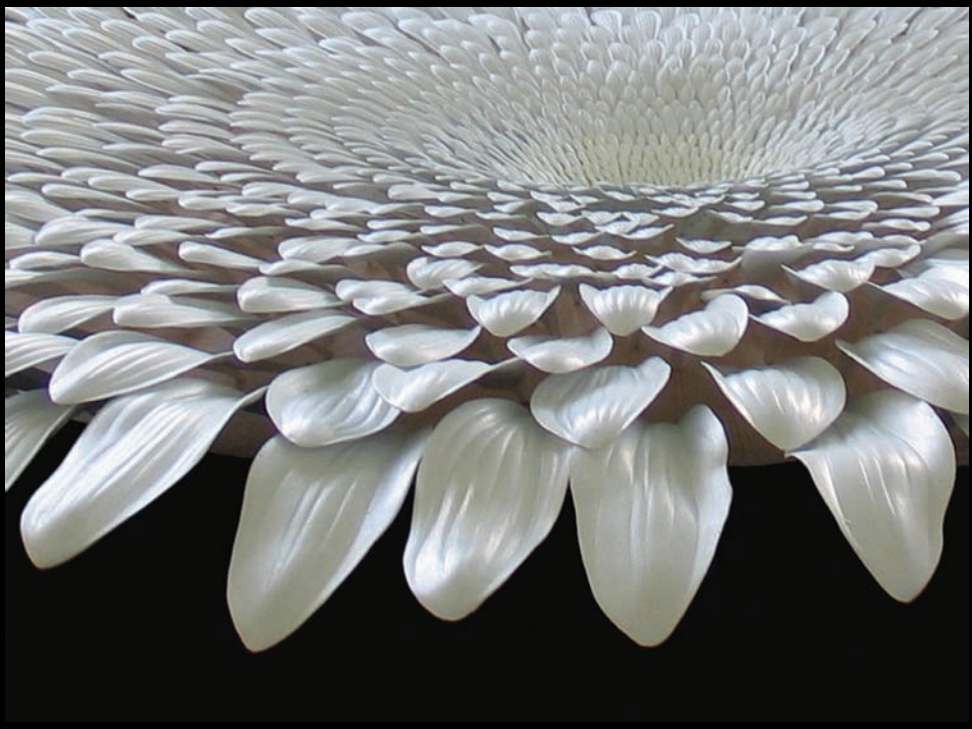
# The Indo-German Identification



Reconciling South Asian Origins and European Destinies
1765–1885

Robert Cowan

*The Indo-German Identification*

*Studies in German Literature, Linguistics, and Culture*

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*To Lela*

*from Majnu*

Europe is primordially and, as long as it remains true to itself, politically and spiritually a power that is opposed to the Asiatic. The German word *Abendland* has a fuller sound. It signifies, in contrast to *Morgenland*, a movement toward the end, a movement which surely begins in the East but which completes itself in the West. . . . "But in order that this occur, the inner sun of self-consciousness must ascend there, casting a higher kind of radiance" [Hegel, *Philosophy of History*], namely the radiance of absolutely free and hence critical spirit, whose dangers and greatness are as yet unknown in the East.

— Karl Löwith, *Martin Heidegger and European Nihilism* (1983)

The seduction lay in the chaos. They thought we were simple. We thought they were neon. They thought we were profound. We knew that we were provincial. Everybody thought everybody else was ridiculously exotic and everybody got it wrong. Then the real action began.

— Gita Mehta, *Karma Cola: Marketing the Mystic East* (1979)

# Contents

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# Introduction: History Is Personal

## Context and Argument

Orientalism in Germany drew on two separate sources, the relationship between the Ottoman and Holy Roman (later Habsburg) Empires on the one hand, and the "Oriental Renaissance" spurred by the translation of Sanskrit texts into European languages on the other. While the foundational scholarly text for the study of this latter form of German Orientalism, Raymond Schwab's *La renaissance orientale*, was published as long ago as 1950, the German case has received much less attention than its English or French counterparts until rather recently. Certainly such eminent scholars as A. Leslie Willson (1964), Ernst Behler (1968), Léon Poliakov (1971), and Wilhelm Halbfass (1981) have made important contributions to this literature, but it was not until the 1990s that the study of German Orientalism really hit its stride with the work of Dorothy M. Figueira, Ronald Inden, Todd Kontje, Partha Mitter, Kamakshi Murti, Sheldon Pollock, and Susanne Zantop, to name only a few major contributors to what has become a growing field of inquiry. Much of this groundbreaking work, particularly with regard to German Indology, has been a response to the notion that Germany, which, unlike England and France, came to colonialism late and in a smaller way, did not share with its European neighbors the same kind of exoticizing power dynamics.

In *Orientalism* (1978), Edward Said famously reproached himself for not paying attention to German academic Orientalists, but defended his choice by arguing, "there was nothing in Germany to correspond to the Anglo-French presence in India, the Levant, North Africa. Moreover, the German Orient was almost exclusively a scholarly, or at least a classical, Orient: it was made the subject of lyrics, fantasies, and even novels, but it was never actual, the way Egypt and Syria were actual for Chateaubriand, Lane, Lamartine, Burton, Disraeli, or Nerval."[1] While this is partially true, Said does not acknowledge the enormous project of German national self-determination with which German Indology was intertwined; thus he has been justly criticized for dismissing the German relationship with South Asia as unrelated to the Foucauldian power relationships he explores in such detail in the English and French colonial contexts. Comparatist Figueira faults Said for consigning the Orientalist himself to a position that is

> merely a function of political forces rather than an expression of the private motives and desires that inspire the individual artist or scholar. Said's argument disregards the testimony of a text's language, reception, and character as narrative, poetry, translation, or scholarship. By linking texts with certain cultural practices, Said imposes a systematized coherence on the historical past that presupposes the political experience of the twentieth century.[2]

Indeed, this criticism is particularly relevant to the study of late eighteenth- and nineteenth-century German proponents of Indian wisdom, the figures that this book examines, such as Herder and Friedrich Schlegel, for they brought to the study of Sanskrit texts their own search to establish a set of German national origins that were independent of the Greco-Roman and Judeo-Christian traditions. They also strove to postulate how modern Germany might regenerate an enervated Europe and bring about what they felt to be its enlightened (Christian) destiny.

What Figueira emphasizes throughout her critique of Said is the personal nature of such Orientalists' engagement with India and, in his pioneering 1993 article "Deep Orientalism?: Notes on Sanskrit and Power beyond the Raj," Sanskritist Sheldon Pollock makes a similar critique. Pollock argues that German intellectuals were engaged in forms of "internal colonialism," which employed ideas from and about India, Sanskrit, and Hinduism for their own national interests: "The case of German Indology, a dominant form of European orientalism, leads us to ask whether orientalism cannot be powerfully understood with reference to the national political culture within which it is practiced as to the colony toward which it is directed."[3] Thus, since the early 1990s scholars such as Figueira and Pollock have sought to situate the peculiar case of German Orientalism, and particularly German Indology, within a framework that emphasizes the personal struggles of the participants. These are struggles to reconcile Eastern and Western explanations of the universe and our role in it as a means of understanding their own geographical, linguistic, and spiritual origins, as well as their purpose and destiny. The intention of this book is to take Figueira's and Pollock's critiques further and argue that in the German case, orientalism can *only* be understood as a set of *personal* attempts to appropriate foreign concepts, motifs, and stories in an effort to tell Germany's own unique story.

The recent scholarly work on German Indology has concentrated on institutionalized academic orientalism, on those nineteenth-century German Orientalists who "filled prominent university positions in a number of European countries where they engaged directly in the work of empire building,"[4] as in recent books by Suzanne Marchand and Douglas T. McGetchin. Other work has focused on debates about hermeneutics, linguistics, and philology (Bradley L. Herling, Tuska Benes), on the role of nationalism and Catholicism in German Indology (Nicholas A.

Germana, Peter K. J. Park), or on new debates about "the Aryans" and Aryanism (Edwin Bryant, Stefan Arvidsson). What this book does is consider each of these strands within the context of individual thinkers who were engaged in attempts to define themselves and understand their own history. In response to Figueira's critique of the Saidian "school" and Pollock's challenge to received notions of orientalism, this study concerns German philosophers and poets (and some of their Greek, Roman, French, and English predecessors) who employed aspects of South Asian thought, art, and literature in their own quests to define themselves ethnically, linguistically, culturally, and spiritually. It is concerned with the personal and textual nuances of the affiliations between Indians and Germans among specific poets and philosophers.

This is not to say that these texts and authors are to be considered independent of their social and historical contexts — quite the contrary. While this study is not a collection of biographical sketches, it considers these "Indo-Germans" — J. G. Herder, Friedrich von Hardenberg (Novalis), F. W. J. Schelling, Friedrich Schlegel, G. W. Hegel, Arthur Schopenhauer, and Friedrich Nietzsche — in light of their personal struggles to reconcile cultural preoccupations and systems of thought that often appear to contradict each other. This book is intentionally textually based, reading these men's published (and occasionally private) writings closely in an effort to understand the direct or oblique influence of Sanskrit literature and the writers' spiritual, scientific, and philosophical concerns, and to underscore both the extent to which they were unable to overcome their own prejudices and the ideas that contributed to their respective *Bildungen*.

But why do I employ this curious philological term "Indo-German" to descibe them?

## Terminology

Historian of language Maurice Olender notes that the introduction of the term "Indo-German" was long attributed to Orientalist Julius Heinrich Klaproth in 1823 (and it still often is), but that it was in fact first used in 1810 by Conrad Malte-Brun in his *Précis de la géographie universelle* (Description of Universal Geography).[5] Regardless of the attribution of coinage, linguist Fred Shapiro states, "whoever coined 'indo-germanique' probably formed it by taking the end-points of the geographical sequence in which the component languages could be discussed, East to West, beginning as does Malte-Brun with '*le sanscrit*' and ending with '*les langues germaniques.*'"[6] But Ruth Römer points out that the dichotomy between Indo-European and Indo-German is not without its ideological implications, for in choosing to use the latter term, German philologists

were specifically staking a claim for their forefathers in an alleged line of linguistic and cultural succession.[7] Certainly in the early nineteenth century the implication of the term's usage — and the reason that I have chosen it as the title of this book — was that Sanskrit was the language of the civilization that gave us prelapsarian wisdom and that German was the language of the civilization that would bring that wisdom to fruition to save a degenerating Europe. This was the world-historical movement that Hegel postulated (and that philosopher Karl Löwith cites in one of this volume's epigraphs): civilization may have begun in the East, but it faltered and will only come to its full efflorescence in the West. While the term "indogermanisch" would be generally eschewed after 1833 in favor of "indoeuropäisch," following the practice of linguists such as Franz Bopp, the term persists in Germany to this day, emphasizing the long life of this historical schema.

In this study I thus use the term "Indo-German" to refer to a somewhat heterogeneous line of thinkers who would bring together these strains of thought: Romanticism, nationalism, and Indology. For these men India and Germany were profoundly linked by genealogy, culture, philosophy, and religion. This was not a complete break from the philosophies of the Enlightenment, however, for in fact these nineteenth-century figures also strove for self-knowledge. Rather than point to any hard and fast distinctions between Enlightenment and Counter-Enlightenment, Germanist Dennis Mahoney notes that the Romantic era in Germany might be productively viewed not as the polar opposite of Enlightenment rationalism, but as a time when discordances latent in eighteenth-century society and thought became manifest.[8] The personal resonances of such discordance are precisely what concern us here.

Yet just as the history of German colonialism is unlike the histories of the English and French empires, the development of German nationalism presents a different case from those of its major European neighbors. As political theorist Liah Greenfield has pointed out, unlike the centuries-long development of French and English nationalism, a German national consciousness developed out of a collection of supposed cultural and ethnic attributes in a very short time in response to the Napoleonic invasions between 1806 and 1815.[9] While this is to a certain extent true, the attributes that contributed to the formation of a more unified German national cultural identity had also developed over centuries; they merely began to coalesce around the turn of the eighteenth century. This is due to the fact that the rise of German national self-determination was coincident with the inception of Romanticism and the first European translations of and commentaries on Sanskrit texts, in which the Indo-Germans found explanations for the *Völkerwanderungen* (migrations of Germanic peoples), connections between German idealism and Hindu philosophy, and poetic inspiration for their Romantic outpourings.

Informing these connections between ethnic and national identity, the Enlightenment-era thinkers treated in this study such as Voltaire and Kant fall mostly into the category of "primordialists" — those who emphasize the prehistoric links between language, religion, race, ethnicity, and territory — while slightly later theorists, such as Herder, are kindred to the school of "perennialism," which advocates that the advent of nation and nationalism are perennial and natural.[10] While I agree with nationalism scholars such as Benedict Anderson and Ernest Gellner that the nation-state is a distinctly modern phenomenon, Anthony D. Smith emphasizes that the religious and linguistic foundation of ethnic identity began in antiquity, and this was particularly so for the Indo-Germans. That is to say, the Indo-Germans brought together long-standing European ideas about the wise, noble, and demonic characteristics of the ancient Indians and Germans and emergent anthropological and philosophical theories to create what Willson calls the "mythical image of India," as well as, I would say, the "mythical image of Germany." Thus this study necessitates a look at the strains of thought from the time of Alexander to the time of Herder that would eventually lead the protagonists in this story to locate the origins of Germanic peoples in India and to attempt to incorporate Indian philosophy into the history of Western thought.

By the same token, as we begin with such origins, we must also follow this Indo-German identification to some of its dark twentieth-century conclusions, for the genocidal outcomes of the Aryan myth are not mythology, but both the culmination and betrayal of almost a century and a half of scholarship and creative work. Moreover, present-day India has seen, since the time of the Nazis, the rise of a brand of Hindu nationalism that bears many of the same marks, motifs, and kinds of arguments as German National Socialism. This phenomenon reemerged with particular violence beginning in the late 1990s and early years of the twenty-first century, as was evident during the Gujarat pogrom of 2002.

## Organization of the Text

The prologue, "Original Attributes, 425 B.C.–A.D. 1765," necessarily covers an almost absurdly vast historical span and provides the textual background to the early German Romantic preoccupation with India. The concerns of this section involve the ascription of specific attributes or character traits to ancient Indians and Goths — primitive wisdom and noble simplicity to each, and demonic and idolatrous tendencies to the Indians. It follows the attribution of these characteristics regarding ancient Brahmins and early Germanic tribes from ancient Greco-Latin historians, such as Megasthenes, Arrian, and Philostratus, through to the Reformation-era rediscovery of Tacitus's *Germania*, which was used by German proto-

nationalists of the time such as Eberlin von Günzberg to argue for Germanic autochthony in Europe.

The core of the text begins in 1765, with the publication of Leibniz's *Nouveaux essais sur l'entendement humain*, and concludes in 1885, with Nietzsche's *Also Sprach Zarathustra*. Part one, "L'Âge des Ombres, 1765–1790s," focuses on Enlightenment-age debates over the origins of languages and the arts, in particular how the Indians supposedly preserved their primitive wisdom and primordial language and invented the arts and sciences before, during, and after the flood described in the Old Testament. Such arguments are to be found expressly in the works of the astronomer Jean-Dominique Bailly and the *philosophe* Voltaire. Considered next is the culmination of this tradition in the confluence of theories that would set the stage for the Jena Romantics' encounter with Indology: Herder's anthropological break with Kant, Fichte's solipsistic form of idealism, and A. H. Anquetil-Duperron's and William Jones's "Aryan" linguistic theories about the affiliation between Sanskrit and European languages.

In part two, "Textual Salvation from Social Degeneration, 1790s–1808," the early German Romantics — specifically Novalis, Schelling, and Friedrich Schlegel — and their fraught relationships with Indian philosophy and Christianity are addressed as evidenced by their encounters with Sanskrit texts, notably *Abhijñānaśākuntalam*, the *Gitagovinda*, the *Bhagavadgita*, the *Manusmriti*, and the *Purāṇas*. Figueira (as well as Herling) locates in Friedrich Schlegel's view of India a dynamic identified by Said that is employed here — a dynamic in which fantasies of an "Other" that has geographical, historical, philosophical, and cultural dimensions arise but are incommensurable with one's personal philosophy or the cultural milieus from which one originates, hence are destined to die, and in their wake resentments grow.[11] That is to say that these three writers were at first zealous proponents of the wisdom and beauty of Sanskrit literature but eventually came to see Hinduism and Buddhism as, at best, faded precursors to perfected Christianity or, at worst, nihilism. While these thinkers strove to find edifying experiences that lay outside their own times and places, they were ultimately hampered by their earlier prejudices and by an inability to reconcile very different thought systems. Bracketing these early Romantic attempts at self-definition was the influence of Fichte — his philosophical solipsism in the 1790s and his extreme nationalism of the 1810s.

Part three, "Alternate Idealizations, 1807–1885," presents a far less homogeneous group: Hegel, Schopenhauer, and Nietzsche. These three philosophers were also concerned with the progression of ideas from East to West and the reconciliation of seemingly incommensurable elements in them, but they came to rather different conclusions than did the Early Romantics. Hegel explored Indian religion in the context of confirming the importance of his own philosophy, denigrating Indian art and litera-

ture in comparison with that of ancient Greece, and criticizing the aspects of Hindu philosophy that did not fit into his own philosophical system. Schopenhauer developed in his early work the most useful synthesis of Continental philosophy and South Asian religions by mixing Kant, Plato, and *Vedānta*, but struggled in his later essays to work out paradoxes between personal happiness and enlightenment. Nietzsche then furthered Schopenhauer's dilemma, resulting in a materialist teleology that (perhaps intentionally) continually contradicts itself, as is evident in an ideal that I call the "Überbodhisattva."

Finally, the epilogue, "Destinies Reconsidered, 1885–2004," addresses the Nazi misappropriation of Nietzsche and German Indology, as well as the Hindu Nationalist appropriation of Nazi methods in India itself, through which supposed religious origins are once again used to rewrite national history so as to exclude supposedly inferior ethnic and religious groups.

## Conclusion

The intellectual careers of the Indo-Germans I examine here are clear examples of the ways in which history is personal; however, I have attempted to rely on conscious and inadvertent prejudices uncovered through textual exegesis rather than the postulation of direct personal goals. These thinkers spent their careers trying to reconcile the realities of life in the German principalities in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries with what they imagined to be their South Asian origins and a distinctly European destiny. The value in examining this history lies in recognizing how those who grappled with seemingly incommensurable thought systems attempted to work out their bases and contradictions.

The history of this Indo-German identification spans more than two millennia and bears on the twentieth-century history of Europe in ways that are perhaps more profound than any other so-called Orientalist history, despite the fact that Germany, unlike England or France, was never much of a colonial power. The personal struggles of the Indo-Germans lie at the core of Western conceptions of racial, aesthetic, and religious origins; happiness, pessimism, and nihilism; and human freedom and perfection. Theirs are stories of individuals and collectives, of identities and revolutions, of a postulated Eastern dawn and an imagined Western dusk.

## Notes

[1] Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Random House, 1978), 19.

[2] Dorothy M. Figueira, *The Exotic: A Decadent Quest* (Albany: State U of New York P, 1994), 56.

[3] Sheldon Pollock, "Deep Orientalism?: Notes on Sanskrit and Power Beyond the Raj," in *Orientalism and the Postcolonial Predicament: Perspectives on South Asia*, ed. Carol A. Breckenridge and Peter van der Veer (Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 1993), 76.

[4] Jennifer Jenkins, "German Orientalism: Introduction," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa, and the Middle East*, 24.2 (2004): 97. This issue of the journal focuses explicitly on this academicization of orientalism and its relation to German imperial interests.

[5] Maurice Olender, *The Languages of Paradise: Race, Religion, and Philology in the Nineteenth Century*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1992), 151. Olender notes that this appears in volume 2, pages 577–81 of Malte-Brun's work.

[6] Fred R. Shapiro, "On the Origin of the Term 'Indo-Germanic,'" *Historiographia Linguistica: International Journal for the History of Linguistics* 8.1 (1981): 166.

[7] Ruth Römer, *Sprachwissenschaft und Rassenideologie in Deutschland* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1985), 53.

[8] Dennis F. Mahoney, ed., *The Literature of German Romanticism*, Camden House History of German Literature, vol. 8 (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2004), 5.

[9] Liah Greenfeld, *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard, 1992), 278.

[10] Anthony D. Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* (Cambridge, UK: Blackwell, 1986), 1–21.

[11] Figueira, *The Exotic*, 57; Bradley L. Herling, "Towards the Spiritual Renewal of Europe: India in the Early Thought of the Brothers Schlegel," in *Locations of the Political*, ed. S. Gorman (Vienna: IWM Junior Visiting Fellows' Conferences, vol. 15, 2003), http://www.iwm.at/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=49&Itemid=125&limit=1&limitstart=1; Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Random House, 1978), 98.

# Prologue: Original Attributes, 425 B.C.–A.D. 1765

*All Germans believe themselves to be native to their soil.*
— Tacitus, *Of the Origin and Situation of the Germans* (A.D. 98)

By the dawn of the eighteenth century, Europeans had already held formed beliefs about India for over two thousand years. The core of these ideas was the notion that in India primordial knowledge older than that of Europe was guarded by high priests and demonic beasts, for two traditions of viewing India had developed: a vision of an enlightened land of primeval wisdom, or a savage place dominated by monsters. At the same time, beginning during the Protestant Reformation some European thinkers developed the idea that all Europeans were ethnically "Germans," and they described the earliest Gothic tribes using terminology evocative of the language in earlier accounts of noble Indian Brahmins. A balanced understanding of the Romantic-era context of the European encounter with India that forms the nucleus of this study thus necessitates following these strands from as far back as we can locate them up to the periods in which they began to overlap, on the cusp of the Romantic Age. This chapter is therefore divided into three sections that address the beginnings of the Indo-German identification. The first concentrates on the classical European tradition of emphasizing the wisdom of Indian Brahmins, the second highlights the medieval tradition of describing the demons that supposedly dwelt in South Asia, and the third focuses on the Reformation-era descriptions of the Goths as an original, blessedly simple race.

## Classical Historians' Enlightened Brahmins

The first European to use the term "Aryan" in referring to emigrants from the Hindu Kush Mountains into what is now Pakistan and northwest India was, as far as we know, Herodotus. He wrote his major work, *The Histories* (ca. 425 B.C.), which employs the term, over a century before any European had traveled to the Indian subcontinent. The root of the term is *arya*, the Sanskrit word that in Vedic times meant a "tiller of the land" and later, by the time Herodotus was writing, meant "noble." The northerly Aryas of the *Rig Veda* (1700–1000 B.C.) are thought to have been

lighter-skinned and more devout than their southerly counterparts, the Dasas. While it appears impossible that Herodotus could have had any textual knowledge of this term, in the popular idiom it may have been used to describe Persians. Modern linguists have found that the only practically certain cognate of the word is the Old Persian *Airiya*, which is the root of the present name of the nation Iran, its full name — *Iran Shahr* — meaning "realm of the Aryans."

The term would be resurrected by India scholar A. H. Anquetil-Duperron just prior to the birth of Romanticism to designate an original, bellicose people of northern India who subjugated the tribes of the Indian south. A vision of a unified "Aryan" people persisted at least into the 1930s. Contemporary scholars, however, now envisage a slow seepage of pastoralists speaking Indo-Aryan languages and believe that there were no such people as "the Aryans," just tribes of ethnically diverse speakers of several related languages who migrated to India from the Levant.[1] Edwin Bryant analyzes at length the racial interpretations of this Arya-Dasa dichotomy by both Europeans and Indians and cites Michael Witzel and Thomas R. Trautmann among others in support of the fact that the linguistic evidence for a racial theory of the development of an ancient Indian civilization is flimsy at best.[2]

In *The Histories* Herodotus states that "Aryan" was the ancient name of the people of the kingdom of Media or Medes, which included the areas of present-day Tehran and Azerbaijan. Herodotus's translator A. D. Godley notes, however, that beginning even in the time of Strabo (first century A.D.) the name "Aryan" was given much wider extension, as was the attribution of strong and noble characteristics to the Aryans,[3] for Herodotus depicts them suffering in climatically harsh India, the most remote and fantastical place on Earth. He writes that India is the nation that lies farthest to the east and that beyond it lies desert, a wasteland of giant ants but abundant gold (3.94–106, 4.40). While Roman writers would associate the Greek god Dionysus with the Hindu Śiva, Herodotus, though he writes nothing about Indian deities, establishes the possibility of an intermediary figure between Dionysus and Śiva: the Egyptian god of the dead, Osiris. He states that Dionysus is called Osiris in Egypt, is believed to rule the underworld, and is the only deity other than Isis who is worshipped throughout Egypt, and that his son, Horus, is Apollo (2.42, 2.123, 2.144). Herodotus then goes on to explain that the concept of *metempsychosis* (that the souls of animals travel into the bodies of other animals after death), usually attributed to Pythagoras, originated with the Egyptians:

> πρῶτοι δὲ καὶ τόνδε τὸν λόγον Αἰγύπτιοι εἰσὶ οἱ εἰπόντες, ὡς ἀνθρώπου ψυχὴ ἀθάνατος ἐστί, τοῦ σώματος δὲ καταφθίνοντος ἐς ἄλλο ζῷον αἰεὶ γινόμενον ἐσδύεται, ἐπεὰν δὲ πάντα περιέλθῃ τὰ χερσαῖα καὶ τὰ θαλάσσια καὶ τὰ πετεινά, αὖτις ἐς ἀνθρώπου σῶμα γινόμενον ἐσδύνει· τὴν περιήλνσιν δὲ αὐτῇ γίνεσθαι ἐν τρισχιλίοισι ἔτεσι. (2.123)

> [The Egyptians were the first to teach that the human soul is immortal, and at the death of the body enters into some other living thing then coming to birth; and after passing through all creatures of land, sea, and air (which cycle it completes in three thousand years) it enters once more into a human body at birth. Some of the Greeks, early and late, have used this doctrine as if it were their own; I know their names, but do not here record them. (2.123)]

While Herodotus thought more highly of Egypt than of India, such attributions of concepts, together with this syncretism of divinities, would continue well into the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries; however, the admixture first hit its stride in the writings of historians following the death of Alexander.

In 324 B.C., more than five centuries before the Germanic tribes invaded southern Europe, before the establishment of the Roman Republic and Empire, Alexander the Great made it to Punjab. The man who began his military career as king of Macedonia, which looked to Greece for its culture, managed to establish an empire that extended north to south from Thrace to Egypt, and from his western homeland east to just beyond the Indus River. He was thus the first ruler to link West and East, Europe and Asia. As such he was the progenitor of Hellenistic civilization, itself a mixture of Greek, Egyptian, Persian, and Indian influences. But for all this Alexander was unable to extend his empire far into India, something that he and his near successors longed to accomplish, for the civilization of the Ganges River Valley already appeared to have a culture rich in material goods and knowledge.

After Alexander's death one of his viceroys, Seleucus Nikator, attempted to extend the emperor's reach into the Ganges Plain, first, in vain, by using military force, then by diplomacy. In 302 B.C. he sent an ambassador, Megasthenes, to the court of Chandragupta Maurya, the king of Magadha (ruled 322–298 B.C.), in what is now the modern Indian state of Bihar. Chandragupta was the founder of the Maurya Dynasty, which would go on to rule an empire from the Hindu Kush in the northwest to the Bay of Bengal in the southwest for nearly a century and a half.

Fourteen years after his departure from Magadha, Megasthenes returned to Greece to write the *Indica* (288 B.C.), an account of the time he had spent in the city of Palimbothra or Pataliputra (now Patna) on the Ganges, at the court of Chandragupta, whom he rendered in Greek as "Sandrokottos." While Chandragupta's court hosted many foreign ambassadors who were impressed with its ornately carved palace and the administration of its empire, the *Indica* is the first account of a European in India and initiated what was to become, for over two millennia, a Western fascination with Indian culture and ideas.

While the text of Megasthenes' *Indica* was lost, classical historians such as Diodorus Siculus, Strabo, Polyaenus, Arrian, and Philostratus

incorporated fragments of it into their own writings. Earlier works by Herodotus and Ctesias of Cnidus, which echoed similar ideas about India, would influence the work of Pliny the Elder and Solinus. J. W. McCrindle, who has compiled the remaining fragments of the works of Megasthenes and his successors, notes that Megasthenes himself was the first European author to speak of the wisdom and exemplary morality of the Brahmins.[4] Moreover, those who were later to pass on and elaborate the fragments of his work that had survived would establish and perpetuate the amazing notion in Western minds that two of the earliest and most important European philosophers, Pythagoras and Plato, had gone to the Brahmin priests of India for instruction.

This idea was elaborated on by Philostratus, who notes in his biography of his own teacher that Pythagoras's and Plato's belief in *metempsychosis*, in the transcendental nature of the soul (the reason for Pythagoras's vegetarianism), had been anticipated by the Brahmins of India.[5]

> Καίτοι τραγῳδίας μὲν εὖ κεκοσμημένης ὀλίγη χάρις, εὐφραίνει γὰρ ἐν σμικρῷ τῆς ἡμέρας, ὥσπερ ἡ τῶν Διονυσίων ὥρα, φιλοσοφίας δὲ ξυγκειμένης μέν, ὡς Πυθαγόρας ἐδικαίωσεν, ὑποθειαζούσης δέ, ὡς πρὸ Πυθαγόρου Ἰνδοί, οὐκ ἐς βραχὺν χρόνον ἡ χάρις, ἀλλ᾽ἐς ἄπειρόν τε καὶ ἀριθμοῦ πλείω. (6.12)
>
> [A well-produced tragedy gets little gratitude, since it pleases only for a small part of a day, like the season of the Dionysia. But when philosophy is constituted in the way Pythagoras ordained, and is divinely inspired in the way the Indians ordained before Pythagoras, then the gratitude lasts not for a short time, but for a time beyond number and infinite. (6.12)]

Philostratus was thus the first writer to lead Renaissance and Enlightenment thinkers to trace Pythagoreanism to Hinduism. The parallel drawn between Pythagoras's and Plato's mistrust of materiality and that of the Hindus would prove even more profound for German idealists, who would create syncretic philosophies of mind by equating Plato's "Forms" or "Ideas" with concepts such as *Brahman* as found in both Vedāntan and post-Vedic Indian philosophy, and with Kant's "*Ding an sich*" (thing-in-itself).[6]

Several classical European authors even believed that such "Hindu" ideas as metempsychosis had been brought back to Europe by the Greek gods themselves. Dionysus, the Greek god of wine and mystical ecstasy, was purported to have journeyed to India, subdued the Aryan and Dravidian peoples, absorbed their philosophies, and returned to Europe with their chief ideas. Euripedes describes Dionysus in *Βακκαι* (Bacchae; 406 B.C.) as a provider of knowledge and the conqueror of Arabia, Persia, and Bactria.[7] Martin Nilsson postulates, however, that the story of Dionysus's campaign that conquered India and led him to appropriate the learning of the Brahmin priests was invented in emulation of Alexander's

attempted infiltration into the region over a century after *Bacchae* was composed.[8]

Arrian, who cites Megasthenes throughout his own *Indica* (fl. A.D. 120, which comprises book seven of his life of Alexander), notes that Dionysus went to India, conquered the tribes there, founded cities, and gave them laws. He also taught the people how to cook their food, introduced the use of wine as he did among the Greeks, and taught them to sow the land, supplying seed himself.[9] Arrian thus credits Dionysus with, among other things, introducing agriculture into Asia. He adds that the Indians then began to worship Dionysus along with their other gods, adding significantly that Alexander called the mountain range that forms the northern frontier of India, of which "Mount Taurus" is the highest peak, "Caucasus" (8.1.2). Then the very colorful Polyaenus goes so far as to state that Dionysus got the Indians drunk before attacking them and used baccantic orgies as part of his military strategy for subjugating all of the Asian continent.[10]

What is of more lasting importance about the legend of Dionysus's supposed journey to India, however, is that it led to a series of identifications of him with two of the three deities in the Hindu *Trimurti*, an absurdity that persisted even into the twentieth century.[11] The legend thus promoted the classical affiliation of Dionysus with Śiva, the god associated with destruction, and occasionally with Vishnu, the Hindu god who maintains the equilibrium of the universe, while Brahma retained few devotees in this period in India. Classical authors would also postulate affiliations between Śiva and Heracles on one hand, and Krishna and Prometheus on the other.[12]

Euripedes' description of Dionysus as a provider of human knowledge who journeyed to India is similar to others' accounts of Prometheus, and Arrian's conflation of the Himalayas and the Caucasus is indicative of such syncretic confusion. Both Strabo and Arrian state that Alexander's followers claimed to have found, near the source of the Indus River, the prison of Prometheus.[13] Diodorus Siculus argues that Heracles founded the city of "Palibothra," where Megasthenes had been ambassador.[14] Allan Dahlquist notes that in a different tradition from that which envisions Dionysus as conqueror of India, both Dionysus and Heracles have their origins among the Indians (177). This is evident in Arrian, who disputes the idea that Heracles or Prometheus was from India or even went there, but maintains that it was the Indians themselves who claimed that Heracles was indigenous to the subcontinent and counted 153 kings, as well as 6,451 years, between the arrival of Dionysus and that of Alexander the Great (8.7.9). While this may seem a rather schematic look at these authors, it is necessary to keep in mind that there are ultimately only a few clear, authoritative statements made about India in their writings and thus modern readers can only get glimpses of their views.

The observation that such ancient writers did identify Dionysus with Śiva has won the almost unanimous approval of scholars — despite the fact that the parallel is not explicitly drawn in classical texts — because of the many similarities between the cult of Dionysus and that of Shaivic devotees.[15] As Dahlquist painstakingly lists, there are major differences between the two, most notably that Śiva is usually depicted as a demonic destroyer and Dionysus is always depicted as benevolent (180–89). Yet both are said to cure the sick and to have provided the Indians with weapons; both are associated with plowing, with figs and vineyards, with mountains, and with dancing; and both are depicted as having long, bushy hair and carrying a spear or trident.

At the end of his study of correspondences in the classical and Sanskrit texts, however, Dahlquist states, ironically, that "Dionysus appears to share nothing with the Aryan world of ideas" (279), but that he can be connected at a number of points with non-Hindu Dravidian religion. He finds instead that Dionysus corresponds more strongly to depictions of the beneficent Krishna. Thus, while Megasthenes himself described Dionysus as Śiva and Heracles as Krishna, there is debate among scholars over the extent to which the gods resemble each other in his surviving fragments (10). Such criticism was already present in Roman commentaries on Hellenistic texts devoted to the topic of India. Strabo is critical of other writers' accounts of India, its ideas, and religions:

> Δεῖ δ' εὐγνωμόνως ἀκούειν περὶ αὐτῆς· καὶ γὰρ ἀπωτάτω ἐστί, καὶ οὐ πολλοὶ τῶν ἡμετέρων κατώπτευσαν αὐτήν· οἱ δὲ καὶ ἰδόντες μέρη τινὰ εἶδον, τὰ δὲ πλείω λέγουσιν ἐξ ἀκοῆς· καὶ ἃ εἶδον δέ, ἐν παρόδῳ στρατιωτικῇ καὶ δρόμῳ κατέμαθον· (15.2)
>
> [It is necessary for us to hear accounts of this country with indulgence, for not only is it farthest away from us, but not many of our people have seen it; and even those who have seen it have seen only parts of it, and the greater part of what they say is hearsay; and even what they saw they learned on a hasty passage with an army through the country. (15.2)]

Nevertheless, the impact of Megasthenes on Roman historians is not to be underestimated, as the body of scholarship on his influence indicates.

It is important to note, as does Dahlquist, that there is no Indian tradition according to which an invasion of India by Dionysus, or Śiva, and his worshippers is so much as mentioned (186). In fact, modern Indian classicists and linguists, such as A. N. Chandra and A. L. Basham, have found no definitive evidence of any large-scale invasion or immigration — of Mediterraneans or "Aryans" — into India before Megasthenes' account, that is, between the Mehrgarh Culture (7000–3300 B.C.) and the Magadhan Empire (684–321 B.C.).[16] The Hindu *Purāṇas* do speak of

a great flood, but they also list kings from the pre-diluvian period and make no mention of an invasion of lighter-skinned peoples or of anyone at all.[17]

## Medieval Travelers' Demonic Idols

The collapse of the Roman Empire (A.D. 476) and the rise of Islamic empires (A.D. 7th century) would bring about an interruption of contacts between Europe and India; tales of India by classical authors began to resurface in the early Middle Ages, and then Muslim accounts of southern Asia to filter into Europe. During this period European ideas about India would be perpetuated by legends drawing on Pliny's *Historia Naturalis* (ca. A.D. 77), Solinus's *De mirabilibus mundi*, which mostly circulated under the title *Collectanea rerum memorabilium* (A.D. 230–240) and is largely an iteration of Pliny, and the traditions of the *Romance of Alexander* (2nd–3rd centuries B.C.).

Pliny, who claimed to be drawing on hundreds of works by dozens of writers, describes India as the land with the most marvels, both positive and negative, including sages seven-and-a-half feet tall who never get sick and live to be 130 years old, tribes that mate with wild animals, and groups with dogs' heads or a single "umbrella-foot" that they hold over their heads.[18] Solinus repeats many of these statements, and both of these works became the primary handbooks on natural history and geography for over a millennium.

The *Romance of Alexander* derives from a Greek text now referred to as *pseudo-Callisthenes*, for it was incorrectly attributed to Callisthenes of Olynthus, a Greek historian who was a great-nephew and pupil of Aristotle. The text, while claiming to be a factual account of Alexander's campaign to Punjab, is in fact a collection of the various marvels that the emperor is supposed to have encountered there. It was translated and added to multiple times over the course of several centuries, inspiring Alexander legends in Qu'ranic, Persian, and Latin literature. Among the documents later added to the *Romance of Alexander* is the *Epistola Alexandri Macedonis ad Aristotelem magistrum suum de itinere suo et de situ Indiae* (Letter from Alexander of Macedon to His Master Aristotle Regarding His Itinerary and Places in India), the fullest form of which was composed before A.D. 1000. In this fictitious letter from Alexander to Aristotle, the pupil tells his teacher of his study with naked Brahmin priests.

In another version, Alexander encounters actual devils in an area on the edge of India called the Valley Perilous, a terrifying region that would be depicted often in medieval European painting. Partha Mitter notes that a particularly influential eighth-century English text, *Marvels of the East*, described, among other wonders, the Indian monsters drawn from classical sources through Pliny, Solinus, and pseudo-Callisthenes.[19]

*Il Milione* (1298), the account of Marco Polo's twenty-four years in Asia (which he dictated to his companion in the prison at Genoa, Rustichello of Pisa), is remembered mostly as a report on the status of the Mongol Empire of Kublai Khan.[20] Polo's, however, was the first medieval European book to describe the practices and beliefs of Indian religions and extended classical images of fantastic India with which Polo was unlikely to have been familiar. In chapter 170 he describes how in Gujarat, "si conciano molte cuoia di becco e di bue e d'unicorni e d'altre bestie, e fassine grandi mercatantie e forniscosene molte contrade" (263; many skins of goat, oxen, rhinoceri, and other beasts are dressed, and large merchant vessels will furnish many cities with them).[21] In chapter 157, on the idols of "Zipangu" (Japan, which Polo appears to have considered a part of India), deities are associated with devils:

> Or sapiate che gl'idoli di queste isole e quelle del Catai sono tutte d'una maniera. E questi di queste isole, e ancora de l'altre ch'ànno idoli, ta; sono ch'ànno capo di bue, e tal di porco, e così di molte fazioni di bestie, di proci, di montoni e altri; e tali ànno un capo e . iiij. bisi e tali ànno .iiij. capi e quanti più n'ànno, magiore speranza e fede ànno i·lloro. Gli fatti di quest'idoli son sì diversi e di tante diversità di diavoli, che qui non si vuole contare. (220)

> [Now it should be known that the idols of these islands and those of the Catai are all of the same kind. Those of these islands, and of the others that have idols, have the head of an ox, or a pig, or of many other kinds of beasts: raccoons, sheep and others. Some have a head and three faces, some three heads, and some ten. And the more heads they have the more one can place one's hopes in them. The aspects of these idols are so different and from such a diversity of devils, that one cannot even count them.]

In the section on the island of "Seilla" (Ceylon), Polo recounts the story of Gautama Buddha, but states that he was thought in that area to be the first man, and thus calls him "Adam." Polo also uses the epithet "Shakyamuni Buddha," given to Gautama Buddha since he was the prince of the Shakya clan; however, Rustichello renders this as "Sergamon Borgani."[22] According to Polo, the Great Khan sent ambassadors to Ceylon to return with the teeth and cranium (*scodella* or "bowl") of this "Adam," and the teeth were quite large. While seemingly impressed by the story of Gautama Buddha, when comparing Buddhism and Hinduism to the Christian communities he encountered in India, Polo did not hold them in high regard because he felt, like most of the Portuguese travelers of the High Middle Ages, that they sanctioned idolatry.

While travelers in the Middle Ages like Polo may or may not have been acquainted with the Indian monsters of popular late-antique handbooks such as that of Solinus, the bestiaries of the thirteenth century, with their

composite griffins and manticores, made no mention of human beings with multiple limbs or heads. Such idols resurfaced for the first time since antiquity in Polo. By the time of *Il Milione*'s publication, however, the devil had been depicted in Christian iconography with horns, hooves, and a tail for at least three centuries,[23] and Mitter, like Jurgis Baltrusaitis before him, appears correct in asserting that Polo's description of South Asian idols was primarily responsible for the reappearance of many-armed monsters in Western literature and art.

*Le livre des merveilles du monde*, the most celebrated edition of Polo's work (ca. 1400), assigns a horned goat-head to an Indian deity for the first time. Baltrusaitis notes that in Thomas de Cantimpré's *De Naturis Rerum* (ca. 1250), in Megenberg's translation of Cantimpré, *Buch der Natur* (1475), in the *Hystorie van Regnaert die Vos* (the prose version of Willem's Low German poem, 1479), and in Schedel's *Nuremberger Chronik* (1493), the multilimbed Indian idols were all consigned to a category of "hommes monstrueux" (monstrous men).[24] Following this, Ludovico di Varthema's *Itinerario* (1510), composed after the Bolognese traveler spent five years in India, also "created an unambiguous stimulus for the bias of the illustrators when they described the gods in Indian temples as traditional European devils."[25] Thus, multilimbed Hindu gods with animal body parts such as Ganesha — the god of wisdom, who has four arms and an elephant's head — seem to have represented demons or monsters to most medieval European scholars.

The classical view of India as the land of knowledge and the medieval view of Hindu deities as devils is indicative of the contradictory nature of early modern Europe's relation to the Indian subcontinent and its religions. India thus came to be seen by medieval and later Europeans as a land in which tremendous knowledge was guarded by dark and sinister forces. It was thought of as a place where human experience can be transcended either through embracing compassion and moderation or through falling into excess and destruction. The figure of Śiva, so resonant for classical historians, embodies this paradox, for Śiva is thought of in Hinduism itself as both benevolent and terrible. His reputation is that of the demonic destroyer. While he is the necessary negative in a tripartite description of the universe that includes equilibrium, he is also described positively as the destroyer of ignorance. Like Prometheus bringing the fire of knowledge to human beings (a role Euripedes assigns to Dionysus), according to the *Rig Veda*, Śiva in an earlier form, as Agni, "the fire," brought to life the progeny of the creator Brahma.[26] Stella Kramrisch points out that Śiva thus "has two natures or two 'names': the one, cruel and wild (*rudra*), the other kind (*Śiva*) and tranquil (*shanta*)."[27] As Rudra he unleashes terrible destruction; as Śiva he heals the wounds of those whom he has injured.[28]

In terms of Hindu metaphysics and the cycles of ages, Śiva was associated with darkness leading the descent from pre-matter into matter, which

was viewed in this context — contrary to most Western thinking — as a process of disintegration, which would prove particularly resonant for Friedrich Schlegel. In the influential Samkhya system of philosophy, attributed to the Hindu philosopher Kapila (A.D. 4th century), the universe is divided into *prakrti* (nature or matter) and *purusha* (soul or consciousness), which is similar to the Western distinction between physics and metaphysics. *Prakrti* is divided into three *gunas* or qualities, each of which has a potentiality or tendency of its own: *sattva* is seen as ascending and luminous, *tamas* as descending and dark, *rajas* as twirling and red. Brahma is the embodiment of *rajas*, of passions and desires, by whose means the world was created. Vishnu embodies *sattva*, the quality of mercy, by which the world's equilibrium is maintained. Śiva is the embodiment of *tamas*, the qualities of darkness and destruction, by means of which the world will be destroyed. *Rajasic*, *sattvic*, and *tamasic* are thus the three fundamental attributes that represent in Hindu thought the natural evolutionary process through which the subtle becomes gross. Gross objects, in turn, by action and interaction among themselves, may again become subtle.[29] This schema would be of particular interest to both Schelling and Hegel.

These various aspects of Śiva, or of Samkhya generally, were in no way understood in Europe, for Europeans would not read texts such as the *Rig Veda* or the *Upanishads* until the late eighteenth century, and therefore Western historiography had yet to take into account such texts (not to mention the contexts in which they may have been composed). One might also note that the medieval European view of India as a land of marvels was also not necessarily reflective of any fundamental idealism in the medieval mentality. Medieval views of India were not monolithic, and especially not among the few travelers who had seen India's tremendous variety of religions, cultures, and geographical features. Despite the fact that even in the influential traditions of the Alexander-Romance Brahmins were lauded for their wisdom, a bias against the Brahmins for their supposed idolatry was promoted in illustrations of India produced by Christian Europeans who had no first-hand experience of the subcontinent. But with the Age of Exploration (1450–1600) travelers were stimulated by an ancient, more positive reputation of the Brahmins and the idea that Pythagoras had inherited his belief in metempsychosis from the Hindus.

By the seventeenth century the images of India that travelers returned with were not of devils or of gurus, but of the Mughal Empire that had been founded by Babur, a descendent of the Mongols, and of the Islamic court whose imperial politics attempted to deal with the inflexible Hindu system of castes. As K. M. Mathew has meticulously recorded, Vasco da Gama had landed in Calcutta in 1498,[30] but the Indians were made to play a negative role in the first clearly formulated Renaissance interpretations of Asian peoples by European Catholics. Joan-Pau Rubiés argues that one of the primary reasons for this was the fact that Portuguese Jesuits were frus-

trated in their attempts to evangelize the Hindus in their hope of taking control over Asiatic trade routes from Muslim merchant communities of the Mughal Empire (8–9). The intractability of the Brahmins was in sharp contrast to the learned Buddhists of Ming China and Japan, among whom the Jesuits found not insubstantial numbers of converts, despite the evangelists' inability to penetrate deep into those countries geographically. Such intractability was due to "a negative judgment of Indian civility based on apparent dissimilarities with Europe, legitimized by the immediate applicability of the concept of idolatry, and compounded by decades of missionary frustration" (10). The European colonial presence in India dates to this period, and it was in the latter part of the seventeenth century that the Mughal Empire began to disintegrate. In the contest for supremacy between local rulers and European business interests over the next several decades, the English emerged strongly, their rule marked by their victories in the battles of Plassey and Buxar outside of Calcutta in 1757 and 1764.

What is fascinating about conceptions of India during the Age of Exploration and this period of Mughal decline is the fact that southern India itself held on to its own romantic image of an ancient Hindu empire. The last Hindu kingdom, Vijayanagar, the "City of Victory" founded around 1336 at Hampi, had been taken over in 1565 by the various Deccan sultanates, leaving southern India open to enlarged Muslim rule. Thus, as Rubiés has pointed out, while the number of European visitors to India proliferated, particularly due to the struggles with the Dutch and British East India companies, the southern India that such travelers encountered lay in political disorder while it harbored its own romantic image of a spiritually unified past (308–9).[31] Southern India's image of its own past began to be taken into account by scholars in Europe as both Counter-Reformation missionaries and more secular "humanist" writers began to challenge the convention of describing native behavior without analyzing native beliefs, a practice that had dominated travel literature and historiography since the Middle Ages.

Beyond these literary efforts the prestige of Brahmin priests was on the rise, for the priestly class was still considered by many Europeans to have been the guardian of Indian knowledge since the time of the biblical Flood. Examples of this are even to be found among the English, with whom we so readily now associate India, but who were in fact latecomers to the fascination with Indian ideas. In 1665 Sir Edward Bysshe, an ancestor of poet Percy Bysshe Shelley, published *De Gentibus Indiae et Bragmanibus*, in which he claimed to have collected their wisdom. Bysshe felt that the wisdom of the Brahmins was directly linked to that of classical sages, and his work is a compilation of Greek and Latin texts by such figures as Palladius, Bishop of Aspuna (d. ca. A.D. 430). Yet in reaction to such associations, Christian scholars began to attack Hinduism and

Buddhism, which at the time were still poorly understood and often lumped together under the term "Lamaism." German Jesuit scholar Athanasius Kircher, for example, argued vituperatively in his *China Illustrata* (1667) that Lamaism was a perversion of the sacred rites of the Roman Catholic Church. Kircher cites Philostratus, Polo, and Varthema in his section on Indian idolatry, arguing that the Indians worshiped demons.[32]

> Non desunt ex Indis, qui Ægyptiorum quorundam Typhonem malignum dæmonem solennissimo ritu colentium exemplo, & ipsi humani generis hostem Diabolum adorent ac variis hostiis placent. (148)
>
> [Not missing from India, and the Egyptians' solemn rite to the scrotum of the malignant demon Typhoeus is an example of this, is that this race of people worships and placates various diabolical enemies.]

But anti-Catholic polemicists used the denunciation of Lamaism as a critique of Catholicism by emphasizing the parallels between the two faiths. Many of the travelers and Jesuit missionaries of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries had in fact remarked upon the similarities between the rituals of the two religions although these coincidences are superficial, as Charles Allen notes (33–34).

What is more striking in this period is the association of Hindu and Buddhist ideas with another non-Christian belief system, Norse mythology. This association forces us to backtrack a bit, to the traditional classical and Christian depictions of the other group crucial to the Indo-German identification: the Goths.

## German Humanists' Noble Goths

From the decline of the Western Roman Empire to the Late Middle Ages, Christian theologians followed classical historians in endowing the word "Goth" with fearsome power. Both Léon Poliakov and Suzanne Teillet note that in Rome Saint Ambrose lumped together the numerous and heterogeneous Gothic tribes, likening their barbarism to that of the dreadful Old Testament giants Gog and Magog, while his pupil Saint Augustine saw them as agents of divine providence.[33] Scholars such as Peter Heather have described at length the ramifications of the fact that the Goths "were the first autonomous group of immigrants to force their way across an imperial frontier en masse and survive."[34] One must point out, however, that "the Goths" were not a single, unified barbarian group who simply "sacked" Rome. The seven-hundred-year history of Gothic tribes involved complex relations with the Romans, competition with Hunnic groups, and the establishment of a significant culture whose remains modern archeol-

ogy has only begun to piece together in recent decades. Yet the juxtaposition of the attributes of noble Gothic simplicity as opposed to Latinate decadence, which persisted into the early twentieth century, was rooted in early conceptions of these rulers who were beginning to become Christianized and would take over much of the western portion of the Roman Empire.

It would not be until 962, when Pope John XII formed the Holy Roman Empire by crowning King Otto I "Emperor of the Romans," however, that Germanic peoples themselves would come to believe that a unified German kingdom had in any way been founded. Otto, Duke of Saxony, had become king of the central region of Charlemagne's empire in northern Italy when the emperor's sons carved up the area in 936. But the Holy Roman Empire would be the first post-Roman, Central European empire — the first "German" empire. But such an "empire" and a seemingly glorious future could not provide the Germans with a less nebulous past. While pre-Christian Gothic groups may have relied on mythologies surrounding fantastic tales of Wotan and the Valkyries, Germanic Christian groups, whose conversions began in the Black Sea area and moved westward to reach Iceland, increasingly sought to establish how they were connected to the men who emerged after the flood described in Genesis. What genealogy led from Noah to Otto I? And how did the German language arise out of the confounding of the original language when the descendants of Noah built Babel in defiance of God?

Scholars in the Late Middle Ages were thus more concerned with where the descendants of Noah and their own languages came from than whether demons were worshipped in India, a place to which most Westerners would never travel. Christian Western and Central Europeans in the Middle Ages — as they increasingly came into contact with Slavic peoples as well as with both Christians and Muslims from the eastern and southern rims of the Mediterranean — began to postulate that their origins might lie to the east of Europe. The Bible itself suggests in Genesis 8:5 that the origin of mankind might be discovered somewhere east of Judea. Arno Borst notes that some thinkers insisted that the origins of mankind in the Bible were Germanic.[35] Hildegard von Bingen, in her *Adam et Eva Teutonica lingua loquebantur, que in diverse non dividitur ut Romana* (1179; Adam and Eve Spoke the German Language, Which Is No Less Divine Than the Roman), claimed that Adam and Eve spoke German. It should be noted, though, that other such debates over whether French or English, for example, was spoken in the Garden of Eden were common in other European milieus as well.

This period, from the High Middle Ages into the Renaissance (ca. 1200–ca. 1500), is often understood as the one in which European scholastics attempted to reconcile the philosophies of Greece and Rome with medieval Christian theology. Using classical texts by authors such as

Plato, Aristotle, and Boethius — often through Islamic intermediaries such as Ibn Rushd ("Averroes") — the academics at medieval universities tended to comment on such texts rather than develop explicit and discrete theories of their own. While scholasticism produced such figures as Thomas Aquinas, Duns Scotus, and William of Ockham, by the 1400s, as Jerry H. Bentley argues, humanism was replacing scholasticism, which was found to be an overly formalistic way of explaining the universe.[36] Scholasticism was found to be insufficiently concerned with practical matters such as the moral underpinnings of politics, or with the singular aspects of history or literature, occupying itself with small questions of logic or with syntheses of thought that were later deemed too ethereal. Therefore, the humanists sought not to create a thoroughly logical theological system, but viewed the New Testament as an historical record of ancient life and a source of pure morality.

Between 1450 and 1550 young German university students, whose study of classical texts yielded very different conclusions from those of Petrarch and the other Italian humanists, glorified the pre-Christian past of the Germanic states. Italians, inspired by Greek and Roman writers such as Plato and Cicero, emphasized the use of the study of rhetoric and moral philosophy in developing the unique capacities and abilities of human beings. The humanism developing in the Holy Roman Empire, though, considered human beings as almost wholly dependent on divine order. In Germany, humanism would be built on an imagined biblical past rather than a present improved by the *studia humanitatis*.

This kind of idealization was responsible for disputes at German universities between pupils and their masters, which greatly intensified after the rediscovery of Tacitus's *De origine et situ Germanorum* (A.D. 98; Of the Origins and Position of the Germans). German humanists such as Jakob Wimpheling and Johann Reuchlin used the text to advance their claims to autochthony and universal European dominion. Thus, from the mid-fifteenth to the mid-sixteenth centuries, a national Romanticism emerged, particularly among young men, that emphasized a type of ideal German who was blessedly simple (as opposed to crudely simple, which is how most Romans had thought of the conquering barbarians).[37] The sole extant copy of the so-called *Germania* had been uncovered in a German monastery by the Italian scholar Enoch d'Ascoli and was reprinted in Venice in 1470, with a German edition issued in Nuremberg in 1473. This text, which for Latinate writers merely confirmed the inveterate barbarism of the Germanic tribes, highlighted for German authors the simple virtues and invincibility of their Gothic ancestors, as well as leading them to conclude that they had been on the Eurasian continent *ab origine* and were still racially pure. Simon Schama notes, "with the first vernacular translation, published in Leipzig in 1496, it came to lodge permanently in the bloodstream of German culture."[38]

Paul Joachimsen notes in his essay "Tacitus im deutschen Humanismus" (Tacitus in German Humanism) that the text spoke to eschatological concerns as well as to originary ones: "Bei Tacitus liegt das Problem des Nachlebens bis zum Humanismus in so fern einfach, als er bekanntlich seit der Karolingerzeit verschollen war, seine Entdeckung ist in so fern besonders interessant, als sie nicht das Ergebnis eines Zufalls, sondern planmäßiger, lange fortgesetzter Bemühungen ist" (700; In Tacitus lies the problem of the afterlife, which until Humanism was simple. Missing since Carolingian times, as is well known, its discovery is particularly interesting in so far as it is not the result of an unscheduled accident, but of long repeated efforts). Tacitus threw into question Christian ideas of life after death by emphasizing the belief systems of Norse mythology in which on *Ragnarok* — the day on which mortals and the gods would meet their end — the forces of evil would gather and sail to Asgard to do battle with the gods. Fenris would swallow Wotan, Thor would die as he killed the Midgard serpent, and Heimdall and Loki would kill each other. Only a few gods would be left, a new star would be born, and the Norse Adam and Eve, Lif and Lithrasir, would repopulate the world with human beings.

Tacitus describes the Germans as indigenous, almost racially pure, and unique: "Ipse eorum opinioni accedo, qui Germaniae populos nullis aliarum nationum conubiis infectos propriam et sinceram et tantum sui similem gentem extitisse arbitrantur" (Personally I associate myself with the opinions of those who hold that in the peoples of Germany there has been given to the world a race untainted by intermarriage with other races, a peculiar people and pure, like no one but themselves).[39] He emphasizes the early Germans' martial valor and loyalty, the girth and vigor of their frames, and the simplicity of their architecture. He praises their timeless virtues, unperturbed by any zeitgeist: their lack of materialism, the sanctity of their marriages, their chastity, their lack of wet-nurses and infanticide, the respect with which they treat servants, their hospitality. He argues that no race indulges more lavishly in entertainment, which consists of beautiful naked youths jumping dexterously between swords and spears.

Tacitus states that the Romans explained the name "Germani" as meaning the pure or "un-demoralized" Germans as distinct from the demoralized Germans of Gaul. He claims that the Germans worshipped Mercury, Hercules, and Mars, and that some of the Swabians made sacrifices to Isis, the cause of such foreign worship he has been unable to ascertain. Using Herodotus's ethnographic distinctions, he points out that there are some tribes among them that are dirty and lethargic, but is unsure whether those should be called Germans or counted among the degraded Sarmatians to the east. He notes that east of the Danube all else that is reported is legendary, that the Hellusii and Oxiones — fabulous tribes seen as possible missing links between man and lower animals —

have human faces and features, but the limbs and bodies of beasts. Thus, Tacitus also obliquely presaged the medieval tradition of referring to peoples of the East as "unnatural."

The rediscovery of Tacitus's *Germania* also reinforced the doubts of Renaissance humanists about Roman history. Such doubts began with the Roman (sometimes called Trojan) myth, which tells of the founding of Rome after the survivors of the sack of Troy established several other cities as they made their way from the Anatolian to the Italian peninsulas, a story recounted in Livy's *Ab urbe condita* (ca. 29 B.C.; From the City's Founding) and Virgil's *Aeneid* (19 B.C.).

During the Reformation such debates would begin to include the public when the influential Lutheran propagandist Johann Eberlin von Günzberg published his own vernacular translation of the *Germania* in 1526. This served to popularize the aggressive attitudes of German intellectuals and their often much less educated followers. It would further weaken the Romance position even among Latin thinkers. Figures such as Machiavelli, who perhaps justifiably admired the orderly rule of German principalities, used the idea of Teutonic nobility to further his association of decadence with Italians. Thus Rousseau's "noble savage" was already prefigured in the cult of the simple, noble German found in Tacitus.

Accompanying this emphasis on the Eastern, biblical origins of the German people came a theological and cultural battle against the Catholic Church and all that was Latinate, for which Eberlin and Martin Luther proved key figures.[40] Luther argued in "An den christlichen Adel deutscher Nation von des christlichen Standes Besserung" (1520; To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation on the Improvement of Christian Conditions) that the tyrannical Latin had exploited the noble German. To Luther, German was the fourth holy language after Hebrew, Greek, and Latin. He accepted a theory that held much currency at the time, that the biblical ancestor Ashkenaz had given the Germans their language. Ashkenaz was one of the three sons of Gomer, who was a son of Japheth (Genesis 10:3), thus a grandson of Noah and a founder of the one of the tribes of the Japhetic race. The name Ashkenaz, which denotes "scattered fire" in Hebrew, has been associated since at least the Middle Ages with northern peoples, and had hitherto been considered the *Stamm* or "trunk" of the Saxons.

In Jeremiah 51:27 the people of Ashkenaz are mentioned in connection with the kingdom of Ararat, in the Caucasus, where Noah's Ark is said to have landed. It might be noted that according to the ancient Greeks, Prometheus, imprisoned in the Caucasus, was also a son of Japheth, or "Iapetos." It has also been postulated that we may recognize the tribe of Ashkenaz in Europe in names such as *Scandia* and *Scandinavia*. Well into the nineteenth century, scholars such as the Protestant theologian A. W. Knobel argued that Ashkenaz is to be identified with the German "race."[41]

During the Reformation some scholars claimed to have produced "proof" of the Japhetic genealogy of the German people. In 1510 an anonymous Alsatian writer known as "the Revolutionary of the Upper Rhine" published a treatise that foreshadowed Adolf Hitler in talking of a thousand-year *Reich* and a Germanic Adam. As Poliakov notes, one of several sixteenth-century vernacular authors of the time who depicted Adam as of German origin, "the Revolutionary" wrote that Adam's progeny were free from original sin since, the writer concluded, Jesus came only to save the infidel Jews (93).

Luther himself would prove to be foundational for Germanic culture and particularly for the history of translation in German, for he was the first to translate the Bible into German without the use of Latinisms. Herder, Goethe, Novalis, and Nietzsche would cite the grace, beauty, and German-ness of his Bible. As Antoine Berman notes, while Luther and his team of scholars spent over ten years (1521–34) studying the Hebrew, Greek, and Latin versions of the text, their aim was the *Verdeutschung*, the "Germanization," of it.[42] For some eighteenth- and nineteenth-century German intellectuals, particularly among the Jena Romantics, Luther's Bible had established the very beginning of modern German Literature. That is to say, while Gothic tribes had developed their own literature, which lived on through sagas such as that of the Nibelungen, and there were many refined examples of literature in Middle High German, Luther's Bible presented the affirmation of Germanic culture within the Christian tradition, which had previously been dominated by its Hebrew, Greek, and Latin strains. This was a rather different endeavor from French and Italian works that advocated for writing in the vernacular but had the weight of Greco-Latin literature behind them, such as Dante's *Vita Nuova* (1294; New Life) and Joachim Du Bellay's *Défense et Illustration de la langue française* (1549; Defense and Illustration of the French Language). This Germanization of the Scriptures was a primary component in the Reformation attempt to renew faith by reformulating the relations between the common people and the New Testament in particular. Berman points out that Luther's own virulent criticisms of Rome and his striving to free Germans from the legacy of Latin literature would overshadow his team's attempts to stay close to the older Hebrew versions of the text (48); however, we should remember that, although literacy rates did begin to rise during the Reformation, they were still rather low.

While Martin Luther was concerned with the spiritual salvation of the Germans, he was more modest in his claims about the origin of the Germanic peoples than were the humanists, who would establish the fascination with the purity of the German language to the point that language and race would be almost inextricably linked well into the twentieth century. Renaissance Germans as seen by the humanists needed to identify themselves with the invincible Germanic tribes who overthrew the Roman

Empire, an attitude which led to further emphasis on their being autochthons. This is evident, for example, in German humanist Conrad Celtis's lectures in 1500 on the *Germania*, in which Celtis accepted Tacitus's dictum that the "Germani sunt indigenae."[43] Celtis also planned to write a *Germania Illustrata* inspired by Biondo's *Italia Illustrata*, which "was to weave together history, topography, and a picture of life in the cities in one grand glorfication of the fatherland."

Unsurprisingly, in Latin languages the spread of Germanic tribes is called an invasion of barbarians, stemming etymologically from the Greek idea that anyone living outside of Athens (and, by extension, the classical Mediterranean world) was a "barbarian." The modern German language terms the same movement of these tribes *Völkerwanderungen* or "migrations of peoples." The spread of these ancient tribes was understood as migrations rather than invasions because some, such as Eberlin, considered all Western Europeans to be descended from earlier, superior Germanic tribes. The Saxons were felt to have settled England, the Franks France, the Lombards northern Italy, and the Ostrogoths Spain — which is to say that all Europeans were really "Germans" according to the early "nationalists" of the Reformation era. An admirer of Erasmus and Thomas More and a champion of the common man against the Franciscan orders (of which he had been a member), Eberlin expounded a powerful idea of Pan-Germanism that would prove tenaciously long-lived.

The sense of the superiority of German stock would persist into the Enlightenment both in the Germanic states and in other European lands. In a number of passages in *De l'esprit des Lois* (1748; Of the Spirit of Laws), Montesquieu described the ancient Germans as the forebears of the French, an idea that upset many of Montesquieu's contemporaries in France, particularly Voltaire. And in his *Briefe zu Beförderung der Humanität* (1793–97; Letters on the Advancement of Humanity), Herder would encourage his compatriots to read Tacitus to find the authentic German characteristics that had been obscured by the advent and adoption of Christianity.

## Conclusion

Thus, by the dawn of the eighteenth century, many of the elements of Indo-German identification were in place: the purported existence of Indian knowledge and Germanic origins that were pre-Christian and pre-classical, in both cases potentially guarded by savage ancient tribes that were not necessarily entirely human. During the early Enlightenment, however, several debates would elucidate the distinctly human aspect of this identification: arguments over the post-diluvian Himalayan emergence of man, the monogenesis-polygenesis problem, the idea of progress in

architecture, climatic determinism, and the development aesthetic categories beyond that of mere beauty.

## Notes

The epigraph at the start of this chapter is a translation of "Ipsos Germans indigenas crediderim" from Tacitus, *Dialogus, Agricola, Germania*, trans. William Peterson, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1939), 264. Unless otherwise noted, all translations are the author's.

[1] William Dalrymple, "India: The War Over History," *New York Review of Books* 52.6 (2005): 63.

[2] Edwin Bryant, *The Quest for the Origin of Vedic Culture: The Indo-Aryan Migration Debate* (New York: Oxford UP, 2001), 60–62.

[3] Herodotus, *Herodotus with an English Translation*, trans. A. D. Godley (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1946), 1:vii.

[4] John Watson McCrindle, *Ancient India as Described by Megasthenes and Arrian*, ed. Ramchandra Jain (Delhi: Today and Tomorrow, 1972), 120–23.

[5] Philostratus, *The Life of Apollonius of Tyana*, ed. and trans. Christopher P. Jones (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 2005), 3.16, 6.10–11. See also Allan Dahlquist, *Megasthenes and Indian Religion: A Study in Motives and Types* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1962), 50.

[6] *Brahman* is the eternal, imperishable absolute, the supreme nondual reality of *Vedānta* (the philosophy of the *Upanishads*), not to be confused with the god Brahma. *Brahman* is a concept that has no equivalent in the religions of dualism, all of which feature a personal God. As absolute consciousness, *Brahman* is an abstract concept that is not accessible to the thinking mind. In the process of any attempt to render it more concrete, *Brahman* becomes *ishvara*, the absolute as a personal God, as in Christianity or Islam (Stephen Schuhmacher and Gert Woerner, eds., *The Encyclopedia of Eastern Philosophy and Religion: Buddhism, Hinduism, Taoism, Zen* [Boston, MA: Shambhala, 1994], 44).

[7] Euripedes, *Bacchae*, ed., intro., and commentary by E. R. Dodds (New York: Oxford UP, 1986), 7–9.

[8] Martin Nilsson, *Geschichte der Griechischen Religion* (Munich: C. H. Beck'sche, 1955, 1961), 2:578.

[9] Arrian, *History of Alexander and Indica*, trans. E. Iliff Robson (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1966), 8.5, 8.7.

[10] Polyaenus, *Strategems of War*, ed. and trans. Peter Krentz and Everett L. Wheeler (Chicago: Ares, 1994), 1.1.1–3.

[11] "*Trimurti* in Sanskrit literally means 'three-form' and indicates the Hindu trinity of three gods: Brahma, Vishnu, and Śiva, who symbolize the principles of creation, maintenance, and destruction. [In art,] *Trimurti* is represented as a body with three heads: Brahma is center, Vishnu to the left, and Śiva to the right. In the *Vedas* this trinity preceded the trinity of Agni, Vayu, and Surya. . . . The trinity

represents three in one and one in three, just as the *Vedas* are divided into three (*Samhita* [collected arrangements of songs and sacrifice-related texts], *Brahmana* [manuals of instruction], and *Sutra* [reductions of the content of the *Brahmanas*]) and yet are one. All are contained within the one being that is the true self of all things" (Schuhmacher and Woerner, *The Encyclopedia of Eastern Philosophy and Religion*, 379).

[12] Heracles was a hero who was considered to be the son of Zeus and Alcmene, the noblest of mortals. Heracles' legend continued to evolve from pre-Hellenic through Roman times, in Homer and Virgil among others, developing into his Latin double, Hercules. For fuller treatment, see Pierre Grimal, *Dictionnaire de la mythologie grecque et romaine* (Paris: PU, 1951), 183–95. Prometheus was a Titan, cousin of Zeus, son of Iapetus and Clymene (Asia), and brother of Atlas and Epimetheus. In Hesiod's *Theogony* (ca. 700 B.C.) simply the benefactor of mankind, Prometheus later was attributed with having given fire to human beings and was thus, by order of Zeus, chained to a rock in the Caucasus where an eagle would consume his continually-regenerating liver in perpetuity (Grimal, 376).

"Krishna means literally 'black' or 'dark blue' in Sanskrit, a symbol for the infinite space of the universe. The name Krishna appears in the *Rig Veda*, but without reference to the later divinity. The earliest reference to Krishna as the son of Devaki is found in the *Chandogya-Upanishad*, where he is described as a scholar. The later god Krishna is the most celebrated hero of Indian mythology and the best known of all deities. He is the eighth incarnation of Vishnu. This hero and *avatara*, around whom so many fables, legends, and tales arose, lived at a time when the Hindus had not yet left northwestern India. He is a prominent figure in the *Mahabharata*, and as the 'Divine One' he instructs Arjuna in the *Bhagavad Gītā*, the most famous 'song' of Hinduism. Here Arjuna addresses Krishna as the supreme, universal consciousness, as divine yet present before the gods, as unborn and omnipresent" (Schuhmacher and Woerner, *The Encyclopedia of Eastern Philosophy and Religion*, 185). For treatment of Megasthenes' identification of Heracles with Krishna, see Dahlquist, *Megasthenes and Indian Religion*, 33–35.

[13] Strabo, *The Geography of Strabo*, trans Horace Leonard Jones, 8 vols. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1966), 15.2; Arrian, *History of Alexander and Indica*, 8.5.11.

[14] Diodorus Siculus, *Diodorus of Sicily in Twelve Volumes*, trans. C. H. Oldfather (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1967), 2.39.

[15] See Dahlquist, Kirfel, Lassen, McCrindle, Mitter, Schwanbeck, and Timmer, who are only the most prominent scholars since the 1880s that have treated the influence of Megasthenes on Roman historians.

[16] A. N. Chandra, *The Rig Vedic Culture and the Indus Civilisation* (Calcutta: Ratna Prakashan, 1980), 56–62. See also "Aryan Invasion of India: Perpetuation of a Myth," by B. B. Lal, and "South Asian Archeology and the Myth of Indo-Aryan Invasions," by Jim G. Shaffer and Diane A. Lichtenstein, both in Edwin F. Bryant and Laurie L. Patton, eds. *The Indo-Aryan Controversy: Evidence and Inference in Indian History* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 50–74 and 75–104,

respectively; as well as Romila Thapar, "The Historiography of the Concept of 'Aryan,'" in Romila Thapar, Jonathan Mark Kenoyer, Madhav M. Deshpande, and Shreen Ratnagar, eds., *India: Historical Beginnings and the Concept of the Aryan* (New Delhi: National Book Trust, India, 2006), 1–40.

[17] The *Purāṇas* are literally "ancient narratives." "In contrast to the older Itihasas, which describe the legendary deeds of human heroes, the eighteen Purāṇas and the eighteen Upa-Purāṇas (Secondary Purāṇas) that are classified beneath them present legends of the gods. They are steeped in devotion (bhakti) and therefore constitute the chief scriptures of the worshipers of Vishnu, Śiva, and Brahma; hence they are divided into Vaishana-, Shaiva-, and Brahmana-Purāṇas. Vedic religion couched its deep spirituality in a nature symbolism that the common people seldom penetrated. For this reason, popular worship was directed toward the outer manifestations of nature. In the Purāṇas, with their trinity of three great gods Brahma (the creator), Vishnu (the sustainer), and Śiva (destroyer of everything, including all evil and ignorance), the symbolic character of the three divine figures was easier to comprehend and could therefore satisfy the people's inner religious need. Thus the mythological Purāṇas represent the true storehouse of the Hindu religion and are today still of vital importance for Hindu belief" (Schumacher and Woerner, *Encyclopedia of Eastern Philosophy and Religion*, 279–80).

[18] Pliny, *Natural History*, trans. H. Rackham (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1943), 7.21–32.

[19] Partha Mitter, *Much Maligned Monsters: The History of European Reactions to Indian Art* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1977), 7.

[20] *Il Milione* has been called *Milione*, *Le Divisament dou Monde*; *Livre des Merveilles dou Monde*; *De Mirabilibus Mundi*; and *Emilione* in its various editions and by various sources, including Polo's own family. See Gabriella Ronchi's "Nota al testo" for a more complete manuscript history.

[21] Note that "unicorni" are "rhinoceri," not "unicorns," although one wonders whether this was not mistranslated in some editions.

[22] Charles Allen renders this as "Sakyamuni Burkhan," apparently based on Teresa Waugh's 1989 English translation of Polo (see Charles Allen, *The Search for the Buddha: The Men Who Discovered India's Lost Religion* [New York: Carroll and Graf, 2002], 27).

[23] See Jeffrey Burton Russell, *Lucifer: The Devil in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1984), 68–70.

[24] Jurgis Baltrusaitis, *Le Moyen Âge fantastique: antiquités et exotismes dans l'art gothique* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1955), 198.

[25] Joan-Pau Rubiés, *Travel and Ethnology in the Renaissance: South India through European Eyes, 1250–1625* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge UP, 2000), 37. Although concerned primarily with ethnography, Rubiés' book notes that beginning with Ibn Battuta, Muslim accounts of India are more reliably accurate, or at least belie different biases than Christian accounts (14, 22–23, 58).

[26] *Rg Veda Samhita* (Delhi: Nag, 1977), 1.71.5, 8.

[27] Stella Kramrisch, *The Presence of Siva* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1981), 7.

[28] For a detailed account of the creation story of Hinduism as it appears in Hindu texts such as the *Rig Veda*, *Taittirya Samhita*, *Maitrayani Samhita*, and *Satapatha Brahmana*, see Kramrisch, *The Presence of Siva*, 3–19. Kramrisch's study of the various aspects and representations of the god Śiva concerns many of the destructive elements in Hindu thought and iconography and thus treats at length the idea of fire arising out of a void.

[29] Schuhmacher and Woerner, *Encyclopedia of Eastern Philosophy and Religion*, 121.

[30] K. M. Mathew, *History of the Portuguese Navigation in India (1497–1600)* (Delhi: Mittal, 1988), 103–17.

[31] This phenomenon has also been detailed in less explicit form in Edward Farley Oaten's *European Travelers in India during the Fifteenth, Sixteenth, and Seventeenth Centuries* (Lucknow: Pustak Kendra, 1909), 61–63, in which he refers to specific European accounts such as Samuel Purchas's 1597 book *Pilgrimes*.

[32] Athanasius Kircher, *China Illustrata (1667)*, ed. Anton F. W. Sommer, Editiones Neolatinae Tom. 95 (Vienna: Im Selbstverlag, 2004), 147–49.

[33] Léon Poliakov, *Le mythe aryen: essai sur les sources du racisme et des nationalismes* (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1971), 24; Suzanne Teillet, *Des Goths à la Nation Gothique: Les origins de l'idée de nation en Occident du Ve au VIIe siècle* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1984), 59–60.

[34] Peter Heather, *The Goths* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997), 1.

[35] Arno Borst, *Der Turmbau von Babel: Geschichte der Meinungen über Ursprung und Vielfalt der Sprachen und Völker* (Stuttgart: Anton Hiersemann, 1957–1963), 659.

[36] Jerry H. Bentley, *Humanists and Holy Writ: New Testament Scholarship in the Renaissance* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1983), 8.

[37] Paul Joachimsen, *Gesammelte Aufsätze: Beiträge zu Renaissance, Humanismus und Reformation; zur Historiographie und zum deutschen Staatsgedanken* (Aalen: Scientia, 1970), 56.

[38] Simon Schama, *Landscape and Memory* (Knopf: New York, 1995), 77. Here Schama also cites the *Germania*'s reception history as documented by Eduard Norden, Kenneth C. Schellhase, and J. Perret (583).

[39] Tacitus, *Dialogus, Agricola*, *Germania*, 268–69.

[40] For an in-depth discussion of Luther's role in these debates, see Stephen Ozment, *Protestants: The Birth of a Revolution* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 11–18.

[41] August Wilhelm Knobel, *Völkertafel der Genesis.Ethnographische Untersuchungen* (Giessen: J. Ricker, 1850), 70.

[42] Antoine Berman, *L'épreuve de l'étranger: culture et traduction dans l'Allemagne romantique: Herder, Goethe, Schlegel, Novalis, Humboldt, Schleiermacher, Hölderlin* (Paris: Gallimard, 1984), 44.

[43] Lewis W. Spitz, *The Religious Renaissance of the German Humanists* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard, 1963), 84.

# I: L'Âge des Ombres, 1765–1790s

# 1: As Flood Waters Receded: The Enlightenment on the Indian Origins of Language and Art

> *It happened in a miraculous way, so that in an instant many different languages were formed. The Fathers would have it that through this confusion of tongues little by little the purity of the sacred antediluvian language was lost.*
>
> — Giambattista Vico, *La scienza nuova* (1725)

At the start of the eighteenth century, "Germany" consisted of approximately eighteen hundred separate territories, each with distinct sovereignty. While the citizens of the Germanic states felt that their cultural development had been retarded by the Thirty Years' War (1618–48), a certain unity existed among them, centered not so much on a feeling of "nationalism" *per se* — for the modern conception of nations was just developing — as on a sense of Germanic culture.

The political consequences of the war between Catholics and Lutherans, which embroiled most of Europe, were twofold. On the one hand, Germany was divided into many separate territories each with *de facto* sovereignty, hampering the power of the Holy Roman Empire and attempts at centralized German power. On the other hand, Spain lost its grip on Germany, the Netherlands, and Portugal, and the Habsburg Empire went into decline, making Bourbon France the dominant power in Europe, a shift that would contribute significantly to German nationalism as the power of France continued to increase in the next century and a half.

German cultural unity would be nurtured by the emerging rationalist theories of what is perhaps an ironic term in light of the subject of this study: *die Aufklärung*, the Enlightenment. Armed with Descartes' anti-scholasticism, Montaigne's skepticism, Newton's dynamic science, Leibniz's calculus, and Locke's empirical democracy, Enlightenment thinkers in the early eighteenth century attempted to remake socio-political society and national culture in the image of nature through reason. They attempted to establish freedom — freedom in art, speech, business, intellectual development, politics — freedom, as Peter Gay puts it, "of moral man to make his own way in the world."[1] For many this meant dissociation from the strictures of biblical genealogy. In this period of Cartesian logic, detailed genealogies that traced all peoples back to Adam began to die out, and the idea

of a larger humanity was broken down into nations and nationalities. Enlightenment thinkers were beginning to have doubts about the scientific grounds upon which Adam was considered a universal ancestor. In Germany the power of the story of Genesis had already been shaken by the humanists' attempts to rehabilitate the German gods. Due to such shifts, what came into focus in this period were issues of what one might call "subjective teleology," that is, of the perfection of the individual and his immediate collective. While Greco-Latin historians and medieval European travelers had emphasized the wisdom of the Brahmins and the demonic strangeness of their deities, Enlightenment writers would debate whether indeed India was the only original civilization — the one that invented language, art, and science — and how German language and civilization might have arisen from it.

## The Loss of the Sacred Antediluvian Language

Beginning in the eighteenth century, the idea that the Germans formed a pure race with a pure language would start to gain ground in theology, philosophy, and science. During this period the search for Germanic origins and the fascination with India would finally come to overlap. Given the line of thinking that stems from the humanist rediscovery of Tacitus and the search for a set of Germanic origins predating Christianity, the later identification of the Germanic tribes with the warlike "Aryans" of the Ganges Plain is unsurprising. By the end of the Enlightenment, however, Europeans would come to see one holy language as predating all others: Sanskrit.

Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz became convinced of a common origin of nations and a radical primitive language shared by all peoples in the first Japhetic eras and the *germanische Frühzeit* (early Germanic times). As Maurice Olender notes, Leibniz "shared the view of a number of Renaissance and post-Renaissance writers who had revived the hypothesis that the languages of Europe had originated on a continent called Scythia. This was the context in which the Indo-European idea originated, along with the hope of 'shedding light on the origin of nations.'"[2]

In *Nouveaux essais sur l'entendement humain* (New Essays in Human Understanding; 1704–5, published 1765, which is the date we bracket as the core of this book), Leibniz argued that every aspect of the discussion of languages and migrations of peoples supported the belief in the common origin of all nations and in a primitive root-language:

> Pour y comprendre les origines tant du celtique et du latin que du grec, qui ont beaucoup de racines communes avec les langues germaniques ou celtiques, on peut conjurer que cela vient de l'origine commune de tous ces peoples descendus des Scythes.

> [To understand the origins as much of the Celtic and the Latin as of the Greek, which have a lot of common roots with the Germanic or Celtic languages, one can plot that this comes from the common origin of all the peoples descended from the Scythians.][3]

Leibniz questioned the argument made by contemporaries that Hebrew was the first language, for he thought that German must be closer to this original root language than Hebrew or Arabic because German was more natural, less altered by history than Middle Eastern languages. As Olender notes, "Associated with the national awakening that led to various local rivalries between supposed primordial tongues, the idea that European languages shared a common ancestor gave rise, between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries, to the concept of an abstract prototype, which in the nineteenth century took the ultimate form of the Indo-European hypothesis" (2). Leibniz used the verb to "Goropize" (from Goropius Becanus), meaning to claim a ridiculous etymology, but he stated that Becanus was not far wrong in claiming that the Germanic language, which he called Cimbric (from the ancient Cimbri of Northern Germany), had even more marks of the primitive than Hebrew.[4] Leibniz also inveighed against French and Swedish contemporaries on the question of the origins of the Franks and Goths in his *Brevis designatio meditationum de originibus gentium ductis potissimum ex judicio linguarum* (Brief Description of Ideas on the Origin of Nations Best Derived from the Judgment of Languages, 1710), in which he made Germany out to be the cradle of the white race.

Despite the fact that Leibniz believed in a common origin and language of nations, by this point debates over German autochthony and the doctrine of the unity of mankind were waged by scientists and historians who had come to focus their attention on the monogenesis-polygenesis problem — the argument over whether modern nations stemmed from one original culture or a plurality of them. The more influential group in this debate until the late eighteenth century, "monogenecists," as they would later be called, usually held that all societies owed their existence to the Hebrew or Egyptian civilization. And, despite the waning of Noachian genealogies, the biblical Flood came to be seen as an empirically provable phenomenon. As Poliakov notes, some argued that the highest mountains were between India and China, so man must have originated there, for those landmasses would have emerged first as the waters of the Flood receded (126).

Most scholars in the early Enlightenment, however, were willing to concede the affiliation of Europeans with peoples of the Middle East found in "indisputable" biblical and classical sources, but were reluctant to do the same with the monster-worshipping races who dwelled in mysterious lands beyond the tallest Nepali peaks. Be that as it may, as religion and philosophy had moved European interest toward India in ancient and medieval times, Europeans now refocused on India through the lens of science.

The French astronomers Jean-Sylvain Bailly and Jean-Dominique Cassini felt that the presence of seashells in locales far from major bodies of salt water confirmed the hypothesis of a universal inundation and therefore corroborated the story of the Flood. At first the self-congratulatory Bailly calculated mathematically that the earliest post-diluvian men would have been situated in the habitable regions closest to the North Pole: Greenland and Novoe Zemlya.[5] Further calculations, however, led him to decide that it would have been too cold there (439), and so he transferred them to the valley of the Ganges River, where he felt the original humans invented the arts and sciences. Bailly's *Lettres sur l'Atlantide de Platon et sur l'ancienne histoire de l'Asie* (1779) is dedicated to his correspondent Voltaire and the latter's conviction that the Brahmins "nous ont enseigné tant de choses" — that they "have taught us so many things." In these letters Bailly attempted to confirm the existence of Atlantis near the North Pole, using evidence from classical writers Plato and Diodorus Siculus to Renaissance explorers such as Christopher Columbus and Hernán Cortés, and felt that the Atlantans may have been the original civilization, whose people reemerged after the Flood and passed their wisdom on to the Indians. Bailly also attested to the fact that the Caucasus and the Himalaya are the same mountain chain, furthering the "Aryan" association.

Bailly wrote in his twentieth letter to Voltaire (12 April 1778), "les tartars que nous méprisons ont leur généalogie: ils prennent leur race du second père de l'espèce humaine, de Noë; & s'ils ne vont pas plus haut, c'est que le deluge les arête" (260–61; the Tartars that we scorn have their genealogy: they take their race from the second father of the human species, from Noah; and if they do not go higher [*plus haut*], it is the deluge that stops them). Then in his twenty-fourth and final letter he noted:

> quelques individus échappèrent à la destruction, ce sont les Brames réfugiés & caches dans les montagnes du Thibet . . . Les Brames descendus du Thibet venaient instruire les Indiens, & leur communiquer le Hanscrit avec les tables astronomiques que M. le Gentil nous a rapportées. Voilà l'époque où commence l'état moderne & connu de l'Asie. (471–72)
>
> [some individuals escaped the destruction, these were the Brahmins, who took refuge by hiding in the mountains of Tibet. . . . The Brahmins came down from Tibet to instruct the Indians and to communicate Hanscrit [*sic*] to them with the astronomical tables that M. le Gentil brought us. That is how the epoch began in which we know Asia and the modern state [of India].]

Bailly seemed to feel that the original Brahmins were driven north to higher altitude by the Flood, taking refuge on the Tibetan Plateau and Tartary (the precise topography and altitude of which he seems unclear),

before reemerging to return to the subcontintuent and teach not only their Indian descendents, but the Chinese and other Asian ethnicities as well.

Bailly's correspondent Voltaire, however, was one of the most formidable proponents of polygenism, and he would use the theory of Indian origins as a means of overturning the power of Judeo-Christian tradition. Claims to German autochthony found their strongest detractors among the *philosophes*, and Voltaire in particular would not concede, as did Montesquieu, that human knowledge had been introduced to France by Germanic tribes. His *Candide* (1759) is also well known as a parody of other aspects of Leibniz's thought. Like many intellectuals of his time, Voltaire displayed an initial interest in China, but the Far East proved too inscrutable to him, and he subsequently became possibly the greatest admirer of South Asia during the French Enlightenment. He unequivocally posited India as the original nation, the cradle of humanity, and the center of diffusion for all knowledge of the arts and sciences.

Such a vision of an enlightened Asia, which to a large extent had grown out of Jesuit missionaries' praise of the rationality of the Chinese system of government, bolstered Voltaire's questioning of revealed religion and contrasted markedly with the Catholic Church's suppression of oppositional thinking. As Dorothy M. Figueira notes, "one discovers . . . in the Enlightenment emplotment of the Orient, a subtle rhetorical strategy: Asia is portrayed as the victim of prejudice and superstition as well as the domain of reason and virtue," thus bringing together the depictions we have traced from ancient Greece through the Renaissance.[6]

This same dichotomy appears most significantly in Voltaire's *Essai sur les moeurs et l'esprit des nations* (Essay on the Manners and Spirit of Nations; 1756–78). Here, in an effort to undermine the Judeo-Christian chronology and authority, Voltaire argued that India was the original civilization. Scholars such as Figueira, Poliakov, Arthur Hertzberg, and Daniel Hawley have emphasized his anti-Semitism in this and other texts; conversely, scholars from John Morley to Graeme Garrard have concentrated on his anti-Christian arguments. Indeed, it seems plain that Voltaire was by turns both anti-Christian and anti-Semitic. These tendencies in his works, however, could stand more subtle reading in terms of his use of South Asia and supposedly South Asian sources, and Figueira's work has done so admirably, for she has found that Voltaire uses India to denigrate Western religions generally and rather equally.

First, though, we might consider how Voltaire arrived at the theory that India was the cradle of all civilization, for this did not just emerge from readings of Montesquieu. In *De l'esprit des lois* Montesquieu had presented India as an example of a country in which climate could shape human behavior, which he found to be otherwise uniform. That is to say, the supposedly remarkable achievements of the Brahmins were partially attributable to the salutary climate of the subcontinent. While such cli-

matic determinism would have an influence on Voltaire, the ground for thinking of India as the mother of art and science had also been laid by various travelers who told astonished Europeans about the giant idols found in the ancient Indian cave-temples outside Bombay. Even more immediate influences on Voltaire were Cassini and Bailly, travel accounts by scholars such as Le Gentil de la Galasière and Jean-Baptiste Tavernier, Jesuit correspondence such as that between Père Bouchet and Pierre-Daniel Huet, and the English writers John Holwell and Alexander Dow. The last of these, like their countryman Bysshe a century earlier, gave prominence in their writings on India to the ancient wisdom of the Brahmins.

Voltaire was a disciple of the English deists, whose rejection of religious supernaturalism was taken to represent the core of all religions and of Christianity in its original, uncorrupted form. Voltaire turned the theory of polygenism in favor of India in his *Essai sur les moeurs*, in which he strove to demonstrate that there existed in South Asia an original religious tradition of which present-day Christianity and Judaism — and even contemporary Hinduism — were degenerated forms.[7] This theory would have a profound effect on the early German Romantic exegesis of Sanskrit texts, for they would ultimately find Christianity to contain more compelling exemplars for ethical behavior. Voltaire claimed that the ancient Aryans practiced a religion that was a pure cult of a supreme being disengaged from all superstition and fanaticism (2:295), and that the most ancient theologies are of Indian invention (2:285). He argued,

> Les premiers brachmanes, étant donc à-la-fois rois et pontifes, ne pouvaient guère établir la religion que sur la raison universelle [mais] la religion dégénéra donc chez les brachmanes dès qu'ils ne furent plus souverains. (2:295–96)
>
> [The first Brahmins, being at the same time kings and pontiffs, could not but establish a religion based on universal reason [but] the religion degenerated among the Brahmins once they were no longer [politically] sovereign.]

He maintained that Saint Ambrose strongly preferred their morals to those of the Christians of his own time (2:297). Voltaire also perpetuated classical Western theories such as the idea that Pythagoras learned everything he knew from the Brahmins (2:283), and reminds us that Strabo had said expressly that the Brahmins worshipped but one god and thus that their belief system resembled those of Confucius, Socrates and Plato, Marcus Aurelius and Epictetus, in fact "tous les sages" (2:296).

Voltaire found in the still-extant practice of *sati*, the ritual self-immolation of widows, continuing evidence of the ancient Indians' former invincibility, for he argued, "Il semblerait qu'une nation, chez qui les philosophes et meme les femmes se dévouaient ainsi à la mort, dût être une

nation guerrière et invincible" (2:292; It seems that a nation in which the philosophers and even the women thus sacrifice themselves to death must be an invincible, warrior nation). Such comments read very much like Tacitus's description of the Goths and their brave martial nature. Voltaire argued that the antiquity of the arts in India had been well known among all nations because so many Chinese, Arabic, and European travelers had gone there for instruction, whereas one never saw Indians in other countries because there was nothing they could possibly learn abroad (2:284–85; 2:291). He even argued that there were Christians in India with no cognizance of the Latin church, for their community was established many centuries ago and remained unmolested by missionaries, thus retaining the original purity of the religion (2:293), although he states that such spirits degenerated in India itself (2:287). He finds that in general Indians have gentler natures than people of the Occident, whose diet of animal meat and strong liquor embitters their blood and makes them more ferocious, and that intrusion by such foreigners corrupted the Indians' natural goodness (2:294). In recent centuries, even the highest caste, the Brahmins, had degenerated to the extent that their present rituals seemed laughable, for "il semble que les hommes soient devenus faibles et lâche dans l'Inde" (2:302; it seems that men have become weak and lazy in India).

Throughout this discourse on moral and cultural degeneration, however, the physiological is also emphasized, for though a polygenecist, Voltaire intimated that mixed races do not advance to the extent that pure ones do, thus the Indians had been contaminated by contacts with other peoples. Influenced by Bernard le Bovier de Fontenelle, for whom science and theology were the same category of inquiry, Voltaire was distinctly mechanical-minded, as were so many of the thinkers of his time, in believing that nature is uniform. Yet he saw that his own philosophy was continually threatened by the monogenecists, whose arguments, he felt, supported the dangerous idea of the infinite power of God. In fact, he used the same epithet for them that he applied to the Goths: their ideas were "barbaric."

Voltaire made these claims based on his reading of the *Shasta* and the *Veidam*, texts supposedly composed over five thousand years before in the sacred language of "*Hanscrit*." He also cites the supposedly ancient *Ézour-Veidam*, a commentary on the *Veidam* composed by a certain Brahmin by the name of Chumontou, who even translated his own text into French! These texts, Voltaire claims, have been only feebly imitated in the writings of other nations. In the *Shasta*, he maintains, one finds the story of the fall of the angels and a description of the Trinity in forms much more reasonable than in European accounts such as that of John Milton. The *Ézour-Veidam* describes the Flood and Hell, the creation of the first man, Adimo, and all the theological principles supposedly contained in the *Veidam*.[8] Voltaire praises Chumontou's exhortation to the polytheistic Hindus,

whom we are to regard as renegades, to stop their idolatry and "cease fooling people" into thinking there is more than one deity (2:301).

As Figueira notes, however, the *Ézour-Veidam* was characterized to Friedrich Max Müller, the foremost Sanskrit scholar of the nineteenth century, as a "very coarse forgery," and the Orientalist Raymond Schwab considered it "an insidious piece of propaganda consisting of certain 'Vedic' materials translated by Jesuits with the intention of isolating elements most in harmony with Christianity" (14).

> What the *Ezour Vedam* actually was[, however,] is less significant than the use to which it and the mythic Aryan society it described were put during the Enlightenment. The Veda (in the form of the *Ezour Vedam*) allowed Voltaire and [the editor of the *Ézour-Veidam*, Baron de] Sainte Croix to draw a distinction between what was Vedic and post-Vedic, the latter being a degenerated form of the former. Just as scripture had degenerated, so too had its interpreters. (15)

The *Ézour-Veidam* was thus the perfect tool through which Voltaire could exhort readers to a return to a supposed form of rationalism and to denigrate the Judeo-Christian forms of organized religion.

At the end of his two chapters on India in his *Essai sur les moeurs*, Voltaire remarks that it is no wonder that Christianity has never really taken hold in India considering Christian missionaries' own internecine feuds:

> Le catholique y combat l'anglican, qui combat le luthérien combattu par le calviniste. Ainsi tous contre tous, voulant annoncer chacun la vérité, et accusant les autres de mensonge, ils étonnent un peuple simple et paisible, qui voit accourir chez lui, des extrémités occidentals de la terre, des hommes ardents pour se déchirer mutuellement sur les rives du Gange. (2:304)

> [There the Catholic fights the Anglican, who fights the Lutheran beaten by the Calvinist. Thus all against all, each wishing to announce the truth, and accusing the others of lies, they astonish a simple and peaceful people, who see bursting in on them the occidental extremities of the Earth, men ardent to tear each other apart on the banks of the Ganges.]

The *Essai sur les moeurs* is both anti-Christian and anti-Semitic in its emphasis on an original Aryan purity that was sullied by inferior foreign influence, its post-lapsarian imitations but pale reflections of its perfect, primeval rationalism. Voltaire's critique is based on certain sources, however, that are not just suspect, but entirely mythic, such as the *Ézour-Veidam*. While he was one of many in a line of primarily French, English, and German scholars to misappropriate Hindu ideas, the influence of this text, which lies on the margins of science and religion, is particularly crucial for its anthropological implications.

Such a separation of science and religion, however, was much less cut and dried for non-deist thinkers. The natural historian Georges Buffon elaborated a theory more coherent than those of many of his contemporaries according to which the first people, "digne de porter ce nom, digne en tous nos respects, comme créateur des sciences, des arts et toutes les institutions utile" (worthy of carrying the name, worthy of our respect, as creators of the sciences, the arts, and all useful institutions), had emerged about 30,000 years ago in an area of Central Asia that is now part of Siberia and Mongolia.[9] Buffon argued that later other myopic, barbarian groups had destroyed this Edenic civilization and plunged the whole of humanity into ignorance. As per Bysshe, Holwell, Dow, Bailly, Voltaire, and others, Buffon felt that only the Brahmins of India were able to preserve a flicker of the old learning, and even they got the perfect astronomy of their own ancestors all wrong. Buffon's account echoes that of the Christian Fall:

> La perte des sciences, cette première plaie faite à l'humanité par la hache de la barbarie, fut sans doute l'effet d'une malheureuse révolution qui aura réduit peut-être en peu d'années l'ouvrage et les travaux de plusieurs siècles; car nous ne pouvons douter que ce premier peuple, aussi puissant d'abord que savant, ne se soit long-temps maintenu dans sa splendeur, puisqu'il a fait de si grands progrès dans les sciences, et par conséquent dans tous les arts qu'exige leur étude. (106)
>
> [The loss of the sciences, this first wound inflicted on humanity by the axe of barbarism, undoubtedly had the effect of an unfortunate revolution that destroyed in perhaps a few years the labor of several centuries. For we cannot doubt that this first people, as powerful at first as they were knowledgable, did not long maintain their splendor before they made such great progress in science, and therefore in all the arts that demand their study.]

How Buffon knew that this first society had such extensive and perfect knowledge, however, is not entirely clear. While the medieval bestiaries and Renaissance works cited earlier preceded Buffon's thirty-six volume *Histoire naturelle, générale et particulière* (Natural History, General and Particular; 1749–88), it remained for nearly a century the main source of information about exotic animals and peoples for scientists we would now call zoologists and ethnologists. But while it may reflect the intellectual prejudices of the public at large in this period, it also reflects a degree of sensitivity to other cultures. Buffon believed that one of the characteristics that separates human beings from other animals is the drive for perfectability, which he, and later Rousseau, would argue had no need of propitious circumstances to manifest itself. He argued that while climate and the intermixture of blood might determine body structure and physiognomy,

the essential characters of races perpetuate themselves regardless of these factors.

The foundation of such perfectability could be found, it seemed, in such original people's ability to grasp metaphysical reality. The French mathematician and philosopher Pierre-Louis Moreau de Maupertius was, like Leibniz, concerned with the origins of language. As Ronald Grimsley notes, his use of the word "origin" in the title of his work *Reflexions philosophiques sur l'Origine des langues et la signification des mots* (Philosophical Reflexions on the Origin of Languages and the Signification of Words, 1748) indicates his interest in the ontological foundation of language rather than an historical precondition:[10]

> Puisque les langues sont sorties de cette premiere simplicité, & qu'il n'y a peut-être plus au Monde de peuple assez sauvage pour nour instruire dans la recherché d'une vérité pure que chaque génération a obscurcie, . . . je suis obligé de recevoir une infinité d'expressions établies, ou du moins de m'en servir, tâchons d'en connoître le sens, la force & l'étendue.[11]
>
> [Since languages have issued from this initial simplicity, and because there are perhaps no longer any people in the world savage enough to instruct us in the search for a pure truth, which each generation has obscured, . . . I am obliged to receive an infinity of established expressions, or at least to serve myself, endeavor to know the sense, the strength, and the spread [of this original mode of communication].]

Maupertius was more a disciple of political philosophers such as John Locke and Étienne Bonnot de Condillac than of the linguists of his time and thus emphasized from the beginning of his career the influence of language on the formation of knowledge (1:265–68). He felt that the original language of man must have been simpler than our contemporary tongues, but that this universal "base" language assured a certain parallelism of linguistic evolution in various milieus (1:268–70). Maupertius's arguments, however, rested on the presupposition that the first human perceptions were not of well-defined bits of experience to which language attached discrete signs, but that they attached signs to a larger, more amorphous perception (1:264–65), prefiguring Derridean discussions of language. What is rather striking about this, however, is that the idea that language derives from the perception of a larger, impersonal phenomenon allowed for the development of national identities based on languages that reflected endemic national "spirits," as Grimsley notes (4–5).

Jean-Jacques Rousseau made observations similar to those of Maupertius in *Essai sur l'Origine des Langues* (Essay on the Origin of Languages, 1781), in which he argued in chapter three, "Que Le Premier Langage dut Être Figuré" (That the First Language Must Be Figured),

that initially each word represented an entire phrase.[12] Rousseau did not make differential judgments about what he conceived as the various human races, and criticized what he thought were prejudices and presumptuous judgments on the part of Voltaire and Buffon.[13] While his "natural man" is presented as hypothetical, like Buffon Rousseau was a believer in the Christian doctrine of the Fall. As for Bailly and Maupertius, human civilization as it had emerged was for Rousseau a colossal blunder that alienated people from nature — the eternal, fundamental reality. Yet he notes, "Les climats doux, les pays gras et fertiles ont été les premiers peuples et les derniers où les nations se sont formées, parce que les hommes s'y pouvoient passer plus aisément les uns des autres, et que les besoins qui font naître la societé s'y sont fait sentir plus tard" (5:400; The soft climates, the fat and fertile countries developed the first peoples and were the last where nations formed, because there men were able to pass more easily from one to the other, and there the needs that give birth to society were felt later). Rousseau was careful, though, about naming names and, like Leibniz, tended to subsume India under Scythia.

## "Entartete Kunst": Perspectives on Ancient Indian Art

What united both monogenecists and polygenecists was the belief — found in Bailly and elsewhere — that the arts and sciences were "invented" by an original civilization. Despite initial input on each side of the monogenesis-polygenesis argument by philosophers and scientists, however, the problem did not receive widespread attention until French magistrate and anthropologist Antoine Yves Goguet published *L'origine des lois, arts et sciences, et leur progres chez les nations le plus ancièn*nes (The Origin of Laws, Arts, and Sciences, and their Progress among the Most Ancient Nations, 1758), which would apply this debate to the question of art-production.[14] European perceptions of Indian art, and Asian art generally, became important at this time because the discussions about the infancy of architecture by art historians and travelers to India brought a new dimension to the mono- vs. polygenesis debate.

Drawing on the popular evolutionary theory of the time, Goguet argued in his first volume, "Depuis le Déluge jusqu'à la mort de Jacob" (From the Flood to the Death of Jacob), that architecture must develop from the simple to the complex, and was most likely the first art to be invented because it is the most directly related to basic human needs.[15] He found the simple forms of the Egyptian pyramids evidence of such a theory and lamented, "l'architecture embellie, corrompue & rétablie successivement, a varié, suivant le bon ou le mauvais gout des siècles & des

nations" (1.126; successively embellished, corrupted, and re-established, architecture has varied, following the good and bad tastes of centuries and nations). Goguet was not the only scholar to give currency to this idea. The archeologist and art historian Johann Joachim Winckelmann had become a pioneer in art historiography a few years earlier when he attached an evolutionary philosophy to the relationship between simplicity and necessity in his discussion of ancient Greek art, *Gedanken über die Nachahmung der griechischen Werke in der Malerei und Bildhauerkunst* (Reflexions on the Imitation of Greek Works in Painting and Sculpture, 1755). What is compelling about Winckelmann's argument is that it is the reverse of the model of degeneration, of the obscuration of primordial truth, that we have seen so far, for he argued that Greek art was imbued with a clear, teleological progress that could be witnessed through an evolving simplicity. Important in the Indo-German context, Winckelmann opposed this ideal to Oriental art, which he felt lacked any notion of progress and was filled with ornament that was both superficial and superfluous. As Mitter notes, "it was Winckelmann who, characteristically, turned [superfluity] into a moral question by wedding the notion of simplicity to that of necessity in his discussion of Greek art (190–91).

Winckelmann juxtaposed superfluous Asian art with nobly simple Greek art, taking some of the formerly postulated attributes of Indian Brahmins and applying them to the ancient Greeks. Thus he would break with the Latinist humanist tradition by expounding a new humanism in the guise of a new Hellenism through which he would attach the qualities of nobility, simplicity, and liberty to Greece generally. These qualities had been associated with Dionysus and the ancient Brahmins by classical historians, associated with the Goths by German humanists, and rather recently associated with Brahmins again by figures such as Voltaire. Winckelmann's association of these qualities with the people of ancient Greece, however, was to a significant degree in response to the problem of German identity in the eighteenth century and in many ways ran parallel to the concurrent movement of the Gothic Revival, which sought to discover authentic German roots. Suzanne Marchand remarks, "This association of the Greeks with nature, genius, and freedom, and of the modern world with the unnatural, the overspecialized, and the tyrannical was perhaps Winckelmann's most significant contribution to German philhellenism."[16] This idealization provided a model that some such as Hegel would use to illustrate the deficiency of South Asian culture and others such as Friedrich Schlegel would employ to celebrate the profound artistic and philosophical Indian roots of European civilization.

Winckelmann's Romantic image of classical Greece had also developed from the aesthetics of French neoclassicism, and was bound up with the changing conception of classical antiquity caused by the development of

archeology into a science. The eighteenth century was the first great age of modern archeological exploration, marked by the discoveries in Campania between 1738 and 1751 of Herculaneum, Pompeii, and Paestum, as well as James Stuart and Nicholas Revett's expedition to Athens. For Winckelmann the "noble simplicity and serene grandeur" of these sites indicated simple truth and logical clarity. Many of these archeological discoveries would also help to foster the theory that propitious climatic conditions might influence cultural achievement. Despite Voltaire's detractions, climatic determinism as a theme and even movement was influential in the eighteenth century, especially in the writings of Montesquieu. Winckelmann sought to demonstrate that the progress of Greek art toward perfection owed much to the climate of Greece.

In contrast to Winckelmann, the French antiquarian Anne Claude Phillippe de Tubières, Comte de Caylus, not only took Indian art seriously, but assigned it an essential place in his discourse on the origin and progress of architecture. Caylus firmly attributed the invention of architecture to the Egyptians, however. As Mitter points out, simplicity and originality were the two principal requirements for the invention of architecture, the two features present to a high degree in Egyptian architecture, and Caylus found the "imitative" Indian lacking (199). The assumptions on which Caylus's hypothesis rested were challenged in 1803 by the German antiquarians Bernard Rode and Andreas Riem in an article on ancient painting attached to a reprint of Winckelmann's *Geschichte der Kunst des Altertums* (History of Ancient Art, 1764). Rode and Riem first denied that Egypt was the inventor of arts subsequently imitated by Indians. They also questioned the doctrine that simplicity was necessarily an indication of antiquity. On the contrary, they asserted, simplicity was a clear sign of maturity and good taste, whereas elaborateness was a reflection of the infancy of an art, thus reversing Caylus's argument.

With the establishment of British power in India in the second part of the eighteenth century, there arrived a new kind of traveler who sought aesthetic alternatives to mere beauty. The phenomenon of the "Grand Tour" — a tour of the principal cities and places of interest in Europe, meant to be an essential part of the education of young men of good birth and fortune, which had grown to include parts of the Middle East and India — encouraged travel purely for the sake of aesthetic pleasures. The first alternative to the category of beauty was the concept of the sublime, which would become an interest of Kant and Schopenhauer. Inspired by, among other things, the A.D.-first-century Roman essay "On the Sublime" attributed to Longinus, British philosopher Edmund Burke placed the sublime on the same level as beauty and made them twin principal categories in his art criticism. In *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful* (1757) Burke argued that the essential ingredient of the sublime is obscurity of the subject, or an inducement

to ignorance that arouses fear. The enormous and mysterious cave-temples of Elefanta and Ellora outside Bombay, recently seen by British and French travelers for the first time, were prime candidates for such an art-historical theory.[17]

The second influential aesthetic movement to emerge at this time and have an impact on European views of Indian art was that of the "picturesque," a category meant to accommodate subjects to which neither of the terms "beautiful" or "sublime" could properly be applied. The picturesque would develop from Sir William Temple's essay "Upon the Gardens of Epicurus" (1685, published 1692), which praises what its author imagined to be the "Asian" manner of garden design, which he found to be based on "disarray." Such supposed disorder would become a vital element in picturesque aesthetics, which advocated irregularity of landscape in both nature and art and suggested that even images that were artificially rude were preferable to those that were extremely ordered.

In India itself, on the other hand, European travelers found statuary and architectural details that at first appeared to the uninitiated eye to be so disorganized as to be not even picturesque, suggesting instead cultural crudeness. But by the end of the eighteenth century, as reliable information about India available in the West increased, views began to change. This was due to the beginnings of scientific archeology and to the Grand Tour, for, as precursors of the Romantic Movement, new travelers came specifically in search of the sublime and picturesque elements in Indian architecture. Coincident with the extension of the area of the Grand Tour was a shift from the traditional academic concept of rules in art to the importance of taste.

## Conclusion

From the middle of the eighteenth century onward one can discern the growth of two distinct traditions: one which undertook to record systematically all the relevant facts about Indian art, and another which engaged primarily in speculation about its nature and importance.[18] The latter had by now been discussed for over two millennia. The fact that Europeans began to systematically research what they had been judging is more significant. Despite such systematization, however, and alongside the development of a Romantic interest in exoticism, there emerged the fundamental Enlightenment emphasis on the importance of the subject. The combination of these two elements — exoticism and subjectivity — was to prove vital for the development of Romanticism's views of India.

The eighteenth century postulated the postdiluvian, Himalayan origin of man and elaborated discussions of origins through debates over the monogenesis-polygenesis problem, climatic determinism, and the idea of

progress in architecture. The period also saw the introduction of the sublime and the picturesque as alternatives to the aesthetic category of beauty, leading to further views of Indian art as either transportatively metaphysical or disorganized and degenerated, much like the earlier dichotomy between Brahmins and demons discussed in chapter one. For German thinkers at the end of the century such as Kant and Herder, man emerged after the biblical Flood only in the Himalayas and established a civilization whose sublime achievements were governed by climatic conditions, and successors of that civilization would eventually settle the European continent. The intervening history between this original society and Europe, however, remained to be rewritten.

## Notes

The epigraph at the start of this chapter is a translation of "La quale avvenne in una maniera miracolosa, onde allo istante si formarono tante favelle diverse. Per la qual confusione di lingue vogliono i Padri che si venne tratto tratto a perdere la purità della lingua santa avanti-diluviana." Giambattista Vico, *La scienza nuova* (Milano: Rizzoli, 1996), 140–41.

[1] Peter Gay, *The Enlightenment: An Interpretation*, 2 vols. (New York: Knopf, 1967) 1:3.

[2] Olender, *The Languages of Paradise*, 2.

[3] G. W. Leibniz, *Oeuvres Philosophiques*, ed. Paul Janet (Paris: Félix Alcan, 1900), 1:238.

[4] Goropius Becanus or Jan Van Gorp, a Dutch physician with linguistic interests, authored the agglutinative *Originum Gentium* (Origin of Peoples, 1569), a nine-volume study of the supposed origins of various Eurasian ethnicities. Although his study is written in Latin, Goropius regarded German as one of the four holy languages, as had Luther, but ranked German behind Hebrew, above Greek and Latin.

[5] Jean Sylvain Bailly, *Lettres sur l'Atlantide de Platon et sur l'ancienne histoire de l'Asie* (London & Paris: Elmesly & Frères Debure, 1779; Woodbridge, CT, Research Publications, Inc., 1997, microfilm), 436.

[6] Dorothy Matilda Figueira, *Aryans, Jews, Brahmins: Theorizing Authority through Myths of Identity* (Albany: State U of New York P, 2002), 9.

[7] Voltaire, *Essai sur les moeurs et l'esprit des nations, et sur les principaux fairs de l'histoire depuis Charlemagne jusqu'a Louis XIII avec des notes par M. Beuchot*, 3 vols. (Paris: Werdet et Lequien Fils, 1829).

[8] In the Hindu creation story the first man and woman are Adimo (or Adima) and Heva. Brahma, as the first god in the *Trimurti*, is God in his aspect as creator of the universe. Originally Brahma, Vishnu, and Śiva were accorded equal veneration, but in modern-day India, Brahmanism has diminished in importance compared with Vaishnavism, Shaivism, and Shaktism (Tantrism). The concept of Brahma

belongs to that of *Ishvara*, that of a personal god as creator of the world, and is by no means to be confused with *Brahman*, the supreme nondual reality. Brahma is often depicted as having four faces and four arms that hold such symbols as the texts of the *Vedas* and prayer beads (Schuhmacher and Woerner, *Encyclopedia of Eastern Philosophy and Religion*, 43).

[9] Georges Louis Leclerc Buffon, *Histoire naturelle, générale et particulière* (Paris: F. Dufart, 1800), 102.

[10] Ronald Grimsley, *Sur l'origine du langage: Maupertius, Turgot, Maine de Biran, suive de trois text*s (Geneva: Droz S. A., 1971), 4.

[11] Pierre-Louis Moreau de Maupertius, *Œuvres de Maupertius* (Lyon: Jean-Marie Bruyset, 1768), 1:263. Please note that many of the accents are missing in Maupertius's text.

[12] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Œuvres complètes*, ed. Bernard Gagnebin and Marcel Raymond, 5 vols. (Paris: Gallimard, 1959–95), 5:381.

[13] Michèle Duchet, *Anthropologie et Histoire au siècle des lumières: Buffon, Voltaire, Rousseau, Hélvetius, Diderot* (Paris: François Maspero, 1971), 329–35.

[14] See Mitter, *Much Maligned Monsters*, 190.

[15] Antoine Yves Goguet, *De l'origine des loix, des arts, et des sciences; et de leurs progress chez les anciens peoples*, 3 vols. (Paris: Desaint and Sallant, 1759), 1:126–32, 2:126.

[16] Suzanne Marchand, *Down from Olympus: Archaeology and Philhellenism in Germany, 1750–1970* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1996), 9.

[17] See Mitter, *Much Maligned Monsters*, for a longer discussion of European travelers' and Orientalists' impressions of these temples.

[18] Mitter, *Much Maligned Monsters*, 106.

# 2: Seeds of Romantic Indology: From Language to Nation

> *None that lives dares pit itself in the over-bold contest against the German language! It is, so that short-lived I may go, with its legendary strength, from primeval diversity, to the ever newer, and yet German expression is enough; It is, as we ourselves were in those grey years, when Tacitus researched us, separate, unblended, and equal only to itself.*
>
> — Friedrich Gottlieb Klopstock, "Unsere Sprache" (1785)

A CULT OF THE GERMAN LANGUAGE and mythology rose up around Klopstock's poetry in the 1780s and '90s, but classical mythology retained devotees such as Winckelmann, Goethe, and Gotthold Ephraim Lessing. The possibility of a poetic vision as subjective as Klopstock's had been presented in literature by Goethe a decade earlier, and in philosophy by Immanuel Kant still earlier. The subject of this chapter is the role of such subjectivity within a wider vision of the universe beyond the human senses. It will address three developments in German thought that foreshadowed the appropriation of Hindu and Buddhist ideas by the German Romantics: Herder's proto-nationalism and Indophilia, Fichte's extreme philosophical subjectivity, and the linguistic discoveries and theories of early French and English India scholars such as Abraham Hyacinthe Anquetil-Duperron and William Jones.

## Anthropology from a Metaphysical Point of View: Kant and Herder

Johann Gottfried Herder would become known less for explicitly elaborating on Kant's transcendental idealism than for expanding his theories about the Himalayan origin of post-diluvian human beings. He also developed Klopstock's cult of the German language by drawing upon a by then widespread interest in mythology and helping to awaken national traditions and feelings throughout central Europe. Intellectual historians such as Richard Wolin have argued that the German cultural *Sonderweg*, or "particular path," started with Herder.[1] That is to say, many of the prob-

lematic aspects of the formation of a modern German identity that became familiar in the West in the twentieth century can be found in a fledgling, if also different, form in the writings of Herder.[2] His influence on the youth culture of the *Sturm und Drang* period (1770s–80s), which, like that of the *Humanisten*, emphasized the nobility and emotion of the ideal German man, affected the Romanticism of youth throughout Europe well into the twentieth century. The 1770s would see the emergence of the *Sturm und Drang* group, including Herder, Goethe, and Schiller, in whose writings the German Romantics would find the kernels of many of their own ideas.

Herder envisioned a new kind of literature that was passionate, spiritually edifying, and emphasized the power of the young against the strictures of an oppressively paternalistic society. In 1770 in Strasbourg, he encouraged the young Johann Wolfgang von Goethe to write his profoundly influential *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers* (The Sorrows of Young Werther, 1774), which was received by German society as both sacrilegious and socially subversive. In the novel Werther identifies himself with Christ but takes no comfort in this identification and does not acknowledge the idea that Christ's sacrifice brought salvation to his believers. He then romantically — perhaps nihilistically — commits suicide. Goethe's book supposedly provided one of the spurs for a spate of young male suicides that would affect many of Romanticism's protagonists. This rupture with traditional society — the revolt against paternal authority through the idealization of youth — proved in some ways more severe than the disruption of the young students who had championed Tacitus's vision of the Goths in the fifteenth century.[3] The rebels of the 1770s believed that the *Aufklärung* that had begun fifty years earlier had failed by depriving man of his soul, religion of its meaning, and German culture of its ability to establish itself on a global stage. Young Germans seemed to feel that the establishment of the true national state was imminent, despite the misguided pursuits of their present context, and thus strove to transfer the relationships they saw in nature into the arena of politics by looking forward, into nature outside man, rather than back at an imagined human past. The *Sturm und Drang* group seems to represent, therefore, the first dramatic modern manifestation of youthful rebellion and conflict between generations in Germany, founded on anxiety about the relationship between modernity, emerging nationalism, and nature.

Trained as a military physician, Goethe's and Herder's collaborator Friedrich Schiller attempted to locate this path to nature in his now almost entirely lost master's dissertation *Philosophie der Physiologie* (Philosophy of Physiology, 1779). Its main ideas were likely to have been repeated in the work *Über den Zusammenhang der tierischen Natur des Menschen mit seiner geistigen* (On the Connection between the Animal and the Spiritual Nature of Man, 1780), in which Schiller argued that the universe is a

divine work of art and that man's destiny is to achieve enlightened perfection.[4] He argued in his essays on the aesthetics of tragedy that what is most important in art is that the pleasure we take from the beautiful, pathetic, and sublime strengthen our moral sentiments, an idea that the Romantics would take up. More importantly for questions of Indian studies, however, is the fact that both the *Sturm und Drang* and their successors the Early Romantics would find a path forward to nature in the work of Herder, our first true "Indo-German."

The atmosphere of Herder's youth was pious, and he would eventually become a Lutheran pastor. He spent much of his time in isolation reading such authors as Klopstock, Lessing, and Heinrich von Kleist, who he later said inspired in him nationalistic feelings. He was also influenced by his twenty-year friendship with the theologian, linguist, and historian Johann Georg Hamann, who was devotedly interested in mysticism. Hamann argued in *Sokratische Denkwürdigkeiten* (Socratic Memorabilia, 1759) that one must eschew the epistemological dichotomy between subject and object, for knowledge, he felt, can never be absolutely certain, nor can it fall prey to complete skepticism.[5] He thought that neither idealism nor realism adequately explains human beings' relationship to the world, for both put too much stock in language. Hamann thus rejected the oppositional debates of his era in favor of an integrated view of the relationship between the human and the divine. As mentor to Herder, Hamann also opened the way for Herder's study of folk poetry and Shakespeare and, perhaps most crucially, helped imbue him with a defensive stance in favor of emotion, which he felt the rationalism of the Enlightenment had viciously attacked.

The pluralist vision of Hamann, Kant, and Herder, which accepts the fundamental irreconcilability of cultural values and their ineradicable conflicts with rationalism, would come to be called the Counter-Enlightenment by some twentieth-century historians such as Isaiah Berlin, while others, such as Jacques Barzun, would see them as merely an extension of Enlightenment arguments.[6] Regardless of which side of the argument one falls on, both of these countervailing aspects of the period are exemplified in Herder's *Auch eine Philosophie der Geschichte zur Bildung der Menschheit* (Another Philosophy of History Concerning the Development of Mankind, 1774). Here he launched a bitter tirade against the idea of "cosmopolitanism," a term that would be appropriated by the Nazi regime, and provided the philosophical foundation for the *Sturm und Drang* to the extent that there was one. He argued against the idea that civilization develops uniformly and insisted that the *Volk* is the source of all truth, just as he had insisted in "Abhandlung über den Ursprung der Sprache" (Essay on the Origin of Language, 1772) that human nature is the source of all language.

As important as Hamann was to the formation of Herder's ideas about nationality, Kant was a tremendous influence on his ideas about India.

While studying theology at Königsberg between 1762 and 1764, Herder attended Kant's lectures on metaphysics, ethics, logic, mathematics, and physical geography. He was apparently quite taken with Kant's lectures on geography, which may account for much of his later interest in the physical environment, which he considered the chief factor in the development of national peculiarities.[7] Under Kant's tutelage Herder read Leibniz, Locke, and Isaac Newton, gleaning from them a keen sense of the divide between rationalism and spirituality. As one of Kant's favorite students, Herder to some extent also shared with his mentor the introduction into Germany of the new ideas of Hume and, most importantly, Rousseau. By the mid-1780s, however, Herder would develop into one of Kant's most public rivals in attempting to supplant philosophy with anthropology.

A much more staid man, Kant, perhaps ironically, fueled Herder's fervent fascination with the study of Himalayan cultures. Like several of his contemporaries, Kant shared one of Buffon's most essential views — that the first society had arisen east of the Caspian Sea around 30,000 B.C. Kant's imagination was captivated by this idea, which appeared in successive translations and travelers' tales, and he modified Bailly's popular astronomical theory by placing the origin of mankind in Tibet. He tried to connect Manichaeism with Hinduism by arguing that the Sanskrit mantra "O mani padme hum," the famous prayer for the end of all suffering, associated with Avalokitesvara, the bodhisattva of compassion, was related to Mani's prayers for escape from embodiment.[8] He also equated Adam and Abraham with Adimo and Brahma, as Voltaire had before him. As John H. Zammito notes, Kant also elaborated on a theory of epigenesis (the process by which genetic information, modified by environmental influences, becomes part of the substance and behavior of an organism) taken from Buffon, applying it to human races, together with a meta-theory of natural history and the regulative use of teleology in the life sciences: "Kant's interest in the questions of biological generation and their metaphysical implications was clear already in his *One Possible Basis* [*for a Demonstration of the Existence of God*] of 1762, if not even earlier in his Universal Natural History (1755)."[9] The latter of these had a deep impact on Herder's historical thinking, as Nicholas A. Germana has argued,[10] for it is one of the sources of Herder's assumption (although he was not the first to make it) that earlier historical stages of collective human life were analogous to earlier stages in human individuals — that is to say, that India represented the childhood of humanity, as Friedrich Majer would state.

In *Anthropologie in pragmatischer Hinsicht abgefaßt* (Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View, 1798), Kant further argued that innate, natural character had its seat in the composition of human blood, and that therefore the mingling of stocks was not good for the human race.[11] At the same time, as he was an opponent of climatic determinism, he argued along with Voltaire that migrations of entire peoples resulted in no change

of character due to relocation. Though Kant merely rehashed prior prejudices by describing types of human beings, his anthropological impact — *à propos* the various relations of cognitive faculties and human types — should not be underestimated, as Wilhelm Muhlmann has emphasized.[12]

Kant's indelible anthropological mark was at first limited to a small number of thinkers, Herder most notable among them. Like Kant, Herder placed human origins in the Himalayas, as would many German thinkers until almost the end of the nineteenth century. However, Herder was the most influential in introducing Indophilia into the Germanic principalities and prompting the Early Romantics to affiliate Germans with India. Despite the fact that Herder was a devout Christian who considered the Bible to be the most accurate rendering of primordial poetic revelation, he felt, like Buffon, that India was the home of such a revelation, and that its original, perfected form had been lost.

Herder's deep love affair with India was also greatly fuelled by his reading of Rousseau, through whom he became imbued with a love of the natural and original, as well as a belief in an unalterable, authentic self.[13] Rousseau's *Discours sur les sciences et les arts* (1750) opens with a passage that is both a product of the Enlightenment and presages the Romantic critique of his age that was to come: that man can use reason to lift himself above himself, but what is even greater and more difficult is for man to "rentrer en soi, pour y étudier l'homme et connoître sa nature, ses devoirs et sa fin" (1:67; to return into himself, to study man and get to know his nature, his duties, and his end).

Under Hamann's influence, Herder subscribed to Rousseau's idea of the artificiality of the culture of his age, and thereafter endeavored to bring his generation back to a life founded on the laws of nature as he conceived of them. Herder viewed man as distinctly more elevated than animals; however, unlike Rousseau, he specifically excluded the ape from the species man. While Rousseau's anthropology found man more independent than most other species, Herder ascribed dependency to nature. As far as he was concerned, the workings of nature caused the formation of human groups.

Herder's anthropology would thus prove quite different from that of his immediate predecessors and contemporaries, and his *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit* (Outlines for a Philosophy of the History of Mankind; 1784–91) was in fact a critique of biological science. He considered his *Ideen* the most important work of his life, and, though incomplete, it contains the fullest development of his idea of nationality as well as his philosophy of history. In her multi-volume portrait of Germany *De l'Allemagne* (Of Germany, 1813), Germaine de Staël understatedly refers to Herder's *Ideen* as "peut-être le livre allemand écrit avec le plus de charme" (perhaps the German book written with the most charm).[14] More importantly, Herder's publisher said of the *Ideen* that by the time the

fourth volume was issued, the ideas of the first volumes were already so deeply ingrained in the minds of Germans that they were largely and frequently misappropriated.[15] Indeed, the interpretation of Herder's works would change dramatically during the course of the next century, and Herder's argument that national peoples had to be studied within their geographical and historical contexts would be erroneously interpreted as a "racial truth" and used to justify racial discrimination.

In the *Ideen* Herder rejected the genealogy of Germans that traces them to the biblical Japheth in favor of the possibility of an Ogygian Perso-Indian mountain region, as had Kant. Like many empirical thinkers of the time, Herder looked beyond the conventional Noachian genealogy and the idea of Adam as a common father to the tradition that placed the origin of Europeans in the fabulous Orient. He argued that it was already known with certainty, based on linguistic and historiographical evidence, that tribes such as the Goths, Gauls, and Celts came from Asia. He describes the gentleness of these tribes' ancestors:

> Auf den tibetanischen Bergen herrscht die älteste Hierokratie der Erde, und die Kasten der Hindus verraten durch die eingewurzelte Macht, die dem sanftesten Volk seit Jahrtausenden zur Natur geworden ist, ihre uralte Einrichtung.
>
> [The most ancient hierarchy upon Earth reigns on the mountains of Tibet: and the castes of the Hindoos indicate their primeval establishment, from the deep-rooted power, which has been for ages a second nature to the gentlest of people.][16]

Herder then avers that Western mythology is descended from earlier Asian stories:

> Alle Sagen der Europäer und Afrikaner (bei welchen ich immer Ägypten ausnehme), . . . sind nichts als verlorne Bruchstücke junger Märchen gegen jene Riesengebäude alter Kosmogonien in Indien, Tibet, dem alten Chaldäa und selbst dem niedrigern Ägypten: zerstreute Laute der verirreten Echo gegen die Stimme der asiatischen Urwelt, die sich in die Fabel verlieret. (270)
>
> [All the mythologies of the Europeans and Africans, from whom I exclude the Egyptians, . . . are but scattered fragments of ancient cosmogony in India, Tibet, the old Chaldea, and even in the much inferior Egypt; but confused sounds of an evanescent echo from the voice of the primitive Asiatic world, losing itself in fiction. (396)]

Herder then turns to the work of Goguet as proof of the antiquity of Asian arts and sciences.

It is in the area of language, however, that he pointed out the superiority of Asian thought over that of any other region. Herder made no dis-

tinction between the Near and Far East, and thus extolled the merits of Arabic as an Asian language:

> Ein unermeßlicher Reichtum von Begriffen geht z. B. in der fortgebildeten arabischen Sprache an wenige Wurzeln zusammen, so daß das Flickwerk der meisten europäischen Sprachen mit ihren unnützen Hülfsworten und langweiligen Flexionen sich nie mehr verrät, als wenn man sie mit den Sprachen Asiens vergleichet. Daher fallen diese auch, je älter sie sind, dem Europäer zu lernen schwer; denn er muß den nutzlosen Reichtum seiner Zunge aufgeben und kommt in ihnen wie zu einer feindurchdachten, leisegeregelten Hieroglyphik der unsichtbaren Gedankensprache. (265)
>
> [In the polished Arabic language, for example, an infinite copiousness of ideas is composed from a few roots; so that the patchwork of most European languages, with their useless auxiliaries and tedious inflexions, cannot be more strikingly displayed, than by comparing them with the languages of Asia. Hence, too, these are difficult for a European to learn in proportion to their age; for he must relinquish the useless riches of his own tongue, when he approaches their finely conceived and deeply regulated hieroglyphic of the invisible language of thought. (390–91)]

Finally, after stating that writing itself was invented in Asia, Herder turns our attention to William Jones's commentary on Asian poetry (to be treated later in this chapter) and concurs that the most ancient poetry of South Asia displays the most divine simplicity and nobility. Herder thus found Asia to be nothing less than the seat of humanity's first civilization, its hierarchies, mythologies, languages, and forms of writing.

Herder constantly accentuates the word "humanity" for, as Robert Ergang has noted, he strove in his work to articulate how humanity would develop (72) although he had great difficulty in clearly defining what he meant. As for Hamann, Herder believed humanity was too much a matter of feeling to be explained through reason. Contrary to popular definition, humanity seemed to be that which is divine in man, and the purpose of human existence to be the development of our highest characteristics. Herder argued that the individual could achieve the fullest development and the most complete expression of his virtues and talents only as an integral part of a group — in particular, the national group. As opposed to Rousseau, who felt that the Enlightenment had revealed an insuperable barrier between nature and culture (which is why his "natural man" had to remain hypothetical), Herder found the process of the development of culture to be the antithesis of the social contract, for he found nations to be derived from nature itself. This affiliation between "nature" and "nation" would prove vital to nineteenth-century conceptions of South Asian culture, for ancient India

would be viewed through a Christian lens as the original home of natural, prelapsarian man.

In his philosophy of history, Herder regarded each nationality as an organic unit whose constituent parts are made up of various branches of culture, which create artifacts in a regulated way according to the dictates of the national "soul." For him the national soul expresses its individuality through its culture, which is like an individual character on the global stage. Therefore, the history of this individuality is composed of the cultural manifestations of its character: its laws, its art, its language, its religion. In contrast to Voltaire and Kant, Herder fell in line with Montesquieu and Winckelmann in constantly stressing the importance of physical environment for the development of cultural organisms although heredity, education, and contacts with other nations play important roles as well. He believed that each nationality has one ineffable particularity that speaks through its art, and that the inexpressible qualities that make nations unique are inalterable despite constant historical change.

As for Buffon, Herder thought that a people belonging to a geographical location and having specific racial characteristics always retained its immutable essence. Each *national* organism, however, matures over time, makes its contribution to the global culture, and then sinks into ossification, making way for others to pass through the same cycle. That is the say, while Indians retained something inexplicable that still made them Indians, their civilization had already peaked and was in decline, while the German civilization was only nearing its zenith. The doctrine of polygenesis did not explain the difference among cultures for Herder, because his research into the languages, customs, technological advances, and traditions of other nations appeared to prove that all men originated in one and the same race. He was thus opposed to all attempts to divide mankind into races, for that would denote differences of origin. To him, the history of mankind is a succession of national organisms that continually express themselves in response to the circumstance of their time and place.

In Herder one finds not just a mixture of Rousseau, Hamann, and Kant, but also of fomenting ideas such as the relationship between geography and racial characteristics, the primacy of emotions over ratiocination, and a wider, spiritual humanity originally linked to India. These sorts of theories linking Germany to India, however, as well as pronouncements emphasizing Germany's superiority over its neighbors, would continue to proliferate at the end of the eighteenth century. Tuska Benes notes, "An organic theory of language with roots in Pietistic theology encouraged this brand of ethnocultural nationalism. The nation in Germany was first a religious concept before it was secularized by the generation of philologists who followed Herder."[17] Herder himself, however, stayed within the universalist bounds of the Enlightenment, maintaining that all peoples, not merely Germans, should be encouraged to discover and develop their own

capacities and opposing the idea that Germans were a chosen nationality. What distinguishes human autonomy, he argued (drawing on Hamann), is its capacity for meaning, for which the use of language is crucial, and no rationalist account of language is adequate to capture that sense of meaning.

We may perhaps call Kant a "proto-Indo-German," for he presented to Herder and to intellectual history the building blocks of the Indo-German identification: an assignation of human origins to India, an early anthropology of national stocks, and an extension of the Cartesian-Spinozan emphasis on subjectivity. Herder brought all of this together, and the now two-thousand-year history of European ideas about India would become a true Indo-mania in the minds of the generation to follow the *Sturm und Drang*: the *Frühromantik*.

## The Dangers of Subjectivity: Jacobi and Fichte

While diverse strains of metaphysical and anthropological thought came together in Herder's *Ideen*, not all of his successors embraced all of their components. He was the precursor of figures such as the idealist philosopher Johann Gottlieb Fichte, who regarded nationality as the product of an irresistible natural force ceaselessly at work molding the members of a group into a unit with coherent characteristics, but Fichte did not share Kant's and Herder's Indophilia. His *Reden an die deutsche Nation* (Addresses to the German Nation, 1808) stressed the cultivation of native endowments in the face of the Napoleonic invasion. He would first, however, prove influential on the Early Romantics because of his brand of transcendental idealism.

In 1785 Herder became embroiled in a controversy over the supposed pantheism inherent in Spinoza's metaphysics. This began when Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, a prominent Protestant minister as well as a critic, supposedly confessed on his deathbed to the philosopher Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi that he was a pantheistic Spinozist, which Jacobi took to mean that he was an atheist. Jacobi had just published *Briefe über die Lehre des Spinoza* (Letters on the Teaching of Spinoza), a work strongly objecting to a dogmatic system in philosophy. Instead, Jacobi advocated for faith and revelation, which he took to be rational.

Judiac scholar Moses Mendelssohn, of the Berlin clique, denied the occurrence of this confession and denounced Jacobi as an enemy of reason. Herder upheld this pantheistic heresy as true, which is to say that he maintained that Spinozism was theistic, while Jacobi held that it was materialistic. The "Pantheismusstreit" (Pantheism Controversy), as it came to be called, thus questioned the apparent disjunction between human freedom and any systematic philosophical interpretation of reality. Jacobi ignited

further controversy in 1787 when, in *David Hume über den Glauben, oder Idealismus und Realismus* (David Hume on Belief, or Idealism and Realism), he scrutinized Kant's new critical philosophy and subjected his ideas about knowledge and things-in-themselves to searching criticism. He argued that the belief in things-in-themselves, the very building block of transcendental idealism, was incompatible with the tenets of that philosophy.

Jacobi's criticisms colored the efforts of post-Kantians — such as Karl Leonhard Reinhold, Gottlob Ernst Schulze, and Fichte — in working the kinks out of transcendental idealism. Fichte understood Kant as a continuation of the subjectivist strain of modern thought that had been initiated by Descartes' individualism and given wider social significance by Rousseau's social consciousness. He was a proponent of a constantly evolving system of transcendental idealism that he called the "Wissenschaftslehre," the "Doctrine of Science," although the implication was that he meant all forms of knowledge.

Inspired by Jacobi, Reinhold, and Schulze, in the lectures and writings he produced while he was a professor at the University at Jena between 1794 and 1799, Fichte rejected the "letter" of Kantianism and advanced a new, rigorously systematic presentation of what he took to be its "spirit." By dispensing with Kant's things-in-themselves and by emphasizing the unity of the theory and practice of reason, he sought to establish the unity of critical philosophy as well as of human experience. While Fichte was not interested in affiliations between the Germanic states and India, his extreme subjectivity, which borders on solipsism, played a key role in the development of post-Kantian philosophy. More importantly, his "Wissenschaftslehre" is directly significant in the Indo-German story, for many of the early German Romantics would be students of Fichte, and his philosophy would be one of the catalysts for their eventual rejection of South Asian philosophy on nihilist grounds.

But first Fichte's philosophy created a dialogue with Jacobi's ideas. In an open letter to Fichte in 1799, Jacobi criticized transcendental idealism as "nihilism." As Michael Allen Gillespie notes, the term "nihilism" had already been applied to transcendental idealism in *Versuche über die Grundsätze der Metaphysik der Sitten des Herrn Prof. Kant* (Experiments on the Principles of Metaphysics in the Morals of Prof. Kant, 1796), a critique by Lutheran minister Daniel Jenisch.[18] A student of Hamann and Kant in Königsberg, Jenisch's accusation of nihilism was directed not at Kant, but at more extreme Kantians who argued that things-in-themselves are beyond human cognition, and that human existence is without objective goals, meaning, comprehensible truth, or essence of any value. Jacobi then attempted to develop the term "nihilism" into a concept, stating in a letter to Fichte: "Wahrlich, mein lieber Fichte, es soll mich nicht verdrießen, wenn Sie, oder wer es sei, Chimärismus nennen wollen, was ich

dem Idealismus, den ich Nihilismus schelte, entgegensetze" (Truly, my dear Fichte, it should not grieve me if you, or whoever it might be, want to call chimerism what I oppose to idealism, which I reproach as nihilism).[19] "Chimerism" was how idealists characterized Jacobi's own philosophy of "non-knowing," feeling that in his system every decision was left up to individual inclination.

Conversely, according to Jacobi, idealism is the philosophy of mere appearances, like the world of the unenlightened figure in Plato's cave, and thus is empty, much like Winckelmann's denigration of ornament in Asian art. Jacobi argued that in idealism man has only the choice between God and nothing and, by choosing nothing, makes himself God. Jacobi thus emphasized the distinction between the recognition that God is outside man and the deification of man. His criticisms of reason and of science in conjunction with those of Herder would profoundly influence German Romanticism, fostering skepticism toward the empirically "proven." They would also, however, establish the idea that the view that human beings cannot "know" the noumenal realm constitutes nihilism.

Gillespie argues that one can see in Jacobi's critique of idealism the beginnings of the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century ideal of nihilism, which he postulates as growing out of the notion of the infinite will that Fichte had located in the thought of Descartes and Kant (64–67). This is a difficult line to draw since — the 1860s Russian context aside — nihilism has been more often a charge leveled against a particular idea than a position to which one overtly subscribes. Fichte felt that the Enlightenment's varying concept of reason was inadequate to grasp the infinite essence of the embodied human spirit, and therefore attempted to demonstrate that one cannot understand subjective experience in the same way as one understands the objective world. Thus, in place of Jacobi's faith as a replacement for the supposed *reductio ad absurdum* of Kantian idealism, for Fichte the key problem to be solved in completing the system that Kant had begun was the problem of self-authorization.

This problem has been characterized as the "Kantian paradox": that we are responsible only for acting in accordance with the norms that we ourselves authorize. Fichte concluded that the core distinction between subject and object is not devoid of meaning but is subjectively established. It is a subject-imposed distinction based on norms, as he felt Kant himself should have seen. For Fichte, Kant's dualism was unacceptable; reason must be a unity of the "I" and the "Not-I" — that is, of both the individual human subject and the objective world. Both of these, in Fichte's view, are expressions of the unhindered movement of the "absolute I," of an infinite will that is as much a prime mover for humanity as it is for divinity. This, in a sense, is the exact opposite of nihilism.

Fichte asserted that subjectivity comes into existence as one acts, a view that would cause much difficulty for the Early Romantics, who would

encounter Sanskrit texts in which action is the means of overcoming the self. For Fichte the subject has no imminent "self," no incomprehensible thing that is responsible for it. Its subjectivity is the result of the norms it institutes and their inherent acceptability. Negation arises from recognizing what is normatively unacceptable, as in works such as Goethe's *Werther* and the youth movements they may engender. Fichte argued that everything that has been said to exist is merely "posited" by acting subjects who determine norms, and that what we ultimately believe to exist is determined by which set of inferences we find to be necessary to make the most sense of our actions.

Fichte's notion of "positing" was thus similar to Descartes' notion of "willing," and the idea of the *Wille* would come to be of prime importance for post-Kantian German philosophers, particularly Schopenhauer. Unlike Cartesianism, however, Fichte's striving to demonstrate that the "Not-I" is an expression of the "absolute I" aimed not merely at overcoming and subordinating nature, but also at overcoming the empirical "I" of every individual, which is more reminiscent of Spinozism. This idea would be taken up by his successors, such as Schelling, as an affirmation of the necessity to subordinate passions in an effort to integrate the personal absolute with the impersonal absolute, as Schelling would determine is stated explicitly in the *Bhagavadgītā*.

Fichte felt that Kant had shown that reason cannot comprehend any object in order to solve the problem of self-authorization. He proposed, elliptically, that the only basis for self-authorization is human beings' autonomy as subjectively authorizing beings — that is to say, that autonomy must be understood as a basic norm of human action, not as a metaphysical fact about an object beyond human cognition. His introduction to *Der Grundlage des Naturrechts* (Foundation of Natural Right; 1796–97) begins by stating, "a finite rational being cannot posit itself without ascribing a free efficacy to itself."[20] In choosing to see self-authorization as about social behavior rather than metaphysics, Fichte had therefore taken the fatal step of eliminating the "Not-I," the noumenal realm, altogether and thus brought together metaphysics and nationalism.

In the thought of Fichte one sees the move away from the coexistence of humanity and nature/divinity toward the assertion of human freedom as absolute and the argument that the objective need not exist. Fichte ignored the Spinozistic arguments and identified the noumenal realm with that of the will. The subject strives to subordinate the objective within itself in an effort to attain absolute being. Of prime importance for the Romantics about Fichte's conception of will was that its goal was absolute liberation and that its primordial character was longing for this liberation. The same longing is a key element in the medieval Hindu dramas *Abhijñānaśākuntalam* and *Gitagovinda* that would so enthrall Novalis and Schelling.

Thus Fichte radicalized this notion of the will in a way that would have been unacceptable to Descartes, Spinoza, and Kant, transforming the emphasis on the subject into a will that actually creates nature rather than harnesses it. As Michael Allen Gillespie points out, in the end Fichte rejected the Enlightenment notion of reason in favor of an absolute subjectivism that attempts to derive all reason from the infinite will of the "absolute I" (99).

Fichte's "Wissenschaftslehre" might prove to be a key source of many of the tendencies that would develop into the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century ideals of nihilism, but it is the application of the seeds of subjectivity and rebellion planted by the *Sturm und Drang* and post-Kantian idealism to the study of Sanskrit literature that would prove decisive for the Indo-German story, for it would help to transform the materialism-alleviating philosophies of India into systems of negation in the minds of some such as Schelling and Friedrich Schlegel.

The rise to prominence of the Indian model of European origin would be aided by Winckelmann's neo-Hellenism, for as this took hold in Germany, ancient Egyptian culture came to be seen — negatively — as African. The shift would contribute to the replacement of the Judeo-Egyptian model of European ancestry in the last quarter of the eighteenth century by the Indian model, as the importance of blood and language eclipsed that of the transmission of philosophical and scientific reason.

Another major contributing factor was the arrival in Europe of texts translated from Sanskrit. The period between 1750 and 1830 saw the rise of the comparative study of religion, a great expansion in archeology performed by Europeans abroad, and the explosion of the modern science of philology. This influx of new sources and the diffusion of knowledge of Indian religious literature in Europe would be described in 1803 by Friedrich Schlegel as the Second Renaissance — an "*orientalisches Renaissance.*"

## Discovering the *Ursprache:* Anquetil-Duperron and Jones

The translation of Indian religious literature into European languages began with traveler and lauded Orientalist Abraham Hyacinthe Anquetil-Duperron, who arrived in India in 1754. It was more than twenty years, however, before he published his translations from Sanskrit.[21] Anquetil-Duperron first received attention in 1771 for his translation *Zend-Avesta, Ouvrage de Zoroastre.*[22] It ignited a revolution in the study of language, for not only did the translation lay the foundation of comparative philology, it was also the first European translation of a religious text not to take the

biblical scriptures as its point of departure. Like Herodotus, Anquetil-Duperron used the term "Aryan" to designate a bellicose people who supposedly descended into the Indian subcontinent from Persia. Less sensational than his translation of the *Zend-Avesta* but perhaps more crucial for the purposes of this study because of its considerable influence the on German Romantics was Anquetil-Duperron's subsequent translation of the Hindu *Upanishads* into Latin in 1804.[23]

The *Upanishads* were first translated into Persian in the seventeenth century for, or possibly by, Dara Shukoh, the eldest son of Shah Jehan, the ruler of the Mughal empire from 1628 to 1658. Dara Shukoh was a prince who upheld the liberal religious tenets of the Mughal emperor Akbar and attempted to reconcile the religious doctrines of Hinduism and Islam. He seems first to have heard of the *Upanishads* during his stay in Kashmir in 1640, afterwards inviting pandits to Delhi to help translate the work. Once this was finished in 1657, the *Upanishads* became generally accessible to those who took an interest in the religions of India, since at that time Persian was the most widely read language of the East.

Even though Persian was understood by many European scholars, the translations prepared under Dara Shukoh did not attract their attention until 1775, when Anquetil-Duperron received a manuscript of the Persian translation of the *Upanishads* from the French naturalist and astronomer Guillaume Le Gentil de la Galasière, a resident at the court of Vizier Shuja ud daula. After obtaining a second Persian manuscript of the work, Anquetil-Duperron collated the two and translated the Persian translation into Latin and French. The latter was not published but the Latin translation was in 1801–2 under the cumbersome title *Oupnek'hat, id est, Secretum tegendum: opus ipsa in India rarissimum,* . . . In the notes to *Oupnek'hat*, the title by which is it more commonly known, Anquetil-Duperron compared the *Upanishads* to the system of Kant, for he understood the text as attributing all material things to things-in-themselves. Due to Anquetil-Duperron, the philosophy of the *Upanishads* would until the 1930s be attributed to the so-called Aryans.

There were dozens of influential travelers to India in the last quarter of the eighteenth century. Le Gentil, who journeyed there in 1760 and published the results of his eight years of research there in 1779, managed to capture the attention of Voltaire. As Charles Allen points out, he was the first traveler to the French territories of Asia to present a consistent account of Hindu astronomy and to realize the extent to which Gautama Buddha was worshipped there (49). While Le Gentil thought that Indian art deserved more respect from Europeans — he felt it was at least as antique as the art of the Egyptians — both he and Anquetil-Duperron agreed about its lack of design. He remarked on the similarity of Gothic and Indian architecture and statuary and described it as funerary and barbaric.[24] Both writers, however, were fascinated with mythology,

a preoccupation vital to the transition from the Enlightenment to Romanticism.

Initial European visitors to India were ignorant about Hindu mythologies, and this led them to put forward fantastic suggestions that Mitter argues grew out of the tradition of considering Hindu deities as monsters. To be sure, Hindu and Buddhist iconography is complex and, considering these limitations, some European accounts, such as that of Carsten Niebuhr, were not so wildly off the mark. Niebuhr was the only survivor of a scientific expedition to the East Indies sponsored by the Danish court and the University at Göttingen. His *Reisebeschreibung nach Arabien und andern umliegenden Ländern* (Description of Travels in Arabia and Other Surrounding Lands, 1774–78) supported Le Gentil's claims that India possessed a culture as extensive and ancient as that of Egypt. Niebuhr studied the historical backgrounds of the three major Indian faiths — Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism — in an effort to understand their mythologies more fully.[25] (Sikhism had yet to become a prominent force in India.) As Mitter notes, Niebuhr placed the sculptures of the caves at Elephanta on a scale of value: they were not as beautiful as Greek and Romans statues, but far superior in design to Egyptians ones (112).

A few years later, celebrated traveler and natural historian Pierre Sonnerat published one of the most detailed and well-illustrated accounts of Hindu religion and mythology, *Voyage aux Indes Orientales* (Journey to the East Indies, 1782). An early and fervent believer that ancient Indian civilization was the cradle of humanity and in the diffusionistic origins of religion, Sonnerat had a tremendous impact on his generation in France. Just as neo-Hellenist art historians such as Winckelmann had strongly linked Greek art with Greek social ideas, Sonnerat's view of Indian art was colored by his view of contemporary Indian society. While Winckelmann was overwhelmingly positive about Greek achievements, Sonnerat was mostly negative about Indian ones. He felt that in India, and in Asia generally, the arts had made little or no progress since the early centuries of their existence because of the oppressive climate, a sort of indigenous conservatism, and the repressive regimes of despots.

Other travelers, particularly English ones, found that the statuary in the Indian cave temples depicted a range of emotion rarely found in classical European sculpture. The growing interest in the aesthetics of the colossal — an essential ingredient in Burke's conception of the sublime — drew attention to the temples. On a visit to the Elephanta caves in the early 1780s, surgeon and Orientalist William Hunter was struck by the representations in Indian statuary of the effects of emotions on the human physiognomy. As Mitter points out, Indian aesthetics traditionally attaches a great deal of importance to the role of a wide range of emotions and their treatment in literature and art (143–44). Hunter's praise of Indian sculpture to the Society of Antiquaries of London in a paper on the "Artificial

Caverns in the Neighbourhood of Bombay" (1784) was indicative of the way Indian sculpture was viewed in this period. English Romanticism stressed the successful delineation of emotions as the prime criterion of its art criticism, and Hunter lauded Hindu sculpture for its ability to do this. Hunter also argued that there was an evolution to be witnessed in Indian art reminiscent of the much-discussed doctrine of the "evolutionary" principle of development from the simple to the complex.

The Society of Antiquaries, in existence to this day, had been founded in 1707 to support "the encouragement, advancement, and furtherance of the study and knowledge of the antiquities and history of this and other countries."[26] Already by the 1780s, however, the essential function of the Society in disseminating knowledge of Indian antiquities in Europe was made redundant by the establishment of the Asiatick Society. The work of visionary William Jones, later knighted for his efforts, it was founded in 1784, the year after his arrival in India, and was renamed the Asiatic Society of Bengal in 1835. Jones was romantic by temperament and sensibility as is evident in his translations of Indian poetry that so impressed Herder. He would eventually and rightfully have a profound influence on the German Romantic movement.

Jones began his career as a Persian scholar, then became a lawyer. In 1768 he was asked to translate a Persian manuscript, a life of Nadir Shah, brought to England by King Christian VII of Denmark. In 1778 he was given the opportunity to travel to India when he was offered a seat on the bench of the newly established Supreme Court in Bengal, although he did not leave for India until 1783.

Two of Jones's acquaintances from Oxford, Charles Wilkins and Nathaniel Halhed, were working in India as clerks for the Bengal Establishment of the East India Company. Like Jones, they too had studied Persian and had recently hand-cast a Bengali typeface. Halhed then wrote and Wilkins published the first printed Indian language book, *Grammar of the Bengali Language* (1778). Before this, Brahmin pandits had snubbed the two enterprising Orientalists when they inquired into the sacred Hindu texts to which only that high caste was privy. As Allen points out, although the keeping of these Sanskrit texts, purported to be in the language of the gods, was their sacred duty and the seat of their power as a class, the pandits relented due to the positive impression made on them by Wilkins's press (48).

When Jones arrived in India, Wilkins was working on a new project, a translation of a section of a Sanskrit epic supposedly many times longer than Homer's *Iliad*.[27] Jones himself believed that there must exist close analogies between Greco-Latin and Hindu mythology, as had been postulated between Dionysus and Śiva since the time of Megasthenes' *Indica*. The epic from which Wilkins was translating was the *Bhagavad Gītā*, an extract of the *Mahabharata*.[28] East India Company Governor-General

Warren Hastings said of Wilkins's translation that it was "of a theology accurately corresponding with that of the Christian disposition, and most powerfully illustrating its fundamental doctrines," referring to the belief among many Orientalists that the Hindu *Trimurti* corresponded directly to the Christian Trinity.[29]

In 1785 ill health required Wilkins to return to England, but Jones succeeded in getting a retired Hindu physician, pandit Ramlochan Cantaberna, to teach him Sanskrit, and he learned it well. In February 1786, in his famous "Third Anniversary Discourse" at the Asiatick Society, Jones declared Sanskrit to be of a structure

> "more perfect than the Greek, more copious than the Latin, and more exquisitely refined than either." Furthermore, he had made a remarkable discovery: that Sanskrit had an obvious kinship with Greek and Latin. Not only was there a common vocabulary for many words, most strikingly in numerals and such nouns of common relationship as the word mother (in Sanskrit *mata*, in Latin *mater*, in Greek *mêtêr*), but all three languages shared the same system of grammar, the conjugation of verbs and nouns being distinguished by the characteristic features of gender, singular and plural, and declension. In sum, Sanskrit bore to Latin and Greek "a stronger affinity, both in the roots of verbs, and in the forms of grammar, than can possibly have been produced by accident; so strong, indeed, that no philologist could examine all three without believing them to have sprung from some common source." There was a similar reason for supposing that "both the Gothick and Celtick, though blended with a different idiom, had the same origin with Sanscrit; and the old Persian might be added to the same family."[30]

The relationship between different European and Asiatic words had attracted attention ever since India had become more readily accessible to Europeans. The Florentine merchant Filippo Sassetti had remarked upon similarities between Sanskrit and Italian in 1587; linguists Heinrich Roth and Johann Ernst Hanxleden had further explored Sassetti's observations in the seventeenth century; and a French Jesuit, Père Coeurdoux, devoted a long treatise to the issue in 1767. Jones himself believed that the first post-diluvian human race was Perso-Indian and spoke Sanskrit, and that the Egyptians, Ethiopians, Greeks, Romans, and Goths originally spoke the same language. In line with the Noachian genealogy that was still considered fundamental by many scholars, he went on to argue that these groups professed the same faith that derived from the common Edenic origin, finding the pre-Christian gods of Greece and Rome directly related to Hindu gods: Chronos was Brahma, Demeter was Vishnu, Zeus was Śiva, and so on. With regard to mythology and religion Jones was a diffusionist, arguing in his article "On the Gods of Greece, Italy, and India" (1785) that "Ethiopia and Hindustan were peopled or colonized by the

same extraordinary race."[31] It would be significant to the nineteenth century that in the late eighteenth the classical god most frequently identified with Śiva was Dionysus.

Jones found (or thought that he had found) not only the roots of classical Western mythology in Hinduism, but those of Christianity as well. He came to believe that Hinduism was the original common religion, even going so far as to say that Stonehenge is evidently one of the temples of "Boodh." In one of his wilder speculations, Jones thought that Gautama Buddha or "Boodh" was an Indian ruler who was born around 1027 B.C. in Ethiopia.

Francis Wilford, an East India Company Lieutenant of Engineers who became the third European to learn Sanskrit, would continue Jones's work and "prove" that Manu, the son of Brahma, was not Adima or Adam as Jones had suspected, but Noah. Poliakov points out that Jones's tragic death in 1794 at the age of forty-seven from a misdiagnosed tumor unfortunately robbed British Indian Studies of its leading mind in its formative period (191). Nevertheless, Jones is generally credited with having laid the foundations for the field of comparative philology with his formulation of the Indo-European language family, with the establishment of the Asiatick Society as the cornerstone of Indian studies, and with the translation of major Sanskrit texts, including the *Manusmriti, Abhijñānaśākuntalam*, the *Hitopadesha*, and the *Gitagovinda*.[32] He also was the first to establish a mid-point in Indian history from which other events could be charted: the reign of Chandragupta Maurya (ca. 322–ca. 298 B.C.), the king "Sandrokottos" of whom Megasthenes had told.

Though they were less significant than his contributions to philology, Jones also made pronouncements on art. He was an exponent of the evolutionary principle in art and held a deep appreciation for early Indian architecture and sculpture. These two facts led him to condemn the whole development of Hindu art as a corruption of earlier forms, in contrast to Hunter. Jones saw what he thought to be the older and simpler forms as preferable. This was to a large extent in keeping with an emerging Romantic consciousness among educated people in Germany which emphasized the simplicity of classical Greek and Gothic art over the supposed complexity of the Roman, as is evident in Winckelmann's praise of the Doric forms at Paestum.

Another impetus to the rise of archeology abroad would thus come from Romanticism. But costly journeys to distant lands lay beyond the means of most people, so more attention began to be paid to local antiquities. As with the German notion of the "migration of peoples" rather than the "barbarian invasions," Germans themselves were fuelling a revival of interest in Gothic architecture and German mythology as the emphasis on Germanic culture and values became more popular, witness Goethe's *Von deutscher Baukunst* (On German Architecture, 1772). But the accounts of

Frenchmen such as Le Gentil point indirectly to the low esteem in which the Gothic was generally held outside Germany.

Concurrently, the *Bhagavadgītā*, published by Jones in Calcutta in 1788, was igniting a fascination with India among certain — primarily young — German thinkers and writers, including the *Sturm and Drang* writers and the Early Romantics. In terms of interest in these texts *vis-à-vis* specifically German issues, Raymond Schwab says of the *Bhagavadgītā*'s impact on Germany: "nul texte plus irréstiblement que celui-là, par sa profondeur métaphysique, par le prestige aussi de son enveloppe poétique, ne pouvait rompre une dure tradition de race supérieure" (174; no text could, by its profound metaphysics and by the prestige of its poetic form, more irresistibly shake the hold of the tradition of a superior race). The French politician Jean Denis Lanjuinais wrote,

> On fut étonné de trouver, dans ces fragments d'un très ancien poème épique de l'Inde, avec le système de la métempsycoce, une brillante théorie de l'existence de Dieu et de l'immortalité de l'âme, tout le sublime de la doctrine des stoïciens, l'amour pur qui égara Fénelon, et un panthéisme tout spirituel, enfin la vision de tout en Dieu soutenue par le P. Malebranche. (174)
>
> [It was a great surprise to find among these fragments of an extremely ancient epic poem from India, along with the system of metempsychosis, a brilliant theory on the existence of God and the immortality of the soul, all the sublime doctrines of the Stoics, the pure love which bewildered Fénelon, a completely spiritual pantheism, and finally the vision of all-in-God upheld by Malebranche.]

To those who studied Sanskrit texts and Hindu philosophy closely, the differences were eventually marked. To those who only gleaned such contrasts through the later Orientalist vogue of the nineteenth century, however, the tradition of the superior race would persist.

Jones translated the *Gitagovinda* precisely to illustrate his thesis about the proximity of Indic and Pythagorean metempsychosis and of Hindu and Platonic mythology. This led some readers to decide that India was the original home of the philosophies of Spinoza and Berkeley, the latter of whom developed an idealist metaphysical system that he felt safeguarded against skepticism. The impact of these revelations would be strengthened by the subsequent publication of the *Upanishads* in 1804. Both Goethe and Herder had been seduced by the link with India when Kalidasa's *Abhijñānaśākuntalam* (A.D. 1st–4th century) appeared in a 1791 translation by ethnologist Georg Forster. Jones's translation of the play greatly impressed Goethe and would inspire composers such as Schubert to write operas based on it. The initial published translations of the British and French India scholars would thus emerge as follows: Wilkins's *Bhagvat-Geeta* (1785) and *Hitopadesha* (1787); Jones's *Gitagovinda* (1789),

*Abhijñānaśākuntalam* (1789), and *Manusmriti* (1794); and Anquetil-Duperron's *Oupnek'hat* (1801–2) and *Upanishads* (1804).

It is worth noting that the concept of India as the ancestress of all Europeans did not recommend itself greatly to the British, who tended not to think of themselves as particularly "Germanic" in the first place. The classic contempt for the "native" — that of the colonizer of an indigenous people — was certainly responsible for the unpopularity of the Indian affiliation. When reviewing the "new genealogies," in the case of the English a link could be found between the national attachment to the Bible and the scientific caution of such writers as Locke and Newton. This devotion to the Bible, which was just as lively in Victorian times and came to be known as "bibliolatry," led to disapproval of such ideas and research as overbold.

## Conclusion

Some intellectuals, such as Herder, saw Jones as providing linguistic evidence that Germany and India were intrinsically linked in a nebulous ancient past. Herder's nationalism provided the theory that a nation is driven in all respects by its own national spirit, whose contributions to world history and culture are governed only by one other factor: the cycles of history. Fichte's idealism provided a solipsistic rationalization of all behavior, opening the way for the justification of the most violent racial discrimination on nationalist grounds. These three intellectual developments were perhaps the most crucial precursors to the revolution that would come to be called German Romanticism.

## Notes

The epigraph at the start of this chapter is a prose translation of "Daß keine, welche lebt, mit Deutschlands Sprache sich / In den zu kühnen Wettstreit wage! / Sie ist, damit ichs kurz, mit ihrer Kraft es sage, / An mannigfalter Uranlage / Zu immer neuer, und doch deutscher Wendung reich; / Ist, was wir selbst in jenen grauen Jahren, / Da Tacitus uns forschte, waren, / Gesondert, ungemischt und nur sich selber gleich" (Friedrich Gottlieb Klopstock, *Ausgewählte Werke* [Munich: Carl Hanser, 1962], 182).

[1] Richard Wolin, e-mail to the author, 15 October 2004.

[2] Richard Wolin, *The Seduction of Unreason: The Intellectual Romance with Fascism — From Nietzsche to Postmodernism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 2004), 113–18. In this section Wolin specifically treats direct lines drawn in the 1930s and '40s between Herder and Adolf Hitler by the German literary guild, the Nazi party itself, and philosophers such as Hans-Georg Gadamer.

[3] See Joachim Whaley, "The Ideal of Youth in Late-Eighteenth-Century Germany," in *Generations in Conflict: Youth Revolt and Generation Formation in Germany, 1770–1968*, ed. Mark Roseman (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge UP, 2004): 47–68.
[4] See Gay Wilson Allen and Harry Hayden Clark, *Literary Criticism: Pope to Croce* (Detroit, MI: Wayne State UP, 1962), 147.
[5] Johann Georg Hamann, *Hamann's Socratic Memorabilia: A Translation and Commentary*, ed. and trans. James C. O'Flaherty (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins, 1967).
[6] Isaiah Berlin, *Three Critics of the Enlightenment: Vico, Hamann, Herder* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 2000), 26; Jacques Barzun, *Classic, Romantic, and Modern* (Boston, MA: Little, Brown, 1961), 6.
[7] Robert Reinhold Ergang, *Herder and the Foundations of German Nationalism* (New York: Octagon, 1966), 7. Ergang attributes this assertion to the autobiography of Herder's spouse Caroline.
[8] Helmut V. Glasenapp, *Das Indienbild deutscher Denker* (Stuttgart: K. F. Koehler, 1960), 12. Manichaeism is a syncretistic religion founded by the Babylonian prophet Mani (A.D. 216–77), who claimed a revelation from God and saw himself as a member of a line that included Gautama Buddha, Zoroaster, and Jesus Christ (Robert Audi, ed., *The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy* [Cambridge, UK: Cambridge UP, 1995], 460). *Om mani padme hum* means literally in Sanskrit: "OM, jewel in the lotus, hum." OM is the most comprehensive and venerable symbol of spiritual knowledge in Hinduism. It indicates form as well as sound, and symbolizes the physical, mental, and unconscious worlds within (Schuhmacher and Woerner, *Encyclopedia of Eastern Philosophy and Religion*, 255–56). A *bodhisattva* is literally in Sanskrit an "enlightenment being." In Mahayana Buddhism (which seeks enlightenment for all beings, not just the individual as in Hinayana Buddhism) a bodhisattva is a being who seeks Buddha-hood through the systematic practice of the perfect virtues but renounces complete entry into *nirvana* until all sentient beings are relieved from suffering (ibid., 39–40).
[9] John H. Zammito, *Kant, Herder, and the Birth of Anthropology* (Chicago: U Chicago P, 2002), 302.
[10] Nicholas A. Germana, "Herder's India: The 'Morgenland' in Mythology and Anthropology," in *The Anthropology of the Enlightenment*, ed. Larry Wolff and Marco Cipolloni (Stanford, CA: Stanford UP, 2007), 120.
[11] Immanuel Kant, *Sämtliche Werke*, 6 vols. (Leipzig: Leopold Voss, 1868), 1:522; and Kant, *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*, ed. and trans. Robert B. Louden (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge UP, 2006), 223.
[12] Wilhelm Muhlmann, *Geschichte der Anthropologie* (Frankfurt am Main: Athenäum, 1968), 57.
[13] Raymond Schwab, *La renaissance orientale* (Paris: Payot, 1950), 226.
[14] Germaine de Staël, *De l'Allemagne* (Paris: Hachette, 1959), 311.
[15] Ergang, *Herder and the Foundations of German Nationalism*, 26.

[16] Johann Gottfried von Herder, *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit* (Berlin: Aufbau, 1965), 269; Herder, *Outlines of a Philosophy of the History of Man* (New York: Bergman, 1966), 395.
[17] Tuska Benes, *In Babel's Shadow: Language, Philology, and the Nation in Nineteenth-Century Germany* (Detroit, MI: Wayne State UP, 2008), 40.
[18] Michael Allen Gillespie, *Nihilism before Nietzsche* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1995), 65.
[19] Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi, *Werke*, 6 vols. (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1968), 3:44. Also cited in Gillespie (65).
[20] Johann Gottlieb Fichte, *Foundations of Natural Right according to the Principles of the Wissenschaftslehre*, ed. Frederick Neuhouser, trans. Michael Baur (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge UP, 2000), 18.
[21] Brought to India by [Indo-]Aryan tribes around 1500 B.C., Sanskrit gave rise to the Prakrit languages, which gave rise to modern Indian languages such as Hindi and Bengali. Sanskrit is written in a syllabary known as *Devanagari*, which comes from the ancient Brahmi script (see Kenneth Katzner, *The Languages of the World* [New York: Routledge, 1977], 174–75). The name *Devanagari* comes from the city of Nagara, with the prefix *Deva* ("god") attached, because they are believed to have been taught by a divinity who prescribed their phonetic order of arrangement. Brahmi is itself reputed to be related to Aramaic, although the Indians used their sophisticated knowledge of phonology and grammar to organize their alphabets differently from the Aramaic alphabet (see Andrew Robinson, *The Story of Writing: Alphabets, Hieroglyphs, and Pictograms* [London: Thames and Hudson, 1995], 175).
[22] Anquetil-Duperron, *Zend-Avesta, ouvrage de Zoroastre, contenant les idées théologiques, physiques & morales de ce législateur, les cérémonies du culte religieux qu'il a établi, & plusieurs traits importans relatifs à l'ancienne histoire des Parses; tr. en françois sur l'original zend, avec des remarques; & accompagné de plusieurs traités propres à éclaircir les matieres qui en sont l'objet, par Anquetil du Perron* (Paris, N. M. Tilliard, 1771). The *Zend-Avesta* is the sacred writings of the Zoroastrians or Parsis and is usually attributed to Zoroaster himself. Zend is the language used, also called Old Bactrian, which forms, with Old Persian, the Iranian group of the Indo-European languages.
[23] The *Upanishads* form the final part of the revealed portion of the *Vedas* and are the principal basis of *Vedānta*, the philosophical conclusion derived from them. Central to the *Upanishads* is the significance and reunification of *atman*, the individual soul, and *Brahman*, the impersonal absolute.
[24] Mitter, *Much Maligned Monsters*, 123.
[25] Jainism is an unorthodox Indian religion that rejects the authority of the *Vedas*. Its tradition refers to twenty-four teachers, with no belief in God. The Jains teach that divinity dwells within every soul, and perfect souls are venerated as the Supreme Spirit. Liberation is attained through right belief, right knowledge, and right action, whereby the practice of non-injury of living beings is particularly stressed (Schuhmacher and Woerner, *Encyclopedia of Eastern Philosophy and*

*Religion*, 158–59). I once attempted to visit a Jain temple in Jaisalmer, Rajasthan, where adherents were such devout believers in non-injury that they were reputed not even to wear any clothing. Visitors, however, were not allowed.

[26] Their mission then as now is stated in full at http://www.sal.org.uk.

[27] Allen, *The Search for the Buddha*, 47–48.

[28] *Mahabharata* means literally in Sanskrit "the great epic of the descendants of Bharata," next to the *Ramayana* the second monumental epic of Hindu literature. Its authorship is ascribed to the mythical sage Vyasa; however, between the fifth century B.C. and the A.D. second century a great many authors and "compilers" (Skt. *vyasa*) indubitably worked on the text, which gradually came to include the greater part of India's popular myths, fables, and fairy tales (Schuhmacher and Woerner, *Encyclopedia of Eastern Philosophy and Religion*, 211). The *Mahabharata* is about six times the length of the Bible. The *Bhagavadgītā*, which constitutes the work's sixth book, means literally in Sanskrit "song of the exalted one" and is a philosophical didactic poem, considered the "Gospel" of Hinduism (ibid., 31).

[29] See Allen, *The Search for the Buddha*, 59. Wilkins was also the first to identify Bodh-Gaya as the place where Gautama Buddha is reputed to have achieved enlightenment.

[30] This passage, including the quotations from Jones, is from Allen, *The Search for the Buddha*, 62–63.

[31] Sir William Jones, *The Works of Sir William Jones: With the Life of the Author by Lord Teignmouth*, 13 vols. (London: printed for John Stockdale and John Walker, 1807), 3:52. This essay was one of Jones's eleven anniversary discourses at the Asiatic Society. The other ten addresses were "On the Orthography of Asiatick Words" (1784), "On the Hindus" (1786), "On the Arabs" (1787), "On the Tartars" (1788), "On the Persians" (1789), "On the Chinese" (1790), "On the Borderers, Mountaineers, and Islanders of Asia" (1791), "On the Origin and Families of Nations" (1792), "On Asiatick History, Civil and Natural" (1793), and "On the Philosophy of the Asiaticks" (1794). All of these were published in the society's journal, *Asiatick Researches*, vols. 1–4, which began to be published in 1788.

[32] *Manusmṛti* (*The Laws of Manu*) is said to date to ancient times and to derive from Manu, literally "man," that is, the progenitor of humanity. It bears signs, however, of the work of several authors, among whom is supposedly Vaivasvata, founder of the solar race of kings. The book contained laws and codes of conduct for individuals, small communities, and larger nations. *Abhijñānaśākuntalam* (*The Recognition of Shakuntala*) is the story of the love of a half-nymph, Shakuntala, for the King Dushyanta, the source of which is the *Mahabharata*. *Hitopadesha* (*The Book of Good Counsels*) is a collection of fables in verse and prose, and the *Gitagovinda* (*The Song of Govinda*) is a lyrical poem.

# II: Textual Salvation from Social Degeneration, 1790s–1808

# 3: Hindu Predecessors of Christ: Novalis's Shakuntala

> *The counter-Enlightenment that set in immediately after the French Revolution grounded a critique of modernity that has since branched off in different directions. Their common denominator is the conviction that loss of meaning, anomie, and alienation — the pathologies of bourgeois society, indeed of post-traditional society generally — can be traced back to the rationalization of the life-world itself.*
>
> — Jürgen Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action* (1981)

## Jena's Indophilia and European Translations of *Abhijñānaśākuntalam*

YOUNG INTELLECTUALS THROUGHOUT EUROPE enthusiastically greeted the French overthrow of absolutism in 1789. The political upheaval seemed to provide, among other things, for an additional stimulus to accelerate the ongoing drive toward emancipation from all conventional rules in the arts. Many German critics and poets agreed that mechanical rules such as the Aristotelian unities in drama, which the Elizabethans had cast aside in the late sixteenth century, stifled creativity. Inspired by the ideals of the French Revolution, young German writers would attempt to develop new forms that embodied the issues of their generation. The Early German Romantics' subsequent rejection of Robespierre's terror following the revolution did not distract them from their task of regenerating literature, society, and religion. After the influences of the *Sturm und Drang*, Fichtean idealism, and developments in Indian studies that we have discussed, the political events of the period influenced the core convictions and poetic manifestations of the Romantic Movement: the French Revolution (1789–99), Napoleon's conquest of Germany (1806), and his fall from power as certified at the Congress of Vienna (1815). Early German Romanticism [*Frühromantik*] was most acutely marked by these events, and that directly concerns the Indo-German story, for Early Romanticism would be directly influenced by, and become a part of, the rise of German Orientalism and nationalism.

*Frühromantik* flourished among university students who gathered in small groups in order to discuss philosophy and write poetry together. One such group gathered around Friedrich Schlegel, including his brother August Wilhelm and the well-connected Thuringian baron Friedrich von Hardenberg, known by his pen name Novalis, whose work emphasized the primacy of the poet in both politics and religion. They met in Jena, where most of the Romantics would study under Fichte, and came to be known as the *Jenenser Romantische Schule* (Jena Romantic School). In this brief period the Schlegel brothers — along with their friends Ludwig Tieck, Novalis, the philosopher Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling, and the theologian Friedrich Schleiermacher — turned Jena into the center of the nascent movement. Based at August Wilhelm Schlegel's home, they presented the first definitions and examples of Romantic poetry in their periodical entitled *Athenäum* (1798–1800) and promoted the *Frühromantik* novels *Lucinde*, by Friedrich Schlegel (1799), and *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*, by Novalis (1802). They also embarked on the first of the group's many translations, beginning with A. W. Schlegel and Tieck's Shakespeare-translation project from 1797 onwards.

The Schlegels were enamored of Herder and Goethe and hoped to befriend Schiller. They made this impossible, however, by writing unfavorable reviews of Schiller's Kantian periodicals. His poetry, criticism, discussions of Kantianism, and his notion that beauty was crucial to the cultivation of the moral life were nevertheless very influential on the Jena School. According to Schiller, only beauty could make evident the necessary harmony between emotion and reason that provides human beings with the motivation to live moral lives.

Schiller had given expression to a veritable cult of youth through the achievement of lasting fame by the time he had reached his early twenties. Due to him, a great preoccupation of the young Romantics was an intense need to develop and express their individuality. The overwhelming conformity in German society at the time suppressed any such thing, although the period did see within the nuclear family structure the distancing of the young from the authority of the ruling patriarch. Their religious faith, along with ideas coming in from France and Britain that broke with the decorum of neoclassical literature in the works of writers such as Rousseau and William Wordsworth, only intensified their belief that they had been suppressing their Romantic feelings so as not to break seemingly anachronistic social rules. At the same time, their alienation was underscored by what they perceived to be crudeness in both the courtly and popular German culture of the time, which was concerned with restraint and balance as compared to the emerging, more radically emotional tendencies of contemporary British and French literature.[1]

Philosophically, the thought of the Jena School was at least initially an outgrowth of Fichte's idealism. Through the Fichtean lens, Descartes'

concept of the self-certainty of consciousness, Hume's notion of an infinite natural causality, and Kant's assertion of practical rationality all constrained the power and scope of subjective will. Although the "Kantian paradox" never played the role for the Early Romantics that it did for Fichte, it certainly provided a backdrop for their works and thoughts, and many of the ideas found in their writings are expressions of it. Fichte's absolute subject embodied the infinite and endowed it with definite power. Alienated from the strictly moralistic society around them, the Early Romantics found that Fichte's emphasis on human spontaneity, on our ability to give objects meaning by bestowing status upon them, expressed their own need to remake the world of their parents from which they felt so estranged. Many scholars have pointed out, however, that the influence of Fichte on the group can be overestimated, for the Jena group hardly became Fichteans. Eventually they felt that Fichte's argument that the subject posits the object seemed to put too much emphasis on human beings' role as creator and not enough on the necessity of responding to experience. Thus the most basic component of their aspirations and work centered around the apparent disjunction between spontaneous creativity and responsiveness to the world as it is and, more importantly, how to integrate the unity of those two things into the idea that human beings are part of a unity of nature. It was this lowering of the rank of nature — and, by association, spirituality — in Fichte's philosophy that made it so inadequate for the *Frühromantik*, because they were also looking for a return to communion with the noumenal world.

What the Jena School found missing in Fichte they discovered in Spinoza, who offered union with a cosmic substance. Friedrich Schlegel wrote that idealism is only a first, effecting impetus and the beginning of intellectual development, alteration, and re-birth: it must be unified at a higher level by "*wissenschaftliche Fantasie*" (scientific fantasy), which is best represented by Spinoza's system.[2] He goes on to add, however, that an alternative to Spinoza must be elicited to facilitate the philosophical reinvigoration of beauty and *Bildung*. This late eighteenth-century secularization of *Bildung*, which was until then a religious term, signaled a move toward a secular concept. Yet for Schlegel the alternative to Spinoza lay in other, non-Western mythologies. He recognized that Spinoza's and Fichte's systems were weakened for opposing reasons: in Spinozism finite subjectivity seems to vanish completely, while in Fichtean idealism objectivity appears to be, at least theoretically, abandoned. The task was to find an ontological foundation for the unity of freedom and nature in a marriage of subjectivity and metaphysics.

Following Rousseau, Wordsworth, and the *Sturm und Drang*, the Jena Romantics came to see this communion as something to be realized through art in a sort of poetry of cosmic spirit, in which men are united with both their own creative expression and the universe itself. As a result

they attempted to synthesize Fichte and other thinkers. Friedrich Schlegel attempted to synthesize ideas of Fichte and Goethe through a philologically informed critique, and Schleiermacher to combine Kant and Spinoza in a kind of critical realism. These attempts would be depicted in the fictional protagonists of Early Romanticism and in some of the philosophical reactions to Fichte. Inspired by heroes such as Goethe's Faust and Wilhelm Meister on the one hand, and by figures in ancient and medieval Hindu literature such as Dushyanta in Kalidasa's *Abhijñānaśākuntalam* on the other, the first German Romantic heroes and the first creative manifestations of Romantic views on idealism were created. The forces of destruction epitomized by Goethe's Werther are to be found in Novalis's narrator in *Hymnen an die Nacht* (Hymns to the Night; 1799–1800), which draws on *Abhijñānaśākuntalam*. The forces of restoration may be seen in Schelling's inspiration drawn from Jayadeva's *Gitagovinda*, for Schelling would unite the radical philosophical notion of creative subjectivity with his own poetic vision of nature. Novalis, Schelling, and Friedrich Schlegel found in these texts a Hindu conception of the Supreme Being that reminded them of Spinoza, although in a more naïve form.

The Jena Romantics first encountered the works of India scholars through Friedrich Majer, a lecturer at Jena who was the chief disseminator of Indian ideas in the Germanic principalities in the 1790s. A friend of Schleiermacher and Schelling, Majer greatly impressed Schiller, Novalis, and Friedrich Schlegel, taking up Herder's theory of India as the source of the human race in his *Zur Kulturgeschichte der Völker* (1798) and then providing evidence through his translations of Hindu texts. The Jena Romantics were fascinated by his first study of Hindu mythology, "Über die mythologischen Dichtungen der Indier," which appeared in Tieck's *Poetisches Journal* (Poetic Journal) in 1800. Majer wrote of this mythology,

> Ein neuer Himmel und eine neue Erde lag vor dem erstaunten Auge deines Inndern da. . . . Mit einem Worte, die mythologischen Dichtungen dieses Volkes kennen zu lernen, die ersten Blüten der jungendlichen Fantasie dieser Menschen, von welchem Sakontala zum Theil schon die Früchte enthält.[3]
>
> [A new Heaven and a new Earth lay before the astonished eyes of your interior. . . . In a word, the mythological stories of these people can acquaint you with the first flowering of the youthful fantasy of these people, of which Abhijñānaśākuntalam contains pieces of the fruit.]

Majer's translations were in many ways more profoundly influential than this work on mythology, however, for his complete *Bhagavadgītā* and *Gitagovinda* were published in 1802 in the *Asiatisches Magazin* that the Orientalist and traveler Julius Klaproth had begun to edit at Weimar, and were widely read by the Early Romantics, among them Novalis.

Majer refers to Kalidasa's drama *Abhijñānaśākuntalam* (The Recognition of Shakuntala; ca. A.D. 400) as a work of "indischen Genius," (165) and for Novalis *Abhijñānaśākuntalam* would prove to be the most profoundly influential Sanskrit text. While scholars such as Sara Friedrichsmeyer and William O'Brien have downplayed or ignored the significance of the work for Novalis, his *Hymnen an die Nacht* provides many examples of his fascination with the play. He was particularly drawn to *Abhijñānaśākuntalam* because of its emphasis on the destruction of childhood innocence and on spiritual renewal, which corresponded to his own experience of loss and his vision of Christian salvation.

A. Leslie Willson notes that Novalis's use of what Willson calls "the mythical image" of India revealed "a longing for poetry, and a cosmology of poetry in the shape of a new mythology,"[4] for "Friedrich Schlegel's reiteration of a call for a new mythology was really the articulation of a longing in the heart of every Romantic poet. The new mythology was to be achieved by the intermingling and combining of the most varied myths into a new union, a new and universal expression of metaphysical truths" (157). Novalis would do this by conceiving of India as the writer Jean Paul had, as a synonym for poetry, as in the first of his "Geistliche Lieder" (Spiritual Songs, 1802).[5] Slightly earlier, in pieces such as "Lehrlinge zu Sais" (Novices of Sais, 1798), we see many of the same preoccupations as those of Novalis's "proto-Indo-German" predecessors. Sanskrit is considered a mysterious language of nature that could reveal the secrets of the universe:[6]

> Die ächte Sanscrit spräche, um zu sprechen, weil Sprechen ihre Lust und ihr Wesen sey. Nicht lange darauf sprach einer: Keiner Erklärung bedarf die heilige Schrift. Wer wahrhaft spricht, ist des equigen Lebens voll, und wunderbar verwandt mit ächten Geheimnissen dünkt uns seine Schrift, denn sie ist ein Accord aus des Weltalls Symphonie. Von unserm Lehrer sprach gewiß die Stimme, denn er versteht die Züge zu versammeln, die über all zerstreut sind. (*Schriften*, 1:79)
>
> [To speak the proscribed Sanskrit language, so as to speak its desire and its character. Not long after speaking, the holy script demands no explanation. He who spoke truthfully is full of life, and his script seems to us the wonderful kin of forgotten mysteries, and he is then in accord with the universe's symphony. Our mentor language is surely the voice, for it understands the traits of collection of that which is scattered over all.]

Novalis also attempted to find Indian influence on the ancient Greeks in such doctrines as metempsychosis; however, he equated metempsychosis with Christian re-birth and "wonders if earthly birth might not be the result of death in the beyond. . . . Thus Novalis offers a logical extension

of the Hindu concept of death as birth into a perfect existence."[7] Willson is correct in stating that it was particularly in their reading of *Abhijñānaśākuntalam* that the Jena Romantics found a focus for their inchoate poetic vision of India, and he makes much of the flower symbolism in Novalis as exemplary of this (157–58).[8] Certainly for Novalis, *Abhijñānaśākuntalam* was the Sanskrit text that would make the deepest impact once it was translated into German. He would find in the text a description of the very childhood of humanity, with an innocence now vanished.

*Abhijñānaśākuntalam* is the third and most famous play by Kalidasa (ca. 353–420).[9] On the advice of his Sanskrit teacher, pandit Cantaberna, William Jones had translated the text, the first complete Sanskrit text translated into English without a Persian intermediary. He first translated it into Latin, "which bears so great a resemblance to Sanskrit, that it is more convenient than any other modern language for the scrupulous interlineary version" (a version that has since been lost); he then rendered it "word for word" into English, "without suppressing any material sentence," "disengaged it from the stiffness of a foreign idiom, and prepared the faithful translation."[10] Jones's *Shakuntala* was published in 1791 and Europe was enthralled. The English translation of the text was followed by Georg Forster's German version that same year, and Forster's *Sakontala* evoked much praise from the Sturm und Drang group. Goethe, in an often-quoted passage from the *Deutsche Monatsschrift* (German Monthly Journal, 1791), rhapsodized that the name "Sacontala" embodies all the charms and delights that nourish and satisfy us.[11] Raymond Schwab notes that after Forster sent Herder his own translation of *Shakuntala*, Herder wrote back to him that the play was a masterpiece of the kind that appears only once every two thousand years. Herder's study of *Sakontala* inspired him to write a lengthy essay on it that he included in his *Zerstreute Blätter* (Scattered Leaves; 1785–93), calling it a new model in dramaturgy, challenging the standard use of Aristotelian dramatic theory to evaluate dramatic works.[12]

Dorothy M. Figueira indicates the enduring and profound interest in the subject of Shakuntala by comparing the no fewer than forty-six translations of the play published in Europe in the nineteenth century in twelve different languages. Jones's *Shakuntala* alone was reprinted five times in England between 1790 and 1807, and translated and published many times throughout the continent. The story of Shakuntala and Dushyanta was adapted for plays, operas, and ballets all over Europe. Of importance for Novalis, as well as for Friedrich Schlegel, Figueira notes two preoccupations of the Forster translation perpetuated in other German translations, the emphasis on the world-weariness of the protagonist (Dushyanta) and references to his concern for the good of the *Volk*: "What to the Sanskrit reader signifies the becalmed soul of the king who knowingly fulfills his

*dharma* is here seen as the soul unburdened from the cares of the world. This image of the world-weary soul will reappear elsewhere in many German translations."[13] Figueira goes on to note, "Forster differs from the Jones source in that he does not omit the concept of *dharma*; he does, however, distort it" (85), emphasizing the enervating aspect of spiritual practice and the necessity of rest. While Dushyanta's existential fatigue is continually emphasized, as Figueira notes, it also becomes apparent that references to the *Volk* are never absent from Dusyanta's worldview as it is interpreted by Germans. Thus, early German translations of the text would reinforce Romantic preoccupations with both the burdens of the philosopher-artist and the growing emphasis of the importance of the collective people and their culture.

## The Vanished Childhood of Humanity

Herder's *Zerstreute Blätter* — in which he showed himself to be transformed by *Abhijñānaśākuntalam*, as well as by the *Bhagavad Gītā* and the *Manusmṛti* — was frequent reading for Novalis. Herder concludes the dialogue on metempsychosis in the work with a "Hymn to the Night-Mother," which influenced Novalis directly. Majer had called Sanskrit poetry the "Morgentraüme unseres Geschlechtes," the "childhood dreams of our species," giving currency to the image of India as not only the birthplace of mankind, but its place of childhood as well.[14] René Gérard emphasizes that the Orient was for Novalis a synonym for "origin," but that India formed only the periphery of his world, the center of which was Judea.[15] Gérard is somewhat cavalier, however, about chalking up much of the Hindu presence in Novalis to a sort of indirect seeping of ideas over the centuries via Neoplatonism, Renaissance mystics, and "eras of the grand religious negations," for he describes Novalis's interest in Hinduism, and that of the Early Romantics generally, as "occultism" (82–83).

When Novalis read Forster's *Sakontala* and Herder's commentary on it, he linked the death of his fiancée, Sophie von Kühn, at age fifteen, to the idea of India as the prematurely vanished site of humanity's childhood. Novalis described his intensely personal experience at Sophie's graveside, during which he felt time and space were transcended, nullifying the power of death, as one of the most important of his life. He addressed Sophie as "Sakontala," and he mentions the name cryptically twice in the paralipomena to the second part of his novel *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* (1:240–42). As historian Romila Thapar notes, Novalis's Romanticism of the character of Shakuntala, his identification of the heroine with nature, was an appropriate counter to the crafted women of neoclassicism.[16] Walter Leifer remarks that, given the first Romantic generation's fascination with the play, it was no wonder that Sophie was known as "Shakuntala" in the

Hardenburg household.[17] Forster's *Sakontala*, Herder's "Hymn to the Night-Mother," and the death of Sophie von Kühn thus lie behind the composition of Novalis's *Hymnen an die Nacht*, and, as Willson notes, a relationship between Christianity and India is expressed very clearly in the text (153), with India representing a lost golden age and Christianity the hope for humanity's future redemption.

The first four of these six hymns contain substantial evidence of the influence of the Shakuntala character often equated with Sophie. The empty world of Novalis's narrating voice, the "lordly stranger" who is "like a king," is the world of Light, which is juxtaposed with the holy, nocturnal world of his beloved.[18] Novalis's narrator states,

> Ein ernstes Antlitz seh ich froh erschrocken, das sanft und andachtsvoll sich zu mir neigt, und unter unendlich verschlungenen Locken der Mutter liebe Jugend zeigt. Wie arm und kindisch dünkt mir das Licht nun. (*Schriften*, 1:133)
>
> [A grave countenance I see, startled with gladness, which gently and reverently inclines toward me and amid infinitely tangled locks reveals the mother's lovely youth. How paltry and childish seems now the Light to me.][19]

This corresponds directly to Dushyanta who, after witnessing Shakuntala's meditative devotion to a simple, natural life, finds empty his royal life of hunting, polygamy, and bureaucratic duties. In this first of the hymns, love is held up as the power that restores the unity of opposite sexes, that enables the couple to regain their divinity, for in Hinduism virtually all divinities that are male have female counterparts.

Novalis then associates his Light-versus-Night schema with the short duration of a material life and the infinity of the release from embodiment, lamenting the small-mindedness that he sees around him:

> Zugemessen ward dem Lichte seine Zeit; aber zeitlos und raumlos ist der Nacht Herrschaft. — Ewig ist die Dauer des Schlafs. Heiliger Schlaf . . . Nur die Thoren verkennen dich und wissen von keinem Schlafe, als den Schatten, den du in jener Dämmerung der wahrhaften Nacht mitleidig auf uns wirfst. (*Schriften*, 1:133)
>
> [Apportioned to the Light was its time, but timeless and spaceless is the Night's dominion. Eternal is the duration of sleep. Holy sleep! . . . Only fools mistake thee and know of no sleep save that shadow which in that twilight of the true Night thou dost cast compassionately upon us. (*Hymns*, 4)]

But Dushyanta eventually rejects Shakuntala and when he realizes his mistake, he is paralyzed with grief until the gods show him the way to her. In the third hymn Novalis's hero was also paralyzed:

> vorwärts nicht konnte und rückwärts nicht, und am fliehenden, verlöschten Leben mit unendlicher Sehnsucht hing: — da kam aus blauen Fernen — von den Höhen meiner alten Seligkeit ein Dämmerungsschauer. (*Schriften*, 1:135)
>
> [incapable of moving forward nor yet backward either, and clung to fleeting extinguished life with infinite yearning — then, out of blue distances, from the pinnacles of my old blessedness, there came a twilight shutter. (*Hymns*, 5)]

Here the heroine is not taken from the hero out of his own ignorance, but out of the advent of human weakness, for she represents the loss of primeval innocence. This hymn thus provides the forum for Novalis's personal outpouring about his experience at Sophie's grave.

Emotionally worn out by these overwhelming feelings of loss, guilt, and shame, Novalis iterates the world-weariness of his hero in the fourth hymn (*Schriften*, 1:137; *Hymns*, 6). The narrator has been transformed by this watershed experience of the limitations of materiality. He puts his cursed knowledge of his materiality to work, however, as does Dushyanta in act 4, "Separation from Shakuntala": "Still wakest thou, cheerful Light, that weary man to his labor . . . Gladly will I stir busy hands, everywhere behold where thou hast need of me."[20] The hymn's narrator again longs to be freed from embodiment (*Schriften*, 1:139; *Hymns*, 7).

It is then in hymn 5 that Novalis leaves the story of Shakuntala and packs in the rest of the collection's themes: the South Asian anthropodicy characteristic of eighteenth-century European Indophilia, a critique of rationalism, and the importance of the spiritual renewal that the arrival of Christ will bring. Partaking in a long tradition that began with Hellenistic historians such as Philostratus, he invokes Dionysus as the symbol of a childhood since past (*Schriften*, 1:143; *Hymns*, 8).[21] This was interrupted by the arrival of death, the knowledge of which is evoked in vaguely Platonic terms (*Schriften*, 1:143; *Hymns*, 9).[22]

In explaining the events that follow the arrival of death and human beings' knowledge of it, Novalis indirectly invokes the Himalayan anthropodicy and directly criticizes the rationalism of his own age:

> Zu Ende neigte die alte Welt sich. Des jungen Geschlechts Lustgarten verwelkte — hinauf in den freyern, wüsten Raum strebten die unkindlichen, wachsenden Menschen. . . . Mit eiserner Kette band sie die dürre Zahl und das strenge Maaß. Wie in Staub und Lüfte zerfiel in dunkle Worte die unermeßliche Blüthe des Lebens. Entflohn war der beschwörende Glauben, und die allverwandelnde, allverschwisternde Himmelsgenossin, die Fantasie. (*Schriften*, 1:145)
>
> [Toward its close the old world waned. The pleasure garden of the youthful race withered; up into waste and freer space strove the unchildlike, maturing men. The gods, together with their retinues,

> vanished. Alone and lifeless Nature stood. Sure number and strict measure held it in clamp of iron chains. As into dust and air, the boundlessly blossoming life disintegrated into dark words. Fled was incantatory faith, fled the all-transforming, all consanguinating heaven-dweller, Fantasy. (*Hymns*, 9)]

Thus, light ceases to be the dwelling place of the gods, and they return to the womb of night to sleep and reemerge in new and more splendid forms; this dark age of hibernating divinity is finally concluded with the arrival of Christ, in which "the East" senses the its own rich wisdom first re-born (*Schriften*, 1:145; *Hymns*, 9–10). This is the point at which the link between the loss of ancient Hindu wisdom and its reemergence in the form of Christianity is made clear. Novalis then takes the association even further, arguing as Philostratus had of Plato, Pythagoras, and Dionysus that the "singer" journeyed to Hindustan, a theory that persists even now.[23]

In the sixth hymn Novalis launches one final call for a return to the past, for, like the line of thinkers beginning with Voltaire and Bailly, he depicts ancient India as an enlightened, prelapsarian civilization the source of whose lapse remains unknown (*Schriften*, 1:155; *Hymns*, 14). "Die Lieben sehnen sich wohl auch / Und sandten uns der Sehnsucht Hauch. / Hinunter zu der süßen Braut, / Zu Jesus, dem Geliebten" (*Schriften*, 1:157; perhaps our loved ones likewise longing / have wafted us this sigh of longing. / Down to the sweet bride come away, / To Jesus whom we love!: *Hymns*, 15).

## The Reemergence of Divinity

Willson notes that in Novalis's set of fragments "Blütenstaub" (1798) the Brahmin is presented as both priest and poet.[24] In *Hymnen an die Nacht* he presents a reconciliation of earlier, Indian wisdom with the promise of the arrival of Christianity (along with some references to ancient Greece). In his "Sänger" we see the same equation of "bard" ("Dichter") with "priest" ("Priester") mentioned in "Blütenstaub," for the "Sänger" is more than a mere bard. Novalis scholars such as Mahoney, Friedrich Hiebel, and Heinz Ritter have noted that various historical personalities, such as St. Thomas, have been postulated as the basis for the "Sänger," although the counter arguments are just as compelling, for Novalis's historical references are vague at best.

As has been noted by Friedrichsmeyer, Novalis's Christianity has nothing to do with sin and its consequences; nor does his utopia have much in common with the Christian heaven.[25] His Christ is a transfiguration, a rebirth of old gods. Novalis felt that Christianity could be restored to this ancient splendor and reconcile all the nations of the world. In *Europa oder Christentum* (Europe or Christianity, 1799) he argues that it is the mission

of Germany, the "kernel of mankind," to bring about this reconciliation. The hymns are testimony to Novalis's strong intuition of a divine world beyond the senses and to his certainty that humanity, when restored to its original perfection, could exist in that resplendent world. His fascination with the play *Abhijñānaśākuntalam* provided him with a poetic and dramatic framework for that world of original perfection. Friedrichsmeyer also emphasizes androgyny in Novalis's work in its contemporary meaning as asexual. This is the opposite, however, of the gender construction inherent in Hindu conceptions of divinity, which are literally androgynous, that is, a union of both sexes, or hermaphroditic.

Novalis's poetic language, which gives us glimpses into both sexes, is fragmentary and aphoristic, qualities he favored in his other writings — as did some fellow early German Romantics such as the Schlegel brothers — over the more philosophical forms employed by the debatably more rationalistic Fichte and Schelling. This preference indicates his sense of each human life as but an incomplete portion of a larger existence that it can never comprehend, a conception of human existence that he is likely to have found confirmation of in reading Majer's and Herder's commentaries on Hindu mythology. Novalis's works suggest that we poor humans strive to pin down our existence, to found a philosophical system rooted in spatio-temporal human freedom, while at the same time attempting to transcend our materiality; thus we are never satisfied and never can be. For Novalis the issue that arises out of this dilemma is that of authenticity, of being true to our embodiment and to our spirituality, a dilemma that is fundamental to Early German Romanticism, if not all Romanticism. He felt not only that our choices are based on contingency, but that the nature of the objects involved in our choices is obscured from us. Novalis thus found that the desire to derive philosophical systems was a pathological illness of logic, an impossible drive to feel at home everywhere when we cannot really feel at home anywhere. He seems to have believed that there were only two artistic cures for this "illness": poetry and the use of fragmentary forms such as the epigram and the aphorism. He is distinctly Romantic in his attempt to respond to the tensions of material existence by creating works of art.

*Abhijñānaśākuntalam* so appealed to Novalis perhaps because the the primary deity of worship is Śiva, the destroyer, although he believed Śiva to be properly seen as the sublime destroyer, the destroyer of the negative "Light" that plagues the poet's narrator. Novalis's compatriots Schelling and Friedrich Schlegel also found Hinduism to have paved the way for Christianity, which was to provide the foundation for modern Europe's salvation from degeneration. Schlegel and Schelling, however, lived on to become more politically conservative, more devoutly Christian, and to ultimately reject their initial zealous praise of ancient Indian philosophy. Novalis remained convinced of the primacy of India in ancient world his-

tory, but he died at the tender age of 28, and one wonders how his views of India and *Abhijñānaśākuntalam* might have changed over time. Perhaps he and Sophie are still discussing the play in Paradise.

## Notes

The epigraph at the start of this chapter is from Jürgen Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action*, trans. Thomas McCarthy, 2 vols. (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1984), 2:148. "Die mit der Französischen Revolution einsetzende Gegenaufklärung begründet eine Kritik der Moderne, die sich inzwischen weit verzweigt hat. Ihr gemeinsamer Nenner ist die Überzeugung, daß Sinnverlust, Anomie und Entfremdung, daß die Pathologien der bürgerlichen, überhaupt der posttradionalen Gesellschaft auf die Rationalisierung der Lebenswelt selber zurückgeführt werden können" (*Theorie des Kommunikativen Handelns* [Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1981], 2:222).

[1] Whaley, "The Ideal of Youth in Late-Eighteenth-Century Germany," 48.

[2] Friedrich Schlegel, *Kritische Friedrich-Schlegel-Ausgabe*, ed. Ernst Behler and Ursula Struc-Oppenberg, 35 vols (Munich: Verlag Ferdinand Schöningh, 1958–), 2: 316.

[3] Friedrich Majer, "Über die mythologischen Dichtungen der Indier," in *Poetisches Journal*, ed. Ludwig Tieck (Jena: Friedrich Frommann, 1800), 166–67.

[4] A. Leslie Willson, *A Mythical Image: The Ideal of India in German Romanticism* (Durham, NC: Duke UP, 1964), 150–51.

[5] "Und Indien muß selbst in Norden / Um den Geliebten fröhlich blühn" (Novalis, *Schriften*, ed. Richard Samuel [Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1960], 1:159).

[6] Willson, *A Mythical Image*, 151.

[7] Willson, *A Mythical Image*, 149–51.

[8] Willson, *A Mythical Image*, 157–58. Willson emphasizes the flower symbolism and cites Jutta Hecker. He finds, however, that "the Romantic mythical image of India found its most poetic expression in *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* (1800), in which it finally is transfigured and absorbed into the new mythology, the mythology of poesy, through the suprarational, magical qualities of the *blaue Blume*" (155); ". . . it can perhaps be shown that there is a direct relationship between the *blaue Blume* and the idea of metempsychosis. A stream of Indic thought pervades the writings of Novalis, and the blue lotus pervades Indic thought" (167). The blue flower might come from one of Georg Forster's notes in his translation of *Sakuntala* (169).

[9] While *Abhijñānaśākuntalam* was not the first of Kalidasa's plays to treat the heroine Shakuntala, it is commonly considered his most fully realized work. The story is based on a tale in the *Mahabharata* and is as follows: King Dushyanta of the Puru dynasty, while on a hunting expedition, meets the hermit-girl Shakuntala, whose mother was a nymph. They fall in love and, in the absence of her father — a

hermit who is away on pilgrimage — marry using a Hindu ceremony known as *ghandharva*, in which a man and a woman can marry due to mutual consent, with nature (embodied in a deity or not) as their witness. After consummating their vows, Dushyanta must return to his palace and promises to send an envoy to escort Shakuntala there. As a symbolic gesture, he gives her a signet ring. When the short-tempered hermit, Durvasa, stops by her hut, Shakuntala, in her amorous reverie, does not hear his calls. The ill-tempered sage places a curse on her so that she will not be remembered by anyone who can make her so engrossed in her thoughts. Time passes and no one comes to take her to the palace. She is pregnant with Dushyanta's child, so her father sends her to the royal court for their reunion. She loses her signet ring on her way to the palace when she stops to worship Śiva at the Ganges, and, because of the curse and the circumstances in which she presents herself there — pregnant and with no royal ring — Dushyanta fails to acknowledge her as his wife. Heartbroken, she pleads to the gods to take her away from the earth to the safe realm from which her mother came. Her wish is granted, but the curse is broken when a fisherman finds the ring in the entrails of a fish. The king suffers from feelings of guilt and injustice. Finally, Dushyanta is reunited with Shakuntala when the gods allow him to discover his now infant son, and Shakuntala forgives him. Their son is called "Bharata," or "All-Tamer," and his rule confers on India its official name as a modern nation in most Indian languages: *Bharat*.

[10] Jones, *The works of Sir William Jones*, 7: 7.

[11] Cited in Romila Thapar, *Sakuntala: Texts, Readings, Histories* (New Dehli: Kali for Women, 1999), 207: "Will ich die Blumen des Fruehen, die Fruechte des spaeteren Jahres, / Will ich was reizt und entzuecht, will ich was saettigt und naehrt, / Will ich den Himmel, die Erde mit einem Namen begreifen; / Nenn ich Sakontala dich und so ist alles gesagt."

[12] Schwab, *La renaissance orientale*, 173.

[13] Dorothy M. Figueira, *Translating the Orient: The Reception of Sakuntala in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Albany: State U of New York P, 1991), 54. Her analysis of the Forster translation in particular appears on pp. 52–54, 83–85, and 127–30.

[14] Cited in Schwab, *La renaissance orientale*, 223.

[15] Réne Gérard, *L'Orient et la pensée romantique allemande* (Paris: Marcel Didier, 1963), 80.

[16] Thapar, *Sakuntala*, 208.

[17] Walter Leifer, *Indien und die Deutschen: 500 Jahr Begegnung und Partnerschaft* (Tübingen: Horst Erdmann Verlag, 1969), 106.

[18] We might note here that Tacitus had emphasized that the Goths counted time by nights, not by days like the Romans.

[19] Novalis, *Hymns to the Night and Other Selected Writings*, trans. Charles E. Passage (New York: Liberal Arts, 1960), 3–4.

[20] Kalidasa, *Shakuntala* (Cambridge, Ontario: In Parentheses Sanskrit Series, 1999; http://www.yorku.ca/inpar/Sanskrit.html), 61.

[21] *Hymns to the Night*, 8. ". . . der Liebe heilger Rausch ein süßer Dienst der schönsten Götterfrau — ein ewig buntes Fest der Himmelskinder und der Erdbewohner rauschte das Leben, wie ein Frühling, durch die Jahrhunderte hin — Alle Geschlechter verehrten kindlich die zarte, tausendfältige Flamme, als das höchste der Welt" (*Schriften*, 1:143).

[22] *Hymns to the Night*, 9. "Mit kühnem Geist und hoher Sinnenglut / Verschönte sich der Mensch die grause Larve, / Ein sanfter Jüngling löscht das Licht und ruht — / Sanft wird das Ende, wie ein Wehen der Harfe. / Erinnerung schmilzt in kühler Schattenflut, / So sang das Lied dem trauerigen Bedarfe. / Das ernste Zeichen einer fernen Macht, / Doch unenträthselt blieb die ewige Nacht" (*Schriften*, 1:143).

[23] There are many books on both sides of the debate over whether Jesus went to India, beginning in the 1890s. Recent contributions to the theory that he did go there include Ghulám Ahmad's *Jesus in India: Being an Account of Jesus' Escape from Death on the Cross and of His Journey to India* (London: London Mosque, 1978), Fida Hassnain and Dahan Levi's *The Fifth Gospel* (Srinagar, Kashmir: Dastgir, 1988), James W. Deardorff's *Jesus in India: A Reexamination of Jesus' Asian Traditions in the Light of Evidence Supporting Reincarnation* (San Francisco: International Scholars, 1994), and Khwaja Nazir Ahmad's *Jesus in Heaven on Earth* (Woking, UK: Working Muslim Mission and Literay Trust, 1952).

[24] Willson, *A Mythical Image*, 148.

[25] Sara Friedrichsmeyer, *The Androgyne in Early German Romanticism: Friedrich Schlegel, Novalis, and the Metaphysics of Love* (Bern: Peter Lang, 1983), 82.

# 4: Reconcilable Indifferences: Schelling and the *Gitagovinda*

> *[Schelling] is the truly creative and boldest thinker of this whole age of German philosophy. He is that to such an extent that he drives German Idealism from within right past its own fundamental position.*
>
> — Martin Heidegger, "*Schelling's Treatise on the Essence of Human Freedom*" (1936)

René Gérard notes that, particularly from 1798 on, with his concept of the *Weltseele* (World-Soul, or the soul of nature), Schelling was convinced that "modern philosophy was in the process of rejoining 'primitive' philosophy."[1] The system that Schelling was developing in these few years following the composition of his friend Novalis's *Hymnen an die Nacht* iterates Novalis's theme of the arrival of a new universal religion destined to restore the knowledge of forgotten mysteries and the message of mystical Christianity. Schelling believed that the European skeptical and idealist systems could be brought together in a way that was consistent with Kantian autonomy; in fact he made doing so the goal of his earliest philosophical investigations as is evidenced by the *Naturphilosophie* he put forth in *Ideen zu einer Philosophie der Natur* (Ideas for a Philosophy of Nature, 1797) and *System des transcendentalen Idealismus* (System of Transcendental Idealism, 1800), both written by the age of twenty-five. For Schelling at this early stage of his development, Hindu philosophy figured as a system of recently rediscovered ancient wisdom that might unlock the problems that beset contemporary European philosophy.

Raymond Schwab contends that Schelling's encounter with the *Gitagovinda* (Song of Govinda), the medieval lyric by Oriya poet Jayadeva, marked the turning point in his thought, when this realization of the import of Hindu philosophy was made.[2] Goethe read William Jones's English translation of the text, which was published in Calcutta in the *Transactions of the Asiatic Society* in 1792 and again in London in 1799 in *Asiatick Researches* 3. He then introduced the text to the fledgling Jena Romantic group before it was re-translated into German in 1802 by F. H. van Dalberg. Barbara Stoler Miller, translator of the now standard English edition of the text, quotes a letter from Goethe to Schiller in which the former states that what was so remarkable in the *Gitagovinda* was the

"extremely varied motives by which an extremely simple subject is made endless."[3] That subject is the union, or reunion, of the individual soul with the larger, impersonal absolute, a subject that was of great interest to Goethe as it was to Schelling, particularly at this early stage of his career.

While Schelling was familiar with *Asiatick Researches*, it is unclear from his journals and correspondence which translation of the text he read. Yet Schwab argues that Schelling interpreted it as laying open the original mystery of the human spirit, a mystery that had passed from India to Egypt, to Eleusis, then into the esoteric gospels of the saints John and Paul.[4] Indeed, Schelling's letters, particularly to August Wilhelm Schlegel, demonstrate similarities that Schelling felt he had found between the *Gitagovinda* and Greco-Latin and Christian sources, although, as Schelling wrote to Schlegel on 7 January 1803, such similarities "could admittedly only be found in a very general sense."[5] The text does seem to have had an impact on the Jena group as an apparent precursor to some of their ideas, though. For Novalis, Schelling, and Friedrich Schlegel the *Gitagovinda* is an exemplar of ancient South Asian revelations that had heretofore been known only through their purported, improved Christian forms.

Attempts to find any direct influence of the *Gitagovinda* on these early works, however, prove futile, as there are few references to the text in Schelling's writings. One can only hope to detect how the text may have contributed to a gradual shift in Schelling's thought, and Schwab's speculation begs the question of what a philosophical comparison between the Sanskrit text and the philosopher's early works might yield. Inspiration from the *Gitagovinda* would appear to be most obvious in Schelling's "point of indifference," which leads to the collapse of dialectical oppositions and the end of the deferral of unity; it leads to what Jacques Derrida might have called a sort of "indifférance." Yet even there influence is not explicit, and thus it falls to the interpreter to find any similarities.

There are potential pitfalls in such an analysis, however. Martha C. Nussbaum admonishes those who engage in comparative philosophy to be aware of the dangers of descriptive and normative vices. She warns against such nefarious tendencies as descriptive chauvinism and romanticism, and normative chauvinism, Arcadianism, and skepticism.[6] While Schelling barely mentions the *Gitagovinda* even in his correspondence, the arc of his relationship to Hinduism and his later move into devout Christianity indicate an implied "chauvinism" both descriptive and normative — a recognition of supposed roots of later Western thought in more ancient, yet somewhat inferior, Indian sources. The dangers of these tendencies certainly also lie in the treatment of such texts by contemporary scholars, as Bradley Herling has highlighted.[7] It is the intention of this chapter to understand the potential points of contact, to comprehend how the two systems of thought may be quite different, and to emphasize the continu-

ing, or perhaps renewed, importance of Schelling's work generally and his oblique but nonetheless crucial role in the history of German Indology.

In the introduction to his 2005 anthology *Schelling Now*, Jason M. Wirth argues in favor of the relevance of Schelling's philosophical project for contemporary philosophical debates, saying that he "is very much alive and inhabiting — even haunting — the state of the philosophical art today."[8] While scholars such as Terry Pinkard and Charles Taylor note that Schelling was considered a philosophical dinosaur by the end of his own life, Wirth argues that Schelling's enduring contribution to both twentieth-century and present debates are finally being recognized. These debates concern such issues as the possibility of nondialectical philosophy, the value of comparative philosophy, the nature of art, and the possibility of a philosophical religion. Certainly for scholars of German Indology, Schelling is a fascinating case precisely because his interest in Sanskrit literature appears to have been confined to a few specific texts, and because trying to map a text such as the *Gitagovinda*, a philosophical-literary hybrid with inconsistent philosophical messages, onto a Western philosophical system that is in many respects abstract presents formidable challenges. Nevertheless, as Schelling emphasized early on that the breakdown of dialectical positions led to human community, it is my contention that the role of "equanimity" in the *Gitagovinda* (and in its predecessor, the *Bhagavadgītā*) may be constructively reconciled with Schelling's "point of indifference," even though Schelling himself never explicitly stated the connection. This comparison may help us understand how one bridges the gap between individual amelioration and communal advancement, how one not only cultivates humanity, as Nussbaum admonishes us to, but cultivates those practices that might spur us to transcend our very humanity.

## Separation: Post-Vedic Hindu Ontology and Post-Kantian German Idealism

First, let us understand the composition of the *Gitagovinda* in the history of Sanskrit literature and the position of Schelling in the history of German Idealism. The *Gitagovinda* uses a romantic framework to recast many of the *Bhagavad gītā*'s teachings about the union of *atman* and *brahman*, the *Bhagavad gītā* (Song of the Divine One; 5th–2nd century B.C.) itself emphasizing that spiritual liberation (*mukti*) is imperfect without love of (and love from) a personal god, as scholars such as R. C. Zaehner have noted.[9] The *Gitagovinda* is a lyrical poem in twelve cantos composed in the early twelfth century by Jayadeva, the court poet of the Bengali king Lakshmanasena. It is one of the last great *bhakti* (devotional) texts composed in Sanskrit, written in an era when vernacular languages were becoming the predominant way of demonstrating religious devotion in

India. Intended to be sung, its cantos are set in various differing *ragas* (musical modes), each of which is meant to evoke a different emotion in the listener. The work celebrates Krishna's youth as Govinda, the shepherd boy in the forest of Vrindavan, and the love between him and his human consort, Radha. The term of address "Govinda" for Krishna refers to his role as knower of earth and the senses and as the protector of cows, for the Sanskrit prefix "*go*" denotes both "cow" and "earth." The *Bhagavadgītā*'s emphasis on a personal god is already apparent in the name taken by the poet to whom the *Gitagovinda* is attributed, "Jayadeva," which in Sanskrit means "triumph [*jaya*] of God [*deva*]."

The play's brief introduction alludes to the romantic couple's passion, but the succeeding cantos show that Jayadeva considered Krishna neither a mere mortal nor an avatar of the god Vishnu as in many other parts of the Hindu tradition, but as the supreme deity. Krishna's brother, Balarama, takes the position usually occupied by Krishna in the enumeration of the avatars of Vishnu. Krishna and Radha's relationship begins with an initial rush of passion, shifts into jealousy and separation, and finally into reconciliation and reunion. The *Gitagovinda* is thus an allegory of the eventual union of the human soul with the absolute, using a romance to recast many of the *Bhagavad gītā*'s teachings about the reconcilation of *atman* and *brahman*. The *Gitagovinda* begins with Krishna and Radha's union and ends with their reunion, and in between is separation filled with remembrance and anticipation. Lee Siegel notes,

> This pattern, union-separation-reunion, is the conventional pattern in Indian erotic literature. But it is also the archetypal structure in Indian ontology: in the beginning was the All, the One, *Brahman*, *Atman*, *Purusa*, the sacred power; creation meant separation, duality, multiplicity; and then at the end of each cosmic era, there is reunion, re-absorption into the One; and then it starts again and again and again.[10]

This type of plot structure — based on union, separation, and reunion — is to be found in erotic literature around the world. What may be unique about such a structure in the *Gitagovinda*, however, is the qualities of repetition and ritual, which are indicative of Hinduism's doctrine of reincarnation and its emphasis on devotional practice. The text is as much a work of philosophy as it is of literature, and Schelling would interpret it as such. Perhaps most importantly, however, this structure that is both narrative and ontological conformed to the popular Indo-German theory that Indian wisdom predated the Flood and became lost or degenerated in the centuries to follow, and that the reparation of such damage was imminent — either in a reconciliation of idealism and skepticism or in Christianity's promise.

Schelling was Fichte's successor and, as many have pointed out, was something of a boy wonder. Although five years younger than Hegel,

Schelling arranged Hegel's invitation to teach at the university at Jena in 1800 and lead their collaborations. Gottlob Ernst Schulze's "Aenesidemus" (1792) had opened up arguments about Kant's alleged refutation of skepticism, as well as throwing into question the issue of things-in-themselves, and Fichte had not really resolved that issue either. This meant that there were still no viable responses to questions about the status of freedom in the natural, non-human world. Schelling applied the Fichtean thesis that subjectivity posits the world to an ideal of nature, arguing that subjectivity is nature's unifying principle, and thus developed a poetic vision of a cosmic spiritual principle into a philosophy of nature. In the spirit of the oscillation between the Vaishnavic and the Shaivic that lies at the heart of the *Gitagovinda*, Schelling kept revising what is ultimately a philosophy of becoming, as Xavier Tilliette has pointed out,[11] in an attempt to adapt Kant's conclusions and resolve the paradoxes that led to them.

For Schelling it seems that Hinduism may have indicated that one key to understanding such questions was precisely the issue of things-in-themselves. Since Fichtean idealism viewed everything as posited by the subject, it had difficulty making sense of the relation between experience as the interior basis of belief and experience as emerging from the exterior world. Schelling thought that even if it were true that things-in-themselves cause our sensations, those causes could never offer us reasons for faith in the noumena behind such bodies. He argues in "Vom Ich als Prinzip der Philosophie oder über das Unbedingte im menschlichen Wissen" (Of the I as the Principle of Philosophy or On the Unconditional in Human Knowledge, 1795):

> Entweder muß unser Wissen schlechthin ohne Realität — ein ewiger Kreislauf, ein beständiges wechselseitiges Verfliessen aller einzelnen Sätze in einander, ein Chaos seyn, in dem kein Element sich scheidet, oder — Es muß einen letzten Punkt der Realität geben, an dem alles hängt, von dem aller Bestand und alle Form unsers Wissens ausgeht, der die Elemente scheidet und jedem den Kreis seiner fort gehenden Wirkung im Universum des Wissens beschreibt.
>
> [Either our knowledge has no reality at all and must be an eternal round of propositions, each dissolving in its opposite, a chaos in which no element can crystallize — or else there must be an ultimate point of reality on which everything depends, from which all firmness and all form of our knowledge springs, a point which sunders the elements, and which circumscribes for each of them the circle of its continuous effect in the universe of knowledge.][12]

Such an ultimate point of reality is exactly what *purusha* is. This "self" that pervades the universe forms the basis of Hindu ontology and its apprehension is what Schelling strove to achieve.

In his systematic *Naturphilosophie*, Schelling attempted to treat nature more holistically than had either empirical science or transcendental idealism. This would first be outlined in his *Ideen zu einer Philosophie der Natur* (Ideas for a Philosophy of Nature, 1797), which tries to provide an account of the objective, natural side of how we understand human self-consciousness, by deriving consciousness from objects. To Schelling *Naturphilosophie* was not a "doctrine of science" as Fichte tried to establish; nor was it exactly a "philosophy of nature." In its first conception it was to construct the view of nature which empirical investigations presupposed in their experiments. Schelling felt that Kant and Fichte had laid the groundwork for him to show that the dueling camps of modern philosophy — realism and idealism — were themselves only manifestations of the absolute, which was the unity of the two. In speaking of Spinoza's system, he wrote,

> Man muß dieses System in sich selbst aufgenommen, sich selbst an die Stelle seiner unendlichen Substanz gesetzt haben, um zu wissen, daß Unendliches und Endliches nicht *außer uns*, sondern *in uns* — nicht *entstehen*, sondern — ursprünglich zugleich und ungetrennt *da sind*, und daß eben auf dieser ursprünglichen Vereinigung die Natur unseres Geistes, und unser ganzes geistiges Daseyn beruht. (*Werke*, 1:5.90–91)
>
> [One must have taken this system up into oneself, have put oneself in the place of his infinite Substance, in order to know that infinite and finite — do not *arise*, but — *exist* originally together and inseparably, not *outside us*, but *in us*, and that the nature of our mind and of our whole mental existence rests on just this original union.][13]

Thus, through intellectual intuition of the absolute, of *purusha*, the dual developments would be united.

Kant had argued in the *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* (Critique of Pure Reason, 1781) that nature is like a mechanical system, but Fichte shunned the notion of things-in-themselves. For Schelling the attempt to understand human beings as autonomous creatures within nature thus led to an insoluble contradiction unless nature is viewed not as merely mechanical, but as a system of forces from which we derive our own self-authorizing actions. He felt that by studying the basic forces of nature he would be able to construct an account of human freedom, for that indeed must be inherent in nature:

> So lange ich selbst mit braucht, bald selbst Sinn und Bedeutung verlor. So lange ich selbst mit der Natur *identisch* bin, verstehe ich, was eine lebendige Natur ist, so gut, als ich mein eignes Leben verstehe; begreife, wie dieses allgemeine Leben der Natur in den mannichfaltigsten Formen, in stufenmäßigen Entwicklungen, in allmählichen Annäherungen zur Freyheit sich offenbaret. (*Werke*, 1:5.100)

> [So long as I myself am identical with Nature, I understand what a living nature is as well as I understand my own life; I apprehend how this universal life of Nature reveals itself in manifold forms, in progressive developments, in gradual approximations of freedom. (*Ideas for a Philosophy of Nature,* 36)]

He thought that nature exhibits Kant's sense of "purposiveness without purpose," except that its fundamental tendency to fluctuate moved toward a growing kind of unity that would culminate in human communities. This difference between Kant and Schelling in terms of whether it is nature or human beings themselves that create community is not dissimilar to the distinction made earlier between Rousseau and Herder on the same issue. If there is a kind of human *Geist*, it is communal and arrives eventually at consciousness of itself as a larger unit.

Like Krishna and Radha, Schelling would seek a reunion of the idealist and skeptical systems, which need not have been separated in the first place. For him the *Gitagovinda* may have suggested that a unity of subject and object was possible. Terry Pinkard remarks that Schelling wrote to Hegel in February of 1795 that the only real difference between skeptical systems and idealist systems had to do with their respective starting points: the former takes as its starting-point the absolute object, the latter the absolute subject (not yet conditioned by any object).[14] Schelling felt that the truth of the matter lay in reconciling those two starting-points with each other in a way that is nonetheless consistent with Kantian autonomy. Both should be understood as different manifestations of an underlying "absolute" reality, as Spinoza had postulated.

While the Spinozistic viewpoint takes human beings as part of nature and the Fichtean regards them as self-determining beings, Schelling saw both as merely manifestations of a single underlying reality, the one in which Krishna and Radha are symbolically united and reunited. In most of his early writings, Schelling appealed to Leibniz's notion of a preestablished harmony between mind and nature to make this point. He emphasized, however, that this harmony could not be the result of external ordering, but had to be the result of a deeper unity, as Spinoza thought.

Rather than finding, as had Fichte, that the distinction between subject and object was subjectively established, Schelling argued that we must intuit that in finding a boundary between subjective and objective, we have not only drawn the boundary ourselves but already exist on both sides of its dividing line, and are both subjective agents and natural objects. Since an original unity is pre-reflective, it can only be apprehended by a type of intellectual intuition, seeing that subjectivity and objectivity are points of view stemming from something deeper than themselves. Schelling thus interpreted the absolute in Spinozean, non-Fichtean terms as the expression of some underlying universal reality common to both the subjective

"I" and the objective "Not-I" of the natural world, which the subject strives to know and transform. He concluded early in his career that philosophy is not a matter of what arguments are put forth, so much as how one conceives the subject-object problem in the first place.[15] Thus Schelling's view ultimately makes the question of dualism moot.

## Reunion: Equanimity as Indifference

The issue that provides the most common ground between Jayadeva and Schelling is therefore the notion of "indifference," which is used by both to indicate nondialectical states and to differentiate their viewpoints from those of earlier philosophical systems — in Jayadeva's case post-Vedāntan Hinduism from Vedānta, in Schelling's case his own view from those of Kant, Fichte, and skepticism. Jayadeva's and Schelling's ideas are "reconcilable" in that they both strove to overcome dualism by reuniting previously united positions through an emphasis on what is variously defined as "equanimity" or "indifference."

The first song of the *Gitagovinda* begins by emphasizing the power and importance of Krishna and the break with the philosophy of the *Vedas*: "Pralaya-payodhi-jale dhrtavan asi vedam / vihita-vahitra-caritram akhedam / kesava dhrt-mina-sarira / jaya jagad-isa hare // dhrwa-padam //" (In seas that rage as the eon of chaos collapses / You keep the holy Veda like a ship straight on course / You take form as the Fish, Krishna / Triumph, Hari, Lord of the World).[16] The song goes on to establish the play's Vaishnavic stance in relation to the *Vedas*: "Nindasi yajña-vidher ahaha sruti-jatam / sadaya-hrdaya darsita-pasu-ghatam / kesava dhrta-buddha-sarira / jaya jagad-isa hare //" (288; Moved by deep compassion, you condemn the Vedic way / That ordains animal slaughter in rites of sacrifice. / You take form as the enlightened Buddha, Krishna. / Triumph, Hari Lord of the World, 71). The song that follows continues these themes, giving the divine attributes of Krishna as Vishnu and further emphasizing that the entire *Gitagovinda* describes the deity's divinity. Vishnu is thus not only assigned the attributes of Krishna — of maintainer and restorer — but is also shown to have a more destructive, Shaivic side, depicted in the angry jealousy of his female consort. Jayadeva saw Vishnu holistically, involving both the degenerative and regenerative cycles of nature, and this would presumably have appealed to Schelling, who envisioned an overcoming of dualistic processes of human action that would eventually create communities.

Having set the philosophical framework in the opening songs, Jayadeva's text returns to a conventional romantic tale. The next act describes the symbols of spring, which are intended to evoke a mood of love in the listener and present themes of restoration. This mood is marred by Radha's jealousy, however, as Krishna flirts with a group of cowherd

girls. Radha now withdraws and sits apart, sulking and despondent, only to burst into rage when Krishna comes to meet her. Her anger and dismissal make Krishna realize what he has done, but he eventually succeeds in assuaging her anger and convinces her of his love. They are reconciled and the text ends by describing their erotic and spiritual love. The *Gitagovinda* was intended be read on many different levels simultaneously: the mystical aspect is present throughout, but the framework of love, betrayal, and reconciliation also speaks to quotidian human experience. In the end, deity and devotee are described as needing and loving one another, as neither is complete without the other.

In Jayadeva's text nature is thus a process of degeneration and regeneration in keeping with the Hindu schema of the cycles of cosmic existence. Schelling's *Naturphilosophie* does differ from the philosophy in the *Gitagovinda*, however, in that for him nature was a continual process of organization, of becoming intelligible, not one of degeneration and regeneration. Schelling did, however, divide nature into "higher" and "lower" powers of freedom. At the lower level, nature constrains our rational understanding of it; at the higher, human beings engage their will autonomously. While nature is not seen as entropic and creative, each power of organization is the result of the two countervailing tendencies that balance each other when they reach an "indifference point." This new form of organization exhibits the same basic oppositional traits, but it in turn leads to a new indifference point that is itself a new and higher form of organization. This process continues until an absolute indifference point is found, oppositional traits vanish, nature culminates in divinity, transcending the material altogether, and a sort of perfection is attained.

Schelling first discussed this "indifference point" in *Einleitung zu dem Entwurf eines Systems der Naturphilosophie oder über den Begriff der spekulativen Physik und die innere Organisation eines Systems der Philosophie* (Introduction to the Sketch of a System of *Naturphilosophie*, or on the Concept of Speculative Physics and the Interior Organization of a System of Philosophy, 1799). Here it is a matter of the intersection of physics and philosophy:

> Der absolute Indifferenzpunkt existirt nirgends, sondern ist auf mehrere einzelne gleichsam vertheilt. — Das Universum, das sich vom Centrum gegen die Peripherie bildet, sucht den Punkt, wo auch die äußersten Gegensätze der Natur sich aufheben; die Unmöglichkeit dieses Aufhebens sichert die Unendlichkeit des Universums.
>
> [The absolute indifference point exists nowhere, but is distributed among multiple constituents. The universe, which developed from the center to the periphery, searches for the point where the extremes of nature cancel each other out; the impossibility of this secures the infinity of the universe.][17]

The absolute indifference point is thus the point at which the destruction of extremes maintains equilibrium while bringing nature to a higher level.

In the *Gitagovinda*'s touchstone, the *Bhagavadgītā*, such an "indifference point" is explained in terms of actions that the individual must take to achieve a nondialectical state, and it thus surfaces in many of the passages on *yoga*. Though it is used with many meanings in the text, the term *yoga* and its variants (*yuj-*, *yukta*, *yogin* — from the verb "to yoke") primarily mean the union of *atman* and *brahman*, the means for attaining such union, and the attributes of the individual who approaches it. For example, one is exhorted to "yoga-sthah kuru karmani sangam tyaktva, dhanamjaya / siddhy-asiddhyoh samo bhutva. Samatvam yoga ucyate" (perform actions, firm in discipline / relinquishing attachment; / be impartial in failure and success — / this equanimity is called discipline).[18] This "equanimity" is found in the individual "beyond dualities": "Jñeyah sa nitya-samnyasi yo na dvesti na kanksati: / nirdvandvo hi, maha-bho, sukham bandhat pramucyate" (*Bhagavad Gītā*, 202; The man of eternal renunciation / is one who neither hates nor desires; / beyond dualities / he is easily freed from bondage: *Bhagavadgita*, 57). Later in the text, however, Krishna reveals to Arjuna that such reverence for nonduality can be reached by devotion to the one god, in this case, Vishnu, in the form of Krishna.

> Ye tv aksaram anirdesyam avyaktam paryupasate / sarvatra-gam acintyam ca kuta-stham acalam dhruvam, / samniyamy' endriya-gramam sarvatra sama-buddhayah, / te prapnuvanti mam eva sarva-bhuta-hite ratah. (*Bhagavad Gītā*, 322–24)
>
> [Men reach me too who worship / what is imperishable, ineffable, unmanifest, / omnipresent, inconceivable, / immutable at the summit of existence. Mastering their senses, / with equanimity toward everything, / they reach me, rejoicing / in the welfare of all creatures. (*Bhagavadgita,* 111)]

As the *Bhagavadgītā* was widely read and discussed among the Early Romantics, Schelling would undoubtedly have recognized this same ideal of equanimity expressed poetically in the *Gitagovinda*: "Radha-vadana-vilokana-vikasita-vividha-vikara-vibhangam / jala-nidhim iva vidhu-mandala-darsana-taralita-tunga-tarangam / harim eka-rasam ciram abhilasita-vilasam / sa dadarsa guru-harso-vasam-vada-vadanam anaga-nivasam" (Siegel, 308; All his deep-locked emotions broke when he saw Radha's face, / Like sea waves cresting when the full moon appears. / She saw her passion reach the soul of Hari's mood — / The weight of joy strained his face; Love's ghost haunted him: Jayadeva, 120). Krishna, though divine, suffers and strives in very human ways. Radha releases him from the bonds of emotion and, together, they reach the equanimity found in Arjuna's devotion to Krishna

in the *Bhagavadgītā* (although Krishna and Arjuna's is not a romantic liaison).

Just as equanimity is a state to be achieved through one's own effort, in *Ideen zu einer Philosophie der Natur*, Schelling transforms Kant's and Fichte's ideas of freedom into a process of becoming autonomous. Human beings attain more and more freedom by climbing out of the realm of the material into a position at which they become unconstrained by nature. The higher power of autonomous willing only seems to be a problem, Schelling claims, if one operates with an individualist view of the relation of agent and world; the problem itself dissipates if one adopts a more interpersonal view of freedom.[19]

Before reading the *Gitagovinda* Schelling had already argued in *Philosophische Briefe über Dogmatismus und Kriticismus* (Philosophical Letters on Dogmatism and Criticism, 1795) that we must be what we wish to call ourselves theoretically:

> Daß wir es aber seien, davon kann uns nichts, als unser *Streben*, es zu werden, überzeugen. Dieses Streben realisirt unser Wissen vor uns selbst: und *dieses* wird eben dadurch reines Product unsrer Freiheit. Wir müssen uns selbst da hinauf gearbeitet haben, von wo wir ausgehen wollen; "*hinaufvernünfteln*" kann sich der Mensch nicht, noch durch Andre dahin vernünfteln lassen. (*Sämmtliche Werke*, 1:247)
>
> [Nothing can convince us of being that, except our very striving to be just that. This striving realizes our knowledge of ourselves, and thus this knowledge becomes the pure product of our freedom. We ourselves must have worked our way up to the point from which we want to start. People cannot get there by arguing themselves up to that point, nor can they be argued into that point by others. (*The Unconditional in Human Knowledge*, 173)]

He argues that one must establish firm ground oneself in order to construct a spontaneity that is divorced from the natural world.

*Ideen zu einer Philosophie der Natur* therefore presents what Schelling hoped would eventually be the "objective" aspect of his total system. The other "subjective" side of his philosophy appeared in his *System des transcendentalen Idealismus* (System of Transcendental Idealism, 1800). Having described nature and the fact that human beings must strive to be both in and above nature, Schelling here attempts to describe human consciousness itself as had Kant before him, showing how we reconcile our autonomy with acknowledgment of the limitations of our knowledge. In this work Schelling puts forward the view that nature is the product of a subjectivity that is both conscious and unconscious. Unconscious subjectivity strives to establish full subjectivity, while conscious subjectivity tries to unite itself to the objectivity that is the absolute indifference point supposed by Schwab to have been inspired by the *Gitagovinda*. For these two

things to happen, a higher unity must be attained in which conscious subjectivity and nature are one. For Schelling the path to attaining this unity leads through art, for he considered art to be the end-product of the exercise of philosophy.

## Philosophical Unity Through Art

The *System of Transcendental Idealism* describes the path from pure subjectivity or self-consciousness through art to objectivity. The most innovative and influential portion of this treatise is its conclusion, which was shared and discussed with Tieck, Novalis, and the Schlegel brothers. Schelling's philosophy of art is presented here as an epilogue to his system of transcendental idealism, "Deduction of a Universal Organ of Philosophy, or: Essentials of the Philosophy of Art according to the Principles of Transcendental Idealism." It is the first announcement of his own system of absolute philosophy: the "System of Identity." Réne Gérard argues that with the philosophy of identity Schelling brought himself more clearly closer to the Orient in that he was inspired by Indian philosophy to construct his absolute, which is the identity of subject and object.[20] While Gérard tends to find Schelling's embrace of south Asian philosophy hitting its stride only after 1805, many of its fundamental concepts, such as that of *purusha*, had apparently taken hold already in the late 1790s.

The epilogue begins with Schelling's statement that his intuition is to bring together the conscious and unconscious self, as well as consciousness of this identification; thus one might argue that it is not so much a system of identity as of identification. The product of this intuition unites itself with characteristics of nature and freedom. Schelling argues that nature begins as unconsciousness and ends as consciousness. He states, however, that the process of production is not purposive, in contrast to that of the product.[21] Here the self must begin subjectively, with consciousness, and end objectively, without consciousness. The self is conscious with respect to the process of production, unconscious in regard to the product. This same identification of the necessity to reconcile *atman* and *brahman*, so clearly spelled out in the *Bhagavadgītā* as a process that begins with overcoming consciousness and mere spatio-temporal experience, is the moving force of the *Gitagovinda*. Conscious and unconscious activities are to be one in the product; otherwise, there is no identity for the self. Intelligence will therefore end with recognition of the identity expressed in the product as an identity whose principle lies in intelligence itself. It will end, that is, in a complete intuiting of itself. It is an identification based on the dissolution of dualism.

Schelling then goes on to characterize the art-product as the symbol of this unity. The basic character of the work of art is that of an unconscious infinity, a synthesis of nature and freedom:

> Die ganze Philosophie geht aus, und muß augehen von einem Princip, das als das absolut Identische schlechthin nichtobjektiv ist. . . . Diese allgemein anerkannte und auf keine Weise hinwegzuleugnende Objektivität der intellektuellen Anschauung ist die Kunst selbst. Denn die ästhetische Anschauung eben ist die objektiv gewordene intellectuelle. Das Kunstwerk nur reflektirt mir, was sonst durch nichts reflektirt wird, jenes absolut Identische, was selbst im Ich schon sich getrennt hat. (*Sämmtliche Werke*, 1:715)
>
> [The whole of philosophy starts, and must start, from a principle which, *qua* absolutely identical, is utterly nonobjective. (. . .) This universally acknowledged and altogether incontestable objectivity of intellectual intuition is art itself. For the aesthetic intuition simply is intellectual intuition become objective. The work of art merely reflects to me what is otherwise not reflected by anything, namely that absolutely identical which has already divided itself even in the self. (*System of Transcendental Idealism*, 229–30)]

Nature, to the artist, is nothing more than it is to the philosopher: simply the ideal world appearing under permanent restrictions, or merely the imperfect reflection of a world existing, not outside him or herself, but within. Schelling ends his epilogue with the following observation:

> Was die intellektuelle Anschauung für den Philosophen ist, das ist die ästhetische für sein Objekt. . . . Das eine, welchem die absolute Objektivität gegeben ist, ist die Kunst. Nehmt, kann man sagen, der Kunst die Objektivität, so hört sie auf zu sein, was sie ist, und wird Philosophie (*Sämmtliche Werke*, 1:717)
>
> [What intellectual intuition is for the philosopher, aesthetic intuition is for his object. . . . The one field to which absolute objectivity is granted is art. Take away objectivity from art, one might say, and it ceases to be what it is, and becomes philosophy. (*System of Transcendental Idealism*, 223)]

For Schelling the self as an intelligence is thus completed in four stages: (1) the absolute first divides itself in the act of self-consciousness, (2) the self intuits that determinacy posited in the objective of its activity, (3) the self becomes an object to itself as sensate, and (4) the self intuits itself as productive. The same schema is that which Krishna follows in the *Gitagovinda*. He is divided from Radha; he realizes what he has done; he strives to change; and he successfully changes his own behavior to achieve his goal.

The similarities between Schelling's and Jayadeva's systems may be striking, but the only reference to the *Gitagovinda* that I have found in Schelling's published writings appears in his *Philosophie der Kunst* (Philosophy of Art, 1803), in which he argues that, as opposed to Greek "realism," idealism may be seen a a specifically Oriental product. His

assessment of the *Gitagovinda* differs from modern interpretations of it, such as that of Siegel. It is worth quoting in its entirety:

> Von der andern Seite ist aber nicht zu leugnen, daß die indische Mythologie der poetischen Bedeutung mehr als die persische sich genähert hat. Wenn diese in allen ihren Bildungen bloßer Schematismus beleibt, so erhabt sich jene wenigstens zur allegorischen, und das Allegorische ist das herrschende poetische Princip in ihr. Daher die Leichtigkeit oberflächlich poetischer Köpfe, sie sich anzueignen. Zum Symbolischen geht es nicht. Allein da sie doch wenigstens durch Allegorie poetisch ist, so konnte in der weiteren Ausbildung der allegorischen Seite allerdings wahre Poesie entstehen, so daß die indische Bildung Werke ächter Lichtkunst aufzuweisen hat. Der Grund oder Stamm ist unpoetisch; das aber, was gleichsam unabhängig von diesem sich für sich selbst gebildet hat, ist poetisch. Die herrschende Farbe auch der dramatischen Gedichte der Indier, z. B. der Sakontala und des Sehnsucht- und Wollust-athmenden Gedichtes der Gita-Govin, ist die lyrisch-epische. Diese Gedichte sind für sich nicht allegorisch, und wenn itwa die Liebschaften und die Wandelbarkeit des Gottes Krischna (welche das Sujet des zuletzt angeführten Gedichtes ist) ursprünglich allegorische Bedeutung hatten, so haven sie solche wenigstens in diesem Gedicht verloren. Aber obgleich diese Werke wenigstens als Ganzes nicht allegorisch sing, so is doch die innere Konstruktion derselben ganz im Geiste der Allegorie. Man kann allerdings nicht wissen, wie weit die Poesie der Indier sich zur Kunst gebildet hätte, ware ihnen nicht durch ihre Religion alle bildende Kunst als Plastik versagt gewesen. (*Sämmtliche Werke*, 5:423–24)

> [One cannot deny that Indian mythology has come closer to poetic significance than has its Persian counterpart. Whereas the latter remains pure schematism in all its creations, the former at least elevates itself to the level of allegory, and the allegorical element is its dominant poetic principle. Hence, this explains the ease with which superficially poetic minds appropriate it. It is never able to elevate itself to the symbolic level. Since, however, it is at least allegorically poetic, the further cultivation of this allegorical side did indeed enable genuine poesy to develop, such that Indian culture does possess works of genuine poetic art. The foundation or basis is unpoetic, though that which cultivated itself for its own sake independently of this basis is poetic. The dominant color of the dramatic poems of the Indians, for example, of the *Abhijñānaśākuntalam* and the yearning, voluptuous poem of the *Gita-Govinda*, is the lyric-epic. In and for themselves these poems are not allegorical; even if the love affairs and the changeability of the god Krishna (which is the subject of the latter poem) originally possessed allegorical significance, at least in these poems they have lost such significance. Yet although these works at least as a *whole* are not allegorical, they are constructed internally quite in the spirit of allegory. One cannot, it is true, know just how

> far the poesy of the Indians would have cultivated itself artistically if their religion had not denied them all formative art specifically as plastic arts.[22]

Why it is that Schelling finds that, while mythology provides the original allegorical foundation of Indian poesy, the Indians' religion has denied them "alle bildende Kunst," however, is not really explained. While he does not find the *Gitagovinda* and *Śakuntala* wholly allegorical, he does appear to find in them the allegorical significance that he feels the works have lost, or at least so Schwab contends (*La renaissance orientale*, 222). Schelling finds that the two texts still contain glimpses of the original Indian wisdom that has been lost or sullied by the ages and do provide some fertile soil in which to plant the seeds that may reconcile the dueling camps of European philosophy.

## Conclusion

Schelling's conception of art advances the idea of a continuous progression from lower to higher orders, reaching toward perfection. As Charles Taylor points out, Schelling thus imbues Schiller's notion of the aesthetic as the locus of recovered unity between freedom and necessity with an ontological foundation.[23] In fact Schelling insisted that the necessary intuition of this "absolute identity" cannot be intellectual but must be aesthetic, for art can show what philosophy cannot.

Later in life, however, Schelling would draw closer to Lutheran orthodoxy, his fascination with Sanskrit literature would wane as it would for others in the Jena School, and he would become almost an adversary of German Indic studies. Pinkard notes that the seeds of this shift are already perceptible in *Philosophische Untersuchungen über das Wesen der menschlichen Freiheit* (Philosophical Investigations on the Essence of Human Freedom, 1809), which uses language similar to both Arthur Schopenhauer's *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung* and Friedrich Nietzsche's *Geburt der Tragödie* (to be addressed in chapters 7 and 8), although there is no clearly traceable influence of Schelling's short treatise on those other two works.[24] At least in his works from the turn of the nineteenth century, higher orders of natural organization are arrived at only through alternation and subsumption. While it is difficult to confirm Raymond Schwab's contention that the *Gitagovinda* marked a distinct shift in Schelling's thinking, an analysis of the text through the lens of his *Naturphilosophie* and his ideas of the role of art does yield striking similarities.

In "Reading Schelling after Heidegger: The Freedom of Cryptic Dialogue," Peter Warnek notes a claim made by Heidegger about Hegel's misunderstanding of Schelling: "[The] greatest thinkers at bottom never

understand each other, precisely because, in the form of their own singular greatness, they each will or want *the same*."[25] Warnek notes that this claim is more than a quip about the two philosophers' complex relationship and in fact indicates the very limits of philosophical interpretation: "the greatness of thinkers thus lies in their ability to encounter each other only through a constitutive interpretive violence, a basic intolerence and exclusion of the other and the thinking of the other" (164). Such an interpretive violence may indeed account for the conspicuous absence in Schelling's writing of references to the philosophical similarities between his own early system and the thought contained in the *Gitagovinda*.

Andrew Bowie notes that by 1804 for Schelling "transcendental philosophy was a result, not a beginning,"[26] but the Early Romantics' love affair with India did not furnish him with satisfactory beginnings either. Gérard argues that it is evident from 1805 onward in such works as *Philosophie und Religion*, *Über das Wesen der menschlichen Freiheit*, and *Die Weltalter* that Schelling felt, like Friedrich Schlegel, that even the mystical strain in Greek thought was of Oriental origin; in many respects this era in Schelling's work resembles the philosophy of the *Upanishads*, but one finds only references to Greek philosophy.[27] Gérard maintains that the polarity of nature corresponds to a polarity of civilizations, an Occidentalo-Oriental antinomy of realism and idealism respectively, that would at all costs attempt to resolve its conflict by regrafting the idealist thought of the Orient onto the realist thought of the Occident.[28] Indeed, like most of the Jena School, Schelling felt that European philosophy had been cut off from Asian idealism by the advent of rationalism and materialism. His contribution to the Indo-German identification lies in attempting to restore the link between South Asian and Europe by using Hindu thought to look beyond European philosophy's restrictive positions in search of greater unity.

## Notes

The epigraph at the start of this chapter is from Martin Heidegger, *Schelling's Treatise on the Essence of Human Freedom* (Athens: Ohio UP, 1985), 4. "Denn Schelling ist der eigentlich schöpferische und am weitesten ausgreifende Denker dieses ganzen Zeitalters der deutschen Philosophie. Er ist das *so* sehr, daß er den deutschen Idealismus von innen her über seine eigene Grundstellung hinaustreibt" (Martin Heidegger, *Schellings Abhandlung Über das Wesen der menschlicken Freiheit (1809)* [Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1971], 4).

[1] Gérard, *L'Orient et la pensée romantique allemande*, 211. Frederick Beiser furnishes a contextualization of the concept of the *Weltseele* in both of Schelling's works *Von der Weltseele* and *Erster Entwurf eines Systems der Naturphilosphie* (Frederick C. Beiser, *German Idealism: The Struggle Against Subjectivism, 1781–1801* [Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 2002], 547–50).

[2] Schwab, *La renaissance orientale*, 203.
[3] Jayadeva, *The Gitagovinda of Jayadeva: Love Song of the Dark Lord*, ed. and trans. Barbara Stoller Miller (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1984), x.
[4] "Il l'interprète comme livrant le mystère originel de l'esprit humain, mystère qui aurait passé ensuite de l'Inde en Égypte, à Eleusis, puis à un Évangile ésotérique connu des saints Jean et Paul" (Schwab, *La renaissance orientale*, 222).
[5] F. W. J. Schelling, *Briefe und Dokumente*, ed. Horst Fuhrmans (Bonn: H. Bouvier, 1962–75), 480.
[6] For Nussbaum, "descriptive chauvinism" consists of "recreating the other in the image of oneself, reading the strange as exactly like what is familiar" (Martha C. Nussbaum, *Cultivating Humanity: A Classical Defense of Reform in Liberal Education* [Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1997], 118), and "descriptive romanticism" is "the expression of a romantic longing for exotic experiences that our own familiar lives seem to deny us" (123). It is "normative chauvinism" when "the evaluator judges that her own culture is best, and that insofar as the other culture is unlike it, it is inferior" (131), and "normative Arcadianism" consists of "imagining the other as untouched by the vices of one's own culture" (134). Finally, Nussbaum defines "normative skepticism" as when "the inquirer simply narrates the way things are, suspending all normative judgment about its goodness and badness" (136).
[7] Bradley L. Herling, "'Either a Hermeneutical Consciousness or a Critical Consciousness': Renegotiating Theories of the Germany-India Encounter," *The Comparatist* (2010).
[8] Jason M. Wirth, ed., *Schelling Now: Contemporary Readings* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 2005), 1.
[9] *The Bhagavad Gītā*, trans. and commentary R. C. Zaehner (New York: Oxford UP, 1969), 3.
[10] Lee Siegel, *Sacred and Profane Dimensions of Love in Indian Traditions as Exemplified in the* Gitagovinda *of Jayadeva* (Delhi: Oxford UP, 1978), 159–60.
[11] The very title of Tilliette's study, *Schelling: Une philosophie en devenir* (Schelling: A philosophy of becoming; Paris: Vrin, 1970), encapsulates the point, which is made particularly throughout volume 1, "Le Système Vivant, 1794–1821."
[12] F. W. J. Schelling, *Werke*, ed. Hartmut Buchner and Jörg Jantzen (Stuttgart: Frommann-Holzboog, 1976), 1:2.85; F. W. J. Schelling, *The Unconditional in Human Knowledge: Four Early Essays (1794–1796)*, trans. Fritz Marti (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell UP, 1980), 71.
[13] F. W. J. Schelling, *Ideas for a Philosophy of Nature as Introduction to the Study of This Science*, trans. Errol E. Harris and Peter Heath (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge UP, 1988), 28.
[14] Terry Pinkard, *German Philosophy 1760–1860: The Legacy of Idealism* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge UP, 2002), 173.
[15] Schelling, *The Unconditional in Human Knowledge*, 165.
[16] See Siegel, *Sacred and Profane Dimensions of Love in Indian Traditions*, 287, and Jayadeva, *The Gitagovinda of Jayadeva*, 70.

[17] F. W. J. Schelling, *Sämmtliche Werke*, ed. Karl Friedrich August Schelling, 14 vols. (Stuttgart: J. G. Cotta, 1856–61), 3:312.
[18] *Bhagavad Gītā*, 145; *The Bhagavadgita: Krishna's Counsel in Time of War*, trans. Barbara Stoler Miller (New York: Columbia UP, 1986), 36.
[19] Pinkard, *German Philosophy 1760–1860*, 187.
[20] "Avec la philosophie de l'identité, Schelling se rapproche plus franchement de l'Orient. Non pas qu'il se soit inspiré de la philosophie indienne pour construire son absolu que est identité du sujet et de l'objet" (Gérard, *L'Orient et la pensée romantique allemande*, 211).
[21] F. W. J. Schelling, *System of Transcendental Idealism*, trans. Peter L. Heath (Charlottesville: UP of Virgina, 1978), 219.
[22] F. W. J. Schelling, *Philosophy of Art*, ed. and trans. Douglas W. Stott (Minneapolis: U Minnesota P, 1989), 57.
[23] Charles Taylor, *Hegel* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge UP, 1975), 42.
[24] Pinkard, *German Philosophy 1760–1860*, 195.
[25] Peter Warnek, "Reading Schelling after Heidegger: The Freedom of Cryptic Dialogue," in *Schelling Now: Contemporary Readings*, ed. Jason M. Wirth (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 2005), 163.
[26] Andrew Bowie, *Schelling and Modern European Philosophy: An Introduction* (London: Routledge, 1993), 57.
[27] Gérard, *L'Orient et la pensée romantique allemande*, 209–10.
[28] "La polarité de la nature correspondait à une polarité des civilizations, une antimonie occidentalo-orientale qui serait celle du réalisme et de l'idéalisme, et qu'il fallait à tout prix tenter de résoudre en régreffant sur la pensée réaliste de l'Occident la pensée idéaliste de l'Orient" (Gérard, *L'Orient et la pensée romantique allemande*, 213). Here he cites a letter of Schelling's from 18 December 1806.

# 5: Fear of Infinity: Friedrich Schlegel's Indictment of Indian Religion

> *Ah Pythagoras* metem su cossis *were that true, This soule should flie from me, and I be changde Vnto some brutish beast.*
> — Christopher Marlowe, *Doctor Faustus* (1604)

Friedrich Schlegel continued the tradition of locating the origins of the Germans in India, but eventually took an adversarial stance against South Asian religions. In *Über die Sprache und die Weisheit der Indier* (*On the Language and Wisdom of the Indians*, 1808) he described Hinduism and Buddhism as not only pale imitations of the perfected Christianity to come, but essentially nihilist. He thus established a viewpoint about Asian religion that would prove detrimental to the interpretation of Asian religious texts well into the twentieth century. The primary problem for Schlegel's encounter with Hinduism and the reason for his eventual attack on it is the irreconcilability of Eastern concepts that have no Western equivalents, such as the concept of the void. He was unable to reconcile these cyclical and rectilinear systems because of what one might call his "fear of infinity."

Schlegel's original fascination with Sanskrit literature reflected his longing to find in India a unifying spiritual revolution outside traditional classical and Christian frameworks that might synthesize religion, philosophy, and art. In defining this revolution, he emphasized the similarities between Vedantic philosophy and German idealism, which both center on questions of dualism. Schlegel's conversion to Catholicism, which occurred during the same week in April 1808 in which *Über die Sprache und die Weisheit der Indier* was published, is also indicative of such longing. Novalis saw Hinduism as paving the way for Christianity, and Schlegel, like Schelling, not only agreed with this formulation, but increasingly believed Hinduism to be but a faint shadow of the perfected Christianity to come. This is already foreshadowed in *Über die Sprache und die Weisheit der Indier* in his exegesis of Sanskrit texts such as the *Manusmriti*, the *Ramayana*, the *Upanishads*, the *Purāṇas*, the *Bhagavad Gītā*, and *Abhijñānaśākuntalam*. He makes very strong claims about the identification of ancient Indians and modern Germans, about mass migrations out of northern India that eventually led to the settling of both northern and southern Europe, thus bringing together the Hellentistic tradition of describing "Aryan" superiority, the Reformation-era tradition of describing all Europeans as Germans, and

the emerging anthropological theories of his own time, establishing a line of thought that Poliakov argues led to the "Aryan myth."[1] Yet he finds that it is the destiny of modern Germans to rediscover and further refine the original wisdom of the Indians, which has been sullied by centuries of misinterpretation, desuetude, and ignorance.

Schlegel's own spiritual difficulty, however, lay in an untenably enthusiastic initial investment in ideas whose apparent paradoxes he was unable to work out satisfactorily, causing him to retreat from his zealous position. Dorothy Figueira and Bradley Herling have noted in Schlegel a dynamic identified by Edward Said in which initial unbridled enthusiasm for a foreign philosophical system reverses into tremendous disillusionment with and eventual condemnation of it.[2] Recently Chen Tzoref-Ashkenazi has faulted Figueira for underestimating the import of the political stance in Schlegel's book,[3] but his nationalism was a spiritual problem framed by notions of origins and destiny. It was a metaphysical issue, and his eventual indictment of Hindu philosophy was based on his non-acceptance of concepts of infinity that have no Western counterparts.

The concept of infinity — in particular, the idea of "the void," the empty expanse out of which the universe may have arisen and to which it may one day return — was an accepted part of Indian thinking beginning in ancient times. On the other hand, in the foundational civilizations of the West, notably ancient Greece, the idea of infinity, be it in matter or a vacuum, was suspect. For example, the mathematical expression "zero" did not exist for the Greeks. Zero, the "protagonist" in a couple of recent intellectual histories, had been used merely as a placeholder in ancient Babylonian mathematics. When it made its way to India via trade routes, it finally became a symbol that was understood differently from any other mathematical expression: as a designation for absence. Charles Seife points out that India was a logical site for the transformation of zero, for the *Rig Veda* states that the fires of creation arose out of the void at the beginning of this eon of the universe's existence and all things would eventually return to that void at its end.[4]

Such philosophical foundations derived out of a void were not to be found among the Greeks, of whom Schlegel was so enamored early in his intellectual development. Aristotle distinguished between physics, which deals with things that are both inseparable from matter and are subject to movement, and metaphysics, which treats that which both exists in separation from matter and is motionless. In *On the Heavens* (ca. 350 B.C.) he concludes:

> Φανερὸν τοίνυν ἐκ τῶν εἰρημένων ὅτι οὔτ᾽ἔστιν ἔξω οὔτ᾽ ἐγχωρεῖ γενέσθαι σώματος ὄγκον οὐθενός. ἐξ ἁπάσης γάρ ἐστι τῆς οἰκείας ὕλης ὁ πᾶς κόσμος (ὕλη γὰρ ἦν αὐτῷ τὸ φυσικὸν σῶμα καὶ αἰσθητόν), ὥστ᾽οὔτε νῦν εἰσὶ πλείους οὐρανοὶ οὔτ᾽ἐγένοντο, οὔτ᾽ἐνδέχεται γενέσθαι πλείους.

> [It is plain, then, from what has been said (in his earlier explanation of the heavens), that there is not, nor do the facts allow there to be, any bodily mass beyond the heaven. The world in its entirety is made up of the whole sum of available matter (for the matter appropriate to it is, as we saw, natural perceptible body), and we may conclude that there is not now a plurality of worlds.][5]

In his *Metaphysics* (ca. 350 B.C.), Aristotle then used his argument against infinity, combined with some attributional logic, to prove the necessary existence of divinity. He argued that the existence of at least one unchangeable being, which causes motion while remaining unmoved itself, is shown by the impossibility of an infinite series of existent sources of movement. In Aristotle's reality, the universe is composed of moving spheres that produce the music of the cosmos, each one moving the one before it, until the outermost sphere that contains all others is reached. This sphere is moved by divinity and there is nothing beyond it. Thus, Aristotle's proof of the existence of divinity refutes the idea of infinity. This description of the cosmos, among Aristotle's other ideas and writings, lived on through the Middle Ages in Islamic scholars' translations and, in modified form, in the Ptolemaic system (which used Aristotle to justify its earth-centered description of the universe), only to be "rediscovered" in Europe in the sixteenth century. In the Middle Ages, however, Indian mathematicians such as Bhaskara (12th c.) would argue that dividing a positive number by zero resulted in an infinite quantity, leading them to reverse Aristotle's argument and assert that zero proves the existence of divinity. When the Islamic world encountered zero in trading with Southern Asia, it would also eventually use the idea of the existence of a void to overturn Neo-Aristotelianism during this same period, handing down many of their ideas via Scholasticism.

The creation of the universe out of a void would be just one of the fundamental concepts of Hinduism that incorporated the infinite in ways that proved perplexing for Europeans since they have neither classical nor Judeo-Christian counterparts. During the Renaissance and Enlightenment, however, and in particular due to the age of naval exploration, unusual terms and concepts now began to make their way into European thought. The early German Romantics did not retain an interest in mathematics and, in fact, in the tradition of Reformation Protestants they rejected empirical proofs of divine existence. The Hindu concept of the void as they would understand it through the first translations of and commentaries on Sanskrit texts would prove fascinating and problematic for them, and in particular for Schlegel. He would view Hindu and Buddhist doctrines concerning infinity, transcendence of materiality, and *nirvana* as indications of the loss of revealed truth, which, though such truth may have originated in the subcontinent, would only be rediscovered in Judea and improved upon in modern Europe.

*L'épreuve de l'étranger* (1984), Antoine Berman's extensive study of translation among the Romantics and their sympathizers explores in great detail the translation of Shakespeare, Spanish poetry, and Greco-Roman texts by Novalis, the Schlegels, and Schleiermacher among others, emphasizing their search for German national identity and auto-affirmation. Berman virtually ignores, however, the fact that anyone in Germany was interested in Orientalist scholarship, mentioning the existence of Schlegel's *Über die Sprache und die Weisheit der Indier* only in a brief footnote about Schlegel's lack of an explicit theory of language. Schlegel's Sanskrit translations are for the most part considered adequate, although scholars such as Berman and Ursula Oppenberg note that August Wilhelm Schlegel's command of Sanskrit was superior; however, his commentaries on Sanskrit texts foster misconceptions about Asian religions, as scholars such as Roger-Pol Droit have noted.

This chapter is therefore intended as a contribution to this recent line of scholarship concerning the role of Germany in postcolonial studies as a site of Pollock's "internal colonialism," that is, a milieu in which South Asian philosophies and literatures were used to expand the boundaries, influence, and importance of Germanic culture itself. Friedrich Schlegel's *Über die Sprache und die Weisheit der Indier* has historically been credited with having begun the study of comparative Indo-European linguistics in Germany and/or faulted as proto-nationalistic. In the anthology *Sanskrit and "Orientalism,"* edited by Douglas T. McGetchin, Peter K. J. Park and D. R. SarDesai, Park usefully emphasizes the importance of Schlegel's text in the context of biblical philology in Germany and Tzoref-Ashkenazi elaborates on its political import. This chapter concerns its role in introducing the field of Indology to the Germanic states in a way that would prove influential in perpetuating myths about Hinduism and India that had begun in the work of the Hellenistic and Roman historians cited earlier, ultimately placing Eastern teachings in a hierarchy below those of Christianity for, as Wilhelm Halbfass remarks, *Über die Sprache und die Weisheit der Indier* is "primarily a philosophical statement."[6]

## Irony vs. Faith

The same oscillation between annihilation and restoration seen in the work of Novalis and Schelling occurs in the work of Friedrich Schlegel and is best exemplified by his doctrine of irony. Novalis and the Schlegel brothers were immensely excited by Fichte's work and lectures at Jena University, and Friedrich's notion of Romantic irony draws from Fichte the idea of a creative subjectivity so sublimely free as to be disengaged even from its own aesthetic works. The detachment implicit in Schlegel's irony, however, is not the same as the detachment from materiality emphasized in so many

Hindu texts on which he would write commentaries. In fact, one might argue that Schlegel's irony ultimately seems to be in opposition to spiritual investment. Although it appears to embrace the paradoxes of existence, it belies a personal unwillingness to invest in the sort of self-examination that would cause one to change one's mind in any fundamental way, presuming that to be possible. Although it is difficult to prove, I would argue that this is true and accounts to a large degree for Schlegel' retreat from the apparent incommensurability of Indian and Western philosophy to take refuge in the familiar consolations of Christianity.

Most of the theoretical foundation for Schlegel's doctrine of irony is to be found in his definition of Romantic literature in his theory of "progressive Universalpoesie," which states that Romantic poetry recognizes as its first commandment that the will of the poet can tolerate no law above itself.[7] He claims that such poetry can be free of all self-interest, raising poetic reflection by multiplying it in an endless succession of mirrors. It seems to be precisely this endless reflecting that elevates irony, cutting off the poet from the truly difficult and necessary integration of personal soul with impersonal absolute as emphasized in the *Upanishads* and *Bhagavad Gītā*, texts that comprise the philosophical foundation of Sanskrit literature, and preserving an interest in the poet's material self. It may thus be no wonder that the word *Ironie* itself derives from the Greek *eironeia* meaning "dissimulation."

Since irony consists of purporting a meaning that is different from and often opposite to a literal one, the Romantic poet is under no obligation to commit himself. The attitude of irony — which was for Schlegel not just a literary technique but a philosophy of living — runs further risks, since the practice of Romantic irony may lead to irresponsible human actions. For example, although not ironic in intention, Tieck's protagonist William Lovell, who rapes his twin sister who then commits suicide, may be considered a nihilist extension of the ironic tendency found in Schlegel. Schlegel takes Romantic irony (as distinguished from Juvenal's irony or Swift's irony) as far as Tieck, but not in the direction of the demonic. He extends his philosophy of irony in search of religious salvation, which is conceived of as a process of becoming. This would derive largely from his paradoxical encounter with Indian studies.

As Michael Franklin notes in his excellent introduction to the 2001 reprint of E. J. Millington's 1849 translation, *On the Language and Wisdom of the Indians*, Schlegel began his intellectual career as a classicist studying Sophocles and Plato in Greek, inspired by Winckelmann's emphasis on the superiority and harmony of ancient Greek civilization. Yet he also shared with Herder and Gotthold Ephraim Lessing an outspoken German disdain for the classical imitations of French neoclassicism.[8] Indeed, Schlegel described the Latin languages as "partly dead" and therefore deficient in creative elements. Although he had very much impressed

his professors at Göttigen and Leipzig, he found that their emphasis on the capacities of the human mind lacked engagement with that which lay outside it. By 1795 his ideas about poetry were split between his denigration of modern poetry when juxtaposed to the ancient Greek, as is made clear in his essay "Über das Studium der griechischen Poesie" (On the Study of Greek Poetry), and his anticipation of the vindication of Romantic poetry.

Schlegel's interest in India had several roots. First, in 1797 he read Georg Forster's *Sakontala*. Although earlier he had been critical of Herder's interpretation of Indian sources, Herder's commentary on the play and the general enthusiasm for it in the German principalities stimulated Schlegel's interest in Indian literature. Second, in 1800 he met the Orientalist Friedrich Majer in Jena, which inspired him to pursue the study of Sanskrit itself. The 1802 Peace of Amiens brought to Paris the man who would become Schlegel's Sanskrit teacher, the British scholar Alexander Hamilton (first cousin of the American statesman). Schlegel was living in Paris with Dorothea Veit, the daughter of the literary critic Moses Mendelssohn, and studying Persian with the Orientalist Antoine-Léonard de Chézy. Like the third Schlegel brother, Karl August, Hamilton had been an army officer in the East India Company and a member of the Asiatick Society of Bengal founded by William Jones, had married a Bengali woman, and had begun cataloguing the Indian manuscripts that had worked their way into the Bibliothèque Nationale over the preceding decades. Within a few years, the focal point of Indian studies would thus shift to Paris from London, where it had arrived from Calcutta.

But even before his Sanskrit studies in Paris, Friedrich and August Wilhelm Schlegel wrote articles for their quarterly *Athenäum* that reflected their nascent but enthusiastic support of the virtues of the Sanskrit language and literature. In "Gespräch über die Poesie" (Discussions of Poetry, 1800), Friedrich argues that the treasures of South Asian literature should be as accessible as those of Greek and Roman antiquity, viewing India as the source of "*Universalpoesie*." In an essay entitled "Die Sprachen" (Languages, 1799), August Wilhelm describes the grammatical perfection of Sanskrit as the language of heaven, its characters having been designed by God himself.

Park has argued that Schlegel's *Über die Sprache und die Weisheit der Indier* is the apology of a Catholic convert, and that "with the theory of degeneration, Schlegel and other Christian thinkers could account for the heathen peoples of Asia and the New World using the Bible's historical scheme and still retain the view of monogenesis."[9] Indeed, Schlegel's conversion to Catholicism seems to have been coming for several years and the composition of this text in 1806–7 appears coincident with his feeling that Asian thought, having strayed so far from pri-

mordial revelation, now threatened Christianity, the sole remaining manifestation of that original unity. As Park notes, *Über die Sprache und die Weisheit der Indier* was the fifth intellectual history of mankind and the second critique of all philosophy that Schlegel wrote during his time in Cologne, each in the service of Christian faith. Close examination of the text, however, reveals much more devastating criticism of South Asian religion.

## Manifestations of Fear

By the time Schlegel arrived at the composition of his definitive work on Sanskrit literature and Hindu philosophy, his love affair with India had devolved into suspicion and discord. The result is a deeply conflicted work. Book one of *Über die Sprache und die Weisheit der Indier*, "Von der Sprache" (On Language), presents evidence of the relationship between Sanskrit and Greek, Latin, Persian, and Germanic tongues, building on William Jones's "Third Anniversary Discourse" given at the Asiatick Society in Bengal in 1786. Like Jones, Schlegel avoids drawing etymologies based on conjecture, emphasizing the roots of verbs and grammatical form.[10] As Franklin notes, "for Schlegel, similarity of structure indicated commonality of origin, and hence also commonality of essence or spirit, whereas similarity of roots indicated the belated intermingling of languages that have originated separately and that share a mere contiguity of material existence" (xii).

It was in this context that Schlegel introduced the term "comparative grammar," which was based on the analogy of comparative anatomy and the idea of language "family trees" suggested by advances in genealogy. Taking his lead from Herder, Schlegel believed that similar structures indicated not only common origin, but also common spirit. In considering Sanskrit itself the Indo-European *Ursprache* rather than its descendant, however, Schlegel made an error that Jones had avoided. Sanskritist Madhav Deshpande notes that such errors in assuming origins are to some extent due to the fact that pre-500 B.C. Vedic was largely incomprehensible and European Indologists were easily misled in trying to find in it cognates with European languages because of ancient Vedic's plethora of regional folk etymologies.[11]

Schlegel advocated in his preface that the study of Indian literature should be embraced by teachers and students as readily as Greco-Roman culture had been embraced by scholars in Germany and Italy in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, using the term "Oriental Renaissance" that he had coined in 1803. He predicted that a short time invested in the study of Indian culture in the nineteenth century, with energy equal to that expended in the Renaissance, would prove no less grand and universal for

the European mind. He argued that the form of all wisdom and science, and almost of the world itself, would be changed and renewed by the influence of the knowledge that would be reawakened, and he maintained that the structure of Sanskrit indicates a clear and profound understanding of human consciousness early in the history of mankind, for the Indian language,

> die selbst in ihren ersten und einfachsten Bestandtheilen die höchsten Begriffe der reinen Gedankenwelt, gleichsam den ganzen Grundriß des Bewußtseins nicht bildlich, sondern in unmittelbarer Klarheit ausdrückt. (*Kritische Friedrich-Schlegel-Ausgabe*, 8:169)
>
> [even in its simplest form, exemplifies the loftiest ideas of the pure world of thought, and displays the entire ground plan of consciousness, not in figurative symbols, but with unmediated clarity. (*On the Language and Wisdom of the Indians*, 454)

In addition:

> Dieß feine Gefühl mußte dann mit der Sprache selbst zugleich auch Schrift hervorbringen; keine hieroglyphische nach äußern Naturgegenständen malende oder bildernde, sondern eine solche, welche den innern Charater der Buchstaben, wie er so deutlich gefülht ward, nun auch in sichtlichen Umrißen hinstellte und bezeichnete. (8:151)
>
> [This fine perception of the value of sounds and syllables would produce a system of writing almost simultaneously with the spoken language; not mere hieroglyphic paintings, or images copied from the external forms of nature, but a system in which the innermost nature of the letters, already so clearly sensed, now might also be indicated or sketched out in the mind by visible outlines. (446)]

Schlegel ends the section maintaining that scarcely any language in the world can be found, no matter how geographically or culturally remote, in which German does not have roots, which documents the great wide migrations of the Teutonic race — or, one might say, his subscription to a good deal of lazy argument by analogy. The importance of this claim should not be underestimated, for it was the most direct connection drawn between ancient Indians and modern Germans since Voltaire and would play a vital role in the development of the concept of Aryanism.

It is book two, "Von der Philosophie" (On Philosophy), however, that may ultimately prove to be the more influential portion of this work, for here we see the "fear of infinity" laid bare. Schlegel's attempts to survey the cyclical nature of Indian philosophy objectively are overshadowed by his growing Christian sentiments and their emphasis on rectolinearity. He goes on to develop the theme of the beauty and antiquity of Sanskrit and

its aptitude for expressing philosophical ideas, but his writing begins to betray his mistrust of the philosophical systems he uncovers. He maintains that the ancient Hindus possessed a knowledge of the true God, but that the original revelation had been obscured and sullied by pantheism, polytheism, and the Indian system of emanation (the theory that all derived or secondary things flow from the primary), producing fatalism, determinism, moral stupefaction, and intellectual indolence. The optimism and belief in universal progress that mark book one give way to a discourse of deterioration in book two. Franklin notes that this may have resulted partly from the fact that the Indian Puranic tradition, which Schlegel touches upon, saw the world as subject to progressive deterioration (*On the Language and Wisdom of the Indians,* xiii).[12]

In reading Sanskrit literature, Schlegel tended to see only the emphasis on the Shaivic, and this not as part of a cycle of decay and reemergence, but as an end in itself. In his discussion of the *Manusmriti*, for example, he argues:

> Was die Dichter der Alten in einzelnen Sprüchen von dem Unglück des Daseins fingen, jene traurigen Strahlen einer durchaus furchtbaren Welt-Ansicht, die sie in tiefbedeutenden Trauerspielen aus dem Gedanken eines dunkeln Schicksals über die Sagen und Geschichten von Göttern und Menschen verbreiten, sammle man sich in Ein Bild und allumfassendes Ganzes, und verwandle das vorübergehende dichterische Spiel in bleibenden ewigen Ernst, so wird man am besten das Eigenthümliche der alten indischen Ansicht aufgefaßt haben. (8:203)
>
> [If all that has been sung by poets of antiquity concerning the misery of created existence be assembled into one image and under one comprehensive form; if we collect each melancholy gleam and fearful conception of the world around, which, born of that gloomy idea of irrevocable destiny, pervades the poetical legends and histories of their gods, and breaks forth in deep-souled tragedies, changing the play of poetical imagery and diction into an enduring and eternal sadness, we shall gain the most perfect conception of the peculiar characteristics of this ancient Indian doctrine. (470)]

Schlegel states that in the cosmogony of Manu one already finds traces of materialism, a clue for tracing the progress of degeneracy from spiritual ideas to an entirely materialist worldview. He argues that in all the ancient Indian texts, one witnesses the "primitive error" of mistaking man, the "blind and senseless instrument" of divinity, for the free operation and comprehension of divine truth. He finds that the most important periods of Indian, and indeed of all Asian, philosophy and religion are the periods that see the diffusion of the doctrine of emanation, which eventually degenerates into astrological superstition and fanatical materialism, and the doctrine of dualism, which is eventually transformed into pantheism. He

argues that among all the systems of philosophy to have come out of Asia, none are so positively of Indian origin or as old as the doctrines of emanation and metempsychosis:

> Wo diese Seelenwanderung nicht bloß physisch gemeint, sondern mit der Meinung von der moralischen Verderbniß und Unseeligkeit aller Wesen, und nothwendigen Reinigung und Rückkehr zu Gott verbunden ist, da ist sie sicher aus diesem System entlehnt, und also indischen Ursprungs. Auf diese Weise finden wir in der Lehre des Pythagoras den Begriff der Metempsychose mit allen seinen orientalischen Nebenbestimmungen zum sichern Beweise, daß es keine hellenische Erfindung war, obgleich bald hernach mit hellenischem Geist und Scharfsinn angeeignet und umgebildet; man müßte dann auch die ältesten und verhältnißmäßig besten Nachrichten von der pythagorischen Lehre ganz verwerfen wollen. (8:213)

> [This Metempsychosis, wherever it is not viewed in a merely physical light, but as closely connected with a belief in the moral ruin and abasement of all created beings, is unquestionably of Indian origin, springing from the belief in emanation, and inculcating the necessity of repentance and purification as the terms of reunion with the Supreme Being. Thus the doctrine of the Metempsychosis, with all its Oriental accompaniments embodied in the teaching of Pythagoras, proves his philosophy to have been no Hellenistic invention, although it was soon developed and adorned with all the riches of Hellenistic genius and ingenuity. We must, then, also be prepared completely to reject the oldest and proportionately best accounts of Pythagorean philosophy. (476)]

This is a renewal of arguments made by Hellenistic and Roman writers such as Megasthenes, Arrian, Strabo, and Philostratus, that the most ancient sages of Greece — notably Pythagoras and Plato, not to mention the god Dionysus himself — had in fact been taught their philosophies by Brahmin priests in India.

Schlegel oscillates in book two between discussions of emanation, metempsychosis, dualism, pantheism, immorality, and materialism. It is almost as if his disbelief of the "errors" in these texts kept him from being able to discuss one issue exhaustively before moving on to the next. He finds that the doctrine of emanation can be understood most favorably when considered as a system of reunion with the divine essence, in which the divine origin of man continually inculcates one to return and incites us to consider a reunion and reincorporation with divinity as the one primary object of every action and exertion. He concludes that the doctrine of emanation is intelligible only as a perverted conception of revealed truth.

Schlegel traces the play of positive and negative forces, the *sattvic* and *tamasic*, in the earliest forms of Indian pantheism to the later alterations and the "debasement" of dualism, arguing that pantheism leads to the

rejection of the difference between right and wrong. He argues that with the doctrine of emanation the world is viewed as degraded, and that as a result only the realm of the Creator is divine bliss. He finds that the persistence of such an erroneous notion is due to its systematic connections throughout Hinduism, as is true with Hindu conceptions of what it means to break the cycle of material re-birth, which Schlegel mistakenly refers to as "immortality":

> [Unsterblichkeit, die] nicht bloße Wahrscheinlichkeit war, durch langes Nachdenken allmählig gefunden, oder ferne Dichtung von einer unbestimmten Schattenwelt, sondern feste und klare Gewißheit, so daß der Gedanke des andern Lebens herrschender Bestimmungsgrund aller Handlungen in diesem ward. Ziel und Seele der ganzen Verfassung, aller Gesetze und Einrichtungen, bis auf die geringsten Gebräuche. (8:205)

> [(Immortality) was not with them a mere probability, deduced gradually, the result of long study and reflection; not some vague imagining of an undefined and shadowy world, but a conviction so certain and decided, that the idea of a future life became the ruling motive and impulse of all actions in this; the grand aim and object of all laws and arrangements, carried out even in the most trifling details. (472)]

Immortality is not construed here as Christian heaven, but as a delusion created by the idea that one can transform one's existence. The idea that there are states of existence between material incarnations is discarded out of hand.

Schlegel derives the "demoralization" of divinity from an overemphasis on the decay of the material, thus following the tradition among Roman historians such as Arrian and Philostratus of associating Śiva with Dionysus:

> In der aus sehr verschiedenen Bestandtheilen zusammengesetzten und durch manche Stufen allmählig gebildeten Religion der Indier, nimmt die Unbethung der wilden Naturkraft aber eine nur allzu große Stelle ein. Bald als allvernichtende Zerstörung aufgefaßt, bald als Zeugungskraft der Natur als eines unendlichen Thieres, biethet uns der Dienst des Sivo, und der furchtbare Durga, Bilder des Todes und der Wollust, blutige Menschenopfer und bacchantische Zügellosigkeit in einem grausen Gemisch dar. Was diesen Naturdienst und Materialismus so schrecklich macht, und von der bloßen Sinnlichkeit mancher Völker um Zustande der einfachsten Wildheit noch so sehr unterscheidet, dürfte gerade die beigemischte und überall einverwebte Idee des Unendlichen sein, die noch auf den bessern Ursprung zurück deutet; denn grade das Höchste und Edelste wird immer, wenn es verwildert und entartet, zur schrecklichsten Misgestalt. (8:223)

> [The wild adoration of mere physical strength holds a far too important place in the various different elements out of which the religion of the Hindus gradually developed itself. It is presented under two characters; sometimes as an inexhaustible creative power, and sometimes as an all-annihilating principle of destruction, and is thus embodied in the worship of Śiva, and of the terrific Durga. Images of death and pleasure, intermingling in horrible combination Bacchantic licentiousness and bloody human sacrifices. The idea of eternity, interwoven with the general plan of this philosophy, and ever pointing backwards to a holier origin, invested the nature-worship and materialism of the Orientals with a peculiarly fearful character, far different from the mere sensuality which reigned in the religion of many wild and uncivilised nations; for the most frightful errors are too frequently produced by the perversion and demoralisation of the loftiest and noblest principles. (479)]

He argues that a similar veneration of the physical strength and vigor of nature was vital to Greco-Roman mythology, although it was not systematized throughout their religious beliefs in so fully developed and interconnected a form. Taking his lead from Herodotus, Schlegel also reaches back to the intermediary Egyptians to explain that the suffering god Osiris is best explained by reference to the Indian belief in the misery of the natural world and the deep degradation in which its original light and purity had become involved.[13]

Schlegel writes that the peculiar affinity of Indian and European idealism consists principally in the opinion that activity, life, and freedom can alone be recognized as actually effective in their operation, and that inertia and inactivity are condemned as utterly void and ineffective. He cannot accept the idea that the move out of materiality is a necessary part of a process, and that the space in between is not a meaningless void. He ignores any emphasis not only on the Vaishnavic (the subtle essence that maintains life and concerned Schelling), but on the Brahmanic (the creative element that Schopenhauer would emphasize) in Sanskrit literature, conceding in his only mention of the *Purāṇas* that they emphasize the role of Vishnu:

> Es ist das erste System, das an die Stelle der Wahrheit trat; wilde Erdichtungen und grober Irrthum, aber überall noch Spuren der göttlichen Wahrheit und der Ausdruck jenes Schrektens und jener Betrübniß, die der erste Abfall von Gott zur Folge haben mußte. (8:209)

> [The Indian mythology and philosophy is the first system which was substituted for the pure light of truth: notwithstanding some lingering traces of a holier origin, wild inventions and savage errors everywhere predominate, and an impression of anguish and sorrow, naturally resulting from the first rejection of, and estrangement from, revealed truth. (473)]

He seems to have felt, echoing Buffon's ideas about the lost wisdom of the first society, that Indian thought was still reeling from this initial loss. He argues that the idea of the absence of any specific design in the creation of the world, of a merely capricious activity on the part of the Creator, is intimately connected with an alternation and revolution that he sees as ceaseless.

Schlegel believed that in Asian countries (other than China, which he still considered pantheistic) Buddhist doctrines were drawn from the worship of Śiva in particular. This belief appears to be based on his own inference, for he regarded the practices of the yogis and Buddhist teachers to be "spirit-crushing martyrdom," apparently like that of Shaivic devotees. Roger-Pol Droit notes that here Schlegel describes how Buddhism has dessicated India (171); it is unclear, however, what Buddhist texts he read, since the Pali canon had yet to be translated by Western scholars. He predicted that Buddhism would not last, because it supposes every object in creation to be nullified and absorbed into an abstract and negative conception of the eternal. He laments:

> Das lebendige tiefe Gefühl des Unendlichen und seiner Fülle der Allmacht, schon sehr geschwächt und verdunstet sein muß, ehe es sich in diesen vom Nichts schwer zu unterscheidenden Schatten und Scheinbegriff des Einen und Allen auflösen kann. (8:243)
>
> [The profound and vital idea originally entertained of the Eternal and his almighty power, must have been greatly vitiated and enfeebled before it could descend to lose itself in the false and visionary notion of the oneness or unity of all things, so distant too from the doctrine of their nullity. (489–90)]

Schlegel saw no similarity between unity of substance, unity of absence, and the power of an almighty, anthropomorphic God, for he was searching for Eastern analogues to Western conceptions rather than attempting to understand Hinduism on its own terms.

At the end of book two, Schlegel noted both the philosophical link he saw between Asia and Europe and the apparent problem of belief in religions that emphasize the transcendence of material form:

> Alle andere orientalische Lehrbegriffe gründen und berufen sich noch auf göttliche Wunder und Offenbarung, so entstellt auch alles durch Fabel und Irrthum sein mag. Der Pantheismus ist das System der reinen Vernunft, und insofern macht er schon den Uebergang von der orientalischen Philosophie zur europäischen. Er schmeichelt dem Eigendünkel des Menschen eben so sehr als seiner Trägheit. Ist einmal diese große Entdeckung gemacht, diese alles umfassende, alles vernichtende, und doch so leichte Wissenschaft und Vernunft-Weisheit, daß Alles Eins sei, gefunden, so bedarf es weiter keines Suchens und Forschens; alles was andre auf andren Wegen wissen

> oder glauben, ist nur Irrthum, Täuschung und Verstandesschwäche, so wie alle Veränderung und alles Leben ein leerer Schein. (8:243)
>
> [All other Oriental doctrines, however disguised by error and fiction, are founded in, and dependent on, divine and marvelous revelations; but Pantheism is the offspring of unassisted reason, and therefore marks the transition from the Oriental to the European philosophy. It is no less flattering to the self-conceit of man than to his indolence. When once men have arrived at the conclusion that all is unity, an opinion at once so comprehensive and all-annihilating, further research or investigation is deemed superfluous; every thing that is divine, drawn from other sources, or believed in by other men, appears, to their superficial reasoning, to be merely the delusive folly of superstition, and even life itself, with its mutations, is, in their eyes, but a fallacious and unsubstantial semblance of reality. (490)]

Poliakov claims that in book three, "Historische Ideen" (Historical Ideas), Schlegel depicts Indian sages descending from the Himalaya to found empires that would civilize the West (*Le mythe aryen*, 192). While this is overstated, Schlegel does argue that the most powerful nations of the globe sprang from one Indian stock and that the genealogy leading to Germanic peoples is obvious, proven by the one monument we possess from earliest Indian history, older and more authentic than any other set forth in words or recorded in written characters — the Indian mode of government:

> Gesetz also, nicht bloß der äussere Drang der Noth, sondern irgend ein wunderbarer Begriff von der hohen Würde und Herrlichkeit des Nordens, wie wir ihn in den indischen Sagen überall verbreitet finden, habe sie nordwärts geführt, so würde sich der Weg der Germanischen Stämme von Turkhind längst dem Gihon bis zur Nordseite des caspischen Meers und des Kaukasus leicht nachweisen lassen. (8:293)
>
> [Admitting, then, that these tribes were driven northwards, not from the mere impulse of necessity, but by an almost supernatural idea of the majesty and glory of those regions, and everywhere diffused throughout the Indian sagas, the path of the Teutonic race may clearly be traced from Turkind along the Gihon to the north shore of the Caspian Sea and the Caucasus. (514)]

Such tribes would then follow the rivers that would lead them to Europe in two successive waves of *Völkerwanderungen*, one settling the north and one the south.

Schlegel felt that comparative grammar demonstrates once and for all that Sanskrit is the oldest Indo-European language and mother of all others, particularly Gothic and Anglo-Saxon. More recently, Deshpande and Peter Edwin Hook have argued that Sanskrit itself bears impressions of many historical influences, especially from the Dravidian languages of the

South.[14] We might remember that in the *Ramayana*, Rama is described as the conqueror of the wild southern tribes and absorbs their culture, much like the historical "Aryans." Schlegel's admission of the antiquity of Sanskrit would not save it from his condemnation, however.

## The Catholic Nationalist Retreat

Aside from Schlegel's decidedly problematic anthropological assumptions, for which he has been justifiably faulted, the intent of his book was in keeping with the tendency among the German Romantics, remarked upon by Antoine Berman, to infuse philosophy, mythology, mystical theology, and poetry into linguistic questions. He ultimately failed to locate, however, the unity and purity he sought in ancient Indian culture, emphasizing in book three that he found in the Judeo-Christian tradition a more convincing elaboration of the original wisdom of India.

Despite this defect, Schlegel has received acclaim as the founder of the comparative enterprise of linguistic typology, particularly for his work in *Über die Sprache und die Weisheit der Indier*. In book one he argues that there is a distinct difference between organic, inflected languages, such as Sanskrit or Greek, and mechanical, non-inflected languages — an argument that runs parallel to August Wilhelm's distinction between organic and mechanical form in his celebrated *Vorlesungen über schöne Literatur und Kunst* (Lectures on Dramatic Literature and Art, 1804). Franklin notes that the cultural-political implications of Friedrich Schlegel's discrimination between organic and mechanical languages ensured that his term "Indo-Germanic" would indicate more than a particular type of linguistic interest.

Jones's "Third Anniversary Discourse" energized linguistic and "racial" interconnections between India and Germany, encouraging Schlegel to link his revival of Gothic medievalism with his claims for an Indian heritage. This has led a few twentieth-century scholars such as Poliakov, Bernal, and Said to charge Schlegel with racism, which, despite Schlegel's anthropologically problematic third section, does not take into account the context in which the work was written. We must remember that Schlegel and the other early German India scholars relied upon the publications of the British Orientalists and that Germany was in a very different position in 1808 than was England; in fact, German Orientalism was quite the reverse of the English model. Germany was not colonizing other countries or imposing its own culture on them; it had yet to become a nation itself. Instead "Germany," a set of loosely connected principalities each with distinct sovereignty, was experiencing forms of internal colonialism bound up in the political climate and nationalist debates of its own scholarship. What is troubling about Schlegel's *Über die Sprache und die*

*Weisheit der Indier* is not that it may be construed as racist, but that it laid the groundwork for later scholars to view Indian thought and Asian philosophy generally as nihilistic.

Schlegel's text was nevertheless a major step in the colonization of Germany by Indian ideas. As Schwab notes, Avestan scholar James Darmesteter maintained in his *Essais orientaux* (1883) that he had scarcely ever seen, outside the manifesto of Joachim Du Bellay, the equivalent of Schlegel's essay in literary history.[15] That is to say, just as Du Bellay had affirmed the legitimacy of literature in the French vernacular, Darmesteter believed Schlegel to have affirmed the place of German in linguistic history by associating it with the profound and ancient philosophical ideas of India.

Other writers were less enthusiastic. Goethe, and later Heinrich Heine, found Schlegel continually apologetic on Catholic grounds and instantly criticized his book.[16] The devout interest that Goethe had shown in his youth for biblical traditions was directed in his late years to other Oriental mythologies and to the concept of *Weltliteratur* (world literature). His own orientalism, however, would never travel east of Persia, as is to be seen in his *West-Östlicher Divan* (1819). Since he felt no linguistic or racial affinity with the Hindus and was disdainful of the rowdy agitation of German patriots, Goethe's observations were out of step with the younger Romantic generation. Schlegel, on the other hand, crystallized the German passion for the Orient that had by then been developing for almost three decades. He would attempt to formulate a metaphysical epistemology that would have a profoundly positive impact on the national destiny, thus seeking to imbue the nationalism and Indo-philia that had begun with Herder with a more profoundly personal — if misguided — spirituality. Schwab describes *Über die Sprache und die Weisheit der Indier* as having created a cultural movement out of three essential factors that, in his mind, made it inevitable: Schlegel's background as a serious German historian; his Romantic veneration for an Orient whose precedents would determine the artistic, philosophical, and political future of Europe; and, above all, his faith, which led him to relate everything to religious interests (80).

While Poliakov overstates the extent to which Schlegel failed to distinguish between criteria of language and criteria of race, it is true that Schlegel did tend to describe national characteristics — in relation to blood, spirit, origin, race, and religion — as pure. He also emphasized the linguistic, cultural, and racial importance of Persia in the alleged line from India to Germany. Previous ancient and medieval European writers had given Egypt or Israel a historical place between India and Germany, while Orientalists such as Anquetil-Duperron and Jones had emphasized the importance of Persia. Schlegel's adoption of the latter point of view would prove influential for later thinkers such as Hegel and, one could argue, Friedrich Nietzsche. Schlegel's contribution to linguistics lies in the new

methodologies he used in *On the Language and Wisdom of the Indians*, which would help foster the comparative linguistics of Franz Bopp, the typological linguistics of Wilhem von Humboldt, and the historical linguistics of Jakob Grimm. His rejection of the Indo-German identification, however, appears to have been rooted in more personal reflections.

The first enthusiastic follower of Friedrich Schlegel's ideas was his older brother August Wilhelm, who wrote in 1804: "If the regeneration of the human species started in the east, Germany must be considered the Orient of Europe."[17] Despite apparently following Friedrich into an Indian obsession, August Wilhelm's interest in India seems to have been rather more inspired by Karl August's travels on the subcontinent. He offered tribute to his elder brother's endeavors in a poem from 1787, "Bestattung des Brahminen. Eine Phantasie an meinem Bruder in Ostindien" (Funeral of the Brahmins: A Fantasy to My Brother in East India), which proved eerily prophetic in its evocation of premature death.[18] With Friedrich's abandonment of Sanskrit literature for Christianity, the baton of Sanskrit now passed to August Wilhelm, who was to hold the first German chair in the subject, at the University of Bonn, beginning in 1818. His publication, the *Indische Bibliothek* (Indian Library; 1820–30), contained articles by scholars such as Bopp and other later English Indologists. August Wilhelm's contributions to German Indian studies proved sound, with fewer of the incendiary and mistaken notions to be found in his brother's 1808 work.

August Wilhelm Schlegel would also prove to be a key player in the transmission of German Romantic ideas and works to France and England, whose writers had themselves inspired Germans in the 1780s and '90s. He was largely responsible for the happy foreign reception of Goethe, as well as of Friedrich's work, through his own university lectures *Über dramatische Kunst und Literatur* (On Dramatic Art and Literature; 1809–11), in which he emphasized the end of classicism and the advent of Romanticism. He insisted on the existence of a cultural gulf between ancient and medieval Romantic literature and between the pagan south of Europe and the Christian north, an idea that was later to influence authors such as Thomas Mann. He also argued against the prevalent obedience to poetic constraints and introduced the idea of the Middle Ages as the province of Romantic poetry. His message was reinforced by Germaine de Staël's *De l'Allemagne*, a cultural history that, as noted earlier, praised the work of Herder and was to determine what France thought about Germany until the two countries went to war in 1870. In de Staël's encyclopedic work, the German principalities appear as a cohesive society of metaphysical poets, with Goethe having established Weimar as the center of Romanticism. While August Wilhelm Schlegel is remembered for these efforts, it is important to note that he would not go on to condemn south Asian religions as had his brother.

## Conclusion

De Staël's overpraise of the Germans is to some extent surprising since both Schlegel brothers were such outspoken critics of French neoclassicism. In the first decade of the nineteenth century, when the linguistic and cultural patriotism of their countrymen was transforming itself into a kind of pan-Germanism, Friedrich Schlegel wrote — as thinkers such as von Günzberg, Herder, and Klopstock had already argued — that Europe owed everything to the Germanic migrations. He went so far as to argue that Latin characters were unworthy for printing translations of Hindu works and expressed a desire to adapt the *Nibelungenlied*, "rediscovered" only a few decades earlier, into an Indo-Germanic epic. In 1806 Friedrich Schlegel wrote to Schleiermacher, "I feel clearly how it is my sole calling to be a writer, author and historian of my nationality."[19] By 1819 he was using the term "Aryan" as had Anquetil-Duperron, justifying his choice by connecting the Sanskrit root *arya* (noble) with the German word *Ehre* (honor). Yet the very linguistic scholars whom Schlegel's work had inspired, such as Franz Bopp, who in 1833 found good reasons for preferring the term *indoeuropäisch*, disputed the use of the term *indogermanisch*.

Although the terms "Aryan" and "Indo-German" were not yet used in *Über die Sprache und die Weisheit der Indier*, the work was published in the same year — 1808 — as a seminal work of German nationalism: Fichte's *Reden an die deutsche Nation* (Addresses to the German Nation). During the Napoleonic period Fichte had become an ardent nationalist, urging the German people to assert themselves against foreign domination. While he had supported the ideals of the French Revolution, he claimed that he did not see the true significance of the conflagration until his discovery of Kant's moral philosophy: while the French Revolution established the autonomy of human beings as a collective, he felt that Kant had established the autonomy of human beings as individual selves. He condemned the violence that followed the revolution, however, and in his sarcastic fourth address he called for an end to the role of languages derived from Latin, especially French. Fichte had written a year earlier, "the distinction between the Prussians and other Germans is artificial, founded on institutions established arbitrarily or by chance. The distinction between the Germans and other European nationalities is founded on nature."[20] He borrowed this idea from Herder — that the members of a nationality are joined together by a cultural spirit which itself is grounded by the preservation of the mother tongue — and felt that a nationality is the totality of human beings continually living together in society and constantly perpetuating themselves both bodily and spiritually, and that this totality is subject to a certain specific law through which the divine develops itself.

Fichte's views on nationality and freedom had been prefigured more than a decade earlier by his magnum opus, the *Grundlage der gesamten Wissenschaftslehre* (Foundations of the Entire Wissenschaftslehre, 1794), which had attempted to deduce a concept of the natural world based on human freedom, which would in turn establish a metaphysics of the causality of freedom. Michael Allen Gillespie sums up the work's argument: "Fichte's practical goal is a radicalization of the Cartesian project for the conquest of nature that has as its end not the physical well-being of individual human beings but the liberation of humanity from nature altogether and the consequent establishment of a realm of universal human freedom and power."[21] The basic principle of right that Fichte formulates from this is posited as the limitation of one's freedom so that others can also be free. He argues that there must be a "primordial right," which entitles people to censure others who violate this *Urrecht*.[22] For Fichte, freedom can be achieved only under the totalitarian leadership of an educated elite of scholars (who will presumably argue about their primordial rights). In Herderian terms, this primordial right is different for each nation.

According to Fichte, the original society was a superior race under the leadership of divinely inspired dictators and Germany inherited that destiny. The triumph of Germany in Fichte's view is in the interests of humanity, for he regarded Germany, like the scholar, as an agent of freedom.[23] He makes it clear in the opening of his seventh address:

> Es sind in den vorigen Reden angegeben, und in der Geschichte nachgewiesen die Grundzüge der Deutschen, als eines Urvolks, und als eines solchen, das das Recht hat, sich das Volk schlechtweg, im Gegensatz mit andern von ihm abgerissenen Stämmen zu nennen.
>
> [In the preceding addresses we have indicated and proved from history the characteristics of the Germans as an original people, and as a people that has the right to call it self simply the people, in contrast to other branches that have been torn away from it.][24]

Fichte's lectures galvanized young Germans as Prussia was collapsing. He ascribed all the peoples of Europe except the Slavs to Germanic stock, but drew a distinction between the "primary race" (*Urvolk*) and the "neo-Latin peoples," who were deficient, de-Germanized, and had been rendered culturally sterilized through the loss of the "primeval language" (*Ursprache*).[25] He was one of the first philosophers to question whether Jesus was of Semitic stock, based on the lack of a genealogy derived from David in the Gospel of John, thus discrediting New Testament genealogies just as Old Testament ones had been discredited by Lutheran theologians. This idea eliminated the greatest obstacle in the quest for an authentically German religion, for, as Isaiah Berlin notes, Fichte "declared that the true self is not the individual at all: it is the group, the nation."[26] Thus the radical subjectivity of Fichte's earlier *Wissenschaftslehre* was transformed through his

theory of natural right into a solipsistic vision of a collective that may do as it wills, sanctioning authoritarianism in the name of reason.

For the Jena Romantics — particularly Novalis, Schelling, and Friedrich Schlegel — Christianity still held answers that Hinduism and Buddhism could not provide. To them in the end, the ideas of Asian religions, though endowed with primordial characteristics, only figured as precursors to the true answers to be found in the New Testament. Ultimately the questions with which they had been concerned, such as whether doctrines such as metempsychosis were closer to the philosophy of Spinoza than to that of Kant, became moot as their unbridled enthusiasm for an alterative to Greece and Rome brought them back to Judea. Throughout the course of this journey, Friedrich Schlegel had done much to perpetuate the idea that Hindu and Buddhist philosophy eventually leads one into the meaningless void. The historical march of national spirits, however, would hold different conclusions for the opponents of Romanticism.

## Notes

[1] Poliakov, *Le mythe aryen*, 190–93.

[2] Figueira, *The Exotic*, 56–57; Bradley L. Herling, "Towards the Spiritual Renewal of Europe, 117.

[3] Chen Tzoref-Ashkenazi, "The Nationalist Aspect of Friedrich Schlegel's *On the Language and the Wisdom of the Indians*" in *Sanskrit and 'Orientalism': Indology and Comparative Linguistics in Germany, 1750–1958*, eds. Douglas T. McGetchin, Peter K. J. Park, and Domodar SarDesai (New Dehli: Manohar, 2004): 107–30.

[4] Charles Seife, *Zero: The Biography of a Dangerous Idea* (New York: Viking, 2000), 66.

[5] Aristotle, *Aristotle on the Heavens*, trans. W. K. C. Guthrie (London: Heinemann, 1939), 1.9.

[6] Wilhelm Halbfass, *India and Europe: An Essay in Understanding* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1990), 75.

[7] Friedrich Schlegel, *Kritische Friedrich-Schlegel-Ausgabe*, 24:182.

[8] Michael Franklin, Introduction to *On the Language and Wisdom of the Indians*, by Friedrich Schlegel, trans. E. J. Millington (London: Ganesha, 2001), viii.

[9] Peter K. J. Park, "A Catholic Apologist in a Pantheistic World: New Approaches to Friedrich Schlegel," in *Sanskrit and 'Orientalism': Indology and Comparative Linguistics in Germany, 1750–1958*, ed. Douglas T. McGetchin, Peter K. J. Park, and D. R. SarDesai (New Dehli: Manohar, 2004), 91 and 93.

[10] Schlegel, *On the Language and Wisdom of the Indians,* xii.

[11] Personal interview with Madhav Deshpande, 17 April 2004, Ann Arbor, MI.

[12] The Puranic tradition stems from the teachings of the *Upanishads*, that is, of *Vedānta*, but using the *Purāṇas*, a popularized version of *Vedānta*. The *Darsanas*,

or schools of Hindu philosophy, are strict, esoteric, and meant only for the learned Brahmin caste. The *Purāṇas* are meant for the masses with supposedly inferior intellects with the aim of impressing on the minds of the masses the teachings of the *Upanishads* and generating in them devotion to God through concrete examples — myths, parables, and legends; lives of saints, kings and great men; allegories and chronicles of major historical events. Among the large number of *Purāṇas* eighteen are considered major *Purāṇas*, six of which are addressed to Vishnu, six to Brahma, and six to Śiva. In the "Śiva-Purana" Śiva is elegised, the importance of the decaying part of the cycle of existence is emphasized, and an inferior, often belittling, position is given to Vishnu. The opposite is true in the "Vishnu-Purana," which emphasizes that the *tamasic*, the Shaivic, is to be avoided. Of particular importance for Schlegel was the fact that in the "Vishnu-Purana" the pursuit of positive forces such as the Buddha, enlightenment, and superiority are constantly juxtaposed to negative forces such as monsters, the demonic, and the void.

[13] See Herodotus, *Herodotus with an English Translation*, 2.42, 2.123, and 2.144.

[14] Madhav M. Deshpande and Peter Edwin Hook, *Aryan and Non-Aryan in India* (Ann Arbor: Center for South and Southeast Asian Studies, University of Michigan, 1979), 3.

[15] Schwab, *La renaissance orientale,* 13.

[16] Schwab, *La renaissance orientale,* 81, 84; Park, "A Catholic Apologist in a Pantheistic World," 101.

[17] Cited in Schwab, *La renaissance orientale*, 206.

[18] Bradley L. Herling, *The German Gita: Hermeneutics and Discipline in the German Reception of Indian Thought, 1778–1831* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 159.

[19] Cited in Schwab, *La renaissance orientale,* 76–77.

[20] Cited in Poliakov, *Le mythe aryen,* 194.

[21] Gillespie, *Nihilism Before Nietzsche,* 97.

[22] Pinkard, *German Philosophy, 1760–1860,* 123.

[23] Gillespie, *Nihilism Before Nietzsche,* 98.

[24] Johann Gottlieb Fichte, *Reden an die deutsche Nation* (Hamburg: Meiner, 1955), 106; Fichte, *Addresses to the German Nation*, trans. R. F. Jones and G. H. Turnbull (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1979), 108.

[25] Poliakov, *Le mythe aryen,* 99–100.

[26] Poliakov, *Le mythe aryen,* 193; Isaiah Berlin, "Kant as an Unfamiliar Source of Nationalism," in *The Sense of Reality: Studies in Ideas and their History* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1996), 244.

# III: Alternate Idealizations, 1807–1885

# 6: Hegel's Critique of "Those Plant-like Beings"

*I called up the devil and he came;*
*I looked him over wonderingly. . . .*
*His diplomatic skill is great,*
*And He talks very nicely on Church and State.*
*He's somewhat pale — no wonder, I vow,*
*For he's studying Sanskrit and Hegel now.*
— Heinrich Heine, "The Homecoming" (1823–24)

THE *HOCH-* AND *SPÄTROMANTIKER* did not share the same zealous fascination with India as did the *Frühromantiker*, yet between 1808 and mid-century, Indology in Germany and France began to become a legitimate area of study, particularly due to the efforts of figures such as the linguist Franz Bopp and the philologist and Orientalist Max Müller. Only shortly after the publication of works such as Schlegel's *On the Language and Wisdom of the Indians*, developments in continental philosophy, German nationalism, and evolutionary biology began presenting theories and associations that would largely determine views of origins and destiny through the end of the nineteenth century. The generation that followed the Early Romantics would be neither overzealous Indomaniacs, nor would they finally come to reject Indian thought as degraded down to a form of nihilism.

In 1807, immediately preceding the publication of Schlegel's text and Fichte's *Addresses to the German Nation*, *Die Phänomenologie des Geistes* (The Phenomenology of Spirit) appeared. This work, which traces the development of mind or spirit from primitive to "absolute" knowledge, was the first major work by Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, who would both criticize the Early Romantics and incorporate much of their thought into his own system. Then his second major work, *Die Wissenschaft der Logik* (The Science of Logic; 1812–16), reformulated transcendental idealism and the *Wissenschaftslehre*. While these two early works formed the basis of his thought, it is his later lectures, given while he was a professor at the University of Berlin between 1818 and 1831 — particularly those on history and aesthetics — that concern the Indo-German identification directly. Most of Hegel's comments about India are to be found in his lectures on aesthetics (1818), on the philosophy of world history (1822–

31), and on the philosophy of religion (1824, 1831). His insights into India and Indian art are determined by the "march of spirit" about which he makes such grand statements. It should be understood, however, that his sources are the commentaries on and translations of Sanskrit literature of his day (which, as Michel Hulin notes, were extensive[1]) and not direct knowledge of works of Indian art or of Sankrit itself.

## The Ahistorical Indians

According to Hegel, the Romantics emphasized a self-destructive obsession with emotional subjectivity to the point at which they were either too ironic to commit themselves to aesthetic or philosophical positions or too paralyzed by the attempt to establish a unity of individual self and larger spirit. In *The Phenomenology of Spirit* he wrote that the cycles of human history are indeed motivated by a self-established freedom. Such cycles are also, however, bound by the limitations of the human intellect. Unlike both Kant and Fichte, but like the Early Romantics, Hegel did not postulate the existence of a state or a space that separates human beings from the absolute, which moves the universe and lies beyond human cognition. He deduced his moral system by arguing that normative acts in a given place and time are governed by the movement of spirit in that time and at that place.

Certain world-historical individuals, such as Napoleon, who are demonic destroyers, however, can subvert such behavior. But for Hegel these individuals can only destroy constructively, as it were, just as — Shaivic devotees would argue — does Śiva. This is to say that Śiva is the destroyer of ignorance, and that the absence of ignorance leads to enlightenment. It is ironic that thinkers outside of Romanticism such as Goethe and Hegel largely, but by no means entirely, rejected the Indo-German appeal, and at the same time seemed to hold views truer to most Hindu conceptions of Śiva than those of the Early Romantics or the classical writers that influenced them. Hegel and Goethe present, in otherwise very different worldviews, what are ultimately theodicies, although neither could be described in any way as a deist. For them, evil and destruction are necessary parts of an overall equation of renewal, while the works of the Jena Romantics already discussed, whether they zealously tout the virtues of Hinduism or Christianity, emphasize liberation from the miseries of material incarnation as an end in itself. For Hegel demonic destroyers such as Napoleon occasionally wipe the slate clean, so to speak, doing away with ossified institutions so that progress can be made, if not under Napoleon himself then under subsequent regimes. But like Goethe's Faust (at least in part one of the play), Hegel shows himself to be no Romantic insofar as he sees the demonic destroyer as an agent of rationality and, perhaps ironically, it is with Śiva that Hegel's view of Hindu ontology would founder.

In *The Science of Logic* Hegel sought to reconcile subject and object, and thus human autonomy and the natural world, through a dialectical demonstration that contradiction leads to a form of reason with fewer contradictions. By basing his idealism on the speculative synthesis of contradiction, however, he accepts the Fichtean and Romantic emphasis on negation. While Hegel's philosophy, like Schelling's, is in a sense a philosophy of becoming, it is founded on the annihilation of annihilation, because for Hegel a negative plus a negative equal a positive. While such an axiom may hold in mathematics or physics, in religion or metaphysics different rules obtain. Negatives in metaphysics, such as the concept of the void, are not necessarily discrete entities that can simply add up to something else. For Hegel a negative taken to its extreme reconstitutes itself into a more comprehensible form of order. Such a view would have profound ramifications for Hegelians at both the liberal and conservative ends of the political spectrum in the middle decades of the nineteenth century.

In *The Philosophy of History*, in which he first discussed India, Hegel sought to turn the notion of a Creator into a category of logic. The Creator is replaced by the self-thinking spirit found in *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, which is impelled by the need to resolve contradictions so as to move to progressively higher planes of articulation, as in *The Science of Logic*. Hegel does not imbue man with the extreme subjective power that Fichte does. Yet his replacement of a divine Creator with an impersonal collective spirit that "moves" man may be seen as yet another step toward the "deification of man."

Maurice Olender argues that in *Reason in History* (1830), Hegel considers the idea that civilization, perfect at its inception, has been in decline ever since.[2] Such a view of the Fall of Man already seems present in Hegel's earliest works, and is in keeping with the Indo-German identification since the time of Voltaire and Bailly. Olender rightfully points out, though, that Hegel criticizes the notion that we have access to the nature of primitive man through some kind of higher authority. Instead, Hegel describes the three great stages in Germanic history as extending 1) from its supposed biblical beginnings to Charlemagne, 2) from Charlemagne to the Reformation, and 3) from the Reformation to the period that comes to fruition in his own philosophy.

He finds, however, that there is no periodization possible in Indian history, because according to him, the Indians do not care about time and are therefore incapable of writing history. In contrast to the Chinese, who Hegel believes to note events very accurately:

> Die Inder dagegen sind durch Geburt einer substantiellen Bestimmtheit zugeteilt, und zugleich ist ihr Geist zur Idealität erhoben, so daß sie der Widerspruch sind, die feste verständige Bestimmtheit in ihrer

> Idealität aufzulösen und anderseits diese zur sinnlichen Unterschiedenheit herabzusetzen. Dies macht sie zur Geschichtschreibung unfähig.
>
> [The Hindoos on the contrary are by birth given over to an unyielding destiny, while at the same time their Spirit is exalted to Ideality; so that their minds exhibit the contradictory processes of a dissolution of fixed rational and definite conceptions in their Ideality, and on the other side, a degradation of this ideality to a multiformity of sensuous objects. This makes them incapable of writing History.][3]

As is evident here, Hegel was fascinated with the Indian caste system, which was for him the prime example of the inertia and indifference he found in Indians as a people.

In Hegel's *Philosophy of History* every nation's culture is described as reflecting its unique "national spirit," which he tends to rate on a scale of historical progress. Toward the top of this scale is Persia, because he felt that imperial Persian politics signified the true beginning of history — which is to say that a nation without clearly noted political events is, for him, without history. The fact that Hegel's historiography places the most emphasis on political events rather than purely military or royal conflicts may make him comparatively liberal among historians of his day; however, such a view of history does not give great prominence to developments in cultural history, as will be seen in Hegel's views of Indian art. Much further down this scale of progress are China and India which, despite being the two great civilizations of the East, have little bearing on the more influential developments in Western history. While Hegel accepts the idea that India was the center of emigration into the Western world and feels that the spread of Indian culture is prehistorical, he also argues that History is limited to that which marks off an essential epoch in the development of Spirit. He adds that overall, the diffusion of Indian culture is only a "dumb, deedless expansion," like the migration of animal herds, for it includes no political action.

## The Irrationalism of Indian Art and Literature

Hegel presents India and China dialectically: China as equated with total objectivity and complete lack of imagination, and India with fantastic, completely subjective irrationality. He finds in Indian religion "allgemeine Vergöttlichung alles Endlichen und ebendamit Herabwürdigung des Göttlichen" (*Sämtliche Werke*, 8:354; "universal deification of all finite existence, and consequent degradation of the Divine": *Philosophy of History*, 141). Yet it was exactly the archaic, the primitive, the irrational qualities of Indian culture that had appealed to the early German

Romantics for, following Rousseau and Herder, they associated the primitive with intuitive and sublime wisdom, as opposed to Goethe and Hegel, who found the "irrationalism" of Indian religion and Hindu art disturbing. Hegel maintains that Indian irrationalism leads to annihilation and self-deification: "Sittlichkeit und menschliche Würde ist nicht vorhanden, die bösen Leidenschaften gehen darüber; der Geist wandert in die Welt des Traumes, und das Höchste ist die Vernichtung" (8:378; Morality and human dignity are unknown; evil passions have their full swing; the Spirit wanders into the Dream-World, and the highest state is Annihilation, 148). He later adds: "Die abstrakte Einheit mit Gott wird in dieser Abstraktion des Menschen zur Existenz gebracht. . . . Bei den Indern aber ist [diese Abstraktion] dieselbe negativ gegen alles Konkrete gerichtet und das Höchste diese Erhebung, durch welche der Inder sich selbst zur Gottheit macht" (8:406; Abstract unity with God is realized in abstraction from humanity. . . . Among the Hindoos [such abstraction] holds a negative position towards all that is concrete; and the highest state is supposed to be this exaltation, by which the Hindoo raises himself to deity, 148).

Roger-Pol Droit has examined this tendency to view Hinduism and especially Buddhism as nihilism among French and German thinkers, and he treats Hegel's role in this issue at length. He correctly notes that none of the initial German Romantic Indomaniacs took into consideration the Hindu and Buddhist schools of thought that had written their own numerous commentaries on texts such as the *Bhagavad Gītā*, texts that argued with each other and were indicative of the religions' own internal schisms and internecine feuds.[4] He is incorrect is stating, however, that no one among these thinkers between 1790 and 1820 did anything other than affirm Indian thought as pure wisdom. As discussed at length in the previous chapter, Friedrich Schlegel took issue with many of what he took to be Hindu and Buddhist doctrines. Droit does, however, prove convincingly that Hegel would be one of the first German thinkers to continually associate Buddhism with "nothingness" (*Nichts*, for Hegel; *néant* for Droit), taking his lead from French theologians such as Joseph de Guignes, Louis Moreri, and l'abbé Jean Baptiste Gabriel Grosier.[5]

Such annihilating "self-deification" was evident for Hegel in the symbolism of Indian art, his views on which had been largely influenced by Georg Friedrich Creuzer, who was much more sympathetic to Indian civilization than Hegel. Creuzer elaborated on Schelling's initial steps toward establishing a modern Romantic interpretation of symbols as both being and signifying a particular idea. He had begun his study of the nature of ancient symbols with the idea that Christian art presented a "consonance of meanings," a clear language of signs which reveals spiritual messages to the believer, as opposed to the schools of medieval Christian and Neoplatonic mysticism, which found that icons, for example, held miracu-

lous powers beyond normal human cognition. However, Creuzer based his *Symbolik und Mythologie der alten Volker* (Symbolism and Mythology of Ancient Peoples, 1810) on the importance of Indian art, literature, religious morality, and mythology in ancient world history. He attempted to understand the meanings of Hindu art by interpreting its representations of Indian myths and symbols, an approach adopted by Hegel.

Like Winckelmann, both Creuzer and Hegel accepted the superiority of Greco-Roman art, distinguishing between the translatability of Greek art's clear language and the supposedly mystical and unintelligible symbols of ancient Asian art. What is important about Creuzer, though, is the fact that he explains the multi-faceted image of the Mahesamurti Śiva as attempting to express the different concepts and stories associated with the many manifestations of Śiva, thus establishing for European historians of Asian art a means of understanding Hinduism and Buddhism's agglutinative iconography. He contributes to our understanding of Hindu art, whereas Hegel continually contrasts Indian art negatively with the supposed progress of classical Western art by only viewing it within the Greco-Roman canon of beauty. The "exaggerations" in Indian sculptures are explained as plastic representations of the extreme abstraction in Indian thought, thus allowing Hegel to view Indian art as forever fixed in its inertia, outside of history.[6] What is particularly dangerous about this is that for Hegel religion and art were bound together. Suzanne Marchand notes that for Hegel, as for the classical scholar August Böckh, Greek art "was bound up with religion in at least two ways: it was a sensual manifestation of the Volksgeist at any particular point in time, and it was a kind of humanistic revelation, prefiguring in art what would later be realized in the (Pietist) spirit."[7] Thus for Hegel, South Asian art, indicative of the Volksgeist in ancient India, reflects the philosophical and ethical weakness of those people.

In his section on poetry in the *Aesthetics*, Hegel argues that a similar misunderstanding of the relationship between human beings and the divine found in Indian sculpture hampers Sanskrit poetry:

> Das indische Epos ist in dieser Rücksicht zu dem eigentlich idealen Verhältnis der Götter und Menschen nicht hindurchgedrungen, indem auf dieser Stufe der symbolischen Phantasie die menschliche Seite in ihrer freien schönen Wirklichkeit noch zurückgedrängt bleibt und die individuelle Tätigkeit des Menschen teils als Inkarnation der Götter erscheint, teils überhaupt als das Nebensächlichere verschwindet oder als asketische Erhebung in den Zustand und die Macht der Götter geschildert ist. . . . Besonders die beiden berühmtesten dieser Gedichte, der *Ramajana* und *Mahabharata*, legen uns die Weltanschauung der Inder in der ganzen Pracht und Herrlichkeit, Verwirrung, phantastischen Unwahrheit und Zerflossenheit und ebenso umgekehrt in der schwelgenden Lieblichkeit und den indivi-

> duellen, feinen Zügen der Empfindung und des Gemüts dieser geistigen Pflanzennaturen dar.
>
> [The Indian epic has not been able to force its way to the properly ideal relation between gods and men [which one is to understand the Homeric epic manages to do], because at this stage when the imagination is symbolic the human element in its free and beautiful actuality still remains repressed, and the action of human individuals either appears as an incarnation of the gods or disappears as merely something accessory or is described as an ascetic elevation into the life and power of the gods. . . . Above all, the two most famous of these [Indian epic] poems, the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*, explain to us the entire outlook of the Indians in its whole splendour and magnificence, its confusion, fantastic flabbiness and lack of real truth, and yet, on the other hand, its overwhelming delightfulness and also the individual fine traits of the feeling and heart of these spiritual and plant-like beings.][8]

Unlike the Homeric epic, which depicts deities as despicably human and certain human beings as distinctly super-human, the epics of these "Pflanzennaturen" paint deities as exemplars that human beings attempt to emulate in the hope of freeing themselves from cyclic material existence. For Hegel the reason that these deities are such useless exemplars comes from the very triadic structure that forms the basis of Hindu ontology and the *Trimurti* of Brahma, Vishnu, and Śiva.

## The Misuse of Śiva

Stuart Jay Harten points out that the Hindu *Trimurti* presented problems for Hegel, for he attempted to reconcile its triadic structure with that of his own system of logic as well as with the Christian Trinity, particularly in his 1824 and 1831 lectures on the philosophy of religion.[9] While Hegel drew on numerous sources for information about the *Trimurti*, the translators of this edition note that he based much of his analysis on James Mill's *History of British India* (London, 1817), but that Mill explicitly avoided drawing analogies between the *Trimurti* and the Christian Trinity.[10] Hegel, on the other hand, though he warns against doing so, makes this association both explicitly and implicitly. He had tried to defend himself against charges of pantheism and atheism put by Protestant theologian and armchair Orientalist Friedrich Tholuck, whose *Die speculative Trinitätslehre des späteren Orients* (The Speculative Doctrine of the Trinity in the Later Orient, 1826) argued that the Trinity was not an integral part of Christianity, but of Asian religions and Greco-Roman philosophy. Hegel instead argues that the *Trimurti* is an inadequate first version of the triad, which is improved upon in speculative logic, and finds its most profound

expression in Christianity. He thus uses the *Trimurti* as yet another standard by which Hinduism may be judged inferior to both the Christian and classical traditions; however, what is more striking is his explicit critique of the *Trimurti*, which he faults primarily for its failure to return to original unity.

Hegel argued in his 1824 lecture series that the basic determination of Hindu consciousness is the category of unity (*Brahman*), but that this "lapses into the ambiguity" that it is sometimes universal and sometimes set up against another theoretical category (*Lectures*, 328). He notes that Mill found, on the basis of a great number of Hindu texts, that the term for the god Brahma is "ein bedeutungsloses Epitheton des Preises überhaupt . . ., welches von verschiedenen Göttern gebraucht wird und gar nicht die verfeinerten Begriffe von Vollkommenheit, Einheit ausdrückt, die wir uns vorstellen" (in general a meaningless epithet of praise, which is applied to a variety of gods and in no way expresses the more refined concepts of perfection and unity that we represent to ourselves).[11] He finds that the figure and conception of Brahma are used in so many ways that they contradict each other and are thus indicative of the cloudiness of Hindu cosmology and Hindus' slavish devotion to things they do not rightly understand. Similarly, he argues:

> Man muß übrigens nicht meinen, daß die Inder so eine bestimmte Geschichte, eine feststehende Vorstellung davon haben, wie wir sie aus den jüdischen Büchern besitzen, sondern dort macht sich jeder, ein Dichter, ein Seher, ein Prophet seine eigene Vorstellung nach seiner Weise, indem er sich spekulativ in sich versenkt. Daher ist nichts Feststehendes vorhanden, sondern jeder hat eine andere Ansicht. (4a:484)
>
> [We should not suppose, by the way, that the Hindus have a definite story or a firmly established representation of creation such as we possess from the Jewish books; instead, everyone there — poet, seer, or prophet — constructs his own representation in personal fashion, by speculative immersion within himself. Hence there is nothing fixed, but instead everyone has a different viewpoint. (588–89)]

As evidence of this, he cites the fact that various ancient Hindu texts such as the *Vedas* and the *Manusmriti* differ in their accounts of creation and cosmology, not taking into account the fact that the earliest portions of the former could be as much as 1,300 years older than the latter.

On the whole, however, as Sai Bhatawadekar has pointed out, Hegel was able to fit Brahma and Vishnu into his schema as absolute substance and determinate being (manifested by human beings' presence on earth).[12] It is Śiva, who he had hoped would represent the reintegration of spirit, with whom he really takes issue, because Śiva in the role of destroyer did not correspond to the state of reconciliation in his dialectic. Hegel argues,

> Das Geistlose dieser Bestimmung, der Form der Unterschiede, auch insofern sie die reine Bestimmung des Begriffs ist, liegt darin, daß sogleich das dritte als Werden oder Veränderung bestimmt ist, statt daß in der absoluten Idee dies dritte eben als der Geist bestimmt ist, nicht ein Übergehen, eine Rückkehr in sich, wo auf unmittelbare Weise die Unterschiede bestimmit sind, als Sein und Nichtsein. (4a:229–39)
>
> [the fact that spirit is totally lacking from this way of defining the form of the differentiae (even to the extent that it is the pure definition of the concept) is due to the third element being defined at once as becoming or change, whereas with the absolute idea the third element is defined as spirit, i.e., not as a transition or return into self, where the differentiae are determined in this immediate way as being and nonbeing. (326–27)]

To this he added in 1831 that the third stage, symbolized by Śiva, "müßte die Rückkehr zum Ersten sein, damit die Einheit gesetzt wäre als in sich zurückkehrende: Aber gerade dies ist das Geistlose; es ist die Bestimmung des Werdens überhaupt oder des Entstehens und Vergehens" (4a:487; ought to be a return to the first, in order that the unity should be posited as returning within itself. But it is just this third stage that is devoid of spirit; it is merely the category of becoming generally, or of generation and perishing, 591). This accusation of the lack of spirit, of a third part that merely signals change rather than being the change that restores unity, means to Hegel the destruction of the entire system: "Die wahrhafte Drei im tiefen Begriff ist der Geist, die Rückkehr des Einen zu sich selbst, sein Zusichkommen, nicht nur die Veränderung, sondern die Veränderung, durch die der Unterschied zur Versöhnung gebracht wird mit dem ersten und die Zweiheit aufgehoben ist" (4a:487; The authentic third aspect in the profound concept is spirit, the return of the One to itself, its coming-to-self; not just change, but change through which the [moment of] distinction is brought to reconciliation with the first [moment], and the duality is sublated, 592). To Hegel the *raison d'être* of the third part is precisely the necessary assimilation of duality into unity. Without that, only further division seems likely.

This view is in line with the application of the doctrine of the Fall to Asian religion, in which Hinduism is viewed as having lost its original, unified perfection and only degenerated further and further. Hegel thus rejects Śiva in particular, on the ground that this deity's role in the schema of creation-destruction-restoration does not conform to his own ideas of how a dialectic resolution arises from the reconciliation of the first two elements in the triad. He might have accepted it obliquely, however, if he had viewed Śiva also as representing determinate being. Hegel thus views the *Trimurti* as unable to unify itself and therefore discards it as spiritless. Like the Jena Romantics, he finds that the most ancient texts of Hinduism

emphasize this original unity, which later degenerate into multiplicity, whose sublation will only be brought about by Christianity:

> "Es kann bemerkt werden, daß in den älteren Teilen der Vedas nicht von Wischnu, noch weniger von Schiwa die Rede ist; da ist Brahma, das Eine, Gott überhaupt allein. Jene Unterschiede sind Bestimmungen, die erst spatter eingetreten sind . . . von Vernunft und Instinkt getriebenen Phantasie." (4a:488 and 4a:622).
>
> [It is noteworthy that the older portions of the Vedas do not speak of Vishnu, even less of Śiva; there Brahma, the One, is God altogether alone. The distinctions of the Trimurti are determinations that are introduced only later . . . as the fruits of phantasy impelled by reason and instinct. (592 and 734)]

And like Novalis, Schelling, and Friedrich Schlegel, he cannot help comparing this ambiguous triad to the clarity of Christianity:

> Dieses dritte Moment müßte die Rückkehr des Ganzen in sich sein, wenn es Geist sein und die Dignität der christlichen Dreieinigkeit haben wollte. Die erste, abstrakte, nur an sich seiende Einheit des Brahm müßte dadurch eine konkrete, gesetzte werden. Aber statt dessen ist diese Dritte nur die geistlose Bestimmung des Entstehens und Vergehens. (4a: 622)
>
> [This third moment [Śiva], if it wanted to be spirit, and to have the dignity of the Christian Trinity, would have to be the return of the whole within itself. The first, abstract, only implicitly subsisting being of Brahman would thus have to become more concrete, posited unity. But instead, this third moment is only the spiritless determination of coming to be and passing away. (734)]

Hegel spent many years studying various aspects of India, its history and caste system, its art and literature, its religion and philosophy. Few who had never ventured to the subcontinent rivaled his encyclopedic knowledge of the country, and yet like the other Indo-Germans addressed so far, he continually denigrated Indian thought and culture as misguided, lazily conceived and executed, and ultimately without net import in the march of history. Civilization may have begun in South Asia, but that was at the dawn of recorded human events. Since then, Indian culture has only degenerated, leaving it to the West to bring about the full efflorescence of the seed it planted.

## Notes

The epigraph at the start of this chapter is from Heinrich Heine, *Complete Poems of Heinrich Heine*, trans. Hal Draper (Boston, MA: Suhrkamp/Insel, 1982), 91;

"Ich rief den Teufel, und er kam, / Und ich sah ihn mit Verwundrung an. . . . Er ist ein gescheuter Diplomat, / Und spricht recht schön über Kirch' und Staat. / Blaßt ist er etwas, doch ist es kein Wunder, / Sanskrit und Hegel studiert er jetzunder" (Heinrich Heine, *Werke und Briefe* [Berlin: Aufbau-Verlag, 1961], 1:122).

[1] Michel Hulin, *Hegel et l'Orient* (Paris: Vrin, 1979), 218–21.

[2] Olender, *The Languages of Paradise*, 10.

[3] Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Sämtliche Werke: Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Weltgeschichte* (Leipzig: Felix Meiner, 1919), 8:357; Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, trans. J. Sibree (New York: Dover, 1956), 162.

[4] Roger-Pol Droit, *Le culte du néant: les philosophes et le Bouddha* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1997), 105–6.

[5] Droit, *Le culte du néant,* 91–108.

[6] For fuller treatment of Creuzer, Hegel, and symbolism in Indian art, see Mitter, *Much Maligned Monsters*, 202–20, and Heinrich Zimmer, *Myths and Symbols in Indian Art and Civilization* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1946).

[7] Marchand, *Down from Olympus,* 43.

[8] Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Ästhetik* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1971), 3:151 and 3:181; Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Hegel's Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art*, trans T. M. Knox, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1975), 2:1072 and 2:1095.

[9] Stuart Jay Harten, "Raising the Veil of History: Orientalism, Classicism and the Birth of Western Civilization in Hegel's Berlin Lecture Courses of the 1820's" (PhD diss., Cornell University, 1994).

[10] Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, trans. R. F. Brown, P. C. Hodgson, and J. M. Stewart (Berkeley: U California P, 1984), 327.

[11] Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Vorlesungen: Ausgewählte Nachschriften und Manuskripte*, *vols. 3–5: Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion*, ed.Walter Jaeschke (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1983–84), 4a:232. Hegel, *Lectures*, 329.

[12] Sai Bhatawadekar, "Three-fold Conceptual Structure of Hegel and Schopenhauer's Interpretation of Hindu Religious Philosophy." Theory, Faith, Culture: An International Interdisciplinary Conference. Cardiff University, 4–6 July 2007.

# 7: Schopenhauer's Justification for Good

> *It sometimes happens that some men who are at odds with their age show that they belong to it by the extent of their opposition to it. Some are rebels, others want to admonish and others still are eccentrics who obtain learning from ancient books and look quietly with complete detachment at their world, as though they themselves did not belong to it. The philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer belonged to the last category.*
>
> — Golo Mann, *The History of Germany since 1789* (1958)

## Schopenhauer's Brand of Vedānta

MANN'S QUOTE MAY BE TRUE and one could argue that Asian philosophy, which often emphasizes cultivating detachment from what Nietzsche would call the "all-too-human," would naturally appeal to one who was already detached in many ways, as was Arthur Schopenhauer. One of Hegel's primary rivals, Schopenhauer was out of step with his contemporaries in the tradition of German idealism. He was, however, one of the most avid readers of the English Indological publications discussed earlier. His interest in Hindu and Buddhist topics began around the age of twenty-five, just after he submitted his doctoral thesis at Jena University, "Über die vierfache Wurzel des Satzes vom zureichenden Grunde" (On the Fourfold Root of the Principle of Sufficient Reason). His introduction to such ideas is thought to have occurred in late 1813, after the acceptance of this thesis, when he met Majer at the young philosopher's mother's salon in Weimar, then, with Heidelberg, one of the centers of what has come to be called *die Hochromantik* (High Romanticism).

Schopenhauer first acquired a copy of Anquetil-Duperron's *Oupnek'hat* from Majer in the winter of 1813–14.[1] He wrote in the preface to the first edition of the first volume of *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung* (The World as Will and Representation, 1818) that he owed many of his ideas to Anquetil-Duperron, and in *Parerga und Paralipomena* (Parerga and Paralipomena, or Essays and Aphorisms, 1851) he extolled the reverence with which Anquetil-Duperron rendered Dara Shukoh's Persian translation.[2] However, unlike Novalis and Schelling, he added,

> Sosehr ich auch die religiösen und philosophischen Werke der Sanskritliteratur verehre, so habe ich dennoch an den poetischen nur selten einiges Wohlgefallen finden können; sogar hat es mich zuzeiten bedünken wollen, diese wären so geschmacklos und monstros wie die Skulptur derselben Völker. (5:467)
>
> [Much as I admire and respect the religious and philosophical works of Sanskrit literature, only rarely have I been able to find any pleasure in the poetical works. Indeed, at times it seemed to me that these were as inelegant and monstrous as is the sculpture of the same peoples.][3]

Schopenhauer's disdain for Sanskrit poetry and Indian art ran counter to the profound impression made on him by Indian religions and philosophy. In his *Handschriftliche Nachlass* (Manuscript Remains) he referred to the Asiatick Society's journal *Asiatick Researches* and Klaproth's *Asiatisches Magazin*, to Schlegel's *On the Language and Wisdom of the Indians*, and to many other works on Indian topics by figures such as Max Müller, perhaps the foremost German Orientalist of the nineteenth century. At his death Schopenhauer had accumulated a library of at least 130 volumes on Asian topics.[4]

The Sanskrit text that Schopenhauer would initially become most familiar with through translations was the *Upanishads.* As Frederick Copleston has pointed out, Schopenhauer's philosophy bears some resemblance to *Advaita* (nondualism), the most prominent form of *Vedānta*.[5] Schopenhauer mentions only the teachings of the *Upanishads* generally as "Vedānta." However, some of his most important doctrines are mirrored in those of the Advaita school, with which he seems to have been acquainted through Windischmann's *Sancara sive de Theologia Vedanticorum* (Shankara, Or of Vedantic Theology, 1833), to which he referred in his *Manuscript Remains* and which Eduard Grisebach lists in his catalogue of titles in Schopenhauer's posthumous library.[6]

Pinkard, who does not explicitly take into account Schopenhauer's Indophilia, points out that in the context of idealism he should be regarded as a post-Hegelian philosopher because his work was only widely recognized in the 1850s, at the end of his life and two decades after Hegel's death, although chronologically speaking his major work, *The World as Will and Representation*, was published around the same time as Hegel's 1817 *Encyclopedia der Philosophischen Wissenschaften* (Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences).[7] One might add that Schopenhauer also saw himself as following Hegel, although he despised Hegel's work just as he despised the work of most of his contemporaries. What he presented was an alternate path that idealism might have taken, for he advocated a return to Kant's three Critiques that ignored the works of Reinhold, Schulze, Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel — a path that wed his own vision of transcen-

dental idealism to the fascination for Indian ideas that the Early Romantics had begun. Unlike the Jena Romantics discussed earlier, however, Schopenhauer would not reject Hindu and Buddhist ideas later in life in favor of Christianity. The extent to which they informed his philosophy only deepened over time as more Sanskrit and Pali works became available in translation and Schopenhauer's own knowledge of them increased.

Based on his interpretation of Kant — and of Plato for that matter — Schopenhauer accepted the disjunction between the phenomena of the natural world and the noumena that he felt lay within it. He thought Schelling's attempt to unify subject and object in his explanation of nature and human freedom was misguided. He felt that there could be no unity of the material world and the absolute and, in fact, Schopenhauer's absolute bears a much greater resemblance to *Brahman* than to any "absolute" found in German idealism. He argues in volume one,

> Diese Darstellung, auf welche wir gekommen sind, indem wir dem konsequentesten der vom Objekt ausgehenden philosophischen Systeme, dem Materialismus, nachgingen, dient zugleich, die untrennbare gegenseitige Abhängigkeit bei nicht aufzuhebendem Gegensatz zwischen Subjekt und Objekt anschaulich zu machen; welche Erkenntnis darauf leitet, das innerste Wesen der Welt, das Ding an sich, nicht mehr in einem jener beiden Elemente der Vorstellung, sondern vielmehr in einem von der Vorstellung gänzlich Verschiedenen zu suchen, welches nicht mit einem solchen ursprünglichen, wesentlichen und dabei unauflöslichen Gegensatz behaftet ist. (*Sämtliche Werke*, 1:67–68)
>
> [This explanation at which we have arrived by following materialism, the most consistent of the philosophical systems that start from the object, helps at the same time to make clear the inseparable and reciprocal dependence of subject and object, together with the antithesis between them which cannot be eliminated. This knowledge leads us to seek the inner nature of the world, the thing-in-itself, no longer in either of those two elements of the representation, but rather in something entirely different from the representation, in something that is not encumbered with such an original, essential, and therefore insoluable antithesis.][8]

For Schopenhauer the phenomenal world must be transcended in order to reach the noumenal, although the noumenal is not "experienced" like the phenomenal; it is re-joined. This view does not obviate the need for him to attempt to explain human relations to the phenomenal world as had his mentor Kant. B. V. Kishan notes that whereas Gautama Buddha avoids any explanation of the nature of reality, leaving its interpretation vague, Schopenhauer is quite clear about his explanation and accordingly develops an entire system around it: "Schopenhauer may be said to diverge from the maxim of the Buddha that it is futile to raise questions concerning things

which cannot be grasped through reasoning and intellect."[9] Such a divergence from Buddhist teachings, however, seems to result from Schopenhauer's need to establish his position in relation Kant and other post-Kantian thinkers — this despite his antagonism toward them, for ultimately he took "the world as representation" as almost a given and devoted most of his work to discussions of the thing-in-itself, the will, aesthetic experience, the roles of the genius and mystic, and transcendence of the material.

Schopenhauer believed that the two key ideas in Kantian thought are (1) that human beings experience the world as representations of the data of the senses and (2) that behind this world or its representations is the thing-in-itself, which Kant felt one can never know. Similarly, in his other two primary sources, Plato's dialogues and the *Upanishads*, "representation" is construed as only a relative reality, which would later in the history of Hinduism be called *mâyâ* or "illusion," something that is not eternal reality. In the "Allegory of the Cave," Socrates described human beings' sensual relation to the world using the metaphor of only being able to see one's own shadow, which the fire throws on the opposite wall of the cave in which one is imprisoned. Schopenhauer would not only also construe representation as *mâyâ* in his text — also citing Calderón, Pindar, Shakespeare, and Sophocles in support of this idea — but claim that his philosophy could provide the necessary basis for deducing all the leading assertions of the *Upanishads*. He admonished in the preface to the first volume of *The World as Will and Representation* that while a thorough knowledge of Plato and Kant is assumed, if his reader has shared in the benefit of the *Vedas*,

> deren uns durch die Upanischaden eröffneter Zugang in meinen Augen der größte Vorzug ist, den dieses noch junge Jahrhundert vor den früheren aufzuweisen hat, indem ich vermute, daß der Einfluß der Sanskrit-Literatur nicht weniger tief eingreifen wird als im 15. Jahrhundert die Wiederbelebung der griechischen: hat also, sage ich, der Leser auch schon die Weihe uralter indischer Weisheit empfangen und empfänglich aufgenommen; dann ist er auf das allerbeste bereitet zu hören, was ich ihm vorgetragen habe. (*Sämtliche Werke*, 1:11)

> [access to which, opened to us by the *Upanishads*, is in my view the greatest advantage which this still young century has to show over previous centuries, since I surmise that the influence of Sanskrit literature will penetrate no less deeply than did the revival of Greek literature in the fifteenth century; if, I say, the reader has also already received and assimilated the divine inspiration of ancient Indian wisdom, then he is best of all prepared to hear what I have to say to him. (*The World as Will and Representation*, 1:xv)]

At the time, Schopenhauer was also familiar with other Sanskrit texts, but his knowledge of Buddhist texts is less evident in the first volume of

*The World as Will and Representation* (1818) than in volume two (1844). An explanation for this may lie in the fact that the number of translated Buddhist texts in the West increased with the discovery of the Pali canon and the proliferation of commentaries such as Eugène Burnouf's *Introduction à l'histoire du Buddhism Indien* (Introduction to the History of Indian Buddhism; also 1844).

As Nicholls points out, only three of the works listed in Schopenhauer's posthumous library that specifically refer to Buddhist thought have publication dates earlier than 1818: M. Ozeray's *Recherches sur Bouddhou* (Researches on Buddha, 1817), Abel Rémusat's *Le livre des récompenses et des peines* (The Book of Rewards and Penalties, 1816), and Samuel Turner's *Gesantschafsreise an den Hof des Teshoo Lama* (Legation Voyage to the Court of the Teshoo Lama; 1801, translated from English). Schopenhauer had no particular predilection for any particular school of Buddhism, preferring to rely on its insights as presented in excerpted form in the works of other writers. As Kishan points out, however, his comments do indicate knowledge of the different phases in the development of the various schools of Buddhism.[10] Further European translation of Hindu sources would also have an impact on the second edition of volumes one and two of *The World as Will and Representation*, particularly A. W. Schlegel's 1823 translation of the *Bhagavad Gītā*.

## Brahma as Will

If one heeds Schopenhauer's warning not to read his masterwork without acquaintance with Vedic literature, and avoids the tendency among some critics to place him only within the context of Western philosophy as Schelling and Hegel's enemy and as a precursor to Kierkegaard and Nietzsche, the extent to which Hindu and Buddhist ideas influenced his work is clear. It would not be inaccurate to divide his philosophy into three main parts roughly conforming to three of the Four Noble Truths of Buddhism, as has been done by critics such as John E. Atwell. These would consist of (1) the observation that material existence is primarily composed of suffering, (2) the "diagnosis" that suffering is a manifestation of the "will to live," and (3) the "cure" that by ceasing to will, suffering abates and, in extreme cases, totally disappears.[11]

As Atwell notes, in volume one Schopenhauer provided the reader with an account of the miseries of material existence, the suggestion of an escape from this world of suffering, and a kind of metaphysics in which the existence of suffering would be rendered intelligible and possibly justified, an idea which parallels the nearly contemporaneous Emersonian theodicy.[12] As in the Hindu and Buddhist idea of *karma*, for Schopenhauer one is responsible for the suffering that one experiences and therefore deserves

it. The concept that one's status in this life is determined by one's actions in prior lives is, of course, a basis of the Indian caste system. The debate, however, between the idea that one can achieve immediate enlightenment and the notion that such an event can occur only after lifetimes of working up the karmic ladder has been a point of debate between competing schools of Hinduism and Buddhism for centuries.

Unlike Early Romantics such as Novalis or Friedrich Schlegel, Schopenhauer made no attempt to conflate the teachings of Hinduism and Buddhism with the Judeo-Christian tradition or, as in the works of other figures previously mentioned, with Greco-Roman mythology. Like the "Indo-Germans" before him, he appears to locate the origins of the Old Testament in the *Zend-Avesta* and those of the New Testament in Indian religion. He observes in "Über Religion" (On Religion) in *Parerga*, "Das Neue Testament hingegen muß irgendwie indischer Abstammung sein: davon zeugt seine durchaus indische, die Moral in die Askese überführende Ethik, sein Pessimismus und sein Avatar" (*Sämtliche Werke*, 5:449; The New Testament must [somehow] be of Indian origin: witness of that is its altogether Indian ethic, in which morality leads to asceticism, its pessimism and its avatar: *Parerga and Paralipomena*, 1:190). A bit further on he asserts, "Alles, was im Christentum Wahres ist, findet sich auch im Brahmanismus und Buddhaismus" (*Sämtliche Werke*, 5:450; Everything true in Christianity is also to be discovered in Brahmanism and Buddhism: *Parerga and Paralipomena*, 1:191).[13] Yet Schopenhauer did not consider the Judeo-Christian tradition as useful as the Near- and Far Eastern texts from which he believed it to be derived, for he found it less applicable to practical human situations.

Post-Kantians may have attempted to tease out issues of practicality from states of existence purported to be beyond human ken. For Schopenhauer, post-Kantianism was doomed from the start, because even Schelling, who had been profoundly affected by the *Gitagovinda* and other Sanskrit texts, denied the importance of what for Schopenhauer was the second key doctrine that Kant expounded in *The Critique of Pure Reason*: the thing-in-itself. Kant argued that knowledge of the thing-in-itself is impossible because it transcends all our cognitive functions based on time, space, and causality. The first two of the four books of *The World as Will and Representation*, "Die Vorstellung, unterworfen dem Satze vom Grunde: Das Objekt der Erfahrung und Wissenschaft" (The Representation Subject to the Principle of Sufficient Reason: The Object of Experience and of Science) and "Die Objektivation des Willens" (The Objectification of the Will), concern the thing-in-itself and will. The equation of the thing-in-itself with will as the fundamental reality forms the basis of Schopenhauer's metaphysics of nature, and thus of his whole system. The "absolute" to be found in forms of idealism such as Hegel's are denied by Schopenhauer out of hand in favor of a fundamental reality with which one hopes to reintegrate one's individual soul.

While book one concerns material contained in Schopenhauer's doctoral thesis — the fact that perceptible objects are only representations formed according to spatial, temporal, and causal properties — book two attempts to understand the reality within such properties. Schopenhauer argued that neither realist philosophy nor empirical science can help us experience the reality behind representation, because object and representation are indistinguishably one. Phenomena, in other words, have an inner, insensible reality: the thing-in-itself, independent of the principle of sufficient reason, which Schopenhauer, unlike Kant, argued one can immediately know through the experience of one's own body.

What is confusing about Schopenhauer's conception of the will — seemingly even to him — is that he appears to mean both the fundamental reality and the human volition that one tries to overcome in re-integrating oneself with that reality. His conception of the will is thus not unlike that of the unity of *atman* and *brahman* to be found in the *Upanishads* and the *Bhagavad Gītā*. Will, for Schopenhauer, is both *atman* and *brahman*, both the individual embodied soul and the impersonal universal soul. Will moves through us and around us, motivating our actions in an instinctual way, and yet helps us act intentionally to overcome our embodiment.

While Kishan incorrectly asserts that Schopenhauer "believes" in the "concreteness" of the world (despite Schopenhauer's assertion that the world of the senses is phenomenal), he is correct in stating that Schopenhauer does not make the material, representational world mind-dependent, but will-dependent. Schopenhauer asserts that the human mind constructs the world of appearances, but only the representation of that world is dependent on the subject. The world as fundamental reality is dependent on the will.

For Schopenhauer as for the "spiritual athlete" (*yogin*) of the *Bhagavad Gītā*, human beings are not merely intellectual, but creatures who experience the world of representations through their bodies. The body therefore is the gateway through which we encounter the fundamental aspect of the representative world. One is aware of one's body as both an object, a representation of the willing, thinking subject, and as a subject that itself acts. Will is also the underlying nature of the perceptual objects that otherwise are mere representations of the thinking subject:

> Jeder wahre, echte, unmittelbare Akt des Willens ist sofort und unmittelbar auch erscheinender Akt des Leibes; und diesem entsprechend ist andererseits jede Einwirkung auf den Leib sofort und unmittelbar auch Einwirkung auf den Willen. (*Sämtliche Werke*, 1:158)
>
> [Every true, genuine, immediate act of the will is also at once and directly a manifest act of the body; and correspondingly, on the other hand, every impression on the body is also at once and directly an impression on the will. (*The World as Will and Representation*, 1:101)]

In the *Bhagavad gītā*, *yoga* — or "integration" (from the Sanskrit verb *yukta*, "to yoke") — is spoken of as the reunion of *atman*, the individual soul, with *brahman*, the universal soul. Schopenhauer's emphasis on the body is not unlike *hatha*, the branch of *yoga* that involves physical postures meant to free one's mind from embodiment.[14] In book two Schopenhauer states that every act of the will is also inevitably a movement of the body. Thus, overcoming the will may begin with overcoming the body, by attempting to enter states that transcend embodiment. Pinkard points out that in understanding one's material embodiment as the expression of one's will, one is grasping what one really is as a thing-in-itself, as a "will" that is not a member of the causal order even though it is capable of initiating its own string of causal connections (337). Schopenhauer thus postulates that the nature of things-in-themselves has a structure analogous to that of "will."

Scholarship on Schopenhauer, however, has tended to conflate these two wills — the one that governs our material actions and the one that strives to free us from materiality — as Schopenhauer himself largely does:

> Wann aber äußerer Anlaß oder innere Stimmung uns plötzlich aus dem endlosen Strome des Wollens heraushebt, die Erkenntnis dem Sklavendienste des Willens entreißt, die Aufmerksamkeit nun nicht mehr auf die Motive des Wollens gerichtet wird, sondern die Dinge frei von ihrer Beziehung auf den Willen auffaßt, also ohne Interesse, ohne Subjektivität, rein objektiv sie betrachtet, ihnen ganz jenem ersten Wege des Wollens immer gesuchte, aber immer entfliehende Ruhe mit einem Male von selbst eingetreten, und uns ist völlig wohl. Es ist der schmerzenslose Zustand, den Epikuros als das höchste Gut und als den Zustand der Götter pries: denn wir sind für jenen Augenblick des schnöden Willensdranges entledigt, wir feiern den Sabbath der Zuchthausarbeit des Wollens, das Rad des Ixion steht still. (*Sämtliche Werke,* 1:280)
>
> [When, however, an external cause or inward disposition suddenly raises us out of the endless stream of willing, and snatches knowledge from the thralldom of the will, the attention is now no longer directed to the motives of willing, but comprehends things free from their relation to the will. Thus, it considers things without interest, without subjectivity, purely objectively; it is entirely given up to them in so far as they are merely representations, and not motives. Thus all at once the peace, always sought but always escaping us on that first path of willing, comes to us of its own accord, and all is well with us. It is the painless state, prized by Epicurus as the highest good and as the state of the gods; for that moment, we are delivered from the miserable pressure of the will. We celebrate the Sabbath of the penal servitude of willing; the wheel of Ixion stands still. (*The World as Will and Representation,* 1:196)]

Some clarity may be found in the fact that for Schopenhauer different types of things manifest the will to different extents. Like Schelling, he accounts for these differences by invoking Plato's Ideas.[15] Plato first presents the concept that the sensible world is merely an imperfect image of a world of constant and unobservable "forms" in the Φαιδων (Phaedo; ca. 325 B.C.). These Forms are the universal prototypes for the various kinds of objects in the phenomenal world. In quotidian experience we rarely notice the "Idea" behind the object, concerning ourselves instead with the object's pragmatic relationship to us. Taking his lead from Plato, therefore, like some other post-Kantians and the Jena Romantics, Schopenhauer in effect argues that Kantianism had to culminate in a kind of Spinozism to establish a tenable relationship between nature and human freedom.

While Schopenhauer did not revise his initial system to the extent that Schelling and Fichte revised theirs, his conception — or at least description — of the thing-in-itself changed over the course of the next four decades. Moira Nicholls concentrates on three shifts in what Schopenhauer says about facets of the thing-in-itself: (1) its "knowability," (2) its nature, and (3) his "explicit attempt to assimilate his own doctrines about the thing-in-itself with Eastern doctrines" (171). She argues that where in the first volume Schopenhauer is emphatic that the thing-in-itself is exclusively will or will-to-live, in his later writings there are passages that suggest that the thing-in-itself is will in only one of its aspects, and that it has other aspects that are the focus of mystical awareness.

While Novalis and Friedrich Schlegel take destructive, Shaivic stances, and Schelling an equilibrating Vaishnavic position, Schopenhauer concentrates on the Brahmanic, the creative. He emphasizes the sin inherent in creating the world, as in the myth of Prometheus. In "Fragmente zur Geschichte der Philosophie" (Fragments on the History of Philosophy) in *Parerga and Paralipomena*, Schopenhauer argues that redemption is a concept of Indian origin, for it "presupposes the Indian teaching according to which the origin of the world (this Samsara of the Buddhists) is itself based on evil; that is to say, it is a sinful act of Brahma."[16]

Schopenhauer, however, acknowledges that his characterization of Brahma as evil is an interpretation of Indian mythology rather than an actual statement of accepted Hindu doctrine.[17] This remark is in contrast to Friedrich Schlegel, who argues in *On the Language and Wisdom of the Indians* that with the Hindu doctrine of Emanation the world is mistakenly viewed as degraded. Thus, only the realm of the Creator is a place of divine bliss. This kind of (Christian) Creator does not exist for Schopenhauer, however; Creation is for him more akin to that found in later Hinduism, a nonanthropomorphic occurrence.

One might note that the concept of creation as a sin exists in early, Vedic Hinduism. The "Raudra Brahmana" section of the *Mahabharata* tells of the descent from transcendental time into temporality due to the

Father at the beginning of cyclic existence, who created the world out of a passion that should have been controlled.[18] Hinduism conceives of time in eons that run their course and are consumed by Agni, the fire who is the only witness to the dissolution of the cosmos. Stella Kramrisch explains man's place in this scheme:

> In the context of Śiva's myth, man has not yet been created in the flesh. To bring about man in his physical concrete existence as human being will be the task assigned to Rudra-Śiva by his father, the Lord of Generation, who is known in the *Purāṇas* as Brahma, the Creator. He will create the eon where the noumenal universe that is Rudra's body will come to life in all its parts, and its ingredients will combine in sentient creatures born to live and to die. The Father who shed the seed, [called] Prajapati [in the last eon], and [called] Brahma [in this one], successively in the ongoing narrative of sacred tradition, plays the role of the Creator. (111–12)

Book three of *The World as Will and Representation* is "Die Vorstellung, unabhängig vom Satze des Grundes: Die Platonische Idee: Das Objekt der Kunst" (The Representation Independent of the Principle of Sufficient Reason: The Platonic Idea: The Object of Art). Here Schopenhauer describes only two realms of experience in which one is aided in abandoning the self, the first being aesthetic experience, particularly the experience of the sublime. He explains that the value of literature, and of tragedy in particular, lies in its quieting of the will:

> [T]eils geht er aus der Menschheit selbst hervor durch die sich kreuzenden Willensbestrebungen der Individuen, durch die Bosheit und Verkehrtheit der meisten. . . . hier mehr, dort minder zur Besinnung gebracht und gemildert durch das Licht der Erkenntnis, bis endlich in einzelnen diese Erkenntnis, geläutert und gesteigert durch das Leiden selbst . . . wodurch nunmehr die vorhin so gewaltigen *Motive* ihre Macht verlieren und statt ihrer die wollkommene Erkenntnis des Wesens der Welt, als *Quietiv* des Willens wirkend, die Resignation herbeiführt, das Aufgeben nicht bloß des Lebens, sondern des ganzen Willens zum Leben selbst. (*Sämtliche Werke,* 1:353–54)

> [In part, it proceeds from mankind itself through the self-mortifying efforts of will on the part of individuals, through the wickedness and perversity of most. . . . Here and there, it reaches thoughtfulness and is softened more or less by the light of knowledge, until at last in the individual case this knowledge is purified and enhanced by suffering itself. . . . The *motives* that were previously so powerful now lose their force, and instead of them, the complete knowledge of the real nature of the world, acting as a *quieter* of the will, produces resignation, the giving up not merely of life, but of the whole will-to-live itself. (*The World as Will and Representation,* 1:253)]

He uses the same distinction that Kant makes in his third critique, *The Critique of Judgment*, between the "mathematical sublime" and the "dynamic sublime." The mathematical sublime entails objects of such immeasurable size, whether microscopic or macrocosmic, that they cease to have materiality that the human mind can experience. The dynamic sublime, which is closer to that of Burke and the sublime of both the English and German Romantics, is what one would call objects or events that show us our physical inadequacy, but which we can still comprehend, such as hurricanes. For Kant the dynamic sublime gives the human mind a chance to experience our humility and understand our calling as moral beings, whereas for Schopenhauer the experience of the dynamic sublime is one of the only ways in which people can acquire a sense of what transcendence would be like. It is a vehicle for escaping materiality.

Schopenhauer distinguishes this notion of the sublime from the experience of beauty:

> Was also das Gefühl des Erhabenen von dem des Schönen unterscheidet, ist dieses: beim Schönen hat das reine Erkennen ohne Kampf die Oberhand gewonnen, indem die Schönheit des Objekts, d. h. dessen die Erkenntnis seiner Idee erleichternde Beschaffenheit, den Willen und die seinem Dienste frönende Erkenntnis der Relationen ohne Widerstand und daher unmerklich aus dem Bewußtsein entfernte und dasselbe als reines Subjekt des Erkennens übrigließ, so daß selbst keine Erinnerung an den Willen nachbleibt: hingegen bei dem Erhabenen ist jener Zustand des reinen Erkennens allererst gewonnen durch ein bewußtes und gewaltsames Losreißen von den als ungünstig erkannten Beziehungen desselben Objekts zum Willen, durch ein freies von Bewußtsein begleitetes Erheben über den Willen und die auf ihn sich beziehende Erkenntnis." (*Sämtliche Werke,* 1:288)
>
> [What distinguishes the feeling of the sublime from that of the beautiful is that, with the beautiful, pure knowledge has gained the upper hand without a struggle, since the beauty of the object, in other words, that quality of it which facilitates knowledge of its Idea, has removed from consciousness, without resistance and hence imperceptibly, the will and knowledge of relations that slavishly serve this will. What is then left is pure subject of knowing, and not even a recollection of the will remains. On the other hand, with the sublime, that state of pure knowing is obtained first of all by a conscious and violent tearing away from the relations of the same object to the will, which are recognized as unfavourable, by a free exhaltation, accompanied by consciousness, beyond the will and the knowledge related to it. (*The World as Will and Representation,* 1:202)]

Pure knowledge can be achieved whether the object is beautiful or sublime, but it is a much more violent process in the latter case, for the indi-

vidual will must, paradoxically, be employed to tear the impersonal will away from the object.

Schopenhauer concludes this section on the plastic arts by noting that ultimately the experience of art results in resignation, in the abolition of the will, which he writes is the innermost spirit of Christianity, Hinduism, and Buddhism: "Nunmehr endigt mit der Darstellung seiner freien Selbstaufhebung durch das eine große Quietiv, welches ihm aufgeht aus der vollkommensten Erkenntnis seines eigenen Wesens" (*Sämtliche Werke* 1:328; Art ends by presenting the free self-abolition of the will through the one great quieter that dawns on it from the most perfect knowledge of its own nature: *The World as Will and Representation*, 1:233). This passage has attached to it the following astonishing but typical footnote: "Diese Stelle setzt zu ihrm Verständnis das folgende Buch ganz und gar voraus" (*Sämtliche Werke*, 1:328; This passage presupposes for its comprehension the whole of the following book: *The World as Will and Representation*, 1:233).

For Schopenhauer the art form that most successfully approached transcendence was music. Romanticism emphasized music's "subjective inwardness" as exemplary of autonomous, human freedom. For Schopenhauer, however, music was more than that; it was the sound of fundamental reality:

> Die Musik ist nämlich eine so unmittelbare Objektivation und [ein] Abbild des ganzen Willens, wie die Welt selbst es ist, ja wie die Ideen es sind, deren vervielfältigte Erscheinung die Welt der einzelnen Dinge ausmacht. Die Musik ist also keineswegs gleich den andern Künsten das Abbild der Ideen; sondern Abbild des Willens selbst, dessen Objektivität auch die Ideen sind: deshalb eben ist die Wirkung der Musik so sehr viel mächtiger und eindringlicher als die der andern Künste: denn diese reden nur vom Schatten, sie aber vom Wesen. (*Sämtliche Werke*, 1:359)
>
> [Thus music is as *immediate* an objectification and copy of the whole *will* as the world itself is, indeed as the Ideas are, the multiplied phenomenon of which constitutes the world of individual things. Therefore, music is by no means like the other arts, namely a copy of the Ideas, but is a *copy of the will itself*, the objectivity of which are the Ideas. For this reason the effect of music is so very much more powerful and penetrating than is that of the other arts, for these others speak only of the shadow, but music of the essence. (*The World as Will and Representation*, 1:257)]

This is similar to the reverence with which the sacred syllable "OM" is held in Hinduism. Appearing throughout its literature, OM is not considered a word, but a symbol and syllable that is a manifestation of spiritual power and betokens the presence of the absolute within both *atman* and *brahman*.[19]

Coincident with the Romantic elevation of music in German society generally at this time was the elevation of Kant's notion of the "genius." For Schopenhauer the exemplar of genius is the composer, in particular Beethoven, who reveals the fundamental reality beyond even his own comprehension. In the work of art, however, despite his genius, the artist can only escape the suffering of life fleetingly:

> [Er] ist ja selbst der Wille, der sich also objektiviert und in stetem Leiden bleibt. Jene reine wahre und tiefe Erkenntnis des Wesens der Welt wird ihm nun Zweck an sich: er bleibt bei ihr stehn. Daher wird sie ihm nicht, wie wir es im folgenden Buche bei dem zur Resignation gelangten Heiligen sehn werden, Quietiv des Willens, erlöst ihn nicht auf immer, sondern nur auf Augenblicke vom Leben und ist ihm so noch nicht der Weg aus demselben, sondern nur einstweilen ein Trost in demselben. (*Sämtliche Werke,* 1:372)
>
> [He himself is the will objectifying itself and remaining in constant suffering. That pure, true, and profound knowledge of the inner nature of the world now becomes for him an end in itself; at it he stops. Therefore it does not become for him a quieter of the will, as we shall see in the following book in the case of the saint who has attained resignation; it does not deliver him from life forever, but only for a few moments. For him it is not the way out of life, but only an occasional consolation in it. (*The World as Will and Representation,* 1:267)]

## The Gospel of Action

The fourth and final book of *The World as Will and Representation*, "Bei erreichter Selbsterkenntnis, Bejahung und Verneinung des Willens zum Leben" (With Attainment of Self-Knowledge, Affirmation, and Denial of the Will-to-Live), concerns the "geniuses" of morality: the saint and the ascetic. The moral saint identifies with the suffering of others by breaking through the world of representation, in which we appear to be separate beings in often antagonistic relationships. This breaking through occurs without practical, intellectual understanding. The same is true of the ascetic; however, in this case the will has been denied completely, to the point at which one becomes indifferent to suffering, both one's own and that of others. For the ascetic all the various distinctions of the represented world disappear. Schopenhauer recognized, though, that such a state cannot be characterized by any kind of intelligible metaphysics.

Such figures for Schopenhauer demonstrate that it is possible for the individual to rise above the knowledge that arises through the principle of sufficient reason and the delusion of the *principium individuationis* —

that is, that one can delight in a life of peace and joy in the phenomenal world. The qualities of intellect, reason, and the capacity to detach oneself from the distractions of the world are the special gifts of the human being and not available to any other known creature in nature. They endow the individual with the rare power of escaping the very will that has created him.[20]

The human mind or "personality" is both that which helps one reach final union with *Brahman*, the underlying spirit of creation, and that which one must overcome. The "Mundaka Upanishad" states, "He [what Christians might call the Holy Spirit] cannot be seen by the eye, and words cannot reveal him. He cannot be reached by the senses, or by austerity or sacred actions. By the grace of wisdom and purity of mind, he can be seen indivisible in the silence of contemplation" (*Upanishads*, 80). Gautama Buddha is supposed to have stated in the *Vajrachchedika Prajnaparamita-sutra* (Sutra of the Diamond-Cutter of Supreme Wisdom; 100 B.C.–A.D. 600), for example, that the individual has to make his life the medium for scaling greater heights of moral perfection. For Schopenhauer this involves the innate quality of denying the very substratum of which human life is but an expression. He prefers the New Testament of the Bible, perhaps because it presents an exemplary, benevolent figure for the human being to emulate. One cannot become Christ, however, according to the Bible, but one can become a Buddha, at least according to Gautama Buddha. It is no wonder that ultimately Schopenhauer's philosophy bears more resemblance to Buddhism than to Hinduism, since an omnipotent will is not an exemplar for human action in the way that an enlightened man is.

Though "all-too-human" in his personal life, the example of Buddhahood and notions of *nirvana* fascinated Schopenhauer; however, he took issue with the Buddhist view that a moral universe would create a world that is unlike itself, and with the idea of absorption into a reality of harmonious balance. Some clarification of the ideas around the term *nirvana* is necessary here. In Sanskrit, it literally means "extinction." In Hinduism, however, it connotes a state of liberation characterized by the merging of *atman* and *brahman*, which frees one from suffering, the cyclic tedium of death and rebirth, and all other bonds of material incarnation.

In Mahayana Buddhism, though the meaning is largely the same, the notion of *nirvana* undergoes a historical change that may be attributed to the introduction of the *bodhisattva* ideal and to an emphasis placed on the unified nature of the world. *Nirvana* in this context has sometimes been described in later Buddhism as the bliss that one feels in experiencing one's identity with the absolute, leading some practitioners to believe that *nirvana* is a material state that is to be surpassed itself, until even bliss disappears. Schuhmacher and Woerner describe the Western confusion about *nirvana*:

> In the West, *nirvana* has often been misunderstood as mere annhiliation; even in early Buddhism it was not so conceived. In many texts, to explain what is described as nirvana, the simile of extinguishing a flame is used. The fire that [appears to go] out does not pass away [because its energy changes state] but merely becomes invisible by passing into space; thus the term *nirvana* does not indicate annihilation but rather entry into another mode of existence. The fire comes forth from space and returns back [*sic*] into it; thus *nirvana* is a spiritual event that takes place in time but is also, in an unmanifest and imperishable sphere, always already there.[21]

As this passage illustrates, even the idea of the void as nothing is a misnomer. A void is empty of anything that a human being can perceive with the senses, but this is to define "void" in the realms of metaphysics or mysticism. (In physics, the supposed "void" has been found not to be empty at all.)[22] Schuhmacher and Woerner go on to add that whether one uses terms such as "bliss" or "annhilation," words are inadequate to describe *nirvana*, and one must remember that it is not "being nothing." Gautama Buddha himself declined to the make any statement concerning *nirvana* because, whether a positive state or annihilation, its net import for conduct in spiritual practice was that the same goal remained: the cessation of suffering. Schopenhauer was careful to use the term *nichts* (nothing), as opposed to the *néant* (nothingness) of the existentialists — that is, actually nothing, as opposed to an approximation of or metaphor for it.

By the same token, Schopenhauer finds in *dharma* (the teachings of Buddhism) the possibility of denying the will-to-live, but seems to need to point out that the pursuit of "eudemonology" is a worthy and necessary goal. In *Parerga and Paralipomena*, he refers several times to eudemonology (from the Greek *eudemonia*, meaning "happiness," which appears most prominently in Aristotle's *Rhetoric* 1.5). In his "Aphorisms on the Wisdom of Life" he describes eudemonology as the art of getting through life as pleasantly and successfully as possible. While he admits that his philosophy argues that an existence in which one is attached to and satisfied by materiality is impossible, he appears late in his life to be preoccupied by the problem of happiness. He is torn by such a preoccupation and laments, "to be able to work out such an answer, I have therefore had to abandon entirely the higher metaphysical ethical standpoint to which [my] real philosophy leads."[23] His discussion of living a happy life, therefore, rests on a compromise and the term "eudemonology" is to be read as a euphemism, for he can only entertain the possibility of a conditional happiness.

This preoccupation with happiness, though cursorily treated in his oeuvre, appears to fly in the face of the fact that Schopenhauer's philosophy is known as "Pessimism." Many of the Indo-Germans have agreed on a variety of issues with Voltaire, a true "Indo-maniac," as noted above. Voltaire's criticism of Leibniz's notion that this is the best of all possible

worlds, as expressed in *Candide* (1759), may be called pessimism for its emphasis on the cruelty of the material world. Similarly, the philosophy of Schopenhauer may be called pessimism in its renunciation of materialism (if one finds materialism personally edifying). Schopenhauer's noting that the world of representation is one of suffering is, however, as in Buddhism, merely the launching point for a philosophy that attempts to look beyond material incarnation and toward what the Jena Romantics would have called "salvation."

According to Gautama Buddha the notion of the self has to be given up by the individual if he wants to break the cycle of rebirth into suffering. For Schopenhauer as well, the individual must overcome dependence on knowledge that is attained through the principle of sufficient reason before he can hope to understand the will. To manage this, Schopenhauer does not advocate the path of asceticism, which renounces teleology completely; he does, however, admonish against over-attachment to the self, which is posited merely because the senses meet objects and give rise to physical sensations.

While Kant found that understanding the nature of the world as things-in-themselves inspired him to live a moral life, Schopenhauer's understanding of the world as will merely highlights the futility of most human actions. Terry Pinkard notes, "Freedom, the watchword of all Kantian and post-Kantian philosophy, was, for Schopenhauer, the freedom to rid ourselves of the illusions of freedom in the first place, which is possible only for the most cultured and rarefied of people."[24] The only form of freedom that remained for Schopenhauer was the freedom to overcome will. He thus found post-Kantianism's hopes for a world of rational freedom naïve, arguing that one must abandon traditional goals. For him the abandonment of the self does not signal detachment from others, for in abandonment he felt that distinctions between self and others would vanish as one comes to closer to integration with the will. Therefore, loss of self fosters not nihilism, but sympathy:

> Wir sehn nun, daß einem solchen Gerechten schon nicht mehr wie dem Bösen das principium individuationis eine absolute Scheidewand ist, daß er nicht wie jener nur seine eigene Willenserscheinung bejaht und alle andern verneint, daß ihm andere nicht bloße Larven sind, deren Wesen von dem seinigen ganz verschieden ist; sondern durch seine Handlungsweise zeigt er an, daß er sein eigenes Wesen, nämlich den Willen zum Leben als Ding an sich auch in der fremden, ihm bloß als Vorstellung gegebenen Erscheinung *wiedererkennt*. (*Sämtliche Werke,* 1:504)
>
> [We now see that for such a just man the *principium individuationis* is no longer an absolute partition as it is for the bad; that he does not, like the bad man, affirm merely his own phenomenon of will and deny all

> others; that others are not for him mere masks, whose inner nature is quite different from his. On the contrary, he shows by his way of acting that he again recognizes his own inner being, namely the will-to-live as thing-in-itself, in the phenomenon of another given to him merely as representation. (*The World as Will and Representation,* 1:370)]

The recognition of the illusion of freedom thus leads to empathy.

So even if Bertrand Russell called Schopenhauer's philosophy a "gospel of resignation,"[25] it in fact is one of action. Kishan argues, "to regard our experience of the world as transitory or phenomenal does not mean loss of faith in the efficacy of human effort."[26] Schopenhauer's premier English-language translator, E. F. J. Payne, echoes this thinking: "Many have complained that [Schopenhauer's] philosophy is somber and pessimistic, but an impartial examination will lead to the conclusion that it is neither more nor less pessimistic than the teachings of Brahmanism, Buddhism, and Christianity, all of which agree in preaching the supreme goal as deliverance from this earthly existence."[27] Schopenhauer thus appears to formulate an "anti-theodicy": a justification of good in the face of evil, without the help of a personal god. God, for Schopenhauer, is only anthropomorphically dead, for Schopenhauer's divine is an impersonal universal will.

Unsurprisingly, Schopenhauer had neither love for nor faith in politics, which he felt not to be concerned with empathy to a significant degree, and found that since the vast majority of people will never achieve the kind of enlightenment that he hopes for, the state must simply maintain order and not attempt to promote ethics. Schopenhauer's philosophy is thus the antithesis of left-wing Hegelianism and even of Hegel himself, for Hegel's philosophy was largely derived in response to historical events, whereas Schopenhauer mistrusted history and had little interest in the nationalist struggles of his day. Such apparent abandonment of hope for political change (although Schopenhauer himself never had any in the first place) made him ironically well-suited to the 1850s and '60s, during which Europeans seemed discouraged by the failures of past revolutions and the grim, if profitable, realities of industrialization. During this period nature philosophies such as that of Schelling appeared overly mystical and largely irrelevant to such an empirical age, while the secular authority of philosophy in German universities was largely replaced by the natural sciences, particularly with the arrival of Darwinism.

## Notes

The epigraph at the start of this chapter is from Golo Mann, *The History of Germany since 1789* (New York: Praeger, 1968), 141; "Dann mag es auch wieder vorkommen, daß einer gegen seine Zeit steht, so daß seine Zeitzugehörigkeit sich nicht im großen Gemeinsamen ausdrückt, sondern durch den Gegensatz. Es kann

die Haltung eines Rebellen und Warners sein; auch wohl die eines Kauzes, der seine Bildung aus uralten Büchern schöpft und ruhig, in völliger Unabhängigkeit, sich das Treiben des Tages besieht, als gehörte er selber nicht dazu. Der Philosoph Arthur Schopenhauer war von der letzteren Art" (Golo Mann, *Deutsche Geschichte des 19. und 20. Jahrhunderts* [Frankfurt: S. Fischer, 1958], 287).

[1] Moira Nicholls argues that in 1813 "there were relatively few scholarly sources of information about Eastern thought available to Europeans" (Moira Nicholls, "The Influences of Eastern Thought on Schopenhauer's Doctrine of the Thing-in-Itself," in *The Cambridge Companion to Schopenhauer*, ed. Christopher Janaway [Cambridge, UK: Cambridge UP, 1999], 176). Still, there had already been a plethora of publications on Indian topics, particularly in English (some of which are cited earlier) — and Schopenhauer spoke and read English fluently. Nicholls does provide, however, invaluable documentation of Schopenhauer's many Oriental sources.

[2] Arthur Schopenhauer, *Sämtliche Werke*, 5 vols. (Wiesbaden: Brockhaus, 1972), 5:469.

[3] Arthur Schopenhauer, *Parerga and Paralipomena*, trans. E. F. J. Payne (Oxford: Clarendon, 1974) 2:394.

[4] Nicholls, "The Influences of Eastern Thought on Schopenhauer's Doctrine of the Thing-in-Itself," 178–79. Although I have not been able to ascertain what percentage of Schopenhauer's total library such Orientalist works make up, their number, as well as the time span over which they were published, certainly indicates Schopenhauer's profound and prolonged interest in Asian topics. See Nicholls 197–204 for an exact listing of which Indological works were sources for each of Schopenhauer's works.

[5] Frederick Copleston, "Schopenhauer," in *The Great Philosophers*, ed. Bryan Magee (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1987). As noted above, the *Upanishads* (literally "to sit down near to," that is, at the feet of the guru) form the final portion of the *shruti*, or revealed part of Vedic teaching, and are the principal basis of *Vedānta*, the philosophical conclusion derived from the *Vedas*. Within *Vedānta* there are three primary branches of interpretation based on medieval commentaries that differ over questions of dualism: the school of *Advaita-Vedānta* or "nondualism," whose main teacher was the eighth-century philosopher Sankara; *Vishishtadvaita-Vedānta* or "qualified nondualism," whose chief representative was Ramanuja, in the twelfth century (and which R. C. Zaehner notes is much closer in spirit to the teachings of the *Bhagavad Gītā*); and *Dvaita-Vedānta* or "dualism," which developed in the thirteenth century under Madhva.

[6] Nicholls, "The Influences of Eastern Thought on Schopenhauer's Doctrine of the Thing-in-Itself," 182.

[7] Pinkard, *German Philosophy 1760–1860,* 333.

[8] Arthur Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation*, trans E. F. J. Payne (New York: Dover, 1958) 1:31.

[9] B. V. Kishan, "Schopenhauer and Buddhism," in *Schopenhauer: His Philosophical Achievement*, ed. Michael Fox (Sussex: Harvester, 1980), 256.

[10] Kishan, "Schopenhauer and Buddhism," 255.
[11] The Four Noble Truths, the basis of Buddhist teaching, are as follows: (1) all existence is characterized by suffering, (2) desire is the cause of suffering, (3) elimination of desire can cause the cessation of suffering, and (4) the Eightfold Path leads to the cessation of suffering (Schuhmacher and Woerner, *The Encyclopedia of Eastern Philosophy and Religion*, 109). The Eightfold Path is composed of (1) a view based on the Four Noble Truths; (2) resolve in favor of renunciation and nonviolence; (3) avoidance of harming speech; (4) avoidance of harming actions; (5) avoidance of ignoble professions; (6) cultivation of what is karmically wholesome; (7) mindfulness of body, emotions, and thought; (8) concentration on spiritual absorption (ibid. 98–99).
[12] John E. Atwell, *Schopenhauer on the Character of the World: The Metaphysics of Will* (Berkeley: U California P, 1995), x.
[13] Schopenhauer uses the term "findet" ("found"), that is, he implies that such truths are also to be found there, not necessarily that they originated there.
[14] The best known other branches of and elaborations on yoga are *karma-yoga* (selfless action), *bhakti-yoga* (devout love of god), *raja-yoga* ("royal yoga"), *kundalini-yoga* (Tantric), and *jñana-yoga* (the path of abstract knowledge) (Schuhmacher and Woerner, *The Encyclopedia of Eastern Philosophy and Religion*, 429). The term *raja-yoga* comes from the *Yoga-Sutra* by Patanjali, second century B.C. Patanjali contrasts *hatha* (physical postures) as a preparatory discipline with *raja*, the other disciplines of yoga, which he considers to be more advanced (see Georg Feuerstein, ed., *The Shambhala Encyclopedia of Yoga* [Boston, MA: Shambhala, 2000], 239–40).
[15] Schopenhauer uses the term "Idee," translated into English as "Idea" with a capital "I"; however, the term "idea" should be taken with caution, since such objects are not creations of a mind, but exist independently of thought. (This distinction is more nebulous in German since all nouns in German begin with an initial capital letter.) While "forms" may be closer to the concept Plato was trying to convey, he uses the singular Greek terms *eidos* (type), as well as *idea* (idea).
[16] Schopenhauer, *Parerga and Paralipomena,* 1:62; "Eben auch die indische Lehre voraussetzt, nach welcher der Ursprung der Welt (dieses Samsara der Buddaisten) selbst schon vom Übel, nämlich eine sündliche Tat des Brahma ist" (Schopenhauer, *Sämtliche Werke,* 4:81).
[17] Nicholls, "The Influences of Eastern Thought on Schopenhauer's Doctrine of the Thing-in-Itself," 184.
[18] Kramrisch, *The Presence of Siva*, 104–5. The *Brahmanas* are *shruti* that explain the relationship of the *Vedas* to specific sacrifical ceremonies.
[19] For more on this, see Schuhmacher and Woerner, *The Encyclopedia of Eastern Philosophy and Religion,* 254–55.
[20] Schuhmacher and Woerner, *The Encyclopedia of Eastern Philosophy and Religion*, 259.
[21] Schuhmacher and Woerner, *The Encyclopedia of Eastern Philosophy and Religion,* 248–49.

[22] In the chapter "The Origin and Fate of the Universe" in *A Brief History of Time* (1988), Stephen W. Hawking explains some of the difficulties in understanding the state of the universe at a supposed beginning: "In order to predict how the universe should have started off, one needs laws that hold at the beginning of time. If the classical theory of general relativity was correct, the singularity theorems that Roger Penrose and I proved show that the beginning of time would have been a point of infinite density and infinite curvature of space-time. All the known laws of science would break down at such a point" (Stephen W. Hawking, *A Brief History of Time: From the Big Bang to Black Holes* [Toronto: Bantam, 1988], 133). One would need at least a quantum theory of gravity to begin to unravel such laws. Aristotle would still have been unsettled by the infinity found by Hawking and Penrose, but the European fear of the void, or Hindu espousal of it, appears, at present, unfounded. Hawking's partner, Roger Penrose, takes up the question in relation to entropy and the second law of thermodynamics (which is that energy spontaneously tends to flow only from being concentrated in one place to becoming diffused or dispersed and spread out) in *The Emperor's New Mind* (1989). Penrose refutes the idea that the big bang explains the second law by noting that the primordial fireball would have been a state of "thermal equilibrium," a state of maximum entropy, not minimum entropy as demanded by the second law. He uses this as the jumping-off point for a lengthy discussion of black holes and the theoretical "big crunch" as the end of our universe's existence, but admits the possibility that the big crunch could be so far off that no violation of the second law of thermodynamics would be discernible to us in our present epoch.

[23] Schopenhauer, *Parerga and Paralipomena,* 1:313; "Um eine solche dennoch ausarbeiten zu können, habe ich daher gänzlich abgehn müssen von dem höheren metaphysisch-ethischen Standpunkte, zu welchem meine eigentliche Philosophie hinleitet" (Schopenhauer, *Sämtliche Werke,* 4:375).

[24] Pinkard, *German Philosophy 1760–1860,* 343.

[25] Bertrand Russell, *A History of Western Philosophy* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1945), 757.

[26] Kishan, "Schopenhauer and Buddhism," 256–57.

[27] Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation,* 1:viii.

# 8: Nietzsche's Inability to Escape from Schopenhauer's South Asian Sources

*The fire is in the minds of men and not in the roofs of houses.*
— Fyodor Dostoevsky, *Demons* (1872)

The Congress of Vienna did not create a unified Germany after the defeat of Napoleon, but rather a set of loosely confederated states. Therefore, those who sought a unified Germany looked to cohesion of culture. George Mosse remarks of the middle decades of the century:

> The revolutions of 1848, which seemed at first to give Germany another chance for unity, only resulted in frustration. The search for national roots, for a national stability upon which to form a true union was intensified between 1848 and 1870, and was accompanied by an increasing opposition to modernity. The modern world had denied to the Germans the unity which they had possessed long ago, and many felt that the movement for unity must draw its strength from those distant times rather than from the unpromising present.[1]

By the 1870s, when the unification of Germany finally occurred after more than a half-century of failed attempts, the touted superiority of the bourgeoisie born of the Industrial Revolution gave way to what would come to be called a *fin de siècle* mood of spiritual emptiness. Despite the fact that public education became compulsory in France and Germany during this period, in literature the theme of modernity would increasingly come to be seen as entropy of spirit rather than triumph of human freedom. Before unification those who sought cultural cohesion looked to the past; now the search seemed to cease altogether for many intellectuals, and not just in Germany. They also continued to look to the common people for traces of their lost national culture as they had for decades. But certain thinkers still looked to India for both their national origin and fate.

The affiliation of Europeans with India now persisted in the works of figures such as the theologian Ernest Renan and the India scholar Max Müller. The latter, at Oxford, emphasized the Aryan background of Europeans, and at his inaugural lecture at the University of Strasbourg in 1872, he admonished his listeners against the excessive growth of German nationalism and over-trust in empirical science.[2] Linguistics had begun to establish the empirical validity of the Indo-European language family; the

development of the social sciences in Germany focused on discovering the origins of human civilization; and the beginnings of social Darwinism fueled growing feelings of cultural supremacy. German political unification (1862–71) had not brought about the national cultural awareness that many had anticipated with messianic fervor, and the mundanities of Bismarck's *Realpolitik* were disappointing, leading many German citizens to fall into the material pursuit of building their local economies.

## The Anti-Indo-German

For Friedrich Nietzsche the problem of his age was not the lack of a culturally and politically cohesive nation so much as the lack of a replacement for what he felt to be the decline of traditional religious and metaphysical ways of thinking. While he appears to have felt that the "God-hypothesis," as well as all metaphysical substitutes for it, was unworthy of belief in the first place, he worried that it could not be replaced by rationalism, thus endangering the very existence of civilization. This intellectual crisis became the primary problem of his philosophy; it was a crisis that he would eventually characterize as the "death of God" and the advent of "nihilism." He likewise criticized and appeared to reject the related postulations from the schools of post-Kantianism and Hegelianism of "things-in-themselves" and substantial "souls." Nevertheless, and due largely to the influence of Schopenhauer, Nietzsche would never really be able to establish a non-metaphysical philosophy, for his thinking would always characterize itself as a negation of metaphysics. One thus finds in Nietzsche a set of concerns that is indebted and related to those of the Indo-Germans, but is a reversal of them.

Nietzsche did not believe in the possibility of absolute knowledge that transcended all viewpoints. Instead, he emphasized the perspectival character of all thinking and the provisional character of all knowing. He believed that there is no true world of existence to which our human perceptions can fail to correspond, no comprehension to be gained of such a world, and not even any knowledge that is absolute and non-perspectival. He did hold, however, that the relations between objects admit a significant measure of comprehension if viewed from a multiplicity of perspectives. He felt that human thought needed to reorient itself, and in lieu of this cluster of traditional ontological categories and interpretations, he conceived the world in terms of an interplay of forces without any inherent structure or end.

Nietzsche's universe ceaselessly organizes and reorganizes itself as the fundamental disposition he called "will to power" gives rise to successive arrays of power relationships (thus forging the way from Schelling to Foucault). His philosophy does not directly confront any of the traditional

questions of Western philosophy, nor does it employ any of the usual styles or methods of argumentation. His writing is more literary than that of Kant, post-Kantianism, Hegel, or Schopenhauer, and his works are rather a kind of creative play of perspectival expressions of human needs, desires, and possibilities, as groups or as individuals, liberated from concern with truth and knowledge. While Nietzsche did not directly cite the influence of Hindu and Buddhist texts, their impact is to be felt through the influence of Schopenhauer.

Nietzsche tried to find his own replacement for "nihilism" that was not religious or metaphysical, to provide an answer, or answers, that were not based on a divinity or impersonal absolute of any kind. Though a follower of Schopenhauer early on, Nietzsche criticized his "educator" starting in his first work, *Die Geburt der Tragödie aus dem Geiste der Musik* (The Birth of Tragedy from the Spirit of Music;1872), as well as in his later *Der Wille zur Macht* (The Will to Power; 1883–88), *Der Fall Wagner* (The Case of Wagner, 1888), and in *Götzendämmerung* (Twilight of the Idols, 1889).[3] Nietzsche saw himself as the optimist, affirming material embodiment in the face of Schopenhauer's inhuman transcendence.

Nussbaum warns that the reader of *The Birth of Tragedy* must have already read Schopenhauer to understand the dichotomy of Apollonian and Dionysian, yet Schopenhauer warned that the reader of *The World as Will and Representation* must have already read the *Upanishads*. Before 1883, when Nietzsche read *Das System des Vedānta* (The System of Vedānta, 1883) by his friend Paul Deussen, Schopenhauer appears to have been his only source for Hindu and Buddhist thought. It remains unclear to what extent Deussen's work may or may not have influenced Nietzsche's later thinking on Asian topics, although scholars such as Thomas Paul Bonfiglio have pointed out his acquaintance with other sources such as Louis Jacolliot's *Les Legislateurs Religieux: Manu, Moïse, Mahommet* (1876).[4]

Nietzsche's apparent lack of understanding of Schopenhauer's Hindu and Buddhist influences led him to construe Schopenhauer's philosophy as denying that human beings are capable of positive action. Nietzsche was thus a sort of "anti-Indo-German" in two respects: first, he did not look to India for metaphysical, linguistic, or racial answers to "German" or "European" questions, and second and more importantly, he appears to have categorically rejected the religious and metaphysical foundations of the Indo-German story, as well as those of the great monotheistic religions. At the same time his vindication of transcendent art may be seen as distinctly metaphysical in character and his exhortation for man to develop into something "higher" distinctly religious.

Therefore, this chapter is intended as a contribution to two debates. The first, launched largely by Georg Simmel's *Schopenhauer und Nietzsche: Ein Vortragszyklus* (Schopenhauer and Nietzsche: A Cycle of Lectures, 1907), concerns the extent of Nietzsche's debt to Schopenhauer. Where Simmel saw

Nietzsche as a counterpoint to Schopenhauer, I find that Nietzsche's philosophy suffers from the same contradictions. He would be unable to escape from the South Asian sources in Schopenhauer's system to establish a response to nihilism that is neither nonmetaphysical nor nonanthropomorphic. The second debate, begun by Martin Heidegger in his lectures on Nietzsche between 1936 and 1940, deals with the extent to which Nietzsche succeeded in breaking out of traditional Western metaphysics. Heidegger argued in "Nietzsche's Fundamental Metaphysical Position" (1937) that Nietzsche connects Parmenides' definition of being-as-existence with Heraclitus's definition of being-as-becoming by envisioning Creation as something that needs a fixed ground to which it can juxtapose itself, supposedly thus bringing Western metaphysics to a close by wedding its two initial positions. Yet Nietzsche is not able to do this without various paradoxes arising.

## Aesthetic Socratism and the Fall of Man

Trained as a classical philologist, Nietzsche looked to the Greeks for ideas in *The Birth of Tragedy*, believing that their art held the seeds of rebirth for a society dispossessed of the consolations of faith and of confidence in science. He was much under the influence of Schopenhauer at this early age of twenty-six, and the two categories of nature that he set up in the work — the Apollonian and the Dionysian — are "up to a point, simply Representation and Will in Greek costume," argues Nussbaum:

> The reader of *The Birth of Tragedy* who has not read Schopenhauer is likely to be puzzled by Nietzsche's rapid introduction of these two fundamental "drives" or "tendencies" in human nature, and by the hasty manner in which one of these is linked with cognitive activity, but also with dreaming, with visual art, and with the awareness of general forms, the other with movement and sexuality, with intoxication, with the awareness of particularity, with the absence of a clear individuation of the self.[5]

While the introduction of the god Apollo into the Indo-German discussion is new, its association is with Platonic or Neoplatonic ideas, which have been present throughout, and indeed midway through *The Birth of Tragedy* Nietzsche begins to refer to the "Apollonian" as "aesthetic Socratism," as will be discussed below. Moreover, the image of Dionysus, whom Nietzsche characterizes as romantically abandoning the self, is in keeping with characterizations of Dionysus among Roman writers mentioned earlier, of a wild conqueror who learned transcendental philosophy from Brahmin priests.

*The Birth of Tragedy* is a book about the sustenance of a healthy society through literature and music, which were intertwined for the ancient

Greeks; most literature consisted of either lyric poetry or drama in the periods Nietzsche treats. Nussbaum finds Schopenhauer's and Nietzsche's respective positions on the role of art in life radically different, with Schopenhauer arguing that aesthetics serve no practical need and are directed only toward resignation and denial, and Nietzsche arguing that they serve a practical, life-affirming function. In fact, their positions are not so different. For each of them, aesthetics performs a positive function, giving us a glimpse into *Brahman* for Schopenhauer as noted earlier, and rendering material existence worthwhile for Nietzsche. In the preface to *The Birth of Tragedy*, which is dedicated to Richard Wagner, Nietzsche stated its argument unequivocally: that art is "der höchsten Aufgabe und der eigentlich metaphysischen Tätigkeit" (the highest human task, the true metaphysical activity)[6] with emphasis on the art of music. While he would later condemn the eighteenth-century German Romanticism of music, his Dionysus, first presented here, is the god of non-visual art as opposed to the god of the plastic arts, Apollo. Nietzsche holds up Apollo, reprehensibly, as the divine image of the *principium individuationis* (in Schopenhauer's use of the term), whereas Dionysus represents music, the thing-in-itself:

> Während unter dem mystischen Jubelruf des Dionysus der Bann der Individuation zersprengt wird und der Weg zu den Müttern des Seins, zu dem innersten Kern der Dinge offenliegt. Dieser ungeheure Gegensatz, der sich zwischen der plastischen Kunst als der apollinischen und der Musik als der dionysischen Kunst klaffend auftut, ist einem einzigen der großen Denker in dem Maße offenbar geworden, daß er, selbst ohne jene Anleitung der hellenischen Göttersymbolik, der Musik einen verschiedenen Charakter und Ursprung vor allen anderen Künsten zuerkannte, weil sie nicht, wie jene alle, Abbild der Erscheinung, sondern unmittelbar Abbild des Willens selbst sei und also zu allem Physischen der Welt das Metaphysische, zu aller Erscheinung das Ding an sich darstelle. (*Werke*, 1:73–74)
>
> [The mystical jubilation of Dionysus breaks the spell of individuation and opens a path to the maternal womb of being. Among the great thinkers, there is only one who has fully realized the immense discrepancy between the plastic Apollonian art and the Dionysian art of music. Independently of Greek religious symbols, Schopenhauer assigned to music a totally different character and origin from all the other arts, because it does not, like all the others, represent appearance, but the will directly. It is the metaphysical complement to everything that is physical in the world: the thing-in-itself where all else is appearance. (*The Birth of Tragedy*, 97)]

Nietzsche goes on to add, "We might, therefore, just as well call the world embodied music as embodied will."[7] At this early stage in his writing, he used the same metaphysical and idealist terminology as his predecessors. However, while he would abandon such vocabulary in favor of his own idiosyncratic

style, which appears to reject such concerns, he continued to grapple with the relationship between art and human teleology or eschatology.

Nietzsche postulated that the Apollonian and the Dionysian are the result of forces "Die aus der Natur selbst, *ohne Vermittlung des menschlichen Künstlers*, hervorbrechen" (*Werke* 1:22; arising directly from nature without the mediation of the human artist: *The Birth of Tragedy*, 24). He argued that in the Dionysian dithyramb man is incited to strain his symbolic faculties to the utmost, attempting to tear asunder the veil of *mâyâ* (a term Nietzsche appears to have borrowed from Schopenhauer), to sink back into the original oneness of nature by expressing the very essence of nature symbolically.[8] According to Nietzsche, however, the deities found in the Dionysian tragedies of Aeschylus do not make one think of asceticism, high intellect, or duty (which he presumably found in Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism, and perhaps Schopenhauer), but of luxuriant, triumphant existence, which deifies the good and the bad indifferently.[9]

While the Apollonian, with its emphasis on the *principium individuationis*, was already problematical for Nietzsche, he considered that which brings about its demise — the "aesthetic Socratism" he attributes in tragedy to Euripedes — even more harmful to humanity. Socrates found tragedy useless because it did not convey truth. Nietzsche thus saw the demise of tragedy in its infusion by the practical in the purported service of truth: "optimistic dialectics took up the whip of its syllogisms and drove music out of tragedy."[10] He notes that Socrates took up music in prison, asking himself: "'Have I been too ready to view what was unintelligible to me as being devoid of meaning? Perhaps there is a realm of wisdom, after all, from which the logician is excluded? Perhaps art must be seen as the necessary complement of rational discourse?'"[11] Nevertheless, he traces the tradition of rational science with its concomitant smug optimism — obstacles to the realization of the Dionysian — back to Socrates.

In a precursor to his doctrine of "eternal recurrence of the same," Nietzsche asserts that in age after age the same phenomenon recurs of maintaining life through the blandishments of illusion:

> Diesen fesselt die sokratische Lust des Erkennens und der Wahn, durch dasselbe die ewige Wunde des Daseins heilen zu können, jenen umstrickt der vor seinen Augen wehende verfürerische Schönheitsschleier der Kunst, jene wiederum der metaphysische Trost, daß under dem Wirbel der Erscheinungen das ewige Leben unzerstörbar weiterfließt. . . . Aus diesen Reizmitteln besteht alles, was wir Kultur nennen: je nach der Proportion der Mischungen haben wir eine vorzugsweise *sokratische* oder *künstlerische* oder *tragische* Kultur; oder wenn man historische Exemplifikationen erlauben will: es gibt entweder eine alexandrinische oder eine hellenische oder eine buddaistische Kultur. (*Werke,* 1:82)

> [One man is enthralled by the Socratic zest for knowledge and is persuaded that he can staunch the eternal wound of being with its help. Another is beguiled by the veil of art, which flutters, tantalizing, before his eyes. Yet another is buoyed up by the metaphysical solace that life flows on, indestructible, beneath the whirlpool of appearances. . . . What we call culture is entirely composed of such beguilements. Depending on the proportions of the mixture, we have a culture that is principally Socratic, or artistic, or tragic; or, if historical exemplifications are permitted here, there is either an Alexandrian or a Hellenic or a [Buddhistic] culture. (*The Birth of Tragedy*, 108–9)]

One might thus call these three consolations of life the "scientific," the "artistic," and the "metaphysical." Nietzsche refers to the last as both "tragic" ("Dionysian") and "Buddhistic." While he appears to reject metaphysical explanations of any kind of "fundamental reality," he does fall back on metaphysical motifs in discussing how human beings can survive in the world. It almost seems as if he is attempting to solve Schopenhauer's contradiction between the "pessimistic" system put forth in *The World as Will and Representation* and his longing for *eudemonia* found in *Parerga and Paralipomena*. Nietzsche extols the virtues of Kant and Schopenhauer, who he feels have triumphed over the conceitedly optimistic foundations of our logic by establishing "a conceptualized form of Dionysian wisdom." However, while he sees Schopenhauer persisting in the search for truth, he also finds him devoid of hope. Here Nietzsche calls "Buddhistic" the "tragic," lived side of nature, of which one only gets glimpses, but within the same work he refers to the Greek chorus as being saved by art rather than by a "Buddhistic" denial of the will. This contradiction is indicative of the conscious or inadvertent paradoxes to come in his later discussions of the development of mankind.

The development of the "Übermensch" or "Overman" is already prefigured here in Nietzsche's associating Prometheus and Dionysus, arguing that the legend of Prometheus is "indigenous to the entire community of Aryan races" and attests to their prevailing talent for profound and tragic vision: "Dieser titanische Drang, gleichsam der Atlas aller einzelnen zu werden und sie mit breitem Rücken höher und höher, weiter und weiter zu tragen, ist das Gemeinsame zwischen dem Prometheischen und dem Dionysischen" (*Werke*, 1:50; This titanic urge to be the Atlas of all individuals, to bear them on broad shoulders ever farther and higher, is the common bond between the Promethean and the Dionysian forces: *The Birth of Tragedy*, 65). He argues that Socratic man has run his course and will be replaced by tragic man, but that it falls on his reader's head to lead the Dionysian procession out of India and into Greece. Here he appears to fall in line with the Hellenistic tendency to envision Dionysus as having become the ecstatic god by going to India. In a passage that sounds eerily prophetic, he states that Sophocles, through the Dionysian character of Oedipus, will tell

> uns der tiefsinnige Dichter sagen: durch sein Handeln mag jedes Gesetz, jede natürliche Ordnung, ja die sittliche Welt zugrunde gehen, eben durch dieses Handeln wird ein höherer magischer Kreis von Wirkungen gezogen, die eine neue Welt auf den Ruinen der umgestürzten alten gründen. (*Werke*, 1:47)
>
> [us that a man who is truly noble is incapable of sin: though every law, every natural order, indeed the entire canon of ethics, perish by his actions, those very actions will create a circle of higher consequences able to found a new world on the ruins of the old. (*The Birth of Tragedy,* 60)]

For Nietzsche "Socratism" is bent on the extermination of myth, which tragedy uses to create the illusions that unify a culture. He states that with the death of tragedy due to the sundering of the irrational sources that nourished it, the Greeks gave up belief in immortality and thus belief in an ideal future, as well as an ideal past. He admonishes his readers to heed the fact that the degeneration of the Greek national character is indicative of the extent to which people, myth, custom, and tragedy are inextricably bound, which is reminiscent of the discussion of the Indian Fall from Bailly to Hegel. The disappearance of tragedy signaled the disappearance of the myths that hold culture together. This argument, though appearing to move into the realms of national identities and folk aspects of culture, remains connected to metaphysics, for Nietzsche maintains at the end of the work: "Die Kunst nicht nur Nachahmung der Naturwirklichkeit, sondern gerade ein metaphysisches Supplement der Naturwirklichkeit ist, zu deren Überwindung neben sie gestellt" (*Werke*, 1:107; Art is not an imitation of nature but its metaphysical supplement, raised up beside it in order to overcome it: *The Birth of Tragedy*, 142).

The difference between Schopenhauer and Nietzsche emerges here. Art for Nietzsche was not a door to the fundamental, noumenal reality as it was for the Early Romantics and Schopenhauer. At the beginning of *The Birth of Tragedy* he uses terms such as "thing-in-itself" in senses similar to those employed by Kant and Schopenhauer, but by the end of the book, he has established that tragic art is about man. The idea that art may only be a representation of a reality human beings cannot comprehend — were it even true — is a moot point.

## The Überbodhisattva

Nietzsche made the transition from philologist to philosopher over the course of the decade that followed *The Birth of Tragedy*, which saw the publication of books that focused and extended his critical assessment of various human tendencies and of his contemporaries. He then published

*Also Sprach Zarathustra: Ein Buch für Alle und Keinen* (Thus Spake Zarathustra: A Book for All and None; 1883–85), which continues many of the themes found in *The Birth of Tragedy*. Here, in what is his most literary work, Nietzsche presents a series of parables that parody the Gospels and hagiography generally, about a prophet who proclaims the death of God and challenges mankind to face its destiny. Zarathustra proclaims the emergence of the *Übermensch*, who will overcome mere man and through whom Nietzsche seeks to direct mankind's efforts to the emergence of a higher humanity, capable of redeeming and justifying human existence. This can occur above all through the enrichment of cultural life by espousing a Dionysian value-standard in place of all non-naturalistic modes of valuation.

Like Goethe and Hegel, who preferred Persia to India, Nietzsche, after much deliberation, chose a "protagonist" for his work who was geographically central to the world's major religions. Yet the lesson of Zarathustra — if there is a single lesson to be gleaned from the work — also runs contrary to the teachings of the Zoroastrians (who still exist, now called Parsis). Although it is not clear that Zarathustra is truly supposed to resemble Zoroaster, Zoroaster did preach the final reconciliation of darkness and light, good and evil. In *Zarathustra* the future victory of a luminous deity is replaced by a human dawn that is close at hand, the sanctioning of "the death of God" releasing all men from the bonds of eschatology. More striking than any vague resemblance to Zoroaster, however, are the ways in which Nietzsche's Zarathustra responds to teachings that appear to issue from Gautama Buddha, and, by extension, Schopenhauer: "'Das Leben ist nur Leiden' — so sagen andre und lügen nicht: so sorgt doch, daß *ihr* aufhört! So sorgt doch, daß das Leben aufhört, welches nur Leiden ist!" (*Werke* 1:573; "Life is only suffering," others say and do not lie: see to it, then that *you* cease! See to it, then, that the life that is only suffering ceases!).[12] His exhortation here is similar to the Buddhist striving to exterminate suffering; however, Nietzsche goes on to iterate an earlier line in the text and then turn it around:

> Überall ertönt die Stimme derer, welche den Tod predigen: und die Erde ist voll von solchen, welchen der Tod gepredigt werden muß. Oder "das ewige Leben": das gilt mir gleich, — wofern sie nur schnell dahinfahren! (*Werke,* 1:574)
>
> [Everywhere the voice of those who preach death is heard; and the earth is full of those to whom one must preach death. Or "eternal life" — that is the same to me, if only they pass away quickly. (*Thus Spake Zarathustra,* 46)]

While he agrees with the so-called preachers of death that the multitudes of humanity suffer from what King Lear called the "superflux" of abundance, he adds that eternal life is the same to him as death. Nothing that

is supposed to come at the end of a mortal life — be it Christian salvation, "enlightenment" as a different kind of being, or simply the pain of death itself — is worth striving for or worrying about. What is important is to change this life: end suffering, end superfluity, be stronger, be higher — here and now.

As he does with motifs from the Gospels, Nietzsche invokes Hindu and Buddhist ideas through Schopenhauer in order to transform them. His Overman seems to be an extension and metamorphosis of the *bodhisattva* ideal in Buddhism.[13] Gautama Buddha had vowed to become a *bodhisattva*. Zarathustra has taken a similar vow, yet the help he hopes to give human beings — not necessarily to all living creatures — does not mark the end of suffering, but a deracinating kick into the next stage of their material evolution. Most schools of Hinduism and Buddhism teach that suffering can end only when one actively transforms oneself by working up the karmic ladder over the course of many lifetimes into something that is different from a human being, which only reacts to sensory phenomena. Zarathustra does not want to wait through seemingly endless cycles of karmic existence until one is finally ready to make the leap into that beyond, much less to wait for everyone else to do so. He wants to address the now and see results in this lifetime, to help humanity by radically changing the rules and duration of the ontological game itself. He seems to want to become the best bodhisattva by becoming an "*Über-bodhisattva*," stressing a distinctly materialist teleology, the goal of which is not material transcendence, but the destruction of inert, lower, culturally-conditioned man. Nietzsche appears to espouse, in other words, a sort of social Darwinist Buddhism that takes from Hinduism, Buddhism, and Schopenhauer the idea that one deserves one's suffering, but emphasizes that one must "get over" all of the negative ideas and emotions that come with it. Nietzsche's Overman is thus not unlike Śiva as the destroyer of ignorance.

Weaver Santaniello correctly notes that Nietzsche found Schopenhauer's "will to be" something that cannot be satisfied and thus desires death — that it is like both Christianity and Buddhism in being nihilistic in this way.[14] It is not that Schopenhauer's philosophy is nihilistic, however, so much as that Nietzsche's is materialistic. Santaniello goes on to note that both Buddhism and Schopenhauer "strive for self-preservation" — a comment that undermines Santaniello's own correct argument, for, despite the many exhortations to extinction, Zarathustra is still bent on an existence that retains materialistic elements. Joan Stambaugh states it well when she says that the artist is as close as Nietzsche ever came to expressing what he meant by the Overman, for he "is pointing to a type of human being who *experiences* differently from most of us. The artist is the man able to experience and shape a higher dimension of reality."[15] She begins her book on the problem of time in Nietzsche by drawing a distinction between the use

of time in both *The Birth of Tragedy* and *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, emphasizing that the former presents evidence of an insatiable greed for existence, while the latter presents becoming in the form of divine self-fleeing and self-reseeking.[16] This is true although, as Stambaugh would concede, neither Nietzsche nor Zarathustra gets to the point of being that they are attempting to describe.

Nietzsche feared that compulsory education had lowered cultural standards: "Once the spirit was god, then he became man, now he even becomes rabble."[17] That is, culture, the primary manifestation of spirit in man, is being slowly killed by education. Zarathustra states that he would believe only in a god who could dance. Walter Kaufmann sums up this argument by drawing useful parallels: "The dance is to Nietzsche a symbol of joy and levity, and the antithesis of gravity. He associates it with Dionysus; but the Hindus too have a dancing god, Śiva Nataraja — no less a contrast to the three great monotheistic religions."[18]

Zarathustra cannot wait for later developments. He needs to make them happen now, for Nietzsche argues that the world we know is without beginning or end and things happen repeatedly in the way they always have. In the section that first mentions "eternal recurrence," a notion that Zarathustra cannot accept and further fuels his stalwart call to action, he mocks the patience of Christianity:

> *Wer* ist der Hirt, dem also die Schlange in den Schlund kroch? . . . — Der Hirt aber biß, wie mein Schrei ihm riet; er biß mit gutem Bisse! Weit weg spie er den Kopf der Schlange —: und sprang empor. — Nicht mehr Hirt, nicht mehr Mensch — ein Verwanderlter, ein Umleichteter, welcher *lachte*! (*Werke,* 1:654)
>
> [*Who* is the shepherd into whose throat the snake crawled thus? . . . The shepherd, however, bit as my cry counseled him; he bit with a good bite. Far away he spewed the head of the snake — and he jumped up. No longer shepherd, no longer human — one changed, radiant, laughing! (*Thus Spake Zarathustra,* 160)]

Martin Heidegger argued at length that this doctrine of eternal recurrence is the fundamental aspect of Nietzsche's philosophy,[19] a claim that Nietzsche himself also made in *Ecce Homo* (1908). While I do not agree, it may be argued that this doctrine emerges out of the tradition of German scholarship that has located the Greek doctrine of metempsychosis in Hindu works. However, as stated above, Nietzsche envisioned humanity as striving toward an ideal that does not transcend materiality and so seems more reminiscent of Heraclitus than of Pythagoras. Schopenhauer's search to reconcile transcendence and *eudemonia* thus became for Nietzsche a paradoxical pursuit of human perfection, an ethical overcoming of our humanity that is still intelligible by the human being.

Nietzsche's theory of eternal recurrence therefore suffers from the same contradiction as Schopenhauer's conception of the Will. "Nietzsche oscillates between two essentially incompatible versions of the doctrine," argues Richard Wolin:

> First, a voluntarist, "anthropological" version compatible with the theory of the will to power, according to which, the idea of eternal recurrence expresses a new categorical imperative: live every moment so that you could will that moment over and over again eternally; and second, a more literal, "cosmological" version, according to which the cosmic cycle of recurrence is indifferent to all human willing.[20]

In contrast to Schopenhauer's figures of the genius, mystic, and ascetic, who achieve glimpses of fundamental reality when they are temporarily able to transcend material incarnation, Zarathustra is more like a Byronic hero: a sublime destroyer who remains mortal.

While for Schopenhauer the artist Beethoven suffered because it was his lot to have unique insight into the thing-in-itself, for Nietzsche the artist Zarathustra appears to re-create his world, giving it new meaning, for "around the inventors of new values the world revolves: invisibly it revolves."[21] For Schopenhauer meaning lies outside the realm of representation, and creation is in a sense a sin. For Nietzsche it is it up to human beings to give meaning to the realm of representation, as Euripedes' Dionysus creates the world by acting it out. Nietzsche thus created a sort of meta-metaphysics, or, in Richard Rorty's words, brings "metaphysics to its destined end by inverting Plato, giving Becoming primacy over Being."[22] One might say that Nietzsche made Being into Becoming, ontology into physics.

Nietzsche's reflections on the re-conceptualization of human beings' relation to the metaphysical world thus point in the direction of a naturalistic epistemology that replaces the conceptions of truth and knowledge of his predecessors (and hopefully fills the nihilistic void seemingly left by their bankruptcy) with an agency that makes *noumena* an irrelevant concept. He may accept a Kantian view of experience, but he also takes the step of letting this supposedly sole extant form of human experience determine our notions of truth, knowledge, and value. In fact, the first occasions on which Nietzsche uses the term "will-to-power" refer clearly to self-overcoming: "Und dies Geheimnis redete das Leben selber zu mir: 'Siehe,' sprach es, 'ich bin das, *was sich immer selber überwinden muß*'" (*Werke*, 1:623; life itself confided this secret to me: "Behold," it said, "I am that which must always overcome itself": *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, 115), just as does the *Bhagavad Gītā*. As he feels that the only tenable alternative to nihilism must be based upon a recognition and affirmation of the world's fundamental character, he posits a general standard of value in which the will-to-power, as the creative transformation of existence, is raised to its highest

possible intensity and qualitative expression. Thus art for Nietzsche is fundamentally creative rather than cognitive and affords a glimpse of a kind of life that would be lived more fully in this manner, the consciousness of which itself brings one closer to that life. In this way Nietzsche's mature thought expands upon the idea of the basic connection between art and the justification of life that was his general theme in *The Birth of Tragedy*. His philosophy may therefore be viewed as a blueprint for surviving the impatient twentieth century, in which the pace of "Socratic" change would accelerate almost beyond the human capacity to adapt.

## Conclusion

Hegel, Schopenhauer, and Nietzsche put forth philosophies that embrace the negation of accepted value systems in distinctly different ways. In Hegel this manifests itself in the idea that a demonic destroyer can help lead society to a new and higher synthesis of ideas. Schopenhauer presents a kind of anti-theodicy in which good is the necessary counterpart to evil both as an explanation of will and as a spur to ethical human action.

Nietzsche did not devote the time and effort to the study of Sanskrit literature that Schopenhauer did, and, while it is difficult to ascertain the extent to which he may or may not have understood Schopenhauer's relationship to his Asian sources, Nietzsche's relationship to the Indo-German legacy is just as problematic as his place in the history of post-Enlightenment philosophy. For him the demonic destroyer leads us beyond the thesis by destroying it completely to make way for something wholly new — a new stage of development which results in a materialist teleology that suffers from the same paradoxes as Schopenhauer's system, for it cannot reconcile the cyclic existence found in Greek and Hindu religion with the rectilinear Christian ideal. Nietzsche argues in *The Birth of Tragedy* that Plato developed an art form deeply akin to the existing forms that he had repudiated at Socrates' behest (*Werke*, 1:66). Similarly, in a sense he develops a philosophy akin to those he repudiates: it can only define itself as a negation of metaphysics that ultimately involves man witnessing his own transcendence. Both he and Plato break through laws of stylistic unity, but more importantly, though attempting to delineate a nonmetaphysical set of ideas, Nietzsche is unable to abandon the presence of metaphysics, so to speak, and the Vedāntan roots of Schopenhauer's philosophy.

## Notes

The epigraph at the start of this chapter is from Fyodor Dostoevsky, *The Devils*, trans. David Magarshack (New York: Penguin, 1971), 551.

[1] George L. Mosse, *The Crisis of German Ideology: Intellectual Origins of the Third Reich* (New York: Howard Fertig, 1981), 3.
[2] Poliakov, *Le mythe aryen,* 264.
[3] Martha C. Nussbaum, "Nietzsche, Schopenhauer, and Dionysus," in *The Cambridge Companion to Schopenhauer*, ed. Christopher Janaway (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge UP, 1999), 359.
[4] Nussbaum, "Nietzsche, Schopenhauer, and Dionysus," 359. Thomas Paul Bonfiglio, "Toward a Genealogy of Aryan Morality: Nietzsche and Jacolliot," *New Nietzsche Studies* 6, no. 1/2 and 7, no. 1/2 (Fall 2005 and Spring 2006): 170–84.
[5] Nussbaum, "Nietzsche, Schopenhauer, and Dionysus," 358.
[6] Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy and The Genealogy of Morals*, trans. Francis Golffing (New York: Doubleday, 1956), 7; also Nietzsche, *Werke in zwei Bänden*, 2 vols. (Munich: Hanser, 1967), 1:18.
[7] Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, 99. "Man könnte demnach die Welt ebensowohl verkörperte Musik, als verkörperten Willen nennen" (*Werke*, 1:75).
[8] Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, 24; *Werke*, 1:22.
[9] Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, 29; *Werke*, 1:25.
[10] Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, 89. "Die optimistische Dialektik treibt mit der Geißel ihrere Syllogismen die *Musik* aus der Tragödie" (*Werke*, 1: 68).
[11] Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy,* 90; "'Ist das mir Nichtverständliche doch nicht auch sofort das Unverständige? Vielleicht gibt es ein Reich der Weisheit, aus dem der Logiker verbannt ist? Vielleicht ist die Kunst sogar ein notwendiges Korrelativum und Supplement der Wissenschaft?'" (*Werke*, 1:68–69).
[12] Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spake Zarathustra: A Book for All and None*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Modern Library, 1995), 45.
[13] "*Bodhisattva*, Skt. lit. 'enlightenment being.' In Mahayana Buddhism, a *bodhisattva* is a being who seeks buddhahood through the systematic practice of perfect virtues (*paramita*) but renounces complete entry into *nirvana* until all beings are saved. The determining factor for his action is compassion (*karuna*), supported by highest insight and wisdom (*prajna*). A *bodhisattva* provides active help, is ready to take upon himself the suffering of all other beings, and to transfer his own karmic merit to other beings. The way of the *bodhisattva* begins with arousing the thought of enlightenment (*bodhicitta*) and taking the bodhisattva vow (*pranidhana*). The career of a bodhisattva is divided into ten stages (*bhumi*): (1) 'extremely joyous' (*rab-dga'-ba*), (2) 'stainless' (*dri-med*), (3) 'illuminating' ('*od-byed-pa*), (4) 'sparkling light' ('*od-phro-ba*), (5) 'difficult to cleanse' (*sbyang dka'-ba*), (6) 'forward facing' (*mngon-du phyogs-pa*), (7) 'far gone' (*ring-du song-ba*), (8) 'immovable' (*mi-g.yo-ba*), (9) 'most intelligent' (*legs-par blo-gros*), (10) 'cloud of Dharma' (*chos-sprin*). The *bodhisattva* ideal replaced in Mahayana and Hinayana the ideal of the *arhat*, whose effort is directed towards the attainment of his own liberation, since this was found to be too narrow and ego-oriented" (Schuhmacher and Woerner, *The Encyclopedia of Eastern Philosophy and Religion,* 39).

A similar ideal is known in Hinduism as the *jivanmukta* (Skt., lit. "one liberated while still alive"): one who is still in the body but has freed himself from the

bonds of ignorance (*avidya*) and *mâyâ*. Such a one has given up identification with the body and mind and has attained liberation (*mukti*). As the Self (*atman*), he knows that he is one with *Brahman* (ibid., 162).

[14] Weaver Santaniello, *Nietzsche, God, and the Jews: His Critique of Judeo-Christianity in Relation to the Nazi Myth* (Albany: State U of New York P, 1994), 82 and 181.

[15] Joan Stambaugh, *The Other Nietzsche* (Albany: State U of New York P, 1994), 10.

[16] Joan Stambaugh, *The Problem of Time in Nietzsche*, trans. John F. Humphrey (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell UP, 1987), 20.

[17] Nietzsche, *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, 40; "Einst war der Geist Gott, dann wurde er zum Menschen, und jetzt wird er gar noch Pöbel" (*Werke*, 1:569).

[18] Walter Kaufmann, introduction to *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, 6.

[19] Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, 2 vols. (Pfullingen: Günther Neske, 1961), 2:5–8.

[20] Wolin, *The Seduction of Unreason*, 52.

[21] Nietzsche, *Thus Spake Zarathustra,* 52; "Um die Erfinder von neuen Werten dreht sich die Welt — unsichtbar dreht sie sich" (*Werke*, 1:578).

[22] Quoted in Gianni Vattimo, *Nihilism and Emancipation: Ethics, Politics, and Law*, ed. Santiago Zabala, trans. William McCuaig (New York: Columbia UP, 2004), x.

# Epilogue: Destinies Reconsidered, 1885–2004

The influence of Nietzsche on successors such as Oswald Spengler and the misappropriation of Nietzsche's thought are well documented both as Zeitgeist and a foreshadowing of dark things to come. "The late nineteenth-century development of a 'post-liberal mood' has long been recognized as a cultural and political watershed," argues Steven E. Aschheim:

> Historians have variously labeled this "change in the public spirit of Europe" [footnotes Mosse] as the revolt against positivism and materialism, as a generational rebellion against the liberal bourgeoisie, as the era of the discovery of the unconscious, and as the age of irrationalism and neo-Romanticism. Underlying and often accompanying these tendencies was the emergence of a full-blown modernism. This self-conscious, though painful, rupture with the past; its fundamental questioning of established limits, authority, and tradition; and its insistence on self-creation and the subjective dimension of meaning was similarly informed by obvious Nietzschean characteristics.[1]

## The Nazi Appropriation of Nietzsche and Indology

The first three decades of the twentieth century saw the transformation of Nietzsche in Germany into the ultimate *volkische* hero, particularly in works such as *Nietzsche und die Romantik* (Nietzsche and Romanticism, 1905), by Karl Joël. This work was published by Eugen Diederichs, the influential publisher who coined the term "New Romanticism" to describe the "Dionysian" gatherings of activists who celebrated both the German Geist and occult mysticism at his Jena home. Joël's book depicts Nietzsche as a romantic profoundly affected by emotion, morality, the sorrow of the world, and a lust for the infinite, and portrays his will to power as the means for penetrating the infinite.[2]

By 1931, in *Nietzsche der Philosoph und Politiker* (Nietzsche the Philosopher and Politician) Alfred Bäumler, who would become the Third Reich's official Nietzsche scholar, had fully "Nazified" Nietzsche by emphasizing the power components in his philosophy and categorically rejecting "passive" doctrines like that of eternal recurrence[3] — potentially his most "Hindu" doctrine. Rudolf E. Kuenzli notes, "In his

attempt to germanicize Nietzsche, Baeumler depicts him as a lonely Greek-Germanic warrior who reconquers the world through his battles against the false values and beliefs of his age, in order to make greatness again possible."[4] Indeed, Bäumler's interpretation has the ring of Tacitus's descriptions of the Goths, and Aschheim's book presents many depictions of this.

Kuenzli asks the compelling question: why would the Nazis appropriate the work of a philosopher who is so difficult to read and ultimately so ill-suited to their task? His answer follows:

> Baeumler considers Nietzsche's constant play between truth and lie as only an unfortunate oversight, that can be corrected if we read him in the "right" way. But Nietzsche's constant undermining of his own truths and exposing them as lies is of course the central movement in Nietzsche's writings. Had Baeumler accepted Nietzsche's constant insistence on the necessary falsity of all truths, Nietzsche would have been of no use to the Nazis. (432)

This treading the line between truth and falsity, materialism and transcendence, origin and destiny is precisely what makes Nietzsche so exhilarating and exasperating to read. Much of the irreconcilability in his writing is a result of the Indo-German identification, of the attempt to reconcile thought systems — Judeo-Christianity, Greco-Latin thought, Idealism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and even potentially Zoroastrianism — that do not easily fit together. While the Nazis would not find explicit Asian influence in Nietzsche (and indeed it is very difficult for responsible scholars to), they would of course amplify the fiction of both Asian Aryan and Nordic Aryan races, while at the same time searching for a scientific basis for their claims.

National Socialists in organizations such as the Vril and Thule Societies were exploring a variety of topics in occult mysticism, such as Rosicrucianism and the work of thinkers such as G. I. Gurdjieff and Madame Helena P. Blavatsky, the latter of whom claimed to be in telepathic contact with spiritual masters in Tibet.[5] While most scholars these days consider such figures to be "crackpots" (to use Nicholas Goodrich-Clarke's candidly subjective term), the Nazi preoccupation with their thought may be seen as an outgrowth of Nietzsche's attempt to make the metaphysical physical. That is to say, they drew inspiration from the human experience of the metaphysical, or mysticism, rather than from conventional religion or metaphysics.

In perhaps the most bizarre expression of the Nazi misappropriation of Asian symbols and language, the regime sponsored a *Schutzstaffel* (SS) mission to Tibet in 1938–39 in search of racial perfection among the remnants of an imagined Aryan race, which would legitimize their concept of Germany's place in the progression of world history. Groups such as the

Thule Society, which like earlier German neo-pagan groups adopted the Hindu and Buddhist swastika as their symbol, claimed that tunnels to the lost world of a perfect race were to be found in Tibet.[6] In *Mein Kampf* (published 1925–26) Adolf Hitler had speculated that the purity of Aryan (Germanic) blood could be restored by second contact with the pure blood of the descendents of the original Aryans, and, as Alex McKay points out, Tibetans seemed the most likely candidates. While the five *Waffen-SS* troops were theoretically there to establish a diplomatic alliance with Tibet from which the Nazis might have eventually attacked British India, their racial pseudo-scientific mission of finding traces of the Aryan race was paramount, for "Nazi leaders such as Heinrich Himmler [and Rudolf Hess, both members of the Thule Society] believed that Tibet might harbor the last of the original Aryan tribes, the legendary forefathers of the German race, whose leaders possessed supernatural powers that the Nazis could use to conquer the world."[7]

Before the mission German scholars studied texts of the Tibetan Bön faith, which predated Buddhism in Tibet, collected from an earlier mission by zoologist Ernst Schäfer, in hopes of finding elements of an older, Aryan religion.[8] Schäfer, by 1938 a member of the SS's *Ahnenerbe Forschungs- und Lehrgemeinschaft* (Ancestral Heritage Research and Teaching Society), which was involved in encephalometry and racial blood typing and claimed to be able to distinguish between Aryan and non-Aryan blood, was sent to lead this mission. As Heather Pringle notes in her recent study, however, the Ahnenerbe was "in the business of myth-making. Its prominent researchers devoted themselves to distorting the truth and churning out carefully tailored evidence to support the racial ideas of Adolf Hitler" in an attempt to re-create the lost world of Germany's supposed ancestors.[9] But their studies yielded little from the complex writings of the amalgamated religious systems of Tibet: "The mission did not encounter any mystic masters, find any long-lost Aryan brothers, or obtain any secret powers with which to save Hitler's Third Reich from ultimate defeat."[10] Further missions were planned but never carried out due to activities in Europe; however, all five of the members of the 1938–39 mission survived into the 1980s and ostensibly stuck to their convictions about the link between Germanic "Aryans" and Asian "Aryans."

These Ahnenerbe officers were only some of the many perpetuators of the Hindu-Aryan myths into the 1980s, however. An even more fascinating Neo-Nazi figure is Savitri-Devi, who even contended that Adolf Hitler was an incarnation of Vishnu. A Frenchwoman of Greek-English birth who was obsessed by the Aryan myth, she became an admirer of German National Socialism in the late 1920s. She immigrated to India in the early 1930s to experience the cradle of the Aryan race at first hand and remained there throughout the Second World War, only to return to Europe in the war's aftermath as a Neo-Nazi apologist. She believed that the Third Reich

was a rehearsal for an Aryan paradise and that Hitler was the incarnation of the last avatar of Vishnu whose intervention in the cycle of the ages was essential to the restoration of the Golden Age.[11] While Hitler was certainly not an incarnation Vishnu, he may in some depressing ways be seen as both the culmination and the betrayer of the Indo-German legacy that began when the *Humanisten* appropriated Tacitus and other Roman writers in their quest to understand their origins and establish their place in the mosaic of world cultures.

George Mosse's "crisis of German ideology," which he feels led to the catastrophe of the Holocaust, is the late nineteenth-century call among *volkisch* devotees for a German revolution to liquidate dangerous new developments since unification and to guide the nation back to its original, cultural-historical purpose as they conceived it:

> According to many Volkish theorists, the nature of the soul of a Volk is determined by the native landscape. Thus the Jews, being a desert people, are viewed as shallow, arid, "dry" people, devoid of profundity and totally lacking in creativity. Because of the barrenness of the desert landscape, the Jews are a spiritually barren people. They thus contrast markedly with the Germans, who, living in the dark, mist-shrouded forests, are deep, mysterious, profound. Because they are so constantly shrouded in darkness, they strive toward the sun, and are truly *Lichtmenschen*.[12]

While such climatic determinism, cited earlier among thinkers of the early Enlightenment, would become a part of the German National Socialist explanation for Aryanism, Mosse also points out that the Nazis never really accepted evolutionary biology because it postulated that a race contained within itself the seeds of success or failure without need of any adversary (103). The Nazi revolution was thus a "revolution of the soul" fostered by a middle class that advocated a society theoretically neither Marxist nor capitalist, but based on a supposed cultural renewal that kept the bourgeoisie in power.

Once the Nazi Party came to power, however, the ideal of total obedience to the leader emerged, and is encapsulated in the twin concepts of *Befehlnotstand* and the *Führerprinzip*, the former of which designates blind obedience to authority, the latter, the structure of the order of obedience in the Third Reich. That is to say, early in the development of German National Socialism the theme of law and order ran strong for a nation that was held to have degenerated from strong Prussian military sovereignty into a weak republic plagued by unemployment and social instability. To the Nazis this meant that one was only answerable for one's actions to one's immediate superior, and on up the hierarchy, and that obedience was prized even above conscience. Obedience was already ingrained in the German family dynamic and workplace, but when the penalty for disobedi-

ence became in many cases death, obedience took on a new tenor. The extent of any kind of middle class power stopped here.

Such principles are indicative of a hierarchy in which extremely subjective demands are endowed with apparent objectivity and universal purpose. It is difficult, however, to draw direct connections between a Fichtean or Nietzschean self-creating subject and a nihilism associated with the Hindu or Buddhist void, much less to argue the cause of a product of such a subject and void. Such tendencies may only be understood as single strands within the complex intellectual history of late modern Europe. Still, the idea that Europe was in need of an ethnic or spiritual group that could help it recover from its purported recent decline, a secularization of the Enlightenment and Romantic-era preoccupation with recovery from the Christian Fall, proved long-lived. What has been disturbing about such preoccupations and the discrimination they engender is that such arguments have been employed with extreme violence in the last decade or so in India itself. A consideration of these developments, though to some extent outside the core of this inquiry, may be useful as a way of bringing this Indo-German identification full circle.

## Full Circle: The Rise of Hindu Nationalism on the German Model

The Indo-Germans rhetoricize the Indian other without engaging it directly, for none of them actually went to India. This study, which has concerned itself with supposed genealogies among other topics, may be brought to a strange and ironic full circle by emphasizing that the Nazi movement was itself profoundly influential on Indian Hindu Nationalism, thus "requiting" this "Aryan romance." While European intellectuals, and Germans in particular, have spent much of the last sixty years understanding the facts and sources of genocide under the Nazi regime, similarly catastrophic events have occurred in India, though usually on a much smaller scale, such as the Gujurat pogram of 2002, in which Hindu extremists employed European fascist ideologies to justify the killing of Muslim citizens. This is relevant to this study because such violence is not indicative of differences between the Muslim world and "the West," but is, as Martha Nussbaum has argued, "a clash *within* virtually all modern nations — between people who are prepared to live with others who are different, on terms of equal respect, and those who seek the protection of homogeneity, achieved through the domination of a single religious and ethnic tradition."[13]

The Indian nationalist movement began in the 1930s, while the British Raj still ruled India and the Nazis were coming to power, but died down after the defeat of Hitler and Indian independence in 1947. It has

reemerged strongly in several stages and with particular violence around the turn of the twenty-first century. While the Indian Congress Party under Mohandas K. Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru strove to unite Hindus and Muslims against the British, Hindu nationalists of the 1940s formed the neo-fascist paramilitary Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), literally the "national union of self-reliant servants," which directly imitated European fascist movements of the time and sought to unite Hindus against Muslims. William Dalrymple points out that the RSS, which is still in existence, wears khaki uniforms and employs a militaristic salute that differs from that of the Nazis only in the angle of the arm: "The RSS aims to create a corps of dedicated paramilitary zealots who will bring about a revival of what it sees as the lost Hindu golden age of national strength and purity."[14] Its adherents believe that religious minorities may continue to live in India only if they acknowledge that it is a Hindu nation. Romila Thapar points out in her 1988 essay, "Imagined Religious Communities?":

> [The first occurrence of the term "Hindu"] is in Arabic texts where the term is initially used neither for a religion nor for a culture. It refers to the inhabitants of the Indian subcontinent, the land across the Sindhu or Indus river. . . . Hindu thus essentially came to mean "the other" in the eyes of the new arrivals. This all-inclusive term was doubtless a new and bewildering feature for the multiple sects and castes who generally saw themselves as separate entities.[15]

In contrast to the accepted historical position of the 1930s — that the "Aryans" came down into the Indian subcontinent from what is now Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Iran and subdued the Dravidian cultures of the south, adopting their religion — Madhav Golwalkar, the early RSS leader who formulated their position on Indian pre-history, believed that the "Aryans" were indigenous to India and were always Hindu. For Golwalkar the enemy was not British but Muslim. He sought to emulate Hitler's treatment of religious minorities to sustain the "purity" of the race and its culture. Christophe Jaffrelot points out that in *We, Or Our Nationhood Defined* (1939), Gowalkar relied on the definition of a nation furnished by Johann Kaspar Bluntschli in his *Lehre vom modernen Staat* (1875), namely, as masses united by birth and race. This is different from the English and French definitions used by the Congress Party leaders, in which the nation is defined in universalistic terms, such as the role of individual will and the social contract.[16] Golwalkar "probably devalued the religious content of Hindu identity because the heterogeneity of Hinduism militated against the project for national unity. But the latter could be promoted by emphasizing race" (55). Nehru therefore denounced the RSS in 1947 as proceeding along strict Nazi lines and thus ruined the organization's reputation for over twenty years.

Between 1999 and 2004, however, when the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), the Hindu nationalist party founded in 1980 as the political wing of the RSS, was in power, they placed the "correct" interpretation of ancient Indian history at the forefront of their debates. These debates over history, however, have ceased to be the waged among scholars and have resulted in what many have called terrorism. Dalrymple notes that an estimated 18,000 volumes were damaged — including a first-century manuscript of the *Mahabharata*, an important set of inscriptions on palm leaves, and an ancient copy of the *Rig Veda* once used by Max Müller — when the Bhandarkar Oriental Institute in Pune was ransacked, on January 5, 2004, by two hundred Hindu militants.[17] This riot had been incited by a footnote in a work on a Hindu king, Śivaji, by an American scholar who intimated that the monarch might have been an illegitimate child.

In the wake of this riot, infuriated Indian historians published editorials attacking the "Talibanization" of India:

> In the land of Mahatma Gandhi and the tradition of nonviolence, this was not the only case in which an obscure scholarly work on Indian history and religion has produced violent responses from India's Hindu nationalists. An increasing number of scholars both in India and abroad have found themselves the targets of hate campaigns from Hindu extremists and the "cybernationalists" of the Indian diaspora.[18]

Targeted Indian historians, such D. N. Jha, argue that the actions of such mobs, which now threaten speakers at lectures, attack art exhibitions and libraries, and send death threats to scholars — apparently with the encouragement of many politicians — amount to terrorism. One of India's most prominent historians, Thapar's work has come under attack for emphasizing the religious tolerance of Mughal emperors such as Akbar, whose great-grandson was Dara Shukoh, the first translator of the *Bhagavad Gītā*.

Indeed, since 1992, when Hindu militants slaughtered over 1,400 Muslims in Bombay alone, both the amount of bloodshed and the power of the far right over Muslim minorities have increased greatly, as is evident from the state-sponsored pogroms in Gujarat in April 2002, not to mention the fact that in the last fifteen years an estimated 80,000 have died due to the Pakistan-backed anti-India insurgency in Kashmir, a region Salman Rushdie has referred to as "Paradise" and part of the area from which the "Aryans" were supposed to have come.[19] In 2000, as part of what has been called the "saffronization" of Indian textbooks, a passage in Thapar's *Ancient India* noting that beef was eaten in the Vedic period was removed from the book without the author's permission.[20]

Such challenges to the purported homogeneity and sanctity of Hindu history have been violently attacked, and arguments that medieval Indian

civilization was culturally rich due to such religious intermixture have been refuted. The government that has replaced the BJP administration has authorized schools to return to their old textbooks. Nevertheless, one hopes that such a-historical myths as those propagated by the RSS will end as Indian historians find more readers outside of India to support their arguments.

## Notes

[1] Steven E. Aschheim, *The Nietzsche Legacy in Germany: 1890–1990* (Berkeley: U California P, 1992), 12.

[2] Mosse, *The Crisis of German Ideology,* 64–65.

[3] Aschheim, *The Nietzsche Legacy in Germany,* 234.

[4] Rudolf E. Kuenzli, "The Nazi Appropriation of Nietzsche," *Nietzsche-Studien* 12 (1983): 431.

[5] The Vril Society was a group convinced that a race of super-beings would emerge from their underground hiding places to rule the world. The Thule Society, which followed the Vril around 1919, was founded in Munich by Baron Rudolf von Sebottendorf, a follower of Blavatsky. The Thule Society drew on the traditions of various orders such as the Jesuits, the Knights Templar, the Order of the Golden Dawn, and the Sufis. It promoted the myth of Thule, a legendary island in the frozen northlands that had been the home of a master race, the original "Aryans" (Alex McKay, *Tibet and the British Raj: The Frontier Cadre, 1904–1947* [Surrey, UK: Curzon, 1997], 67].

[6] The term "swastika" is derived from the Sanskrit *svasti*, meaning "happiness" or "well-being." In Hinduism the swastika is an auspicious figure of a cross, a mystical sign found everywhere on temples and objects of art. In Buddhism the sign is interpreted as a symbol of the wheel of the teaching (*dharma-chakra*) or of Buddhist teaching in general (Schuhmacher and Woerner, *The Encyclopedia of Eastern Philosophy and Religion,* 345).

[7] McKay, *Tibet and the British Raj,* 66.

[8] The foundations of Buddhism in Tibet, which exists only in its Mahayana form there, were laid in the 8th century A.D. under the rulership of King Trisong Detsen (755–97) by the Indian scholar Shantirakshita (representative of the "Middle Way" school of Mahayana or *madhyama*) and by Padmasambhava, who is considered the "father" of Tibetan Buddhism (Schuhmacher and Woerner, *The Encyclopedia of Eastern Philosophy and Religion*, 370).

*Bön*, which in Tibetan means literally "invocation" or "recitation," is a general heading in Tibetan Buddhism for various religious currents in Tibet before the introduction of Buddhism by Padmasambhava. The word *bönpo*, which is also used, referred originally to priests with varying functions but later to a developed theoretical doctrinal system that was strongly influenced by foreigners from the neighboring countries to the west. In the beginning of the eleventh century, Bön

appeared as an independent school that distinguished itself from Buddhism through its claim to preserve the continuity of the old Bön tradition. This school, which still exists, shares certain teaching with the Nyingmapa school (which derives from Padmasambhava) (ibid., 41). See also David L. Snellgrove, *Indo-Tibetan Buddhism: Indian Buddhists and Their Tibetan Successors* (Boston: Shambhala, 2002), 381–528.

[9] Heather Pringle, *The Master Plan: Himmler's Scholars and the Holocaust* (London: Fourth Estate, 2006), 3.

[10] McKay, *Tibet and the British Raj*, 92.

[11] Nicholas Goodrich-Clarke, *Hitler's Priestess: Savitri Devi, the Hindu-Aryan Myth, and Neo-Nazism* (New York: New York UP, 1998), 4–5. Goodrich-Clarke's *The Occult Roots of Nazism: Secret Aryan Cults and Their Influence on Nazi Ideology: The Ariosophists of Austria and Germany, 1890–1935* addresses only Western sources of occult mysticism. The addition of his work on Savitri-Devi both rounds out and extends that scholarship by focusing on the Indian component of Nazi thinking as well as the postwar perpetuation of the Aryan myth.

[12] Mosse, *The Crisis of German Ideology,* 4–5.

[13] Martha C. Nussbaum, *The Clash Within: Democracy, Religious Violence, and India's Future* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard, 2007), ix.

[14] William Dalrymple, "India: The War Over History," *New York Review of Books* 52.6 (2005): 63.

[15] Romila Thapar, *History and Beyond* (New Dehli: Oxford, 2000), 61.

[16] Christophe Jaffrelot, *The Hindu Nationalist Movement in India* (New York: Columbia UP, 1993), 54.

[17] Dalrymple, "India: The War Over History," 62.

[18] Dalrymple, "India: The War Over History," 62.

[19] See Pankaj Mishra, "Massacre in Arcadia," *New York Review of Books* 52.15 (6 October 2005): 8–11. This is a review of Rushdie's novel, *Shalimar the Clown* (Random House, 2005), which deals with the fighting in Kashmir, although Mishra faults Rushdie for portraying Kashmir too simplistically as a pastoral idyll ruined by ideological violence.

[20] Saffron is the "holy color" of Hinduism as well as of the Hinayana Buddhism of Southeast Asia. Mahayana, and in particular Tibetan, Buddhism is known by its burgundy color.

# Conclusion: The Intersection of the Personal, the Philosophical, and the Political

## Summary

Hegel argued in *The Philosophy of History* that political revolutions did not matter to Hindus because they did not change one's lot in life, which was governed by the caste system. One is apparently born into the level of society at which one belongs based on past performance. Better performance will only result in a higher ranking in a future lifetime, so no matter how well you run in this race, you still finish in same spot in which you were placed. More recently, Pankaj Mishra perhaps better sums up what Hegel was trying to get at in the South Asian worldview (if there is a single one). He quotes Mahatma Gandhi, who, unimpressed with Gibbon's account of the decline of the Roman Empire, lauded the authors of *Mahabharata* for giving historical facts a back seat to philosophical wisdom, for "that which is permanent and therefore necessary eludes the historian of events," because "truth transcends history."[1] Such access to truth is precisely what the Indo-Germans attempted to achieve. Feeling that one has a purchase on some kind of truth is necessary; however, truth eludes our attempts to make it pragmatic, quantifiable, objective. The Indo-Germans looked back at their own histories in attempts to re-write those histories. Theirs were struggles for authenticity, struggles to create a cultural identity unified by ethnicity, language, and belief. Yet, as Dorothy M. Figueira has explained, figures such as Friedrich Schlegel eventually rejected forms of Sheldon Pollock's "internal colonialism." Along with the association of Hinduism and Buddhism with solipsistic and nihilistic strains in Western thought rather than with more compassionate philosophies, this rejection of South Asian philosophy and its placement in a hierarchy below the Judeo-Christian and classical traditions has fed systems of thought that have sanctioned bloodshed on insubstantial philosophical grounds.

As we have seen, the identification of Indians and Germans was prefigured in the works of classical historians and medieval travelers, in the wise and noble qualities attributed to both Brahmins and Goths. Astronomers and philosophers of the Enlightenment then argued that the

arts and sciences had been invented by an original South Asian civilization whose real genius had been lost and only survived in pale imitations in Europe and in India. This application of the doctrine of the Fall, however, only appropriated supposed ancient Indian history for Christian purposes. Herder's postulation that national spirits govern the development of civilization grew out of such a Christian idealization. Jones's concurrent linguistic discovery of the similarities between Sanskrit and Greek and Latin, and Fichte's solipsistic strain of German idealism, proved detrimental to the development of early German Romantic views of Hinduism and Buddhism.

Champions of Hinduism among the Jena Romantics were destined to become adversarial to it once they failed to reconcile some of its doctrines with their own Greco-Roman and Judeo-Christian models. Novalis's and Schelling's works were profoundly, if at times obliquely, influenced by their encounters with specific works of Sanskrit literature, but they only embraced Hinduism as a flawed forerunner of a purportedly more refined Christianity. Friedrich Schlegel not only rejected Hinduism on the same grounds, but went out of his way to disprove many of what he took to be its doctrines, creating nihilistic impressions of Hinduism and Buddhism that would exacerbate later attempts to reconcile Eastern and Western philosophies, as Roger Pol-Droit has emphasized. At the same time, as Nicholas A. Germana has noted, Schlegel made the strongest claims to date about the direct historical links between ancient India and modern Germany.

Hegel's unidirectional history from East to West attempted to explain the world historical import of Indian philosophy, but Hegel found that it never was as perfect as some Enlightenment and Romantic philosophers claimed it to be. Arthur Schopenhauer is the one philosopher here who was able to devise a comparatively workable synthesis of German idealism and *Vedānta*, which resulted in a philosophy of sympathy, but he also found that this synthesis failed to correspond with his own ideas of the pursuit of happiness and thus he and his philosophy remained at an impasse. Friedrich Nietzsche used the categories of Schopenhauer's philosophy, but his manipulation of them culminated in a contradictory attempt to transcend materialism while remaining intelligible to human beings.

Finally, the German National Socialists then misappropriated Nietzsche's thought as well as various theories within German Indology, perpetuating their own version of the Indo-German story that betrayed its real contributions to cross-cultural understanding. Similarly, Hindu Nationalists in India itself have employed many of the same techniques of distorting their own religious, cultural, and political history in order to discriminate against the Muslim minority.

## The Importance of the Indo-Germans

While the Indo-German identification has in many ways had even more profound effects on Europe itself than other Orientalist histories, as I have highlighted it is important for us to keep in mind, in contextualizing and analyzing the works of the Indo-Germans, the impact personal ideological and spiritual struggles have on attempts to establish unified national identities. In their own *Selbstbestimmungskämpfe* the Indo-Germans enacted the cycle of creation, maintenance, and destruction that composes the structure of Hindu ontology, for they created a Germanic-South Asian identification, championed and defended it against critics, and then destroyed this "Oriental renaissance" when their own doubts about it became too overpowering, leaving their contemporaries and future scholars to sort out the pieces. In the end Jacobi and Fichte had helped set the stage for thinkers like Schlegel and Hegel to accuse South Asian religious thought of nihilism when they became frustrated in their inability to make their own Catholic or idealist systems cohere with the Hindu void or a triumvirate system that necessarily includes an element of destruction.

Where the personal, the philosophical, and the political come together for the Indo-Germans is in the individualized compulsion to find a philosophical/religious basis for the connection between ancient Indian civilization and the modern German nation. That is to say, writers such as Friedrich Schlegel, the Indo-German *par excellence*, were engaged in individual quests to find philosophical and religious roots for Christian German culture in South Asia. Other scholars, such as Herder and Jones, were establishing the ethnic and linguistic roots of this affiliation. What concerned the Jena Romantics and Hegel and Schopenhauer was the need to establish spiritual (poetic) and philosophical connections that explained how Indian thought had been transformed and re-established on Germanic soil and what kind of synthesis could be generated out of the (re)discovery of this connection. What is most striking about the Indo-German identification in the nineteenth century, therefore, is that an affiliation that would have such far-reaching effects on Western conceptions of racial and religious origins, the history of aesthetics, pessimism and nihilism, and the possibility of collective human perfection could have such individual, idiosyncratic, roots. It has been said by many, though, that "all history is intellectual history," and I believe that individual predilections, preoccupations, and tastes have often had a much more profound effect on world history than might have been imagined by previous generations of historians. The Indo-German story is testament to that fact. But what next? How do we move beyond recognition of that fact?

## Internal Postcolonialism?

In 1970 Marshall Berman published a book that had grown out of his doctoral dissertation, *The Politics of Authenticity*, which looked at the origins of Romanticism in the works of Rousseau and Montesquieu. Berman was writing as a part of and in response to the New Left revolution of the 1960s, which he saw as awakening an impulse that had been forgotten for the century following the failed revolutions of 1848 to 1851. This was an impulse — whether called "identity," autonomy," or "self-realization"[2] — that "was one of the deepest and most pervasive themes of the Romantic Age" and that he ascribes to such figures as Schiller and Novalis: the "dream of an ideal community in which individuality will not be subsumed and sacrificed, but fully developed and expressed" (ix). The pursuit of such authenticity has been conceived since the Enlightenment, so argues Berman, as beginning with a negative interpretation of the world, as an ethic of disengaged conformity and internal liberation. Indeed, this impulse to define oneself in spiritual and ethnically specific opposition to stifling, prevailing social rules and accepted philosophical views is largely what spurred the revolutionary critical stances of such figures as Herder and Schlegel. The world has changed dramatically since 1970, however.

More recently, Terry Pinkard has observed that the emotional force of the idea of "revolution" — whether a socialist revolution, a revolution in the arts, or a revolution in spirituality — that hung around until roughly 1989 was the basis for the inchoate hope that something would come along to change things so that our freedom would now be finally realized, that the anxieties accompanying it would finally either disappear or themselves be integrated into some workable whole.[3] In the twenty years since 1989, we have seen not only the unification of Germany, but the establishment of the European Union. While I would not say that the idea of revolution is dead, at the turn of the millennium political philosophers such as Jürgen Habermas and John Rawls problematized it by asking what the implications of globalization are for our understanding of the politics of national and cultural identities. They wondered whether this "postnational constellation" (Habermas's term) of global interrelatedness threatens democracy or offers new forms of expression. Of course we see both threats to democracy and new expressions of it as evinced on the one hand by Europeans letting their civil liberties ebb away in favor of increased corporate influence on government and, on the other, by the the power of information technologies like Twitter to tell the stories of emerging democratic movements in nations like Iran. Indeed, commentators have spoken of the "Obama Effect" among young, educated people in the Middle East, a moment that has many of the earmarks of revolution. A global reality in which race, religion, ideology, class, and nationality have no effect on civil rights, however, seems much like Berman's "authenticity" or the restoration of Tibet: a dream.

What has largely come to a close, though, at least in its nineteenth-century form, is colonialism, and the literature on *post*colonialism is now vast, multifaceted, and compelling. If we keep in mind Pollock's formulation of "internal colonialism" that we employed in analyzing the Indo-Germans and their twentieth-century successors, we might then wonder what "internal *post*colonialism" would look like. Attempts to define oneself by drawing direct lines from one civilization to another over the course of many centuries using paths such as language or philosophy have, as we have seen, proven misleading at best, catastrophic at worst — and with the dramatic increase in human immigration and racial admixture will prove only more so. We find now that just as often our "elective affinities," to use Goethe's term, define us as much as geographical determinants. An Irish-American teenager may know nothing of Ireland and self-define using the dress, vernacular, and attitudes of African-American hip-hop. A Guyanese Hindu, an Indonesian Muslim, a Swedish Christian, and a Chinese Jew may all connect because they prefer Macintosh computers to Dells. The Indo-Germans sought explanations for themselves that were ultimately a mix of such elective affinities, mythology, newly assayed theories, and textual "evidence." They were well-off, well-educated men hampered by a dream of authenticity. But then, such a level of choice, such freedom to pursue the authentic, is not enjoyed by all.

In her 1997 book *Cultivating Humanity*, Martha C. Nussbaum focuses on education in a world that is becoming increasingly interconnected. She emphasizes a dichotomy in education made by Seneca — between education for those free citizens who deserve it based on birth and class, and education that produces free citizens out of any — and all — people.[4] Seneca argues that the latter group understands that tradition demands respect because it has stood the test of time, but is only food for the strength of mind required for critical thinking. "In this way, they hope to advance from the cultural narrowness into which we all are born toward true world citizenship," so that we may become valuable members "of a world community of nations that must increasingly learn how to understand, respect, and communicate, if our common human problems are to be constructively addressed" (294). This world-citizen model is the opposite of the "gentleman's model" in which the Indo-Germans were educated and in which the elite of postcolonial nations continue to be. If internal colonialism was based on personal predilection, internal postcolonialism is no different, and one must hope that it will lead in the direction of internal world citizenship, if not external civil freedom.

Historian John Patrick Diggins argued a few years ago in an article on the challenges of understanding intellectual history that one "must be comfortable with contradiction and hence more in tune with Augustine, who looked to the depths of human consciousness for spiritual knowledge, than with Aquinas, who believed evidence for God and human freedom could be

found in reason alone."[5] A bad boy who tried to make good, a repentant sinner, Saint Augustine explored many facets of the relationship between ethics and metaphysics and found that the contradictions therein still had to have a place as parts of the whole. In the end the Jena Romantics may not have been so wildly off the mark in finding the doctrines of Spinoza edifying. Spinoza perhaps would have understood the teachings of Sanskrit literature much more profoundly and accurately than any of the Indo-Germans, for he understood the place of mere humanity in the scheme of the dynamically sublime universe and thus, it may be argued, understood humility. We may humbly ask why different systems of thought have to be reconciled into a workable whole that is impersonal. They only have to fit together to the extent that one feels one has personally worked through them. This is what brought me to the study of German Orientalism in the first place — an interest in working through my interests in Asian religion and Continental philosophy in the hope of establishing a personally functional synthesis.

Nietzsche's Zarathustra claimed that the will to establish a system necessitates a lack of integrity. The spirit of this remark is well taken, for extreme danger lurks in the overly doctrinaire. Yet when the struggle for self-determination takes one as far as the Indo-Germans went, it is difficult to fault them for reverting to their original viewpoints. After all, this is what Hegel felt Hindu ontology should do in the first place. I have addressed the Indophilia (and Indophobia) of Bailly, Voltaire, Kant, Herder, Novalis, Schelling, the Schlegel brothers, Hegel, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, and several others in an effort to tease out the intersection of the philosophical, the political, and the personal. To see how they themselves did enact this dynamic of creating an Indo-German identification, distancing themselves from it, and returning to their original Christian or classically-based sense of self. We might argue that if history is personal, historiography is often more so. What is important in our endeavor, as it was in the German struggle for self-definition, is that one attempts to understand ideas in their proper contexts, on their own terms, and to respect them. Whether or not they fit into one's own worldview is not as important as the attempt to establish an equal place for each system of thought within that view. One may never be able to adequately establish a set of ethnic, linguistic, or spiritual origins for oneself, but one can come to terms with one's present and future.

## Notes

[1] Pankaj Mishra, "A Cautionary Tale for Americans," *New York Review of Book* 52.9 (26 May 2005): 8.

[2] Marshall Berman, *The Politics of Authenticity: Radical Individualism and the Emergence of Modern Society* (New York: Atheneum, 1970), xv. Berman's choice of

the word "authenticity" appears to be in order to consciously situate himself in the line he draws from such "Existentialists" as Sartre and Heidegger.

[3] Pinkard, *German Philosophy 1760–186*, 360. Nineteen eighty-nine was in fact the year of my own first trip to Germany, on November 9th, to be precise, a day-trip from Belgium, where I was studying. That was the day that citizens of East Germany were first permitted to enter West Berlin and euphoric Germans surged over the Wall. Cologne was remarkably quiet as we visited the cathedral in which Friedrich Schlegel had become a Catholic. In my pocket was the book I was reading at the time: *L'enseignement du Dalaï Lama*.

[4] Nussbaum, *Cultivating Humanity*, 293.

[5] John Patrick Diggins, "Arthur O. Lovejoy and the Challenge of Intellectual History," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 67.1 (Jan 2006): 183.

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# Index

*In the early nineteenth century,* German intellectuals such as Novalis, Schelling, and Friedrich Schlegel, convinced that Germany's cultural origins lay in ancient India, attempted to reconcile these origins with their imagined destiny as saviors of a degenerate Europe, then shifted from "Indomania" to Indophobia when the attempt foundered. The philosophers Hegel, Schopenhauer, and, later, Nietzsche provided alternate views of the role of India in world history that would be disastrously misappropriated in the twentieth century. Reconstructing Hellenistic and humanist views of the ancient Brahmins and Goths, French-Enlightenment debates over the postdiluvian origins of the arts and sciences, and the Indophilia and protonationalism of Herder, Robert Cowan focuses on turning points in the development of an "Indo-German" ideal, an ideal less focused on intellectual imperialism than many studies of the "Aryan Myth" and Orientalism would have us believe. Cowan argues that the study of this ideal continues to offer lessons about cultural difference in the "post-national" twenty-first century.

Of great interest to historians, philosophers, and literary scholars, this cross-cultural study offers a new understanding of the Indo-German story by showing that attempts to establish identity necessarily involve a reconciliation of origins and destinies, of self and other, of individual and collective.

Robert Cowan is Assistant Professor of English at Kingsborough Community College of the City University of New York.

Cover image: Photograph of Markus Baenziger's sculpture *Forever Never,* courtesy of Edward Thorp Gallery, New York.

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