nirujjhati.*

Or, as in the translation of the British Buddhist monk, Bhikshu Sangharakshita:

> This being, that becomes,
> From the arising of this, that arises

[2]See Theodore Stcherbatsky, *The Conception of Buddhist Nirvana*, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1968/78, p. 643.

This not becoming, that does not become,
From the ceasing of this, that ceases.[3]

It is thus from our ordinary consciousness and its perception of
the world that *duḥkha* arises. Perceiving the true nature of that
world and our consciousness as mutually dependent co-origina-
tion, the one being conditioned by the other, already takes one
beyond the ordinary consciousness, on which the European En-
lightenment depends for the knowledge of truth.

Though Buddhism repudiated the authority of the Vedic scrip-
tures, it created in its place an enormous corpus of Buddhist scrip-
tures. The editor of *A Buddhist Bible*[4] tells us that in contrast to
the Christian Bible (Old and New Testaments) which comprises
66 books, 'Buddhist scriptures number over ten thousand, only a
fraction of which have thus far been translated. In the Sung Dy-
nasty, about AD. 972, a Chinese version of these scriptures was
published consisting of 1521 works, in more than 5000 volumes,
covering 130,000 pages'.[5] Many of these are commentaries or
commentaries on commentaries. If we were to seek a canon (mea-
suring-stick or standard or selective norm) within this enormous
corpus, we have to resort to the Pali *Tripiṭaka*, believed to be the
earliest collection and supposed to be limited to the *ipsissima verba*
of the Master. Like all scriptures, the *Tripiṭaka* must also have
gone through several stages of compilation and reduction.

It is worth noting that while the Buddha repudiated the autho-
rity of the Vedas, Buddhism had to develop an alternate scripture,
based on the words of the Master. Thus authority which went out
by the door came back in through the window by a process that
seems unavoidable in the phenomenology of religion. And while
emancipation is beyond the conceptual, the road to emancipation
lies through the conceptual.

If we turn then to a conceptual analysis based on the written
scriptures, it is not in the hope of giving a conceptual description

[3]Bhikshu Sangharakshita, *A Survey of Buddhism*, 1957; 3rd ed, The Indian
Institute of World Cultures, Bangalore, 1966, p. 84.

[4]Dwight Goddard (ed.), *A Buddhist Bible*, E.P. Dutton and Co., New York,
1952.

[5]Ibid., Preface, p. v.

of *nirvāṇa*, as many highly competent scholars[6] have done. It is only to get a glimpse of the particular perception of reality by Buddha, a perception which is only one basket of the *Tripiṭaka*. If we look again at Nāgārjuna's or Dharmakīrti's reformulation of that perception, we should not be under the illusion that the perception alone would lead to *bodhi* or enlightenment.

THE THREE STAGES OF THE BUDDHIST PERCEPTION OF REALITY
Buddhism, like the banyan tree, develops branches and grows horizontally all the time, striking new roots from the branches. Three stages in the growth of the tree are clearly discernible, but some knowledge of the different schools remains in the background, even when we look at Buddha's own perception, which obviously is capable of many different interpretations:

(i) The Abhidharma phase—from Buddha's death to about first century AD.;

(ii) the development of an alternate esoteric tradition, mainly among the Mahāsaṅghikas, leading to the development of Madhyamaka (*śunyavāda*) and Yogāchāra (*vijñānavāda*) schools from the first to fifth centuries AD;

(iii) the development of Tantric Buddhism which probably came partly from the esoteric tradition of the Mahāsaṅghikas and partly in reaction to Hindu Tantrism—sixth to tenth centuries AD., and the parallel development of the Dignāga-Dharmakīrti school.

We will not discuss these at length here; what is more important for us is to see the creative interaction between Hinduism and Buddhism (with Jainism on the margin), which marked the most productive period of Indian intellectual history. Indian scholarship is still developing on the controversy between Diṅnāga (Dignāga) and Dharmakīrti on the Buddhist side and Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika theoreticians like Uddyotakara, Vācaspati Miśra, Jayanta, and Śrīdhara on the Hindu side. Dharmendra Nath Shastri made an important contribution in the mid-sixties with his *The Philosophy of Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika and Its Conflict with the Buddhist Dignāga School*.[7] Another important and more recent contribution

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[6]For example, Theodore Stcherbatsky, *The Conception of Buddhist Nirvāṇa*, op. cit.

[7]2nd edition, Bharatiya Vidya Prakashan, Delhi-Varanasi, 1976.

was Amar Singh's *The Heart of Buddhist Philosophy—Diṅ-nāga and Dharmakīrti*, in which he argues that Diṅnāga and Dharmakīrti were not 'idealists' belonging to the Buddhist *Vijñānavāda* (Yogāchāra) school as many scholars believed, but that they actually belonged to the Sautrāntika school. What is more important in our quest for India's cultural identity is to see more clearly the issues disputed in this creative period of India's intellectual enlightenment, i.e., the sixth to tenth centuries of our era, which also produced the great Śaṅkara. But Śaṅkara does not recapitulate or resolve the great issues between Diṅnāga-Dharmakīrti and the Hindus. Śaṅkara is one-sided and unrepresentative of the multifarious richness of Indian thought. By looking at the contoversy that raged for four centuries we should be able to answer the question: Is there anything in that debate relevant to India's quest for national identity?

It may be important today to set side by side a number of answers to fundamental questions raised by our great thinkers. It would be necessary, in order to do so, to set aside the present Vedantic debate about the issues between the three *Lokāchāryas* —Śaṅkara, Rāmānuja and Madhva. I believe our problem becomes clearer if we forget for the time being what our Vedānta text-book philosophy tells us, and look at the intellectual milieu which created that debate in India. It is of course true that Buddhism died out in India beginning with the eleventh century of our era, and Vedantism came into ascendancy, at least among the ruling elite in India. It may also be true that the Vedantic tradition, particularly the Advaita of Śaṅkara, the Viśiṣṭādvaita of Rāmānuja and the Dvaita of Madhva, are not necessarily the best products of the Indian mind.

THE BASIC QUESTION: HOW REAL ARE THINGS?

Our national policy is based, as said earlier, on a simple naive realism, which holds that things are many and more or less what they look like. This unexamined realism is very un-Indian. It is what saps our cultural vitality, as well as the vitality of most contemporary civilisations and cultures. It is a foolish realism which the Western Enlightenment and scientism have bequeathed to us,

8Munshiram Manoharlal, Delhi, 1984.

as an instrument for enslaving us and keeping us under subjuga-
tion and subject to exploitation. Emancipation from this naive
realism would be the first step to the seeking of an authentic
Indian identity, whether it is for our national leaders or for our
elite civil service.

In saying this, I am also aware that Indians have to be eman-
cipated from easy and unexamined notions of truth, from a dis-
torting *māyāvāda*, and from many logical postulates instilled into
some of the educated elite by academic teachers of Vedantic philo-
sophy. It seems absolutely necessary to find this middle path again,
if the Indian psyche is to vibrate with new vitality as it once did
(in the sixth to tenth centuries of our era, as well as before and
after).

Let us go back to the original Buddhist Enlightenment, when
India reacted against ritual cultism, unrealistic theology and
priestly exploitation by resort to an enlightened human reason, a
human reason illumined by a trans-conscious experience of *samyak-
sambodhi*. The first awareness of the Buddha was that the 'indi-
vidual' is not supreme. It is *avidyā* or non-wisdom that makes one
think that the thinker is all-important. In true Buddhist Enlight-
enment, the individual becomes totally integrated with the whole,
and the unity of the whole becomes primary. It is most interesting
for me, as a non-Buddhist, non-Hindu, to see that this is the central
and most penetrating insight of the Vedic tradition as well. When
the *Ṛgveda* (I:164) says *Yajño bhuvanasya nābhi*, it means more
than ritual sacrifice. It is only when one becomes more preoccupi-
ed with holding on to oneself than with giving oneself, that trouble
arises in this single cosmos—this cosmo-theandric unity which is
the universe. Disjunction between three realities—World, God and
Self—is at the heart of our suffering, whether economic, social,
political, or environmental. Only in such disjunction can there be
a thought of the other as an enemy, as a threat, or as an object to
be exploited.

The Vedic idea that the 'navel of the world is sacrifice' could be
interpreted to mean that the origin of the universe as a manifesta-
tion is the sacrificial self-giving of the Source Itself.[9] The cosmic

[9]The *devayajña* concept seems central to the Vedic tradition. It is more
clearly spelt out in the *Satapatha Brāhmaṇa* (XIII: 7, I.I): 'Brahma, the self-
existent, was doing *tapas*. "In *tapas* there is no infinity", he thought, "come

dance, the *ṛta* or 'natural law' which modern science seeks to objectify and unravel is at its foundation, its navel, Ultimate Reality's self-giving. The six pillars of the earth are truth, ardour, initiatory discipline, prayer, sacrifice and *ṛta* in the Vedic vision.[10] *Anṛta*, or breaking of the cosmic rhythm is destructive and therefore false. To hold on to oneself, one's *jīva*, is such *anṛta* in the deepest of Vedic vision. As Ultimate Reality gave itself up, so to speak, in the manifestation of man and cosmos, man's function is to be the priest of creation, rendering himself and the cosmos to Ultimate Reality in responsive sacrifice.

This is the heart and foundation of Indian spirituality; not reason's adventure and expansion to dominate and swallow the world. The willingness and capacity to sacrifice oneself for the sake of the whole, more than anything else, should form the foundation of an Indian identity. That way we would not be lazily and dangerously borrowing from the adventure and expansion of the West, but would be ourselves, authentic in our self-sacrifice. That was Gandhi, and in one sense Nehru.

Buddhism springs from the same vision, but is strongly opposed to the ritualisation of sacrifice. The central notion of *Pratītya-samutpāda*, as well as the early *Abhidharma*, is essentially the same. *Pratītyasamutpāda*, however, is not a mere notion, an intellectual construct of classical Buddhism. It is an attempt to conceptualise the trans-conceptual vision of reality. As a notion something analogous could be detected in Jaina literature, according to Dr. Jaini of U.C.B., cited by Jay Hirabayashi and Shotaro Iida.[11] The issue is not so much the intellectual formulation as the vision and experience (the *samyagsambodhi*, the har-

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let me sacrifice myself in all that lives, and all that lives in myself". So, having sacrificed himself in all that lives and all that lives in himself, he [Brahman] acquired greatness, self-radiance and sovereignty'.

In the *Puruṣasukta* of the *Ṛgveda* (x, 90), we read: 'With the sacrifice the gods sacrificed to the sacrifice. This was the primordial liturgical act (*dharmāni prathamāni*)'.

10Ṛg-Veda X:190 Atharva-Veda XII:I, 1.

11'Another Look at *Madhyamika* vs. *Yogacara* Controversy Concerning Existence and Non-Existence', in Lewis Lancaster (ed.), *Prajnaparamita and Related Systems*, Berkeley Buddhist Studies Series, 1977, p. 342 and p. 357, note 10.

monious and good, auspicious enlightenment) that lies behind it, and in the light of which alone it makes sense.

The debate is not, as some naively put it, between the 'real' existence of things and their non-existence. The question is rather, 'what is the true nature of the world of things which confronts us?' The Western Enlightenment and the modern science born of it, simply rules out the question as a non-question. The Buddhist perseveres and says: that is the key question, not the question of how things work (modern science) or how to work on things (modern technology). In India today we take the Western road in this matter and rule out the question. At that point we have broken from our tradition and to that extent become inauthentic.

If the creative springs of Indian spirituality are to be opened, we will have to ask again the question of the non-substantiality of all that exists—not in the well-worn categories of Vedantic *māyā* doctrine, but in the vibrant categories of the Buddhist-Hindu debate of the fourth to tenth centuries. This is Indian critical philosophy at its mature best, more than a millennium before the European Enlightenment developed its critical philosophy.

It is necessary to say a word by way of explaining this excursus into an ancient debate. The issues between Buddhist and Hindu thought, the present writer believes, provide a better context than the context of the European Enlightenment, to redefine whatever it is that we as a nation had in mind when we consciously opted for a 'secular' identity, but which we now have difficulty in defining or clearly articulating in terms of national policy. In some ways Buddhism is close to secularism in so far as it brackets the question of God and even denies belief in the soul as an eternal entity. But Buddhist secularism is superior to and much more profound than Western secularism, and in fact infinitely closer to our own people.

At the present stage of our history, Buddhism, being a minority religion in India, poses less of a threat to our religious minorities. It is not allied to any power group or vested interests. It is also the Indian tradition which has found the most universal acceptance abroad, though we ourselves, as a people, have rejected or neglected it. The revival of this brilliant spiritual-intellectual

tradition, and its reassessment by both Hindu thinkers and by European-type secular scholars, may point the way for an answer to our national identity question. This does not mean that India should become Buddhist. It means that we must leave some of the well-worn but unproductive philosophical debates borrowed from the West and the Western study of the Indian heritage (to which we have to be particularly grateful, but which we must assess on our own, as a people today).

We do not want to take Buddhism or any particular school within it as normative for our nation. We only want to initiate a process of assessing some of the earlier debates, in order that it may stimulate new thinking. The majority of our people profess some form of Hinduism. There is no way of formulating a consensus view of either Hinduism or Buddhism. Even if we could, we cannot make that consensus a norm for our nation. If we then examine the Indian classical tradition, it is only to look for pointers, not norms, to elucidate the nature of that Indian identity we want to build. It may also throw light on the related question that troubles our best minds: the possibility of incompatibility between modern technology imported from the West and our pluriform, rich, Indian cultural heritage.

It is with this orientation that we focus on Dignāga and Dharmakīrti—not in order to settle academic Indological disputes, but to throw light on our way to the future as a nation, and as humanity.

DHARMAKĪRTI *Versus* VĀCHASPATI MIŚRA

A Chapter from India's Golden Age of Enlightenment

It is a truism to say that Hindu philosophy developed in dialec-
tical tension with Buddhist philosophy. The Buddhists were the
first to develop real philosophy and logic in India. Whether it is
Sāṅkhya or Cārvāka, Nyāya or Vaiśeṣika, Vedānta or Advaita,
every Hindu school of philosophy had to grow in dialogue with
the even more numerous Buddhist schools—Sautrāntika, Vaibhā-
sika, Vijñānavāda, Yogāchāra, Sarvāstivāda, Madhyamaka, Prā-
saṅgika, an so on.

The tragedy of the Indian philosophical thought since the
twelfth century has been that this debate has been foreclosed or
suppressed by the dominant Hindu community. Those who, like
Raja Rammohun Roy and many other Indians, trained to be
English, despise the seemingly abstract metaphysical questions
of this debate, have not given themselves much of a chance to
understand the debate before rejecting it as irrelevant.

We here embark on an exercise which is perhaps foredoomed
to be frustrating. We want to see if Dignāga and Dharmakīrti of
the Buddhist Dignāga school and Vāchaspati Miśra of the Hindu
Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika school were simply playing language games in
their debate, or whether there is something in that debate that is of
worth and value to our quest for India's identity as a nation, to
the nature of enlightenment and the secular in the Indian context.

The present writer is driven mainly to translations and versions
of this debate in English, referring back to the original Sanskrit
when absolutely necessary. Scholars of Indian philosophy will
find much here to question. Fortunately we have Theodore
Stcherbatsky's two-volume classic on *Buddhist Logic*[1] which gives

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[1] Theodore Stcherbatsky, *Buddhist Logic*, Dover Publications, New York,
1962.

many of the Buddhist texts in an English version (not always to be relied upon), and D.N. Shastri's *The Philosophy of Nyāya Vaiśeṣika and Its Conflict with the Buddhist Dignāga School*[a] which gives many of the Hindu texts in the original. Dharma-kīrti's *Pramāṇa-Vārtika* (*Svārthānumāna-Parichchda*) is available in a Sanskrit text.[3]

Dignāga was a logical path-finder. His dates are difficult to establish with precision. He probably lived and wrote in the fifth century AD. His principal work, *Pramāṇa-Samuchaya* is an attempt to establish the basic principles of epistemology and logic. Like many outstanding Indian thinkers (Nāgārjuna, Dharmakīrti, Śaṅkara) he was a brahmin from south India, from the area around Kanchi. He became a Buddhist at a very early age; he joined the Vatsiputriya sect, left it, travelled north and was taught by no less a teacher than the great Vasubandhu, whom Buddhists call the Second Buddha. Dignāga took what was best in the traditional Abhidharma logic of Buddhism, looked at the Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika systems' objections to it, and finally consolidated an epistemological position which we can call the best specimen of Indian secular thought.

The Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika and Mīmāṃsaka schools were the flourishing Hindu schools against which Dignāga contested. The later Vedānta school of Hindu philosophy was most likely an offshoot of this contest; the Upanishads are of course much earlier, though all of them show the influence of early Buddhist thought,[4] Even the *Brahmasūtra* of Bādāryana does not seem to be free from that influence.

The Nyāya school or the Naiyāyikas, were radical realists. They took everything as real—things, time, space, soul (*jivātman*), Supreme Soul (*paramātman*), particulars, universals, and even non-existence. Even notions, relations and qualities were regarded as objectively existing by the Naiyāyikas. This commonsense

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[2]D.N. Shastri, *The Philosophy of Nyaya-Vaiseshika and Its Conflict with the Buddhist Dignaga School*, Bharatiya Vidya Prakashan, Delhi, Varanasi, 1964; reprinted 1976.

[3]Dalsukhbhai Malvania (ed.), Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi, 1959.

[4]See the cogent argument of Hajime Nakamura, the Japanese scholar, in *A History of Early Vedanta Philosophy*, Motilal Bararsidass, Delhi, 1983, pp. 25ff.

realism happens to be also the prevailing view of our Western trained elite. Vātsyāyana (Pakṣilasvāmin), possibly a contemporary of Dignāga, was an exponent of this Naiyāyika commonsense realism. A more formidable and certainly more polemic Naiyāyika was Udydotakara, a brahmin who joined verbal battle with his fellow-brahmin Buddhist, Dignāga. Around this period arose the Vaiśeṣika philosopher Praśastapāda. The Naiyāyikas and the Vaiśeṣikas became allies in the battle against the Dignāga school. This led to the formation of a renewed and more consistent Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika school, which later (ninth century?) produced one of the most distinguished Indian brahmin philosophers, Vāchaspati Miśra (who in the area of philosophy is perhaps superior to Śaṅkara) and his follower Udayanāchārya (tenth century?), the last great thinker of the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika school.

It is in this context of the polemical debate between Buddhist philosophy on the one side, and the Hindu Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika philosophy, allied with the less rigorous Mīmāṃsaka philosophy on the other, that the Advaita-Vedānta of Śaṅkara originated.

If we return to that fifth to tenth century debate today, it is to do two things:

(i) to rediscover the wider wealth of the Indian philosophical heritage, of which Vedānta is only one of the schools that has survived and flourished to this day, and in that wider context to raise some basic philosophical questions, to which the Western answers seem unsatisfactory;

(ii) and to search in that debate a more Indian base for our so-called 'secular identity' as a nation, which fits our situation better than the imported base of the European Enlightenment and its liberalism.

The Fundamental Questions—Reality and Knowledge

We can start our brief discussion with the opening aphorism of Dharmakīrti's *Nyāyabindu*:

All successful human action has
to be preceded by right knowledge;
hence this investigation.

The question that the West has often asked, and to which it has given such mutually contradictory answers (e.g., Descartes,

Hume, Kant, Hegel, Popper, Kuhn, Feyerabend) is the one that our cultured elite always fails to ask: 'how do we come by right knowledge?' It is possible to give an unexamined answer, and proceed to action. This is what we do most of the time. One of those unexamined answers, so current among our elite, is that scientific knowledge is right knowledge, and the scientific method is the only way to right knowledge. This was the answer of the European Enlightenment; but the West, or at least the more perceptive thinkers in the West, are no longer sure that scientific knowledge is proven knowledge, though it may be operationally successful. Even the assessment that scientific theories, though ultimately unproveable, have high probability value, is now being abandoned in the West. Listen to the late Prof. Imre Lakatos:

> Of course, replacing proof by probability was a major retreat for (scientific) justificationist thought. But even this retreat turned out to be insufficient. It was soon shown, mainly by Popper's persistent efforts, that under very general conditions all theories have zero probability, whatever the evidence; *all theories are not only equally unprovable but also equally improbable.*[5] (emphasis in the original)

In our present incipient stage of working towards an Indian identity, it is fatal to ignore this preliminary question of the validity of knowledge, in the interests of a shallow pragmatism that seeks only the means to gain some arbitrarily chosen national ends. We must examine both our own and Western epistemology and ontology, to see how shaky some of the unexamined assumptions of our cultural elite are.

The *pramāṇas* or principles of our epistemological tradition have an axiological character. That means they are themselves not rationally proved, but treated as self-evident, and built upon. In the Indian tradition of *pramāṇa-vichāra* (thinking about first principles or standards of knowledge), we make the distinction between *prameya* (that which is to be measured), *pramātā* (the measurer or subject), *pramāṇa* (the measuring standard or epis-

[5]Imre Lakatos and Alan Musgrave (eds.), *Criticism and the Growth of Knowledge*, Cambridge University Press, 1970; reptd. 1984, p. 95. Lakatos has developed this idea in his 'Changes in the Problem of Inductive Logic', in Lakatos, (ed.), *The Problem of Inductive Logic*, 1968, esp. pp. 353ff.

temological principle) and *pramiti* (the process of measuring or knowing).

Dignāga's basic contribution to Indian logic is the 'secular' affirmation that there are only two principles or *pramānas* which validate knowledge—direct sense-perception (*pratyaksa*) and valid inference (*anumāna*), There are two worlds to be known— the external world, and the mental world. For these two *prameyas* (measurables, *cogitanda*), there are two corresponding *pramānas* (measuring standards). There are no other *prameyas* and therefore no other *pramānas* are necessary. This is Humean simplicity centuries before Hume. Perceptive knowledge is direct knowledge of a material object (*vastu*) confronted by our senses. The *vastu* or object with its specific characteristics (*svabhāva* or *svalaksana*) is directly perceived by the senses. The object acts directly on our senses and produces sensations. The *vastu* is the subject of this action, not the perceiver. The essential function of the external object is the realisation of this sensation in us—*Sāksātkaritva-vyāpāra*. Contrary to Kant, and more in accordance with Hume, Dignāga argued that direct perception (*pratyaksa*) involved no element of a mental judgment, so long as it is a perception that is not empirically false (*abhrānta*). Sense-perception is non-constructive (*kalpanāpodha*), and goes wrong when the constructive judgment intervenes to produce an illusion. Kant agrees with Dignāga when he asserts that the senses cannot err. The mind is the source of error.

Inference (*anumāna*) is indirect knowledge, again as Hume contended. It is an activity of the mind, dependent, however, on the sense-perception of particular entities. The sense-impression alone is *pratyaksa*. When a judgment is added to it, and one says 'this is a cow', that is *anumāna* or inference, a mental construction. The word or concept 'cow' does not belong to the *pratyaksa*. Here Dignāga's logic is much more rigorous than that of Kant or Hume. In other words the sense-impression cannot be equated with the mental perception that this particular is a cow. When one does that, one has already moved from sense-perception to inference, from the particular to the universal. The particular that acted to give the sense-impression is *svalaksana*, having its own specific, here-and-now momentary reality. The judgment 'that is a cow', or a specific cow named, say Gosri, and

the words 'cow' or 'Gosri' do not attach themselves to the sense-experience or the external object. The mind or *anumāna* does that association. The sense-experience is a unique particular, distinct from everything else—*sarvato-vyāvṛtta*—and momentary (*kṣanika*), *svalakṣaṇa* or *sui generis*. It has neither extension nor duration; these are creations of the mind. It is a 'point-instant' without dimension, as Stcherbatsky calls it.

It is not unreal; in fact that point-instant alone is real. It is without determination (*vikalpa*) or *nirvikalpa-pratyakṣa*. Up to this point Dignāga and the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika school would more or less agree. The latter would concede that this point-instant, though real, is without any mode of subject-object or subject-predicate. It is *viśeṣya-viśeṣaṇa-bhāvāvagāhī*, not subject to modes of qualified and qualification. Even consciousness is not aware of the point-instant as such, but the point-instant initiates in the mind a mental determination which could cause action, and the point-instant is therefore efficiently real. The determination as an object however is a creation of the mind in response to the point-instant. The concept is not an object. It is a mental determination.

Here Dignāga comes close to Kant, but does not say with Kant that the categories of the mind blend with the sense-impression as warp and woof. The determinate perception is a valid perception for the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika. For Dignāga it is a mental creation, in so far as it is associated with generalised forms (e.g., cow) and differentiation of subject-predicate or subject-object. A determinate perception, therefore is not a real perception, but one derived from real perception. Dignāga draws the line of demarcation sharp and strong between the point-instant and the mental image or concept. The cognition that there is an 'external' object called the cow, and to that end projects the internal image to the external, is a pseudo-perception. What is measured or apprehended by the *pratyakṣa pramāṇa* and that which is projected by the *anumāna pramāṇa* belong to two different worlds. The so-called external object or the point-instant has already been apprehended by the *pratyakṣa-pramāṇa*. It cannot then be again apprehended by the *anumāna-pramāṇa*, since the point-instant has already been apprehended by sense-impression or *pratyakṣa*.

You may very well ask: if the cow apprehended by the determinate perception is only a thought-image, how can it be different from the cow in memory or the cow in a dream? There is a difference. The cow experienced in the former instance, though a mental construct, is consequent upon a sense-impression, while the cow conjured up in memory or dream is not so. We make a mistake, however, in the first case, in identifying the mental image and the external object. This false identification is *adhyavasāya*, a false judgment. 'This cow'—'this' here refers to the *pratyakṣa* and 'cow' to *anumāna*. The two are absolutely different, dissimilar, belonging to two different worlds. The first is an efficient real particular; the latter is a mental construct. The failure to grasp the difference (*bhedāgraha*) creates the problem.

The determinate perception of the cow is however not entirely unreal, in so far as that to which the mental construct is projected is in fact real, efficient. The mind does not grasp the 'this', the point-instant, it only projects a mental construct on to it and identifies the two. But the mental image is not a cow that gives milk. Only the point-instant is efficient at that level. The mental image helps however to locate the real efficient point-instant. One can grasp the determinate perception of water; though the perception grasped is not real water, but only a mental image, that mental image can lead you to the real water, and actually help you to grasp it, not by mind but by a vessel or your cupped hand.

Sometimes the association of the external object and mental object may be even a worse error. In the famous example of '*rajju-sarpa*' the point-instant of a rope (*rajju*) is associated with the mental construct of a snake (*sarpa*). The action caused in this *bhrānta* perception is caused, not by the point-instant of the rope, but by the (falsely) determined perception of a snake in the rope. It is the memory-image of the snake falsely associated with the sense-experience of a rope that causes the characteristic behaviour of fight or flight or fright.

But here Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika and Dignāga part company. For the former the particular is a composite entity, with its own substance and attributes. For the Dignāga school, the particular is a point-instant without dimension or substance or predicate; these latter are projected by the mind. For Dignāga, the universal 'cow' is not real. It is a mental construct. It has no correlate in the

world measured by *pratyakṣa pramāṇa.* Dignāga, in European terms, is a 'nominalist' (one who regards universals as mere names), not a realist (in the sense of people who regard universals as real). For the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika school the universal, or generalised forms like 'cow', 'tree'; 'river', etc., are not only real, but exist eternally, independently of mental activity, in the real world.

Dignāga is a rigorous secularist. He does not call upon any *śabda-pramāṇa* (which he does not believe exists) or adduce any scripture to prove his point. His starting point is purely rational, starting with the everyday experience of this world open to our senses. How one wishes that our intellectuals and our elite would pay more attention to this uniquely Indian starting point, free from all religious or theological colouration as a starting point for our own discussion about India's secular identity!

Let us now look at Vāchaspati Miśra's critique of the Dignāga view. Hindu philosophy took some four centuries to develop an adequate logical counter-argument to Dignāga. As we have, though very feebly, interpreted Dignāga's view, it seems obvious that rigorous logic is on the side of the Buddhist rather than on the side of the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika school. But it will be unwise to accept Dignāga logic till we have viewed the formidable critique of the greatest Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika logician, Vāchaspati Miśra.

If Dignāga is dated in the fifth century AD. and is pre-Śaṅkara, Vāchaspati Miśra is post-Śaṅkara, and his dates can be fixed in the first half of the ninth century. From the date given in his *Nyāya-sūchi-nibandha* (898 Vikrama era), we can fix the date of that work as AD. 841.[6] His masterpiece, *Nyāya-vārtika-tātparya-ṭīkā*, is the high point of Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika realism. Encyclopaedic in learning and razor-sharp in logic, Vāchaspati Miśra has put all systems of Indian philosophy in his debt. His summary of our various schools of Indian thought is the fairest and most objective account of India's philosophical heritage. He interprets each school from the inside, as if he were a follower of it. This shows greatness of mind and broadness of sympathy, something rare these days in India. He was from Mithila.

What Nyāya-Vaiśeṣikas cannot accept in the Dignāga view is the contention that only the *kṣaṇika* or momentary is real, and its corollary, that the mental is unreal. For Dignāga not only do universals have no existence, nothing mental has any real exis-

tence, since there is no correlate for it in the external world; only that which is presented to the senses is real. And external objects are not real, in so far as they are constituted by mental activity. We err in not recognising the difference between the mental and the real. The failure to grasp the *bhēda* (difference), i.e., *bhēdā-graha*, rather than the attribution of identity between the mental and the external (*abhēdāgraha*) or non-apprehension of difference rather than apprehension of non-difference, according to Dignāga, constitutes the problem of knowledge.

In his faithful summary of this Buddhist doctrine, Vāchaspati Miśra puts it this way:

> Externality of the thought-image consists in the non-compre-hension of the difference of the external (from the internal) and not in the comprehension of the identity of the external (with the internal), because identity of the thought-image (appearing as internal) is not possible with the unique particular.[7]

As Śrīdhara (another great Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika thinker) put it, we are too easily deceived into confusing the internal image and and the external object, not because we have any reason to be-lieve they are the same, but because of a kind of lazy failure to perceive the difference between the mental world and the external world. What then is this difference? What is the nature of a uni-versal? What do all cows have in common, which they do not share with others? Four legs, a body and a head? No, most mammals have these. The only thing common to all cows is their 'absence of non-cowness'—not a positive, but a negative factor. All the cows of the world are different from each other, yet they share this negative factor of absense of non-cowness. This universal 'cowness' does not exist as an external reality. It is a mental negation or exclusion of non-cowness. Such exclusion of a negation is called *atad-vyāvṛtti* or *apoha*.

In the judgment 'this is a cow' there are two errors: first, the failure to see the difference between a mental object and the

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[6]D.N. Shastri, *op. cit.*, p. 112.

[7]*Bāhya-bhedāgrahāścāsya bāhyatvaṃ na punar bāhyabhedāgrahaḥ vikalpa-gocare bāhyastad-abhedāgrahasyāśakyatvāt. Nyāya-Vārtika-Tātparya-ṭīkā.* cited by Shastri, *op. cit.*, p. 351, note.

external point-instant; second, the illusion that there is something common to all cows that makes a cow a cow. The *svalakṣaṇas* or particular characteristics of various cows—colour, size, hump, shape, horns—are different. But we presume that all cows have some common *svalakṣaṇas* or characteristics.

What happens in determined perception is that the pure perception or sense-experience of a particular point-instant in the external world starts a chain-reaction in the mind—first, the recalling from memory of a name or class-name, which in turn evokes a generalised but not precise image. Words or names and thought-images are capable of invoking each other. But words do not touch the point-instant which creates the sensation. Where then does this false *adhyavasāya* originate? The Buddhist would say, from two sources: there is some sort of beginningless nescience or *anādi avidyā* (Śaṅkara would agree) or *anadi vāsanā*. It is this *vāsanā* that creates erroneous *adhyavasāya*. This externally reflected or object-reflecting (*artha-pratibimbaka*) image which appears in our determinate perception of the object is *apoha*. The universal (*sāmānya*) generates this *apoha*, this non-existent object image or class-name which is actually the absence of a negation (absence of non-cowness), and not anything real.

The Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika attack on the Dignāga view was focussed on the alleged unreality of the mental, and on the *apoha* or negative view of all knowledge. The argument, most clearly advanced by Vāchaspati Miśra, and perhaps more precisely by Kumārila, goes like this: If the Buddhist says that the name cow means only exclusion of 'non-cowness' (*apoha*), then, how can 'non-cowness' be grasped without knowing what 'cowness' is? 'Non-cowness' is negation of 'cowness', and the negative cannot be grasped without grasping the positive. 'Cowness' and 'noncowness' are mutually dependent; without knowing the one the other cannot be known. On the other hand, once 'cowness' is grasped, the *apoha* or the exclusion of 'non-cowness' serves no purpose.

Vāchaspati Miśra's view is:

tasmājjātimatro vyaktayo
vikalpānaṃ śabdānāṃ ca gocarāḥ
, tāsāṃ tadvṛttināṃ rūpam

atajjātīyavyāvr̥ttamityarthaḥ.
atastadavagater na gāṃ badhāneti codito'-
śvādin badhnāti.

So also universals subsisting in particulars are discernible to
conception and through names, in the form of being distinguish-
ed from that which does not belong to its own class. So, some-
one asked to bind a cow does not bind a horse, etc.[8]

Where Dignāga insists that universals exist only in the mind,
the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika insists that it subsists in the particular, and
not merely in mind or names as the Nominalists hold. Vāchaspati
Miśra echoes Plato when he says that universals can both exist and
not exist. They are eternal in nature, but manifest only through in-
numerable particulars. The universal is not dependent on the parti-
cular. It exists in relation to the particular now existent, but is non-
existent in relation to existents that are in the past or in the future.
What is the upshot of this debate? The logical issue cannot be
settled because these are two separate sets of logical discourse,
which have different starting points. The Dignāga view is a rigor-
ous working out from his initial premise that there are only two
prameyas (namely the real or external, and the mental or internal);
that therefore we need only two *pramāṇas,* namely sense-percep-
tion (*pratyakṣa*) and inference (*anumāna*), to grasp these two dis-
similar worlds; and that the *pramāṇa* for the external world can-
not be used for the internal world and vice versa. Once you grant
these initial premises, Dignāga's conclusions seem to follow.
Vāchaspati Miśra would accept the two-*pramāṇa* and two-*prameya*
view for argument's sake, but would not accept the heavy line of
demarcation between the two worlds.
The Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika school came to a compromise view, a
commonsense view which cannot be fitted into Dignāga's logic.
Universals are not mere names that do not exist. They are eternal
entities, but the particular cannot hold these universals exclusively,
since the vessel (particular) has a beginning and an end, but the
content (the universal) has no beginning or end, but comes to
manifest itself through the temporal. The universal is not a nega-
tion of a negation or *apoha.* It both includes certain characteris-

[8]Sanskrit text from Shastri, *op. cit.*; English translation present author's.

tics and excludes others. It is both negating and affirming at the same time. The universal (say, horse) excludes or negates all non-horses which do not belong to its class; but it also includes those characteristics which are exclusively of the horse. The affirmation, says Śāntarakṣita of the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika school, is primary; the exclusion or negation is secondary. While Dignāga's logic could not accept this view, later Buddhists like Ratnakīrti affirmed that *apoha* has a positive aspect qualified by the negation of others.

The Buddhists and the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣikas also argued about relation: relation between subject and predicate (e.g., *ghaṭa* and *ghaṭatva*), relation between qualities of members of a class, etc; and came up with the concept of *samavāya* as that which holds the substance and its attributes together in an inseparable union between a material reality as substance and its qualities. This was the way Edmund Husserl took in the West in this century—to conceive the *noema* or mental object having correlation with the external object through *noesis*.

We would need a whole book to relate these classical Indian debates to our question about our Indian secular identity. We can only make two important points here. First, Rammohun Roy was wrong in despising the Indian heritage, which he knew only slightly. He was moved by his own class interests to espouse the bourgeois ideology of the European Enlightenment. This is in no way to detract from his greatness as a social reformer. But the commonness of view between him, Lord Macaulay and Prime Minister Nehru should give us pause. We have to come to terms with the values of the European Enlightenment. Macaulay chose those values for us with the agreement of our intellectual elite, like Raja Rammohun, during our period of colonial bondage. Nehru, himself a child of the European Enlightenment, imposed on our nation these values with the concurrence of our ruling class. To assess these values we need to work in two directions: (i) understand the nature of the European Enlightenment in the light of Europe's psyche, history and self-understanding; and (ii) appropriate for ourselves more of our own heritage which we have too lightly set aside as irrelevant. Our second job is to develop a sufficiently well-informed framework of the two cultures.

This book seeks to initiate some perspectives on the first, but cannot do justice to the second. But the suggestion can be made

that this is one of the principal tasks of institutions like the Indian Council of Philosophical Research and the Indian Institute of Advanced Study. It is a formidable task indeed. The best scholarship in the country and abroad will have to be enlisted in the project. It will also need foresightful leadership which can make the team come to life. It has to be a project, one aspect of which will be something like the *Great Books of the Western World* project of the Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc. We need a *Great Books of India* project, but it has also to be accompanied by interpretative essays, since our minds are better tuned to Western categories than to our own. We need more, however. We have to generate an informed public debate on our national identity, in which ordinary people from all walks of life can participate; a debate which can be prepared and initiated by the best minds in India under the most competent leadership. It will examine our heritage in comparison with other heritages—Western, Chinese, Arabic and so on. Ultimately the debate should pervade our society as a whole: our politicians and our people, our academics and our students, our mediamen and the public exposed to the media, our civil servants and our masses, through all the regional languages.

We have to revive the Orientalist orientation initiated by the early Presidency College (Calcutta) tradition set by Sir William Jones and the 'Asiatick' Society, and actually practised by some of the great missionary teachers of our elite—Carey, Marshman and Ward, for example. It was this orientation which Raja Rammohun Roy despised as irrelevant and Macaulay suppressed, in favour of a straightforward introduction of English culture. In Indian higher education, it was the point of view of Alexander Duff that finally prevailed. For him English education was the dynamite that would explode the power of Indian culture to resist colonial conquest and missionary conversion and domination. Indian culture is much more massive and powerful than what English education can destroy in two centuries. We are now in a situation both nationally and internationally where it would be a catastrophe to abandon English education altogether. But we need to supplement the Macaulay-Roy-Nehru line with an equal emphasis on a freshly formulated non-elite, Orientalist line, if the Indian identity has to become authentic.

In pursuing that Orientalist line, we should not fall into the trap

that is developing—to interpret the Indian heritage in primarily Hindu or brahmin terms, regarding the Buddhist and the Jain traditions as merely subsidiary to it. Nor can the Indian heritage exclude the rich and positive elements that Europe and West Asia as well as Central Asia and America have poured into our treasuries throughout our history. The kind of Indology that has developed recently remains a scholarly specialisation, and largely a Hindu partisan interpretation of our heritage. To recover the Indian heritage in such a way that Indian Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists and Jains, and even tribals can say, 'this is our common heritage'—that has yet to happen. Our pioneering institutions like the ICPR and IIAS, the ICCR and ICSSR, and our universities have a big job cut out for them at this level.

Equally important is the need to re-start our so far frustrating Indian discussion on the secular. Can we have our own formulation of the concept of the secular, starting from, say the Buddhist-Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika debate of the fifth to tenth centuries? This will open our eyes to many things, of which the difference in fundamental assumptions and approach between the European secular and the Indian secular is one. Both of them generally rule out the authority of religion and depend upon the human perceiving-reasoning process as sufficient starting point for a human grasp of truth. In the European secular, religion becomes a casualty. In the Buddhist and Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika schools this does not happen. On the contrary the deepest religious perceptions arise from the secular starting point.

The traditional *abhidharma* doctrine of the Buddhists is eminently secular; yet Buddhist 'religion' and 'spirituality' flourished for centuries within that doctrine. The reason was that the non-scriptural *abhidharma*, or the logic of a Nāgārjuna or a Dignāga or a Dharmakirti, was always held as an integral part of the *Tripiṭaka* and the Four Noble Truths, the Noble Eight-fold Path, the Vinaya and the Saṅgha. The intellectual was never dissociated from community life, discipline, prayer and meditation.

This is where the Indian secular approach is in sharp contrast with the European secular. The Indian secular is an intensely religious, disciplined, meditation-generated intellectual effort. Draw portraits of a tight-lipped Voltaire, of a morose and intensely self-preoccupied Kant or Schopenhauer, of a Locke or a Hume, a Kier-

kegaard or a Wittgenstein, a Nietzsche, a Diderot, a Sartre. Keep
these portraits on one side. Draw portraits of Buddha, Aśvaghoṣa,
Nāgārjuna, Dharmakīrti, Chandrakīrti, Dignāga, Vāchaspati Miśra,
Sridhara and keep them on the other side. The difference between
European secularism and Indian secularism becomes immediately
evident—in the personal lives and disciplines of the two sets of
philosophers. The really great secular philosophers of India were
all deeply religious men, shaped by an intense religious discipline
of fasting and prayer, asceticism and religious training.

Ben-Ami Scharfstein, an Israeli philosopher at Tel-Aviv Uni-
versity, has done us a singular favour by trying to relate the thought
of many of the Western philosophers to their personal lives. The
picture that emerges is indeed fascinating: I cite a sample passage
from the book:

> Therefore, when I think of the atomism of Hume, James, Rus-
> sell and Wittgenstein, I conclude that it must have been their
> inward experience that made them receptive to the atomic dis-
> integration of the self. To Russell, body and mind were only
> logical constructions, and the whole person only 'relations of
> the thoughts to each other and to the body.'
>
> ...Hume, James, Russell, and Wittgenstein underwent deep
> depressions, and all were tempted by suicide....[9]

As we follow Professor Scharfstein on a guided tour of the
personal lives of the major Western philosophers, relating their life-
experiences to their philosophical positions, one is impressed by the
fact that very few of them had attained anything like the personal
integration that we associate with our great Indian philosophers.
The noble thought of India, with few exceptions like the *Cārvāka*,
comes out of deep religious experience and personal integration,
even when that thought appears to be secular as in the case of Bud-
dhism and the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika system.

This is what distinguishes the European Enlightenment from the
Indian concept of enlightenment. Both develop rigorous forms of
logical reasoning. In fact, compared to the rigour of Indian thought,
European Enlightenment thinking seems extremely loose and nebul-

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[9]Ben-Ami Scharfstein, *The Philosophers—Their Lives and the Nature of
Their Thought*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1980, pp. 76 and 78.

ous. It is superior to Indian thought in its direct relation and relevance to contemporary socio-political issues and the interests of a particular class. Our thought has a logical consistency that achieved high levels, at least a millennium before the rise of European Enlightenment rationalism. But Indian rational thought was undergirded by a deeply religious and spiritually trained consciousness, which does not seem to be the case with the philosophers of the European Enlightenment.

Indian secular thought is grounded in the religious; it neither excludes the religious from its domain of interest, nor does it use religious dogmas for its axioms. Starting from a 'secular' analysis of everyday experience, it arrives at startling conclusions which force us to revise our commonsense perceptions and draw our attention to the transcendent reality that manifests itself through the every-day world. Only this kind of spiritually grounded secularity, which can see meaning in the every-day life of ordinary mortals, but see that meaning through the transcendental experience of the philosopher and the community of sages can get close to our masses and overcome our alienation from our own heritage.

India must not betray her historic destiny by being a slavish imitator of the West. Even Marxists in the socialist countries expect from India a spiritual guidance other than that of Western liberalism and the European Enlightenment. Indian enlightenment is also an inner illumination, a seeing of light, a healing intuition that emancipates from the trammels of dogmatism and ritualism, that helps us experience the unity of the whole. It can use logic at its most rigorous best. But that logic, starting without any scriptural or religious authority (unlike in Śaṅkara), apparently secular, not assuming God or soul, leads relentlessly to the Supreme Insight, for that insight is powerfully present at the very inception of the path of secular logic, powering and guiding the journey along that path.

It should be noted that the Buddhist Enlightenment does not come at the end of the path of secular logic. It precedes the development of that logic, even though it does not start from any scripture or religious dogma.

ye dharmā hetuprabhavā hetum

*teṣāṃ tathāgataḥ hyavadat
teṣāṃ ca yo nirodha
evaṃ vādī mahāśramaṇaḥ.*

The *Tathāgata* has explained how the elements which proceed from a cause originate. He has also taught how the process can be stopped. This is the great doctrine of the Mahāśramaṇa.

This is what the logic ultimately shows—the cause for the world appearing as it is and causing suffering or *duḥkha*, and how to eliminate that *duḥkha* from the world. But the logic which seems to proceed by its own syllogistic momentum, has always been in the mind of the sage as he writes, for that is the experience, the vision, the enlightenment that gives him integration and orientation.

This is perhaps difficult for a Western-trained mind to understand—how the conclusion of a particular logic can be presupposed even from its first premise. But logic by itself is not the path to truth and freedom. The true path is the combination of knowledge and wisdom with personal and communitarian integration and discipline. From that discipline of prayer, meditation, self-control and compassion comes the basic insight, which the logic then works out. An ordinary intelligent person cannot be a philosopher in our tradition, as he or she can in the West. Only a sage is a philosopher. Reality is beyond concept and reasoning. It is directly experienced. From that experience reason can always chalk out a path that leads to that experience, of which the rigorous logic is but one aspect. It can proceed only hand-in-hand with the *vinaya* (the discipline) and the spiritual *saṅgha* (the life in community). Without these two controlling elements, the path of logic leads, not to enlightenment, but to the wilderness, where one can perish. The groundedness in *vinaya* and in *saṅgha* is what makes the Buddhist Enlightenment clearly distinguishable from the European Enlightenment.

CONCLUSION

One has so far refrained from making too many comments on the shifts in the centres of the West in more recent times. The West now has three major centres—Western Europe, Eastern Europe and America. This diffusion of centres brings new and more interesting tensions, in the context of which alone India's quest for a national identity can proceed. The emergence of two additional centres—the United States of America since 1848, and the USSR since 1917, has reinforced Western Europe's bastion mentality; along with mild anti-Americanism and less mild anti-Sovietism, there is a desire to catch up with these two competitors for world domination and to emulate them in some respects. We in India are caught between these tensions.

I mention the date 1848 for America, because that is when America's ambitions for world power really began to be manifest. Once the Spanish were defeated and California and New Mexico were taken over from Mexican Spaniards, the 'Manifest Destiny' of America became clear—expansion and adventure. Western Europe was rocking under the influence of the 1848 riots in Paris, in Austria, in Italy and in Germany; monarchies were being overthrown and republics coming to power in almost every European state; even the semblance of feudal power was being wiped off, to be replaced by the symbol of bourgeois power, namely parliamentary democracy; European kings, such as existed, became symbols.

America, which had accomplished the republicanisation of government much earlier, was free to launch out on a campign for world domination, starting mainly from the Californian west coast which it had newly conquered and acquired. America had very little feudalism and no royalty to overcome. The bourgeois-liberal constitution had already been declared on September 17, 1787. In 60 years, the union of a dozen states along the Atlantic coast had spread to cover the continent. The Spanish-Portuguese empire had become weak, unlike the French, British and

Dutch. The USA was ready to take over the world, first from the Spanish, and later from the other West Europeans.

The Americans had so succeeded in annihilating the power of the native people (Amerindians) that the eighteenth-century West European Enlightenment values could be enforced in the USA without any substantial resistance. The Spaniards and the Portuguese were unable to muster the ruthless cruelty and methodical heartlessness necessary to eliminate all the non-Iberians on the continent. And their commitment to the Enlightenment liberalism was far less ardent compared to that of their fellow-Europeans to the north. They decided to live with the blacks, the creoles and the native Indians, of course keeping them in subordination to the European colonisers.

The USA got its independence from Britain quickly and with great determination, eliminating the native Americans and the blacks from any semblance of political power, managed to consolidate its power as the new leader of the West. Across the Atlantic, however, they had to compete with Britain and France. The Hispano-Americans, on the other hand, were slower in revolting against the Spanish and Portuguese crowns, and when they finally did, the Latin American states were unable to unite or wield world power.

The compromise of 1850 did not settle the problem of whether slavery was to be permitted in the new states of California and New Mexico. The Civil War and the problems connected with slavery and emancipation of slaves kept the USA preoccupied with internal problems. America emerged strong in spirit and vigorous from the Civil War. The nation which the European Enlightenment had built was now ready to flex its muscles. The transformation of the American economy from agricultural to industrial was swift and effective; in that process farming itself became industrialised. The acceleration of industrial development in the 1870s and 1880s—rich silver deposits in Nevada and Montana (the 1860s), the great increase in lead production (Missouri, Illinois, the 1870s), the development of aluminum, the wonder metal (1887), the dynamo, railways and the telegraph (1866), telephones, (1876) the typewriter (1873), electricity (1878), Portland cement (the 1870s), steel (1875)—made America the industrial leader of the world. Private enterprise grew to be

America's largest force, much more powerful than the government.

Europe's brazen imperialist sentiment (end of the eighteenth century—partitioning of Africa) found an echo among the Americans. By 1900 the depression was wearing away; the last major Spanish-American war had been fought and won in Cuba; Sousa's band had popularised *The Stars and Stripes Forever*; jingoism and expansionism were again in the air. America was now a world power, ready to compete with all European colonists. The manufacturing and trading forces wanted world markets and raw materials. In China, the biggest of world markets, the 'Open Door' policy, permitting Europeans and Americans to have equal access to the Asian markets and resources, was openly declared. Hawai and the Philippines were annexed to the American empire. In 1905 Teddy Roosevelt's America condescended to use its good offices in the Russo-Japanese war, in the Franco-German dispute about North African ports, in all problems of the Carribean and Central America, in the Panama Canal and in the taking over of the Canal Zone, thus ensuring American access to the Atlantic and the Pacific alike.

Meanwhile science and technology had developed at a frantic pace, and America was ahead in this field, thanks to large-scale German immigrations. By 1917, on the entering of America into World War I, Woodrow Wilson gave expression to the latest enunciation of Europe's self-understanding and of the European Enlightenment's doctrines:

> The right is more precious than peace, and we shall fight for the things which we have always carried nearest our hearts— for democracy, for the rights and liberties of small nations, for a universal dominion of right by such a concert of free peoples as shall bring peace and safety to all nations, and make the world itself as free. To such a task we can dedicate our lives and our fortunes, everything that we are and everything that we have, with the pride of those who know that the day has come when America is privileged to spend her blood and her might for the principles that gave her birth and happiness and

the peace which she has treasured. God help her, she can do no other.[1]

America thus became the new centre of Europe as 'adventure and expansion'. Were it not for the rise of Soviet power in the same year, 1917, when America announced its imperialist intentions in the most refined and most humanitarian language. Asia and Africa would have been completely at the mercy of this fast-growing super-power. As the Second World War ended, the Soviet Union was weak, as was Western Europe. Only America was strong. From 1945, America asserted herself, and became the leader of the neo-colonialist 'expansion and adventure' into the world, in competition with its competitor, i.e., expanding communism.

A new factor emerged steadily from 1945 onwards—the arms race and the arms trade, a factor directly affecting our Indian identity. As we have already seen, trade and war are the two essential expressions of the Western psyche. Now the two became amalgamated into a new strategy of combining trade and war into the 'war trade', and making this the major arm for capitalist world domination by the world bourgeoisie.

Without waging a world war, 150 wars have been fought since the Second World War. Scores of non-European, non-American countries have suffered from this war, paid for it out of their meagre resources, and only the armaments industry and the war trade have actually benefitted. Six countries account for 95 per cent of the overall volume of the main types of weapons transferred to other countries, according to a 1978 report of the UN Secretary General, confirmed by later research. These countries are the USA, the USSR, Britain, France, West Germany and China; two of them are socialist and four capitalist.

We in India are caught in the meshes of this grid of the arms trade and the arms race. We have our imaginary enemies—Pakistan and China next door, and many others further away. So our defence expenditure shoots up, our political structures become completely dependent on defence contracts for financial support,

[1]Cited in Allan Nevins and Henry Steele Commager, *America, The Story of a Free People*, third edition, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1942/1971, pp. 417-18.

and the people are unable to move things in the right direction. We fight other people's wars and pay for them while our people starve and die of ill-health and malnutrition. The more we spend on arms, the more manufacturers and traders in weapons become richer and the people themselves poorer.

One technique the West has perfected is that of provoking nations against each other. The Arab-Israeli conflict, Iraq-Iran war, Pakistani-Indian tensions, all these have the hand of armaments manufacturers and traders behind them. Even as recently as 1987 we saw the game, which now the American press has exposed, of pitting Libya against Sudan, trying to make them fight, so that Egyptian forces, with US help, can destroy the air power of Libya. Sometimes the trick works before it is exposed; the 'merchants of death' make fat profits; the poor of the world are further impoverished; the people have to go back and buy more weapons from the same merchants of death; if they do not have enough money to pay, there are Shylock-like bankers willing to finance the transaction; again the end result is both a heavy flow of resources from the poor to the rich, and the poor getting increasingly indebted to the rich.

To affirm and shape an authentic Indian identity while we are caught in this game, seems an unrealistic goal. Yet, in this historic moment of our existence, when our very national existence is threatened, we have to put out a gigantic effort for finding ourselves and our intrinsic creativity which is eclipsed by the mask of an alien secularism-liberalism. We need to face all three forms of the European Enlightenment now confronting us—Western Europe, the USA, and the socialist countries of Europe. History has thrown us into alliances and interactions with all three. Each has to be handled in its own way—Enlightenment liberalism, imperialist pragmatism, and socialist humanism. We have to learn from all three, but critically so. Which means we should have an identity of our own independent of these three, but in collaboration and interaction with them. This also means that we understand the the three forms of European-American values in some depth, and that we develop self-respect for our own tradition, both in thought and in the arts.

We have not gone to any length in treating the nature of socialist humanism, which is one of the more positive contribu-

tions of western thought to us. The better values of the European Enlightenment are embodied in socialism, but we need to deepen them by putting them on a more secure and more transcendent foundation. This, I believe we are capable of doing, and this I believe is the way forward not only for us in India, but for humanity as a whole. The strategy for this has to be both cultural and political-economic, both national and international.

This moment in history offers a profound challenge to the Indian spirit. We have the resources, hidden among our people, to meet that challenge. Whether the leading elite in this country will see the vision and respond to the challenge remains to be seen. The peoples of the world are waiting. Our own people are waiting for some new light that can quicken their creativity and give them hope. History itself seems to be waiting. This new light, however, cannot come from top down. Our present elite cannot generate that light; the masses of our people have to be involved in generating a new healing light which has its source in the experience, wisdom and aspiration of our people. The job of the elite (the civil service, the educational system, the intelligentsia and the political-economic leadership) would be, first of all, to enable the masses of our people to become their co-authors of a new enlightenment.

This calls for creating new institutions and new movements. The present heavy political machinery and indolent bureaucracy cannot cope with the task of mobilising our people. Both the political process and the bureaucracy have become not only alienated from the people, but parasitic and exploitative of the people. Education, regarded mainly as an investment in the economy to produce trained man-power for the existing system, hardly enables the people to perceive the most important dimensions of the reality around them.

The new institutions needed will have to be such as would:

(i) mobilise the people, giving them a sense of purposeful participation, and a vision that both fulfils their deepest aspirations and calls forth heroic expression of their human creativity;

(ii) be geared to the education of the masses (including literacy, but going far beyond) in the context of socio-economic activity to increase productivity, but with a social motivation (as opposed

to personal gain and greedy acquisitiveness) to serve the whole people;

(iii) promote the cultural creativity of the people in a manner that is not alienated from socio-economic productivity in all realms, like better health services, better distribution of housing, transportation, water, electricty and other public services; a cultural creativity which would both be the expression of the richness of our Indian heritage, and a better acquaintance of all regions with the cultures of other regions.

It is in the context of such a mobile nation-wide socio-economic, educational and cultural progamme that a new concept of Indian national identity can be shaped and promoted, in the interaction between the intellectuals (including artistes) and the masses. In this process secularists and the adherents of various religions will be in continuous interactive cooperation and dialogue with each other. All religions will need to reform themselves to face the creative challenge of this new mobile programe. The religious leaders will have a major role in helping the adherents of the various religions to abandon their narrow communal perspectives and to commit themselves to a new national purpose and vision.

In this process the millions of adivasis and tribals in our country will have to be given special consideration. Adivasis should not have the culture of the mainstream imposed on them; neither should they keep away from the mainstream and seek to develop in splendid isolation. They should have sufficient autonomy to pursue their own cultural goals, and yet contribute to the total national effort.

These are indeed tall orders. The question is: who will bell the cat? The government cannot do it alone. Neither can the Congress party by itself, without the cooperation of other national political parties. The basic structure should provide for the participation of all—workers and peasants, students and teachers, professionals and non-professionals, armed forces and office personnel, intellectuals and artists, writers and political workers, religious leaders and secular ideologists.

Three factors will have to be kept in mind before launching such a programme. The first step will be to mobilise a manageable group representing all sectors of the population to work out

the basic scheme. These people, who should be limited to a few hundreds, will have a small group chosen from among them. It will be the responsibility of this latter group to draft the scheme and periodically provide opportunities for the large group to discuss and refine it. This should not, however, be done in the way, for example, that the New Education Policy was formulated, which seems to have failed to elicit a real national discussion of what kind of education is needed in our country. It was hastily rushed through production and approval; bureaucratic and political compromises took away the vitality of the policy before it came to public attention. Full participation by all sectors of the people will be necessary before the final formulation of the programme. This cannot be done by a government bureaucracy. There are enormous political problems connected with the choice of personnel for the commission to formulate the programme.

The second stage would be to train the core leadership of the programme itself. Such training would have to be done in the context of a few regional pilot programmes of social mobilisation in different parts of the country. Eventually, thousands of such core workers would have to be trained, who will later be deployed to carry out social mobilisation and training for leadership in each locality. During this second stage, the draft programme produced by the commission will be put to the test. Most of the commissioners themselves would be involved in training the leadership and carrying out pilot programmes. There will have to be a thorough revision of the programme during this second stage, in the light of the experience from the pilot programmes and the experience of the core leadership. Provisions will have to be made in the programme for facing regional and local variations in situations. Such revision may also be needed at subsequent stages of the programme and provision should be made for periodical reviews, both locally and centrally. The main thrust in this second stage will be two-fold—(i) training the leadership for the national programme, and, (ii) reformulating policy in the light of the experience of the pilot programmes,

The third point to be kept in mind is that the launching of such a social mobilisation programme will threaten many vested interests, and that they will either try to capture it for their own private ends or else thwart and hinder its implementation. There will have

to be strong leadership for the programme, endowed with sufficient power to fend off its detractors and distorters. The leadership will not use armed force against the critics and would-be detractors. They will have to pit intelligent and informed people's power or the power of organised and peacefully expressed public opinion against them.

The question of the nature of the Indian identity will always be at the centre of this programme at all stages: in the stage of formulation, in the stage of pilot programmes and leadership training and in the final stage of national implementation. No academic discussion in the cloisters of universities and institutes will settle that question finally, though academies, institutes and universities have major contributions to make to the public discussion.

The quest for the Indian identity can only be an unending one. For no identity can be static. The suggestions made here are meant only to initiate that quest. The central thrust of that quest will still be enlightenment, which would deal simultaneously with the world around us and the world in us. This dialectic linking of the double enlightenment calls for great creative ingenuity. What studies and writings can do to relate the two enlightenments to each other can serve only a limited function. The main motive force will have to come from groups of dedicated people seeking to live out the dialectical synthesis in their own private and group lives.

This entails the working out of personal and group disciplines for these dedicated pioneering groups and persons. Such a rule of life will give attention to forms and modes of study, of work and of common meditation and worship. These groups should by necessity be inter-religious and include also open-minded secularists. The persons for these pioneering groups should be chosen for their integrity of character, ability to listen to and work with others, and authenticity of commitment. Their basic quest will be the enlightenment of both dimensions of the human consciousness —the world-directed dimension and the other dimension seeking transcendent fulfilment. This calls for two levels of discipline—a personal discipline in which one seeks enlightenment in accordance with one's own religious or secular tradition (it is a condition that the religious tradition should not be totally other-worldly or this-world-denying), and a group discipline in which people of diverse religious perceptions and commitments can participate.

These pioneering groups will have a key role in formulating the programme and in training leadership for the programme as well as in its implementation. Their common group discipline will include productive and creative work, common study and common meditation. They will produce texts, tapes and other educational material for the training of the leadership. Much of this kind of work will have to be done on a voluntary basis rather than on a salaried or remunerative basis. It must attract people who are prepared to suffer and sacrifice for the good of the people.

In fact such a movement cannot be successful without a leadership of the highest calibre of dedication, discipline and commitment. We need not look for a reincarnation of Mahatma Gandhi. What we need really are teams of people whose common lives would be an expression of sanctity and compassion, discipline and devotion, sanity and sobriety. It is as a group that they will seek to excel in spiritual and cultural achievements, not as disparate individuals.

The life of these teams will entail more than a mere pooling of their varying talents and capacities. The important thing is how these talents and capacities are made to work together to create the good, without any individual member of the team needing to take any special credit. That will be a new kind of education—not focussing on individual or personal development, but looking to the social development of corporate wholes. It is only in such a corporate context where, on the one hand, there is strong personal discipline and dedication, and on the other, a capacity to shift the team members away from one's own personal development to the development of the corporate whole, that one can experiment with dialectically relating the two kinds of enlightenment—the rational and the spiritual, to use a kind of shorthand.

The pioneering will then begin with the formation and shaping of these teams of competent, dedicated people living and working together, without alienation from the daily life of the people of the locality and from their economic and cultural activities. Strangely enough, when the true enlightenment finally comes, combining the relation to the transcendent and the relation to the external world (including one's own body), it will not be in direct continuity with the team's effort or as an outcome of its plans. It will be a sur-

prise, for where there is dedication, the transcendent itself breaks in to open up new levels of reality and to create new forms of the common good.

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