

Methods and Contexts: Rethinking Religion in South Asia

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ABSTRACT: This article addresses the issue of methods and contexts in the study of religion in South Asia. Along the lines of the “natural history’... of religious studies” proposed in Lease 1995, it proposes a “natural history” of the study of religion in South Asia, insofar as it originates not only in a “Protestant Christian ‘apologetic’ theological project” (Smith 2010) but also, more specifically, in reconstructions of traditions using the “text-historical method.” The case studies in MTSR 1995 provide a differential diagnosis of the pathologies responsible for the demise of five programs in religion. We focus, instead, on the disciplinary crisis in religious studies, using the work of Paul Hacker as an example. Smith’s (1995) three preconditions for the formation of a discipline—“theory, general studies, and professionalism”—are the criteria we apply to comprehend the field’s diremption. On a positive note, the article argues for reconsidering the role of method in religious studies. Recognizing and correcting for the shortcomings of past scholarship is a *sine qua non* for progressing the academic study of religion. A comprehensive topically arranged bibliography provides suggestions for further reading.

I. Genealogy of “Method”

Introduction

What is the role of “method” in the study of religion in South Asia? This article uses the recent controversy over Paul Hacker’s Nazism on RISA-List (Religion in South Asia) to engage with questions of method, historical research, and institutional identity. Some objected to this discussion for amounting to “moral vilification” of Hacker (Steiner 2020b; Uskokov 2020c). One participant questioned the relevance of scholars’ Nazi affiliations by invoking a comparison between Jewish Holocaust deaths and World War II deaths in the former USSR (Zydenbos 2020a).¹ These excesses aside, the question of whether the historical-critical or text-historical method reflects the political and religious biases of its intellectual-historical situation deserves scrutiny (Rogerson 1992; Howard 2000; Sheehan 2005; Legaspi 2010; Morrow 2017). An extensive body of literature demonstrates the role Protestant scriptural hermeneutics played in the development of historical criticism (Krauss 1956; Ebeling 1963; Krentz 1975; Lauster 2004; Reventlow 2010). This literature also notes the polemical and apologetic ends terms such as “science,” “criticism,” “critical historical,” and “presuppositionless” have served (primarily against Jewish OT communities) (Maier 1974; Levenson 1993; Edgecomb 2009; Reiser [2007: 36] advises abandoning the misleading term “historical critical” altogether).² The Protestant origins

¹ See the section “The RISA Episode: Paul Hacker’s Nazism.”

² See, in particular, Edgecomb (2009): “Particularly skillful as a propagandistic coup was the exclusive appropriation to their work of the terms ‘criticism’ and ‘critical’—a situation that pertains to this day. The historical-critical method (the term originally invented to describe de Wette’s dialectic of the devolution of Hebraism into Judaism, superseded by Christianity, a revival of Hebraism, and so on, as I described here), a newly-minted approach to the Scriptures, became equated with criticism itself in the 1850s. This meant that other approaches were not referred to as critical, thereby severing the terminology’s usage from its roots in antiquity, particularly the Aristotelian usage, which had prevailed to that time. No longer was criticism the right application

and nature of the study of religion have, likewise, been demonstrated by several studies. The idea is formulated most strikingly in J. Z. Smith's observation, "the study of religion in secular public institutions ... ground[s] itself in a Protestant Christian theological project. ... religious studies in North America ... ground their enterprise in a Protestant Christian 'apologetic' theological project" (Smith 2010: 1139–40).

Scriptural Hermeneutics and Method

At a deeper level, we may ask to what extent scriptural hermeneutics in post-Reformation Germany were beholden to anti-Judaism. The evidence is irrefragable. Scholars have traced central principles of Luther's hermeneutics to his anti-Judaism (Bornkamm 1969; Bienert 1982; Kaufmann 2017; Kaufmann 2011; on Luther's hermeneutics more generally, see Ebeling 1993). An innate connection exists between Luther's Christology and his criticisms of the "obduracy" (*Verstocktheit*) of German Jews.³ Moving forward in time, scholars have argued for a connection between Luther's anti-Judaism and the Holocaust (Rubenstein 1988 most strongly, whereas Probst 2012 traces a more complex narrative and Gritsch 2012 is mildly exculpatory; for

of a well-formed mind to decision-making, but something that the academy decided. The distinction is crucial. For it is certainly not the case that the historical-critical method of de Wette can be described as the conclusion of a well-formed mind. It is instead an entirely self-serving, societally and aetically contingent invention, an appropriation of the history of another race for purposes of his (and sympathizers') own and only of useful application at that moment in time: for the unification of the German lands into a single republican state, a state which would exclude all who would not convert to the above-mentioned highest expression of 'the world spirit': liberal German Protestantism as defined by theology professors (I will not sully 'Theologian' with such an association) such as de Wette!"

³ See Bienert (1982: 88 and 89–90): "Aus der jüdischen Ablehnung Christi ist einerseits Gottes Strafgericht der Zerstörung Jerusalems und der Zerstreuung des jüdischen Volkes in alle Welt erfolgt, zum anderen ist die Ablehnung Christi auch Kennzeichen der jüdischen Religion in ihrem Verhältnis zum Christentum. Solange die Juden in dieser Ablehnung verharren, sind sie nach Luther 'verstockt' und können den wahren Christus nicht erkennen. An dieser Stelle stehen beide Seiten sich kompromißlos gegenüber. ... Eines der interessantesten religionspsychologischen Dokumente bietet Luther mit dem folgenden Text, bei dem es um den Mittelpunkt christlicher Lehre im damaligen Verständnis und zugleich den Schwerpunkt in der theologischen Kontroverse zwischen Christentum und Judentum geht: die Person Jesu Christi. Was dem Christen an der heftigen und auch nicht immer zartfühlenden jüdischen Ablehnung Jesu Christi als Verstockung oder Halsstarrigkeit erscheint, hat seine eigentliche Ursache am Kreuz Christi, das ganz natürlicherweise dem Juden ein 'Ärgernis' und dem nur nach Vernunftgründen urteilenden Menschen eine 'Torheit' ist (vgl. 1Kor 1,23). 'Also ist der Fluch und (die) Verstockung der Juden so ganz durch Herz, Mut und Sinn gegangen, durch Mark und Bein getrieben, daß da keine Hilfe noch Rat ist... Das sehen wir an den Juden täglicher Erfahrung wohl, wie steif und verstockt sie sind von Kind du Kindeskindern. So giftig und häßlich können sie von Christus reden, das über alle Maße ist. Denn sie halten's für eitel Fluch und Gift, was wir von Christus glauben und lehren; (sie) meinen schlicht nicht anders, denn Christus sei ein böser Bube gewesen; der um seiner Bosheit willen mit anderen Buben gekreuzigt sei. Darum, wenn sie ihn nennen, so nennen sie ihn schmähhlich 'Thola', das ist: den Gehenkten. ... Also werden sie allenthalben verstockt und gärgert, daß solcher Fluch muß wohl durch Mark und Bein gegen und sie zutiefst vergiften, daß sie nicht vermögen, herauszukommen und den gekreuzigten Jesus für einen Herrn und Gott zu halten.'"

additional sources, see Schramm and Stjerna 2012).⁴ The rise of historical criticism to the dominant mode of biblical exegesis in the nineteenth century reinforced anti-Judaic prejudices (Schechter 1915; Levenson 1985 and 1993). Despite sporadic efforts at rehabilitating them (Kratz 2009), the anti-Judaism of biblical critics such as Wellhausen and Friedrich Delitzsch is well known (Pasto 1999; Arnold and Weisberg 2002).⁵ Even scholars who adopted elements of historical criticism such as its chronologies or stratifications (Kaufmann 1960) acknowledge its problematic history (for summaries of Jewish attitudes to historical-criticism, see Levenson 1994 and Schwartz 2012).

To the Civil Authorities	To Pastors and Preachers
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Burn down Synagogues 2. Destroy Jewish homes 3. Confiscate Prayer Books and Talmudic writings 4. Forbid Rabbis to teach 5. Abolish safe-conduct for Jews 6. Prohibit Usury to the Jews 7. Enforce manual labor on the Jews 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Burn down Synagogues 2. Confiscate Prayer Books, Talmudic writings, and the Bible 3. Prohibit Jewish Prayer and Teaching 4. Forbid Jews to utter the name of God publicly

Table 1. Luther’s Instructions in *On the Jews and Their Lies* (1543)

Indology and the Study of Religion

⁴ Stjerna’s (2019: 32–33 and 34) assessment is worth citing: “Martin Luther also wrote explicitly about the Jews with theologically argued aggression, and these writings have been widely and wildly disseminated throughout the world. He was a central Christian figure evoked by Nazi propaganda. Important Luther remembrance dates were used to grab the people’s attention and to imply the greatest theological leader of the German people passively supported Nazi agendas. Most notoriously, the Kristallnacht of November 9–10, 1938, took place on Luther’s birthday. Also, once upon a time, a Nazi flag flew from the balcony of the *Lutherhalle*, Luther’s famous home in Wittenberg. ... When exploring Luther’s views on the Jews, scholars have typically listed Luther’s last publications as the most important: *On Jews and Their Lies*, *Last Words of David*, and *On the Ineffable Name*, and his last two sermons with a ‘postlude’ titled ‘Admonition against the Jews’ to top it all. These works are deliberately and explicitly anti-Semitic. Luther attacks the Jewish faith, its integrity, and, finally, its purpose. Furthermore, in these works he offers a solution for the ecclesial and political leaders to ‘deal’ with the Jews by either extinguishing their faith or removing them from ‘Christian’ lands and proximity. Luther’s most famous *Judenratschlag*, ‘advice’ regarding the Jews, comes from his treatise *On Jews and Their Lies*, particularly chilling to read after the rise and fall of Nazism (see table 1).” The table is reproduced as Table 1 above.

⁵ Friedrich Delitzsch’s anti-Semitism, expressed in *Die Große Täuschung* (Delitzsch 1920–21) among other works, contrasts with his father Franz Delitzsch’s more enlightened views (summarized in Gerdmar 2009). Though an advocate of mission towards the Jews, Delitzsch Sr. fought against anti-Semitism (a good account of the complex role he straddled may be found in Levenson 2002). If attitudes in academia are often a result of institutional pressures, they are not set in stone. Succeeding generations judge scholars individually. As profitable as it may be to bait any one group of people under the current academic dispensation, scholars ultimately bear personal responsibility for their statements.

Turning to Indology, the “science” of India in nineteenth-century Germany (Oldenberg 1886, 1906, and 1907), the anti-Judaism of Heinrich Ewald and Rudolf von Roth and the anti-Semitism of Christian Lassen is recognized (Figueira 2002; Benes 2008; Rabault-Feuerhahn 2013; Adluri and Bagchee 2015 and 2017).⁶ But lest we be accused of the ad hominem fallacy of reading Indologists’ work out of their personal biographies, we also studied the application of the text-historical method to Sanskrit texts (Adluri and Bagchee 2014, 2016a, and 2018c). Whereas the application of historical criticism to the Hebrew Bible is complicated by issues of authority, faith, and competing notions of the canon (Kugel 1990; Cooper 2002), no such confusion exists in relation to the Mahābhārata and the Bhagavadgītā (on the reception of the latter, see Sharpe 1985 and Herling 2006). These texts emerged outside the ambit of Christianity. Until very recently, their reception was not shaped by debates internal to the history of (Judeo-)Christian faith (Sweetman 2003; Gelders 2009). Whereas Protestant scriptural hermeneutics cannot but impinge upon our view of Judaism given that they share a “book” (Childs 1986 and 1992), it would be bizarre to modulate our reading of the Mahābhārata to account for Protestant Christian anxieties, unless we are willing to return to the nineteenth-century misapprehension that Protestantism is identical with the principle of “scientificity” (*Wissenschaftlichkeit*).⁷

⁶ Compared with biblical theology, biographic writing in Indology is woefully underdeveloped. It mostly consists of repetitive hagiographies (Windisch 1917–20; Stache-Rosen 1990). Whereas in biblical criticism, the anti-Judaism of nineteenth-century critics inevitably flows into evaluations of their work, Indologists insist on separating the study of India from its historical context (Slaje 2016). Karttunen (2007: 112) declares that “it is rather unnecessary to criticize Lassen for sharing some of the views of his time,” but this argument applies to every other anti-Semite as well. The lack of historical contextualization in Indology has fostered a tendency to look at the work of nineteenth-century Indologists in a timeless, ahistorical perspective. It has also bred a culture of misrepresentation and denial (see Schmithausen 1981; Rüping 1981 on Hacker; Mylius 1974, 1979, 1985, and 1994–95; Mylius and Taube 1974; Taube 1981 and 1982 on Weller; Schetelich 2007; Franco 2009 on Hertel; and see also, for correctives, Adluri and Bagchee 2016b, 2019a, 2019c, and 2020b).

⁷ See Howard (2006: 29 and 33–34): “The idea of neutrality—or *Voraussetzungslosigkeit* (literally ‘presuppositionlessness’)—as a characteristic of *Wissenschaft* becomes especially pronounced toward the end of the nineteenth century; it was often trumpeted by secular and progressive Protestant scholars to criticize those, notably Roman Catholics, believed to be incapable of producing true science because of their adherence to confessional goals. Quite often, this criterion of science was invoked to suggest that all theology, Protestant as well as Catholic, represented an ‘alien substance’ (*Fremdkörper*) within the modern scientific university. ... [M]any leading theological voices did not construe *Wissenschaft*—whether in its idealist or positivist guise—as a necessary threat to theological verities. In fact, liberal Protestant theologians often interpreted the critical rigours of modern enquiry as the logical, historical fruit of the Reformation, which had challenged the dogmatic rigidities of Catholicism. To reject *Wissenschaft* therefore was tantamount to vitiating the purest and most progressive form of human religious consciousness: modern Protestantism. Turning away from the spirit of *Wissenschaft*, as one theologian put it, amounted to ‘a defection from the essence of Protestantism’.” See also Howard (2000: 103–104), especially, “The new ideal of *Wissenschaft* was borne out in exemplary fashion among theologians and biblical critics such as de Wette and Strauss. De Wette emphasized repeatedly that since faith was independent of knowledge, then ‘Unwissenschaftlichkeit’ testified not only to a lack of scholarly nerve, but to a mistaken understanding of the nature of faith.” W. M. L. de Wette delivered the inaugural address to the Orientalist Congress in Basel in 1847 (de Wette 1848). In his address, he underscored the holy trinity of scientificity, Germanhood, and Christianity. German is not simply the language of science: it is identical with its concept. When Orientalists, theologians, and “all other researchers in the discipline of national and religious history” cast aside the “old dogmatic prejudices” (of the Catholic Church), they “assuredly experience the noble

The results of our investigation, however, provided a different picture (for a summary, see Edward P. Butler, et al. 2016). From its inception onwards, the study of Indian texts in Germany was subordinated to intra-Christian debates over the nature of revelation and the meaning and direction of history. Depending on whether Protestants or Catholics were telling the story, history was either a narrative of degeneration or of progress (Park 2004; Tzoref-Ashkenazi 2006; Dusche 2013; Myers 2013). The majority of German Indologists, however, were theologically trained Protestants (Kugel's [1986] observation about biblical criticism is thus even truer of Indology). Unsurprisingly, they found "evidence" of similar phenomena in Indian texts as they claimed existed in Judaism and Catholicism: mendacious priests, textual corruption and spiritual decline, ceremonialism, meaningless ritual, and an aberrant and sophistic legalism (Weber 1850 and 1868; Holtzmann Sr. 1854; Holtzmann Jr. 1892; Garbe 1894; Oldenberg 1886 and 1915).

Race and Nationalism in the Study of Religion

More problematically, once these discoveries were advanced as objective facts under the name of "criticism," they fused with a nascent racial discourse. Indologists such as August W. Schlegel, the author of the "biracial theory" of Indian history, and Christian Lassen, the originator of the term "Semite," provided decisive inputs (Arvidsson 2006; Benes 2006; Paulin 2016; Adluri and Bagchee 2018a; Bagchee 2019).⁸ The "primary facts," such as they were, were not only

freedom that the German spirit has achieved." Philosophy as "the science of science [*Wissenschaft der Wissenschaft*]," "the consciousness and the living spirit of the same," "can only move sufficiently freely and form [itself] in a manner proper to [itself]" within the German language as its native element.

⁸ Benes (2008: 202–203) presents a useful summary: "In an article 'On the Origin of the Hindous' (1834), August Wilhelm Schlegel proposed that the Indian 'nation' was a compilation of two 'distinct races' (races differentes). Indigenous Indians had been 'black savages'; they were badly armed and lived 'in vast primitive forests.' Those Indians with ties to Indo-European speakers were members of 'the white race' and had introduced the natives to the 'first rudiments of civilization.' The relocation of the Aryan homeland outside of India enabled this distinction. Christian Lassen's *Indian Antiquities* (1847) expanded this two-race theory of India with a more detailed study of the 'original ethnographic conditions of India.' The 'sharp contrast in the physical appearance of the two races' derived from the fact that 'old inhabitants distinct from the Aryans' once inhabited the continent. These natives had a 'very black skin color with curly almost wooly hair and their own non-Sanskrit language.' They belonged to what Lassen termed 'the black Asian race,' a 'raw, wild,' and 'uncivilized stock.' Since the Aryan invasions, this 'black race' had numbered among the 'defeated races,' like 'the Australian Negroes ... and the red men of America.' Aryan Indians, by contrast, were 'a more lightly colored people' with a 'physiognomy different from the neighbors.' Their 'corporeal structure and facial expressions' proved them members of the 'Caucasian race.' According to Lassen, the Aryans represented 'the more perfectly organized, entrepreneurial and creative nation.' They always proved to be 'the dominant, victorious race,' successfully driving away the 'weaker, yielding' natives. Lassen defined the cultural and spiritual proclivities of Aryans in relation to speakers of Semitic tongues. In his view, Aryans and Semites were members of the same race; they shared a 'higher capacity for self-reliant cultivation' and had lived in close proximity in antiquity. Yet Lassen insisted that language revealed an 'original spiritual gift' that Aryans only shared with other members of the language family. A 'genius instilled at creation' had endowed them with 'higher provisions from which sprouted everything great they accomplished.' This meant for Lassen that Aryans had 'surpassed all others' in the discovery of the practical arts, in instituting laws, civil

naturalized; they are also biologized, that is, they were rendered expressions of genetic incapacities or predispositions. The latter were, in turn, explained in terms of the rising proportion of “foreign,” “aboriginal,” or “non-Aryan” blood among “invading Aryans” (Lassen 1847; Oldenberg 1881 and 1886; Garbe 1889; Frauwallner 1939, 1944, and 1959). The core explanatory principles of Indology thereby acquired a density that made the encoding narrative harder to perceive.

Protestant anti-Judaic prejudices, German nationalism, nineteenth-century *Wissenschaftsideologie*, Aryan ideology, anti-Semitism, and a vulgar racism thus fused together in German Indology (Pollock 1993; Benes 2008; McGetchin 2009; Adluri 2011; Adluri and Bagchee 2014), making it the perfect discipline to examine if we wish to understand the intellectual-historical contexts and the ideological embeddedness of the contemporary study of South Asian religious traditions. The discipline’s reliance on a small number of racially and ideologically motivated individuals such as Christian Lassen, Richard Garbe, Hermann Oldenberg, Paul Hacker, and Erich Frauwallner made it possible to unravel these connections (Adluri and Bagchee 2020a).⁹ However, it also threatened scholars seeking to protect the privileges accruing from an institutional hegemony (Stuchlik 2009; Steinkellner 2009; Slaje 2010; Stuchlik 2011; Hanneder 2001 and 2012).

The RISA Episode: Paul Hacker’s Nazism

The recent controversy over Paul Hacker’s Nazism highlights the problems with the field.¹⁰ What is opposed to mentioning Paul Hacker’s Nazi affiliations—he was a member of both the

society, and the state, and in perfecting the fine arts and sciences. ‘In their ceaseless activity,’ he concluded, the Aryans ‘envelop the external world and the realm of the spirit; their aspiration is to dominate the entire globe.’”

⁹ A search of Proquest Dissertation & Theses brought up 122 entries that cite Paul Hacker (some of these may be false positives). How many of them base their argument on Hacker’s analyses and how many of them will hold up to a critical examination are separate questions. A corresponding database of German dissertations is not available, but the following works apply Hacker’s “text-historical” method: Tripathi 1968; Gail 1969 and 1977; Rüping 1970 and 1977; Brinkhaus 1978; Bock 1984 and 1987; Laine 1989; and Mertens 1998.

¹⁰ See Zydenbos (2020a): “We see a pattern evolve here: riding on Sheldon Pollock’s already debunked Nazi Indology bandwagon, you falsely and/or irrelevantly label senior scholars in Germany ‘Nazis’ and kick up a scandal; and when someone justly criticizes you, you play the victim and shout ‘censorship’ and what not, as Dr. Adluri’s pupil and partner Dr. Bagchee has done (as reported by Dr. Steiner). Publicity for your supposedly just cause in certain circles is 100% guaranteed. Easy and cheap success.

Dr. Adluri’s own prompt demonstration of how this ploy of irrelevance and playing the victim works:

Vishwa Adluri wrote (15.04.2020):

‘The list moderators need to immediately step in and issue a statement that RISA will not permit harassment of scholars who mention someone’s Nazi affiliation nor will they support taking the oppressor’s perspective over the victims’. We are talking about 6 million dead here!’

(The irrelevance:) ‘We are talking about [...]’ No, we are not talking about that. We are talking about the work of a scholar on Indian religion. Which Indologist through his academic work (including this alleged monster Hacker: after WW2!) is responsible for millions of dead? (By the way, the number of dead in WW2 in the Soviet Union alone was already a few times 6 million. But Hollywood never mentions that, so Dr. Adluri doesn’t either.)

NSDAP and its paramilitary terrorist wing, the SA (Adluri and Bagchee 2020b)—is not its “irrelevance” to his work,¹¹ as though historians have never cited details (Foucault 1977), but precisely its relevance to the position of authority contemporary Indologists claim (Franco 2016;

(The feigned victimhood:) ‘will not permit harassment of scholars [...]’ This is cowardly bunkum. Justified, correct criticism is not ‘harassment’. His protégé Dr. Bagchee is not a victim.

I earnestly request the persons who are in charge of RISA-L to consider amending the list rules. It is deeply unethical to misuse this academic forum for scandal mongering that does not serve the advancement of knowledge about Religion In South Asia, only to seek the role of a victim, in pursuit of cheap personal publicity profits. If anyone wishes to do Hollywood Indology, in Raiders of the Lost Ark style, then that person should take it elsewhere. Such deliberately offensive behaviour should not only be flagged, but persons who repeatedly behave thus should be barred entirely from this academic forum.”

¹¹ Since these revelations have been responsible for a certain amount of controversy (Ruppel 2020) we reproduce the clarification of Hacker’s Nazism (the images are not included). Scholars are free to judge whether their views are fairly represented.

“On April 13, 2020, I posted a message to the Religion in South Asia (RISA) Section of the American Academy of Religion (AAR) in which I referred to Paul Hacker (former Professor of Indology at the University of Münster) as ‘Nazi Indologist Paul Hacker.’ Aleksandar Uskokov (Sanskrit lector, South Asian Studies Council, Yale University) promptly called for me to be ‘red carded’ on the grounds that ‘labeling him [Hacker] “Nazi” is just obnoxious name calling.’ Antonia Ruppel (Lektorin in Sanskrit, Institut für Indologie und Tibetologie, Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München) immediately ‘seconded’ the call. In order to clarify that my reference was intended merely as a statement of historical fact, I hurriedly uploaded the file containing Hacker’s Nazi documentation to: https://www.academia.edu/42725519/Paul_Hacker_Nazi_Dossier. Since I had to respond immediately to Uskokov’s unexpected attack, I didn’t have the time to separate out materials. *I have since done so*. The materials here now relate only to Paul Hacker. For the Thieme materials see here: https://www.academia.edu/42749714/Paul_Thieme. For those who might not know what they are looking at, I append the following explanation. The Hacker materials consist of three parts:

1. *NSDAP Gaukartei (NSDAP District Membership Card)*: Membership records for the NSDAP, consisting of a central and a district card (Zentralkartei and Gaukartei), were maintained in Munich. Fortunately, they escaped the wholesale destruction planned for them at the end of the War (however, it is estimated that only ca. 80% of them survived). Hacker’s Gaukartei lists his name, date and place of birth, and current address. His party membership number is 4612687 and date of admission is May 1, 1937 (these details are confirmed in his personal questionnaire; see the next point). The handwritten entry next to “Aufnahme beantragt am,” giving the date of application as 20.6.1937 is possibly an error.

2. *Fragebogen für Parteimitglieder (Questionnaire for Party Members)*: This was a questionnaire all party members had to fill out for a party statistical survey (parteistatistische Erhebung) conducted in 1939. Besides submitting personal information, party members had to list their rank and cooperation with the party and its sub-organizations. The handwriting is *almost certainly Paul Hacker’s own*. He lists the date of his joining as May 1, 1937 and his membership number as 4612687. Under sub-organizations he lists the SA (Sturmabteilung) and the NS-Volkswohlfahrt (aka NSV, the National-Socialist People’s Welfare organization). No political functions are listed. The questionnaire is signed.

3. *SA Nachrichtenschein (Certification from the News Division of the Sturmabteilung [Nachrichten-SA])*: The Sturmabteilung (lit., “Assault Division”), aka stormtroopers or brown shirts, was a paramilitary terrorist organization known for voter intimidation, extortion, political assassination, and Jewish pogroms. It played a key role in the NSDAP’s rise to power, but membership in the party was not identical with SA membership. Hacker personally attests to his membership (see previous point, no date is given); this record provides additional information on his role and status: Sturmman (a rank equivalent to Gefreiter) deputed to the Marine 77 (probably a reference to the marine division of the SA, the so-called Marine-SA).

I wish to emphasize once again that the evidence that Paul Hacker was a Nazi is so clear-cut that it would be irresponsible of scholars not to acknowledge it. Its use is *not* rhetorical. By contrast, where my research reveals the contrary (see the dossier for Paul Thieme), I am equally scrupulous in reporting it.”

see, in response, Adluri and Bagchee 2016b, 2019a, 2019b, 2019c, and 2019d). By studying Indology historically, we followed the directive of the American Academy of Religion (AAR Mission and Values [n.d.]; see also AAR 2018): we undertook a critical examination.

The principle that “in this work, we attend to the social history of ideas as well as to the social locations of those who produce them” (AAR 2018) ought not to be controversial. The social and biographic journey of the person named “Paul Hacker” is essential to understanding his evolution as an individual, thinker, and scholar (Bagchee and Adluri 2014). It is also essential to providing a nuanced, context-sensitive understanding of his work by placing it within its temporal and historical horizon.¹² Finally, the explicitly anti-Judaic framing of core elements of Luther’s theology (Goshen-Gottstein 2018); the institutionalized discrimination against Jews in the German university (Richarz 1974); the anti-Judaism, both latent and manifest, of German Indology (Adluri and Bagchee 2017); academia’s role in creating anti-Semitism (Pallade 2009); and the convergence of these strands of German intellectual history in the Holocaust (Goldhagen 1996; Ericksen and Heschel 1999) make it imperative that we not only acknowledge scholars’ Nazism but also that we discuss its potential influence on the reception of their work (of which the latest episode on RISA-List provides a striking example).¹³

¹² The AAR itself (AAR 2016a and 2016b) explicitly provides for protection of scholars’ freedom of inquiry: “To honor the highest ideals of intellectual inquiry and the institutional contexts that support them, researchers should defend academic freedom” and “Researchers have the right to follow lines of inquiry where they lead. Criticism should not impede scholarship, and our shared commitment to free inquiry means that scholars must be free from intimidation and free to form conclusions on the basis of shared scholarly norms, as understood by qualified peers. Further, AAR members should be cautious in condemning unwanted speech or writing on the grounds that it violates standards of ‘civility,’ since sometimes that argument might allow unfair treatment and endanger free inquiry.” See also AAR (2018): “Scholars have a professional obligation to treat others honestly, fairly, and with dignity. They also have a particular obligation to maintain integrity and accountability in all their professional interactions and diligently avoid any behavior or conduct that could exploit power or status differences (such as those between faculty and students, senior and junior colleagues, or tenure-track/tenured and contingent faculty)”; “Supportive and contested interpretations, whether they result in full or partial agreement, or in disagreement, deepen and enrich our understanding by generating new questions, new arguments, and new lines of investigation. Free inquiry fosters original and valuable insights through vigorous and civil debate in a spirit of critical scrutiny. The AAR recognizes that free inquiry must be protected, especially for those who are at risk due to their faculty status”; and “Scholarly argumentation and exchange often require that we both acknowledge our deep academic differences and engage in various forms of critical self-reflection. That scholars respect and welcome divergent points of view, even as they subject those views to critical scrutiny.”

¹³ See Ruppel, et al. (2020): “Dear RISA-L, We, the undersigned, after receiving equivocating reactions from the RISA-L administrators, regrettably feel forced to make the following public statement in the wake of recent unacceptable abuse of this forum. We were informed by one of the administrators that RISA-L rules, as they stand at present, do not make the current situation easy for the steering committee to decide about punitive actions against list members, including expulsion (although we know that such expulsions have been carried out in the past, e.g., November 2011, in a less vicious case). We consider free speech to be an important precondition for scholarly work, but not just any speech qualifies as acceptable, particularly in an academic setting (e.g., slander, or deliberate nonsense). Yet Dr. Adluri, in support of his pupil Dr. Bagchee, in effect says that any colleague who takes the scholarly writings of Paul Hacker seriously and defends his scholarly achievements is a defender of the perpetrators of the

Some scholars worry that attending to Hacker's social context may overshadow his scholarship (in highly colorful language in Zydenbos 2020b).¹⁴ This argument is a non sequitur. Anyone wishing to demonstrate the value of Hacker's ideas may do so. These scholars commit the fallacy they accuse others of committing, "a 'transfer of crime,' from membership to his scholarship" (Uskokov 2020b). If these scholars were so confident of Hacker's scholarship, they would not object to historical complexity. They, not the critics, are guilty of the associative fallacy (explicitly in Steiner 2020c). Making unsubstantiated claims of "ad personam" attacks (Zydenbos 2020b; Ferreira-Jardim 2020; see also Uskokov 2020a) enables them to circumvent substantive criticisms of the method and its underlying episteme (on which strategy, see Strenski 2012). Moreover, how far do we go in ruling well-established historical facts inadmissible? Historical research is a hallmark of the contemporary study of religion, which includes reflecting on our own activity as scholars of religion (Sutcliffe 2008; Taves 2011).¹⁵ Cardinal Ratzinger has called

Shoah. This is not only grotesque for more than one reason, but goes much further: it amounts to a wholesale slandering of those colleagues, plain and simple.

We also believe that it is in the interest of RISA-L members to know that what members say on-list evidently may be quoted (with their name and, for some reason, their institutional affiliation) elsewhere by Dr. Bagchee in political fora, in a distorting, incriminating and agitational manner. Granted that reportedly there are as yet no clear rules for cancelling the list membership of abusers, to remain silent, without as much as an expression of disapproval of such uncollegial behaviour, here means to condone. The steering committee must seriously consider whether this is a signal which it wishes to send out.

Therefore we expect the RISA-L steering committee, or the RISA-L administrators as their representatives, to at least post a condemnation of the methods and statements of Drs. Adluri and Bagchee. Any failure to do so will reflect badly on the ethical standards of the committee, of the administrators, and of this forum.

Antonia Ruppel (LMU Munich)

Patricia Sauthoff (University of Alberta)

Roland Steiner (Philipps Universität Marburg)

Aleksandar Uskokov (Yale University)

Robert Zydenbos (LMU Munich)"

¹⁴ What is it that these scholars are really defending? It cannot be the value of Hacker's work: no scholar addressed it. Neither did anyone offer a defense of any portion of it. Zydenbos's and Steiner's defense was also not, "Paul Hacker was not a Nazi, as the following documents prove." Rather, the specific principle they defended was the inviolability of German scholars *to criticism as such*. Their objection was not that the criticism of Hacker was mistaken: it was that criticism of Hacker was *not permitted*. In defense of this principle, Indologists are willing to go to any length. They will abuse their institutional affiliation (Zydenbos 2018 and 2019). They will adopt a different set of moral standards in regards to "senior scholars in Germany" (Zydenbos 2020a) than hold for ordinary mortals ("maybe Hacker was a really nasty fellow, a drug addict, rapist and child molester, and regularly beat up his mother; but all such matters of speculation are thoroughly irrelevant if his scholarly work helps us further"; Zydenbos 2020b). They will even propagate a narrative of reverse racism towards Germans or, more generally, "white" Europeans ("Who the real racists are is quite clear. (I am not aware that 'whites' have protested against Indian research into Western cultures.); Zydenbos 2016; see also Zydenbos 2020c: "ethnocentric smear campaign" and Zydenbos 2020d: "typically, she [Camille Paglia] too is beaten with the 'Nazi-Keule' [German for 'Nazi bludgeon'], like Uskokov and Ruppel"). And see also the AAR's statements on non-discrimination and on white nationalism (AAR 2008 and 2019).

¹⁵ Lincoln (2005: 8–10) acknowledges the destabilizing potential of historical inquiry:

"2. The relation between the two nouns [that is, history and religion] is also tense, as becomes clear if one takes the trouble to specify their meaning. Religion, I submit, is that discourse whose defining characteristic is its desire to speak of things eternal and transcendent with an authority equally transcendent and eternal. History, in the

for “a criticism of criticism ... a self-criticism of historical exegesis” (Ratzinger 2008: 100).¹⁶ The American Academy of Religion explicitly recognizes that “responsible scholarship might be

sharpest possible contrast, is that discourse which speaks of things temporal and terrestrial in a human and fallible voice, while staking its claim to authority on rigorous critical practice.

3. History of religions is thus a discourse that resists and reverses the orientation of that discourse with which it concerns itself. To practice history of religions in a fashion consistent with the discipline’s claim of title is to insist on discussing the temporal, contextual, situated, interested, human, and material dimensions of those discourses, practices, and institutions that characteristically represent themselves as eternal, transcendent, spiritual, and divine.”

But Lincoln also recognizes the inescapability of applying a historical perspective to one’s own academic tradition(s):

“9. Critical inquiry need assume neither cynicism nor dissimulation to justify probing beneath the surface, and ought to probe scholarly discourse and practice as much as any other.

10. Understanding the system of ideology that operates in one’s own society is made difficult by two factors: (a) one’s consciousness of oneself as a product of that system, and (b) the system’s very success renders its operations invisible, since one is consistently immersed in and bombarded by its products that one comes to mistake them (and the apparatus through which they are produced and disseminated) for nothing other than ‘nature.’ ...

13. When one permits those whom one studies to define the terms in which they will be understood, suspends one’s interest in the temporal and contingent, or fails to distinguish between ‘truths,’ ‘truth claims,’ and ‘regimes of truth,’ one has ceased to function as historian or scholar. In that moment, a variety of roles are available: some perfectly respectable (amanuensis, collector, friend and advocate), and some less appealing (cheerleader, voyeur, retailer of imported goods). None, however, should be confused with scholarship.”

¹⁶ Hacker died before Ratzinger became Pope Benedict XVI, but Ratzinger’s elevation would have created a severe hermeneutic problem for him. On one hand, he accused him of introducing Protestant ideas into the Church (Hacker 2007 [Ratz.]). “Ratzinger’s reflections are, to a great extent, Protestantizing, specifically in the sense of neo-Protestantism” (15). “Per Ratzinger’s definition the entry into ‘the history that begins with Christ’ is successful when it occurs ‘in the belief that this is that salvific history’” but “this is precisely the heresy of the original Lutheranism” (16). “How should this program, as monstrous within the Church as it is genuinely Protestant, be realized?” (17). Ratzinger’s approach to scripture leads to “subjective arbitrariness” and the introduction of “fashionable philosophies” (22). Hacker accuses Ratzinger of “favoring the Protestants quite uncritically; thereby several unproven and un-Catholic fantasies enter his presentation” (22–23). “Ratzinger places the dogma in twofold manner ‘reductively’ and ‘critically’ in ‘history’”; his understanding “is simply an irreligious product of the dialogism of a personalistic pseudophilosophy” (24). “Ratzinger’s students are not trained as Catholics. Anyone who has heard young people who have attended his [Ratzinger’s] lectures preach gains an impression of the disastrous effects of his Protestantizing idiosyncracies, which, naturally, have become even cruder among his students.... It becomes luridly clear that Ratzinger’s Protestantizing historicism poses a monstrous threat to the Church” (27). Hacker accuses Ratzinger of a “historical (or existentialist) dissolution of the dogma... Ratzinger has devastated the Church’s doctrinal order... for all his pious words his view is in fact materialistic; here too he is under Protestant influence. Philosophically, his ideas are completely untenable... Theologically, Ratzinger’s hypotheses imply consequences that are irreconcilable with the dogma in multiple respects” (27–28). On the other, Hacker recognized the sole authority of the Pope. Not only was “obedience owed to the Holy Father” and “vis-à-vis the Apostolic Throne” (Hacker 1973 [Zur Kritik]: 186–87); “it has [also] never happened that a saint has established another church alongside the existing Catholic Church” (Hacker 1978b [In der K.]: 18). Against schismatics, he argued that “even if, today, we must suffer in the Church because of the Church... this is suffering for the Church, in union with the suffering of our Lord.” “Our rejection of progressivism” in the Church “gives us the right... to a (factual!) criticism ... but never to establish a ‘true’ church alongside the temples of worship of the existing Catholic Church” (Hacker 1978d [Keine K.]: 7). This hermeneutic problem also confronts all those who cite Hacker as a basis for interreligious dialogue. It is one thing for Hacker to accuse dissenters of being “apostates” (Hacker 1975c [Tisch. II]: 83) and “heretics” (Hacker 1977f [Meißbuch]: 96–97); and of “heresy” (Hacker 1978i [Verschw.]: 13–14) and “the destruction of the Church” (Hacker 1977b [Küng]:

conducted “both from within and outside communities of belief and practice” (AAR 2016a). Ought we now defer to a few individuals who wish to propagate a sanitized view of German history (Katz 1993; Rubenstein 2001; Rosenbaum 2009)?

Paul Hacker and the Failure of the Text-Historical Method

If biblical studies have manifested a “Bible-and-spade approach to biblical history” (Stavrakopoulou 2016: 26), in Indology, precious little spadework was accomplished. The text-historical method did not deliver reliable, intersubjectively valid results. The “histories” of concepts drawn up were a priori. Scholars erred in their dating of texts as basic as the Mahābhārata. Hacker, after drawing up an involved chart of the “relationships of dependency” between different versions of the Prahāda myth, concedes that “the schema is intended to make definite claims only about the Prahāda textual passages analyzed in this treatise, not about the works as a whole” (Hacker 1959b [Prahāda II]: 224). But what good is a method whose results apply solely to the excerpts the scholar has made and whose results only demonstrate that those excerpts can be brought into the order he proposes?¹⁷ Compared with the methodological sophistication attained in biblical history (Williamson 2007), Hacker’s faith in identifying internal textual developments appears hopelessly naïve. With Hacker, we are not even in the realm of *realia* (for the problems with which, see Adluri and Bagchee 2018c on Witzel 1974, 1986, 2004, 2013, and 2014). His method is purely text-immanent, consisting of drawing up fictive “textual histories” in the belief that these reflect, and hence *validate*, the “developmental history” of religion he wishes to see.¹⁸

13). Other scholars, however, must clarify where they stand on matters of doctrine—with Paul Hacker or the Roman Church.

¹⁷ The underlying methodology of this specious chart is explained in Hacker (1959a [Prahāda I]: 528–29): “From such conclusions, following simple norms of commonsense probabilities for the most part, we can construct a scheme of earlier and later [texts]. This scheme is then used, vice versa, as a means to gain knowledge of the historical process, for the knowledge of the development of ideas. [We thus gain] a construct of knowledge in which the presentation of the historical development and the scheme of earlier and later [texts] mutually reinforce each other.” The inherent circularity of this process does not strike Hacker. Neither does the fact that it cannot get underway without “the accessory of a scaffold of conceivabilities [*Denkbarkeiten*].”

¹⁸ Pasto makes the same argument with characteristic elegance in his dissertation (Pasto 1999: 1): “The basic argument of this work is straightforward: Jewish history, as represented in western Biblical scholarship, is a Christian invention. Or rather, it is what I will call a Christian sacralizing history. I will explain what I mean by the term “Christian” below. By “sacralizing history” I mean any representation of the past that serves as the foundational narrative for identity in the present. By Christian sacralizing history I mean a history that serves as the foundational narrative for Christians in the present. Thus, I argue that what is taught as Jewish history in most western university courses, is in fact a Christian past that serves the needs of a Christian present. I presume of course, and I will argue throughout this work, that Christians possess the power to represent the Jewish past as Christian sacralizing history. This Christian sacralizing history has a number of distinctive features, among which is the assertion of a rupture that separates and contrasts, respectively, an Abrahamic covenant with a Mosaic Law, Hebrews with Jews, and ancient Israel with later Judaism. The point of rupture is variously postulated as the Babylonian Exile, the Hellenistic period, or the time of Jesus, depending on the views of the particular writer.

The *objective* failure of text-historicism to generate scientific results urgently necessitates a reevaluation of the method. We have elsewhere highlighted its multiple and *inherent* problems (Adluri and Bagchee 2014; 2016a; 2018c): it is subjective; it lacks criteria; it relies upon institutionally generated consensus; and it commits the historical fallacies of reference, availability, and patronization (Spoerhase and King 2009).¹⁹ We have shown that, in the case of the Bhagavadgītā, the results attained using this method did not survive examination in a single case (see Table 2; reproduced from Adluri and Bagchee 2020a: 104). If they did, this was only coincidental, that is, the results were correct *in spite of* the method. Results attained through error, chance, or prejudice, however, are not *scientific* results. Hacker himself recognized that a “*merely external, more or less mechanical textual criticism*” would not yield the apologetic results he sought and hence advocated “*inner criteria of an intellectual-historical nature*” (Hacker 1961c [Zur Meth.]: 488; Hacker’s italics). But even if these criteria are “internal” (to the text? To the scholar’s imagination? To his agenda?), they must be open to debate. Otherwise they become a matter of *faith*—their use restricted to a *community of religious believers*.

Source	“Critical” criterion	Verses retained (of 700)
Holtzmann Jr. (1893)	Only the pantheistic elements are original	164
Garbe (1905)	Only the theistic elements are original	528
Schrader (1910)	The original Bhagavadgītā, as part of the pre-Viṣṇuite Mahābhārata, ends with 2.38	85
Garbe (1914)	Garbe’s second attempt incorporates Winternitz’s suggestions	353
Jacobi (1918)	Only the epic elements are original	71
Oldenberg (1919)	The key to the poem is in 2.39; everything thereafter belongs to the “didactic poem”	85 or 82
Charpentier (1930)	Amalgam of other scholars’ ideas about the “original”	66
Otto (1934)	Only elements relating to Arjuna’s “situation” are original; the Bhagavadgītā is an instance of the	139

In each case, however, the rupture is the point at which the Abrahamic-Hebraic-Israel ends, and the Mosaic-Jewish-Judaism begins.”

¹⁹ These fallacies are especially apparent in Mertens 1998, a work that explicitly acknowledges its debt to Hacker’s “text-historical” method (for scholars without access to the German, the key passages are translated in Adluri and Bagchee 2018b). Whereas Hacker’s text-historical dissections at least served some purpose, since they worked in conjunction with his evangelism (for statements of which see Hacker 1958b [Erforsch.], 1967–68 [Indol.], 1980b [Kath. Chr. I], 1980c [Kath. Chr. II], and 2012 [Greuel]), Merten’s unsubstantiated claims about the texts under discussion neither serve historical knowledge nor contribute to the history of ideas (Schuyler 1932; Skinner 1969).

	numinous experience of the <i>mysterium tremendum</i> found in Luther's "On the Bondage of the Will"	
Hauer (1937)	The <i>Bhagavadgītā</i> is a "metaphysics of battle and action" that combines "the two life poles of the Indo-Germanic nature"	140
Von Simson (1969)	It is a "secondary interpolation" following a first interpolation from 6.16.21 to 6.20.22 and 6.42.1	-991
Ježić (1986)	Attempt to validate German scholars' ideas of the <i>Bhagavadgītā</i> : "The poetic parts of the <i>Gītā</i> are relatively more ancient than the didactic parts attached to them"	60

Table 2. Text-Historical Reconstructions of the "Original" *Bhagavadgītā*

The one place Hacker clarifies what he means by "critical" (Hacker 1967a [Interp.]: 262), he identifies the method's "critical function" (cp. also, "critical discrimination") with "leading the kernels of truth [in heathen texts] into the freeing relationship [with Christianity], in which alone they can become fruitful." *But to call this aim "critical" is to abandon all claims of secular rationality.* Hacker's remark, "such theories are not really theology, but intellectual-historical hypotheses. The scholars had hardly an inner relationship to what they thought up" (Hacker 1975b [Tischg. I]: 13; see also Hacker 1977c [Meßopfer]: 8-9: "With the self-certitude peculiar to scholars of their era, they presented the products of their 'creative' fantasy as facts"), encapsulates Hacker's application of the text-historical method.

Rather than contributing to our understanding of the texts, the "underhanded theology" (Nietzsche 2005: 9) of the "text-historical method" has masked Hacker's ignorance of textual criticism. Hacker never trained as a critic; he never edited a text; and he never revealed the slightest knowledge of textual criticism. Hacker (1965d [phil. Begriff.]), a bombastic "reflection on method," contains inanities such as "certain perspectives, perceptual capacities, and criteria are the preconditions of finding and noticing" (295). Scholars cannot cite a single editorial contribution of Hacker's—quite logically, since Hacker's purpose was fundamentally the opposite of an editor's, namely, to make texts accessible in readable versions.²⁰ Neither Bernhard Breloer, the Nazi Indologist with whom Hacker studied in Berlin, nor Kirfel, with whom he continued his studies in Bonn (Rüping 1981), were editors. The one critical edition Kirfel was supposed to have prepared never appeared (Birwé 1977). Hacker's training with Kirfel, such as it was (Rüping 1981; Schmithausen 1981), consisted in his embrace of the latter's ideas of "text-

²⁰ Sullivan's (2016: 11) judgment is succinct: "The image of textual dissection (or perhaps vivisection would be a better term) suggests something further about the method described so clearly by the well-named Professor Hacker. The text having been rendered into disconnected pieces, the idea of interpreting its meaning seemingly lost in the process, one now looks outside the text for correspondences that might facilitate understanding of the formerly whole text."

historical” reconstruction (Kirfel 1927 and 1967; Hacker 1961c [Zur Meth.]). But neither Kirfel’s reconstruction of an alleged “Ur-Purāṇa” nor Hacker’s extension of his ideas nor Hacker’s students’ application of this made-up method have advanced the theory or the practice of editing texts.²¹

The Text-Historical Method as “Underhanded Theology”

Hacker’s application of the text-historical method was not innocent. He clearly grasped the consequences of applying a decompositional analytic to the canon. “A bare return to Holy Writ is never possible; the interpretation of scripture always presupposes a hermeneutic canon. If one rejects the authentic canon of the Church—that is, the definitions of the Church, its proper proclamation of doctrine, its recommended Doctors of the Church—one inexorably falls under the influence of a modern, heretical principle of interpretation (and, in a flash, ‘the man of today’ becomes the measure for what is supposed to be valid in the Church...). The hermeneutic canon of the Church is authentic because it is directed by the same Holy Spirit that inspired the Holy Writ” (Hacker 2007 [Ratz.]: 23–24).

Hacker fought fiercely against the principles of “the historical” (Hacker 1979a [Protestant. I]: 3), “religious [read: textual] surgery” (Hacker 1975b [Tischg. I]: 19), “new interpretations” (Hacker 1975c [Tischg. II]: 83), and “liberal scholarship” (Hacker 1975b [Tischg. I]: 15 and 1975c [Tischg. II]: 84) in regards to Catholicism. He rejected both the “liberal-historicizing imagination” (Hacker 1975b [Tischg. I]: 20) and “Protestantizing historicism” (Hacker 2007 [Ratz.]: 27) and viewed the acceptance of “the views of Protestant scholars as ‘science’” (Hacker 1975b [Tischg. I]: 13) skeptically. In Hacker (1977e [Trinit.]: 117), he argued that theologians had been corrupted by the idea that we need to “progress ‘scientifically’ [*wissenschaftlich*]” beyond the decisions of the Church. “There is nothing more to discuss in a science-y manner [*wissenschafteln*].”²²

²¹ Compare Mertens’s (1998) explanation of the upshot of her “text-historical” investigations: “The following graphic is intended to portray the relationships of dependency that exist between the analyzed versions of the mythologeme of exclusion from sacrifice or of the Dakṣa myth (the assertions hold only for the textual passages analyzed and not for the work as a whole!)” (386). But what is the point of this work, if it does not permit any statements about the relationships of the works to each other, much less relate them to objective historical facts? The various tables of “the relationships of dependency” drawn up by different scholars (Hacker 1959b; Bock 1984) are incommensurable. They cannot validate each other. Neither do they offer a basis for cumulative results, since no two scholars, even when they are working with the same set of texts, are ever working on the same “mythemes.” All these tables reveal is the utter lack of originality among Indologists: other than replacing *über* with *für* and adding an exclamation, Mertens *copies the text verbatim* from Hacker 1959b. Her introductory sentence replaces *nachstehende* with *folgende* and inserts a relative clause before the infinitive, but is likewise a facsimile of Hacker’s. Her second, third, seventh, eighth, and tenth sentences are largely copied from Bock, whereas her third, ninth, and sixteenth sentences are largely copied from Hacker (from whom Bock himself borrows).

²² These inconcinnities (see, additionally, Hacker 1958b [Erforsch.] and 1962 [Das heut. Indien]) cannot be dismissed by claiming that in regards to Indian texts Hacker is dealing with a “pagan” religion. This is so not because it will expose Hacker’s intellectual dishonesty but because it will expose that the practice of asserting the merely provisional validity of Hinduism pending its historical evaluation and reuse, a hermeneutic strategy Hacker

Indologists have struggled with this aspect of Hacker's legacy (Schmithausen 1978, 1981, and 1995; Halbfass 1995b), and rightly so. The supersessionist narrative of Hinduism's religious degeneracy has been the tacit presupposition of all Hacker's work and that of his collaborators. Without it, neither could the "text-historical" data be collected, nor would there be agreement among scholars about what counts as valid results, nor would there be any purpose to their activity. To acknowledge this aspect, however, would have amounted to surrendering the claim of "scientificity" (Hacker 1960b [Purāṇen] and 1961c [Zur Meth.]; see also Schmithausen 1978).²³ This is the real reason Indologists are reluctant to answer the question of what kind of knowledge they provide and for whom. It immediately reveals that they have an interest in the knowledge or, rather, it places them on the horns of a dilemma: if the knowledge is disinterested, it is banal; if it is not disinterested, then it is apologetic.²⁴ The easiest response for them has, for the longest time, been to say, "we provide knowledge, period."

Pappas (1989: 257) describes the problems arising from "an excess of charity." "In interpretive terms, an excess of charity means the dissolution of differences between readers and

explicitly affirmed (Hacker 1978c [Progressismus], 1978g [Modernismus], and 1980d [Church in India]), is the latest iteration of Christian apologetics (explicitly so in Hacker 1967a [Interp.]).

²³ German Indologists' insistence that the text-historical method is the sole *scientific* method for studying Indian texts (Stietencron 1996; Hanneder 2001; Malinar 2007; Hahn 2010) contrasts with Hacker's own view. Despite occasional statements about the need for "philological-historical Indian research" or "philological-historical Indian studies" (Hacker 1958b [Erforsch.]: 329 and 330; see also Hacker 1965c [Rev. of Potter]), Hacker was ambivalent about applying scientific, historicist methodology to religion. Hacker (1977e [Trinit.]: 109) refers to "propaganda disguised as history being inducted into the Church free of customs duty." In Hacker (1976a [Für viele v.]: 51) Hacker speaks disparagingly of "philologism."

²⁴ The deficient scientificity of the text-method is not simply due to its imprecise application, as though a future generation of scholars might produce better results. Neither is it a function of its inconsistent results, even though the latter are an important index of the method's failure. It arises from a problem that already bedeviled the Reformers—the difficulty of holding together the two elements of the *sensus literalis sive historicus*. "For one brief shining moment the Reformers held together both the *sensus historicus* and the *sensus literalis* because, while rejecting allegorical exegesis in the name of grammatical-historical exegesis, they affirmed that the true referent of the text is the self-revelation of God. Modern historical criticism, by contrast, by divorcing the sense of the text from its divine referent, deliver only the historical sense without the literal sense and thus has broken the line of continuity with the Reformation" (Capetz 2011: 472). In like manner, Hacker struggles to hold together two senses of "historical." On one hand, the historical meaning is supposed to be the grammatical-textual meaning that we can discover in the text—objectively, scientifically, and "text-historically." On the other, it is precisely that apologetic, supersessionist narrative Hacker wanted to develop,²⁴ and which his so-called method was supposed to reveal—again, objectively, scientifically, and with every pretense of undertaking a purely mechanical decomposition of the text into its constituent elements. Like the Reformers, Hacker had to ostensibly reject allegorical exegesis (the drawback of the native commentators) for "straight" grammatical-historical exegesis, whereas, in reality, his historical exegesis was *also* a kind of allegorical reading of the text—namely, one that indicated the incoherence of Hinduism: its non-organic nature (Hacker 1957 [Relig. Tol.], 1961a [Komm.], 1964 [Zur Gesch.], 1965b [Rev. of Renou], 1978a [Aspects], and 1980b [Kath. Chr. I]), its lack of true ethics (Hacker 1958a [Der Dharma-Begriff], 1961b [Schopenhauer], 1965a [Dharma], 1971 [Vivekananda], 1978a [Aspects]), its soteriological inadequacy (Hacker 1960a [Magie], 1967a [Interp.], 1967c [Rev. of Pannik.], 1978c [Progressismus], 1978g [Modernismus], and 1980d [Church in India]), and its ultimate supersession by Christianity (Hacker 1962 [Das heut. Indien], 1978g [Modernismus], 1980d [Church in India]).

writers, in which the former do the latter an imagined favor by making everything in the text agree with their own beliefs. This is a worry that repeatedly arises in the literature on charitable interpretation.... It becomes a virtue to see one's own thought in everything one reads, and clearly that does not make for acceptable interpretation. Interpretive practice normally tries to reach an understanding of the text that will be neither banal nor bizarre. Nothing is gained by saying either 'This means nothing at all' or 'This is exactly what I was saying'."

By contrast, Indologists, through an *excess of rancor*, achieved the opposite effect: they declared that the texts "mean nothing at all ... exactly as we were saying"! But this conclusion was only possible because they had reached advance agreement about what would be considered acceptable research. The institution itself mandated that scholarship must show that Indian texts were meaningless, composite, incoherent, or otherwise problematic (Hacker 1960b [Purāṇen] and 1961c [Zur Meth.]; Bakker 2019, citing Hacker, makes the same case). The basic assumption was that Indian texts were not self-evident and that native commentators were an unreliable guide to them. Above all, these texts were radically incomplete, needing a larger historical context for their interpretation and understanding. This context, of course, could only be the scholars' own, Protestant Christian context.

Paul Hacker and the "Hindu-Christian Dialogue"

Some have asked whether "Hacker's scholarly work betrays Nazi sympathies, or if his arguments could be shown to depend on Nazi ideology" (Roberts 2020; see also Steiner 2020a). We suggest they might usefully look at Hacker's political ideas. Even considered as a contribution to Christian evangelism—though we might ask what the value of evangelism based on bad science is; moreover, no one has yet shown that a single person was converted because of Hacker's text-historical claims—Hacker's Christianity is racist, anti-pluralist, anti-liberal, and anti-progressive (Hacker 1975b [Tischg. I], 1975c [Tischg. II], 1976a [Für viele v.], 2007 [Ratz.]). Rather than Christian love or Christian ethics, Hacker's writings evince a concern with forcing non-Westerners to acknowledge the cultural superiority of the West (Hacker 1962 [Das heut. Indien], 1978c [Progressismus], 1978g [Modernismus], 1980c [Kath. Chr. II], and 1980d [Church in India]).

Hacker never repudiated his Nazism after the war. Neither did he seek to foster interracial understanding (which might suggest contrition). He remained a problematic figure: self-righteous, isolated (Kehren 1979), at home only in a circle of like-minded fundamentalists, and at odds not only with the established churches, both Protestant and Catholic (Hacker 1975a [Seelenm.], 1975c [Tischg. II], 1977e [Trinit.]), but also with liberal currents in post-war Germany (Hacker 1975b [Tischg. I], 1975c [Tischg. II], 1977c [Meßopfer], 1977d [Skandal], 1978g [Modernismus], 2007 [Ratz.]). The rabidity of his attacks on Indian Christians (Hacker 1980d [Church in India] and 2012 [Greuel]) is matched only by the bile he displayed towards other Catholics, including Ratzinger. Hacker 1974a (Eiterb.) is typical: "In truth, the body of the Church today is covered by thousands upon thousands of pus boils. ... In all religious areas of life

... the body of the Church is full of malignant tumors. We must soberly contemplate the fact that the wrath of God may have decided to let the Church die out in Western Europe. The cause of death: the anthropocentric cancer of egotistical disobedience. For this defiant, concealed disobedience is in truth the ‘pus boil’” (277; the reference is to Isaiah 1:6).

Although born a Christian, Hacker’s rediscovery of Christianity occurred after the war when he encountered Indian thought.²⁵ Yet, his Christianity was unalloyed with humanism. He was as dismissive of Indian Christians such as Amalorpavadass (who felt their conversion made them Hacker’s equal) as he was of Hindus such as Radhakrishnan and Vivekananda (who thought their religion made them members of humanity). He could accept neither the self-assertion of newly emancipated Indians nor the awakened self-consciousness of Indian converts. The latter had no right to be in the Church, except in respectful deference to Western culture, thought, and values. Hacker fought their efforts for recognition within the Church, *even against, what could be argued, were the Church’s interests* (Schmalz 2006; Collins 2007). Indian Christians’ efforts at adaptation and indigenization met with his ire (Hacker 1977a [Adapt.], 1978c [Progressismus], and 1980d [Church in India]). In one place Hacker decries them as a “fatal Indianization” (Hacker 1980c [Kath. Chr. II]: 200).²⁶ These facts make it surprising that participants in the Society for Hindu-Christian Studies have chosen Hacker as a basis for the Hindu-Christian dialogue (Rambachan 2002; Locklin 2007 and 2015). He is, perhaps, not even a good representative of Christianity.²⁷

The State of Hacker Scholarship

²⁵ Schmithausen (1989: 4) notes, “After the *Vivarta*, work on Advaita philosophy initially took a backseat for more than a decade in Hacker’s research activity—not least because, as Hacker himself once expressed it, his religious search found no fulfillment in ‘the ice water of impersonal monism’ and he turned once again to Christianity.” Rüping (1981: 12) comments, “Since the turn away from Advaita-Vedānta, at the back of the studies from these years stands an ever-stronger turn towards Christian tradition.”

²⁶ It could be argued that what drew Hacker to Christianity was not its potential for interreligious dialogue—indeed, he was opposed to ecumenism (Hacker 1977h [Zur Protest.], 1979a [Protestant. I], and 1979b [Protestant. II])—but the selfhood it gave him. According to Kehren [1979: 114], this was the reason Hacker converted to Catholicism: “In the Lutheran Church, there is no going down on one’s knees, but he lusted for it.” In Hacker (1976b [Heil]), Hacker describes his understanding of Catholicism: “Man does not obtain salvation merely by seeking it and thinking about it, but only after he has performed the fundamental religious act of sinking down in prayer, [even as he is] borne aloft by the blessed abyss of the triune-yet-one Godhead, by its grace, [thus] surrendering himself: this is Catholic doctrine and this alone.” Regardless of whether they were Hindu, neo-Hindu, Indian, Indian Christian, Protestant, Catholic, Rahner or even the future Pope(!), all those who refused to participate in Hacker’s self-flagellating drama would inevitably be charged with “*Indifferentismus*” (Hacker 1980b [Kath. Chr. I]), “*Relativismus*,” or “*religiöse Gleichgültigkeit*” (religious apathy) (Hacker 1979a [Protestant. I]).

²⁷ Along with Gushee (2018), however, we might wonder what the value of Hacker’s evangelism is, since it is rooted in white supremacism, racism, and coercion (Hacker 1978c [Progressismus], 1978f [Missionsv.], 1978g [Modernismus], 1979c [Heidentum], 1980b [Kath. Chr. I], 1980c [Kath. Chr. II], and 1980d [Church in India]; and see Oster 1978, responding to Hacker’s call to limit donations to churches in India).

The current academic estimation of Hacker's scholarship is not the result of well-informed opinion.²⁸ Only a fraction of his publications has appeared in translation. The published work is itself but a small fraction of his literary estate—9350 documents in 67 cartons. Few scholars of religion in South Asia know of the existence of Hacker's theological writings or that they far exceed his Indological writings—*Theologisches I–VI* in cartons 35–43 compared with *Indologisches I–IV* in cartons 55–59. By contrast, the polemical and apologetic writings are hardly known even among German scholars outside of the fundamentalist circles Hacker addressed. Whereas we have discovered 48 contributions not acknowledged in his *Kleine Schriften* (Hacker 1978e),²⁹ additional sources Hacker wrote for such as *Anzeiger für die kath. Geistlichkeit*, *Die*

²⁸ Zydenbos (2020b) claims Hacker “has made lasting contributions to our field of studies.” An examination of his work, however, revealed *no special knowledge* of Hacker's writings (Zydenbos 1983, 1991, and 1997; all efforts to locate Zydenbos 1993, a 31-page pamphlet found in one copy alone in one library in Germany, failed). Zydenbos's dissertation (Zydenbos 1996) contains ten bibliographic entries for Hacker, but nine refer to articles in the *Kleine Schriften* (the tenth refers to the *Kleine Schriften* [Hacker 1978e] itself). The text contains a *single* reference to Hacker (“Disputed in Hacker 1964”; 23, n. 5). Hacker does not feature in the index. The term “Neo-Hindu” is indexed, but has only one entry. The relevant passage (“the use of English indicates ... a deviation from the glorified norm of *sanātana dharma* in its neo-Hindu form”; 283) does not credit Hacker. “Inclusivism” is indexed under “Hindu inclusivism,” but Hacker is not cited and the discussion does not explicate the concept. Hacker's methodological contributions are not mentioned. The dissertation's sole “method” is “content analysis,” defined as “concentrating on the development of the narratives as reflected in the thoughts and actions of the main characters in the novels and stories” (19). Hacker's two theoretical essays on the study of Hinduism (Hacker 1960b [Purāṇen] and 1961c [Zur Meth.]) are not cited. No secondary sources on Hacker are listed (not even Schmithausen's [1981] or Rüping's [1981] post-mortem assessments). The sole example of scholarly work based on Hacker Zydenbos cites is Halbfass's *India and Europe* (Halbfass 1988). Isherwood is the only source for Vedānta. Radhakrishnan is dismissed with the words, “discussions about the cultural situation in India tend to be dominated by highly emotional or political, in a word: non-scholarly, considerations, and most of the writing that is being done in India on the subject of ‘Indian literature’ is utterly useless from an academic point of view and is usually guided by S. Radhakrishnan's dogmatic statement that ‘Indian literature is one, though written in many languages’” (15). Occasionally, Zydenbos dismisses critics with casteist generalizations: “Much criticism produced in Kannada is not mature, and in their value judgments many critics are often guided by utterly unlitary criteria. In many cases, it is no longer necessary to read the criticism if one knows the castes to which the critic and the author under discussion belong” (19). The dissertation's self-righteous tone (see especially, 119–24) suggests long-standing issues with race (Rao 2000 questions whether Zydenbos's work might not arise from a sense of insufficient acceptance by the culture to which he strove to assimilate), which likely precipitated Zydenbos's latest outbursts (Zydenbos 2016, 2020c, and 2020d).

²⁹ These were primarily in *Una Voce Korrespondenz* and *Vox Fidei: Stimme des Glaubens*. Hacker was a regular contributor to *Vox Fidei*, contributing eight articles and letters to the editor between 1977 and 1978. These contributions express his opposition to “affluent materialism,” “technological optimism,” “amoralism,” and “atheism” (Hacker 1974a [Eiterb.]); “progressivism” (Hacker 1977c [Meßopfer]); “fornication” and “sexuality” (also, sexual education) (Hacker 1977d [Skandal]); “radical [also: godless] progressivism,” “Marxism,” “liberal Protestantism,” “Catholic modernism,” and “godless socialism” (Hacker 1978g [Modernismus]). A cartoon printed in the 1977 issue provides a good indication of the concerns (and educational achievements) of *Vox Fidei*'s readership: The Devil of “Progress” invites nudists, Freudians, modernists, naturalists, freethinkers, theosophists, Marxists, Teilhardists, advocates of sexual freedom, and Free Masons to enter “the new world religion” of “world goodwill” saying, “Come in, gentlemen! The Catholic Church no longer condemns! Come in! There is room for all!” The caption below reads: “excluded: faithful Catholics!” The image is both anti-Islamic (a figure wearing a fez cap, harem pants, and Turkish slippers walks alongside a beturbaned man in a caftan) and anti-Semitic (another figure wears a yarmulke).

katholischen Missionen, Theologie und Philosophie, Entscheidung (a German-language offshoot of the Rev. Billy Graham's *Decision*), *Internationale katholische Zeitschrift*, and *Theologisches: Katholische Monatsschrift* still await examination. The anonymous writings may never be discovered. Additional documents we must consider include his de-Nazification files and military records. It would be irresponsible of scholars to risk a statement on Hacker without knowing what is contained in these files.³⁰

Hacker's outsized reputation among Indologists is explained neither by his "philological" achievements, which are slight, nor by his contributions to "historical" knowledge, which are non-existent. No objective historical knowledge, either about empirical history or about textual history (authorship, place of copying, modes of dissemination, and the like), has ever been achieved by Hacker's "text-historical method." Indeed, the method *was not designed to deliver such knowledge*. Its sole purpose was to work out a "history" of religion in South Asia that would affirm Hacker's religious identity (we hesitate to say "as a Christian," since to call Hacker "Christian" is a disservice to Christianity). And despite frequent references to Hacker in relation to interreligious dialogue (Robinson 2004; Cornille and Corigliano 2012), his contributions to theology are insignificant.

Notwithstanding his strident statements on "doctrine" (Hacker 1977e [Trinit.], 1977f [Meßbuch], 1977g [Zur Fälsch.], 1977h [Zur Protest.], 1979d [Wandlung I], and 1979e [Wandlung II]), Hacker remained an outsider to academic theology (Kehren 1979: 121: "a voice in the desert"). He had no meaningful training. Apart from a few lectures (according to Rüping 1981; Schmithausen 1981, who provides a more detailed breakdown of his studies, does not list theology), he appears never to have studied theology formally. Kehren (1979) and Rüping (1981) record intensive self-directed studies, but these studies culminated in a most original understanding of Christianity.³¹

³⁰ See Hacker's objections to identifying Christ's suffering with "Auschwitz" (Hacker 1975d [Verf. Hoff.]: 185). He also declares that presenting "a concentration-camp commandant, namely, Rudolf Höß ... as a deterrent example for obedience" leads to "a hollowing out of God's fourth commandment" (Hacker 1977d [Skandal]: 15–16). In Hacker (1978h [Origenismus]: 319) he asserts that "Israel can only be saved through faith, that is, through the faith that Jesus is God's Son." The prayer that Israel "remain true to the (old) covenant" rather than that it "*be converted to the faith in Jesus, the Son of God, as is proper*" is "theologically false, because the old covenant has been superseded by the new." The CRRJ (2015), however, explicitly affirms that, "from the Christian confession ... it does not in any way follow that the Jews are excluded from God's salvation." "The Catholic Church neither conducts nor supports any specific institutional mission work directed towards Jews." The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (in ECPLJR 1994) acknowledges the complicity of Lutheranism in the Holocaust. Indology, it would appear, lags not only behind the twenty-first century but also the twentieth century. When the Church appears as a bastion of enlightened values by comparison, the university has finally betrayed its mission.

³¹ Rüping (1981) and Schmithausen (1981) note Hacker's penchant for autodidacticism. Rüping (1981) and Kehren (1979) record his idiosyncratic approach to Christian theology; Kehren (1979) additionally notes the lack of teachers. In Ratzinger (2008: 102), Hacker is referred to as "an outsider who stands apart from theology as it is taught in the classrooms." Geyer (2016) attributes to Ratzinger the view that Hacker was "a disciplinary outsider" (*Betriebsfremder*).

Drawing on Max Scheler (Hacker 1963), Hacker developed his own, idiosyncratic notion of “person,” which he applied in disputes over the interpretation of the person of Christ (in Hacker 1974b [H. u. Stehk.], 1974c [wd. Glaubensk.], 1975c [Tischg. II], 1976b [Heil], 1977d [Skandal], 1977e [Trinit.], 1979b [Protestant. II], and 1979d [Wandlung I]). This understanding was also the basis of his disputes with Hinduism, which he claimed lacked a robust concept of “person” (for Hacker’s remarks on the personal/impersonal in Hinduism, see Hacker 1950a [Eigent.], 1957 [Rel. Tol.], 1960a [Magie], 1965a [Dharma], 1967c [Rev. of Pannik.], and 1978a [Aspects]).³² This desire to preserve a reified—and, ultimately, *racialized*—sense of self not only inspired Hacker’s conversion to Catholicism (where he likewise fought every interpretation that threatened his selfhood); it was also the source of his bitter polemics against Advaita Vedānta (which, he rightly sensed, posed the greatest threat to his painful selfhood).³³

Hacker’s partisans have failed to cite any significant theological propositions of his.³⁴ They would not find many. Hacker’s chief contribution to “theology,” paradigmatically as

³² Some of the most astute comments on Hacker’s view of person can be found in Pesch (1968: 52): “All appearances to the contrary, Luther’s concept of faith does not permit a genuine personal relationship to Christ, since Luther must subordinate God, Christ like a thing or a servant to his own need for salvation and for certitude.”

³³ Personally also, Hacker remained an outsider to academic theology. He was most at home among various fringe groups, where he wrote for others who were similarly discontented with the Church (Hacker 1974a [Eiterb.], 1975d [Verf. Hoff.], and 1977c [Meßopfer]). His early association with the Michaelsbruderschaft, a group of priests and laypersons interested in the spiritual renewal of Christianity, previewed future membership in Una Voce, a group seeking restoration of the Roman rite. He regarded academic theologians and Church officials with suspicion (Hacker 1977c [Meßopfer] and 1977d [Skandal]); in Hacker 1978b [In der K.] he compares his situation in the Church with St. Teresa of Avila, Catherine of Siena, and St. John of the Cross). They, in turn, despised him (Kehren 1979). His relationship with Ratzinger was agonistic (Kehren 1979: 118: “friendly ‘state of war’”). His students may have described Hacker’s theological output in awed terms, but it consisted largely of diatribes and (poison pen) letters. It is doubtful his students knew of its full extent or its contents.

³⁴ D’Costa (2009) comes closest to offering a “theological” proposition from Hacker. He notes Hacker’s opposition to Rahner’s interpretation of Vatican II. “Both [Hacker and Ruokanen] read the achievements in other religions as basically anthropological achievements: the best the human spirit can achieve in moving towards the living God” (73). D’Costa is correct in his interpretation (compare Hacker 1980a [Chr. Att.]: 74: “human or anthropological” religion versus “strictly theological or dogmatic” religion), but Hacker’s claim is, strictly speaking, not a contribution to Christian theology. It makes no assertion about God, *except indirectly*. The “intra-Catholic question regarding those who follow the Hacker line outlined above (that no supernatural grace can be attributed as acting within the [other] religions)” (D’Costa 2009: 75) is specifically the concern of men who deny others their beliefs, and hence the *anthropological concern par excellence*. D’Costa further notes, “while I shall give my grounds for disagreeing with the reading of Hacker et al., Hacker’s approach still allows for mutual cooperation and activity by religions on a whole range of ethical matters: the environment, human sexuality, family life, economic wealth and poverty, and so on. It does not require wholesale agreement about any doctrinal issue or mutual affirmation viz. viewing each other as differing means to salvation or anything of the sort. It allows for ad hoc points of common concern to bring religions together” (75). This is manifestly false. Not only was Hacker against any discussion of human sexuality (Hacker 1977d [Skandal]); he was also violently against cooperation with other religions that did not lead to mission (Hacker 1978f [Missionsv.] and 1978g [Modernismus]). He specifically protested aid to developing nations whose citizens resisted conversion (Hacker 1980b [Kath. Chr. I] and 1980c [Kath. Chr. II]). Even after conversion, aid was to be dependent on the converts acknowledging the supremacy of the West, proving that Hacker’s Christianity was less about the “glad tidings” of the Gospel than it was about

“Hindu-Christian studies,” was a set of vaguely racist, putatively sociological characterizations of Indians (“neo-Hindu,” “inclusivist,” “feelings of inferiority vis-à-vis Christianity,” etc.). It bears emphasis, however, that Hacker had no training in sociology (Schmithausen 1981; Rüping 1981) and conducted no quantitative research (surveys, interviews, controlled studies, etc.) of any kind. His characterizations of Indians have the same scientific value as President Trump’s comment about African nations. If not for their attendant scientization (a particularly egregious example of which can be found in Mertens 2004) and for the fact that, after the war, Hacker’s ad hoc vocabulary and conceptualizations provided Indologists with a way to preserve concepts of racial superiority in the language of Christian exclusivism, they would have been dismissed as the ravings of a bitter, sick old man (Kehren 1979; Rüping 1981; see also Hacker 2007 [Ratz.]: 30, n. 34: “Ratzinger is entirely lacking in morality—this is, again, good neo-Protestantism”). The latest episode on RISA-List proves, yet again, that what Hacker’s supporters seek to defend is not any specific achievement of Hacker’s, but the myth of Hacker as a great scholar (Halbfass 1979: 169: “one of its [German Indology’s] internationally distinguished masters”); and hence, ultimately, *the myth of a great scholarly tradition of German Indology itself* (Zydenbos 2020a, 2020b, and 2020c).³⁵

In any other field, denying people of color the capacity for ethics, except insofar as they borrowed them from Europeans (Hacker 1958a [Der Dharma-Begriff], 1961b [Schopenhauer], 1965a [Dharma], 1971 [Vivekananda], 1978a [Aspects]), would provoke outrage. In Indology, it is considered an index of supreme “*Wissenschaftlichkeit*” (scientificity) because Indology is the *Rassenwissenschaft* (race science) *par excellence* (Adluri and Bagchee 2018a; Bagchee 2019). The irony that the charge of lacking ethics was made by a Nazi and SA-member is lost on most Indologists. Or, if they see it, they parse “ethics” to mean: the German god-professor stands above every moral code (explicitly in Zydenbos 2020b). It is no coincidence that three of Paul Hacker’s teachers—Bernhard Breloer, Hans Losch, and Hans Uebersberger—were Nazis. Hans

preserving (and enacting) racial identities. Hick (1997: 161) provides a fitting reply to D’Costa’s (1996: 225) claim, which implicitly evokes Hacker, that “both pluralism and inclusivism are sub-types of exclusivism”: “In ‘The Impossibility of a Pluralist View of Religions’ ...Gavin D’Costa argues that ‘pluralism must always logically be a form of exclusivism and that nothing called pluralism really exists’ (p. 225). He sees himself as doing a ‘conceptual spring cleaning exercise’ (p. 225). However, the result is to obscure clear and useful distinctions by confused and confusing ones. Some further spring cleaning is therefore called for.”

³⁵ See Aichele, et al. (2009: 388–89) on the constitutive communal function of (scholarly) myth-making: “Myth is not merely a community’s charter; it is the community’s taken-for granted common sense and the hermeneutic through which the community defines life, truth, rationality, and justice. Myth is the metanarrative (and attendant perspective) that establishes and defends the communal status quo. Such myth supports the interests of the dominant group in the community by repeating itself ad nauseam throughout society and by portraying the ideological preference for the elite in the society as part of the natural order of things. Despite its very public work, myth excludes or mystifies two important issues. First, myth occludes the ideological perspective of the mythmaker(s) in order to present that perspective as true or ‘natural.’ Second, as we have already seen, myth excludes the other who supplies the definitive mythic contrast. This other is always necessarily silent and even mysterious, because she is known only in the mythic discourse of the insider.”

Uebersberger was also an active anti-Semite (Taschwer 2016). To pretend that Hacker's Nazism has no bearing on either his career or his scholarship (Steiner 2020b; Uskokov 2020b) is to delude ourselves: Hacker is a symptom of the *Gleichschaltung* (the ideological cooptation of German institutions under National Socialism) of the German university in 1933–34.

Conclusion

Gadamer (2004) in *Truth and Method* distinguishes between two kinds of prejudices: justified prejudices and those based (merely) in authority. In Hacker's case, the contemporary reliance on his work reflects an unjustified prepossession in favor of authority *simply* because it is considered authority (Laine 1989; Venkatkrishnan 2015). Of the dissertations we examined, only twelve cited his *Kleine Schriften* (Hacker 1978e). None cited the theological and polemical writings (Bagchee and Adluri 2014). Most referred exclusively to Halbfass 1995a, the only translated collection of his work (for examples of this "cite lite" praxis, see Bhatia 2009; Uskokov 2018).³⁶ The discrepancy between scholars' invocation of Hacker as an authority and their actual knowledge about his work indicates a crisis in the study of religion in South Asia. The circumstance that members of RISA-List expressed consternation at the revelation of Hacker's Nazism suggests ignorance of both his oeuvre *and* its biographic and historical context.³⁷

³⁶ One author noted, "I am influenced by the German Indologist Paul Hacker (1913–1979), who was also intrigued by the problem of authenticity and sought to understand and question what he used to call 'Neo-Hinduism'. Like Hacker, I am a committed participant in the continuing encounter and dialogue between India and the world (Hacker and Halbfass 1995)" (McCartney 2016: xxviii). But the expected discussion of Hacker's work never comes. The sole reference to Hacker in the entire dissertation is, "Paul Hacker is said to have borrowed the term 'Neo-Hinduism' from the Jesuit scholar Robert Antoine (1914–1981), who in turn may have adopted it from Brajendranath Seal (1864–1938) (Hacker and Halbfass 1995: 9)" (69). This is a thin basis on which to build up a thesis. The bibliography contains a single reference to Hacker (to Halbfass 1995a); not even Davis's translation, "Dharma in Hinduism" (Hacker 2006), is listed. The concept of "inclusivism" is incorrectly glossed with "Malinar (2009) described the concept of inclusivism, which refers to the inclusion of other religious systems within the hierarchy of one's own theological perspective" (63). Neither Hacker's writings on the subject (Hacker 1957 [Relig. Tol.], 1964 [Zur Gesch.], 1967b [Rev. of Yatiswarananda], 1978a [Aspects], 1983 [Inklusivismus], and 1985 [Grundl.]) nor those of his students (Halbfass 1983 and 1988; Oberhammer 1983b; Wezler 1983) are cited—inexplicably so, since the sole reference to the concept in Malinar (2009: 264–65), a one-line statement, is actually annotated with "this form of tolerance was regarded by the Indologist Paul Hacker as a 'specifically Indian thought form' and given the term 'inclusivism'" and a reference to "Oberhammer 1983" (here, Oberhammer 1983a).

³⁷ One explanation is that, lacking knowledge of German, scholars have relied implicitly on secondary accounts (Schmithausen 1995; Halbfass 1979 and 1995b). But these sources, although aware of the apologetic nature of Hacker's work, have not acknowledged its full theological scope—see Hacker (1978e [Kl. Sch.]: xiv), containing the surprising statement, "other articles and miscellaneous writings without scientific goals published, sometimes anonymously, in various venues or [existing in] manuscript form have, at the author's behest, not been included in this list of publications"; the bibliographic additions in Rüping 1981 continue this pattern of selective acknowledgment. These sources belong, without exception, to the class of Indological hagiography (for the problems with which, see Adluri and Bagchee 2016b, 2019a, and 2019c). Halbfass's obituary of Hacker (Halbfass 1979: 170) is typical: "In various important areas of Indian studies, Paul Hacker has made pioneering contributions and developed new and exemplary methods of research. In particular, his contributions to an historical analysis of *Advaita Vedānta* and his investigations in the Puranas and other anonymous Sanskrit texts

Whereas scholars are free to judge whether their sources are credible, unbiased, and useful, these choices have consequences for the long-term validity and relevance of their work. In this year dedicated to reflection on “The AAR as a Scholarly Guild” (Cabezón 2020), we therefore present this review of the field. We hope that some scholars at least will move beyond the unscientific, supersessionist, racist, and anti-Semitic approaches of traditional Indology, which has been destructive not only of communities and texts but also of our common search for meaning, to forge a new paradigm in the study of religion in South Asia.

have set new standards.... His research ... has also given new and highly significant impulses to the study of modern Hinduism. ...In its totality, Paul Hacker’s work presents a rare combination of existential commitment, of philological rigour and acumen, and of methodological awareness.” But to build up a thesis in ignorance of the primary sources, to not know the full extent of an author’s oeuvre or his political and ideological imbrications is to betray the principle of rigorously historical philological scholarship. In light of these problems, we plan to accelerate our efforts to place materials on Paul Hacker at scholars’ disposal. We are also in the process of digitizing additional documents pertaining to his Nazi connections.

II. Topical Bibliography

This bibliography provides suggestions for further reading. Although not exhaustive, it offers a comprehensive guide to current scholarship on the issues raised in the article. It is organized into the following sections, corresponding roughly to the sections in the main text:

1. Historical-Critical Method in Context
2. Protestantism and the Historical-Critical Method
3. The Apologetic Use of Historical Criticism
4. Luther, Anti-Judaism, and the Holocaust
5. Historical Criticism and Anti-Semitism
6. Jewish Responses to Historical Criticism
7. Anti-Semitism in Indology
8. Hagiography and Lack of Critical Historiography
9. Canonical Criticism; Reception Studies
10. Protestant Origins of Germany Indology
11. Race Science, Indology, and German Nationalism
12. Text-Historical Dissertations and Works
13. Institutional Responses
14. AAR Mission Statement, Board Resolutions, and Board Statements
15. Social Contexts and Methods in the Study of Religion
16. Naïve Faith in *Realia*
17. Text-Historical Reconstructions of the Bhagavadgītā
18. Paul Hacker, Christian Evangelism, and White Supremacy
19. Scientificity of the Text-Historical Method
20. Extent of Scholars' Knowledge of Hacker
21. Interreligious Dialogue citing Hacker
22. Secondary Sources; Dissertations citing Hacker
23. Inclusivism
24. Critical Studies of Indology; Holocaust Studies
25. The RISA Controversy over Paul Hacker's Nazism

Historical-Critical Method in Context

Howard, Thomas Albert (2000) *Religion and the Rise of Historicism: W. M. L. de Wette, Jacob Burckhardt, and the Theological Origins of Nineteenth-Century Historicism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Legaspi, Michael C. (2010) *The Death of Scripture and the Rise of Biblical Studies*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Morrow, James L. (2019) *Pretensions of Objectivity: Toward a Criticism of Biblical Criticism*. Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications.

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Protestantism and the Historical-Critical Method

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The Apologetic Use of Historical Criticism

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Luther, Anti-Judaism, and the Holocaust

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Historical Criticism and Anti-Semitism

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