

Heidegger and Boss's India: On Encounter in Daseinanalysis

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What you seek is seeking you. – Rumi

I. Medard Boss visited India for five months in 1956 and returned again in 1958 for three more months. His first trip was supplemented by a five-week stay in Indonesia and brief visits to Sri Lanka (then known as Ceylon), Java and Bali. The first trip was in response to an invitation to teach modern European psychiatry to Indian doctors, but we know from his “India book” that whatever else it meant to Boss, his sojourn turned out to coincide with a time of deep spiritual and professional crisis in his life. What he says in the “India book” enriches our understanding of Boss the man, the physician, and the therapist as well as the founder of *therapeutic* daseinanalysis.

Boss was 53 years old when he first visited India. His experiences were quite varied. For example, it is amusing to imagine the patrician Swiss psychiatrist dancing (as he reports) with a Balinese girl in the middle of the night to the accompaniment of gamelan music; or meeting a scantily clothed male guru with a mesmerizing gaze and not batting an eyelash.¹

Most important, of course, were his conversations with several gurus and his first-hand introduction to Eastern religious practices. Boss's travels to the East are also significant because they took place just before the well-known seminars for psychiatrists led by Martin Heidegger began at Boss's home in Zollikon.

In what follows, I will discuss the impact of Boss's *Indienfahrt* on how he came to understand encounter in daseinanalysis² as the basis of his praxis. The possibilities for a new form of therapy opened up by his experiences abroad and his growing understanding of Heidegger's thought eventually led in 1971 to the working out of a comprehensive plan

1 I will refer to *Indienfahrt einer Psychiaters* (Neske: Pfullingen, 1959) [= IP] and *A Psychiatrist Discovers India* (London: Oswald Wolf, 1965) [= PI]. All translations from PI are modified.

2 I have decided at long last to dispense with the tradition of naming Boss's “modality” of therapy ‘Daseinsanalysis’, which simply imitates the German word, including its formation of the possessive by adding an ‘s’, by anglicizing the suffix and instead will refer to it throughout as daseinanalysis (not capitalized, given that the fewer the exoticisms the better). The expression “dasein analysis” (modeled on “dream analysis”) or the neologism ‘dasein-analysis’ are probably more correct for *Daseinsanalyse*, but I am willing to take the chance that an even simpler neologism ‘daseinanalysis’ might catch on.

for a hermeneutic-phenomenological foundation for medicine and psychology, including related studies of physiology, psychopathology and psychotherapy.³

II. The opening of the book is a bit of travelogue, but it serves as background for understanding Boss's transition from being a visiting dignitary to becoming a seeker who literally sat at the feet of several sages. His extended conversations with Gobind [Govind] Kaul are at the heart of the book. Boss also spent about two months in several ashrams fully immersed in Hindu spiritual practices, including yoga and meditation.

Important sociopolitical changes were still in their early stages in India during the late 1950s following the country's independence from Britain about a decade earlier. Boss was attentive to them and especially to the introduction of technology into the everyday lives of members of the upper caste who were his hosts. What stands out for the reader now more than sixty years later is that much of what Boss wrote then he could say today about the comingling of the two cultures. For example, what he then observed about his medical colleagues, who by day were fully "Westernized" but when they returned home were transformed into dedicated observers of an ancient spiritual heritage, is still the case in the early 21st century as I have heard from young academics recently transplanted in American colleges and universities. However, the image of cell phones on the banks of the Ganges where men are bathing in loincloths and the dead are being cremated is something more striking than anything Boss might have envisaged in the late 1950s when, as now, cows were respectfully free to roam about everywhere as they have for thousands of years.

While abroad, in addition to teaching and supervising clinicians, Boss treated individuals from a variety of cultural, ethnic and religious backgrounds, including Hindus, Muslims, and Buddhists. As we will see, this is important to keep in mind when we consider one of the three basic insights he reports having arrived at while in India, given that back home his private practice consisted for the most part of fairly well-heeled Christian fellow professionals.

Boss reports he had read a fair amount of primary literature on Hindu philosophy and theology before his travels. He had also learned some Hindustani, but the conversations recorded in the "India book" with three of the eight sages he spent time with all

3 Grundriß der Medizin. Ansätze zu einer phänomenologischen Physiologie, Psychologie, Pathologie, Therapie und zu einer daseinsgemäßen Präventiv-Medizin in der modernen Industrie-Gesellschaft (Bern: Huber, 1971; 2nd, expanded ed., 1975; 3rd ed., 1999, with a "Preface" by Marianne Boss; new title beginning with 2nd ed.: Grundriß der Medizin und Psychologie. Ansätze zu einer phänomenologischen Physiologie, Psychologie, Pathologie, Therapie und zu einer daseinsgemäßen Präventiv-Medizin in der modernen Industrie-Gesellschaft]. The book was translated as *Existential Foundations of Medicine and Psychology*, New York: Jason Aronson, 1979. The book was written with assistance of Heidegger, who is said to have gone over every page of the manuscript.

took place in English. Translators were heavily involved. He tells us he “noted down” what they reported was said by his interlocutors immediately following the discussions. The texts he presents are said to be verbatim, but given the amount of material quoted and the intervention of translators, much of what we read in the “India book” is likely paraphrase in many places and perhaps even interpretation of what was actually said by his mentor. None the less, it is all we have as a record of a unique experience.

We might compare these reports to the *Zwiesgespräche* with Heidegger that took place between 1961 and 1972 which Boss also “jotted down” after talking with the philosopher and eventually published in 1987 in his edition of protocols of the *Zollikon Seminars* along with heavily redacted excerpts of letters from Heidegger covering the period 1947–1971.

III. Although there is scarcely a word about therapy until the final chapter of the “India book,” in its opening pages Boss contextualizes what will be said later on the topic in the framework of the medical model: “The contemporary psychiatrist and above all his youngest version [*Spielart*], the psychotherapist, is a physician [*Arzt*]” (IP 13).⁴ This is problematic for how we now see daseinanalysis evolving, since Boss seems to be limiting its practitioners to medical doctors. Immediately, however, he qualifies this, asserting that it is not one who has undergone medical training but it is rather “someone who is able to know the exact nature of man and to say how and what we actually are *in the world* [emphasis added]”⁵ who is best prepared to do the work of the daseinanalyst. Evidently, that the potential daseinanalyst should not be limited to those who have been medically trained became plain to Boss precisely as a result of his encounters with his Indian mentors. Hence the importance of his experiences in India.

Having had first-hand experiences with both Eugen and Manfred Bleuler, Freud, Jung, Ludwig Binswanger, and other key figures in the psychiatric and psychoanalytic establishment, from Karen Horney, Otto Fenichel to Ernest Jones, Boss was in a position unlike few others to know what the medical model looked like from the inside. Indeed, he watched modern psychiatry take shape. On the other hand, he came to realize that the model itself which underlies psychiatry is inadequate for appreciating who one must be and what one is to do as a daseinanalyst.

And yet, even given his experiences in the East and with Heidegger, Boss’s professional identity as a physician remained intact throughout his life. This remains problematic for understanding the future of daseinanalysis and conflicts with what Boss says about who best makes for a daseinanalyst, as we have seen. It was conflict in Boss as a man who wished to authentically do what the daseinanalyst does and yet remain known to his pa-

⁴ PI 9.

⁵ The psychotherapist is “der um die Verfassung des Menschen genau Bescheid weiß und zu sagen vermag, wie und wozu wir eigentlich auf der Welt sind“ (IP 13).

tients as Dr. Boss. Although it was never fully resolved, the conflict between a profession [*Beruf*] and a calling [*Beruf*] became clear to Boss as a result of his experiences in India. It is one of purposes of this contribution to understand this conflict and its consequences for the future of daseinanalysis.

We see the result of Heidegger's influence especially in *Psychoanalysis and Daseinsanalysis* (1957)⁶ but its full impact is given most eloquent expression in the "India book": "For me it was all about the consolidation of the principles [*Grundlagen*] of our psychology and medicine, about a deepening and proper grounding of our anthropology [*Menschenkunde*], in order to gain a better, more measured insight into that which man is about in his authentic essence and his determination [*Bestimmung*]."⁷ We may conclude that even given the continuing Boss's professional affiliations with medicine and psychology, the "different view of man" Heidegger brought into view for him called for his digging deeper for something else than he found in the sciences. This occurred during the all-important months in India.

IV. The highlights of the "India book" are what Boss calls three miracles [*Wunder*]. These were the sources of three insights that sum up what he learned from his encounters with the Indian sages he met. The first is the realization of "einer wesensmäßigen menschlichen Übereinstimmung" (PI 244), "an essential concordance in all people" (PI 180), no matter their sex, age, national origin, political, religious, or cultural heritage. He would understand the insight in terms of the *Dasein* of each human being. *Dasein* is without sex, gender, age, or nationality. As a consequence of this first insight, this meant that "one now recognizes in every patient who comes in quest of help a portion [*Teil*] and a manifestation of the divine [*Erscheinungen des Göttlichen*], and one is happy that one is granted [*verstattet*] the honor [*Ehre*] of rendering aid [*Hilfeleistung*]. Now one need only through an appropriate way of comportment [*entsprechendes Verhalten*] let the patient sense the genuineness of this knowledge, until the latter thereby becomes aware once again of his own divine nature [*eigenes Gottesnatur*]." These were not Boss's words, but rather those of an *altindische Psychotherapeut*, whose background was in Ayurvedic medicine. What the Indian doctor then said is even more remarkable: "Naturally, this entails the renunciation of any payment [*Honorara*], of any acquisition of personal possessions [*Besitzes*] in general, as well as of any personal [*persönlichen*] therapeutic ambition [*Ehrgeiz*] and pride [*Stolz*]" (PI 93). We can only imagine what was going through Boss's mind as he heard these words, especially given that he charged quite a lot for a therapeutic session back home and live quite comfortably.

6 *Psychoanalyse und Daseinsanalytik*, Bern: Huber, 1957 (2nd ed., Munich: Kindler 1980; Frankfurt: Fischer 2017 (digital)). A much revised English version followed: *Psychoanalysis and Daseinsanalysis*, New York: Basic Books, 1963 (2nd ed., New York: Dacapo Press, 1982). Indeed these are two very different books.

7 PI 88.

The insight, that as *Daseins* we are all identical (albeit not the same), is folded into the two other insights based on the other two *Wunder* and all three are neatly summarized in the concluding sentence of the chapter on the third *Wunder*“: “For only because, to my astonishment [*Erstaunen*], the experience of an essential human sameness [*Übereinstimmung*] and [the second insight] an immediate ability to understand [*Verstehenkönnens*] each other was repeated within the much more comprehensive and deeper dimensions [*Dimensionen*] of hour-long and day-long conversations with Indian sages, was I able to perceive [*wahrnehmen*] at all [the third insight] the highest unfolding [*Entfaltung*] in all people of the possibility [*Möglichkeit*] of human perfection [*Vollkommenheit*] and undisturbed happiness [*ungetrübten Glücklichkeit*].” (PI 180).

The first insight, then, is that each of us is *Dasein* and as such we are the same. This entails the second insight, namely, that there is an immediate mutual understanding between any two people based on our being-with [*Mitsein*], one of Heidegger’s existentials of *Dasein*. Finally, the third insight for Boss saw that the nature [*Wesen*] of *Dasein* is the unfolding of its possibilities. Therefore, the task of the daseinanalyst is to set the conditions that allow for the realization of these possibilities which is the expression of *Dasein*’s freedom.

Boss compares the moments of enlightenment he experienced with his gurus with what happens in psychoanalysis, “the modern illumination method [*Erhellungs-Methode*] of the West”: “Psychoanalysis is an experiential science [*Erfahrungswissenschaft*] in such a consummate sense that it can never be learned just by studying books. Really, only the experiencing of it in one’s own body [*am eigenen Leibe*] and in one’s own soul [*an eigener Seele*] enables one sufficiently to see what psychoanalysis actually is and is capable of doing” (PI 165). In both psychoanalysis and in a moment [*Augenblick*] of enlightenment, it is a matter of an *experience* and not merely of second-hand intellectual familiarity with ideas. It is the difference between *seeing* something as the result of an engaged involvement in a practice and merely *knowing* about it. Such *radically experiential* insights are moments of existential [*daseinsmäßig*] change.

That just moments of insight also occurred in *thinking along* with Heidegger during the Zollikon seminars and in conversations with him is quite clear from Boss’s records of the seminar protocols and dialogues with Heidegger. To the “modern enlightenment” of psychoanalysis which he had experienced with Freud and other analysts with whom he trained and from whom he received supervision and the moments of insight Boss had in India we can add his experience of thinking [*Erfahrung des Denkens*] with Heidegger as determinative for Boss’s *Existenz*.

V. Taking a closer look at the “India book” we note that four additional texts that appear in various editions of the book that are crucial for understanding daseinanalysis as it came into being as a result of the confluence of Boss’s experiences with his Indian mentors and with Heidegger.

The text as we have it *in English* contains two important additions unique to it which make clear the connection between the Indian *Wundere* and what Boss gained from reading Heidegger and working with him as a participant in the Zollikon seminar sessions.⁸ Since the “India book” is very hard to find, I will quote these additions in full.

The first addition follows a long transcript about Boss's second Indian *Wunder*:

When the master had begun to explain the fundamental term of the highest Indian wisdom, the word *chit*,⁹ I could hardly believe my ears. For I had heard him say things which often corresponded exactly, word for word, to phrases I had heard in the West from the lips of the philosopher Martin Heidegger. With redoubled caution, I then tried not to consider the meaning of the Indian wise man's statements in the light of my knowledge of Western, so-called “existential” philosophy. Not at any price did I want to have them distorted by seeing them through this conceptual filter. By so proceeding, I was very soon able to recognize the underlying difference between Western “Daseinsanalysis”¹⁰ and the Indian doctrine of “*Chit*.” The former corresponds only to that Indian insight which the master had just characterized as a mere preliminary stage. At this stage – as I had just heard – man and man's luminating, opening-up nature is of necessity needed so that something like “being” can take place, can arise and shine forth at all. In accordance with the highest Indian wisdom, however, “*Chit*,” primordial illumination and opening-up, is said to be possible purely by itself alone. It is said not to have to make use of human existence as that realm which would grant the necessary luminated openness for the arising of that which has to be, for its shining forth and its coming forth into its being. Nevertheless, despite this fundamental discrepancy, I remained greatly dumbfounded by the entirely unexpected, very far-reaching affinity between what very recent Western “Daseinsanalysis” and very ancient Indian wisdom recognized as the most profound “ground” of “being-ness” as such; this “ground” being called “clearance,” “openness”: “*Lichtung*” by “Daseinsanalysis”, and “*Chit*” by the Indian philosophical tradition. Could it be that in quite another part of our earth, in the Black Forest of Germany, the same deepest insight into that which is trying to well forth? Could this be happening at the very time when it is about to be completely obscured and suffocated by the bustle of technology in India, where it dwelt for so many millennia in the knowledge of her wise men (*PI* 128-129)?

Boss's homage to Heidegger made explicit here was surely known to him since the two men were in the midst of the Zollikon seminars when the English translation was published, but it is not entirely clear whether Heidegger realized that what could be found in the English edition took the form of an expansion of the German text, which he surely had read.

- 8 I assume Boss wrote these passages in English. I have taken the liberty of cleaning them up a few spots, not knowing whether his translator, Henry Frey, may have altered what Boss asked to be added.
- 9 *Chit* had been defined by Boss's interlocutor as “the non-objectifiable occurrence of primordial, dawning brightening [*das ungegenständliche Ereignis des ursprünglichen, aufgehenden Erhellens*]” (*IP* 175). The English translation reads: “the non-objectifiable occurrence of the primordial, emergent, opening-up illumination” (*PI* 127).
- 10 It is likely that what Boss wrote here was *Daseinanalytik* which was lost as a translation for *Daseinsanalyse*. The insertion is not about daseinanalysis as a practice but rather about the relation between being [*Sein*] and being-there [*Da-sein*] and whether the latter is “necessary” for the former to come up as an issue for the human being at all.

The second, brief addition follows soon after in the same chapter:

Brahman never means anything else but the occurrence of the fundamental opening up of an illuminated, free realm which, in its turn, is the indispensable prerequisite for the possibility of beingness as such, i.e. of anything shining forth, coming forth into its existence (*PI* 139).

Three critical notions are distinguished: man's existence [*Dasein*], openness or the clearing [*Lichtung* or *chit*], and Brahman or "being-ness" [*Sein*].¹¹ The passages are of interest in clarifying an important point of contention between the two men which would eventually be resolved by a significant change of heart by Heidegger that is addressed by Boss in his postscript to the 4th German edition,¹² to which we will turn in due course. The influence of Boss's sojourn in India on his understanding of Heidegger's thought was not straightforward. Indeed, it was troubled for many years.

I provide a complete translation of the postscript since it addresses this point of contention. Reading it, we get a sense of the creative tension that existed between Boss and Heidegger. The text contains a further tribute to Heidegger much like that found in the additions to English edition just cited and is of interest in providing additional biographical material about Boss. Finally, it points to the further influence on Boss of Japanese (Zen) philosophy that was a natural extension of Indian philosophy.

The present book, *A Psychiatrist's Sojourn in India*, was first published in 1959 by Neske (Pfullingen). In 1966 it was published a second time in paperback, albeit in an abridged

11 Again, we do not know what Boss actually wrote in the German here. In *Psychoanalysis and Daseinsanalysis*, a note containing a passage from a letter to Boss from Heidegger suggests that 'being-ness' translates *Sein*. It also takes into consideration two other terms, *Seyn* and *Seiendheit*: "The suggestion to translate (a) *das Seiende* or *Seiendes* as "being" or "particular being," (b) *Seiendheit*, in the sense of the mode of being of a specific species of things or living beings, as "being-ness" (lower case), and (c) *Seyn*, as such, as "Being-ness" (capitalized) seems best. To be sure, in the sufficient distinction between (b) and (c) the whole road of my thinking is concealed, insofar as one follows its progression through the essence of metaphysics. It is probably not accidental that the "ontological difference" cannot be adequately stated in either English or French." See *Psychoanalysis and Daseinsanalysis*, New York: Basic Books, 1963, 36 (note).

12 This edition is notable for the inclusion of thirteen color photographs following p. 264) (1) "Entrance to the Hindu University in Benares. It is called the Place of World Wisdom": Founded in 1916, it is now Banaras Hindu University; (2) "Benares: Morning bathing in the holy waters of the Ganges for the cleansing of sins"; (3) "Man and a holy cow together in a temple in Benares"; (4) "Leprosy patients in front of a gate of the temple of Madura in southern India, trying to touch the healthy in order to heal themselves"; (5) "11-year-old boy who entered a monastery as a student monk and has been living there for 3 years"; (6) "Boy in the consulting room of an Ayurvedic doctor one hour after a fatal snake bite. Pure prayer treatment"; (7) "A yogi, priest in a lonely forest temple"; (8) "The only female sage in the Annandamoyee ashram in Benares"; (9) "View from the author's other dormitory in Rishikesh. Front left, glimpse of the pillow"; (10) "The Holy Vishnudas"; (11) "The author's sleeping quarters in the Annandamoyee ashram"; (12) "Spiritual power in front of the spiritual power of the Himalayas [Gobind Kaul]"; (13) "The author's most significant "sage," Swami Gobind Kaul near Shrinigar in the Kashmir Valley."

version, by Herder. If now the author and even more the publisher agree to publish the book again in a third edition two full decades after it was written and again in its unabridged and unaltered original form, they must be convinced of two things. First, they have to be sure no substantive misconceptions contained in the first edition have come to light which have to be corrected. Second, they must be of the opinion that even today the book has not lost any of its relevance.

That both are the case may be considered proven by the following facts:

The author did not go to India again after 1958, yet he has remained in continuous contact with his teachers and friends, especially the Mahamahopadhyaya [esteemed scholar] who is extensively quoted above and who, until his death a few years ago, one could truly call his "guru."¹³ Much that confirms the correctness of what is in the text of this book the author learned along the way from the Swiss psychiatrist Dr. Erna Hoch, who at the author's instigation took over the management of a psychiatric clinic in northern India eighteen years ago and has worked in India since then without interruption. She is today professor of psychiatry at the University of Kashmir at Shrinagar and director of the university hospital there. Above all, she followed in the footsteps of the author in studying Indian philosophy and Hindu meditation and kept him constantly informed about her experiences in this regard, both by letter and during her occasional visits to Switzerland.¹⁴

Furthermore, on a daily basis the author himself has carried out without interruption the meditative exercises imparted to him by his Indian teachers in accordance with the instructions received at that time. After this kind of experience as well he does not feel any inclination to make any changes or additions to the original text of the book.

Finally, last fall [1975] it was granted to the author to be invited to Japan for a considerable amount of time because many of the medical, philosophical, and theological faculties of

13 The Sanskrit for 'guru' गुरु means, literally, one who dispels darkness.

14 The story of Erna M. Hoch is worth recalling. She is not mentioned in Boss's edition of the *Zollikon Seminars*, but is named by Peter Trawny in the GA edition of the seminars: "Erna Hoch (1919-2003), born in Basel. After a stint in England during World War II in the Women's Auxiliary Service, she studied medicine in Basel and specialized in psychiatry. Beginning in 1956, she worked in India, then between 1969 and 1980 in Kashmir. She returned to Europe in 1988" (GA 89, 669). Hoch played a significant role in the Heidegger-Boss collaboration. She was an important mediator between Boss and various Indian scholars in India after Boss had been there. We learn from Hoch that she was Boss's "messenger between East and West" who had been sent by Boss to speak with K.C. Pandey and other Indian scholars *on assignment on Heidegger's behalf*. Hoch kept the minutes of the first of the Zollikon seminars. See Erna M. Hoch, *Sources and Resources. A Western Psychiatrist's Search for Meaning in the Ancient Indian Scriptures* (Zurich: Rüegger, 1991). In her book, published soon after Boss's death, Hoch provides much to reflect on regarding what she takes to be four similarities and four differences between Western daseinanalysis and ancient Indian philosophy.

various universities in Japan were highly interested in his “daseinsanalytic school.”¹⁵ In that way the author came into close contact with the most recognized masters of Zen Buddhism. He even had the good fortune to take part extensively in meditative Zazen with a group of Zen Buddhist monks. It is precisely a comparison with his Indian experiences with Zen Buddhist practices and teachings and what has become outstanding about them that made it possible for the author to confirm just how appropriately [*sachgerecht*] the Indian realities [*Gegebenheiten*] mentioned in this book are described.

The author considers only one single supplement to be appropriate and fruitful at this point and at the present time. In the previous [German] editions of *Indienfahrt eines Psychiaters*, the author has said not a word about what was for him just the most surprising and deeply shocking experience that awaited him in India. His greatest surprise was that he heard from the mouth of his Indian interlocutors a great number of propositions which, word for word, seemed to have been taken from the daseinsanalytic work *Sein und Zeit* by Martin Heidegger. Yet the author knew very well that Heidegger had not heard anything of the Indian insights nor had the Indian sages heard anything at all about Heidegger. The author has omitted any indication of this so far, because he was afraid that by including this experience he would in an all too disruptive way break up [*zerstückeln*] the course of his depiction of the Indian realities and ways of thinking, which was his only concern.

The reason for making good this omission today presents the author with a crucial question which has since become public in the eyes of a critic.¹⁶ First, the latter referred to the author’s assertion in his foreword to *A Psychiatrist’s Sojourn in India* on the matter of his reading of all of the literature on Indian wisdom available to him, even books written by Indian scholars on ancient Indian insights into the basic constitution of man, into the nature of his world, and into the nature of the relationship between the two, and [in addition] the critic could not shake the suspicion that Boss’s reading was consistently falsified by being forcibly pressed into the service of a Western Platonist and neo-Kantian paradigm of presentation. But (so the critical question continued) before listening to the Indian sages, did not the author of the *Indian Sojourn*, probably doff the spectacles of Western metaphysical Platonism and neo-Kantianism only to put on those of the equally Western fundamental ontology of Martin Heidegger?

What astonished the author most about this question was not so much that it was made at all, but rather the fact that it was made public only once as far as he knew. That there

15 Here I have adopted Boss’s approved English rendering of *Daseinsanalyse* as it appears in *Zollikon Seminars. Protocols – Conversations – Letters [= ZS]*, Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2001. A Japanese translation of Boss’s “Das Leib-Seele-Problem im Lichte der Daseinsanalyse” appeared in Yoshida Masatoshi (ed.), *Martin Heidegger-Festschrift* (Tokyo: Risosha), 1975, pp. 120-143.

16 It is not clear to whom Boss is referring here.

was indeed a great danger that the author could, in a daseinsanalytic sense, *mis*-hear [ver-hören] was all too conscious to him from the start. Heidegger's new discoveries had only recently impressed him deeply. Precisely in full knowledge of this danger, the author had been able to arm against it accordingly. The best proof of his impartiality in this regard may be that the author also immediately became aware of the fundamental difference between Hindu and daseinsanalytic human studies. The deepest insight of the Westerner Heidegger into that which is is that in his basic constitution man consists in a globally unbridled ability to attend to [Vernehmenkönnen] what is encountering him [das ihm Begegnenden]. As questioning openness [vernehmende Erschlossenheit] of this kind, man is claimed [in Anspruch genommen] as that place of appearance [Erscheinungsstätte] without which nothing at all could be given. All, that is, which is and has to be needs such a sacred space [Heiligkeitsbereich] in order to come to pass [an-wesen] somewhere, to "dawn [aufgehen]" in the fullness of its meaning, to be able to make its appearance [Vorschein] and thereby come into its being [zu seinem Sein kommen zu können].

On the other hand, the author heard from the Indian Mahamahopadyaya (and not only from him) about the quite different kind of experience [Erfahrung] mentioned in this book. According to him, clearly there is only "Brahman," the "great dawning [große Aufgehen]", "clearing [Lichtung]", "lightness [Gelichtetheit]", "awareness [Bewußtheit]" even *without* the essence of man [Menschenwesen].

After his return from India, when the author reported this formidable contradiction between the Indian sages and the Westerner Martin Heidegger, *after a long, thoughtful silence Heidegger replied: What was just now conveyed by the author was for him simply not immediately experienceable [unmittelbar erfahbar] and therefore could not be considered as true for him [als Wahrheit gelten]* [emphasis added]. Heidegger expressed this with just as much certainty [Bestimmtheit] as the Indian sages had previously shown [dargestellt] the author their knowledge of non-human-dependent [menschen-unabhängiges] Brahman as the most immediate [unmittelbarste] and most certain meditative experience [gewisseste meditative Erfahrung].

On the other hand, if the insights of Indian sages are at a remove unbridgeably far [unüberbrückbar] from those of Heidegger's fundamental ontology, what the author heard in India about a "lightness [Gelichtetheit]," "Brahman," which is there [das ...gebe] without what is there [das Seiende] in general even independent of man [unabhängig vom Menschen], indeed independent of a god [^Gott], of gods [Göttern], or a deity [Gottheit], is in all greater closeness to the original Hindu experience which, on its way to the East [auf ihrem Weg nach Osten], changed into the Zen Buddhism of southern Japan.¹⁷

17 The key figure in all this is Adi Shankaracharya (788-820), the 8th-century scholar of Vedanta who achieved a synthesis of Hinduism and Mahayana Buddhism that evolved into Zen. He is mentioned in Heidegger's notes for one of the Zollikon seminars in GA 89, 37. Just how much of

As we will see, in 1965, in a talk given in honor of Ludwig Binswanger, the first psychiatrist to attempt to base his *psychiatric* daseinanalysis on Heidegger, Heidegger would change his mind about the relation between *Dasein* and the clearing [*Lichtung*]. This would be no minor adjustment.

Before turning to this rather remarkable change in understanding, I will acquaint the reader a bit with Boss's most most extensively quoted mentor, Gobind Kaul, whom the psychiatrist met in 1956. It was Kaul who had told Boss that "the tireless training of a truthful essential condition [*unablässige Üben einer wahrheitswürdigen Wesensverfassung*]¹⁸ is much more important than all talk [*Reden*]" (*IP* 223). Such a *Wesensverfassung* is the result of an *Üben*, a practice or discipline, not mere talk about it. For Heidegger it is thinking, which cannot replace repeating what others are purported to have thought. The connection with the experience of psychoanalysis and daseinanalysis versus talking or reading about it obvious. One may read volumes about piano playing, but only sitting at the keyboard and tirelessly practicing scales and arpeggia, Czerny or Pischna will make it possible to perhaps one day make music sightreading a score by Bach or Mozart. One may read books about fitness but only working out will produce the desired muscle tone.

Heidegger is "Eastern" has been a fascinating question for a long time, as are the question of what he was familiar with of Eastern philosophy and when, and in what way Boss enhanced Heidegger's familiarity with the area. As we will see, Boss is clear that before Heidegger spoke with Boss about his *Indienfahrt*, the philosopher knew nothing about Indian philosophy. In a letter of March 7, 1960, Heidegger asks Boss: "If you could—but only at your leisure—find out and share with me the Indian words for 'ontological difference [*ontologische Differenz*]', that is, for 'being [*Sein*]' and 'beings [*Seiendes*]', for 'unconcealedness [*Unverborgenheit*]' and 'forgetfulness [*Vergessenheit*]', I would be very grateful" (*ZS* 254). By the time of the trip to Sicily, April-May 1963, however, the two men were discussing Indian thought (*ZS* 178-181). A discussion of these conversations would take us too far afield today, but they are relevant to the point of contention between Boss and Heidegger that was not resolved until 1965 with Heidegger's change of heart about the meaning of Brahman for his understanding of *Dasein*. Based on what know from their correspondence so far made public, we can safely say that Boss was Heidegger's tutor on Hindu philosophy from the spring of 1960 through 1963, but that it was even after the conversations in Taormina that Heidegger had rethought the matter, leading up to the lecture for Binswanger in October 1965. A close look at the texts and letters from these two years will reveal a great deal about just how meaningful Boss's insights from his time in India became for Heidegger. The crucial element of the discussion is the place of *language* which as Heidegger had said in 1946 in homage to Rilke, is the "house of being [*Sein*]" (*GA* 5 310)" On the relation between Heidegger and Vedānta, see J.L. Mehta's essay on the theme in Graham Parkes (ed.), *Heidegger and Asian Thought*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1987, 15-45. The volume contains important essays by Parkes, Otto Pöggeler, Joan Stambaugh, Paul Shih-yi Hsiao (with whom Heidegger undertook a project of translating the *Tao te Ching*), Keiji Nishitani, Yasuo Yuasa, Akihiro Takeichi, Kohei Mizoguchi, Tetsuaki Kotoh, Hwa Yol Jung and David Michael Levin.

18 Heidegger had written about the *Wesensverfassung* of *Dasein* as early as the first introduction to *Sein und Zeit*. *GA* 2, 11. Frey has Kaul say that "the tireless training of a frame of mind being attuned to truth is much more important than all talk" (*PI* 164).

I will quote a letter from Boss of November 1970 to the editor of Kaul's book of poems, *Gobind Amrit*,¹⁹ which was published in 1975. It is an important document and rather difficult to find, so I will quote it in its entirety. It is important in that it reveals the depth of Boss's personal crisis during the time of his sojourn in India. In it we have an exceptionally intimate glimpse of Boss the man, confirming this author's view that the time of his travels in India was one of spiritual and personal, that is, existential change in the life of the evidently "successful" European physician and therapist. It also speaks to the second insight mentioned, that preverbal "immediate understanding" that occurs between two human beings – any two human beings – that is the starting point of any relationship, but in the context of our discussion the *Verhältnis* between the *Dasein* of the analyst and the *Dasein* of the analysand. It was just such an experience with Kaul that would be life-changing for Boss.²⁰

At the age of about fifty I had reached the stage of a well established and not unsuccessful psychiatrist and academic teacher. People thought of me as a lucky man. Inside, however, the despair had grown to an almost unsupportable degree. Many of the best authorities in my field had been my teachers. Still I lacked any real understanding about the essence and the meaning of human existence. Most of the patients who came to ask for my therapeutic aid complained in a more or less veiled and hidden form of exactly the same failing in knowing about the goal of their lives. Finally, I had to realize that the natural scientific approach to man enabled the modern scientist only to manipulate the human body in an extremely skillful way. Manipulation as such though is by far no proof at all for an adequate understanding of the manipulated matter.

This state of affairs forced me to seek help outside the Western world. I went to India. I had been told the Indian saints and philosophers had searched for the truth about man and his world during an unbroken chain of thousands of years.

I met a great many very learned and saintly Indian men and women. To all of them I shall remain deeply indebted for their help. The turning point of my life, however, only occurred when I was brought before Swami Gobind Kaul who had come down from Kashmir just at that time to Goregaon, Bombay.

There was no possibility for him and me to talk to each other directly. All my knowledge of several languages, including my preliminary studies in Hindi were of no avail. Swamij only speaks Kashmiri. Nevertheless, *from the very start of our encounter an immediate non-verbal, rather a preverbal understanding between him and me had sprung up* [emphasis added]. In his presence the many torturing questions about man's existence and about beingness as such were instantly stilled. A closeness to godhead at once had opened up. Later on Swamiji showed me through Goregaon friends as interpreters the practice of meditation. Ever since I follow his advice without any break wherever

19 The title means simply *Govind Water of Life*. The book is a selection of Kaul's *bhajanmala* (devotional songs), referred to in places as his "rosary of hymns."

20 "Foreword" to Gobind Kaul, *Gobind Amrit*, Bombay: Prithwinath Niranjannath Pandit, 1975, 1-2. It is a letter written in English to J.M. Kayande, dated November 23, 1970. The pages scanned for archive.org are found at <https://archive.org/details/GovindAmritKashmiriSwamiGovindKoul/page/n5>. Kayande's brief "Salutations," which follows the letter, purports to give an account of what he observed when Boss and Kaul met. One might have doubts about some of the details of what was observed.

Miles Groth

I have to stay in this world. I never could have fulfilled my rather heavy tasks as a psychotherapeutic doctor and as an academic teacher without this fountainhead of mental strength which I was so lucky to find in India.

I am happy to learn that Mr. Prithvi Nath Pandit of Goregaon is going to publish some two hundred poems by Swamij Gobind Kaul of Kashmir. I am sure that this book will bring all those who have eyes to see and ears to hear closer to the only realm which really matters.

Medard Boss, MD

Professor of Psychotherapy, Medical School

University of Zurich, Switzerland

November 23, 1970

The effect of Kaul on Boss was profound. From him learned the essentials of encounter that he would introduce into psychotherapy. What he experienced with Kaul he would from then on realize was the starting point of daseinanalysis, what Heidegger had referred to as the being-with [*Mitsein*] of each *Dasein*. Again, it is worth reminding ourselves that this was no 22-year-old George Harrison embracing the music of Ravi Shankar in 1965 or the 22-year-old analysand on Freud's couch in Berggasse, but rather the now a 67-year-old Boss recalling life-changing experiences from his late middle age fifteen years earlier.

VI. To complete our review of the "India book" it remains to look at Boss' introduction to the 4th edition (1987), "After Thirty Years."²¹ We do this in retrospect after yet another *thirty-five* years. The then 84-year-old Boss had some sobering comments on the place he had visited many years earlier, but the enduring impact of his travels clearly remained powerful. It is a summing up of his perspective on daseinanalysis as influenced both by Heidegger and by the impact of his mid-career, mid-life crisis. That same year, of course, he published his edition of Heidegger's *Zollikon Seminars*. The connections between these two texts run deep.

After reporting, sadly, that nearly all of his "teachers [*Lehrer*]" had died, "one right after the other," Boss tells us that one "personal connection" to India had continued, namely,

21 "After Thirty Years. Preface to *A Psychiatrist Journeys to India* (4th Edition)" [= *PPJ*] in Keith Hoeller (ed.), *The Heidegger-Boss Relationship*, Seattle: Review of Existential Psychology & Psychiatry, 2008, 33-39. This volume originally appeared as *Review of Existential Psychology and Psychiatry* 27(1-3), 2002-2003. Translation by Michael Eldred. Cf. *IP* (4th ed.) 6-10. Eldred omits the first paragraph of the preface, which merely enumerates the series of editions of the "India book." The reprint of *The Heidegger-Boss Relationship* is now hard to come by, but it remains an essential starting point for understanding now twenty years after its initial publication. It includes Boss's own "Martin Heidegger Applied to Psychiatry and the Modern World" (1989), a lecture he gave at Stanford University in September 1989. That and a paper "What Is Man Made of When He Dreams and Where Is He Then?," given at the University of Portland (not yet published in English), were his last public lectures in the States. By the end of Spring 1990 he was unable to complete the introduction to the English translation of the *Zollikon Seminars* and died a few days fore Christmas that year.

with Erna Hoch, who had maintained a steady correspondence with Boss during her time in Kashmir from 1969 until the late 1980s when she retired and returned to Europe. Sixteen years younger than Boss, the two colleagues had met in Switzerland after a long separation not long before Boss wrote the preface.

The message of the text is mixed. For starters, Boss observes that “a journey to India with approximately the same experiences that one can read about in earlier editions of this book would no longer be possible today. Too much has changed in that country in the intervening time, for the most part precisely in the direction of the hopes and fears expressed by the author” (PPJ 33) regarding the encroachments of technology and their effects. In contrast to the difficulty he had had in even finding the wise men he met, the “tourism industry” had made access to the holy places where they dwelled now a convenient stop on a tour bus. Worse yet, some of the most esteemed sages had allowed themselves to be “commercialized” and even “press themselves on the tourists almost in flocks.”

In the streets, one could now see women dressed in blue jeans which had replaced the flowing saris he remembered. Among other influences, the introduction of military service for women had made the “once fascinating, flower-like innocence” of their faces disappear, Boss ruefully observes. Indeed, “both women’s and men’s faces have become tighter [*verbissener*], greedier” (PPJ 34).

He notes that the dozen or so psychiatrists who had been available to people in India in 1958, when the population of India had been more than 400 million, had grown in number to a thousand, but they had to serve a population that had doubled. Indian physicians who went abroad to train as psychiatrists in the UK or America often remained there after completing their program of study in order to make more money in the West than they could have back home. Spoken with irony, Boss observes that “the gift of western technology” had led to an alarming increase in the rate of alcoholism and addiction to “modern drugs [*Drogen*]” among the Indian population. In 1987, in India as in the West, there was already the widespread use of so-called psychotropic medications. This is a contraindication for daseinanalysis, a central feature of which is the avoidance of prescribing drugs during treatment. Instead, it is always only a matter of encounter, the couch, and words.

With reference to the epilogue to the 3rd edition, Boss returns once more to the “similarity between ancient Indian thinking and the insights of the modern Western philosopher Martin Heidegger” he had written about there and in the passages added to the English edition. Most important, we are apprised of the period that interests us, namely, the years that coincided with the Zollikon seminars. We hear of Heidegger’s surprising change of heart about the issue that had vexed both men for years:

After the author’s return from India, I held countless conversations [*unzählige Gespräche*] with Martin Heidegger about my Indian experiences. Previously, Martin Heidegger had known next to noth-

ing [so *hut wie nichts*] about the thinking of ancient India. Until then, he was under the impression that man's meditative thinking [*das besinnliche Denken des Menschen*] had only begun with the Pre-socratic philosophers of ancient Greece. In particular, he had up to that time heard nothing of the fact that thousands of years ago, the ancient Indian sages placed the greatest importance on the single word [*Wort*] which also provided Heidegger's thinking with its own foundation [*Boden*].

The great Indian sages used the word "Brahman" for this insight. With it they referred to "the great rising [*das große Aufgehen*]," the "clearing from the ground up [*das von Grund auf Lichtende*]." But Martin Heidegger, too, spoke of a clearing [*Lichtung*] in his early work, *Being and Time*.²² At the same time he believed that the existing [*Existieren*] of human beings is the ultimate, unconditional presupposition for the fact that anything at all can "be [*sein*]." In contrast to this, the age-old Indian sages had experienced that "Brahman," in the sense of something cleared and open [*Lichthaften und Offenen*], could be even without the presence [*Anwesenheit*] of human beings.

In the period *preceding* the author's journey to India, Martin Heidegger was unable to follow his Indian fore-thinkers on precisely this point. But then, many years after the author's return from India, the following astounding sentences were unexpectedly heard in a talk given by Martin Heidegger:

Yet it required a decades-long walk along forest paths that lead only so far [*Ganges auf Holzwegen*] to realize that the sentence in *Being and Time* – "The Dasein [*Da-Sein*] of the human being is itself the clearing [*Lichtung*]"²³ – has perhaps divined [*geahnt*] the matter of thinking [*die Sache des Denkens*], but in no way adequately thought it through [*gedacht*], that is, in no way posed [*vorgelegt*] the matter as a question that arrived at it [the matter].

Dasein is the clearing for presence [*Anwesenheit*] as such, and yet is at the same time not it at all insofar as the clearing is Dasein in the first place, that is, insofar as the clearing grants [*gewährt*] Dasein as such. The analytic of Dasein [*Analytik des Da-seins*] does not yet attain [*gelangt*] to what is proper [*das Eigene*] to the clearing and by no means [attains to] the region [*Bereich*] to which the clearing, in turn, belongs [*zugehört*].²⁴

- 22 GA 2, 133: "When we talk in an ontically [*ontisch*] figurative way about the *lumen naturale* in man we mean nothing other than the existential-ontological [*existenzial-ontologisch*] structure of this being, the fact that it *is* in the manner [*Weise*] of being its there [*Da*]. To say that it is "illuminated [*erleuchtet*]" means that it is cleared [*gelichtet*] [*] in itself as being-in-the-world, not by another being [*Seiende*], but in such a way that it is [***] itself the clearing [*Lichtung*]. Only for a being thus existentially cleared [*existenzial zu gelichteten*] do things that are there [*Vorhandenes*] become accessible [*zugänglich*] in the light [*Licht*] or concealed [*verborgen*] in darkness [*Dunke*]. Of its own [*zu Hause aus*], Dasein brings its there [*Da*] along with it; if it lacks its there, it is not only factually not, but is in no sense the being [*Seiende*] which Dasein in essence is. *Dasein is [***] its disclosure.*" (GA 2, 177). Heidegger made notes in copies of the text in three places: [*] (truth, unconcealment)—*Offenheit* (openness)—*Lichtung* (clearing), *Licht* (light), *Leuchten* (luminance); [**] *aber nicht produziert* (but not produced); [***] *Dasein existiert und nur es; somit Existenz das Aus- und Hinaus-stehen in die Offenheit des Da: Ek-sistenz* (*Dasein* exists, and only it [exists]; consequently, existing is standing out and into the openness of the there: ex-sisting).
- 23 Heidegger creates a declarative sentence from the clause in the passage cited above, referring only to § 28.
- 24 Boss cites Martin Heidegger, *Zur Frage nach der Bestimmung der Sache des Denkens*, ed. Hermann Heidegger, St. Gallen: Erker Verlag, 1984, p. 19. The text is a revised version of a lecture given in honor of Ludwig Binswanger on October 30, 1965, entitled "Das Ende des Denkens in der Gestalt

And so we learn that Heidegger also recognizes the same thought that the age-old Indian sages once perceived [*vernommen hatten*]. Now Martin Heidegger as well saw that the perceiving [*vernehmende*], clearing [*gelichtete*] human existing [*Existieren*] is itself a being [*ein Seiendes*] and as such requires a pre-human, more encompassing clearing [*Lichtung*] for it to come to appearance [*zum Vorschein*] at all.

This thought opens up the possibility that now ancient Indian thinking and the most recent Western mode of thinking can go a lot farther by working together to overcome the subjectivism of the modern machine and atomic age which dominates the entire globe today...

The philosophical overcoming of the presently reigning subjectivity could turn out to be just as significant. This overcoming, which was once achieved by ancient Hindu philosophers, was also discerned by that philosopher who has his roots in the most modern philosophy, Martin Heidegger. The consequences of such an event for the future can be enormous. Always at the beginning of a new historical epoch stand philosophers whom our destiny [*Geschick*] uses as its mouthpieces...

January 1987

Boss had in hand the original Erker edition of Heidegger's text "Zur Frage nach der Bestimmung der Sache des Denkens" – "On the Question Concerning the Determination of the Matter of Thinking" – and knew of the occasion of the presentation of the text by Heidegger and its original title: "Das Ende des Denkens in der Gestalt der Philosophie [The End of Thinking in the Form of Philosophy]." It had been read in honor of the 80th birthday of Ludwig Binswanger, who had first brought Heidegger's thought to bear on questions of interest to psychiatry. The talk had nothing to say about daseinanalysis. Instead, it was Heidegger's most straightforward announcement that philosophy had come to an end in the West.

der Philosophie [The End of Thinking in the Form of Philosophy]." See GA 16, 620-633, with a preface added by Heidegger for a Japanese translation of an expanded version of the text by Koichi Tsujimura published in 1968. The preface, which was not published in German until 1989 is in GA 16, 695. An English translation by Richard Capobianco and Marie Göbel, "On the Question Concerning the Determination of the Matter for Thinking," can be found in *Epoché: A Journal for the History of Philosophy*, 14(2), 2010, 213-223. I have adapted the Capobianco/Göbel translation of the sentences Boss cites. Boss inaccurately quotes the passage from the Erker edition in hyphenating *Dasein* as *Da-Sein*, something the translator carries over into English as 'Da-sein'. The address resonates with Heidegger's "The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking," first heard in a French version in 1965, read by Jean Beaufret at a conference on Kierkegaard. The German text appeared in 1969. An English translation by Joan Stambaugh was published in 1972 with "Time and Being" (1962) and several other seminal texts by the "very late" Heidegger.

The text, written in 1964, was first read by Jean Beaufret in Paris at a conference sponsored by UNESCO in a French translation by Beaufret and François Fédier as “La fin de la philosophie et la tâche de la pensée.” Binswanger is mentioned only at the opening of the address where Heidegger recalls that the psychiatrist “along the path of his medical activities and scientific investigations, also traversed the different phases and movements of the philosophy of our century” in his attempt to clarify the foundations of psychiatry.²⁵ It is worth recalling that by the end of November 1965 Heidegger had been quite clear during the Zollikon seminars that Binswanger’s “psychiatric Daseinsanalysis” was based on a misunderstanding of his *Daseinsanalytik*, something that Binswanger himself admitted.²⁶

The upshot of the preface is that given the harmony of Indian philosophy and Heidegger’s thought, there “opens up the possibility that now ancient Indian wisdom and the most recent Western mode of thinking can go a lot farther by working together to overcome the subjectivism of the modern machine and atomic age which dominates the entire globe today. The consequences of such an occurrence for the future can be enormous...The philosophical overcoming of the presently reigning subjectivism ... once achieved by the ancient Hindu philosophers ...was also discerned by that philosopher who has his roots in the most modern philosophy, Martin Heidegger” (*PPI* 36). Boss is optimistic that “such a change in thinking [*Wandel des Denkens*] [found in Hindu philosophy and Heidegger’s thought] could have repercussions for medicine [*Heilkunde*], because it could allow the somatic [*das Leibliche*] and the spiritual-intellectual [*das Seelischgeistige*], as well as their relation to one another, to appear in a completely different light [*ganz andere Lichte*] than hitherto” (*ibid.*). And such repercussions would be felt most solidly in daseinanalysis.

As I have already suggested, regrettably Boss’s vision did not extend to medicine and psychology as a whole in his lifetime. Nor have his proposals taken hold yet. This remains work to be done, but it appears that the renaissance of interest in daseinanalysis now current signals that such work is underway. Everything, however, will depend upon a complete declaration of independence of daseinanalysis from medicine and psychology.

VIII. We have come to understand the origin of *encounter* which is central to Boss’s therapeutic daseinanalysis in his experiences in India in the late 1950s. Heidegger’s influence on Boss precipitated such a reorientation within the psychoanalytic tradition that took place while he was there. Seeing the relation between *Dasein* and *Dasein* as basic to any human encounter had prepared Boss for the surprising [*verwunderlich*] insights he arrived at in the presence of the gurus with whom he sat. He would not have experienced things as he did had Heidegger’s thought not made have made open to

25 “On the Question Concerning the Determination of the Matter for Thinking,” 213.

26 See ZS 115 ff.

what Kaul and others had to *show* him about genuine *Begegnung* – encounter or, better, meeting – which Boss then realized is the starting point of daseinanalysis.²⁷ It remains for another time to examine this synergy in more detail. So does the remarkable fact that Boss's reorientation in turn led to a change in heart on the part of Heidegger about how to think about *Dasein*, *Lichtung* and *Sein*.

Meßkirch

May 22, 2022

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27 See "Medard Boss on 'Encounter in Psychotherapy,'" in *Daseinsanalyse* **37**, 2021, 31-48, translated by the author. First published as "Begegnung in der Psychotherapie," in *Psychotherapy and Psychosomatics*, **13**(5), 1964, 332-341.

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