the sources of his own tradition were suitable for promoting and legitimizing such an openness; in his eyes, this was a confirmation of their own power and validity in the face of the challenge from abroad. In this sense, they were not just vehicles of receptivity, but also became sources of inspiration and instruction for the non-Indian world, able "to impart divine knowledge to mankind at large."[88]

13. Neo-Hinduism, Modern Indian Traditionalism, and the Presence of Europe

1. The hermeneutic situation which is expressed in Rammohan Roy's "multilingualism," his cross-cultural horizon of self-understanding and appeal, his position between receptivity and self-assertion, "Westernization" and "Hindu revivalism," forms the background and basic condition of modern Hindu thinking and self-understanding. Rammohan's own role as "father of modern India" has often been exaggerated, and it has assumed almost mythical proportions. Yet his life and work represent more than just a chronological starting-point for the development of modern Hindu thought.

Since Rammohan's time, it has become increasingly obvious that the European, i.e., primarily British, presence in India was not just another case of foreign invasion and domination, or of cross-cultural, interreligious "encounter." Instead, it was an encounter between tradition and modernity, i.e., an exposure to new forms of organization and administration, to unprecedented claims of universality and globalization, to rationalization, technology, and a comprehensive objectification of the world. It also meant the advent of a new type of objectification of the Indian tradition itself, an unprecedented exposure to theoretical curiosity and historical "understanding," and to the interests of research and intellectual mastery.

The European presence in India since Rammohan Roy has been vastly different from the Indian presence in Europe. And this is not just due to Europe's superior political and administrative power, nor is it a matter of factual information *about* Europe. It is a presence which is spread through a variety of institutions, technical innovations, missionary activities, educational policies, and other direct and indirect channels. Accordingly, the Indian response has many levels and facets, and it is as complex and differentiated as India itself. It reflects the linguistic and religious, the social and cultural variety of the Indian tradition. It is expressed in English, Sanskrit,

and numerous vernaculars, in art, literature, and philosophy, in social, political, and religious movements, through cooperation with, and withdrawal from, the Europeans, through innovations in traditional garb, and the rearticulation of traditional ideas in Europen terms and concepts. It occurs in statements about, and adaptations of, Western ideas, but also in reaffirmations and reinterpretations of the Hindu tradition and identity, in active participation in Western "civilization" and the globalization of science and technology, or in its critique and rejection. It is represented by poets, pandits, and politicians, by theorists and practitioners, by popular and elitist movements. For modern Indians, dealing with the West is not a matter of choice or predilection: it is a historical necessity and predicament.

2. The wide variety of attempts to respond to the West and to articulate or reinterpret the meaning and identity of the Hindu tradition in the modern world can be exemplified by the following brief and selective list of names: Radhakant Deb (Rādhākānta Deva), I.C. Vidyasagar (Īśvaracandra Vidyāsāgara), and Debendranath Tagore (Devendranātha Ṭhākura), who criticized, modified, and continued Rammohan Roy's work; proponents of Tantric and Vedantic "experience" like Ramakrishna (Rāmakṛṣṇa; i.e., Gadādhara Caṭṭopādhyāya) and Ramaṇa Maharṣi; Vedicizing reformers, most notably Dayānanda Sarasvatī; Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and numerous other Vaiṣṇava reformers and universalists; B.G. Tilak, M.K. Gandhi and other nationalists and political leaders; poets and thinkers like Bankim Chandra Chatterji (Bankimcandra Caṭṭopādhyāya) and Rabindranath Tagore (Ravindranātha Ṭhākura); the great international spokesmen of Neo-Hinduism, such as Vivekananda, Aurobindo, and Radhakrishnan, who expressed themselves primarily in English; encyclopedic scholars and reformers like S.V. Ketkar (Śrīdhara Vyaṅkateśa Ketakara) and Laxman Shastri Joshi (Lakṣmaṇa Śāstrī Jośī); leading Sanskrit pandits, such as Vāsudevaśāstrin Abhyaṅkara, Anantakṛṣṇa Śāstrin, and Gopīnātha Kavirāja; academic teachers of philosophy, such as K.C. Bhattacharya.

It would be preposterous to attempt a complete or even representative account of the xenological, philosophical, or ideological positions and perspectives indicated by these names; nor is it necessary in the context of this study. We can and must be more selective. We will focus our attention on a few important movements and leading individuals who have articulated their xenological positions in an exemplary fashion and who have responded explicitly and specifically to the European ideas of philosophy, science, and religion. In particular, we will deal with the xenological implications of the phenomenon commonly referred to as "modern Indian philosophy," and with some representative and factually influential models of the accommodation, universalization, self-assertion, and reinterpretation of the Hindu tradition. In addition, we will also refer, though

much more briefly, to some scholars and thinkers who have not appealed, at least not explicitly, to Western ideas and audiences, and who have not made any significant use of the English language. This will include references to modern pandits who have tried to cope with the modern world from within the framework of traditional "orthodoxy" and through the medium of Sanskrit.

We will not deal in any detail with the actual spread of Western ideas, the educational policies of the British, the activities of the missionaries, the various channels through which European ideas were disseminated, or the various modes of reception by the different strata of Indian society and in the different areas of India. Islamic revivalism and modernism in India will remain excluded from our presentation.[1] Following our selective survey of important personalities in chapters 13 and 14, we will focus on the role of two fundamental concepts in modern Hindu thought - the concepts of *dharma* and *darśana*, which serve as translations for, but also as devices of self-assertion against, the Western concepts of religion and philosophy.

We will also observe chronological limitations. We will focus on developments in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In general, this study does not deal with the current situation as such, but with its historical antecedents and conditions, and with its hermeneutic background.

3. In a broad classification, Paul Hacker has divided modern Indian thought, and the Indian attitudes towards the West, into "Neo-Hinduism" and "surviving traditional Hinduism." Occasionally, Hacker also speaks of Hindu Modernism (by which he likewise means "Neo-Hinduism"); he avoids the terms "Renaissance" and "Reformation", so preferred by other authors in this context.[2] Neo-Hinduism and Traditionalism are the two main trends in modern Hindu thought, two ways of relating to the Hindu tradition while encountering the West. Whereas Neo-Hinduism has had more "publicity abroad," "surviving traditional Hinduism" has retained a much greater vitality within India itself. Today, both of these approaches find themselves confronted by Marxism.[3]

Hacker stresses that the distincton between Neo-Hinduism and Traditionalism is not based upon any particular teachings: ". . . we should lose sight of the essentials if we were to try to find the decisive difference in the area of doctrine."[4] Thus, for example, the tenets of the essential unity and equality of religions and of a tolerance essentially intrinsic to Hinduism, both of which play such a major and obvious role in Neo-Hinduism, are by no means foreign to Traditionalism.

Traditionalism, it should be noted, has also taken in and assimilated new elements, and is by no means a mere continuation of that which existed before the encounter with the West. Similarly, it is *not* possible to describe

Neo-Hinduism as a rigorous break with the past and its transmission. What distinguishes Neo-Hinduism and Traditionalism are the different ways in which they appeal to the tradition, the structures which they employ to interrelate the indigenous and the foreign, and the degree of their receptivity vis-à-vis the West. Modern traditional Hinduism has preserved an essentially unbroken continuity with the tradition,[5] and it builds upon this foundation, carries on what is already present in the tradition, even though additions are made and extrapolations occur.

4. To be sure, Neo-Hinduism also invokes the tradition, tries to return to it, and hopes to find in it the power and context for its response to the West. Yet as Hacker emphasizes, this return is the result of a rupture and discontinuity. More important than the fact that foreign elements have been added to the tradition is that basic concepts and principles of this tradition have been reinterpreted and provided with new meanings as a result of the encounter with the West: "Neo-Hinduism . . . always implies reinterpretation."[6] The link which the "Neo-Hindus" find to their tradition is, one may say, an afterthought; for they first adopt Western values and means of orientation and then attempt to find the foreign in the indigenous: ". . . afterwards they connect these values with and claim them as part of the Hindu tradition."[7] The ways in which they make use of the key Hindu concept of *dharma* (which shall be discussed in detail below) is especially symptomatic of this. To be sure, the traditionalists have also added new meaning to this concept, and relate it to the non-Indian world in a new manner, for instance in the *sanātanadharma* movements;[8] in contrast to the "Neo-Hindus," however, they do not assign it any essentially new interpretation oriented primarily around Western models.

Hacker's two categories are not mutually exclusive and not always clearly distinguishable. There are possibilities of transition, overlap, or combination. There may indeed be instances of a relatively "pure form of Neo-Hinduism," perhaps Radhakrishnan or Aurobindo,[9] and there are also certain very pronounced forms of confrontation and polemic between Modernism and Traditionalism. Yet it is also possible "that one and the same person combines elements of both ways of thinking."[10] And it is precisely this which so marks the peculiar ambivalence and range of variation which may be seen in modern Indian thought: orthodoxy and receptivity, openness and self-assertion, the new interpretation of indigenous concepts and a Hinduization of Western concepts, all these intermix in a variety of ways.

We should also bear in mind that Neo-Hindu "modernism" by no means advocates an extreme of Westernization: on the one hand, while it may indeed be contrasted with traditionalism,[11] it may also be distinguished from more radical forms of "modernization," secularization, and the adoption of

Western model — Hacker himself mentions Marxism. In general, it is obvious that Hacker's scheme is a simplification, although a useful and convenient one.

5. Referring to his choice of the word "Neo-Hinduism," Hacker says: "I do not know who invented the term Neo-Hinduism. I found it in an informative article by Robert Antoine who presented the Bengali writer Bankim Candra Caṭṭopādhyāya (Chatterjee) as a 'pioneer of Neo-Hinduism.'"[12] Bankim Chandra lived from 1838–1894. Older authors, e.g., Rammohan Roy and his successors, were merely "forerunners" in Hacker's eyes. They could not have been Neo-Hindus in the complete sense of the term because the nationalism which Europe was bringing to India had not yet attained its full bloom in their day; Neo-Hindu nationalism in turn is inseparable from modernization and Westernization.[13]

The appropriateness of this historical differentiation is beyond question. Rammohan Roy, the "father of modern India," was certainly not a nationalist, notwithstanding any subsequent claims that he was indeed the founding figure of Indian nationalism. For Rammohan greeted the British as instruments of Divine Providence and considered their rule over India and the introduction of a European educational system into India to be both necessary and good. Yet there are also a number of reasons to consider him a "forerunner" of Neo-Hinduism, not the least because he helped pave the way for Neo-Hindu nationalism: In Rammohan's work, and in particular in his later development, that cultural and religious self-assertiveness which would later be transformed into modern Indian nationalism became increasingly pronounced; and along with his conviction that the British rule was historically necessary was linked the hope that precisely through this — "from constant intercourse with Europeans"[14] — the will to national self-assertion would ultimately be strengthened. In any case, it is not correct to ascribe to Rammohan a completely indifferent attitude — "this indifference to the 'native' or 'foreign' character of traditions"[15] — in this regard. The practice of reinterpretation which is such an essential element of Neo-Hinduism may also be found in Rammohan's work; and in his view, the introduction of European means of orientation in the fields of politics and ethics, science and technology has to be mediated by a new appropriation and "actualization" of the original teachings of Hinduism. While there is nothing in Rammohan's work as pronounced as Vivekananda's idea of the "practical Vedānta," the foundations of a program for deriving practical consequences from the metaphysics of the Vedānta are already apparent. And it is thus not surprising that the first explicit signs of a confrontation between modernism and traditionalism appear in the controversies initiated by Rammohan, viz., in the *Vedāntacandrikā* and its criticism of the *ādhunika* and *idānīntana* ("innovator", "modernizer").[16]

6. As for the term "Neo-Hinduism," which was employed by R. Antoine and P. Hacker, it appears that the term itself cannot be traced back to Rammohan's time, although the closely related expression "Neo-Vedānta" (as well as "new Vedānta," "Neo-Vedantism") can. Both Christians and Hindus make use of it in their critical and polemical descriptions of a "modernistically" reinterpreted Vedānta.

Already the *Vedāntacandrikā* (1817) itself characterizes Rammohan's pure and imageless monotheism as a "new Vedānta" (*abhinava vedānta* in the Bengali version).[17] Following Rammohan's death, the term "Neo-Vedantism" is used in the debates between the missionaries and the Brāhma Samāj. Thus, for example, a "notice" in the *Calcutta Review* makes a comparative reference to "Neo-Platonism" and continues: "So, in like manner, ought much of what, nowadays, is made to pass for Vedantism, — consisting as it does of a new compound arising from an incorporation of many Western ideas with fragments of oriental thought — to be designated Neo-Vedantism to distinguish it from the old."[18] In the following decades, the more fully developed Neo-Vedānta takes up the challenge from both sides and attempts to prove that its "innovations" in no way represent an external addition of Western elements, but rather draw from the potential originally contained in Hinduism and the Vedānta.

Our discussions below will primarily consider Neo-Hinduism and, specifically, the Neo-Vedānta. This is not due so much to the fact that it, as Hacker has correctly stressed, has attracted more publicity in the West, but rather because it provides an explicit and exemplary demonstration of the relationship with the Western world and the hermeneutic problems involved in the confrontation with it. Standing between traditionalism and orthodoxy on the one hand and a mere mimicry of Western models on the other, it represents, so to speak, the xenological core of modern Indian thought.

Before we begin with our discussion of the concepts of *dharma* and *darśana*, concepts that provide such prime illustrations of the hermeneutic and xenological orientation of modern Hinduism, we shall first present a short survey of some major religious and intellectual movements in the period following Rammohan Roy. Our main focus will be upon the following thinkers and developments: Debendranath Tagore, Keshab Chandra Sen, and the development of the Brāhma Samāj; Bankim Chandra Chatterji and "Humanism" and "Positivism"; Ramakrishna, Vivekananda, and their successors; and Dayananda Sarasvati and the Ārya Samāj; we shall also look briefly at some twentieth-century figures, i.e., Aurobindo, Radhakrishnan, Coomaraswamy, and K.C. Bhattacharya. In addition, we shall also refer to testimony from the orthodox and pandit literature, and to other instances of a more traditionalist xenology.[19]

7. One question that was of central importance for later developments emerged in Rammohan's work, although he did not discuss it in a fully explicit and thematic fashion. This question concerns the basis and the extent of the binding "revelation" in Hinduism and its relationship to the "revelations" of other religions traditions, as well as the true sources of religions conviction in general.

This theme acquired a central significance with Debendranath Tagore (Devendranātha Ṭhākura, 1817–1905),[20] probably the most important leader of the Brāhma Samāj after Rammohan's death. In 1839, Debendranath founded the Tattvabodhinī Sabhā, an organization that was closely linked to the Brāhma Samāj and whose magazine, the *Tattvabodhinī Patrikā*, represented the views of the Samāj. In contrast to Rammohan, Debendranath posed the question as to the authority of the Hindu holy scriptures in a very direct and explicit manner. Together with his friends, he tried to determine how much of the traditional material was indeed binding and reliable and could be accepted once and for all as the valid vasis of the "religion of the believers in Brahma." In further contrast to Rammohan, Debendranath quickly broke with the Vedānta philosophy of Śaṅkara, whose non-dualism appeared completely unsuited to the establishment of a new religious and social life. He concluded that he should replace Śaṅkara's commentaries to the Upaniṣads with interpretations of his own.[21] Other texts and groups of texts also were inadequate in his eyes; no text speaks for itself, none proves its own authority: the principle of selection, the criterion of authority, i.e., the foundation of religious conviction, is not to be found *in* the texts:

> I came to see that the pure heart, filled with the light of intuitive knowledge (*ātmapratyayasiddhajñānojjvalita viśuddha hṛdaya*), — this was its basis. Brahma reigned in the pure heart alone. The pure, unsophisticated heart was the seat of Brahmaism (*brāhmadharmer pattanabhūmi*). We could accept those texts only of the Upanishads which accorded with that heart. Those sayings which disagreed with the heart we could not accept.[22]

The Upaniṣads themselves contain as it were reports about that which the ancient seers (*ṛṣi*) have experienced and tested (*parīkṣita*), and they encourage each of us to follow the "test" or the "experiment" of his own heart (*hṛdayer parīkṣā*).[23]

8. Debendranath places himself in the position of a "seer" and attempts to personally realize and reactualize what is documented in the Upaniṣads - at least as far as they are true and acceptable: "Thinking thus, I laid my heart open to God, and said: 'Illumine Thou the darkness of my soul.' By His Mercy my heart was instantly enlightened... Thus by the grace of God, and through the language of the Upanishads, I evolved the foundation of the

Brāhma Dharma from my heart."[24] The source of truth, that site of divine inspiration, may be found in one's "own heart," and in the final analysis, what the Upaniṣads actually provide is merely a linguistic medium, a means of expression. Of course, it is obvious that the immediacy and authority of religious experience which Debendranath claims to have located in his "own heart" contains European ingredients. It is inspired by the modern European search for certitude, as well as by various Western conceptions of inspiration and intuition, and, more specifically, by the ideas of the Scottish school of common sense. In his critical approach to the authority of "sacred texts," he was, moreover, influenced by the views of his companion Aksay Kumar Datt, who was a much more radical "Westernizer" and "modernizer."[25]

On the other hand, European conceptions are recast as vehicles for Hindu self-assertion; for example, the term *ātmapratyaya*, which appears in the *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad* as part of the compound *ekātmapratyayasāra*, is utilized to translate and Hinduize the concept of intuition. Debendranath reinterprets this term, which was originally understood as the non-dualistic self-presence of absolute consciousness.[26]

Debendranath's self-assertion as a Hindu is much more pronounced than Rammohan's. In the *Brāhmadharmagrantha*, which appeared in two parts between 1850–1852 and was intended to serve as the basic text-book for the Brāhma Samāj, he made almost exclusive use of Hindu sources, although he occasionally modified and rephrased the original texts.[27] At the same time, his doctrine of intuition and his interpretation of religious texts as documents of inner experience opened up new dimensions of universality and of interaction with other religions, and it paved the way for such exemplary Neo-Hindu views as that of Radhakrishnan, who saw all valid religious documents, both within and without Hinduism, as records of "experiences," and thus understood "intuition" and "experience" as the basis and the common denominator of all religions.[28]

9. Debendranath represents what might be termed a conservative universalism; he was not inclined to change the forms of Hindu social and religious life in a radical manner or to reduce them to syncretisms or "common denominators" with other religions. Rajnarain Bose, who was closely associated with Debendranath and advocated Unitarian universalism as well as Indian nationalism, stated: "Although Brahmoism is a universal religion, it is impossible to communicate a universal form to it. It must wear a particular form in a particular country."[29]

The universal as well as syncretistic potential inherent in Debendranath's approach became much more manifest in the work of a man who was Debendranath's partner and complement in the development of the Brāhma Samāj and yet also his antipode: Keshab Chandra Sen (1838–1884).

The development which became clear with Roy and Devendranath — although in some ways only implicitly — gained greater significance with Keshab: While Roy had not yet thematically conceived the contrast between scripture and intuition, Devendranath entertained open doubts about the infallibility of the Veda. Keshab expanded this view even more by granting inspired intuition a general precedence over all written 'revelation.'[30]

Keshab was much more inclined than Debendranath to search for "inspired" sources outside of Hinduism as well and to demonstrate the universal harmony among the traditions by compiling exemplary records of religious experience. In 1866, he founded his own branch of the Brāhma Samāj, within which a new schism occurred in 1878.[31] In 1880, he proclaimed the "New Dispensation (*nava vidhāna*) which, as the third "dispensation" following the "dispensations" of the Old and the New Testaments, was intended to establish the universal church and the harmony of all religions. Keshab's *Ślokasaṃgraha*, a counterpart of Debendranath's *Brāhmadharmagrantha*, offers a collection of quotes from Hindu, Buddhist, Jewish, Christian, Islamic, and Chinese religious sources.[32]

I believe in the Church Universal which is the deposit of all ancient wisdom and the receptacle of all modern science, which recognizes in all prophets and saints a harmony, in all scriptures a unity and through all dispensations a continuity, which abjures all that separates and divides, always magnifies unity and peace, which harmonizes reason and faith, yoga and bhakti, asceticism and social duty in their highest forms and which shall make of all nations and sects one kingdom and one family in the fullness of time.[33]

10. With this, it is obvious that Keshab has arrived at an understanding of history and soteriology that is no longer Indian. He comes closer to Christianity — which he considers to be the "religion of Humanity," the "worship of Humanity"[34] — than any other leader of the Brāhma Samāj, and yet through his universalism he simultaneously distances himself from the Christian tradition. Jesus is a great seer, a *ṛṣi* — along with others, along with Buddha, Caitanya, Moses, Kabīr, etc., all of whom have been drawn together into an "indissoluble organic unity" through the "power of the heart."[35]

In his attempts to find a criterion for the truth and validity of "intuition" and the "voice of the heart" which he perceives in himself and in the testimony of the "seers," Keshab, like Debendranath before him, adheres to such eighteenth and nineteenth century Western philosophical conceptions as "instinctive belief," "common sense," "a priori truths," "moral sense," "primitive cognitions," and a complete arsenal of corresponding concepts.[36]

The East and the West, and especially India and Europe, should complement and correct one another. Europeans should teach the Indians science and exact thought, while learning in turn "ancient wisdom from India."[37]

Europe, the Lord has blessed thee with scholarship and science and philosophy, and with these thou art great among the nations of the earth. Add to these the faith and intuition and spirituality of Asia, and thou shalt be far greater still. Asia honours thy philosophy; do thou honour, o Europe, Asia's spirituality and communion. Thus shall we rectify each other's errors and supplement mutual deficiencies.[38]

This model of a mutual supplementation of scientific and analytical thought and religious spirituality, in particular as presented by Vivekananda, has become typical of Neo-Hindu self-awareness and the Neo-Hindu interpretation of the relationship between India and Europe. P.C. Mozoomdar/Majumdar (Pratāpacandra Majumdāra; 1840–1905) continued Keshab's work in his publications, specifically *The Oriental Christ*, and on several journeys to Europe and America. In 1893, he represented the Brāhma Samāj at the World Parliament of Religions in Chicago.[39]

11. In spite of his great willingness to accommodate Christianity, in spite of the affiliation of his "New Dispensation" with the "dispensations" of the Old and the New Testaments, Keshab considered himself to be essentially the fulfiller and executor of Hinduism: Hinduism alone has been called to lead Christianity to its true universality and to simultaneously perfect itself therein. Speaking of Christ, Keshab states: "The Acts of his Hindu Apostles will form a fresh chapter in his universal gospel. Can he deny us, his logical succession?"[40] The Hindu tradition of inclusivism is placed under the name of Christ: the "Christianization" of India is simultaneously the Hinduization of Christianity. Keshab's program was illustrated and radicalized in an idiosyncratic fashion by Brahmabandhab Upadhyay (1861–1907), a nationalist and journalist who converted to Christianity — first to Protestantism, then to Catholicism — and yet remained convinced that he had not compromised his being Hindu: he had merely actualized and fulfilled the spiritual universalism immanent in his "Hinduism." On the other hand, Brahmabandhab produced some of the sharpest anti-British polemics of his day.[41]

In the later part of his life, Keshab had numerous encounters with Ramakrishna (i.e., Gadādhara Cattopādhyāya, 1836–1886), who was probably the most famous representative of "living Hinduism" and has become the very symbol of the potential of undogmatic religious experience and ecstasy contained within the Hindu tradition.[42] In Keshab's eyes, Ramakrishna seems to demonstrate that his idea of the harmony of religions, his *nava vidhāna*, could be fulfilled and lived within Hinduism; conversely, Keshab is one of the most frequently mentioned personalities in

the so-called *Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*.[43] P.K. Sen has correctly contested the assumption that Ramakrishna had a profound influence on Keshab long before the two ever met, Keshab had already found his own way to the "Religion of Harmony."[44] And in spite of their well-attested mutual affection, it is the differences in their behavior and their orientations that strike one most. Nevertheless, both of these figures demonstrate the themes of self-assertion and universalism, of receptivity and preservation and fulfillment of the tradition, that were imposed by history upon nineteenth century Hinduism.

12. In contrast to Keshab, Ramakrishna did not affiliate himself with the Brāhma Samāj: instead, he was among its most effective critics. In a certain sense, the restorative features of his criticism were a continuation of the tradition exemplified by the *Vedāntacandrikā*.[45]

The world, as the living play and manifestation of God, neither requires "reform," nor is it receptive to it. Ramakrishna had little more than mild irony when speaking of the will to social and religious reform exhibited by so many of his contemporaries: he viewed this as just one form of attachment to the world, and a lack of freedom for the divine. In his eyes, the Brāhma Samāj's program of reform was an abstraction which isolates one aspect of the divine and the religious from the concrete multiplicity of its manifestations: from the rich melody of Hinduism, it offers but a single note.[46] The value and richness of Hinduism cannot be reduced to the abstract purity of its pristine sources; instead, in consists in its organic totality, which Ramakrishna conceives in the sense of a non-historical inner perfection, the timeless of presence of the *sanātana dharma* ("eternal religion").[47] Even without "reform," Hinduism is prepared for the encounter with Christianity and the other religions of the world; its potential of "experience" and its inner diversity offer room enough for the inclusion and recognition of other names and forms of worship. Ramakrishna saw no problem in adding the worship of Jesus to the various cult forms of Hinduism, and he was convinced that his own meditative experiments could demonstrate that the various religions were all paths to the same goal. The metaphor of the different expressions for the *one* water which all drink together with other parables and metaphors, illustrates the Unity of God in the diversity of forms of worship.

This should not be mistaken for an example of deistic "tolerance"; instead, this is one of the most impressive examples of "inclusivism" in the nineteenth century. Its very "openness" is a form of self-assertion; and proved to be one of the major obstacles to the efforts of the Christian missionaries. Nor is this a syncretism in the sense of Keshab, but an extrapolation of Hinduism itself, an answer to the Europeans coming out of the tradition of Tantric Vedānta. The Hinduism which Ramakrishna

emplifies, in particular in the stylized and mythicizing presentation by his successors, appears as an open, yet in itself complete, framework of encounter and reconciliation with other traditions, as the timeless presence of the religious per se, to which nothing new can accrue.[49]

13. Vivekananda (actually, Narendranātha Datta, 1863–1902), Ramakrishna's most famous and effective apostle both in India and in the West, was an untiring herald of this message. Next to Rammohan Roy, Vivekananda became one of the leading figures of modern Hindu thought and self-awareness and an exemplary exponent of Hindu self-representation vis-à-vis the West. His appearances in the West, his self-understanding, and his activities within India are all interwoven in a peculiar way: "During his first visit to the West, Vivekananda became the man who made history: the most influential shaper and propagandist of the Neo-Hindu spirit."[50]

The literature concerning Vivekananda is voluminous, although the great majority of it is the work of disciples and admirers. In the Indian portrayals, he is often presented in a stereotyped and glorifying manner as the herald of a Vedānta rejuvenated with new vigor and vision and capable of leading to a world-wide synthesis,[51] and as the founder of a renewed and well-grounded Hindu self-assurance. Even in the West, he is not infrequently celebrated as the teacher of a "universal gospel" and the proclaimer of the "harmony of religions."[52]

In contrast, critical assessments and attempts to "demythologize" Vivekananda are much more rare,[53] and rarer still are examples of a thorough historical analysis and hermeneutic clarification of Vivekananda's work. It might seem as if Vivekananda's work does not offer any really worth-while tasks for historical research or philosophical reflection; in many parts, it is rhetorical and popularizing, reducing the complexity of classical Vedānta to simple and occasionally superficial formulas. Whoever searches here for theoretical consistency or philosophical originality may find himself as disappointed as with Rammohan Roy; similarly, the tangible historical and practical success with which Vivekananda met may be as questionable as that attained by Rammohan.

14. This notwithstanding, the critical studies of P. Hacker have shown that historical research and hermeneutic analysis are faced here with important tasks.[54] And it may be seen that Vivekananda's work, like that of Rammohan Roy, is an exemplary reflection and expression of an historical and hermeneutic situation. In this sense it has important implications for the modern world, no matter what its practical relevance or theoretical conclusiveness may be.

In comparison to Rammohan, Vivekananda tends much more to explicitly assert himself as a Hindu and to derive his teachings and practical programs from the sources of Hinduism. Vedāntic "inclusivism" is the very

framework and basis for Vivekananda's encounter with the West. At the same time, his "missionary" impulse is much stronger than Rammohan's; he is committed to propagating Hindu principles beyond the borders of India and to utilizing their international recognition in his efforts to regenerate Hindu self-awareness and self-confidence.[55] In general, Vivekananda's references to the mutual relations, and the similarities and dissimilarities, between India and the West, both in terms of India's self-representation *for* the West and its self-assertion *against* it, are much more explicit than was the case with his predecessors.

His travels to the West play an exemplary and programmatic role in Vivekananda's life. Again and again, he speaks to Western audiences about India and Hinduism,[56] to his own countrymen about the West, and to both sides about their mutual relationship. He simplifies and schematizes. He lives and practices the problematic and ambivalent position which Neo-Hinduism occupies between India and the West. He adopts Western motifs of self-criticism and the search for India and transforms them into aspects of Hindu self-assertion. He appeals in a rhetorically effective manner to ideas and values which many Europeans find lacking in their own tradition and present, and he demonstrates the extent to which the Neo-Hindu "dialogue" with the West employs or presupposes Western means of self-reflection and self-critique.

Vivekananda's treatment of the interrelations of understanding and the mutual reflections of Indian and European self-awareness remains without explicit hermeneutic reflection, and he pays little theoretical attention to the intercultural and interreligious situation which he represents, so to speak, in practice.

15. Whereas Rammohan Roy often referred to his descent from the Brahmin caste, Vivekananda liked to present himself as a *kṣatriya*, a member of the caste of warriors and kings. Actually, he was born into the caste of the *kāyastha*, whose membership in the *kṣatriya* caste is highly questionable.[57] It was important for his education that he became acquainted with the works of such representatives of European critical and positivistic (i.e., secular and progress-oriented) thought as J. St. Mill and H. Spencer at Presidency College in Calcutta. During this period, he also became familiar with the teachings of A. Comte, who was well known in Bengal at this time.[58] Parallel to this, he acquired a good, but not very comprehensive knowledge of traditional Sanskrit scholarship. As a member of the Ramakrishna circle, he became acquainted with the *Yogavāsiṣṭha* and the *Aṣṭāvakragītā*, Vedānta texts outside of Śaṅkara's "orthodox" tradition.

Vivekananda's knowledge of European philosophy remained important for him even after he had the encounter with Ramakrishna that was to be so crucial for his religious and philosophical orientation and his self-awareness

as a Hindu. He became Ramakrishna's favorite student and presented himself as his instrument. In India and on his journeys to Europe and America, most conspicuously at the World Parliament of Religions in Chicago (1893), he appeared as the herald of the Hinduism which Ramakrishna embodied. And in Ramakrishna, he found a secure tenure where there had previously been only searching and doubt, and a kind of Indian answer to Europe which did not even require verbalization and conceptualization.

Vivekananda taught that Ramakrishna was the living commentary to all of the sacred texts of the Hindus; he encompassed within himself all that which had been lived in the millenia of Hindu religious life; with his birth, the Golden Age, the 'Age of Truth,' had dawned once again.[59]

In Vivekananda's eyes, Ramakrishna was the inner fulfillment of the Hindu tradition, and the living demonstration that India was ready for Europe without ever having searched for it and was thus equal to the challenge which the encounter between the two represented: Through its embodiment in Ramakrishna, Hinduism did not just demonstrate its potential of receptive openness, but also the power to go beyond itself and to affect or even transform the West:

The time was ripe, it was necessary that such a man should be born, and he came; and the most wonderful part of it was that his life's work was just near a city which was full of Western thought, a city which had run mad after these occidental ideas, a city which had become more Europeanized than any other city in India. . . . Let me now only mention the great Shri Ramakrishna, the fulfilment of the Indian sages, the sage for the time, one whose teaching is just now, in the present time, most beneficial. And mark the divine power working behind the man. The son of a poor priest, born in an out-of-the-way village, unknown and unthought of, today is worshipped literally by thousands in Europe and America, and tomorrow will be worshipped by thousands more.[60]

16. There is no reason to doubt that Vivekananda's veneration of Ramakrishna was genuine and in keeping with the Indian tradition of revering one's guru. But it is equally true that he stylized and used his guru in his own peculiar way and that his own personal work, the 1897 "founding of the Ramakrishna order for the purpose of preaching Hinduism in India and abroad, for the purpose of general mass-education and philanthropic activity..., was in no way directly inspired by Ramakrishna's ideas."[61] Ramakrishna himself can hardly be counted among the spokesmen of Neo-Hinduism; yet through Vivekananda he became the instrument and leading figure of Neo-Hinduism in its encounter with Europe.

Ramakrishna is the representative and quintessence of that "spirituality" which Vivekananda time and again — using often stereotypical phrases — presents to the Europeans as the true message of India: teachings about the spirit, the soul, God; that is what India has to offer to the world and especially to the West and what, moreover, the modern West particularly needs.

Let others talk of politics, of the glory of acquisition of immense wealth poured in by trade, of the power and spread of commercialism, of the glorious fountain of physical liberty; but these the Hindu mind does not understand and does not want to understand. Touch him on spirituality, on religion, on God, on the soul, on the infinite, on spiritual freedom, and I assure you, the lowest peasant in India is better informed on these subjects than many a so-called philosopher in other lands. I have said. . . ., that we have yet something to teach to the world.[62]

Closely related to this, and linked as well to Ramakrishna's thought, is Vivekananda's claim that the idea and practice of tolerance and universal brotherhood is India's gift to the world:

India alone was to be, of all lands, the land of toleration and of spirituality . . . in that distant time the sage arose and declared, *ekaṃ sad viprā bahudhā vadanti* - 'He who exists is one; the sages call him variously.' This is one of the most memorable sentences that was ever uttered, one of the grandest truths that was ever discovered. And for us Hindus this truth has been the very backbone of our national existence. . . our country has become the glorious land of religious toleration.[63]

17. As Vivekananda sees it, "the world is waiting for this grand idea of universal toleration"[64] and spirituality to be passed on by India.

The other great idea that the world wants from us today . . . is that eternal grand idea of the spiritual oneness of the whole universe . . . This is the dictate of India's philosophy. This oneness is the rationale of all ethics and all spirituality. Europe wants it today just as much as our downtrodden masses do, and this great principle is even now unconsciously forming the basis of all the latest political and social aspirations that are coming up in England, in Germany, in France, and in America.[65]

The time is ripe for Ramakrishna and the Vedānta. And while the West may have conquered India, it still needs India as well; it is waiting for India without realizing its need. For Vivekananda, this means that it is waiting for the Vedānta and its "idea of the spiritual oneness of the whole universe." The truth of the Vedānta may already be seen in the efforts at social reform and in the beginnings of self-correction displayed by modern Western thought, without, to be sure, being discovered and formulated as such. The Indian tradition — perfected through Ramakrishna — is called upon to steer these beginnings, to develop them and trace them back to their metaphysical basis and in this way show Europe a way out of its historical aberration.

Vivekananda often speaks of what he sees as the one-sided materialism, hedonism, secularism, and rationalism of the West. The Western nations are ruled by the pursuit of profit and the desire to control, by a concentration upon external things, by the "ideal of eating and drinking"; they are presently "...almost borne down, half-killed and degraded by political ambitions and social scheming... Ay, in spite of the sparkle and glitter of Western civilisation, in spite of all its polish and its marvellous manifestation of power, standing upon this platform, I tell them to their face that it is all vain."[66]

18. However, materialism and secularism are only *one* side of the Western world, for it also boasts of that energy and dynamism which Vivekananda would so like to awaken in his own countrymen. And while he may indeed feel that nationalism, accompanied as it is by intolerance and the desire for power, is one of the evils of the Western world, he also admires the vigor and the dynamism associated with the Western sense of national identity. The Indians have lost their "individuality as a nation"; this is the reason behind their degeneration and humiliation, the "cause of all evil in India." The Indians must learn from the other nations, and in particular the nations of the West, to be a genuine and full-fledged nation.[67] In order to help his people in this regard, Vivekananda is ready to adopt all suitable means and ways of motivation from the West. In this context, he sees no alternative to learning from the West; his orientation here is shaped entirely by Western models.

The Hindus should make the organizational abilities, the pragmatic orientation, the work ethic, the social virtues, and the scientific and technical knowledge of Europe and America their own. They should overcome their own indifference and lethargy and advance to new vigor and self-confidence. They should follow the example of Japan, which had successfully assimilated Western science *and* rediscovered its own strength and identity.[68]

Vivekananda's call to initiative, will-power, and faith in India's own abilities appears frequently throughout his work and in memorable formulations: "Have faith in yourselves, and stand up on that faith and be strong; that is what we need. Why is it that we three hundred and thirty millions of people have been ruled for the last one thousand years by any and every handful of foreigners who chose to walk over our prostrate bodies? Because they had faith in themselves and we did not."[69] Americans and Europeans exhibit this self-confidence to a particularly high degree. This is what lies behind their prosperity and their national power and identity.

As Vivekananda often stresses in his letters and travel reports, Americans are especially exemplary in their readiness to practical philanthropy, their

organizations for educating the public, etc. In fact, the establishment of the Ramakrishna mission in 1897 was directly influenced by his experiences in America. And yet he also has recourse to socialist conceptions, especially during his later years, when he was influenced by his personal acquaintance with the Russian anarchist and utopist Kropotkin. He spoke of himself as a "socialist" and concurred with the Marxist prognosis concerning the coming rule of the proletariat, which he tried to link to traditional Hindu concepts by describing it as the "rule of the Śūdras."[70] He never mentioned, however, Marx or Engels.

19. The materialistic West, successful in the mastering of external situations, stands opposed to the spiritual and religious East, which has degenerated in social and practical respects. This contrast forms the basis for Vivekananda's conceptual model of a mutual complementing and synthesis, a model which occasionally, especially before Western audiences, takes on the form of a trade exchange.

> Therefore it is fitting that, whenever there is a spiritual adjustment, it should come from the Orient. It is also fitting that when the Oriental wants to learn about machine-making, he should sit at the feet of the Occidental and learn from him. When the Occident wants to learn about the spirit, about God, about the soul, about the meaning and the mystery of this universe, he must sit at the feet of the Orient to learn.[71]

As we have seen, similar models of contrast and complementing were already a distinctive part of Keshab Chandra Sen's work, although they were there included in a context of thought that aimed more at syncretism than at religious and national self-assertion. The missionary Christianity which Keshab was so willing to accommodate is, in Vivekananda's view, too closely tied to the materialism and intolerance of the West to represent true religiosity. And to the extent that it really is religion — is it not an absurd suggestion to introduce it into a country which is in its very essence and, as it were, by definition religious, whose national identity Vivekananda seeks to establish through its religiosity?[72]

But even when referring to the introduction of scientific and technical knowledge or the adoption of Western self-confidence and Western vigor, Vivekananda is not satisfied with a mere syncretistic annexation. What appears as an introduction of foreign achievements is also a rediscovery of the forgotten potential of the Indian tradition. In order to be truly appropriated, apparently foreign elements must be founded upon and communicated through the richness of one's own tradition. To a certain degree, this also pertains to the field of the exact sciences; although Vivekananda does not go so far in this regard as Dayananda Sarasvati. Yet he, too, assures his fellow Indians that such sciences as arithmetic and astronomy

were already laid out in the Veda and that, in any case, the Indians were not dependent upon the Greeks in this regard.[73]

20. However, science is not the central issue in Vivekananda's rediscovery and reinterpretation of the Indian tradition. It is ethics, social commitment, and national identity itself, which he tries to draw from the sources of Hindu religious and metaphysical thought. The sense of identity and social initiative which he tries to awaken in his fellow Indians must not be a borrowed or derivative one. It must coincide with a sense of rediscovery and reacquisition of their own heritage — and this means, above all, the heritage of Advaita Vedānta, the tradition of Śaṇkara.

Ethics, self-confidence, and brotherly love find their true and binding foundation in Advaitic non-dualism; the Indians have discovered the true and metaphysical principle for that which appears at the surface in the ethical and social efforts of the West. They only have to readopt and transform into social action that which was always in their possession. Their Vedānta must become a "practical Vedānta."[74]

In the same above-cited context in which Vivekananda makes reference to the exemplariness of Western self-confidence and Western will-power, he also states:

> That is what we want, and that can only be created, established and strengthened by understanding and realizing the ideal of the Advaita, that ideal of the oneness of all. Faith, faith, faith in ourselves, faith in God — this is the secret of greatness . . . We have lost faith in ourselves. Therefore to preach the Advaita aspect of the Vedānta is necessary to rouse up the hearts of men, to show them the glory of their souls. It is therefore, that I preach this Advaita. . .[75]

Self-confidence is ultimately confidence in one's own identity with the divine One. Because the Advaita Vedānta teaches this identity with complete clarity, it offers the principle behind that which appears in practice in the West; and what appears to have been borrowed from the West was thus in actuality always encompassed and preserved within the Indian tradition: in other words, it is merely the fulfillment of that which the Vedānta "in itself" had always called for and upheld.

21. With this idea of a "practical Vedānta," Vivekananda takes a step which clearly goes beyond not just the teachings of the classical Vedānta, but also those of his master Ramakrishna: As we have seen, Ramakrishna considered such an engagement in the world and for the world as merely one form of attachment to the world.

Yet it is not only this program of practical and applied Vedānta which distinguishes Vivekananda from Ramakrishna. Together with his will to social reform, Vivekananda develops a tendency to contrast pure origins with later forms of degeneration for which his master most certainly did not

provide an example or a justification: Whereas Ramakrishna generally adhered to the evolved whole of Hinduism, Vivekananda comes close to the search for origins and the awareness of degeneration expressed by Rammohan Roy. Śaṅkara is his great example, as he desired to return the Indian world to its "pristine purity."[76] Vivekananda deplores that the truly authoritative Veda is eclipsed in its validity by the Purāṇas and Tantras, documents of an increasing historical degeneration.[77]

In this context, Vivekananda severely reproaches Buddhism, to which he assigns considerable responsibility for the degeneration of Hinduism, and especially for the corruption of Tantrism and the "Brahmanic idolatry." In his opinion, as Buddhism itself degenerated, it infected, as it were, Hinduism.[78]

On the other hand, Vivekananda also refers to Buddhism as nothing less than the "fulfillment of Hinduism" and as a source of energy and inspiration: "Hinduism cannot live without Buddhism, nor Buddhism without Hinduism."[79] In order to resolve and explain this contradiction, we should first recall that Vivekananda repeatedly makes an emphatic distinction between the Buddha himself, the great teacher and practitioner of compassion, and the errors and shortcomings of his followers.[80] Besides, it is a striking and symptomatic fact that his friendly and approving comments are usually presented to Western, primarily American, audiences, while his criticism and warnings find their expression mostly in India. There are equally symptomatic changes and ambiguities in his attitude towards Tantrism, which he often condemned in public and yet accepted and valued as an essential ingredient of his Indian, specifically Bengali identity.

22. This agrees with the above-mentioned fact that Vivekananda's comments contain elements that are essentially rhetorical, were composed with strategic and tactical considerations in mind, and paid heed to the occasion and the expectations of his listeners. It also provides an indication of the ambivalent hermeneutic situation in which Vivekananda finds himself: his references to Buddhism, both in India and in the West, bear the mark of his discussion with the West and his broken and apologetic relationship to his own tradition. Speaking to his fellow Indians, it is not so much Buddhism per se which he rejects as it is Western attempts to play off Buddhism against Hinduism.[81] On the other hand, in his appearances before Western audiences, Buddhism serves to demonstrate the universal reach and inclusivist power of Hinduism. The Hindu relationship to Buddhism is utilized as an example of a successfully completed absorption and neutralization of a great missionary religion: "But in India this gigantic child was absorbed, in the long run, by the mother that gave it birth, and today the very name of Buddha is almost unknown all over India."[82] Vivekananda repeatedly stresses that Buddhism is the oldest and most successful of all

missionary religions, having spread at an early date over the "civilized world" of its time — "from Lapland to the Philippines."[83] Within India itself, however, this world-wide religion was nothing more than a "sect."[84]

Implied in these statements are references to Christianity and its missionary claims; and such references do not at all remain merely implicit. Invoking Western authors, Vivekananda also makes the attempt to historically and genetically derive the basic doctrines of Christianity and its missionary impetus from Buddhism.[85] In this way, Buddhism becomes a vehicle for historical reductionism and an inclusivistic neutralization of Christianity.

In general, the way in which Buddhism is treated has a symptomatic role to play in the development of modern Hindu thought. Whereas Ramakrishna's comments remained within the traditional framework, Bankim Chandra Chatterji already exhibited the same petulant reaction to Western interpretations of Buddhism that may be found with Vivekananda.[86] The attitude of Rabindranath Tagore was more positive, while S. Radhakrishnan concerned himself with Buddhism in an especially detailed and yet quite ambivalent manner.[87]

23. Vivekananda's Neo-Hindu self-awareness is also characterized by the manner in which he takes up the traditional concept of the *mleccha*. The inconsistency of those modern traditionalists who theoretically adhere to their ancient exclusivism but in practice have long since acceded to cooperate with their foreign rulers provides him with an obvious occasion for critique: "And to the Brahmins I say, 'Vain is your pride of birth and ancestry. Shake it off. Brahminhood, according to your Shastras, you have no more now, because you have for so long lived under Mleccha kings.' "[88] If they were to take their own prescriptions seriously, then they would have to follow the reputed example of Kumārila and burn themselves slowly in the *tuṣa* fire in order to atone for this defilement. "Do you know what the Shastras say about people who have been eating Mleccha food and living under a government of the Mlecchas, as you have for the past thousand years? Do you know the penance for that?"[89]

Here, Vivekananda is contrasting the theoretical pride of the Brahmins with their factual and practical humiliation. He has only scorn and contempt for this type of thinking, emphasizing purity and exclusivity as it does: It is an essential element of his message and of the life he lives that India must fully accede to the contact and intercourse with other nations and religions in order to fulfill its own religious and national potential, in order to become a nation and to demonstrate the power and fullness of Hinduism. From time to time, he also refers to passages in the traditional literature which he finds incompatible with the ethnic exclusivism and the pejorative treatment of the *mleccha*; for example, he asserts in a curious misinterpretation of a passage

in the *Nyāyabhāṣya* that Vātsyāyana, its author, stated that the *mleccha* have "seers" (*ṛṣi*) of a Vedic caliber.[90]

Vivekananda repeatedly advances an ethical and spiritual reinterpretation of the contrast between "Aryan" and "non-Aryan" that is reminiscent of Buddhist procedures: "He is of the 'arian' race, who is born through prayer, and he is a nonarian, who is born through sensuality."[91]

24. Yet it becomes clear time and again that for Vivekananda, such ethical and spiritual demarcations coincide with ethnic and national delimitations. A definition of the *mleccha* based merely upon factors of ethnicity or birth should be replaced by a concept of *ārya/mleccha* of a higher order. This higher concept should then in turn be utilized to call the Indians to a new ethnic and national self-awareness. By the way, this double step from ethnic to ethical and spiritual and then again to ethnic/national is not uncommon in Neo-Hinduism.

The *true* Aryans are those who have attained a knowledge of the nature of the divine Self. In Vivekananda's view, however, these are de facto the Indians, who have preserved their sacred knowledge within the Sanskrit tradition.

> There was, from the earliest times, a broad distinction between the Aryas and the non-Sanskrit speaking Mlecchas in the conception of the soul. Externally, it was typified by their disposal of the dead — the Mlecchas mostly trying their best to *preserve* the dead bodies either by careful burial or by the more elaborate processes of mummifying, and the Aryas generally burning their dead. Herein lies the key to a great secret — the fact that no Mlecha race, whether Egyptian, Assyrian, or Babylonian, ever attained to the idea of the soul as a separate entity which can live *independent* of the body, without the help of the Aryas, especially of the Hindus.[92]

Admittedly, both here and in similar contexts, the concept of the Arya is not simply identified with that of the Hindu, and it appears as if Vivekananda is here making an at least implicit concession to the recent European use of the term "Aryan." On other occasions, however, he rejects such a Western usage and emphasizes that the word "Arya" may only be applied to the Hindus.[93] In general, there can be no doubt that Vivekananda frequently used the word "Arya" to appeal to the self-esteem of the Indians *as* Indians — in a sense in which even the Europeans, who in his view had never by themselves realized the true nature of the "soul," i.e., the *ātman*, were *not* Aryans: "What we call Manas, the mind, the Western people call soul. The West never had the idea of soul until they got it through Sanskrit philosophy, some twenty years ago."[94]

East and West, India and Europe - these are geographical and ethnic notions. For Vivekananda, however, they also represent ethical, spiritual, and metaphysical categories.

25. Vivekananda preaches universal tolerance and openness, the harmony of the religions, and the synthesis of East and West. Yet at the same time, he finds in this program the essential confirmation and fulfillment of his own tradition — of the Hinduism identified with the Vedānta — which he considers to be not just a particular religion, but rather religion per se. He aspires to a harmony in the sense of this tradition and within the framework it provides. And in doing so, he sees himself as the spokesman for a people which owes its ethnic distinction to the possession of this tradition and which should assert its national self-esteem by reflecting upon this tradition and by proclaiming and propagating it outside of India.

The spread of the supposedly Vedāntic ideas of spirituality, tolerance, and harmony amounts to a conquest of the world by Hinduism. The Indians are repeatedly called upon to "conquer" the world, and in particular the West, with their spirituality.[95] Western colonialism and imperialism is thus up against a kind of spiritual expansionism and "imperialism." Here, Vivekananda's primary concern is not with winning converts to Hinduism — notwithstanding the fact that he occasionally alludes to the idea of a "conversion" to Hinduism.[96] More important is his conviction that Hinduism does not require any conversions at all, that the remaining religions are all in truth encompassed by Hinduism from their very inception and, moreover, that Hinduism in principle already anticipates all future developments within itself. Thus, it may face the challenges posed by history and the world with calm self-assurance. Here we find the successor to Ramakrishna speaking, who provides the inclusivism embodied by his master with its most exemplary expressions:

> Ours is the universal religion. It is inclusive enough, it is broad enough to include all the ideals. All the ideals of religion that already exist in the world can be immediately included, and we can patiently wait for all the ideals that are to come in the future to be taken in the same fashion, embraced in the infinite arms of the religion of the Vedānta.[97]

In a sense, the world has already been conquered by Hinduism without even knowing it.

26. Vivekananda agrees with Ramakrishna's criticism of the Brāhma Samāj. He is particularly offended by the imitative and syncretistic elements in this and similar movements — by the degree in which they take the premises and expectations of their English colonial lords into consideration. Imitation and conformity cannot lead to new strength, but are instead symptoms of humiliation and decay. "O India, this is your terrible danger. The spell of imitating the West is getting such a strong hold upon you, that what is good or what is bad is no longer decided by reason, judgement, discrimination or reference to the Shastras. Whatever ideas, whatever manners the white men

praise or like, are good; whatever things they dislike or censure, are bad!" To be sure, the search for confirmation and recognition in the West is, as we have seen, a central motif in Vivekananda's own activities. Although he is concerned with a self-assertion of Hinduism based upon Hinduism's own sources, the way in which he returns to these sources is mediated by his encounter with the West and shaped by Western models and expectation horizons. This is particularly true of Vivekananda's program for a "practical" and ethically and socially "applied" Advaita Vedānta.

P. Hacker's views concerning the systematic and historical implications of this specifically Neo-Hindu program are both penetrating and provocative.[99] His thesis is that the doctrine of an ethical and social applicability of the Vedānta philosophy of identity was not only inspired in a more general sense by the encounter with the West, but that the Western starting point can be precisely identified and a date provided for the beginning of its influence upon modern Indian thought: The first person who attached the idea of ethical applicability to the Indian doctrine of identity and its formulation as *tat tvam asi* was A. Schopenhauer, who was working within the context of his own system of ethics. In turn, Schopenhauer's follower Deussen adopted this idea and introduced it into modern Indian thought on February 25, 1893 through a speech in Bombay and on September 9, 18 during a personal conversation with Vivekananda.[100]

To support and illustrate his thesis, Hacker provides a survey and interpretation of passages from Sanskrit literature which link ethical maxims, in particular those concerning compassion and selflessness, with metaphysical and theological teachings. His conclusion is that in none of these passages is the identity principle expressed in *tat tvam asi* used as a metaphysical justification to support ethical demands: When a "reason" is provided in these cases, then it is based upon an assimilation or approximation to the other based upon the common presence of God in all persons, but not through any identification with God. Hacker concedes that the *Bhagavadgītā* contains the rudiments of a panentheistic justification for ethics - but not one based upon the philosophy of identity. In another work, sc. his important study of the myth of Prahlāda, he traces the role and development of this panentheistic argument within the Vaiṣṇava tradition.[101]

27. The challenge expressed here has not yet been taken up by the representatives of the Neo-Vedānta, and a historical and philological discussion is hardly to be expected from this camp. The basic significance and pertinence of Hacker's observations is undeniable. Yet his thesis, which involves questions concerning the interpretation of Schopenhauer as well as the Indian tradition and Neo-Hinduism, calls for further reflection and has to be modified in certain details. Hacker himself amended his view on a later occasion: "I would just like to note that I, when I wrote that a

cle, had not yet recognized the *apposition* of Schopenhauer's moral justification with Vivekananda's positivistic ethic and the imperative of believing in one's own self."[102]

Such an apposition is significant indeed: there is no single or fully unified foundation of ethics in Vivekananda's thought. Instead, several motives appear in juxtaposition. Often, one or the other is taken up for tactical or rhetorical purposes, in accordance with a particular audience; and the fact that *one* viewpoint is occasionally given more emphasis than another by no means implies that it alone is of central importance. *One* single event was not enough to bring Vivekananda onto the path of his "practical Vedānta." Apart from Western sources, such Indian texts as the *Yogavāsiṣṭha* and the *Aṣṭāvakragītā* had prepared him for the possibility of combining ethics and metaphysics. Deussen's ideas, and specifically the conversation of 1896, provided additional support and further encouragement not only for his practical program, but also for his Hindu self-assertion against the West.

It is, however, obvious that a certain change in style and emphasis took place under the influence of Deussen's arguments. In the *Karmayoga*, based upon a series of lectures, Vivekananda was still expounding a theory of action which, with its postulate of disinterested action and its repeated assurance that, ultimately, the world was not to be helped, was largely indebted to the *Bhagavadgītā* and, moreover, to the teachings of Ramakrishna.[103]

The impressions made by his stay in the West apparently contributed to a certain "secularization" of his position: Acting within the world no longer served primarily as a means to a soteriological end; instead, religious and spiritual means were sought to fulfill worldly and social ends.

28. Hacker states that traditional Advaita Vedānta and Hinduism in general "had certainly not ethically applied the tat tvam asi before the beginning of European influence..., at least not in the sense of Schopenhauer's understanding."[104] And in fact, several of Vivekananda's direct predecessors, including Debendranath Tagore and Dayananda Sarasvati, had taken exception to Śaṅkara's Advaita Vedānta precisely because they considered it to be unsuited for ethical and social practice. But as we have noticed, Vivekananda's understanding of the Vedānta was not only shaped by Śaṅkara, but also by the *Yogavāsiṣṭha* and the *Aṣṭāvakragītā*. Moreover, we have not yet determined the exact sense in which one may speak of Schopenhauer's "applying" the *tat tvam asi*. His view is that philosophical ethics is essentially descriptive, even contemplative. It does not prescribe what ought to be done, and, moreover, is not concerned with putting metaphysical principles into practice. Schopenhauer's essentially negative view of the empirical world rules out a practical interest in it; he rejects the attempts of traditional philosophical ethics to advance a "universal

recipe to generate all the virtues."[105] Accordingly, he is not concerned with deriving practical *demands* from the *tat tvam asi*. He refers instead to the metaphysical truth expressed in this sentence in order to *explain* what he considers to be the central ethical phenomenon of compassion and selfless action — namely as a manifestation of the fundamental unity of reality which has not yet achieved the full clarity of knowledge.

It is Deussen and not Schopenhauer who is concerned with "conclusions" of an ethical nature that could lead to an improvement of the empirical world. It is Deussen who cites the Biblical phrase "and you shall know them by their fruits" and tries to combine Schopenhauer's metaphysics of the absolute will with the Christian ethic of charity in a "harmonious whole,"[106] and who calls upon the Indians to draw the appropriate ethical conclusions from their metaphysics of unity. The "metaphysical foundation" thus reveals itself to be a utilitarian appeal to common sense as well, insofar as according to the identity principle one ultimately does something good for oneself by helping others.

The special importance which Deussen's view that the Vedānta contains the "purest form" of morals gained for Vivekananda can only be assessed when one recalls the extent to which the Christian missionaries of the nineteenth century had stressed the ethical and social deficiency of the Vedānta and turned the criterion of utility *against* it: "Let Utility then answer if she prefers Vedantism to Christianity."[107] Time and again, allusions were made to various ethical, social, and civilizing "consequences" in order to propagate the superiority of Christianity over the Vedānta.[108]

Ultimately, the practical thrust in Vivekananda's thought and its articulation in the form of a "practical Vedānta" also provided an answer to this challenge. In essence, Vivekananda was not concerned with merely appending an ethical and social dimension onto Hindu thought, but rather with deriving this from the most basic principles of Hinduism itself. To this extent, his relationship to practice is pivotal to his relationship with the Western world.

In general, the role of ethics is central for the self-understanding and self-articulation of modern Hindu thought. We may recall here the efforts of Rammohan Roy, but also those of more traditional "reformers," for instance Svāminārāyaṇa (1781–1830) in Gujarat or, among Vivekananda's contemporaries, Nārāyaṇa Guru (1854–1913) in Kerala. In Maharashtra, Viṣṇubāvā Brahmacārī (i.e., V.B. Gokhale, 1825–1892), "proposed an utopian socialism based on Vedāntic monism." B.G. Tilak (1856–1920), who was familiar with Deussen's lecture in Bombay and whom Hacker includes in his argumentation concerning the origins of "practical Vedānta," found inspiration for an ethically applied monism in the *Jñāneśvarī*, the great Marathi commentary on the *Bhagavadgītā* completed in 1290.[109]

29. Vivekananda stands at the end of the same century whose beginning was witnessed by Rammohan. During this time, Rammohan's receptivity, which exhibited only the cautious beginnings of universalist self-assertion, had been replaced by a much greater initiative towards the outside world, and the West in particular, an expansive sense of mission and destiny. Vivekananda was aware of the fact that in his undertaking to carry Indian spirituality into the West, he had seized an historical opportunity created by Europe itself, he had to utilize channels of communication which were provided by the West. "Owing to English genius, the world today has been linked in such a fashion, as has never before been done. Today trade centres have been formed such as have never been before in the history of mankind, and immediately, consciously or unconsciously, India rises up and pours forth her gifts of spirituality, and they will rush through these roads till they have reached the very ends of the world."[110]

However, Vivekananda does not present us with any hermeneutic reflections as to how far the *contents* of his "spiritualistic" message have been affected by Western categories and expectations: He is not willing or able to see how far he has removed himself from the position of Śaṅkara and how much he has yielded to those Western means of orientation against which he desires to assert Hinduism. Critics have characterized his doctrine as a "so-called Vedānta," and they have referred to the "hasty improvisation" with which he and other representatives of Neo-Hinduism have tried to combine Western impulses with "inherited spiritual goods."[111] Indeed, Vivekananda wants to avoid compromising with Western secularism, but cannot avoid the following unresolved dilemma: India should prove its secular value as a nation using the standards of the West; but it should also preserve its spirituality and avoid the Western entanglement in *saṃsāra*.[112] The secularization of the Vedāntic tradition is yearned for and yet again shunned. The ambivalence and "improvisation," which is so characteristic of Vivekananda's thought, appears as if caricatured among several of his numerous successors and imitators, e.g., Svami Ramatirtha (1873–1906), who visited America soon after Vivekananda and taught: "Domestic, social, political or religious salvation of every country lies in Vedānta carried into effect."[113]

Yet it would not be appropriate to judge Vivekananda's achievements primarily against the standards set by the teachings and the intellectual level of Śaṅkara. In spite of all "hastiness" and imbalance, his work represents a genuine and exemplary manifestation of the encounter between India and the West.

30. Before we turn to a short survey of developments in the twentieth century, and to a few recent instances of pandit traditionalism, we should first mention two figures who provided a contrast to Vivekananda during the

nineteenth century: Dayananda Sarasvati and Bankim Chandra Chatterji (Bankimcandra Caṭṭopādhyāya).

The Bengali author and thinker Bankim Chandra Chatterji (1838–1894) may not be as well-known outside India as Vivekananda, yet he was just as important for the development of Neo-Hindu thinking. In contrast to Vivekananda, Bankim primarily employed the Bengali language; yet his readiness to adopt and appropriate the Western natural scientific point of view surpassed that of Vivekananda; and the Hindu self-assertion and willingness to reform which he advocated were more unreservedly secular. Ramakrishna held a correspondingly negative opinion of Bankim.[114]

The *dharma* concept, which is one of the fundamental notions of traditional Hinduism, appears in Bankim's thought as a vehicle of appropriating European "Humanism" and "Positivism," in particular that represented by A. Comte, who for a while enjoyed great popularity in Bengal. The role which *dharma* plays in Bankim's thought shall be discussed in more detail below in connection with our systematic discussion of the Neo-Hindu reinterpretation of this concept.[115]

At the focal point of Bankim's new approach lies the concept of *anuśīlana*, which appears in the subtitle of his main philosophical work *Dharmatattva* and which he utilizes in his attempts to reconcile the Western ideas of "culture" and secular progress with the traditional Indian context. For Bankim, the "cultivation" of one's self and one's own potential and thus the realization and actualization of one's humanity or "humanness" (*manuṣyatva*) is part and parcel of the concept of man.[116] This in turn he tries to legitimize from within the Hindu tradition by invoking the humanistically and positivistically re-interpreted concept of *dharma*. In it, he finds the ideas of "duty" and "essence" (i.e., "essential attribute") to be interwoven. Bankim emphasizes the importance of the physical and worldly for the attainment of full "humanness" and as a precondition for the possibility of religious development. He is convinced that India must look to its foreign lords, the British, in order to obtain knowledge about and proficiency in this domain, which is also indispensable for the "cultivation" (*anuśīlana*) and securing of India's own national strength and autonomy.[117]

31. In his literary work and his activity as editor of the journal *Baṅgadarśana*, Bankim Chandra adheres firmly and intentionally to the Bengali language. This is a fundamental component of his program of "patriotism" (*svadeśaprīti*) and self-assertion vis-à-vis the Europeans. On the other hand, he also considers it imperative that this vehicle of self-assertion be opened up for the acceptance and transmission of Western concepts and terms. He often includes long English quotes in his Bengali philosophical works and makes use of corresponding English expressions

when explaining problematic Bengali terms or neologisms. Unlike Vivekananda, he develops a clear hermeneutic awareness of problems concerning the intercultural correspondence of terms and concepts.[118] He often discusses in detail the contemporary scientific and philosophical literature of Europe, without exhibiting Vivekananda's rhetorical and popularizing tendencies. He also speaks of European Indology, of India's role as an object for European research, using a largely critical tone.[119]

The humanitarian and nationalistic aspects of his philosophical and literary program are interwoven with one another in an idiosyncratic fashion, although nationalism seems to occupy the primary position: Patriotism (*svadeśaprīti*) and the love of mankind (*manuṣyatva*) are to be cultivated equally and integrated in one another; if this were to succeed, India would accede to the highest rank in the world.[120] The Indians should adopt the concepts of national independence and freedom from the British; yet they should also try to recreate and legitimize them out of their own tradition in such a way that they may utilize them against the British with complete self-assurance.[121]

Bankim derives his claims to national self-assertion and superiority largely from the universal and "inclusivistic" wealth of the *religious* tradition of Hinduism (to which he tries to give a new secular meaning). He stresses the Hinduism of the Purāṇas and its evolved totality against what he sees as the abstract and other-worldly teachings of the Vedānta. The emphasis on the *Bhagavadgītā* is much stronger and more pronounced than among his predecessors. Kṛṣṇa becomes the very epitome of Hindu self-awareness;[122] he represents the superior richness of Hinduism, its comprehensive power of integration, against the religious and philosophical claims of the Europeans.

Yet the model for Bankim's presentation is that of a "humanistically" influenced European picture of Christ which arose in the nineteenth century.[123] While Bankim may claim the evolved whole of Hinduism as the basis of national self-awareness, Hinduism is and remains filtered by Western concepts and goals. Ramakrishna's criticism of Bankim's presentation of Kṛṣṇa and Hinduism is exemplary: Who can really be a Hindu who accepts Kṛṣṇa but not the Gopīs?[124]

Naturalism and secularism and the corresponding reinterpretation of the concept of *dharma* acquire much more pronounced forms among such thinkers and writers as Aksay Kumar Datta.[125]

32. Admittedly, Dayānanda Sarasvatī (1824–1883), the founder of the reform movement Ārya Samāj whose work we shall discuss at the close of this chapter, can hardly be numbered among the representatives of modern Indian *philosophy*. This notwithstanding, he provides a lucid, exemplary, and somewhat naively exaggerated illustration of some of the main motifs and tensions in modern Indian thought: traditionalism and modernism,

self-assertion and receptivity, nationalism and universalism — all are interwoven in his thought in a very characteristic fahsion; efforts towards reform, assimilation, and progress are linked with an uncompromising, yet radically reinterpreted adherence to the oldest sources of his own tradition.

Dayananda, an unusually prolific author and polemicist from Gujarat, adhered primarily to the Vedic *Saṃhitās*, those superior teachings of the Indian "Aryans" which were never created and predate all historical developments, having been originally communicated by God.[126] It is from these Dayananda considered human knowledge and human civilization to have been ultimately derived. However, the Indians themselves, the original recipients and guardians of the Vedic revelation, have failed to preserve its proper understanding. The "polytheism" of the Purāṇas and the escapism of the Advaita Vedānta have obscured and concealed what is actually a message of pure monotheism and the mastering of the secular world. As a consequence, this message has been forgotten, and the Neo-Vedāntic "reformers" have kept it in oblivion.

Even the Europeans ultimately owe their technological and scientific achievements and thus their present superiority over the Indians to their having originally been instructed by the Indians. Of course, they have become entangled within a historically derivative and degenerate religion — Christianity — which Dayananda sharply criticizes and compares to the Hinduism of the Purāṇas.[127] The motif that the Western sciences and all civilizations in general are ultimately dependent upon India and the Veda is taken up with an even greater resolve by Dayananda's follower Gurudatta and linked to a sharp criticism of Western Indological research.[128]

Dayananda emphasizes the universal, global significance of the Vedic teachings; he is critical of the historically developed forms of the caste system. And yet his orientation remains essentially ethnic. He reverts emphatically back to the old concept of *ārya* — which he views as a concept largely determined by ethnicity and geography — as well as the equally ancient contrasting concept of *dasyu*.[129] The message of the Vedas is that of the universal and rational religion which embraces all peoples and groups; because of their original possession of this message, however, the Indian "Aryans" were and still are prominent among all peoples. Still, for the historical situation in which India finds itself and for the purpose of its national regeneration, Dayananda recommends that the Indians learn from the virtues and achievements of the Europeans;[130] ultimately, however, all of humanity must learn from those ancient and sacred sources which anticipate in principle all future developments and whose original guardians were the Indians.

33. In addition to his Hindi works, Dayananda is also the author of numerous Sanskrit works, specifically of commentaries to the Vedas. His approach is much more archaizing than that of Vivekananda or Bankim

Chandra; he frequently follows the teachings and exegetic principles of the traditionalist Pūrvamīmāṃsā, and he criticizes the Westernization and the syncreticism of the Brāhma Samāj. Nevertheless, he may also be counted among the representatives of Neo-Hinduism in a number of important points; indeed, there were various controversies between his movement and the exponents of "orthodoxy" and traditionalism.[131]

In the introduction of his Sanskrit commentary to the *Ṛgveda*, Dayananda attempts to demonstrate in detail that substantial elements of modern science and technology may be found in the Veda; among other things, he speaks of the Vedic teachings about telecommunications (*tāravidyā;* "transmission knowledge"), about the construction of ships and aircaft (*nauvimānavidyā*), and about gravity and gravitational attraction (*ākarṣaṇa, anukarṣaṇa*). He also provides examples of Vedic achievements in the fields of administration and politics.[132] In each of these cases, Dayananda maintains that such later Hindu commentators as Sāyaṇa completely misunderstood the original meaning of the Vedic revelation. Moreover, he also assumes that an analogous process of adulteration and false interpretation has affected the Vedic auxiliary sciences and supplements (*vedāṅga, upaveda*) as well as the philosophical systems (*darśana*, assigned to the Vedas as "additional limbs," *upāṅga*); and within these disciplines, he makes a rigorous distinction between the basic texts and what he considers to be counterfeit commentaries.[133] Outside of the Ārya Samāj, Dayananda's theses are usually considered a curiosity among the exegeses of the Veda and have been subjected to ridicule; disregarding their "curiousness," however, they also possess a symptomatic importance, for they illustrate the central role which modern science and technology play within the challenge to India that is posed by the West and for the self-understanding and self-representation of Hinduism vis-à-vis the West. The fascination with science and technology was already great with Rammohan Roy; Keshab Chandra Sen and Vivekananda attempted to meet it with models stressing the mutual complementing of East and West. On the other hand, some Europeans were convinced that introducing European scientific thought into India would help pave the way for the reception of Christianity,[134] and they presented scientific and social progress as the concomitant and consequence of Christianity. However, this strategy was not very effective. The Hindu reaction consisted in viewing Western progress as being independent of Christianity as well as in attempts to show that the Indian tradition does not merely provide a potentially equal or superior substratum for such achievements, but was actually their historical basis. Dayananda's exegesis of the Veda illustrates this in an extreme, yet exemplary fashion.

14. Supplementary Observations o
Modern Indian Though

1. Our presentation has brought us to the threshold of the twentieth ce
tury. We have focused on thinkers and religious "reformers" who ha
come to symbolize the achievements of modern Hindu self-affirmation, b
also the problems and ambiguities of assimilation and adjustment. In bo
respects, Vivekananda, who died in 1901, exemplifies and summarizes t
developments since Rammohan Roy.

We have not dealt with other writers, thinkers, educators, politic
leaders who, though perhaps not as well known as Vivekananda, are by
means less significant. One of the greatest educators and most effici
"reformers" stands chronologically between Rammohan and Vivekan
da—Ishvar Chandra Vidyasagar (Īśvaracandra Vidyāsāgara, 1820–189
In 1849, Vidyasagar published a Bengali biography of "great European
He was one of the first Indians to apply Western historical and criti
methods. His "Introduction to Sanskrit Grammar" (*Saṃskṛta vyākara
upakramaṇikā*) and his "History of Bengal" (*Baṅglār itihāsa*), also
Bengali, are works without precedent in the Indian tradition.[1] Vidyasa
never visited Europe and never abandoned his confidence in what he co
sidered to be superior European learning and rationality. His conte
porary, the poet Michael Madhusudan Datta (1824–1873), did go
England and subsequently expressed his disenchantment with the West,
deep personal tension between India and Europe, and his search for
modes of self-assertion. As a writer, he abandoned the English langu
and returned to his native Bengali.[2] A few decades later, the young Rab
dranath Tagore (Ṭhākura, 1861–1941), who was to become the m
celebrated poet of modern India, visited England and recorded his imp
sions as follows: "I had thought that the island of England was so small
the inhabitants so dedicated to learning that, before I arrived there, I
pected the country from one end to the other would echo and re-echo