

ISSN: 2349-2147



# Modern Research Studies

Editor-in-Chief  
**Gyanabati Khuraijam**

**An International  
Journal of  
Humanities and Social  
Sciences**

*An Indexed & Refereed e-Journal*

[www.modernresearch.in](http://www.modernresearch.in)

**Title: On the Cattle of Helios and God's Dumb**

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**Volume 2, Issue 3  
September 2015**

**pp. 576–601.**

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## **On the Cattle of Helios and God's Dumb Creation:**

An outsider's review of the culture of India based on personal experience compared with the European and American dream

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**Abstract:** When one starts learning (from) history of India he is almost immediately upset by endless at first glance tangled clue of events and names that are impossible to arrange in some consequent rational order. So, it seems that the only key for the cultural history of India lies in personal experience. Such an experience is more or less arbitrary initiation but it is inevitable to get one among many possible consistent pictures of India. Doing this way image of India should be first “debritainized” and “degermanized” as false imposed rationalizations of the Indian history. Free from colonial prejudices culture of India can be used as a distant mirror for understanding European Union who more and more appears as unsuccessful India, unable for real cultural and historical integration. We try to rethink India in the time of growing neo-colonialism because its energy of preserving self-identity despite centuries of colonial rule is of crucial meaning today.

**Keywords:** India, Europe, America, Hegel, Gandhi, East Indian Company, Neem tree, cows, dreams.

## Personal Introduction

*When the Argonauts were passing by island of Sicily carrying on their ship the Golden Fleece stolen from King Aeëtes of Colchis, ever reckless as they were, still they did not dare touch any of the Cattle of Helios that were grazing there. The cows were the pledge for the covenant between gods and men and not even mendacious pirates would submit to the temptation to undo that testament. I remembered this on the busy highway leading from the east to the west of India while I was watching a herd of cows resting in the middle of the road and the convoy of vehicles carefully going around them without any fury or commotion. I watched that sight for half an hour only to realize in the end that we do not understand what freedom is, for it is washed over by the erosion of superficiality and loyalty to illusions. It was not hard to conclude that I was present not only in another space but in another time as well. That another world of freedom was India.*

## Introduction

As I read from books, the name India derives from Sindhu (Indus), the name of the great river in the north-western part of the Indian subcontinent. In the majestic Old Indian literature it is called Bharatwarsha (the land of the descendants of the mythical king Bharata). It consists of many states of unrelated people with seemingly countless unassociated tongues. As opposed to Europe, in the middle of the previous century, in matter of just a few years, all these states united without resistance recognizing dominant common spiritual belonging that had been built for thousands of years by the oral tradition of Vedic odes, epics, myths, and philosophical teachings in Sanskrit. The oldest traces of history in India go back to the last interglacial period (40.000-20.000 B.C.) which is followed by a long period of the rise of the civilization of Indus Valley discovered at the excavations of Harappa and Mohenjo Daro whose urban development begins from 3000 B.C.

The culture of Harappa began its decline from 1700 B.C., and the forceful invasion of the peoples speaking Indo-Arian changed the cultural landscape of the Northwestern India.

Endeavouring to encompass such immeasurable millennial walk of Indian culture by the means of a single definition, the Prussian philosopher G. W. F. Hegel determines its general principle as “the character of Spirit in a state of Dream.” “The dreaming Unity of Spirit and nature,” he says, “which involves a monstrous bewilderment in regard to all phenomena and relations, we have already recognized as the principle of the Hindu Spirit” (Hegel 1956, 149). For a wakeful imperial philosopher like him, it was a reason enough to remove from self-conscious history India, a land that gave birth to works of incomparable beauty and depth.

*India is a dream, the greatest dream that Europe has ever dreamt. Since times immemorial up until Vasco da Gama, Europe has been dreaming India as a horn of plenty; it appeared to it as the fulfillment of all its desires. That dream forced Columbus to discover India in America, because Europeans saw India everywhere. Europe has not wakened from that dream to this day, for in that way the Age of Discovery was conceived – the age that it glorifies as the very beginning of its ascension. This became clear to me in Ernakulum, the place at which Vasco da Gama once landed in order to discover India, God knows for what time, after Egyptian pharaohs, Alexander the Great, Roman Caesars, and God knows who else. Old Roman coins found in India and exhibited in the Summer Palace in this place, a sumptuous residence of the maharajas of Kochi, testify that the Argonauts discovered India for countless times and always lost their way there. Argonauts would not have been what they were if they did not immediately try to make money on their dream, selling some spices in Europe at an even 30.000 times higher than the purchase price in India. Portugal pushed to the edge of Europe and almost drowned in the Atlantic immediately and inevitably became a world power when Vasco found a sea road to India, something that Britannica calls “a new era in history of the world”. It was the touch of India which achieved this, for it is quite enough for “a new era in history of the*

world” (which should not be confused with the scrapped phrase “new world order”), because it seems that India can transform everything, even the hopeless history of the world, even Portugal, and in the end even my own self who did not set off in a search for spices of life and golden promises, but merely let myself down the road of gold and silk, boding that every trip to India with one's eyes opened reveals yet another hidden dream.

## Hegel and India

The consideration of the Indian culture should begin with Hegel for he was “the first modern philosopher who envisaged world evolution as an integrated *historical* process, and for that reason the first philosopher of culture, since culture is the exclusive prerogative of spiritually informed consciousness/in the historical meaning attributed to the term “Spirit” by Hegel, later more and more frequently substituted by the term “Culture” (Nanajivako 1976, 300).

When he thinks of India and its culture, Hegel is worried because in the dream “Spirit ceases to be for itself, against the other,” since he thinks that the true and only basis of philosophy and culture is Descartes' dogma of the separate, independent subject where one cannot allow for “the individual to stop knowing itself as *this* individual in a dream” (Hegel 1956, 137).

Hegel's such understanding of dreams comes, on one side, from French rationalism – since French philosopher Rene Descartes feared in *Meditations* that in a dream he would never know he was in a dream - but even more from the British empiricism for which dream has no relation to truth. The insular empiricism seems to show itself at every step in Hegel's thoughts that he just barely manages to furnish with his speculative jargon of authenticity. As Hegel primarily cares about the individual standing wakeful “against objectivity” it is quite natural to him that the Indian culture makes of something divine “bizarre, unclear, and foolish.” Not wanting to leave much room for doubt and nature of his attitudes, he adds: “The people of India have achieved no foreign conquests, but have been on every occasion vanquished themselves... The English, or rather the East Indian Company, are the lords of the

land; for it is the necessary fate of Asiatic Empires to be subjected to Europeans..." (Hegel 1956, 138)

Reading Hegel's such words in *The Philosophy of History* makes one quickly tired from speculative affectations of a badly disguised British empiricism. Hegel bases his judgment of India mostly on reports written by the British travel writers that he then philosophically revises and interprets with self-confidence. Not only does this call for questions of reliability of other conclusions of *The Philosophy of History*, but we are also left with doubts about the general relationship between British and German culture. It seems like German philosophy in its classical form, although elevated in tone and pathos, is but a retelling of different and often unconvincing and unreliable British theories and reports. Truth be told, something like that is impossible to imagine in the case of Kant who found strength to erect transcendental building with its three critiques against Hume's cynical empiricism, still less possible with Goethe who developed his theory of colours *in spite of* Newton; but Hegel clearly shows declination and dependence of German speculative philosophy upon British empirical material. His text on India is therefore replete with superficial insights and reckless conclusions, something which he, in a turn of events that only a chance could make, realized himself near the end of his life. After reading *Bhagavad Gita* in 1827 he felt so cheated that in a bout of desire to repent he decided to write *The Phenomenology of Spirit* all over again. "The subtlety of goal specific to sangha and yoga, and especially the path leading to that goal, was discovered in its religious form by thinking and for thinking in such manner that it deserves, above all doubt, to be called philosophy" (Hegel 1827, 138). But death by cholera overtook him in 1831 and so *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, which sums up Indian religion in two pages as "belief in plants and animals", remained to forever testify on the misguiding of Hegel's and German philosophical thought, as well as the prejudices about India that were spreading in Europe of that time.

*Ernakulam was at the end of my December trip across India, and that I had arrived to the land of wonders was clear to me already in the beginning when I landed in Mumbai. While I was waiting at the airport building for the next airplane to carry me to the big city of Chennai at*

*the opposite, east coast, I opened Mumbai Times of 2<sup>nd</sup> December and on the fifteenth page found news completely impossible for the European conception of reality. The teacher Baba Ram Prasad Das ordered his students to burn him alive. They did it with great respect to their teacher. In the books I read that up until XIX century people were being burned alive in Europe as well, but always against their own will, based on the condemnations of zealous Catholic and Protestant churchmen. In times that followed there were, however, those who did it willingly, such as Jan Palach, who protested against the Soviet invasion of Czecho-Slovakia, or twenty years ago that other Czech whose name I did not memorize for it was not advertised so well as Palach's, and who protested against the entry of NATO army into the same country. But the immolation of Baba Rama was not one of the fruits of inquisitorial violence, nor was it burning with a political thesis or a message that he wanted to send to someone. He did not even do it in the name of any religion, which leaves us utterly confused. From the text one could gather still that he did it to show that life is stronger than elementary forces; that it can last only while it is led by courage and strength to overcome alluring sensuality and its endless promises of sweet fulfillment. The real question indeed is whether he truly died or it is us who were not born with bravery in our hearts, and are dying every day fearing everything except letting ourselves to fear.*

*I am mentioning this because the coincidence wanted this to be my first encounter with India. I do not of course want to recommend such method of spiritual maturation, but there is something non-hypocritical in this act for which he did not even expect to be called a martyr, to be beatified, rewarded, acknowledged, to become an entry in an encyclopedia. Europe is naturally terrified of this and likes to remind that somewhere in remote northern India widow still sacrifices herself after her husband's death, and is even more prone to forget that during the Reformation and the Counter-Reformation a great part of its female population was burned alive to the greater glory of God. And not even today's Europe finds it foreign to her thought to pour bombs on whole nations and to burn cities and villages. Maybe that Hindus died only so that India would not do the same things Europe does? And is it some kind of Christianity, of sacrificing oneself for the common good, which*

*has been moved from churches-museums to the middle of life? This event helped me realize that I was entering into another world which speaks another language, which we shall never learn if we keep sitting in front of the mirror and asking whether we are the most beautiful in the world. Freedom in India does not have the same limits set to it in Europe and which do not allow the pulse of life to be felt. The famous philosopher Karl Jaspers states in his essay "What is Europe" that it is the principle of freedom. That is rather nice and elevated, only that by turning the pages of books I was not able to find many whom Europe gave freedom, and one can find a neat number of those whose freedom has been taken. Maybe perhaps if Jaspers thought that Europe has freed Falkland Islands from Argentineans, and Kosovo from Serbs.*

In *The Philosophy of History* Hegel puts another stop on his understanding of India claiming that "the moral condition of the Hindus (as already observed) shows itself most abandoned. In this all Englishmen agree." And then he adds the final argument. "I do not know an honest man among them, says an English authority" (Hegel 1956, 152). In this manner, by slavishly following British colonial theory in which the East Indian Company is the last instance of judging moral reality, Hegel determines with full surety from the height of the Absolute Spirit: "Cheating, stealing, robbing, murdering are with him habitual. Humbly crouching and abject before a victor and lord, he is recklessly barbarous to the vanquished and subject" (Hegel 1956, 152).

In a breathless ride to reach as soon as possible the Absolute Spirit and its coronation in the announced Protestant religion and Prussian state Hegel has not enough time to consider Indian cultural and thoughtful heritage which in its complexity and duration manifold surpasses that of Europe. His breathlessness and lack of time of a "businessman of cosmopolitan spirit", as he calls himself, gave right to the colonial discourse and deepened further the gap between European and Indian culture. "Since more than a hundred years Hegel's anti-criticist /i.e. anti-Kantian/ dogmatic Reason has served, far beyond the academic ground of its origin, as a successful *ideological* tool for imposing a *Euro-centric attitude* supported by the authority of political and social forces involved in a dialectical tensions with ruinous effects



for the dignity and the very existence of all extent world-cultures” (Nanajivako 1976, 321).

Hegel – into whom Descartes put fear that he will forever remain enchanted if he does not release the subject of all its boundaries including the moral one – not for one moment thinks that the consciousness of dream could be the highest form of culture. In his system there is not even a glimpse of an alternative, and he cannot accept that the Indian culture of the dream could be something not only lower but also something higher than history, and that in that treasury of collective unconscious the true source of thoughts and life could be sought.

Contrary to what Hegel would expect, tradition tells us that around fifth century B.C. Panini dreamt, in a dreamless sleep, his *Ashtadhyayi*, the grammar of Sanskrit in eight books, “one of the greatest monuments of human intelligence” (Bloomfield 1933, 11). Some say that, in a deep meditation, he received it personally from the god Shiva, but that means basically the same, for Shiva is the face of the dream. Had Hegel had an insight into the perfection of Panini’s grammar, his *Phenomenology* would have changed even more fundamentally than after reading *Bhagavad Gita*. In that dream, Panini assembled a grammar as a phenomenology that was not seen before or after that: whole language, all changes in it and all its possibilities were described by him in four thousand sutras (coded, short statements). The grammar was assembled not by descriptive, but by genetic principle: he does not describe linguistic phenomena separately and each for itself, but makes syllables out of voices, then roots, and then enumerates changes in verb forms and noun phrases, and then he derives forms (and their meanings) from root syllables so that he could then derive higher forms from the lower ones, and finally reach complex phrases that make it possible to combine meanings of individual words in countless ways. His grammar, as every other phenomenology, is guided by the principle: *discern what is different, and not what is similar*. If the essence is different, and the form is similar/same, the phenomena are different. And vice versa, if the form is different, and the essence is the same, then the phenomena are the same. This is also related to the rule: *what happens at one place*

*within the language is also happening everywhere else in it, and hence his rules of euphony – what we would call phonetic changes – do not have exceptions.*

Judging by Panini, great Indian thinkers are clear-sighted, sharp-witted and logical even in their dreams. When our normative grammar that was made into being by “agreements” is compared with Indian philosophy of language, the dense, Euclidean form of meta-language which encompasses spoken and written language like a three-layered aura, and Panini’s grammar, which describes and writes down the language, and does not prescribe it, we realize how we have been led astray by Descartes and Hegel and the revolutionary-minded enlighteners who, believing in Reason, sharply separated dream from wake.

*In Chennai Professor Shanmugam Subbiah is waiting for me; he is a geographer who made my journey a true search for the core of the Indian world. I was supposed to tour all south India, and professor Subbiah knowledgeably drew a path leading right through the lines of forces of Indian culture that strongly are magnetized with their inner force and spiritual depth. Every kilometer and every moment were carefully planned, and the road from Chennai led to Tiruchirappalli, then to Madurai, and then to the very south of the sub-continent, and then to Thiruvananthapuram, Ernakulam, and in the end back to Mumbai. I traveled with almost no stops, during day and night, changing all transport vehicles and covering thousands of kilometers. Distances in India are big and one must be ready to travel all night, to come to the hotel by train at five o'clock in the morning and then to set off again at eight for some other destination a hundred or two hundred kilometers away. Images of Indian past and present were thus passing almost ceaselessly, followed by the explanations and vivid descriptions of my kind hosts, who waited for me in every new place I visited. All of them knew past and present of their places completely, and their education (all of them were university professors) meant that I would not get mere information but that I would be let in on the core of Indian culture. And while the wondrous nature, teeming with unknown plants, was switching places with endlessly complex monuments thousands*

*years old, I was standing before the riddle of the unfailing good will of my hosts who devoted themselves to me completely as if my curiosity were the most important thing in this world. Professor Ilangovan from Madurai waited for the train with me until midnight even though his wife called him on the phone several times. Professor Ganesh from Tiruchirappalli got up at four o'clock in the morning to take me from the hotel to the bus station; Professor Sukumar and his family wandered with me to the very south of India for two days. Professor Devan would wish me a good night with a basket of exotic juices that I had never tasted before (in fact I drank only juices most of the time since the temperature was around 30 degrees). All this time, Professor Subbiah would regularly call not only to inquire how I felt but also to thank his colleagues on their kindness. I truly had to ask myself whether I was really dreaming. Of course I was dreaming, I answered to myself with words with which I started this text, for India is a dream. Europe tried to colonize this dream like a child opening a TV set to find the little people it sees on the screen. In colonized India, however, it did not find the midgets it was seeking, but it did lose the ability to dream, and the absence of vision was replaced with the prosthetics of tele-vision. Europe has actually discovered all but its own self.*

Nevertheless, in a very fortunate part of *Philosophy of History*, Hegel has an insight: "...and so India as a desired land is an important element of all history" (Hegel 1956, 138). But at the same time he fails to understand that the final reality of Europe is exactly the dream of India which by its force overpowers reason about which enlightened Hegel cares so much. Since the ancient times to the Age of Discovery India is a dream, the greatest dream that Europe has ever dreamt. Since times immemorial Europe has been dreaming India as a horn of plenty; it appeared to it as fulfillment of all its desires. It is elusive like a dream made of known images and inscrutable sights, memories and portents, logical sequences and mindless imagination.

*But on the other hand, what is Indian dream? It is certain that it was not Europe, for maharaja from Calicut, where Vasco da Gama landed on 20<sup>th</sup> May 1498, did not even want to talk with him and sent him where he came from. He must have been simply uninteresting.*

*Vasco could only leave with a few kidnapped Hindus so that he could prepare better for the next coming.*

*Vasco went to India two years later for the second time, but this time in the form of a penal expedition, since nothing went as smoothly as it used to for the Spanish in South America who had already managed to kill millions of American Indians. He first ambushed a ship with around 400 passengers, then he threw women and children into the sea, killed the crew and burned the ship so as to show to India who it is dealing with and to produce fear while there was still time. Then he attacked the ruler of Calicut, and to show his dangerous side and serious intentions, according to the tested European recipe, he first bombarded the harbor, and then massacred some thirty pilgrims who approached his ships to trade with fruits and fish.*

*Vasco returned to India for the third time, but only to die there, for, among other things, Indians were better in microbiological warfare. Everything somehow went against the scenario played in “west India”, where the natives died of illnesses, especially because of smallpox, which Spanish brought with them. By the way, all conquerors of India die of strange illnesses. Hegel died of cholera, Vasco from plague, and Alexander the Great from who knows what.*

*One can only imagine how the European Argonauts felt when, after all that happened, managing nothing but pointless crimes, they had to return home with empty hearts and ship full of goods, for instead of mercy of the rulers they achieved in buying only the spices. Then they started getting rich which was all they ever dreamed of. When we say European or American dream, all is clear outright: more or less, it amounts to a supermarket, the material welfare. And what Indian dream is, we almost cannot even ask, since we do not know what India is or what dream is.*

## **Amphiboly of India**

Any attempt to speak about the elusive Indian culture is directly confronted with amphiboly. How, indeed, to describe without contradictions a country between the peaks of the everlasting ice of

Himalayas and Kashmir, tropical jungles and sea coasts of Kanjakumari, the deserts of Rajasthan and jungles on the north-east, a land with 5100 towns and 638.000 villages where railroads everyday transport 30 million travellers; where people speak 22 languages noted in the constitution (of which none is studied in Belgrade), as well 1652 other languages and 22.000 dialects gathered into 12 linguistic families using 24 different writing scripts; which is peopled by 330 millions of Gods and Goddesses, as well as 1217 million of people of all known ethnic roots assorted into 3742 castes and sub-castes gathered into 4635 different communities, and which every day increase by 30.000, where 60% of the population is younger than 25 years; in which four great religions were born, and the fight for political authority is fought between 85 big political parties; where 94% of the population is self-employed; whose music has 72 musical scales with as many sub-scales, and in which potato can be prepared in over 300 ways?

When we have all that in mind, we simply have to realize that every attitude about India easily finds its contradiction. As the Hindus themselves say, “whatever you say about India, the opposite is also true” (quoted in Storti 4). To say something about India is not simple, since in each word as well as in every unspoken thought, there lurks a contrast, an amphiboly, an infinity blossoming in contradictions. Mind can rescue itself from this philosophical trouble like Kant did in a similar kind of dilemma when, confronted with antinomies, he found a safe haven in the transcendental notion of the thing itself.

If India had not been the thing itself, if the reality of its culture had not been transcendental, it would have empirically collapsed into contradictions found at every step and in every place. The orientation of the Indian culture towards transcendental qualities inevitably stems from the incessant array of unsurpassable contraries from which it springs. All of them continue to exist in India, since no one, be it a spiritual or a sober economical prophet, attempts to resolve and abolish them, but instead lets them flow freely so that eventually they touch and cross with each other somewhere in the infinity, on the other side of experience.

*Holding lectures at Indian universities in interims between travels I felt as if I were somehow moving between daily, historical life, in its vast plots, and cosmic life, eternal and immutable. At moments I felt as if I were hovering somewhere between heaven and earth, wake and dream only to slowly realize that the Indian culture too is a constant ungraspable hovering between heaven and earth, history and cosmos. What happened to me, led by some kind of “strange hand of a daring coincidence” was the Indian culture itself. It is alive for it has power to happen and to be directly there, to push life, to be life's insolation, to encourage it to come before the face of heavens. It did not appear to me as something external, as a precious museum exhibit, a distant reflex, something standing against me; it hurried to meet me, it came by the path on which distances were disappearing and misunderstandings were vanishing that are so dear to history and its utopian complications.*

*That strength united India. Countless small and often quarrelling kingdoms melded into a unitary core by the fusion energies of a great culture that has been continually working for more than five millennia and that has made such an impossible act quite simple. It was not for one single moment surprised by its own unification – doing it at once, in one stroke, without delay and moaning of the difficult European delivery. So that the paradox could be mightier still, the unification was prepared exactly by the colonial lord whose famous maxim was “Dieu et mon droit” or in Latin, “Divide et impera”, or in Serbian, “Only me and no one else”. With its subliminal energies India won the battle against reckless English colonialism that managed to eradicate not only peoples but entire races in previous ages. India rid itself of it by a pre-eminent culture of tolerance that was inevitably rooted both in heaven as well as earth.*

*I remember the scene from the film “Gandhi” when satyāgrahi, Hindus devoted to non-violence, approach in endless ranks English soldiers who beat them mercilessly while the Hindus do not resist the least. They fall to the ground without attempting to defend themselves, they simply pile one on another, to die symbolically for being ashamed of their torturers – it seems as if they are metaphorically burning*

*themselves like the mentioned teacher Baba Rama, who himself probably could not stand the shame for all that is done to the world by traders trying to sacrifice it on the altar of the capital to the evil spirit of consumerist society. And thus India succeeded, without one fired bullet, almost without a raised voice, to defeat the greatest colonial force of those times. Gandhi's victory is not historical, since historical victories are achieved with clubs and fists; it is in its sense super-historical, for it is something that we are yet to understand. Europe is truly trying to unite like India did in 1947, but the impression is that it is investing the last atom of its energy into that unification, that it is straining itself so much to finish the process that in the end it will fall apart, while India seemingly achieved it without effort, with an ease that testifies on its inner strength. The thing is simple: attractive forces in India are much stronger than the repulsive ones; there is much more love in India and it simply shows in great, critical moments of decision. Of course, Gandhi was later assassinated, and that wound is painful, but is not incurable for knife cannot reach Vivekananda. Gandhi could not have performed liberation if he had not previously known the essence of freedom. The main preparation for the liberation was achieved by Swami Vivekananda, teacher, philosopher, reformer, who explained what freedom is. Our problem actually lies in that we are incessantly struggling for freedom without knowing what it is, nobody told us about it, we are always experiencing it negatively, as "freedom from". That is why we always win in the struggle for freedom, but as in a curse we stay without it. Vivekananda expressed the meaning of freedom, made a solid base on which Gandhi could powerfully deliver the matter of liberation without any violence whatsoever. The main spiritus movens of liberation is Vivekananda, and in that consideration we see the sanity of Indian culture who dedicated to him a magnificent mausoleum building it on the most southern spot of its territory, on the island which at the far south touches the Indian sub-continent.*

In India liberation is always transcendental. Only countries that tamed, pacified, suppressed and erased their contradictions, in which false prophets are speaking of roads without alternatives, where everything is clear from now until the end of the world, can seek for their solutions in empirical experience and historically defined "reality".



But India, a forceful spring of contraries which constantly emanates and throws out new appearances and events, historical liberation can be rooted only in religion. “Not “economy,” “history,” “progress,” but the notions of dharma (normative order), karma (moral act and effect), and jati (caste) as principle of social layering are therefore the foundation of the Indian society” (Singh, 21). And no neoliberal watered down Hegelian “development” can change anything about it, even if it performed its play in the Globe theatre.

Liberators in India are religious reformers: Shankara, Vivekananda, Sri Aurobindo..., and Gandhi is their self-conscious contractor working on the building of the culture of freedom powerful enough to defeat, without violence, the imperial “Spirit” of numbed contraries. That completely challenges the received opinion in the West that religion should be separated from the secular life and that the social theory can only be carried out by enlightened philosophers such as Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, Montesquieu, Tocqueville and other secular thinkers like them. India too could follow Hobbes and Locke and ask together with them whether individuals in their natural state are evil or good. With such childishness of the Enlightenment it would not have found strength to begin liberation, but would instead be losing itself in the lack of freedom and secular and religious establishments which exploit that lack most successfully. In India there is a lot less lack of freedom than in Europe that has been trying to separate church from the state in the name of historical conquest of freedom, which itself may not be so bad, but it happened in such way that together with the dirty water the child too was thrown out, for at the same time religion was divorced from life. Like an inquisitor, Europe condemned its true reformers to another reality so that in that way she could deny any transcendence to life.

Europe that is flickering with expectations of the future does not have patience to let the contraries intersect somewhere in the infinity. Defending itself against the transcendental culture of India and at the same time passionately seeking its material wealth, powerless to confront the free play of contraries, defending itself exactly against that, the enlightened Europe has been imagining utopias to banish the



transcendental reality from presence into future where it will never come true. It conceived the notion of history whose main task is to lull into the *real* immanent but always delayed solution of the contradictions.

*India is first of all the land of freedom, for in it you can feel that long-forgotten state and sentiment at every step. Not declarative, ideological, corporative freedom, Taste of Freedom from the Winston cigarettes advertisement, or the equally deceptive human rights from the United Nations declarations, but the free experience of life and world. That is why in India there does not exist such intense trade with ideologies of freedom, there are the fewest utopian projections of "we are going towards", endless historical deceits that have been strangling Europe for centuries. In India with all its troubles you still feel like you are breathing freely and that other people are breathing freely too – it is a country of unobstructed breathing where you can catch your breath. That is why as a professor of cultural anthropology I liked seeing a big tourist advertisement at the southern cape of India: "Free yourself from history, come". This shows that it is clear to them as well that the main affliction of Europe is history. We are all sick with that, and the medicine we take to cure us is leading us, as Kierkegaard says, into sickness unto death.*

*Europe is also distressed over the traditional Indian division of the society into castes. It seems like that is against freedom, and that it does not allow for vertical mobility. The division into castes has been inherited from previous millennia but it is a part of the Indian culture. Nobody claims that it is an ideal state, but it is an organization of the society which is not hypocritical, which is simply acknowledged, like lobbying in America. What produces troubles in other political systems is legalized in America and functions without damaging the system too much. Similarly, the division into castes which is latent in all societies, even those that hypocritically deny that by giving different names to social differences, is in India an integrated part of the culture because of which the society suffers less from the democratic neurosis according to which we are all equal until we try to realize that equality.*

*Therefore India does not waste itself in the neurosis of the divided self, and has incomparably more energy than any other country. And that energy ranges from wild personal and collective passions to the most subtle manifestations of the beauty of the soul and freedom of the mind. Often that creative energy of freedom is disclosed in the unexpected projects and undertakings. For example, the agrarians of the state of Kerala started using Coca Cola as a cheap and reliable pesticide. Although Coca Cola issued a statement that such use of the popular drink is not based on science, the villagers still continued using it to protect their crops. The state of Kerala did not stop them from using Coca Cola in that fashion, but it realized that such use is incompatible with the regular use of Coca Cola as a drink, and hence the latter was made illegal.*

Indian culture is the result of heightened sensitivity, having a feeling for almost ungraspable undertones, little differences difficult to discern, slippery analogies, unrestrained difference. Contrary to that, the Western culture is digital, light-dark, zero and one; it is a place where nuances quickly disappear and where there is effort to command the separated contraries, to put them into an order in which there is no appeal and in which everything is allowed. That is how the European culture, which ruled a very huge geographic map and where with satellite precision it drew everything she owned in the material world, found itself imperceptibly exiled on a small island of the histories of exhausted differences and numbed contraries where the transcendental quality of life, an infinity lurking in everything and in every moment, is no longer perceived nor felt.

Indian musician plays by composing at the same time what we can no longer hear because the European music is now reduced to two scales. Old Greek music had eight scales and it took a lot of fruitful historical work for the progress of European culture to end up on two scales, and in the recent time in atonal noise. The ungraspable Indian music can be heard in the Sanskrit “alphabet” with 14 vocals which are below the threshold of audibility in Serbian and other languages. Then there are long and short simple vocals: a, i, u, r, l (vocalic r and l exist in the Serbian language as well, but they are not different in writing

from semi-vocals, which is not the case in Sanskrit), complex e and o, and the long complex ai and au. There are, so that the music of the language could be equally complex as the music of instruments, even three “na” – guttural, palatal and dental, two “sha”, postalveolar and palatal... and so on until the whole reality is transformed into music, which was so dear to ancient philosophers (Kostić 2009).

In difference to the cultural policies that stop at anthropocentric borders or have imperial pseudo-global strivings, the cultural politics of India does not have boundaries because we are still dreaming the same dream, the music we have forgotten so long ago, which reminds us of the moment when it all began, of the place whence it came from. That dream has been besieging Europe who could only be excited by India like that. Dreams of India, enlarged by the fantastical inventions, have been moving European history stronger than any other force. Even Christianity, with its vision of the Kingdom of Heaven imperceptibly sank into the story of the kingdom of earthly wealth. And no matter how much it resisted India and its Gods in the waking world, Christianity turned into a seeker for the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth. Karl Marx’s communism where everybody will have according to their needs is also India, hidden and so disfigured that it has become unrecognizable. Old travelogue writers used to describe India in the same way Marx described communism. Marx, even if in his subconscious, carried with himself something of the Indian dream of plenty. In his time, thanks to the capital coming from the colonized India, the industrial revolution shakes the world awakening visions that new wealth should belong to everyone, if not here and now, then at least in the communism of the future. But his simple oversight was that new wealth does not come mainly from work, but from the immeasurable horn of plenty spilling over from India and its dream.

British East Indian Company, which holds that horn in its hand like a divinity, was the only corporation to rule a country, the first example in history that a corporation became an imperial force. It had power over people, industry and trade up until 1857 and the armed uprising. Even though it was seemingly dismantled, it actually transformed several times in every possible way, keeping the same colonial essence,

only to finally come from draconian prohibitions to the neoliberal control with patents, biopiracy and aggressive culture of globalization. Today's globalization, in which corporations are becoming ever richer, and countries ever poorer, has been largely envisioned according to the pattern set by East Indian Company. It is an effort to colonize not just India, but the dream itself, and to make out of it a trivial story of historical development in which every trace of the transcendence is lost.

## **America as False India**

Contrary to that, it should never be forgotten that India was discovered in a dream as an amphibolous dream of infinity. Namely, Columbus had an idea that the true way to reach India is to trick the historical path and contrary to reason sail dialectically to the west to reach the east. He, even though he was a greedy rogue, realized Renaissance dream that energy can only be produced out of contraries and that only by sailing in antinomies whose source reason cannot reach, one can find a way to India. And he was right. The only thing he did not know was that India is always double and that it always has at least two faces. He merely discovered the first, semblant face, the historical illusion of India – America. Having no moral qualities, he could not possibly reach the transcendence of India, and instead he stumbled on the materiality of America, convinced that it must be India. And it really was, but in a way which he could never see. America stood in the way, and India, the real one, the thing itself, was never really discovered. It was but colonized, still only for a short time showing the enslaved continents powerlessness of colonialism. Truth be told, Columbus's job was not to see such things. His only task was to plunder. The work of understanding does not even belong to those who use contraries, but to those who pass through the frame of history to the fifth dimension of the thing itself.

It is completely certain that the discovery of America is a consequence of the search for India. The global power of America started appearing when the capital of East Indian Company started arriving to it. America is even now a would-be India, a land of plenty, for so much capital and so much energy was breathed into it that for a moment it seemed like a real India. But while in India plenty is

something utterly natural, something that belongs to the endless diversity of the nature of things, in America it is squeezed out with hardship and built into a monolyte where diversity is abating on the ominous soil of ruling culture.

Hegel correctly notices that, when the Spirit came to America, all else disappeared: "Of America and its culture... we have some news indeed, but only such news that it was a completely natural culture which had to come to ruin as soon as the Spirit approached it" (Hegel 1956, 87). The Spirit because of which everything is coming to ruin is the greatest threat today because it did not stop after eradicating American native people – it has now turned against the man himself. The foray of the enlightened Spirit continues before our eyes so that we may witness many thousands of living species disappearing, and the living world being replaced with genetic surrogates. This would probably make Hegel very happy because he could show what the Spirit is capable of and that it would not rest in peace until the last form of natural life perished.

As India slowly disappeared within America with the invasion of the Spirit that banished contraries, the latter remained a mere shell, a big island of history ready to leave *dream* and colonize *wake*. One should not forget for one moment how many dreams were devoted and given to America which like Aphrodite was born out of the sea foam from the incessant dream of India out of which its very history was built. All those that came over the ocean had first dreamt it. And it seemed that it was a more real India than India itself. The released energy of dreams, something like Nikola Tesla's released electricity, flooded and irrigated life that was living life to the full because it was in the state of dreaming. As Charles Simic says:

Even in a prison in Italy, he told me, I was in a mate and dreamt of New York. One morning, at dawn, Germans took him to the yard and he thought that they would shoot him. Before him was a squad of armed soldiers, together with an officer, but then a photographer came with a tripod and made a few pictures of my father

standing next to the wall. He had no idea why. 'I want to see New York before I die,' he told Germans as they led him back to the cell. (Simic, 102)

But it was only a picture of India, a picture of dream in full colour and on cinematograph. In spite of what Hollywood, CNN and dazzled Windows think, dream cannot be colonized. "We are all coming to America expecting to become part of a Hollywood film. Most American films are shot in South California, and if in Europe you had watched palms waving in the air while under the crowns of the trees someone like Rita Hayworth is passing in a white limousine, you would have got a completely wrong impression about this country. Do people really live like that, I was wondering. What will they say about my rotten teeth and my funny accent? America was a fearful heaven" (Simic, 118).

In a word, America is a transcendence caving into an empirical realm of a fearful heaven. It had a chance to be India, for it arose from the same dreamlike play of contraries, but the Spirit of which Hegel was speaking would not let it happen. Neither Hegel, nor America, nor East Indian Company could understand that dream is far more precious than attained wake, for while in wake life is always striving towards something, in dreams it has already arrived. India is a place where all wanderings conclude and commence because it has taken its transcendental nature outside empirical transience with an unquenchable energy of contradictions, antinomies and amphibolies that no wake can tame. India is a school of disciplining life and bringing it to dream, which is a path that has to be taken by all who are going towards philosophy. Without the experience of India, philosophy is, as we have seen in Hegel's example, condemned only to its history – like life itself.

Hence even today, after all that has happened, India has remained our dream that can embrace all history; it has kept something of the life which is dream in the waking world. India still keeps the sounds we cannot hear and visions we can only see in dream. A huge square, full of bustle of people and carts in whose middle are lying cows that

nobody is chasing away, around which all are passing – the drivers, and the pedestrians, and the rikshas – with respect and care. Or there are those same cows or some other cows, from the beginning of this text, who are completely calmly lying in the middle of the road undisturbedly watching vehicles slowing down as they approach them and then going around them. Those views convince us at once that we are in the middle of a dream, for they are impossible in the wake of imprisoned “mad cows”, the functional life overstuffed with things and pressing matters in whose way nothing can stand or stay, which tramples all in its path so that delivery could be fast and accurate – delivery, first and foremost, of one’s self as commodity.

Gandhi said of Hinduism: “The central fact of Hinduism is cow protection. Cow protection to me is one of the most wonderful phenomena in human evolution. It takes the human being beyond this species. The cow to me means the entire sub-human world. Man through the cow is enjoined to realize his identity with all that lives. Why the cow was selected for apotheosis is obvious to me. The cow was in India the best companion. She was the giver of plenty. Not only did she give milk, but she also made agriculture possible. Cow is a living symbol of God’s grace. She is the mother to millions of Indian mankind. Protection of the cow means protection of the whole dumb creation of God” (Prabhu & Rao 36).

These few words by Ghandi are perhaps the best way to depict the cultural politics of India – *protection of the whole God’s dumb creation*. It is a healing dream of India, discovered for so many times, but never revealed in its countless elusive forms; conquered so many times, but never taken, for the dream that keeps “God’s dumb creation” cannot be colonized, it always evades us as soon as we let of the loud outcry of victory, just when it seems to us that we have it in our hands, that we possess its meaning and understand its message. God’s dumb creation, the dark matter of sociability, music and vocals that we cannot hear are those things that determine freedom and rise of a community. That is best realized in the noise of swine flu and bird flu epidemics, vanished living species, plundered ores and reckless pollution of water, earth and air. Hegel’s “Spirit” has now imploded into a loud technology that is



trampling over God's dumb creation. Plants, which are, as Hegel realizes, the essence of Indian religion, are mercilessly patented so that, like they were truly new, we have protection of all those products which have been used for centuries: thus is heritage of dreamings of countless generations seized away. From immemorial ages, the knowledge on the Neem tree has been gathered, restored and transferred without any thought that it could ever become someone's possession, because it belonged to everyone. Although Neem has been used since forever in Ayurvedic medicine, today American and Japanese corporations are biopiratically holding more than 12 patents for the products derived from it. Now the people of India have to pay those corporations for rights to use Neem because of their patent rights to "Spirit" – just like once they had to pay East Indian Company for the right to use salt from the Indian Ocean. Colonization by patents is but a continuation of the British imperial practice that began with the prohibition of the Ayurvedic medicine, the obliteration of knowledge and shutting down the clinics. Not only was the natural and cultural heritage endangered by this, but also sustaining of life by traditional healing, first and foremost by Ayurveda which came into being 5000 years ago and which is today practiced by around 600.000 Ayurvedic physicians and over million practitioners on 70% of the population. They are mainly healing from their dreams, utterly convinced that the very patient they are treating has helped the physician in previous life. And so is the infinite horizon of existence reflected in one more way, more ungraspable than we can even imagine in the wake.

*Respecting cows who are walking around like equal, shall we say, citizens and to whom the same rights are given as to humans, is so different from the conditions in the barns of "advanced" countries. In India they are not engines for exploitation, but dignified public beings. People accept them as only different in form and for a moment it can appear to us that they are completely aware of their position and that they are no less religious than humans. It is us, burdened by the Argonautics of overpowering nature and other anthropocentric illusions, who find this hard to accept: utter disbelief overcomes us when in the temples we see elephants officiating priestly duties.*



*Perhaps the most exciting moment of my travels was when in a temple in Madurai, in the hall of a thousand pillars, an elephant came close to me and blessed me by laying his trunk on my head. We looked into each other's eyes and it seemed to me as if we felt a mutual closeness, and between us the Theory of Evolution collapsed and I felt what rarely happens in life, a moment of unblemished joy. I recalled that in many other ancient cultures the animals were clerical beings and that when they were ejected from the temples what began to happen was their extermination from the world which has now led to, statistically expressed, the disappearance of one species every 15 minutes. The meeting with the elephant disturbed some layers of archetypal memory that were buried deep down, and reminded me of what we had actually lost with the Theory of Evolution that divides living beings into "lower" and "higher", probably to extend the system of castes to nature. However, the animals in 2006 predicted tsunami and retreated in time to safety, while humans, so proud of their remote sensing and other technologies simply drowned.*

*It is not only this treatment of animals but also many other things that remind of some Golden Age, when in ancient times of free cows of the Sun-god, it was Harmony, and not Argonauts, who ruled the world. In India we have survival of some images from those remote times, perhaps just those about the cattle of Helios from the beginning of this text, which can be noticed through the relationship with nature, with the living world, with other humans. Glimmering of those golden times offers itself not only in sacred rituals but also in the street.*

*I loved to ride by their city buses which remind of the Saurians long ago extinct, for they have no doors nor glasses, since they simply do not need them, because even there we can see their openness towards nature. From the opened buses one can often hear music and the drivers ride these distant ancestors of today's models with a contagious appetite, unquenching exhilaration, as if they were taming mythical monsters, turning the huge steering wheel and continually pressing the honk so that it seems like they are breathing something of their own life into the vehicle and that they are making living beings out of metallic pots. Both the car and its driver are alive, melded into in a movement*

*which passes the boundary between living and non-living matter. What a difference it is from the European driver who is a mere extension of the machine, both physically and psychically. I was sharing my seat – or to say it better, a bench – with a fellow traveller when he suddenly rose and started calling another passenger so that he too could sit because there was enough place. We huddled and he sat so that on the next stop he called a traveller coming into the bus and invited him as well to sit with us so that he too would not stay standing. There was barely any space but it was the inner space which incredibly expanded, and bliss was over-pouring on the faces of my fellow travellers because they were able to do something for another person, because their goodwill was accepted and because in that way they could have possibly improved their karma. I could physically feel happiness radiating from my fellow travellers and in a flash I realized that the bus had become a temple, that what was happening in it was the mystery of metamorphosis for which people usually go to church. In the very spot was overcome the limitation of space and we were swimming in an atmosphere of fulfillment that people are seeking for their entire life, I guess. And the experience did not end there, for at the next station the driver turned back, saw a passenger standing and with the kindest gestures invited him to sit behind him on a toolbox. In that moment it was clear to me that this bus is not going to the place written on its board. It in fact did not need to go further, for we had already arrived. It was enough for me to realize that in India cattle of Helios still exists. The video I made of the driver and his bus reminds me on that and it is one of the dearest relics from this trip. I always watch it as an antidote when on television I hear the calls of the Argonauts to hurry because we are getting late for an imaginary ship or train. How could I be late when I have already arrived?*

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