

Pride and Prejudice: Orientalism and German Indology

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Rethinking “Orientalism”

Edward Said’s seminal work *Orientalism* (1979) provided the first theoretical framework for comprehending European Orientalism, but his analysis of Orientalism as a form of knowledge production that accompanied and provided the theoretical foundations for Western colonial domination was of limited value in thinking about the work of German Orientalists.¹ Among critics of Oriental studies, German Orientalism thus acquired the status of a test case or a limit case of the Saidian hypothesis. Noting the lacunae in Said’s scholarship in this area, a number of scholars attempted to put forth alternative models for understanding German Orientalism’s unique place within this debate.² Was German Orientalism immune to Said’s critique? But if so, why did German universities develop a significant infrastructure in Oriental studies? How was one to account for German Orientalism’s quantitative lead over its British or French counterparts?³

In an article written in 1993, “Deep Orientalism,” Sheldon Pollock provided one of the most radical and most novel reformulations of Said’s thesis. Unlike British or French Orientalism, he argued, whose “vector” was “directed outward” to the colonized “other,” “in the case of German Indology we might conceive of it as potentially directed inward—toward the colonization and domination of Europe itself” (77). German “Orientalism,” Pollock suggested, was Orientalism of a peculiar

kind. Like its British or French counterparts, it shared the “division” of the world into “betters and lessers” and thus facilitated “the domination (or ‘orientalization’ or ‘colonization’)” of specific groups (77). But unlike the British or French experience, “in the German instance... orientalism as a complex of knowledge-power” needed to be seen “as vectored not outward to the Orient but inward to Europe itself, to constructing the conception of a historical German essence and to defining Germany’s place in Europe’s destiny” (83). “If the ‘German problem’ is a problem of identity, and ‘the German figure of totalitarianism’ racism..., the discourse of Aryanism and, consequently, the orientalism on which it rested was empowered to play a role in Germany it never could play in England” (83). Pollock argued that this meant that the traditional question critics ask in contemplating Orientalist knowledge—that is, “to what degree were European scholarship of Asia and the colonial domination of Asia mutually constitutive?”—was too narrow to encompass the specific instance of German Indology (76). Instead, Pollock suggested that one would have to examine German Indology within the specific context of “the German romantic quest for identity” and “what was eventually to become one of its vehicles, the emerging vision of *Wissenschaft*” (82). Said’s analysis was restricted to two sources in the creation of Orientalist knowledge, that is, colonialism and evangelism, but Pollock now proposed that a third constituent may have been equally important in the constitution of German Indology: “German romanticism-*Wissenschaft*” (80). “This third major component of Indology,” he argues, “is less easily accommodated within an explanatory framework of colonial instrumentality and thus not accidentally was the one major form that Said left unaccounted for in his analysis” (81).

This turn away from the use of Orientalist discourses to legitimate and to provide theoretical foundations for the Western colonial project to the way Orientalist discourse was used in Germany to construct a new identity had significant consequences for the discipline. Besides implying a significant shift in scholarly focus “away from the periphery to the national political culture and the relationship of knowledge and power at the core” (81), it meant that German Orientalist knowledge had to be studied under a double aspect. On the one hand, one had to examine how this knowledge allowed Germany to set itself apart from other European nations. Here Pollock identifies two tropes: (i) “the celebration of Aryan

superiority,” and (ii) “the willingness to recognize racial kinship between European and Indian” (83). On the other hand, one would have to examine the means German scholars used to set themselves apart from Indians.⁴ Concretely, this would take the form of creating a narrative of “the degeneracy of the South Asian Aryans,” even extending to “proposals for a eugenics program in India (calling for a revivification through racial planning of the debilitated South Asian Aryan stock)” (83).

This latter aspect has occupied Pollock more than any other in the years since the publication of his 1993 article. Besides leading an international research group on “Sanskrit Knowledge Systems on the Eve of Colonialism,” Pollock has also published numerous articles challenging the received wisdom that India was already in a terminal state of decline before the advent of British colonialism. As he articulates it in the first lines of the research proposal for the Sanskrit Knowledge Systems group:

The two centuries before European colonialism established itself decisively in the Indian subcontinent (ca. 1550–1750) constitute one of the most innovative eras in Sanskrit intellectual history. Thinkers began to work across disciplines far more intensively than ever before, to produce new formulations of old problems, to employ a strikingly new discursive idiom and present their ideas in what were often new genres of scholarly writing.⁵

Other articles asked the question “Is there an Indian intellectual history” (Pollock 2008a), outlined new approaches to the study of Indian intellectual history (1985), or sought to rethink the received wisdom on Sanskrit’s decline (2008b, 1996, 2001). India, Pollock was able to show, had a thriving intellectual culture long after its supposed decline under “Brahmanism” or “Hinduism.”⁶ In fact, contrary to the “old Indological prejudice” of “the older the more authentic” (2008a: 541), Pollock was able to show that the real flowering of Sanskrit culture occurred substantially later than most Indologists, addicted to a narrative of Āryan origins, had been willing to concede.

Pollock’s work has not been uncritical of indigenous social or intellectual systems; in fact, one of his preoccupations in his most recent book *The Language of the Gods in the World of Men* (2006) is precisely the question of the nexus between Sanskrit and power. But these criticisms

could not have been more distinct from those in the first phase of Orientalism. Ever since G.W.F. Hegel, Orientalist scholars had considered Indians to be incapable of history. India's lack of historical consciousness, they reasoned, was a direct consequence of spiritual excesses. Indeed, the absence of historical consciousness could be directly attributed to the priestly caste's need to control and to impose their religion on their naïve followers. As Theodore Goldstücker wrote in 1864, "When, by priestcraft and ignorance, a nation has lost itself so far as to look upon writings like these as divinely inspired, there is but one conclusion to be drawn: it has arrived at the turning-point of its destinies. Hinduism stands at this point..." (73). But all was not lost. "The causes of the gradual degeneracy of Hinduism," Goldstücker reasoned, were no "different from those to which other religions are subject, when allowed to grow in the dark" (74). "In Europe, religious depravity received its check when the art of printing allowed the light of publicity to enter into the book whence her nations derive their faith" (74). So, too, "no other means" was capable of imposing a "check" on it "in India than the admission of the masses to that original book which is always on their lips, but which now is the monopoly of the infinitesimal fraction of the Brahminical caste able to understand its sense" (74). Historical-critical research into Indian texts thus, from the very beginning, carried an interventionist imperative along with it. It was charged not only with the task of enabling a Klärung or "clarification" of Indian texts, but also that of an Aufklärung or "Enlightenment" of the Indian mind.⁷ In Goldstücker's words, "If those intelligent Hindus of whom we are speaking" were to have "the will and the energy to throw open that book and the literature connected with it, to the people at large, without caring for the trammels imposed on caste by the politicians of late ages," they were sure to attain a "new vitality" amidst their "decaying life" (74). Indeed, so potent was the new ideology and so great the expectations associated with the historical-critical method that Goldstücker considered the results to be "foreshadowed" (74). As in Europe, Indians would ultimately make use of the insights made available to them, to do "what their forefathers attempted to do, but did not succeed in accomplishing," that is, "break through the artificial bonds which had already in their day enslaved Hindu society" (74).

In exposing the agenda underlying German Orientalist scholarship in

his 1993 article, Pollock had set the stage for radically rethinking these scholarly dogmas on India. While not denying that “more ‘traditional’ Indological work, of a text-critical, lexical, epigraphic, numismatic variety” had also taken place during the first phase of Orientalism (92), he had shown that this work could not be studied without taking into consideration the historical conditions of its production. In particular, he had shown that the rhetoric of science and scientificity had been used to obscure the Indologists’ actual praxis. Citing the Austrian Indologist Erich Frauwallner’s claim that “ ‘Wissenschaft in the strict sense of the word is something that could be created only by nordic Indo-Germans’ ” (93–94), Pollock argued that “what is of the essence to see is that it is within the realm of Wissenschaft that this knowledge production is taking place, Wissenschaft that provided the warrant of objective truth that constituted it as scholarship” (94). Indeed, contrary to these scholars’ uncritical valorization of science as “value free,” Pollock argued that a critical philology had to recognize that “disinterested scholarship in the human sciences, like any other social act, takes place within the realm of interests; that its objectivity is bounded by subjectivity; and that the only form of it that can appear value-free is the one that conforms fully to the dominant ideology, which alone remains, in the absence of critique, invisible as ideology” (96). It was precisely Indology’s failure to do so that explained how “in German Indology of the NS [National Socialist] era, a largely nonscholarly mystical nativism” was able to merge “with the objectivism...earlier described” to foster “the ultimate ‘orientalist’ project, the legitimization of genocide” (96).

Critical Responses

“Deep Orientalism?” (Pollock 1993) attracted much attention, including a long running debate on the Indology list.⁸ German Indologists largely rejected Pollock’s analysis, especially the attempt to link German Orientalist knowledge to National Socialism. Most of these responses were little more than rhetorical diatribes and failed to address Pollock’s criticisms. Besides the Indologists, whose response one could have anticipated, historians such as Suzanne L. Marchand (2010) indirectly questioned Pollock’s thesis, arguing that the work of Indologists was highly specialized and hence could not be made responsible for wide-

spread Orientalist attitudes.⁹ In her words, “we find ourselves believing that all Europeans—whether women or men, aristocrats or peasants, classicists or orientalists, Czechs or Scots—were actually cognizant of and bound by this reified ‘discourse,’ no matter who these individuals were, what they did or did not know, and what the context was in which their statements were made” (xxi).¹⁰ Marchand in fact argued a radically different thesis to Pollock’s: according to her, “ ‘orientalism’...[also] played a crucial role in the *unmaking*, as well as the making, of western identities” (xxvii; emphasis in original). Nonetheless, her work too acknowledged Pollock’s contributions in illuminating the complicity of Indology in National Socialism.¹¹

In contrast to Marchand’s measured evaluation, Orientalist scholars were much more hostile to Pollock’s suggestions.¹² Richard W. Lariviere (1994), one of Pollock’s earliest critics, dismissed his work as no more than “distortionist criticism,” while post-Orientalist critiques were a sign of “pathological self-examination.” Reinhold Grünendahl went even further, accusing Pollock of ignoring the “lowlands of the factual [Niederungen des Faktischen]” (2006: 217). Pollock’s work, he claimed, made use of “strategic selection and interpretation of the material” in order to “generate the greatest possible attention for [him]self and [his] own ‘reading’ ” (217). Grünendahl further accuses Pollock of being engaged in “an academic game of hunting for media ratings” (217). Grünendahl’s work may appear typical of the German tendency to dismiss post-Orientalist debates “as peculiar to the proclivity of American academia to meta-theorizing” (Hanneder 2001a: 239), but it also raises important questions concerning the validity of the Orientalist critique. I will focus here on the three substantive charges he raises:

(i) Grünendahl’s main criticism of Pollock and other post-Orientalist critics is that they are “unable to make a contribution to an understanding of disciplinary questions and their background,” because “all too often” “they lack every disciplinary prerequisite” (2008: 457).

(ii) They thus “ignore what is already present in terms of secured knowledge, without considering it worthy of discussion” (457).

(iii) Grünendahl also questions Pollock’s data, arguing that it (a) is not based on “concrete evidence” and (b) does not stand in “any recognizable connection to his theses” (2006: 210).

As my main concern in this paper is with the third of these charges, I

will only offer some brief remarks on Grünendahl's first two criticisms. Concerning his primary criticism of Pollock, it seems to me that he fundamentally misunderstands Pollock's work, when he accuses the latter of failing to distinguish between Indology's *scientific* contributions and its ideological manifestation. As we have already seen, Pollock's main focus in his 1993 article is precisely this naïve, uncritical equation of science with objectivity *tout court*. Indeed, the question for Pollock is precisely how "in German Indology of the NS era, a largely nonscholarly mystical nativism deriving ultimately from a mixture of romanticism and protonationalism" was able to merge with the "objectivism of Wissenschaft" to engender that "ultimate 'orientalist' project, the legitimation of genocide" (96). I take Pollock to be less interested here in the actual mechanics of how Indologists collaborated with Nazism, than with highlighting the way an uncritical acceptance of the rhetoric of science made German Indology so susceptible to being harnessed for the most diverse and the most inhuman ends. In simply repeating this acceptance, Grünendahl paradoxically confirms Pollock's hypothesis. Secondly, Pollock's work does not "ignore" what "is already present in terms of secured knowledge": as we have seen, Pollock is fully cognizant of the fact that "text-critical, lexical, epigraphic, numismatic" work was also being carried out at the same time as Indology was creating powerful theoretical foundations for National Socialism. In fact, Pollock writes:

I have observed often enough that all the Indologists cited above are "serious" scholars; their work was argued out on sophisticated historical and philological grounds, not on the "intuitive" principles of crude propagandists like the chief party ideologue [Alfred] Rosenberg (although no German Indologist ever felt the call to criticize Rosenberg, and some, like [Ludwig] Alsdorf...cite him as authoritative). They are for the most part unimpeachable with respect to scholarly "standards" (94).

In both cases, we see a refusal to engage with Pollock's criticism that confirms Pollock's statement in the 1993 article that "to...[his] knowledge no German...Indologist has undertaken an analysis of the field and the relationship of the questions of scholarship and the questions of state since the war" (95). Indeed, Grünendahl's overhasty and unthinking reaction suggests that Pollock's analysis might be profitably extended

forward to German Indology even in its post-war period. This task, however, exceeds the scope of the present paper, which is mainly concerned with presenting some additional evidence in support of Pollock's claims.

New Contributions to the Post-Orientalist Debate

In the preceding section, I highlighted some of the problems with the Orientalists' response to Pollock's critique. Since Pollock's critique is not restricted to a simplistic equation of Indology with Nazism, it cannot simply be brushed aside as a "uni-dimensional presentation" (Grünendahl 2006: 213).¹³ Instead of taking up Pollock's substantive criticisms, however, Grünendahl targets the messenger himself.¹⁴ Thus, he attacks Pollock's scholarship, his motivations, and his competence to carry out such an inquiry, and he even admonishes Pollock that "scientific and moral integrity count among the valuable goods one can only lose once" (233)! Pollock's work is typical of "post-Orientalist jargon" (212n8), he bases himself on "Edward Said's willfully perverted conception of 'Orientalism' " (210n5), and he makes use of a "doubtful citational praxis" (232). Even though this is but a partial list of Grünendahl's multiple *ad hominem* attacks, it already highlights the serious disconnect between American and German approaches to Indian studies.¹⁵ It also suggests that there is perhaps no engagement possible between Pollock and his critics. In all of Grünendahl's multiple rebuttals of Pollock, I have nowhere found any acknowledgment that at least some of his criticisms may be partially valid or any acknowledgment of the extensive evidence of the complicity of particular Indologists in National Socialism. Especially notable is Grünendahl's ability to insulate a scholar's specious ideology and his "scientific" Indological contributions. For example, he remarks of Jakob Wilhelm Hauer¹⁶ that his "Indo-Aryan researches" "from the get go had little to do with a textually based Indian philology, to say nothing of linguistics" (Grünendahl 2008: 470). In a similar vein, he writes of Walther Wüst's¹⁷ contributions "one can, however, see of most of the writings cited by Pollock from their title alone that they are closer to contemporary Indo-Germanic studies and 'folk' [völkisch] influenced German studies than Indology. Their object, Indian culture, recedes fully into the background in them, if it is at all of relevance"

(2006: 217–18). “Conversely, it holds that Indology did not have any demonstrable influence on the picture of Indo-Germans of ‘northern’ appearance, which embodied the National Socialist ideal of race [Rassenideal]” (218).

Grünendahl’s strategy of attributing the negative aspects of Hauer’s or Wüst’s work to their latent political leanings or to a third discipline (provided it is not Indology) would, however, have been rhetorically more convincing had he been able to show that German Indologists had since distanced themselves from their work. Yet, in a recent volume, Angelika Malinar (2007: 25, 33, 30) still cites Hauer as an accepted authority.¹⁸ This acceptance of Hauer is especially surprising, given that Malinar sets aside both “the later Sanskrit tradition of commentaries” and “modern Hindu interpretations of the text” on the grounds that “each author establishes his own hermeneutics on the basis of the religious or philosophical tradition he adheres to” (17). But as laudable as this concern for objectivity is, how is one then to explain the inclusion of a statement such as the following: “Important elements of the National Socialist ideology are discernable in Hauer’s interpretation, such as the ‘leader-principle’ (*Führerprinzip*), ‘survival of the fittest’, etc. The *BhG* is turned into timeless Indo-Aryan metaphysics”? (25). Since Hauer, too, is not free of ideology, why do the same standards not apply here? Seemingly, Nazi ideology is compatible with science, whereas a philosophical outlook appears to pose problems for Malinar. Malinar’s inclusion of Hauer among canonical interpreters of the *Bhagavad Gītā* is not consistent with her concern with objectivity.

In her 1996 study on the *Bhagavad Gītā* as a text that allegedly propounds a “royal knowledge of sovereignty and sacrifice,” Malinar once again cites Hauer as an accepted authority. Thus, following the opening line introducing Hauer’s writings, she writes: “The dedication ‘to the fighting spirit’ [Dem kämpfenden Geschlecht] preceding the book expresses the temporal reference sought in this book: the beginning of National Socialist rule in Germany as welcomed by Hauer” (38). The section concludes with the words: “Certain elements of National Socialist ideology are recognizable here (Führer principle, subjection of the individual to the demands of the ‘racial community’ [Volksgemeinschaft], the destruction of life for the sake of the superior life)” (39), but in spite of being fully aware of the National Socialist context of Hauer’s writings,

Malinar does not provide a critical discussion of this background. On page 42, she locates Hauer among scholars such as Friedrich Otto Schrader and Hermann Jacobi; on page 53, he again appears in a list of scholars arguing for an “epic text” of the *Bhagavad Gītā* (the list reads “Adolf Holtzmann, Jr., Hermann Jacobi, Friedrich Otto Schrader, Hermann Oldenberg, Jarl Charpentier, Jakob Wilhelm Hauer” [53]); and on page 61, he is mentioned alongside Franklin Edgerton, Rudolf Otto, and R.C. Zaehner.

Malinar is not alone in opposing the objectivity of German scholars to the alleged subjectivity of Indian interpretations. Her teacher and mentor, Heinrich von Stietencron, too writes:

The analytic thinking of Western interpreters who were schooled in historical-philological methods stands in contrast to the traditional Indian commentators, who not only harmonized and freely downplayed all breaks in the text [that is, the *Bhagavad Gītā*], but, above all, sought to read their own philosophical-theological concepts out of individual textual passages, in order to secure Kṛṣṇa’s divine authority for them—a spectrum that has been further expanded since the beginning of India’s independence movement by the politically motivated interpretations of modernity (Malinar 1996: 1).

How are we to harmonize von Stietencron’s allegations of bias in the case of the Indian commentators, when German commentaries on the *Gītā* are unable to arrive at even a basic consensus on what constitutes the *Bhagavad Gītā*? A brief look at these commentaries is illuminating. Richard Garbe, insisting that only theistic elements are original, accepts 530 verses out of the 700 verses of the *Gītā* as it appears in the Critical Edition of the *Mahābhārata*. In contrast, Jacobi, insisting that only the epic elements are original, accepts 85 verses. Oldenberg, selecting verse 2.39 as key, relegates all remaining verses to the “didactic poem” and thus accepts only 83 verses as belonging to the original *Gītā*. Otto, in accordance with his theories, insists that only the elements relating to Arjuna’s “situation” are original and thus retains 144 verses. Theodor Springmann accepts 594 verses. Hauer, believing the *Gītā* to be a “metaphysics of battle and action,” accepts 141 verses. Georg von Simson outdoes all his predecessors by excising the *Gītā*

altogether from the epic and finds not only the *Gītā* in its entirety, but also a good measure of additional epic passages relating to the *Gītā*'s context to be secondary interpolations. This would mean that for von Simson, not even one verse of the *Bhagavad Gītā* belonged in the original epic.

In contrast, Indian commentators, despite rigorous logical, lexical and philosophical debates, have always acknowledged the integrity of the text. Some commentators include one or two verses that do not play a role in their interpretation, but not one commentator excises or adds a single verse to support his or her interpretation. Thus, whereas German commentators freely tailored the text to their particular polemical or ideological ends, Indian commentators all acknowledge a roughly 700-verse text as authoritative. Each of these traditional interpretations is rigorously argued for, based not only on lexical but also logical grounds. Moreover, these interpretations were fashioned in an environment of philosophical debate and logical disputation. Von Stietencron's gross generalization typifies the deficient historical consciousness that, according to Pollock, fatally impaired Indology's capacity for self-reflection. Affirmations of the alleged superiority of the German method aside, such gestures rarely hold up under critical examination.

On the intensely ideological plane of von Stietencron's claim, basic cogency has been set aside. To my knowledge, no German reviewer has called attention to the glaring contradiction between uncritically repeating Nazi scholarship and yet excluding Indian scholarship on the grounds that it is not objective. On the contrary, a reviewer of Malinar's work, Jürgen Hanneder, critiques Malinar for not going far enough. Thus, in his review of Malinar in the journal of the German Oriental Society (*Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*), he notes that while it may be "completely understandable" to exclude Indian scholarship, such "systematic exclusion of the classical Indian tradition of commentary is a possible methodological weakness." Hanneder now continues: "For, one can hardly counter a biased [tendenziösen] interpretation by native commentators [merely] by excluding it; otherwise, one exposes oneself to the danger of also eliminating the specifically Indian 'horizon of understanding' along with the native reception, which [horizon] may possibly preserve something historically true [historisch Richtiges]" (2001b: 240).

Remarkably, Hanneder does not fault Malinar for her sweeping gesture of excluding all Indian commentators on the specious grounds that they are inconsistent and biased, but for not making an example of them as inconsistent and biased! From his perspective, German scholars need only take note of Indian commentators to show that they are wrong. Indian commentaries have nothing to contribute to an elucidation of the *Bhagavad Gītā*, except what the Indologist can establish as “historically true” of them: that they all suffer from bias.

Hanneder’s comments are especially problematic in light of the fact that he acknowledges “he is not an expert in this field [that is, *Bhagavad Gītā* scholarship]” and “does not consider himself to be qualified to present a well-founded total evaluation of the results of this work” (2001b: 240). But in that case, how does he justify his prejudice that lumps the entire Indian tradition into a single uncritical and amorphous tendency? Comments such as these would seem to suggest that jingoistic pride and unthinking prejudice continue to plague German Indology, whatever its achievements may be.

Given Hauer’s continued respectability among Indological circles, Grünendahl’s comment that “Hauer...stands in clear distance to ‘Indian studies’ [Indienforschung]” (2008: 468) strains the bounds of credibility. The history of reception of Hauer’s thought suggests that many other Indologists were receptive to his ideas. This one example alone suffices to demonstrate the reluctance among Indologists to face up to the history of their discipline.¹⁹ This is surprising. How can a discipline that claims to be “according to its history, system and method, in the first instance, a purely ‘European’ science [Wissenschaft]” (Slaje 2003: 317) fail to take its own history into account in determining its truth and value? Grünendahl’s extraordinary resistance to any degree of historical contemplation illustrates the tension at the heart of all historicism: that it itself is historical and hence can uphold its claims to being absolute only if it suppresses its own history. I will say more on the relationship of Indology to the historical method in the conclusion, but before I do so, I would like to turn to the third of Grünendahl’s charges against Pollock: that his charges lack evidentiary support.

“Deep Orientalism?” (Pollock 1993) mainly examined Indological writings from the early twentieth century. In his bibliography, Pollock lists the texts of the National Socialist period in a separate section, with

the earliest of his sources going back to 1911. But as he notes, “an exhaustive typology and analysis [of Indology] are premature” (88). This is so not only because “the important question of the political economy of Indology in Germany in the period 1800–1945 awaits serious analysis” (118n5), but also because of the considerable historical and philological work to be done. “The process of *Gleichschaltung* in the German Oriental Society awaits study” (122n34). Further, we are still lacking a “history of the DMG [Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft, the German Oriental Society],” a “real desideratum for the study of institutional orientalism, especially in the NS and postwar years” (122n34). Since the publication of Pollock’s article, of course, much more work has been done. We are now much better informed about the early history of German Orientalism. Besides the works already cited, we now have a number of new disciplinary histories, including Nicholas Germana (2009), Douglas T. McGetchin (2009), Pascale Rabault-Feuerhahn (2008), Indra Sengupta (2005), Todd Kontje (2004), Douglas T. McGetchin, Peter K.J. Park, and Damodar SarDesai (2004), and Kamakshi Murti (2001).

Additionally, in a recent study, Jakob Stuchlik (2009) has been able to show the Austrian Indologist Erich Frauwallner’s deep involvement in Nazism. Drawing on archival material and Frauwallner’s correspondence, Stuchlik provides compelling evidence of Frauwallner’s commitment to a racist ideology, even after the war. This racism, Stuchlik demonstrates, is not just limited to his well-known attempt at dividing the history of Indian thought into two racially distinct periods: a first, Āryan period beginning in the Vedic Age when the Indian philosophical systems reach their culmination, and a second, “degenerate” Indian period beginning in the second half of the second millennium when countless new systems develop on the basis of Śaivism and Vaiṣṇava philosophy and continuing till today.²⁰ Frauwallner’s “Aryan approach” (der arische Ansatz), as Stuchlik shows, characterizes even “the conceptual core of [his] scientific and scientific-political *oeuvre*, and, not least of all, the life of a committed National Socialist” (2009: cover copy).

Much work still needs to be done here, especially concerning the personal biographies of many of these Indologists. Together with a colleague in Germany, I have been working on a two-year project to collect data on early German Orientalism. In the concluding section of this review, I would like to present some of this evidence.

From Orientalism to Germanism

At the time Pollock wrote “Deep Orientalism?” it is unlikely he could have anticipated the tremendous support for his thesis in the writings of the earliest Indologists. A careful examination of the historical record, however, shows that Pollock was correct in almost all his intuitions. My own research shows that German Indology was always far more preoccupied with the rivalry with its European peers than with legitimizing colonization. In fact, one can notice a preoccupation throughout its history with claiming a “European” identity for itself, albeit one that also takes into consideration its unique place among other European nations. As Pollock has suggested, it is this mixture of Eurocentric consciousness and a need to draw on Āryan heritage that was responsible for the unique status of German “Orientalism.” In fact, the “Orientalist” aspects of German Orientalism may even have been a side-effect of its concern with European prestige. “Indology is,” writes a contemporary German writer, “according to its history, system, and method, in the first instance, a purely ‘European’ science [Wissenschaft], as it is completely anchored in the context of European thinking and is also methodologically committed to this thinking in the practice of its research” (Slaje 2003: 317). It is understandable that a European intellectual, dependent as he is upon the specific cultural conditions that enable his research, would seek to locate himself within a “European tradition of knowledge [Wissenstradition]” (311), but how accurate is this claim? One might perhaps, at this point, expect a discussion of how this European science relates to India, whether it is truly representative of India, and so on, but that is not the question I am interested in here. I am more interested in querying this “European” self-understanding to see whether it is historically accurate. I am less interested in “Orientalisms” of all kinds and more in the “Germanism” characteristic of German Indology. If “Orientalism” is defined as the attempt to define the “other,” Germanism may be defined as the attempt to define the German self. Thus what is ultimately at stake in German Indology is not the image of India in European eyes, but the image Germans sought to project of themselves and which they hoped to see reflected in the eyes of the “other.” Since Christian Lassen and Adolf Holtzmann, German Indological scholarship has been an attempt by German academics to define themselves in the eyes of the other—initially,

in the eyes of European intellectuals, and later, in the eyes of their American counterparts. In this process, German scholars barely took notice of the Indians “other” than as a foil for their own critical consciousness and methodology. Indians, as a rule, only appear on the margins of this discussion.²¹ If it was necessary to put them down, it was only in order to establish one’s superiority in the eyes of the other European nations. Indeed, for Walter Slaje, the “deep reaching reception of Occidental values, ideas, and intellectual attitudes” ultimately causes India to “become a Europe in Indian clothes,” something that he asserts can “be said in a similar way for other non-European cultures in the present as well” (2003: 326).

I will focus on evidence for four claims Pollock makes in his article, providing further supporting evidence:

(i) that the “vector” of German Indology is directed inward, that is, at its European rivals,

(ii) that German Indologists somehow have privileged access to India’s past,

(iii) that Indians are degenerate and hence incapable of interpreting their own texts, and

(iv) that science is a uniquely German capacity.

On the “vector” of German Indology

I would like to cite but two examples here that demonstrate that this concern was paramount in German Indology: the first is taken from Oldenberg’s “Über Sanskritforschung” (1886); the second from his “Indologie und klassische Philologie” (1906). In both these articles, one can see how a new consciousness of the historical role Germany is to play in Indological research comes to the fore. Oldenberg begins his 1886 text thus:

Research into Sanskrit, the *science* [Wissenschaft] of Indian antiquity, is at present a hundred years old. It was in the year 1784 that in Calcutta a number of the men active as jurists or as civil servants of the East India Company came together to [form] a *scientific* [wissenschaftlichen] society, the Asiatic Society. One can say, that the establishment of the Asiatic Society coincides with the creation of that new branch of historical research, which previous generations had not or could hardly

have thought possible. Englishmen began the work; soon it was taken up by men of other nations and in the course of time it transformed itself ever more decisively—to a far greater extent than this could, for example, be said of research into hieroglyphic or cuneiform [writing], into an affair of German *science* [deutschen Wissenschaft] (386; emphasis added).

This is not an isolated statement: Oldenberg’s disdain toward British scholarship is deep-rooted and recurs throughout this essay as a continual refrain. The following examples will suffice to give some indication of the depth of his feeling:

While Colebrooke still stood at the height of his [creative] powers, the participation in researches on India began to awaken in that land which had done more than any other to bring these [researches] closer to a strict, firmly grounded *science* [Wissenschaft]: **Germany** (390; emphasis in original, italics added).

The contrast between the two great periods [of Sanskrit scholarship] could not embody itself more clearly than in these two dictionaries, in which the development of researches on India is represented: here the beginnings, which the English *science* [Wissenschaft] standing directly on the shoulders of Indian pandit-hood had made; there the further development, with the methods of strict philology, in terms of breadth and depth pressing incomparably ahead of these beginnings, at their head German researchers (402; emphasis added).

Let us turn to yet another of Oldenberg’s methodological reflections on German Indology, the text “Indische und klassische Philologie” from 1906 [1967]. Here is how Oldenberg describes the Indological task:

For both *sciences* [Wissenschaften], the task is to summon up the existence of past civilizations from their grave, to reinvigorate its manifestation, to understand the causal processes at work in it. The doorway here, as there [in classical philology] is language, grammar, and the lexicon....Then the same holds for the Indologist as for the classical philologist, to blaze a trail through monstrous [ungeheure]

masses of literature, to cleanse [säubern] the texts, to put the old and the new, as much as possible, in their place (1516; emphasis added).

Oldenberg's definition of the "doorway" (Eingangspforte) in terms of language, grammar, and the lexicon (Sprache, Grammatik, und Lexikon) of course follows a path typical of German Indology since Franz Bopp, who in 1816 laid the foundations for the study of Sanskrit along the principles of comparative linguistics with the publication of his book *Über das Konjugationssystem der Sanskritsprache in Vergleichung mit Jenem der Griechischen, Lateinischen, Persischen und Germanischen Sprache*. Yet, unlike Bopp, Oldenberg is aware of the implicit consequences of this move: if Indology is based upon a purely linguistic foundation, then the German scholar, working with texts, has an inherent advantage over his British rival "work[ing] locally and on site." Oldenberg places, on the one side, those who work locally, "obviously mostly Englishmen, alongside them anglicized Indians...as a whole not Indologists according to the German mould [nach deutschem Zuschnitt]" (1517–18). On the other, he places the German Indologist: "There are," he says, "fruits in Indology that only the purposeful philological and historical method is capable of picking. To these fruits the hands of the workers of whom I have spoken [that is, Englishmen and anglicized Indians] do not always reach" (1518). Oldenberg continues:

Now the others: we philologists, in particular, the German philologists. Many of us have not seen India at all; for obvious reasons we cannot come so easily to Benares as one comes to Rome or Athens. Thus, we are all too exposed to the danger that something of the ultimate vitality of life is missing from the pictures that appear to us, that what we take to be the cloud trails of the Indian sky are ultimately only the vapors of our own study-rooms (1518).

Oldenberg is not unaware of the material advantages of the British Indologists, but in his opinion these scarcely compare to the advantages of German Indologists, specifically their genetic and intellectual proximity to ancient India. As he notes:

If we may not feel secure of [possessing] an immediate feeling for the

Indian present, we nonetheless see with greater certitude in the distance of the Indian past, that is, in the period that is, above all, important for us—we who do not have to participate in the administration of India but who seek to interpret the documents of the Indian tradition concerning the problems of human history. We know the Hindu less well than our [British] colleagues who live in his country and breathe his air. But to us is given, I hold, the possibility of knowing the Aryan of old India better than these [colleagues] (1518).

One is inclined to smile at Oldenberg's suggestion that German scholars might be inhaling nothing more than the "vapors" of their own study-rooms, but there is a disturbing subtext to his claim that it is somehow "given" to the German scholar to know the "Aryan of old India" better than his British or other European colleagues. Walter Demel (1992) has already shown just how deeply ingrained racial prejudice was in German academic life of the eighteenth century.²² Other scholars such as Rolf Peter Sieferle (1987) have demonstrated how closely linked the nascent discourse on the Aryan "race" was to German Indology; and one knows of course of how deeply implicated German Indologists such as Frauwallner and Hauer were in National Socialism. In the present text, Oldenberg does not draw out the consequences of this proximity, but he is far less reticent in his 1886 text. There he writes that German precedence in Indology is ultimately founded on racial consanguinity:

There still lies shapeless in these workshops [that is, German universities] a block or two of uncut stone, perhaps in order to resist the form-giving hand forever, but nonetheless some shapes have also become visible under the active chisel, [and] from their features the distant past, the bygone existence of that strange race [Volkes] looks back at us that is kin [verwandt] with our race [Volke] and yet whose paths have diverged, both internally and externally, so far from our paths (Oldenburg 1889: 386).

On German Indology's claims of privileged access to ancient India

We should note the curious insensitivity to issues of scientific method or scientific universality here. If, as Oldenberg suggests, German methodology and philological rigor are superior to British methodology, why does

racial consanguinity play a role at all? Why does it matter whether British or German Indologists carry out the task? What makes German scholars better equipped for the task? Merely the fact that they are German and hence better able to “recognize” this “race” as being “kin” with their own race? Yet, as Oldenberg realizes, if all that matters is racial consanguinity, then one would have to acknowledge Indians as the authoritative masters of Indology. Pollock has already suggested that German Indology found itself in a peculiar bind: on the one hand, acknowledging “racial kinship between European and Indian” was essential to its strategy of claiming superiority vis-à-vis its European counterparts; on the other hand, its relationship to India was always deeply ambiguous, given its commitment to being taken seriously as a *European* tradition.²³ Oldenberg’s response to this dilemma is paradigmatic:

It appeared, as though one had a Lycurgus of Oriental prehistory before one; for one ascribed to distant antiquity this strange image of the strange life of a race; the description, exaggerated and distorted by the arrogance of the priests, of Brahmin hegemony due to Brahma’s grace, in which the people were nothing, the ruler little, and the priests everything (1886: 389).

It was fatal for all thought and poetry in India that a second world filled with its own phantastic content established itself early on alongside the real world: the sacrificial site with its three holy fires and the schools in which the virtuosos of the sacrificial cult were trained—areas of magical activity and the playground of an empty, pedantic cabbalism, whose enervating power over an entire race we only grasp in its full extent with great difficulty. The poetry of the Rigveda shows us this disease in an early stage, but it is there and much of what constitutes the essence of the Veda rests on it (396–97).

I am, however, less concerned here with Oldenberg’s seeming “racism” than the ongoing rivalry with British scholarship, as this contains the key to grasping some of the issues involved in Germanism. German Indologists consistently suffered from an inferiority complex vis-à-vis their British and French colleagues, as the latter not only had much better access to

Indian texts, but also the ability to observe modern India firsthand. The earliest German Sanskrit scholars, Friedrich Schlegel and Wilhelm von Humboldt, had learnt the language under Alexander Hamilton in Paris. Even when German universities began offering courses in Sanskrit, German scholars quite frequently had to travel to London or Paris to consult the great collections of Sanskrit manuscripts their European peers had built up in the meanwhile. Little wonder, then, that Oldenberg is compelled to find some sort of argument that would close the gap to his British colleagues. By shifting the focus to India's remote past and by placing Indology on purely linguistic foundations, he is cleverly able to undermine British claims to forerunner status in Indian studies, while simultaneously playing into German pride within his own community.

As a consequence of this need to link up with India's past rather than its present, German Indology was never interested in any aspect of contemporary India. For contemporary Indian discourse not to pose a threat to this knowledge, it was necessary for German Indology, from the very beginning, to focus on an epoch of Indian history adequately far-removed from modern India.²⁴ This sentiment continues to the present day. As Michael Hahn notes, "When it comes to research into modern politics and history we are one among many others. But as regards classical studies, there we have the greatest prestige" (cited in Schulz N.d.).

As we saw above, Pollock has suggested that the "vector" of German Indology might be conceived of as "potentially directed inward—toward the colonization and domination of Europe itself" (1993: 77). Oldenberg's text shows just how much truth there is to this claim, but it also suggests that things are more complicated on the ground than Pollock imagines. Not only does placing the emphasis of Indology upon ancient India work to displace British claims to knowledge of India, it also makes it impossible for contemporary India to challenge German claims to sovereignty over these texts.²⁵ Indology, from the very beginning, had to define itself narrowly as the (philological) study of ancient Indian sources in order to uphold German claims to sovereignty in this field. Indeed, it is only once we grasp the implicit logic behind this emphasis upon ancient India that we can at all understand why philology must be, as Slaje describes it, the "*primary method*" of Indology (2003: 319; emphasis in original). As Oldenberg himself notes: "Now, when we trust ourselves to be able to

look back into that distant past, without constantly erring in its twilight, then we owe this above all to that philology, that great teacher, from whom we learn to work as philologists” (1967: 1518).

Once the methodological circle between Indology (as canon) and philology (as method) is set up, Indology becomes autonomous in an important, Kantian sense. It becomes its own court of appeal: it neither has to acknowledge other approaches (British colleagues in the field), nor the accumulated wisdom of the Indian interpretive tradition:

Does our exegesis have to show respect before this Indian-knowledge [Inderwissen] or does it have to blaze its own trail on its own authority? Whoever stands closer to my discipline knows how sharply the two views relate to each other....To me it can only appear correct to examine the text, as sharply as we can, with the methods of classical philology without all the literal faith in the traditional text: then we learn, I hold, to recognize that the exemplary transmission is not infallible, and, in some places, we learn to improve it (1520).

Attributing degeneracy to India

Yet, what is it that classical philology brings to Indian texts that the ancient commentarial tradition is unable to? Indian texts, as not a few classicists and Indologists have shown, have been handed down in exemplary fashion.²⁶ In order to justify this dismissal of traditional knowledge, Oldenberg has to invoke the (alleged) lack of historical consciousness among Indians, that is, he must implicitly draw upon Hegel to justify the rejection of Indian thought.

Historical development tends to be more weakly, more nebulously formed in India than in the west. And it lies in a transmission before us that does everything [possible] in order to obscure its image completely: this transmission without firm dates, which often confuses old and new to a seemingly hopeless extent, which continuously presents us with illusions with the pretentious wisdom of its masses of commentaries that only owe their existence to the sophistry of the scholastics in place of genuine thoughts and institutions (1886: 406).

Indeed, “the more we...know” of the history of India, the more it appears

“as an incoherent rise and fall of accidental events.” “These events lack a secure hold and the meaningful sense such as that the power of a national spirit [Volksgestes] that wills and transforms its will into deeds lends history.” Thus, it is “only in the history of ideas, above all of religious thought” that we find “firm ground”: “one may hardly speak of history in another sense here.” Further, “a race that has no history, naturally has even less of historiography.” Oldenberg thus argues that around the same time as an interest in history—that is, “in one’s own past and in its relationship with the battles and sufferings of the present” was awakening in “Herodotus and Fabius” in the West—“the literary activity of India was sunk in theological and philosophical speculation.” “One saw in all events only this, that it is transient: and everything transient one recognized as, we may not even say relatively, but rather as absolutely worthless, a misfortunate nothing, from which the wise man had to liberate his thoughts” (406).

In many respects, then, Oldenberg’s disquisition follows completely traditional lines: its foundation of the study of India on linguistics and philology, its emphasis upon the study of ancient sources, its valorization of geographic and physical distance as guaranteeing a heightened objectivity, and its imputation of a deficient historical consciousness to Indians. Nonetheless, Oldenberg’s essay is remarkable because it marks a turning point in the German reception of Indian thought: it marks the first time that the methodological self-conception of this discipline which is slowly in the process of constituting itself is clearly articulated. With this essay, the break with the early phase of the German interest in India is complete: in future, it will not be philosophers of the rank of Schlegel or von Humboldt who will be at the forefront of scholarship on India, but the “Indologist,” as the administrator of a new *logos* of India.

On science as a uniquely German capacity

Oldenberg, in a sense, becomes the father of a certain methodological self-understanding that runs through German Indology to this day. However, I would like to emphasize that Oldenberg is not the first to articulate these anxieties. He simply represents a crucial point of inflection for German Indology: its transformation from a diffuse group of people with a diffuse set of interests to a formalized academic discipline

with its own canons of method, its own institutional apparatus (chairs, conferences, publication venues, and so on), and its own hierarchical structures. Indeed, the anxiety Oldenberg gives voice to is not unique to German Indology: it is a standard feature of all German Oriental studies, as the editor's foreword by Heinrich Ewald to the first volume of the *Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes* shows. Ewald, Evangelical theologian, founder of the German Protestant Union (Deutscher Protestantenverein) and one of the most significant German Orientalists of the nineteenth century, notes:

If one looks into the development of Orientalist studies in Europe and the special share which Germany can have in them: we find here at first great disadvantages and hindrances weighing down upon our Fatherland. If it is true that these studies can only gain a continual fresh impetus and new challenges through a constant [and] vital connection with the Orient, growing aids and tools, indeed, their entire material: how poor and backward is Germany not just in comparison with England and Russia but also with France and Holland, indeed even with Italy and the northern countries! (1837: 6).

The situation is evidently galling to Ewald, for he continues: "It is not pleasant to have to face up to our ignominy, but to just cover it up with rose-tinted ink is no more honorable" (7). What can redeem the situation? Ewald's response is thought provoking:

And, yet, Germany has accomplished great things in Orientalist literature and will still accomplish great things, if for no other reason than that the general *scientific* [wissenschaftliche] consciousness that has been so strongly and enduringly stimulated among us will not let this particular *science* [Wissenschaft] be and will not let it decay. Even if some branches of the many-branched Orientalist *science* [morgensländischen Wissenschaft] are still extremely meager and unfruitful among us, a misfortune that arises primarily out of the deplorable lack of material and aids: we are nonetheless able to compete in other areas with all Europeans to our great credit, and in some areas, already have [attained] a decisive lead—let it be said without arrogance (7; emphasis added).

Of course, this consciousness of a unique role for Germany in world history is not limited to Indology, and it would be wrong to make Indology a scapegoat for other areas in which German longings for primacy led to disastrous consequences. What I want to emphasize, however, is the way Germany, early on, sought to make up perceived deficits in stature among the other European states through invoking the rhetoric of *Wissenschaft*.²⁷ As the Ewald quote above shows, *Wissenschaft* was felt to be somehow uniquely German, an innate national disposition that was to compensate for Germany's perceived material shortcomings.²⁸ Roughly 70 years separate Ewald's foreword from Oldenberg's "Indische und klassische Philologie," but the tenor remains the same: as Oldenberg rather plaintively notes, while physical possession of India "can never be the case for us," we should not forget "the possession that belongs to us [that is, India's intellectual rather than her material wealth] and which we must administer in the best interests of all." "We, too, after, all," he concludes, "have a significant role to play in the picture of the world that the present is creating" (1886: 406).

The Nazi scholar Erich Frauwallner advances similar arguments in a letter to Walter Wüst, one of the highest-ranking Indologists in the Nazi Party and curator of the research organization "Deutsches Ahnenerbe" (Forschungsgemeinschaft Deutsches Ahnenerbe).²⁹ In a file from the Reichsgeschäftsführer of the Ahnenerbe³⁰ to the Reichssicherheitshauptamt (that is, the headquarters of the Nazi security apparatus founded in 1939 by Heinrich Himmler),³¹ I have come across what must surely count as one of the most telling documents of the obsession with German primacy in the field of Indology.³² The cover letter addressed to the Gestapo³³ requests a "political verdict" regarding Dr. Erich Frauwallner, member of the NSDAP as of 29.11.1932 and with membership number 1 387 121, since the organization plans to appoint him to the Ahnenerbe. But what makes this file especially interesting is its contents: it includes a proposal from Frauwallner to Wüst, requesting funds to establish a "department for Oriental Indology" at the University of Vienna. Frauwallner clarifies that this new department would function as a "natural complement" to "Prof. Wüst's department" (that is, with the Ahnenerbe), but its primary focus should be the creation of a Sanskrit dictionary. In his proposal, Frauwallner offers a "twofold justification" for the project: he begins by noting that the earlier German Sanskrit dictionaries are inadequate in

certain respects. However, since work on the largest Sanskrit dictionary was carried out by “two German scholars, O. Böhtlingk and R. Roth,” it is, he concludes, “practically a duty of German *science* [deutschen Wissenschaft] to not let this proud heritage grow old but to renew and further it.” On the other hand, “to make use of foreign dictionaries,” says Frauwallner, “would be a disgrace given the status of German *science* [deutschen Wissenschaft], in particular, in the field of Indology, apart from the fact that these dictionaries live off German work in their most valuable parts.”³⁴ The point I wish to make, once again, is not that some Indologists were deeply implicated in National Socialism, but to show how German Indologists constantly invoked the rhetoric of “Wissenschaft” in order to defend claims of German precedence in Indology. At the same time, since “Wissenschaft” was felt to be a uniquely German capacity,³⁵ this meant that German scholarship could offer the world something “science” could not.

One can trace a direct lineage from this rhetoric of science as a uniquely German capacity in Oldenberg via Frauwallner to contemporary authors such as Slaje, von Stietencron, and Hahn. But the recurrence of this motif in German Indology also shows that Pollock’s analysis of the German obsession with “romanticism-Wissenschaft” is as true today as when it was formulated almost two decades ago. German Indology’s failure to engage in a critical self-reflection and to address its past thus continues to be a problematic inheritance.³⁶

I have here restricted myself to analyzing just four aspects of this problematic inheritance, but something similar could also be shown of the other criticisms Pollock raises. This evidence, however, must await a longer study. The present review only aimed to show how Pollock’s critics’ responses paradoxically end up confirming his theses. Besides brushing off post-Orientalist critique “as peculiar to the proclivity of American academia to meta-theorizing” (Hanneder 2001a: 239), it seems German Orientalists are set on repeating the same defenses, the same postures, and the same tactics of rejection and exclusion through which, for much of the history of German Indology, they have kept the critics at bay. More than anything else, it is this studied silence on history—whether its own disciplinary history or wider European history—that exposes Indology’s claims of being uniquely German and European. Peter Gaeffke³⁷ provides the following revisionist statement:

After the disturbing experiences of Nazism and the second World War, German Indology emerged in much the same form as it had been in the beginning of the twentieth century, when it celebrated the victory of textual scholarship and boasted of a nearly endless series of masterly publications. In 1946, the philological text-critical method was not impaired by the political situation, although some Indologists had undergone various forms of deprivation, persecution, moral debasement, etc. But when the German universities opened their doors again, Indologists continued the textual studies of earlier times (1997: 398).

One wonders what kind of “deprivation, persecution, moral debasement” the Indologists had undergone, since many of them, Frauwallner included, had made splendid careers under National Socialism. Gaeffke’s comments demonstrate that German Indology is neither self-critical nor does it subject itself to history: neither with respect to the history of scholarship, nor with respect to the religious-political history that first engendered the discipline.

Conclusion

One might wonder what purpose a review of the post-Orientalist debate serves at this point, when German Indology as a discipline is already on the wane within Germany.³⁸ However, there are rich intellectual gains to be made: not only in terms of Indology, but also regarding Germany and its place in European self-consciousness. Indology remains a rich source of historical study. Here, I have argued that Pollock’s critique is ultimately not a critique of the methods of philology as applied in German Indology, but of German Indology’s studied silence on a history that includes equal parts science and ideology. It is thus an attempt to hold Indology up to the same standards it applies to all other disciplines and traditions. Pollock’s project thus envisages a new kind of philology, one he calls “critical philology.” It is clear that philology hitherto, especially in the study of the texts of the Orient, has failed at a critical self-reflection on its own practice and on the historical conditions of its possibility. The “scientific and moral integrity” Grünendahl (2006: 233) refers to is yet to be earned in the case of Indology. Unless German Indology is understood as a participating moment in Germany’s own history, and as its product,

it can never be a scientific discipline according to its own definition of scientificity as historical clarification.

The wider question of Germanism, of course, cannot just be restricted to an analysis of German Indology or to German Orientalism. It would have to encompass wider aspects of German intellectual history, including philosophy, politics and religion. It would have to consider the record of early twentieth-century philosophers such as Martin Heidegger, whose remarks on the unique affinity between the German language and thought³⁹ outdo even Frauwallner's claims on science as a uniquely Āryan capacity.⁴⁰ It would require us to examine the place of India in official Nazi communiqués, not least Hitler's own ambiguous relationship to India.⁴¹ And it would also need to study Martin Luther's role in creating a new German consciousness based on linguistic identity.⁴² Nonetheless, any such inquiry would have to begin with Indology, if only because it provided the essential tools in this process, that is, a discourse on Āryan origins, a new national identity, and a progressive displacement of the source of religious authority from a Hebrew-speaking Semitic Orient to a more suitable "Āryan" Orient.

Notes

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1. On Said and his critics, see Varisco (2007).

2. Among these, mention must be made of Inden's *Imagining India* (1990), and Figueira's *The Exotic: A Decadent Quest* (1994) and *Aryans, Jews, Brahmins: Theorizing Authority through Myths of Identity* (2002). See also Marchand (2010); a summary of her thesis can be found in "German Orientalism and the Decline of the West" (Marchand 2001).

3. According to Pollock, "the size of the investment on the part of the German state in Indological studies throughout the nineteenth and the

first half of the twentieth centuries...and the volume of the production of German orientalist knowledge...almost certainly surpassed all the rest of Europe and America combined” (1993: 82). Such matters are notoriously hard to quantify, but Pollock’s impression would seem to be confirmed by the German self-understanding, especially as reflected in claims such as “Bonn—Benares on the Rhine” or “Germany—the Second Home of the Vedas,” both cited in Lütt (1987: 391). Lütt does not clarify his sources, but for at least one of his claims, I have been able to find a current example: the website of the department of Indology at Bonn University (<http://www.ioa.uni-bonn.de/abteilungen/indologie/abteilung/fachgeschichte>).

4. See Figueira (2002) for an enlightening account of the ambiguity of the German relationship to the Orient. More recently, Herling (2006) has argued that German Orientalist discourses must be located within the twin impulses of a Romantic yearning for the Orient (especially in J.G. Herder) and G.W.F. Hegel’s shutting the door on Indian philosophy.

5. <http://www.columbia.edu/itc/mealac/pollock/sks/proposal.html>.

6. Nicholson (2010) provides additional evidence for Pollock’s thesis. Challenging the scholarly dogma that “Hinduism” is largely a Western creation, Nicholson shows how in the sixteenth century scholars such as Vijñānabhikṣu engaged in a sophisticated hermeneutic reflection on the concept of Hinduism, attempting to identify its essential features.

7. Albrecht Weber’s statement in a letter written to Karl Otto von Raumer, the Prussian Minister of Culture (Kultusminister), in 1855 provides the best evidence of this underlying motivation. Weber writes: “The study of Indian antiquity has, in the last fifteen years, with the availability of the oldest holy scriptures of the Indians, the Vedas, gained unimaginably and increasingly in both practical and academic significance. The practical significance has affected England in particular and has been acknowledged both there and in India, by the Christian missions as well. The entire weight of the religious and cultural structure of contemporary India appears to rest on the Vedas. As soon as they are unveiled from the mysterious darkness surrounding them till now [*sobald nun diese nicht mehr in ihr bisheriges mysteriöses Dunkel gehüllt sind*], and made accessible to all, all the untruths shall be automatically revealed, and this shall, in time, put an end to the sorry plight of religious decadence [*dem traurigen Zustande der religiöser Versumpfung*] of India. The

critical analysis and publication of Vedic texts shall assume a role among the Indians, similar to Luther's translation of the Bible" (Letter to Karl Otto von Raumer, 12.10.1855 [Humboldt University Archives, P.F. 1433]; translated and cited in Sengupta 2004: 278–79).

8. The Indology list, www.indology.info, is maintained by Dominik Wujastyk. The list's searchable archives can be accessed at: <http://listserv.liv.ac.uk/archives/indology.html>.

9. The situation, however, is more complicated than Marchand suggests. While it is true that knowledge of the Orient ultimately led to a relativization and rethinking of a Eurocentric worldview, a lengthy history of interaction between social, cultural and intellectual factors stands behind this process. Indology's contributions to this development are at best incidental and almost certainly unintended.

10. My research challenges some of Marchand's conclusions, but more work needs to be done in this area. The influence of some German scholars clearly extended beyond the purely academic sphere: some, like Richard Garbe, sought to appeal to a popular audience; see especially his novella *The Redemption of the Brahman* (1894), a well-meaning if confused eulogy of Enlightenment consciousness made memorable by phrases such as "nigger is nigger" (35).

11. "In some fields, on the other hand, collaboration was no surprise; as we have seen, Indology, almost wholly devoted to the study of ancient Indian languages and literatures, had been inclined to romantic racism already in the late nineteenth century. In the 1930s, numerous Indologists sought to anchor Nazi racial theory in ancient 'Aryan' history and literature, including Erich Frauwallner, Hermann Güntert, Hermann Lommel, Paul Thieme, and Ludwig Alsdorf; Sheldon Pollock estimates that one-third of the approximately twenty-five professors of Indology were active in the party of SS" (Marchand 2010: 489).

12. For reasons of length, this article limits itself to the work of Grünendahl, who, in a series of articles since 2006, has emerged as Pollock's most vocal critic. However, the practice of attacking one's critics and hiding behind the rhetoric of "scientificity" has a long tradition in German scholarship. To cite but one example, in a recent review of the volume of the Third Dubrovnik International Conference on the Sanskrit Epics and Purāṇas, Andreas Bigger accuses Alf Hillebeitel of "presenting his own opinion of the genesis of the *Mahābhārata* with great eloquence,"

but “to a great extent eschewing [the need for] scientific demonstration” (2008: 496). Not content with this *ad hominem* attack, Bigger also accuses the “peer-review-system” of “breaking down” in this one case.

13. Compare also “post-Orientalist jargon” (Grünendahl 2006: 212n8).

14. *Ad hominem* attacks appear to be accepted practice in German Indology. In his recent review of Stuchlik’s (2009) study of Erich Frauwallner and National Socialism, Slaje asserts: “The author would have done better to have found a home for his book in the program of a nonscientific [nichtwissenschaftlichen] publishing house or in that of an ideological organ. With science [Wissenschaft] it has nothing to do—in spite of contrary suggestion through the reputable name of the publishing house, under whose imprint it was inexplicably allowed to appear” (2010: 463). Stuchlik has the only possible response to Slaje’s *ad hominem* attacks: he points out that Slaje’s review is “motivated by an obvious desire to discredit a critical book about the relationship of a scholar to National Socialism” and accuses him, “over and above the attempt at discrediting the book and its author,” of seeking “to wash the [accused] scholar clean [of Nazism]” (2011: 287). Compare also Stuchlik’s concluding remarks, “However, Slaje does no favors to the Frauwallner-school to which he belongs and which he believes he must defend in this manner: his engagement places him in the tradition of the questionable and only apparently de-Nazified [Scheinentnazifizierter] Frauwallner and thus confirms the book’s conclusion which pointed out the remarkable contemporary significance of the problem” (307–8). Interestingly, Hanneder is Slaje’s student, so that there would appear to be a consistent line one can trace from Frauwallner to Slaje to Hanneder. Not only does Hanneder share Slaje’s Orientalist prejudices, but, again like his teacher, he would seem to have a problem acknowledging the Nazi past of some of his predecessors: in his book on the history of Indology in Marburg (Hanneder 2010a), a series of biographical portraits of his predecessors to the chair in Indology at Marburg, he completely elides the fact that Johannes Nobel was one of the professors to sign the infamous “Bekanntnis der Professoren an den deutschen Universitäten und Hochschulen zu Adolf Hitler und dem nationalsozialistischen Staat” (Declaration of Allegiance to Adolf Hitler and the National Socialist State)—a fact Hanneder had to have known, since Pollock already mentions it (Pollock 1993: 94) and Hanneder has conducted a long-running feud with Pollock

over his 1993 article).

15. Gaeffke (1990) provides a good indication of the gulf between American and European approaches; compare especially his comments on the “immigrant population,” “secondary education in the United States,” “Easterners,” “women” and “affirmative action,” all of which he identifies as being responsible in part or whole for the deficits of American scholarship.

16. Hauer was a founder of the “Aryan Seminar” (das Arische Seminar) at the University of Tübingen and a member of the Schutzstaffel and Sturmabteilung. Interned after the war and found guilty of collaboration with the Nazis, Hauer was banned from teaching until 1950. On Hauer’s life and work, see Bauman (2005).

17. Wüst was president of the “Research Group for German Ancestral Heritage” (Forschungs- und Lehregemeinschaft Deutsches Ahnenerbe), a group dedicated to “scientifically” demonstrating the superiority of the Aryan races. It operated directly under the orders of Reichsführer-SS Heinrich Himmler. As its president and later curator, Wüst had a leading role in reorganizing German sciences in the interests of the National Socialist state (see, especially, Wüst 1942, which is perhaps the best introduction to his ideological commitments). Schreiber (2008) contains a detailed review of Wüst’s publications including archival material.

18. For a discussion of the book’s main thesis and approach, see my review (Adluri 2010b).

19. Indeed, the few “histories” one finds of the discipline tend more toward hagiographical writing than constituting serious attempts at a history of the discipline; see, for example, Stache-Rosen (1990); see also Hanneder (2010a). Both works downplay the Nazi history of German Indological professors.

20. The thesis is first formulated in Frauwallner 1939; but is also a cornerstone of his history of Indian philosophy (see Frauwallner 1953).

21. For a discussion of this problem in the context of *Mahābhārata* studies, see the editors’ introductions to the two-volume collection of Hildebeitel’s selected essays (Adluri and Bagchee 2011a,b).

22. Kant, for example, writes: “Die Negers von Afrika haben von der Natur kein Gefühl, welches über das Läppische stiege,” and continues, their distinction from the white race is therefore “eben so groß in Ansehung der Gemüthsfähigkeiten, als der Farbe nach” (cited in Demel

1992: 652). In another place, Kant notes: “dieser Kerl...war vom Kopf bis auf die Füße ganz schwarz, ein deutlicher Beweis, daß das, was er sagte dumm war” (652).

23. This split would also explain the peculiar mixture of primitivism and faith in an austere method characteristic of German Indology.

24. This is true not just of the early phase of German Orientalism, as it continues to be echoed even in recent writings. Besides the comment by Michael Hahn cited in Schulz’s write-up (see above), see especially Hanneder’s review of Schulz’s in his “Search the Web: ‘Deutsche Indologie,’” where he notes that, “the brief article is relevant, since it presents positions that many readers may find to be logical and capable of consensus. No one who is informed about the discipline will consider the first paragraph an exaggeration. German scientists need not struggle to ‘catch up with the world’s best’ in this one area” (2010b: 82).

25. Lariviere (1994) nicely brings out Oldenberg’s implicit logic: “Obviously, we cannot expect Indians of the tenth century AD to suddenly appear and explain their own work to us—the equivalent of insisting on the Trobriand Islander’s own account. Our Indian colleagues are no less free of bias. For them, as for us, the past is a foreign country.” I am unclear on exactly why Lariviere considers it impossible that the Trobriand Islanders should not present their “own account” to us, or what use our constructed histories or ethnographies of the Islanders are, if we do not take their self-understanding into account. In fact, if his claim is indeed true, then scholarship no longer has any external referents: what European scholarship (whether Indology, anthropology, or ethnography) says is true, is true. In effect, Lariviere’s statement justifies imposing a completely foreign scientific system in place of the “native” response. Lariviere, of course, does not see any problem with this form of external, Orientalizing knowledge. In fact, he explicitly welcomes it and asserts the right of Western scholars to carry out such scholarship, especially if the Trobrianders, as he says, are not inclined to write ethnographies about themselves!

26. Olivelle provides a good overview: “Since the nineteenth century there has been among western scholars a pervasive mistrust of ancient Indian interpreters and commentators, especially the much-maligned Śaṅkara, as reliable guides to understanding ancient Indian texts. Early scholars were confident—to modern eyes, overconfident—of their ability

to uncover ‘original’ meanings through philological acumen unmediated by native gloss or comment....To restore these texts to their presumed pristine state prior to the corrupting intervention of scribes and commentators, European Sanskritists of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries undertook to create ‘critical editions’ of several Upaniṣads, the most famous of which were Böhtlingk’s editions of the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* and the *Chāndogya*. Strange though it may seem, none of these so-called ‘critical editions’ used manuscript material; even where manuscript differences are noted, the editions were not based on a careful sifting and collation of all the available manuscript evidence and the application of recognized editorial principles. There is no evidence that even a thorough search for manuscripts was ever undertaken” (1998: 173–74).

27. On the ideology of science and its functions in the National Socialist state, see Cornwell (2003).

28. National Socialism, for example, was substantially the product of a rhetoric of “Geist” as Junginger (2008) and Lincoln (2008) have so effectively shown; see especially Lincoln’s translation and discussion of Güntert’s *Ursprung der Germanen* on pages 190–91.

29. The Forschungsgemeinschaft Deutsches Ahnenerbe was an organization founded by Heinrich Himmler in 1935 with the aim of studying Germanic history. In practice, however, its activities tended to an intellectual justification of the superiority of the Nordic or Āryan races. Literature on the Ahnenerbe abounds; a good place to begin is Junginger (2008). The classic study is still Kater (2006).

30. That is, Wolfram Sievers, although the enclosed letter is signed by a junior official on his behalf.

31. The letter however is not addressed to Himmler’s office in the Wilhelmstraße, but to Gestapo headquarters in Prinz-Albrecht-Str. 8.

32. I thank my colleague Joydeep Bagchee for this document.

33. See note 31 above.

34. Erich Frauwallner, “Letter to Prof. Dr. W. Wüst, 31st January 1943” (Federal Archives G 117, slide 1920); emphasis added.

35. Indeed, the word is only inadequately translated by the English “science,” which carries strong connotations of the natural or physical sciences, in contrast to the German term, which has always been associated with a kind of comprehensive moral and spiritual rectitude, and hence also primarily with the cultural or human sciences, the so-called

“Geisteswissenschaften.”

36. Meanwhile, the historical prejudice skews German Indological scholarship in other ways, especially its insistence that any statement in a text ought to be primarily understood “historically”; for a discussion of how this prejudice continues to vitiate German scholarship on the *Mahābhārata*, see my (Adluri 2011a) introduction to a special issue of *Journal of Vaishnava Studies* on the Critical Edition of the *Mahābhārata*; see also my (Adluri 2011b) article in the same issue on a more sophisticated hermeneutic approach to texts.

37. Gaeffke is of German origin. He fought in World War II between 1944 and 1945 and was then interned between 1945 and 1946. Between 1947 and 1948, Gaeffke studied history and German in Regensburg under Ernst Schwarz, an early member of the NSDAP (for details of Schwarz’ Nazi-party activities, see Klee 2007: 558). Schwarz awakened an interest in Indo-Germanic culture in Gaeffke, who then continued his studies under Walter Porzig, a documented Nazi sympathizer and leader of a Nazi cell in Bern (see Lerchenmueller 2004: 73). After spending three years in India on an Indian government scholarship between 1952 and 1955, Gaeffke was finally appointed Professor of Modern Indian Literature at the University of Pennsylvania in 1972.

38. Exact statistics of the state of Indology in Germany are hard to come by, but anecdotal evidence suggests that the discipline is in serious trouble (see Schulz N.d.). The last published review of Indology in Germany I am aware of is von Stietencron 1981 (see the appendix, “Short Information on the Indological Departments at Universities in the Federal Republic of Germany,” 138–46). A comparison with the situation in the heyday of German Indology is instructive (see the chapter “The Study of Sanskrit in German Universities, 1818–1914,” in McGetchin 2009: 76–101). A study of German departments, including closures in recent years, is an urgent desideratum.

39. “I have in mind the special inner relationship of the German language with that of the Greeks and with their thought. The French continually confirm this for me nowadays. When they begin to think, they speak German, assuring that they could not get by with their own language” (Heidegger 2009: 331).

40. For a discussion of Heidegger’s allegiance to Luther and the problems this poses for his conception of human existence, see Adluri (2010a).

41. “ ‘League of suppressed nations’ is a stupid catchphrase....When today the Indian lives under the domination of England or the black under the domination of some other European race, this lies justified in their inferiority....The freedom struggle of the blacks, Indians, etc. is the attempt to break through a natural hierarchy....The admiration of Gandhi is, in my eyes, a racial [rassische] perversity” (cited in Sieferle 1987: 457; my translation).

42. Although emancipatory in many ways, Luther engendered unanticipated consequences; as Shirer notes, “It is difficult to understand the behavior of most German Protestants in the first Nazi years unless one is aware of two things: their history and the influence of Martin Luther. The great founder of Protestantism was both a passionate anti-Semite and a ferocious believer in absolute obedience to political authority” (1990: 236).

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