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# *Orientalism and the Postcolonial Predicament*

Perspectives on South Asia

Edited by  
Carol A. Breckenridge  
and Peter van der Veer



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*Sheldon Pollock*

### 3. Deep Orientalism?

#### Notes on Sanskrit and Power Beyond the Raj

smṛtibhramśād buddhināśah  
(*Bhagavadgītā* 2.63)

#### Orientalism and Indology

This paper brings together two projects, both still in progress, and frames them within the general problematic of orientalism, which, as it is usually conceived, may seem peripheral to both. Thinking about German Indology during the years 1933–45 and about forms of precolonial domination in South Asia in this framework, however, suggests that the question orientalism, at least in its common contemporary sense, is usually thought to pose—to what degree were European scholarship of Asia and the colonial domination of Asia mutually constitutive?—may be too narrow. The case of German Indology, a dominant form of European orientalism, leads us to ask whether orientalism cannot be as powerfully understood with reference to the national political culture within which it is practiced as to the colony toward which it is directed; whereas examining forms of social power in India before the Raj leads me to believe that “orientalist constructions” in the service of colonial domination may be only a specific historical instance of a larger, transhistorical, albeit locally inflected, interaction of knowledge and power. I will enlarge on these questions a little more broadly before turning to them individually.

The history of classical Indology in the West, more particularly of Sanskrit studies, discloses a process of knowledge production fundamentally informed by, and serving to enhance, European power in Asia.<sup>1</sup> This is all well known—although in isolating three specific forms of such power my assessment may be idiosyncratic—and I will be brief about it here. What this orientalist commonplace cannot readily accommodate, however, is German Indology. One way to theorize this case is to consider the possibility that the movement of orientalist knowledge may be multidirec-

tional. We usually imagine its vector as directed outward—toward the colonization and domination of Asia; in the case of German Indology we might conceive of it as potentially directed inward—toward the colonization and domination of Europe itself. Orientalism may be said to create an opposite when this “othering” fits both with historical paradigms and with political needs, as in the Middle Eastern matrix of semite, infidel, colonized, and so on charted in the studies of Edward Said. In the case of the Germans who continued, however subliminally, to hold the nineteenth-century conviction that the origin of European civilization was to be found in India (or at least that India constituted a genetically related sibling), and who at the same time had none of the requisite political needs, orientalism as an ideological formation on the model of Said simply could not arise. On the contrary, their “othering” and orientalizations were played out at home. At least this seems to me one way to understand Indology in the National Socialist (NS) state, for which I give a brief institutional and intellectual-historical sketch below.

A fundamental thing about orientalism is that it offers an extreme and often transparent instance of knowledge generating and sustaining power and the domination that defines it. How might we apply this insight of the orientalist critique to precolonial forms of domination? Pared to the bone, orientalism is disclosed as a species of a larger discourse of power that divides the world into “betters and lessers” and thus facilitates the domination (or “orientalization” or “colonization”) of any group.<sup>2</sup> From this perspective, indigenous discourses of power—the various systematized and totalized constructions of inequality in traditional India—might be viewed as a preform of orientalism. Raising such a possibility, at all events, might encourage extending to premodern Indian cultures the problematics of power and domination necessary to help us interpret their products.

The status of these indigenous discourses of power in everyday relations of domination has been a principal target of the critique of orientalism in India, a critique conducted, however, largely in the absence of adequate analysis of the discourses themselves. Sanskrit knowledge presents itself to us as a major vehicle of the ideological form of social power in traditional India, and I want to look at this self-presentation and some of the questions that have been raised about its status as an “orientalist construction.” At the same time, I will examine briefly one feature of this ideological form of Sanskrit knowledge, namely, its monopolization, and thematize the restriction of access to Sanskrit “literacy” as a principal mode

of domination. Admittedly, these are "mandarin materials" I am working with, but much ideological discourse, almost by definition, consists of mandarin materials. I also acknowledge that I do not attain (or seek) at present much institutional, regional, or historical specificity. But the lack of a social-historical framework of analysis for domination doesn't entail the lack of its historical social reality.

Widening the scope of orientalism to include discursively similar phenomena is not meant as an attempt to relativize and thereby detoxify European colonialism. Nor, of course, does focusing on the contributions of German Indology to the discourse of National Socialism, or of high Brahmanism to the ideological formations of precolonial India, mean to suggest that other discourses of power—directed at Palestinians on the West Bank, Brahman communities in contemporary Tamil Nad, or whomever—do not exist. On the contrary, it is precisely by expanding our analysis that we may be able to isolate a certain morphology of domination that many such discourses share—in their invoking higher knowledge naturalizing cultural inequality ("revelation," "science," "intuition of the blood"), creating the idea of race and concurrently legislating racial exclusivity, asserting linguistic hierarchy and claiming superiority for the language of the masters, and securing an order of domination by monopolizing "life chances" such as forms of literacy.

It might be argued that expanding the term "orientalism" to cover phenomena beyond, and before, colonialism jeopardizes the heuristic historical specificity of the very concept. To a degree this criticism is valid, yet I think we may lose something still greater if not doing so constrains our understanding of the two other historical phenomena.

Both sets of problems, German Indology in the period of National Socialism and social power in precolonial India and the interpretation of Sanskrit cultural products, are complicated issues that I do not pretend in either instance to be fully competent to adjudicate. German Indology presents so many problems that I see I have often been driven in what follows from the more central—a consideration of academic-political discursive formations—to the more peripheral—a narrative of "personal politics." (The tendency for histories of academic disciplines for the NS period to veer toward *Personalpolitik* suggests others share my conceptual difficulties.) The question is whether the motivating impulse, the very epistemological foundation of so much German Indology up to the end of the Second World War (which I think is the German search for national self-understanding) is in its very nature a reactionary impulse. If not, how did

such scholarship find itself, so easily and so vastly, contributing to reactionary politics? How did even those whose overt politics seem to have had little to do with National Socialism come so readily to contribute to precisely the same discourse as officers in the SS? Finally and more broadly, how far do regnant discourses—and these are, ultimately, the discourses that are politically regnant—constrain what we can know and why we want to know it?

As for the work currently being done to "de-orientalize" the study of South Asia, I have come to regard it as an essential precondition for classical Indology, and as the most exciting development in the field in this generation. Yet at the same time, I have begun to sense that some arguments and perspectives currently dominant could benefit from a more capacious historical view and a more nuanced methodological reflection on what ideological power—projected, imagined, hoped-for power—in addition to "real" power might mean for our interpretation of Indian cultures. It is crucial to ask to what degree we must take into consideration asymmetries of power, interpreted though all the accounts of them must be, in the context of "Sanskrit culture" when trying to understand its products. Can we not argue that redirecting our work to this problematic is required not only by a morally sensitive scholarship, but even more compellingly, perhaps, by an epistemological necessity, given that social contextuality—however infinitely expandable it may be—and, correlatively, relations of social power, form the condition of possibility for any cultural meaning?

I have no illusions that I have successfully negotiated all the strong whirlpools, epistemological, political, and moral whirlpools, that confront anyone approaching the history of German Indology, still less so the problem of writing a history of cultural power in a precolonial world from within a postcolonial one (particularly the problem that such cultural critique sometimes might seem to recapitulate the very colonial discourse it seeks to transcend). The "Notes" in the subtitle is meant at least to circumscribe the ambitions I have and the claims I am prepared to make. But I want to share these notes because I think the issues in each of the two cases are too central to what, ultimately, Indologists do to permit the luxury of silence on the plea of specialization.

Finally, placing my two projects within the framework of "orientalism" reinforces the necessity to think about the critical dimension of this scholarship. A history of Indology, extracolony no less than colonial, that finds it to be enmeshed in power from its very beginnings, and an analysis

of the object of Indology, or at least of Sanskrit studies, as an indigenous form of knowledge production equally saturated with domination, have important implications. We are forced to ask ourselves whether the Indology we ourselves practice continues its past role. Which of those forms of traditional domination that have existed in India remain sedimented in contemporary society? What can we learn about our own history as well as Indian history from all this, and what might be some components of a critical Indology that confronts domination in both the scholarly process and the scholarly object?

### Indology, Power, and the Case of Germany

The early history of Indology is constituted out of a network of factors, economic, social, political, and cultural, that make any generalization about it at the same time simplification. With that caution understood, I think we can broadly identify three constituents in early Indian studies as especially important for their historical effectiveness and continuing vitality. These are British colonialism, Christian evangelism (and its flip side, theosophy and related irrationalisms), and German romanticism-Wissenschaft.

In the West, Sanskrit studies from the beginning developed from the impetus provided by one or another of these constituents. The earliest grammars of the language, for example, are the work of German and Austrian missionaries of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (Hanxleden, Paulinus; Roth 1988); many of the first Sanskrit manuscripts in Europe were collected by French missionaries, some of the first attempts at Sanskrit editing and publishing are those of the British Baptists at Serampore in Bengal (e.g., Carey and Marshman 1806–10). One of the first Europeans to learn Sanskrit well enough to make use of it was—obligatory reference—William Jones, supreme court judge under the East India Company (1785; Cannon 1970: 646, 666, 682ff.), whose principal motive, like that of another important early Sanskritist, Colebrook, was the administration of law in British India. One of the critical moments in the academicization of Sanskrit studies was the encounter in Paris (1803–04) of the dominant character in German romanticism, Friedrich von Schlegel, with Alexander Hamilton of the East India Company (Rocher 1968). From Hamilton, Schlegel learned enough Sanskrit (*Über die Sprache und Weisheit der Indier*, 1808; Oppenberg 1965) to encourage his brother, August Wilhelm, to learn

more, and it was A. W. von Schlegel who went on to hold the first chair for Sanskrit in Germany, at the University in Bonn (1818).

All of this history is certainly well known. I review it here to disentangle the three principal components so that, by arranging them side by side in their bare outline, we can appreciate more fully the fact that it was particular institutions of European power, the church, the corporation, the university, that created and later sponsored Indology; that, however we may wish to characterize the ends of these various institutions, it was their ends that Indology was invented to serve.

The principal target of the orientalist critique in South Asia has been the intimate and often complicated tie, sometimes the crudely heavy link, between Indology and British colonialism, and we now possess sharp analyses of some of its most subtle forms (for instance, Cohn 1987).<sup>3</sup> Some of the postulates in this critique about precolonial power, and the more complex and challenging issue of a postcolonial “European epistemological hegemony,” I will discuss below. But the creation of Indological knowledge and its function in colonial domination need no elaboration here.

The various forms of cultural and spiritual domination represented by missionary Indology do not require special comment here either, although its cognate phenomenon, nineteenth-century theosophy and its wide range of modern-day incarnations, merit discussion within an orientalist analysis. It would be worth examining how these representations, especially in their highly commodified, scientistically packaged, and aggressively marketed contemporary forms, continue to nourish one of the most venerable orientalist constructions, the fantasy of a uniquely religion-obsessed India (and a uniquely transcendent Indian wisdom), and how this fantasy in turn continuously reproduces itself in contemporary scholarship, given the institutional monopolization of Indian studies by the “history of religions,” and presents one of the most serious obstacles to the creation of a critical Indology.

The third major component of Indology, my oddly hyphenated German romanticism-Wissenschaft, 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.<sup>4</sup> Trying to conceptualize in larger terms the meanings and functions of German orientalism invites us to think differently, or at least more expansively, about orientalism in general. It directs our attention momentarily away from the periphery to the national political culture and the relationship of knowledge and power at the core—directs us, potentially, toward

forms of internal colonialism, and certainly toward the domestic politics of scholarship.

No serious encounter with orientalism as it relates to traditional India can avoid the case of Germany. There are two reasons that are immediately obvious, because of their very materiality: 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 (without this involving, it bears repeating, any direct colonial instrumentality) and the volume of the production of German orientalist knowledge. On both counts Germany almost certainly surpassed all the rest of Europe and America combined.<sup>5</sup>

In dissecting what accordingly has to be seen as the dominant form of Indianist orientalism, both in sheer quantity and in intellectual influence, two components seems worth isolating: the German romantic quest for identity and what was eventually to become one of its vehicles, the emerging vision of *Wissenschaft*.

The romantic search for self-definition (beginning in the early nineteenth century but with impulses continuing halfway into the twentieth, and perhaps beyond) comprised initially a complex confrontation with, on the one hand, Latin-Christian Europe, and on the other, the universalizing Enlightenment project of humanism. The discovery of Sanskrit was one of the crucial components in this search. As a British historian put it in 1879: "Not in a merely scientific or literary point of view, but in one strictly practical, the world is not the same world as it was when men had not yet dreamed of the kindred between Sanscrit, Greek, and English"—and, he should have added, German.<sup>6</sup> As is manifest in the responses of the first Germans to learn the language (Friedrich von Schlegel and Othmar Frank, among others), Sanskrit was thought to give evidence of a historical culture, and spiritual and ultimately racial consanguinity, for Germans independent of, and far more ancient than, Latin or Christian culture.

This romantic dream seems to have sharpened into the vision of an Indo-Germanic *Geisteswelt* only gradually. The principal German cultural dichotomy in the early nineteenth century had juxtaposed Germania and Rome. This came to be replaced by the antithesis and finally essentialized dichotomy between "Indo-German" and "Semite." Indo-German, according to one of the best short accounts, was largely a *Kontrastbegriff*, called into being by the social and economic emancipation of Jews in the course of the century (von See 1970). But what made it possible to construct and consolidate this dichotomy, in addition to an "orientalizing" epistemology, was "orientalist" knowledge itself.

The discourse on Aryanism that this orientalist knowledge generated was, to a degree not often realized, available to the Germans already largely formulated for them at the hands of British scholarship by the middle of the nineteenth century. This discourse included a generous selection of what were to become the topoi of 1930s Germany: the celebration of Aryan superiority; the willingness to recognize racial kinship between European and Indian coupled with a readiness to establish (where this was politically useful) and explain (with the commonplaces that recur in 1933) the degeneracy of the South Asian Aryans; the politically driven disputes on the original homeland; even proposals for a eugenics program in India (calling for a revivification through racial planning of the debilitated South Asian Aryan stock). It might even be said that Aryanism was one conceptual building block in the totalizing projects of a good deal of nineteenth-century British work on India (H. S. Maine, J. W. Jackson, F. Max Mueller—a list easily extended).<sup>7</sup>

In the German instance, however, orientalism as a complex of knowledge-power has 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. If the "German problem" is a problem of identity, and "the German figure of totalitarianism" racism (Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy 1990: 296), 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.

There is no need to trace further here the beginnings in the nineteenth century of the orientalist creation of Indo-German as counteridentity to Semite, still less the general place of India in the rise of German romanticism, for a good deal of work has already been done on those topics (e.g., Schwab 1950: 74ff.; Willson 1964; Stern 1961: 3–94; Römer 1985: 62ff.). What I want to focus on instead is the end point of the process, by which I mean not so much its chronological end but its consummation, in the period of National Socialism. In this culminating instance, I think two things happen: First, there come to be merged what hitherto seemed by and large discrete components of German orientalism, romanticism and *Wissenschaft*. Second, "orientalist" knowledge becomes part of the official worldview of a newly imagined empire, and in this German allomorph of British imperialism—the attempt to colonize Europe, and Germany itself, from within—orientalism has its special function to discharge.<sup>8</sup>

With some exceptions (the Göttingen orientalist, though not Indologist, Paul de Lagarde in the last third of the nineteenth century, for instance), the emerging vision of science/scholarship, *Wissenschaft*, seemed

to be a current running parallel to and rarely intersecting with the quasi-mystical nativism of romanticism; indeed, this disjunction seems somehow prefigured already in the characters and careers of those fellow Sanskrit students in Paris in 1815, the romantic A. W. von Schlegel and the scientist Franz Bopp (the latter of whom in 1816 was the first systematically to demonstrate the cognate relationship between Indic and European languages).<sup>9</sup> And I suggest it was precisely a new interpenetration of "science" and nativism that in the 1930s endowed German Indology with its specific power and significance. Indeed, the conjunction in NS Indology of cultural-nationalist primitivism and high intellectual technology presents an instance at the level of the academy of a much broader phenomenon fundamental to National Socialist culture, which a recent scholar has aptly characterized as "reactionary modernism."<sup>10</sup>

The characteristics of this "science" merit historical analysis no less than the constructions of romanticism. An inventory of the epistemological instruments of *Indologie* would include, besides Bopp's comparative linguistics, other nineteenth-century intellectual technologies developed for the human sciences, such as the text-criticism of Wolf and Lachmann, the philology of Böckh, and the historiography of Ranke. What above all interests me here, however, is the general conceptual framework within which these components combine to operate. Part of this framework consists in the claim of objectivity, of "value-free scholarship," which seems to have been more vigorously asserted the deeper the crisis of European culture grew.

I want to look very briefly at one of the more forceful and historically significant apologies for such scholarship, the programmatic lecture "Wissenschaft als Beruf" (Science/Scholarship as Vocation/Profession) that Max Weber delivered before students of the University of Munich only months before his death. There is nothing in itself "orientalist" about this defense, which was made by a political economist and meant to apply broadly to the human sciences. But it is worth singling out by way of preface to a discussion of National Socialist Indological scholarship partly because of its historical location—it was presented in late 1918 or the beginning of 1919, the liminal moment in modern German history;<sup>11</sup> partly because it gives lucid expression to a set of beliefs about scholarship and to a justification of method that seem to infuse the scholarship of the period, including academic Indology; and partly because of what may be a deep and enduring self-deception. I think it is all-important to try to understand the set of presuppositions that sustained belief in the pos-

sibility of producing "serious scholarly work," which viewed itself as utterly distinct from other modes of state discourse such as propaganda, directly under the aegis of the swastika. In a way, Weber's lecture, intended as an attack on the politicization of scholarship, and indeed, viewed with suspicion and hostility especially by conservatives,<sup>12</sup> may help us grasp one basic ideological precondition for the intersection of scholarship and state power, at the very moment when that intersection was about to become interpenetration.

What for Weber were the "least problematic" issues of scholarship need no problematizing here. It is irrelevant for understanding much NS-era Indology to question the formal and positivistic ideals of scholarship (consistency, noncontradiction, evidence, argument, philological and historical precision), for they were also accepted as ideals generally by NS scholars. Nor is there anything very troubling about Weber's claim that, given the fundamental undecidability of competing value systems, scholarship should attempt to remain value-neutral. What is surprising is his reluctance to extend this relativism to "science" itself, to its descriptions, representations, constructions. We are presented at once with a conception of the "political," as open advocacy of partisanship, that seems wilfully shallow, and with an unquestioned assumption that, despite the fundamentally political nature of social and cultural existence, including scholarly existence, the transcendence of political values really is possible. Weber demands, for example, of the students listening that they should just "establish the facts." He offers to prove "in the works of our historians that, wherever the man of scholarship comes forth with his own value judgments, the full understanding of the facts ceases" (Weber 1984: 26). In all of this there is little acknowledgment that historical or cultural facts (Weber takes "democracy," that most ideologically protean entity, as his example) may not actually be lying about like so many brute existents waiting merely to be assembled, but are actually constituted as "facts" by the prejudgments—by the values—of the historians and "men of scholarship" themselves. Relentless in driving politics from the lecture room, Weber seems to have left it to rule untroubled in the study.

The objectivism Weber enshrines was no more questioned in Indology than it was in any other institutional scholarship in the Germany of the period. And what I am wondering is whether it is the putative separability of "fact" from "value," to which Weber gives expression in his lecture, and consequently the decontextualization and dehistoricization of the scholarly act itself, the objectification of scholarship—and all in the

interests of a depoliticization of scholarship in the face of war and revolution—that enabled some of the most politically deformed scholarship in history, including Indological history, to come into existence. I want at least to entertain this hypothesis when examining institutional Indology in Germany during the period of NS power, 1933–45, although the paradox of NS scholarship is more complicated: While denouncing a Weberian objectivism as alien to the spirit of scholarship meant to serve the new Germany,<sup>13</sup> the Indologists in fact believed that the scholarship they were producing to that end was scientific and objective. The NS Indologists, it seems, were Weberians in reverse: relentless in driving “objectivism” from the classroom, they yet felt it had to rule, and could indeed rule, in the study.

### Ex Oriente Nox: Indology in the Total State

Before the logical aporia of legitimacy, political systems have only a relatively limited repertory of methods of legitimation. Some political systems (certain once-existing “socialist” systems, for example) employ myths of utopia, while fascist systems employ myths of origins (Lyotard 1987). The NS state sought legitimation in part by the myth of “Aryan” origins. This, as we have seen, had been provided early in nineteenth-century Indian orientalism—a benchmark is Friedrich von Schlegel’s identification (1819) of the “Arier” as “our Germanic ancestors, while they were still in Asia” (Sieferle 1987: 460). In the later NS search for authenticity, Sanskritists, like other intellectuals—“experts in legitimation,” as Gramsci put it—did their part in extrapolating and deepening this discourse. They finally would heed the words of the nineteenth-century proto-fascist (and “Wahldeutscher”) Houston Stuart Chamberlain: “Indology must help us to fix our sights more clearly on the goals of our culture. A great humanistic task has fallen to our lot to accomplish; and thereto is aryan India summoned.”

The myth of Aryan origins burst from the world of dream into that of reality when the process of what I suggest we think of as an internal colonization of Europe began to be, so to speak, shastrically codified, within two months of the National Socialists’ capturing power (April 1933). The “Law on the Reconstitution of the German Civil Service,” the “Law on the Overcrowding of German Schools,” and a host of supplementary laws and codicils of that same month were the first in a decade dense with legal measures designed to exclude Jews and other minority

communities from the apparatuses of power (including “authoritative” power, the schools and universities), and to regulate a wide range of social, economic, and biological activities.

For some, linguistic activity should have been included. The Kiel (later Munich) Sanskrit and Iranist Hermann Güntert had already in 1932 expressed a view on the relationship of race and language consonant with such control, which he elaborated in a manifesto in 1938, “New Times, New Goals,” when he became editor of the journal *Wörter und Sachen*.

A man alien to a given ethnic and racial group does not become, simply because he speaks their language—one originally alien to him—and “beholds the world” via the constructions of that language, a comrade of the folk [*Volks-genosse*], even if the language—which was originally alien—had been used already by his forebears. For far more potently, deterministically, unconsciously do primal dispositions and peculiarities of his inherited substance issue forth, whereas language is far more easily changed and transformed than those deep spiritual dispositions such as customs, notions of justice, Weltanschauung, and the general emotional life. Should those who are alien to the race have long-term influence, they would transform the language according to their own nature and try to adapt it as far as possible to their spiritual natures—that is to say, they would become pests upon, corrupters of this language. It is therefore perfectly clear: A people creates itself a language appropriate to it, and not vice versa! A people is the power that commands all the life of a language.<sup>14</sup>

The whole weight of these early laws rested on the concept “Aryan” (or rather, somehow significantly, at first on its negation<sup>15</sup>): “Beamte, die *nicht arischer* Abstammung sind, sind in den Ruhestand zu versetzen” (“Civil servants *not of aryan* descent are to be pensioned off”); “. . . die Zahl der *Nichtarier* [soll] ihren Anteil an der Gesamtbevölkerung des Reichs nicht übersteigen” (“The number of *non-aryans* [allowed into schools] [shall] not exceed their percentage among the general population of the empire”) (Walk 1981: 12ff.).<sup>16</sup> It is not necessary to review here the long and rather complex prehistory of the term *Arier*—the essence is caught in the remark of Victor Klemperer, that “‘aryan man’ is rooted in philology, not natural science” (Klemperer [1947] 1987: 148)<sup>17</sup>—nor to analyze the justification of the category constructed by “race-science,” which was the master conceptual scheme in operation here and which itself had significant orientalist dimensions.<sup>18</sup> The point I want to make has nothing whatever to do with historical truth or scientificity of terminology; it has to do with the mobilization of meaning for the purpose of domination as it is contextually bound to Germany in the years 1933–45.



In this connection, two points are worth stressing. First, the concept of *Arier*, which was ambiguous to the scholarly mind and opaque to the popular, absurdly so for a juridical term, required substantial exegesis, as the initial supplementary decrees for the execution of the *Arierparagraph* make clear.<sup>19</sup> Second, to contribute uncritically to this exegesis was to justify what Löwith aptly terms “political zoology” and to contribute to the marginalization, exclusion, dehumanization, and ultimately extermination of “lesser” peoples in a manner congruent with, if exceeding, standard-issue colonialism. In this project, German Indology participated in some crucial ways. I want to explore a few of these, adopting Haug’s formulation and asking how German Indologists *qua* Indologists, by means of their specific epistemological tools and sense of scholarly purpose as Indologists, helped to effect the “fascisization” of Germany Indologically (cf. Haug 1989: 5).

Regarding the role of “ideology” in the consolidation and execution of NS power, I will only allude here briefly to the ongoing debates on functionalist and “idealist” explanations that have long been contending in the analysis of National Socialism (as indeed of other political formations). The importance and effectivity of the notional, of the intellectual and ideological and “weltanschaulich,” in addition to or even independent of the material, seem to have gained at least parity in current re-thinking in the historiography of the movement. This seems in part attributable to the fuller history of the Holocaust now available, since the extermination of the Jews would seem to pose a serious challenge to any purely functionalist explanation of National Socialism.<sup>20</sup> Yet, whatever the actual effectivity of the ideational dimension of National Socialism may have been, there is no doubt that the builders of the movement believed in the necessity of providing it with an intellectually convincing doctrine. And this was to become one that in the end relied, more than any other state doctrine in European history, on the putative results of scholarly—archaeological, philological, anthropological, Indological—research.

I can examine here in some detail only a few examples of Indology as practiced in NS Germany; an exhaustive typology and analysis are premature. The range of contribution is wide and multifaceted (and bibliographically altogether unsystematized); the degree of candor and self-consciousness about congruence with state discourse differs markedly in these contributions; and the interpretation of most of them necessitates a confrontation with serious problems of scholarly method and purpose. Yet one thing that is uniform and clear about these texts is the set of basic

“orientalist” ideologemes they adopt—about an Aryan culture of the past, its survival into and meaning for the German present, the role and ability of Indology in capturing its nature, its superiority and the concomitant debasement of others—and the scholarly foundations with which these components are supplied.

The earliest Indological intervention after the National Socialists took power, within months of the law on the “Reconstitution” of the civil service mentioned above, and a model for what was to come, is the programmatic article “German Antiquity and the History of Aryan Thought” by Walther Wüst, Vedic specialist at the University of Munich, student of Wilhelm Geiger, successor to Hans Oertel, later rector of the university (Wüst 1934).<sup>21</sup> What the first adjective in the title means, says Wüst, everyone knows; the second one, however, is far less clear, although “by reason of the laws of racial protection it has become more familiar than any other word in the German language.” To explicate it, Wüst brings to bear the full and ponderous apparatus of philological and historical Indology. Etymology, literary history, comparative religion, folklore, and archaeology are all summoned to testify that the ancient *āryas* of India were those who felt themselves to be the “privileged, the legitimate” (Wüst’s interpretation of *ārya*) because they established the superiority of their race, their culture, their religion, and their worldview in the course of struggle with host populations. The “deep significance” and “indestructible grandeur” attaching to the terms *Arier*, *arisch* have been preserved into the present thanks to tradition and racial memory (*Erberinnerung*). The *RgVeda* as an Aryan text “free of any taint of Semitic contact”; the “almost Nordic zeal” that lies in the Buddhist conception of the *mārga*; the “Indo-Germanic religion-force” of yoga; the sense of race and the “conscious desire for racial protection”; the “*volksnahe* kingship”—such is the meaning of the Indo-Aryan past for the National Socialist present, a present that, for Wüst, could not be understood without this past.

The search for German identity and NS self-legitimation in the Aryan past found in Wüst’s early essay is characteristic of a great deal of Indological work of the period; his article in fact is a catalog of commonplaces. But equally characteristic, and crucial for us to note, is the “scholarly” dimension. Wüst repeatedly distances himself from amateurs, charlatans, and ignorant nonspecialists (*Sachkundigen*) and invokes and exploits to a fault the standards of philological and historical scholarship. More than anything, it is this commitment to “science” to substantiate the order of the state, and the vision that scholarship could gain access to a realm

of objective truth independent of historical interests and values, that makes this orientalist scholarship so typical of the period and so disquieting.

Lest we isolate this scholarly activity from the world of concrete power, it is worth recounting a speech given by Wüst (in his capacity as [then] SS-Hauptsturmführer) on March 10, 1937, in the Hacker-Keller, Munich, before the commanders of the SS officer corps South and the SS subordinate commanders and regulars of the Munich garrison. In "The Führer's Book 'Mein Kampf' as a Mirror of the Aryan World-View" (1937), Wüst seeks to establish a general set of continuities between ancient Indian and contemporary German thought (or rather *Weltanschauung*, for which he offers a long etymological excursus).<sup>22</sup> After providing a catalog of what he takes to be basic "Indo-Aryan" representations (the world as ordered and "bright," existence as growth, the eye as a microcosmic sun, god as the father, the law of fate, and the like), he argues that all of it is to be found in Hitler's *Mein Kampf*, a text that thus evinces a spiritual continuum stretching from the second millennium B.C. to the present. "But we see these connections in their maturest state," he adds, "perhaps in personality. In this context, I would like to make reference to a particularly significant connection." He proceeds to recount the Buddha's sermon on the Middle Way, the realization that fulfillment lay between self-indulgence and self-denial, and then proceeds to argue that

this very closely correlates with an experience the Führer had during his Vienna period, when as part-time worker he came face to face with suffering, and went through the wretched dwellings of the workers and saw their want. There the Führer spoke the profound words: "At that time I was warned not to choke on Theory nor to become shallow on Reality" ["Damals wurde ich gewarnt, entweder in der Theorie zu ersticken oder in der Wirklichkeit zu verflachen"]. I know of no more striking example of this hereditary, long-term tradition than the ingenious synopsis contained in the brief words of the Führer and the longer confession of the great aryan personality of antiquity, the Buddha. There is only one explanation for this, and that is the basic explanation for components of the National-Socialist world-view—the circumstance, the basic fact of racial constitution. And thanks to fate, this was preserved through the millennia . . . [through] the holy concept of ancestral heritage [*Ahmenerbe*]. (Wüst 1937: 17–18)<sup>23</sup>

Neither Wüst's improbable thesis, nor the spectacle of a professor of Sanskrit lecturing before members of the central apparatus of Nazi terror on Indo-European etymologies and Buddhist *sūtras* to prove the "absolute fact" of the superiority of Aryan cosmology and its afterlife, should blind

us to what is significant here: the propriety and need Wüst felt of legitimating the NS *Weltanschauung* by anchoring it in an ancient Indian *darśana*.

As an example of pedantic *wissenschaftliche* antiquarianism coupled with a primitivism and irrational cultural nostalgia that finds itself suddenly, incredibly, and perilously invited into the inner sanctum of political power, the work and career of Wüst may be extreme.<sup>24</sup> What is typical, however, is again the "orientalist" character of his scholarship, in every essential dimension of the term, both as representing an ontological and epistemological division between an "us" and some "them," and as serving to sustain a structure of manifest domination.

A fuller account of the more notable expressions of NS Indology would include the work of Ludwig Alsdorf, Professor of Sanskrit and Jainology at Münster and Berlin (Alsdorf 1942 is a *Fachgeschichte* of Indology that gives unusually clear voice to its ethnic and national purposes);<sup>25</sup> Jakob Wilhelm Hauer, Professor of the History of Religions at Tübingen (Hauer 1934 argues that the *Bhagavad Gītā* is an "Aryan" text; Hauer 1937 offers an assemblage of the principle NS themes on Indo-Aryan antiquity);<sup>26</sup> and Hermann Lommel, Professor of Sanskrit and Iranian at Frankfurt (Lommel 1935 makes the attempt to distill the "authentic Aryan spirit" of the oldest cultural monuments to achieve an awareness of "our own historically evolved and genetically [*blutmässig*] inherited way of being"; Lommel 1939 [!] is a disquisition on the Aryan god of war). Requiring more complex theorization are those texts—issuing in a flood after 1933—that, without any overt commitment to National Socialism, fully embrace the terms of its discourse by their unchallenged participation in and acceptance of the *Fragestellungen*, the thematics, of NS Indology. An example of this more sophisticated orientalism is the work of Paul Thieme (1938), an analysis of the Sanskrit word *arya*, where at the end he adverts to the main point of his research: to go beyond India in order to catch the "distant echo of Indo-germanic customs" (p. 168). Apparently arcane articles on such topics as "Alt-indoarisch *matya*-, n. 'Knüppel als bauerliches Werkzeug'" (Ernst Schneider, *WZKM* 47 [1940]: 267ff.) feed into, and were intended to feed into, a complex state doctrine of *Blut und Boden*, Indo-Germanic farmers versus nomadic Orientals, Nordic heroes versus Semitic traders, and so forth.

One focal point of Indological work during the NS period that merits more than the brief observations possible here was the question of the *Urheimat* (the original home of the Aryans). To a degree the *Urheimat*

issue had always been a scholarly question prompted and driven by the ideological demands of the European politics in which this discourse originated. Yet no matter how squarely situated at the intersection of scholarship and politics the question shows itself to be, as in Germany in the 1930s, it has almost universally been debated with a breathtaking pretense of political detachment. The first major scholarly salvo of the 1930s was fired with the publication of *Germanen und Indogermanen . . . Festschrift für Herman Hirt* (1936).<sup>27</sup> In his introduction, Helmuth Arntz, the editor, asserts the purely scholarly nature of their investigations: "Much poison has been poured out, even upon our scholarship; much hate and bitterness does the world fling at the Third Reich, the new state we have finally built for ourselves. That our scholarship is no longer free, but muzzled and misused for propaganda purposes—that is the worst reproach. This Festschrift refutes that. Each of the participating scholars was free to say what he wishes; and the fact that high scholarship is a cultural factor of propagandistic value holds for other nations as well as ours" (p. viii).<sup>28</sup> The volume edited later that same year by the ethnologist of tribal South Asia, the Austrian W. Koppers, *Die Indogermanen- und Germanenfrage*, was meant to provide a counterweight to the *Hirt Festschrift*.<sup>29</sup> Also in 1936 (in what hardly seems an accidental *Stellungnahme*), the whole debate is deflated by the great Russian phonologist Trubetsky. Speaking before the Cercle linguistique de Prague in December, he argued that there may never have taken place a "Proto-Indo-Germanic language" diffusion carried by Indo-German groupings—in fact, there never may have existed a Proto-Indo-Germanic language—but only "a gradual approximation of languages, the one to the other, through mutual borrowing over time."<sup>30</sup> From among the complexities of NS analysis of the Urheimat question it is worth calling attention to the way the nineteenth-century view expressed by Schlegel was reversed: the original Indo-Europeans were now variously relocated in regions of the Greater German Reich; German thereby became the language of the core (*Binnensprache*), whereas Sanskrit was transformed into one of its peripheral, "colonial" forms.<sup>31</sup>

Of course, more "traditional" Indological work, of a text-critical, lexical, epigraphic, numismatic variety, was taking place during the period—the same sort of work produced, say, under the sign of nineteenth-century French orientalism for Arabic (of the genre wherein, given the context of NS deformities, some postwar historians like Rothfels were prepared to see an "inner emigration" and a "sort of opposition"). But such philological work, despite illusions as to its rocklike imperviousness to political-

social life that are still widespread in the field, is an instrument of meaning—social, historical, ideological—and presupposes questions of such meaning whether these are articulated or not. And when such questions of meaning did find articulation in Germany in the years 1933–45, they seem to have been in the main purely "orientalist" questions.<sup>32</sup>

I want to illustrate the typicality noted above in regard to Wüst's scholarship by a brief account of the final phase of orientalism in the NS period, the wartime program funded by the Imperial Ministry of Education called the "War Effort of the Humanities" (*Kriegseinsatz der Geisteswissenschaften*, 1941–42).

The task of the "War Effort" (or "Aktion Ritterbusch" as it was sometimes called after the Kiel legal scholar who initiated the *Einsatz*), was to encourage scholars of the humanities "to place in the foreground of their work the idea of a new European order."<sup>33</sup> As part of this effort, and at the suggestion of the executive committee of the German Oriental Society,<sup>34</sup> a "Working Session of German Orientalists and German Orientalist Archaeologists" was convened in Berlin in 1942. Ritterbusch's opening statement adequately conveys the self-understanding of much German scholarship of the period with respect to its relationship with state power:

I do not have to emphasize again here how acutely aware the German humanities are of their political-historical responsibility, and how very much they wish to prove, through their own learning and initiative, that they are not only a great, indeed, critical power of our popular [*völkisch*] life, but that they wish to contribute to the formation of world-historical decisions and dispositions that are coming to maturity and being decided upon in this war—to contribute and to participate for the benefit of the people and the Führer and the historical mission of the Empire. (Schaefer 1944: 5)

What interests me particularly in this scholarly convention of orientalists contributing to the mission of empire is the contribution of Erich Frauwallner, Professor of Sanskrit at the University of Vienna, who is widely regarded as the preeminent authority on Indian philosophy of his generation (and member of the National Socialist German Workers Party [NSDAP] since 1932, when the party was still illegal in Austria). In his presentation, Frauwallner argued that the special meaning of Indian philosophy lay in its being "a typical creation of an aryan people," that its similarities with western philosophy derived from "the same racially determined talent," and that it was a principal scholarly task of Indology to demonstrate this fact. Reiterating an axiom of NS doctrine, that "Wissenschaft in the strict sense of the word is something that could be created

only by nordic Indo-Germans," Frauwallner adds, "From the agreement in scientific character of Indian and European philosophy, we can draw the further conclusion that philosophy as an attempt to explain the world according to scientific method is likewise a typical creation of the Aryan mind" (Frauwallner 1944; cf. 1939).

Indian knowledge, again, is meaningful to the degree that it assists in the self-revelation of "Aryan" identity. The very *raison d'être* of Indology for Frauwallner, as it seems to have been for so many scholars of the period, is fundamentally conditioned by this racialism. The ideology of objective "science," moreover, not only governs Frauwallner's presentation; his whole purpose is to demonstrate that this science exists in a realm beyond ideology—that it is a fact of biology. What alone enables him to do this, I think, is "orientalist" knowledge production.

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 Rosenberg (although no German Indologist ever felt the call to criticize Rosenberg, and some, like Alsdorf [1942: 86] cite him as authoritative). They are for the most part unimpeachable with respect to scholarly "standards." 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.

To what degree this work was motivated by opportunism or cynicism it is not easy to discover. It may be pointed out, however, that German Indology shows a support for National Socialism noteworthy among the humanities for its breadth.<sup>35</sup> In the early and important *Declaration of Allegiance . . . to Adolph Hitler (Bekennntnis . . . zu Adolph Hitler* [Dresden n.d. (November 11, 1933)]), the names of a good number of the most distinguished Indologists of the period are prominent (including Schubring, Sieg, Nobel, Hertel, F. Weller). Of the twenty-five or so Indology professors of the NS period (leaving aside Dozenten, etc.), perhaps a third were active participants in the party or the SS, according to documents preserved in the Berlin Document Center. (Some examples, from a first, incomplete census: Ludwig Alsdorf, NSDAP No. 2697931 [entry into party 1 August 1933]; Bernhard Breloer, NSDAP No. 5846531 [1 May 1937], SS-Unterscharführer, SS No. 230317 [26 June 1933]; Erich Frauwallner, NSDAP No. 1387121 [29 November 1932]; Jakob Wilhelm Hauer, SS-Untersturmführer, SS No. 107179, NSDAP No. 50574 [1 May 1937]; Richard Schmidt, NSDAP No. 2492244 [1 June 1933], SS-Obersturmführer.<sup>36</sup>) No

German Indologist made any public statement on the state appropriation of Indological learning—perhaps none could have made such a statement, since there was little discernible appreciation of the politics of interpretation. Apart from the Indologists victimized by the "Aryan paragraphs" whether as Jews themselves or because they were married to Jews (including Bette Heimann [emigrated], Walter Neisser [suicide, 1941], Walter Ruben [emigrated], Isidore Scheftelowitz [emigrated], Richard Simon [died 1934], Moritz Spitzer [fate unknown], Otto Stein [died in Łódź Ghetto, 1942], Otto Strauss [died in flight in Holland, 1940], Heinrich Zimmer [emigrated]), none publicly opposed the regime, or left the country. As far as I can tell, only one, Heinrich Lüders, ran afoul of the NS state, being forced to take early retirement from his position at the University of Berlin in 1935.<sup>37</sup> Quite as important, to my knowledge no German—or indeed, any other—Indologist has undertaken an analysis of the field and the relationship of the questions of scholarship and the questions of state since the war. In the flood of work since the late 1960s on every conceivable dimension of scholarship in the National Socialist period, it is noteworthy that there has been no publication on the topic from within the Indological community (even on an autobiographical occasion; typical is the silence of von Glasenapp in *Meine Lebensreise* [1964]). I would also like to call attention to the substantial increase in the investment on the part of the NS state in Indology and "Indo-Germanistik." Both Himmler and Rosenberg sponsored institutes centrally concerned with "Indo-Germanische Geistesgeschichte."<sup>38</sup> There is preserved a planning memo on the postwar Institut für arische Geistesgeschichte approved by Hitler in 1940, in which Rosenberg wrote:

The nineteenth century left behind extensive research on the history of the Indians, Iranians, and Greeks, and their intellectual/cultural creations. With the exception of Greek literature, Indian and Iranian thought has not penetrated European consciousness very deeply. To strengthen this consciousness, [and]—given the collapse of the entire Palestinian [i.e., Jewish] tradition—to free a more ancient and far more venerable one from its concealment, is the critical *weltanschauliche* task of the Munich institute. Therefore it will also be its task, in addition to working up the important sources and presenting syntheses of them, to re-issue those works that are essential for National Socialist *Weltanschauung*, and for the development of an intellectual tradition, e.g., L. v. Schroeder, *Indians Literatur und Kultur*;<sup>39</sup> Böhlink [sic], *Indische Sprüche*. (Document reproduced in Poliakov and Wulf 1983: 133ff.)

Motives are not always easy to discern, no doubt. All we can know is that between this scholarship and basic ideologemes of the NS state there

is distinct congruence; what we need to know is what made this congruence possible and how it worked. In German Indology of the NS era, a largely nonscholarly mystical nativism deriving ultimately from a mixture of romanticism and protonationalism merged with that objectivism of *Wissenschaft* earlier described, and together they fostered the ultimate "orientalist" project, the legitimation of genocide. Whatever other enduring lessons this may teach us, it offers a superb illustration of the empirical fact 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.

As one of its dominant forms, German Indology has to be accommodated in any adequate theorization of orientalism. But the German case also suggests that orientalism, thought of as knowledge serving to create and marginalize degraded communities—even members of one's own community—and thus to sustain relations of domination over them, reveals itself as a subset of ideological discourse as such.<sup>40</sup> If consideration of the British use of forms of orientalist knowledge for domination within India might help us theorize the German use of comparable forms for domination within Germany, the latter may help us theorize how Indian forms of knowledge serve in the exercise of domination in India—may suggest a sort of eastern orientalism, in the service of a precolonial colonialism. The self-representation of Indians no more escapes the realm of interests than the representations of their oppressors; and just as there have been other imperialisms than that forming the last stage of capitalism, so there may have been other "orientalisms" to sustain them.

### Pre-Orientalist "Orientalism"

It has in part been the critique of orientalism in Indian studies over the past decade that has led to a notable reformulation of the history of social power in India. One way this is expressed, to touch on a central tenet of what we might call a new archaeology of colonialism, is to claim that colonialism "elevated Brahmanic formulations to the level of hegemonic text" (Raheja 1988: 498), or, in other words, that it "created . . . an autonomous caste structure with the Brahman clearly at the head" (Dirks 1987: 8; cf. 1989: 45). From the very specific—"the colonial domination of

India, meaning the late nineteenth-century Orientalism . . . infect[ed] concepts of caste," "overpowered Indian beliefs," and introduced "the notion of . . . inherited [physical] properties" (Fox: 1985: 154)—to the very general—orientalism invented "much of India's ancient past . . . and, not least, the past of Asiatic Despotism" (Washbrook 1988: 83)—the implication seems generally to be the same: that to a substantial degree it was British colonialism that, in cooperation with orientalism, "traditionalized" society in such a way that it took on a form, a hegemonic Sanskritized form, that it may never really have had.

I hope this summary does not caricature the analysis of the post-orientalist anthropologists and historians, and I certainly do not mean to dismiss their deep insights out of hand, for much of the argument—for example, concerning the objectification, by the very categories of the British census, of caste hierarchies that previously had been far more flexible and mobile—is compelling. What troubles me is, first, the stronger formulation of this interpretation, whose logical extension is that colonialism in South Asia produced certain forms of domination *tout court*; and second, the thinness of the history of precolonial domination on which, ironically, this new historicism is based, and, moreover, its potential for precluding such an analysis.<sup>41</sup>

As for the stronger formulation, it may be that, out of repugnance toward India's colonial past and orientalism's complicity in it, post-orientalist Euro-American Indology, like Indian nationalist Indology before it, has become prone to idealized India's precolonial past. Even if this idealization has not always found actual expression, the now widespread thesis seems unavoidably to entail a far more positive valorization of what preceded colonialism's "'Brahmanization' of society . . . [which made] the values of one section of present society [Brahmans] artificially dominant over those of others" (Washbrook 1988: 82). This is a valorization that can also be found in much contemporary South Asian scholarship.<sup>42</sup> When we combine this with the fallout from books like *Homo Hierarchicus*—leading the general reader to such New Age characterizations of caste as "an expression of holistic unity of opposites that is as much a part of the structure of human thought as . . . binary oppositions" (Jay 1988: 47)—we soon find ourselves launched into some Oriental Paradise Lost.

To make my objection a little clearer, I will examine this post-orientalist theme in two specific cases and then try to think a little more epistemologically, if you will, about problems we face interpreting pre-modern Indian, or indeed any, cultural products.

The first case is an argument recently made by Burton Stein.

What I am calling "indologism" is different in crucial ways [from "Indology"]. The ideology of divine hierarchy, *varnāśramadharmā*, is an important part of the ancient knowledge of India, beginning with the post-Vedic *Brahmana* texts, with their neat order of social differences within a moral unity, and continuing through medieval *dharmaśāstra* texts, with their more messy, contingent and regionally varied codes. These texts—particularly the former—received a new life lease and legitimacy at the hands of European orientalist who constructed the knowledge we call "indology" and which I, polemically, call "indologism." By the latter I mean the conversion of the findings of a valid knowledge and discourse, based upon ancient texts, into a social theory allegedly pertinent . . . to pre-modern societies of South Asia, where it can have at best a partial validity (and that to be demonstrated). (1985: 36–37)

We might want for a moment to consider, as one illustrative instance, the new life lease and legitimacy that these texts, particularly the former,<sup>43</sup> received at the hands of Indian "orientalists" in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. It is then that we find, especially in North and central India, a sudden (or so it appears to me) and certainly luxurious efflorescence of scholarly production relating to such texts. This production brings us for the first time identifiably authored and securely datable *dharmaśāstra* works. All of these emerge from the court circles of the ruling elites of the period. Within a century and a half we witness extraordinary activity: the (now lost) codes of Bhoja, king of Dhārā (ca. 1030); the great commentary on the *Yājñavalkyaśmṛti* by Vijñāneśvara, patronized by Vikramāditya VI of the Kalyāṇa Cālukyas (ca. 1100); the commentary on the same text by Aparārka, of the Śilāhāra dynasty of the Konkan (ca. 1130); the vast digest (the earliest one extant) by Lakṣmīdhara, chief minister of King Govindacandra of the Gāhaḍavālas of Kanauj (ca. 1130), on whom more below; the five huge works on *dharma* composed at the court of (or perhaps even by) King Ballālasena of Bengal (ca. 1175); the capacious code of Hemādri, minister of Mahādeva, the Yādava king of Devagiri (ca. 1265), and, at the end of this period, the monumental work on *Parāśara* by Mādhava, hereditary teacher and minister to the first kings of Vijayanagar (early fourteenth century).

Such vast intellectual output surely needs to be theorized in some way. No one is insisting that such texts be read as reflections of reality: texts cannot simply "reflect" what in some measure they help to constitute. But at the very least, it is conceivable that demonstrating commitment to

a certain—perhaps even antiquarian or nostalgic—ideal of social order, a kind of pre-modern "traditionalization" of it, was a major concern of the ruling strata in this two or three hundred year period, when, significantly, the Sultanate was in process of consolidating itself (see below). I do not see how we can understand this concern and thus approach an adequate understanding of the nature of social power during this period if we dismiss as not pertinent such massively subsidized intellectual work emanating from within the very center of the political culture of the time. It is possible to argue, in fact, just the opposite of Stein's position: that it is precisely the fact that this textual material "has served (and still does) as a justification for class oppression" that supplies a "powerful reason" for *not* "questioning its standing as relevant social theory for the reconstruction of medieval societies" (1985: 37). These texts may well in part be "models for" rather than "models of," but whereas this distinction nuances our sense of their material reality, it does not empty them of ideological reality.

My second example is a recent essay on the nineteenth-century debate on *sati*, which illustrates many of the strengths and some of the weaknesses of the current postcolonial archaeology of power in South Asia (Mani 1987). In important and useful ways, the author draws attention to the way the discursive strategies of the entire debate on the burning of widows worked to silence the voice of the victim and foreclose the question of female agency. But the more central concerns of the essay are stated to be textual authority, "law," and "tradition," and here the argument is on shakier ground. "Tradition," for instance, is said to be "reconstituted under colonial rule"; "brahmanic scriptures" are falsely postulated as "locus"—and prescriptive locus—of "what constitutes authentic cultural tradition" (pp. 121–22). "[T]his privileging of brahmanic scripture and the equation of tradition with scripture is . . . an effect of a colonial discourse on India" (p. 122). Though the main intention throughout the essay is to raise "questions regarding the place of brahmanic scripture in precolonial India, the nature and functioning of precolonial legal systems and pre-British indigenous discourses on tradition and social reform" (p. 123), we never leave the colonial arena in pursuit of these goals. To discover whether "a legal discourse on scripture is a colonial phenomenon" (p. 149), we don't proceed to the logically prior question, "whether brahmanic texts [have] always been prioritized as the source of law" (a good, though conceptually and historically complex, question), but to "a careful reading of the Parliamentary Papers" (p. 133). If we want to argue that colonialism reconstituted tradition, should we not do a careful reading of the earlier

tradition (or rather, traditions) that was the object of transformation? Would we not want to look, for example, at real texts with real dates and authors we can place in a social world, in addition to the interpretative practices of the Company pandits (themselves not so easy to interpret)?

Were we to do this we would find a process of hierarchizing textualization, a regime of truth, in precolonial India comparable to what we find in the early Raj. To argue that “the equation between scripture and law” (terminology never theorized in the essay, and far more dichotomous than that in use in precolonial India) is a process that takes place under the sign of colonialism or that the debate on *sati* is “a modern discourse on tradition” in which “tradition” as such is “produced” (pp. 150–51), is to ignore perhaps a millennium of debate in India over what constitutes “traditional” textuality and how local practices interact with that textuality. Critique, rejection, and reform do not begin in 1800 in India, and their epistemological building blocks, “authentic tradition” and the like, are not ideas that spring forth for the first time from the fevered brains of Colebrook, Bentinck, and Rammohun Roy.

In fact, much of the discourse as we find it in the nineteenth-century Raj could easily have derived, and may have actually derived, from a text like the twelfth-century digest I examine further below, the *Kṛtyakalpataru* of Lakṣmīdhara. Here the discussion of *sahamaraṇa* (*sati*) takes place in the context of *vṛyavahāra*, which is precisely what we would call juridical procedure and substantantive law, rather than in the discourses on “domestic” duties, “religious” vows, or “ritual” purity. The treatment follows a section on criminal law and is directly preceded by points of law relating to sexual behavior outside marriage—rape, adultery, fornication, heterosexual and homosexual child molestation, bestiality; it is placed within the framework of sexual law within marriage and is itself followed by discussion of levirate, remarriage, and inheritance laws.<sup>44</sup> *Sahamaraṇa* is thus regarded by the author simply as a further dimension of legal obligation within the sexual sphere. Lakṣmīdhara cites the same “scriptural” passages as those adduced by the pandit of the Nizamat Adalat in 1821 (Mani 1987: 131), and other texts, for example, the *Brahmapurāṇa*, that appeal for authority to the *Rgveda* verse (7.6.27) whose interpretation was so much to vex Rammohun (p. 136; *Kṛtyakalpataru* p. 634).<sup>45</sup> Lakṣmīdhara concludes, “After examining all these textes, one may affirm that all women, Brahman and others—except those who are pregnant, or have small children, and so on—who seek particular rewards for the husbands in heaven are en-

titled (or obligated) to die with him [if he dies at home] or subsequent to him [if he dies abroad].”<sup>46</sup> He then proceeds to cite additional authorities (Bṛhaspati, Viṣṇu, Hārīta, Yama, and of course the ubiquitous Manu) who allow the alternative of asceticism, without himself commenting on the option.

In brief, this whole discussion—and others of the same sort in other digests and commentaries (like Medhātithi on *Manusmṛti* 5.117ff., who denies the very possibility of the legality of *sahamaraṇa*, calling it suicide)—illustrates not only the premodern interpenetration of “law” and “scripture,” but the “contentiousness” of “pre-traditionalized” tradition itself. Indeed, the very existence of the sophisticated hermeneutic science, *Pūrvamīmāṃsā*, that I discuss below is predicated on antinomies internal to the Sanskrit tradition, respecting everything from the performance of basic rituals to the very conceptualization of “tradition” itself.

If there was a British “Brahmanizing tendency,” then, it may largely have recapitulated a precolonial Brahmanizing tendency on the part of medieval ruling elites. This is to make no claim that other regulating structures of social life—“lineage, sect, and little king,” for instance<sup>47</sup>—may not, in fact, have been more relevant in everyday reality (whatever “everyday reality” might mean). It is only to recall that elite Sanskrit textuality laid claim to omnipotence and to suggest that the social origins and epistemological modalities of such claims require that we take them seriously. It bears repeating that the fact that the colonial debate on *sati* “turned on the issue of its scriptural grounding” (p. 140) makes a crucial point about the displacement of real violence against women onto textuality, but this is a displacement that occurred earlier, for “tradition” itself in India invariably scripturalizes deliberation of what should and should not be done in social life. The textualization of *sati*, thus, seems yet another instance where indigenous discourses of power intersected with the colonial variety (as is justly acknowledged with respect to the denial of female subjectivity, p. 152). What might in fact be worth assembling is just such an inventory of ideologemes, for the preexistence of a shared ideological base among indigenous and colonial elites may have been one contributing factor to the effectiveness with which England consolidated and maintained its rule in India.

The epistemological problems—concerning the interpretation of texts, ideology, social action—implicit in so much of the discussion of “Indologism” certainly merit more sustained reflection than they have received.

To take a commonplace example, consider the following verse from the beginning of the *Vālmiki Rāmāyaṇa*, describing the social world of the kingdom of Kosala:

kṣatram brahmanukhaṃ cāsīd vaiśyāḥ kṣatram anuvratāḥ/  
śūdrāḥ svakarmaniratās trīn varṇān upacāriṇaḥ//  
("The kṣatriya order followed the lead of the brahman order, the vaiśya that of the kṣatriya, whereas the śūdras, devoted to their proper duties, served the other three varṇas.") (*Rām.* 1.6.17 ed. crit.)

What are we to do with such a statement in light of the above-mentioned claims about the transformative impact of colonialism and in our attempt to reconstruct a "poetics of power" for precolonial India? (I am not interested here in the specific problem of brahman versus kṣatriya dominance—a dichotomy wildly overdrawn given what we actually know of Indian social and political history—but only in the general question of how we evaluate representations of power.) It will not do to object that the *Rāmāyaṇa* gives us mere fiction (*kāvya*), or just a dream of power. It is not just that the "tradition" itself regards the epic as absolutely true, or that nonfictional normative texts (*śāstra*) promulgate precisely the same sort of stratification, for similar objections of historicity could be raised.<sup>48</sup> What is more to the point is to examine the foundations of this historicity itself. What are the historical controls by which fictionality can be identified and excluded? Where a historical context can be constructed only via texts, and since the line between the documentary/constative text on the one hand and the "worklike"/performative text on the other is thoroughly permeable,<sup>49</sup> how can we tell the fiction from the fact? We have always known that people make their stories from their histories, and recently we have come to appreciate the degree to which people make their histories from their stories. Furthermore, even if we could somehow ascertain that this is only a dream of power, dreams, *l'imaginaire*, are no less historical, no less real—by the very fact of their being dreamed—and potentially no less effective than any other fact or event. A widely shared illusion can be more real than a "fact" that is disbelieved; the broad inculcation of belief in the existence of authoritative texts and their discourses of false necessity can reify practice in a very general but still crucial way (a question in essence no less relevant to the discussion of any normative discourse, legal discourse in particular, anywhere).

These are matters historians elsewhere have of course reflected on,

though such reflections are rarely if ever brought to bear on the Indological problem. It may be instructive, therefore, to cite the following extended thoughts of the historian of medieval France, Georges Duby.

In effect, in order to understand the ordering of human societies and to discern their evolutionary forces, we have to direct our attention equally to mental phenomena [in addition to material structures], whose intervention is unquestionably just as determinative as that of economic and demographic phenomena. For it is not as a consequence of their actual condition, but rather of the image they have of it—which is never a faithful reflection—that people regulate their conduct. . . . Reconstructing ideological systems of the past via their disparate fragments, or following the tracks of the transformations they have undergone, is in truth nothing but preparation for a much more difficult task, which consists in defining the relationships that ideologies in the course of their history have had with lived social reality. Here we would suggest conducting research in two stages: A) Ideologies present themselves as the interpretation of concrete situations. They are prone, consequently, to reflect any changes in these situations. They are slow in doing this, however, since they are by nature conservative. The adjustments finally produced in them often come only after a very long delay, and remain only partial. Measuring the deviations between the history of ideologies and the history of lived social relations is all the more difficult in that, by the play of a subtle dialectic, the weight of systems of representations can slow down, or at times even arrest, the movement of economic and political structures themselves. It is, nevertheless, the task of historians to establish as carefully as possible the chronologies of these discrepancies. And on these chronologies all subsequent investigation and interpretation should be based. B) Such an analysis of temporal deviations should naturally lead the social historian in due course to critique the coherent systems that ideologies of the past represent, to demystify them a posteriori by showing how, at every moment in the historical evolution, the discernible features of the material conditions of social life are more or less travestied within the mental images of them. That is, the historian should measure, as exactly as possible—and given the fact that in the majority of documents the expressions of lived reality and of dreamed reality are found to be confusingly mixed up, this enterprise is rendered exceedingly arduous—the concordances and discordances that are located, in every point of the diachrony, in three variables: on the one hand, between the objective situation of groups/individuals and the illusory image wherein they take comfort and find justification; and on the other, between this image and individual/collective behavior. (1974: 203–4, 217–18)

The problem remains, of course, how we can possibly determine the "objective situation." But the fact that India's past confronts us with real dreams of power as well as with real power, and that a critical historiog-



raphy should aim at, among other things, measuring the fit or lack of fit between them, is something that I think we have yet to confront in classical Indology.

How it is possible, then, to survey the constructions of colonial domination without a detailed topography of precolonial domination, I cannot see.<sup>50</sup> And this topography, charted throughout the expanse of Sanskrit cultural production, does not really yet exist, a lacuna for which classical Indology itself is partly responsible. The failure to trace with any adequacy a historical map of social power in traditional India, which alone can anchor our estimations of the impact of colonialism, is all the more surprising considering what appear to be the extraordinary density, longevity, and effectivity of authoritative power—or at least of its normative claims, though the two are not easily distinguishable—in the high culture of early India.<sup>51</sup> One reason classicists have failed to write this history might emerge if we contextualize our own profession: The privileged elite from which Indology has historically drawn its members could hardly be expected to pose to an alien culture questions of domination it was unable, or unwilling, to pose to its own.

Such subjective impediments to tracing this map are, however, matched by the objective impediments of an inadequate, or rather stunted, historical record; inadequate given the typical hazards of studying an ancient society; stunted in the case of South Asia by a pervasive dehistoricizing component in the dominant ideology itself. For a large part of its textual production, the model of truth available for most discourse in Sanskrit—the Veda, broadly conceived—and the conditions of truth that model entailed—historical transcendence—has produced a body of texts that actively aspired to, and largely secured, a condition of timelessness, one correlating with the naturalization of the social toward which this ideology aimed.<sup>52</sup>

An adequate historical analysis of ideology as accessible to us in one important and paradigmatic sector of traditional India, the culture of orthodox Sanskrit texts, is no small order, to be sure; I could not even begin to detail what such a project might encompass (not even what precisely “orthodox” might mean over time), though I will try to sketch out a few preliminary ideas. One suggestion is that what we may find to be central in this morphology is something close to the problem we encounter in the analysis of orientalism, above all the problem of knowledge and domination: Here it is not just the instrumental use of knowledge (indeed, of *veda*) in the essentialization and dichotomization of the social order, but

the very control of knowledge that constitutes one of its elementary forms. The monopolization of “access to authoritative resources”—the most authoritative of all resources, Sanskrit (*vaidika*) learning—becomes itself a basic component in the construction and reproduction of the idea of inequality and thus in what, again, can be viewed as a process analogous to colonization in precolonial India.

Rather than any singular “idea of inequality,” it is truer to speak of plural “ideas of inequalities,” for there are many forms of difference—gender, ethnos, race—constructed in many diverse ways as inequalities. A fertile source for understanding the variety of inequality constructions, and in their very structure a potential template for a morphology of social power, are the *nibandhas* of medieval India I mention above. These digests of social/religious codes of conduct, which define what may be viewed as the total society (*varṇāśramadharmā*), are compendia of rules and exegeses based on earlier material from *dharmasāstra* and its “metalegal” framework, *Pūrvamīmāṃsā*, both of which have long and highly sophisticated traditions of their own. I want to look, very briefly, at a few themes of unequal power, “allocative” and “authoritative” power, before following up on one of them in a little more detail, as these themes are presented in one of the earliest of the great *nibandhas*, the *Kṛtyakalpataru*. This massive work, in fourteen volumes (twelve so far published) was composed, as I noted above, for King Govindacandra of the Gāhaḍavāla dynasty of Kanauj, the ruler of much of North India in the middle of the twelfth century, by Bhaṭṭa Lakṣmīdhara. Not only was Lakṣmīdhara “foreign minister” (*mahāsāndhivigrahika*) of the king, but he also appears to have been a judge who rendered decisions in a wide variety of cases.<sup>53</sup>

Why is the first great *nibandha* composed—why should an encyclopedic synthesis of an entire way of life be undertaken—precisely in that time and place? Evidently it has to do with some acknowledgment on the part of the Gāhaḍavāla king of a need for special reaffirmation of *dharma*, but why just then? Was it because, for the first time since the development of the *dharmasāstras*, that way of life confronted, in the Central Asian Turks, something radically different, a resolutely unassimilating social and religious formation (far more confirmed in its difference than, say, the assimilationist Śakas a millennium earlier, or the Hūṇas of a half a millennium earlier)? The fact that the production of *dharmānibandha* discourse, as noted above, almost perfectly follows the path of advance of the Sultanate from the Doab to Devagiri to the Deccan (Lakṣmīdhara, Hemādri, Mādava) suggests, on the one hand, that totalizing conceptualizations of

society became possible only by juxtaposition with alternative lifeworlds, and on the other, that they became necessary only at the moment when the total form of the society was for the first time believed, by the privileged theorists of society, to be threatened. These political developments certainly mark the dynasty in other ways. The first invasions of Mahmud of Ghazni had started one hundred years before Lakṣmīdhara began his work (when, in fact, the efflorescence in shastric production noted above was initiated). We know that the king's grandfather, Candradeva, was involved in major campaigns against the Turks and had established the supplemental tax called the *turuskadānda* to raise money to that end.<sup>54</sup> One of his records represents him as "Svayambhū himself born upon the earth to restore *dharmā* and the Veda, whose sounds had almost been silenced" (IA 18: 14–19, vs. 3). In one of Govinda's inscriptions he is said to be "Hari [Viṣṇu] himself born into this world at the request of Hara [Śiva], since he is the only one capable of protecting Vārāṇasi from the wicked Turk warrior."<sup>55</sup> Within little more than a generation, the dynasty would come to an end when Govinda's grandson, Jayacandra, died in battle with the Turks, and Banaras was sacked (A.D. 1193).<sup>56</sup>

To situate the arguments of Lakṣmīdhara, it is necessary to bear in mind certain basic postulates of *dharmasāstra* discourse. One of these is that, since *dharmasāstra* informs us of types of action that have nonutilitarian, transcendent ends (*adr̥ṣṭārtha*)—informs us, that is, of things we would not normally do for ends we would not otherwise know about<sup>57</sup>—its authority must likewise derive from some transcendent source. Only the Veda, consequently, qualifies to function as source of our knowledge of *dharmā*. Thus, according to our earliest systematic analysis of the topic, in the *Pūrvamīmāṃsāsūtra*, *dharmā* is rule-governed sacrificial ritual (*yāgādī*) deriving its authority from texts that are transcendent, existing out of historical time, composed neither by man nor god (*apauruṣeya*). All of this constitutes a central representation, an episteme, of the *vaidika* worldview, with large consequences for social existence within and at the margins of the "orthodox" culture this worldview defines.<sup>58</sup>

In the course of Indian social-intellectual history, however, more came to count as *dharmā* than could be accounted for in Vedic texts. (What is therefore paradoxical, if that is the right word, is not that the Veda has so little to do with *dharmā*, as Jan Heesterman has so often argued [e.g., Heesterman 1978, 1981], but that *dharmā* had, originally, little to do with anything but Vedic ritual.) This massive expansion of the realm of transcendentally enjoined practices represents historically, I would argue, a response to the Buddhist critique of *vaidika* culture and the ensuing

disenchantment of the social world. In this process of expansion, "memories" of the Veda (the primary connotation of *smṛti* in this context) and the actions of those who participate in Vedic culture became essential authorities supplemental to existing Vedic texts, so long as these did not contradict the explicit word of the Veda or evince clear evidence of self-interest. But the difficulty of establishing contradiction between "memories" or "practices" and Holy Word is something the eighth-century Mīmāṃsaka Kumāṛila demonstrates with overpowering logic. At the same time, self-interest is never clearly thematized or seriously defined.<sup>59</sup> The way is thus opened for a vast textualization and ritualization of social-cultural life. It is in this context that Lakṣmīdhara adduces a foundational principle of the traditional Indian discourse of power: "Whatever act the *āryas* who know the Vedas claim to be *dharmā*, is *dharmā*; whatever they reject is said to be *adharmā*."<sup>60</sup>

The term *ārya* itself merits intellectual-historical study (and I mean diachronic analysis, not static etymology) for premodern India at least of the sort *Arier* has received for modern Europe.<sup>61</sup> The binary pair *ārya/anārya* is one of several discursive definitions by which the Sanskrit cultural order constitutes itself. It overarches the world of traditional Indian inequality—"A non-*ārya* may act like an *ārya*, and *ārya* like a non-*ārya* . . . and though they may be equal [*samau*] in this [i.e., in transgressing caste duty] they never are [otherwise] equal" (*Manusmṛti* 10.73). Another antithesis, *ārya/mlecchā*, seems to add little new, though again, the second valence here also awaits detailed analysis;<sup>62</sup> Lakṣmīdhara (for whom the word almost certainly already had reference to the Central Asian Turks, as it usually does later) cites a verse symptomatic of the xenophobic energy it channelized: "One should never perform a *śrāddha* in the land of the *mlecchas*; one should never go to the land of the *mlecchas*. If one drinks water from the wells of the Others, one becomes like them."<sup>63</sup> Added to these fundamental dichotomies is a biogenetic paradigm with which Lakṣmīdhara feels it necessary to supplement the social inequality already warranted as *dharmā* by promulgation in the Veda.<sup>64</sup> Social action (*karmā*) on the part of the various orders of the social world is differentiated by reason of the heterogeneous psychophysical constituents, peculiar to their specific natures, that make up the members of these orders.<sup>65</sup>

From such factors as the semantic realm of the distinction *ārya/anārya* and the biogenetic map of inequality (along with less theorized material, from Vedic and epic literature, for instance), it may seem warranted to speak about a "pre-form of racism" in early India (Geissen 1988: 48ff.), especially in a discussion of indigenous "orientalism," since in both its

classic colonial and its National Socialist form orientalism is inseparable from racism. This question like many others raised here deserves reexamination, for work done to date strikes me as inadequate for the precolonial period.<sup>66</sup> At present, however, I want to stay with the indigenous rationale of inequality by isolating a principle internal to the *dharmasāstra* tradition, which contributes as much to the construction of illegitimate hierarchy as any other, though not usually treated as such. This is the prohibition of knowledge, the denial of (*vaidika*) literacy, and the radical censorship this entails for “śūdras” and all communities outside the “twice-born.”

Lakṣmīdhara introduces this prohibition via a detailed analysis of the “livelihood, action, and *dharma*” of śūdras, which I summarize for reference though much of this material will be familiar.<sup>67</sup> Numerous authorities of *dharmasāstra* are adduced to confirm that “The one and only *dharma* of a śūdra is obedience to the twice-born; anything he does other than that will be fruitless” (p. 266). The śūdra is to work for an *ārya* (I omit the exfoliation of occupational detail), who is to provide the śūdra with left-over food, old clothing and furnishings, and the like (the qualitative inferiority that is a necessary complement of the quantitative inferiority of resources permitted the despised). The śūdra is to be supported by the *ārya* even if he is too old to work and must in turn support an *ārya* with whatever wealth he might have (p. 267); in general, however, “a śūdra even if capable must never have a surplus of wealth, for a śūdra with wealth will injure brahmins” (p. 271). These specific socioeconomic relations of domination are enjoined on the śūdra with full transcendent legitimacy—they are *śūdradharmas*;<sup>68</sup> at the same time, the śūdra is obliged to conform with the general social ethic (*sādhārana dharma*), purity/honesty, humility, and the like (p. 265; Vol. 1, p. 10)—that is, he has the obligations of humanity without its privileges. Add to these antinomies the most important: the śūdra’s *dharma* paradoxically excludes him from the realm of *dharma*: “. . . The śūdra merits no ritual [initiation], enjoys no *dharma* as derived from Holy Word, nor [is subject to] prohibitions deriving from *dharma* as expressed in Holy Word” (p. 271).

The prohibition of knowledge is the subject taken up in detail by Lakṣmīdhara in chapter 29 of Book 2, “What Must Not Be Given a Śūdra.” “One must never bestow learning<sup>69</sup> upon a śūdra . . . never teach him *dharma*, never instruct him in other vows. Whoever tells him about *dharma*, or instructs him in vows, will go to the hell called Vast Darkness, along with the śūdra himself.”<sup>70</sup> Lakṣmīdhara’s construal of this passage is indicated by his next citation, from Yama: “Whoever becomes the teacher of a *ṛṣala* [śūdra], and whatever *ṛṣala* becomes a student—both sink

down to hell and dwell there a hundred years.” Such injunctions restricting participation in Sanskrit high culture and access to Vedic “literacy”—something fundamental to the world conception of elite Sanskrit culture, and one of the elementary forms and formulations of inequality in traditional India—are not argued out in detail in the digests of *dharmasāstra*. The principal theorization is found in *Pūrvamīmāṃsā*, where a separate “topic” is devoted to it entitled “Exclusion of the Śūdra.”<sup>71</sup> The arguments here are rather technical and complex, but it is possible to summarize the basic issues and draw some provisional conclusions without too much misrepresentation.

The *Mīmāṃsā* discussion centers on a conception that might almost be called a fulcrum of inequality in *vaidika* India: *adhikāra*, “qualification” or even “right” of a person to possess the results of an act of *dharma*.<sup>72</sup> There are certain logical prerequisites (not necessarily directly enunciated by Vedic rules) of this “qualification”: The person must have the knowledge to perform the rite, must be in possession of the ritual means (in particular the sacrificial fires), and must be physically and economically capable of executing the rite.

According to the *Mīmāṃsā* discussion, the simple “desire for heaven” is insufficient to qualify one for participation in the Vedic sacrifice. Even though the Vedas command, “He who desires heaven should sacrifice,” sacrificing presupposes being in possession of the sacrificial fires, and in the Vedic injunction for building these fires<sup>73</sup> only the first three *varṇas* are mentioned (6.1. 25–26). According to some earlier authorities indeed (*Bādāri* is cited as one), the injunction to build the fires (“a brahman should build the fires in the spring, a *kṣatriya* in the summer, a *vaiśya* in the autumn”) was only intended to specify conditions for doing the building, not to ordain who could do it,<sup>74</sup> for “the śūdra desires heaven, too . . . and what is it in a sacrifice that any man can do but that the śūdra is unable to do?”<sup>75</sup> The insistence that only those actually mentioned have the “qualification” is, however, confirmed via the additional condition of knowledge: a Vedic injunction requires the initiation (*upanayana*) of a Brahman in the spring, a *kṣatriya* in the summer, a *vaiśya* in the autumn, whereas the śūdra and all the others below him again are not mentioned. The claim that these others might study the Veda alone is denied: the Veda explicitly prohibits this.<sup>76</sup>

Arcane and convoluted as this discussion may seem, it suggests several important things about inequality and its representation in the elite culture of traditional India; I want briefly to address three of them. First, the restriction on Vedic “literacy” discussed above is not peripheral to the *Mi-*

māṃsā system but foundational to it and implicit from the very first *sūtra* (Verpoorten 1987). Second, it is by means of precisely such an exclusion that communities of the despised are ideationally created as such in early India. While a biogenetic disqualification is sometimes adduced elsewhere, śūdras and other despised communities are here not excluded from Vedic literacy on the grounds of physical or intellectual inferiority. On the contrary, "Śūdras are as capable of learning as the twice-born are"; "in the matters of this world *āryas* and *mlecchas* have equal capabilities."<sup>77</sup> The trouble is that, with the vast expansion of the realm of *dharma* alluded to above—the ritualization and shastra-ization that ultimately encompasses the whole of life, including the life of the śūdra—the "other world," of Vedic authority and the resources of power it controlled, had virtually subsumed this one. *Dharma* was total, and in *dharma* transcendent rules operated. In the world of Mīmāṃsā, therefore—the master science of the Veda, the foundation of *dharmaśāstra*, and so the heart of that orthodoxy that defines the high culture of traditional India—inequality in the final analysis becomes more than natural. Resulting from Vedic injunction, or rather a chain of Vedic injunctions, it is not simply beyond instrumental reason, but a matter of truth-transcending-reason (*adṛṣṭārtha*); like sacrificial violence, for example, it becomes understandable precisely because it is incomprehensible. Nowhere I think is Bourdieu's notion of "theodicy of privilege" better exemplified.

Third, the very fact that the Mīmāṃsā discussion should take place—a rationalization of the irrationalism of domination—betrays to my mind the consciousness in the tradition itself of the asymmetry of power that characterized it and the awareness of a need for its legitimation. This is the implication, too, of the many responses to it from within the tradition, from Bādāri in the Mīmāṃsā school itself to the *ViṣṇuPurāṇa* (6.2.22ff.), which celebrates the "freedom" from Vedic obligations thus provided the śūdra, who need only serve the twice-born in order to win the "higher words"; to (initially) countermovements like Buddhism, which sought to valorize other forms of literacy (Thapar 1975: 130);<sup>78</sup> and to sectarian movements like Pāñcarātra, which provided the missing "Vedic" injunctions authorizing initiation of the śūdra.<sup>79</sup> But none of this palliation makes itself felt in the totalizing constructions of the social order, like Lakṣmīdhara's *Kṛtyakalpataru*, that were produced in North and central India in the two centuries leading up to the Turkic conquest. (Quite the contrary, the very form of the *nibandha* conspires to produce the impression of the massive and monolithic weight of tradition, at least on the questions I treat here.) Restrictions on access to high-culture literacy,

along with other juridical structures of inequality in the orthodox Sanskrit tradition—particularly differentiation in (judicial) punishment and in (religious) penance, which seems to constitute almost an indigenous economy of human worth—are among the components of a program of domination whose true spirit we might begin to conjure with other comparable programs, such as the *Arierparagraphen* of the NS state.<sup>80</sup>

### For a Critical Indology

Reviewing Indology in the way we have just done, we encounter a field of knowledge whose history and object both have been permeated with power. From its colonial origins in Justice Sir William to its consummation in SS Obersturmführer Wüst, Sanskrit and Indian studies have contributed directly to consolidating and sustaining programs of domination. In this (noteworthy orthogenesis) these studies have recapitulated the character of their subject, that indigenous discourse of power for which Sanskrit has been one major vehicle and which has shown a notable longevity and resilience.

In a postcolonial and post-Holocaust world, however, these traditional foundations and uses of Indology have disappeared, and the current self-interrogations within our field may, with typical scholarly tardiness, somehow be responding to this new impotence and the loss of purpose in scholarly activity that it implies. In other words, if Indological knowledge has historically been coexistent with vanished institutions of coercive power, then the production of such knowledge no longer serves its primary and defining purpose. Our obsession with orientalism over the past decade might suggest that Indologists, who have begun to realize their historical implication in domination only now that it has ended, no longer know why they are doing what they do.

The rise of a new empire and its continued production and utilization of orientalist knowledge may preemptively suggest that this assessment is not altogether correct. The colonial foundations of Indology may have given way, but neocolonial foundations have been built in their place. These await careful analysis, and our ignorance of our own role in the reproduction of power may account in part for the acute sense of confusion about our work some of us feel. But I can see at least three other sources for our turmoil.

German Indology, construed as part of a whole, leads us to confront a very large set of worries, the crisis of the culture of humanistic scholar-

ship as such. As a component of domination, German Indology was hardly different from the rest of German scholarship of the period. Numerous studies over the past fifteen to twenty years have demonstrated clearly the painful truth Steiner has caught in a memorable phrase: The humanities in Germany failed to humanize.

Not very many have asked, or pressed home the question, as to the internal relations between the structures of the inhuman and the surrounding, contemporary matrix of high civilization.<sup>81</sup> Yet the barbarism which we have undergone reflects, at numerous and precise points, the culture which it sprang from and set out to desecrate. . . . Why did humanistic traditions and models of conduct prove so fragile a barrier against political bestiality? In fact, were they a barrier, or is it more realistic to perceive in humanistic culture express solicitations of authoritarian rule and cruelty? (Steiner 1971: 30)

Like the predicament of Indology, that of humanistic studies in general has belatedly seized the attention of scholars, as "Der Fall Heidegger" demonstrates. This case is important not only because it posits in such stark terms the potential copresence of philosophy and barbarism, but because it is depressingly commonplace, as we are beginning to learn.<sup>82</sup> Can we continue to believe innocently in the value of such scholarship to life when this scholarship, often foundational each to its particular field, so readily served forms of repressive power through active contribution to the discourses that sustained these forms, or through "active indifference," "collaborative unknowing"?

Two other factors that I think contribute to the malaise I mention above are the management of critique perfected by contemporary capitalism and the theoretical challenge (yet again) to the scholarly dogma of objectivity.

A self-consciously responsible scholarship in late twentieth-century America may recognize and attempt to escape its implication in new forms of coercive power by fostering a critique of the imperial conditions of our scholarly production. A good example of this scholarship, and a sort of programmatic statement, is Edward Said's 1989 address to the American Association of Anthropologists, "Representing the Colonized: Anthropology's Interlocutors." Here he argues in favor of some (still largely unspecified) "alternative and emergent counterdominant" scholarly practices to break the link between area studies and neocolonial policy. "These are matters not just of theoretical but of quotidian importance. Imperialism, the control of overseas territories and peoples, develops in a continuum with variously envisaged histories, current practices and policies, and with differently plotted cultural trajectories."

Now what, as Weber might have asked, are the "external relationships," the "material conditions" of such scholarly pronouncements as this? What does it mean to warn against "the formidable difficulties of empire" before a professional organization of anthropologists, and in a scholarly journal published by the University of Chicago, and with all expenses paid by Columbia University? Why, in other words, should central ideological apparatuses of the empire so hospitably embrace those who seek to contest it, and why is it that the empire all the while should be so thoroughly unconcerned? It may be a tired and tiresome issue (a reprise of the 1960s hit "Repressive Desublimation"), but late capitalism's blithe insouciance toward its unmaskers, its apparently successful domestication of anti-imperialist scholarship, and its commodification of oppositional theory are hard to ignore and certainly give pause to those who seriously envision some role for critique in the project of progressive change.

Said's essay may also serve as entry point for the second factor mentioned, the problem of objectivity, something already raised above in the context of Weber's *Wissenschaft als Beruf*. There, a vision of science as value-free seems to have enabled, or certainly was spectacularly unable to prevent, the easy coexistence of scholarship and state violence. Challenging this vision at the most fundamental level has been among the main themes of theoretical work in the humanities during the past two decades. Central here are hermeneutical criticism, ideology critique, and the rhetoricization of historiography (as argued by Hayden White, Hans Kellner, and others). The prejudgments, theory-ladenness, and perspectival partiality out of and with which we perceive any object, especially a cultural object; the way discourses serve in class-divided societies to sustain forms of domination; the purely rhetorical (rather than ontological) status of the truth claims of historical description (LaCapra even wants to challenge the facticity of dates)—all of this conspires fundamentally to deny more forcefully than ever the very conditions of possibility of objective scholarship, including de-orientalizing scholarship.<sup>83</sup>

The problem of orientalism, therefore, thrusts itself on our attention not just because we now recognize that underwriting relations of power, in however modest a way, has been central to its existence; and probably not because of a perverse sense of impotence now that the traditional foundations of Indology have crumbled (for new foundations have replaced them). It's more than this; the whole project of humanistic scholarship, by reason of its capitulations and collusions, seems suspect. At the same time, the escalating critique of objectivism is nearing victory, but what a victory:

It ends in disarming the seekers of truth who advanced it—and who, even armed to the teeth, seem perfectly welcome in the new empire.

What, then, are the prospects of a scholarship that is “postmodern” with respect both to the subject and to the object of scholarship? How, concretely, does one do Indology beyond the Raj and Auschwitz in a world of pretty well tattered scholarly paradigms? I can only offer some very tentative thoughts, little more than notes to my “Notes.”

1. The problem of “objectivism” is bedeviling more of us more profoundly than ever, and I cannot offer much that is original. One response may be programmatically to recognize and asseverate one’s own interests and value-judgments, for does not the danger of “subjectivism” in part lie in suppressing it? Might the same self-consciousness not effectively confront if not neutralize the potential self-negation of the critique of ideology? Or perhaps we must finally acknowledge, as Joan Scott somewhere urges, that in the last analysis the fundamental question is not the “truth” of the human sciences but their relationship to power, whether as forms of knowledge that sustain illegitimate force or challenge it (a thesis for which NS Indology provides an important historical example). Another, more attractive response is one offered by the Critical Legal Studies (CLS) and Law and Society movements, where some of the more creative thinking about these problems is going on. Our focus should perhaps not be the dichotomy between objectivism and subjectivism, between accurate description and values, but rather the dominant paradigm of research itself, and its basic assumptions. We should construct new perspectives that, for classical Indology as for CLS, would include giving priority to what has hitherto been “marginal, invisible, and unheard.”<sup>84</sup> Given the radical silencing and screening out of communities effected by “classical” culture, this is, admittedly, a very arduous task indeed; disembedding the discursive structures by which such censorship and occlusion were effected, as I attempt to do in the discussion of pre-orientalist orientalism, has, I am fully aware, a barely provisional adequacy.<sup>85</sup>

As for method and the current fever of methodism, I am not sure that more is desirable than a minimalist position: Since cultural processes and social relations (constituted through hierarchies of class/caste, gender, etc.) are inseparable, and social relations are relations of power, cultural processes have to be seen as arenas where questions of power are constantly engaged (cf. Johnson 1986).

2. A postcolonial Indology should challenge the residual conceptual categories of colonialism, what was referred to above as “European episte-

mological hegemony.” This may seem at times like some untranscendable hermeneutic horizon, but I don’t think it is that serious; hermeneutical (or ideological or narratological) imprisonment is more terrifying in theory than in practice. An instance of the kind of challenge meant, from the side of economic history, is offered by Frank Perlin (e.g., 1983). He proceeds against the grain of the standard view, that the world system is modern and European, by demonstrating that a world system existed prior to the eighteenth century and that in this world system Europe was basically peripheral, while India may have possessed upward of one quarter of the manufacturing capacity in the world. Perlin’s economic-historical project suggests something of a conceptual paradigm for thinking anew South Asian societies and cultures. Washbrook has formulated this well: “South Asian economic and social history was written more to explain why the region did not develop like Europe, or perhaps did not develop at all, rather than to account for the changes and developments which did actually take place” (1988: 62). I may certainly be unaware of important recent work, but it seems that a preemptive European conceptual framework of analysis has disabled us from probing central features of South Asian life, from pre-western forms of “national” (or feminist, or communalist, or ethnic) identity or consciousness, premodern forms of cultural “modernism,” precolonial forms of colonialism.

3. In rejecting Eurocentrism, we have to be particularly watchful of its mirror image, “third-worldism” (as it is usually termed especially in discussions of the fate of the Iranian revolution). This seems to me a decided danger in some of the reformulations of colonial transformation now in vogue (and of the more commonplace naive image of spiritual, quietistic India), and appeal to a largely unproblematic concept of “tradition,” whether from a secularist or revivalist position, has become a standard feature of discourse in the public sphere in India. As I try to argue above, domination did not enter India with European colonialism. Quite the contrary, gross asymmetries of power—the systematic exclusion from access to material and nonmaterial resources of large sectors of the population—appear to have characterized India in particular times and places over the last three millennia and have formed the background against which ideological power, intellectual and spiritual resistance, and many forms of physical and psychological violence crystallized.

This violence is the great absent center of classical Indian studies, the subject over which a deafening silence is maintained. One task of post-orientalist Indology has to be to exhume, isolate, analyze, theorize, and at

the very least talk about the different modalities of domination in traditional India. By all means one is eager to help in the project of reclaiming "traditions, histories, and cultures from imperialism" (Said 1989: 219), but can we forget that most of the traditions and cultures in question have been empires of oppression in their own right—against women, above all, but also against other domestic communities? Perhaps the western Sanskritist feels this most acutely, given that Sanskrit was the principal discursive instrument of domination in premodern India and that, in addition, it has been continuously reappropriated in modern India by many of the most reactionary and communalist sectors of the population. It is a perilous enterprise for the western scholar to thematize the violence in the traditions of others, especially when they are others who have been the victims of violence from the West (though a culture's failure to play by its own rules, and evidence of internal opposition to its domination, are two conditions that certainly lessen this peril). Yet can one avoid it and still practice an Indology that is critical, responsible, and self-aware?

4. This critique of domination should be coupled with an awareness of the penetration of the present by the past—with an awareness of forms of traditional social and cultural violence sedimented in contemporary India—which in turn should entail solidarity with its contemporary victims. Here I would point to a key issue raised in perhaps the most significant confrontation with the public role of history in recent years, the *Historikerstreit* in Germany. In that controversy, a major critique was developed against "historicization," defined in the specific context of the *Streit* as an attempt to reduce a matter of historic significance, the Holocaust, to a matter of only historiographical significance, with all the consequences that making something "academic" implies (Diner 1987: 10–11). I bring this issue up here because it prompts the question why we should not resist any such "historicization" that serves to normalize or trivialize domination, not only in the egregious case of the NS state, but wherever traditional forms of oppression have perdured into the present.

Traditional domination as coded in Sanskrit is not "past history" in India, to be sure. Partly by reason of the stored energy of an insufficiently critiqued and thus untranscended past, it survives in various harsh forms (intensified by the added toxins of capitalist exploitation by twice-born classes) despite legislation designed to weaken the economic and institutional framework associated with it. When, for example, we are told by a contemporary Indian woman that she submits to the economic, social, and emotional violence of Indian widowhood because, in her words, "Accord-

ing to the shastras I had to do it"; when we read in a recent Dalit manifesto that "The first and foremost object of this [cultural revolution] should be to free every man and woman from the thralldom of the Shastras," we catch a glimpse not only of the actualization in consciousness of Sanskrit discourses of power, but of their continued vigor.<sup>86</sup>

5. It may be, to conclude on a major chord, that a transformed and transformative, an emancipatory Indology can exist only within the framework of an emancipatory domestic culture and politics. Moving beyond orientalism finally presupposes moving beyond the culture of domination and the politics of coercion that have nurtured orientalism in all its varieties, and been nurtured by it in turn.

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#### Notes

1. My thinking about "power" and its maintenance has been informed by Giddens's analysis of power as the control of both "allocative" (material) resources and "authoritative" (including informational) resources. When below I focus on traditional *vaidika* India, I have in mind specifically Giddens 1979: 94ff., especially p. 162, where he argues for the primacy of "authority" over "allocation" in pre-capitalist societies, and 1985: 258ff., especially p. 261, where he discusses the distribution of "life chances," as for instance literacy, as one form of "authoritative" resource.

2. See now Said 1989: 207.

3. The complexity of this tie may be illustrated by Warren Hastings's preface to the first English translation of a Sanskrit text, Wilkins's *Bhagavadgītā*:

Every accumulation of knowledge, and especially such as it obtained by social communication with people over whom we exercise a dominion founded on the right of conquest, is useful to the state; it is the gain of humanity; in the specific instance which I have stated, it attracts and conciliates distant affections; it lessens the weight of the chain by which the natives are held in subjection; and it imprints on the hearts of our own countrymen the sense and obligation of benevolence. Even in England, this effect of it is greatly wanting. It is not very long since the inhabitants of India were considered by many as creatures scarce elevated above the degree of savage life; nor, I fear, is that prejudice yet wholly eradicated, though surely abated. Every instance which brings their real character home to observation will impress us with a more generous sense of feeling for their natural rights, and teach us to estimate them by the measure of our own. But such instances can only be obtained in their writings; and these will survive when the British dominion in India shall have long ceased to exist, and when the sources which it once yielded of wealth and power are lost to remembrance. (1785: 13)

A more exquisite expression of liberal imperialism would be hard to find.

4. As widely remarked, and acknowledged, 1985: 1.

5. See the table prepared by Rhys Davids, which shows for the year 1903 a total of 47 professors (26 of them full professors) for "Aryan" orientalism in Germany (Rhys Davids, 1903-04, which he juxtaposes to the four professorships in England, the colonial metropole). For the years around 1933 that more centrally concern me in these "Notes," the *Minerva Jahrbuch* shows substantial programs in Indology at 13 German universities. The important question of the political economy of Indology in Germany in the period 1800-1945 awaits serious analysis.

6. Edward Augustus Freeman, 1879. A prescient document, widely disseminated in its reprinted form in the Harvard Classics, vol. 28.

7. Leopold 1974 provides a good survey. A number of these representations, in particular India as the cradle of Aryan civilization, have lived on in British (and Indian) discourse well into the twentieth century, often taking on a particularly local political inflection. Compare Annie Besant's remarks to the Indian National Congress in 1917: "The Aryan emigrants, who spread over the lands of Europe, carried with them the seeds of liberty sown in their blood in their Asian cradleland. Western historians [I believe she is referring in the first instance to H. S. Maine] trace the self-rule of the Saxon villages to their earlier prototypes in the East and see the growth of English liberty as up-springing from the Aryan root of the free and self-contained village communities . . ." This was recently cited by (then) Vice President R. Venkatraman of India in his Centenary address at the Adyar Library (1988: 198).

8. A third moment is worth noting: National Socialism made Germany safe again for the open expression of a racism that, while generally accepted in nineteenth-century European scholarship—and indeed, constitutive of orientalism—had largely been excluded from the scholarly sphere for half a century (cf. Laurens

1988; the new freedom to hate publicly is brought out clearly in an early tract on the "worldview" of National Socialism by Karl Zimmerman (1933: 20-22). One might well speculate as to what degree other European scholarship would have differed had its political idiom permitted unconstrained public expression. For the notion of an "inner colonization" of Europe, I now see that I have to some degree been anticipated by the fascism critique of Césaire and Fanon, who regarded it as European colonialism brought home (see most recently Young 1990: 8).

9. For the intellectual-historical appropriation of Bopp—who would certainly have resisted it—in the NS period, see Richard Harder 1942.

10. Jeffrey Herf 1984.

11. It is thus, ultimately, against the values of the November Revolution that Weber counterposes the values of value-free science; his earlier adumbrations of this topic ("On Objectivity," etc.) thus may be thought to be superseded by his formulation here. A memorable eyewitness account of Weber's presentation and its backdrop can be found in Löwith 1986: 15-17.

12. Ringer 1969: 32ff.

13. The idea of an engaged, anti-objectivist Indology finds expression frequently in the period (e.g., in the introduction to Lommel 1935, or Güntert 1938, especially p. 11). Position papers on the question more broadly viewed were prepared by the Hauptamt Wissenschaft (e.g., "Weltanschauung und Wissenschaft," MA-608 [H.W. VortragsMsk 1938], 55672-99, in the archives of the Institut für Zeitgeschichte, Munich).

14. Güntert 1938: 6-7 (here and throughout the essay all translations are my own unless otherwise indicated); Güntert 1932, especially p. 115. The logical extrapolation of such a position is found in the demands raised by the German Student Union's campaign against "Un-German Spirit" during their book burnings of April-May 1933 (e.g., No. 5: "The Jew can only think Jewishly. If he writes in German, he lies"; No. 7: "We demand of the state censor that Jewish works be published only in Hebrew. If they be published in German, they should be characterized as translations" [document published in Poliakov and Wulf 1983: 117-18]). The control of language itself is an elementary form of social power, as will be apparent in the case of India.

15. I believe I now see why: ". . . racism always tends to function *in reverse* . . . : the racial-cultural identity of the 'true nationals' remains invisible, but it is inferred from (and assured by) its opposite, the alleged, quasi-hallucinatory visibility of the 'false nationals': Jews, 'wops,' immigrants . . ." (Balibar 1990: 285).

16. As of April, 1933, 800 professors (out of a total of 7,000) had lost their positions; 85 percent of these were Jews. By 1937, 1684 professors had been dismissed. The Jewish student population dropped from 4,382 in 1933 to 812 in 1938 and zero after November 1938. See Jurt 1991: 125.

17. On the whole question, see, most recently, Siefert 1987, who is useful principally for his analysis of nineteenth-century theories of race but is otherwise insufficient and sometimes misleading. He also incomprehensibly ignores altogether the work of professional Indologists, Iranists, and Indo-Europeanists during the NS period on the question of "Arier" (as on attitudes toward the Indian Freedom Movement).



18. There are two key figures here. The first is Egon Frhr. von Eickstedt, professor at Breslau. Much of his work focused on the racial history of South Asia: cf. *Rassenkunde und Rassengeschichte der Menschheit*, 1934 (note the encomium in Alsdorf 1942: 4) and the journal he founded in 1935, *Zeitschrift für Rassenkunde und ihre Nachbargebiete*, which carried substantial articles of his own and of others who worked in South Asia, e.g., Heine-Geldern. The second, better known, is Hans F. K. Günther, professor at Jena, later Berlin, who also had a basic subcontinental orientation: cf. especially *Die nordische Rasse bei den Indogermanen Asiens*, 1934, as well as his own journal, *Rasse*, 1934ff. A separate study could be devoted to the "orientalist" dimension of "race-science," in particular its interpreting Indian "caste law" as an expression of racial "hygiene," and adducing India as a warning of the dangers of the "blood chaos" that National Socialism prevented at the eleventh hour (for both themes, see Günther 1936). The ratio *ārya* : *caṇḍāla* [outcaste, untouchable] :: German : Jew was made already by Nietzsche, cited in Alsdorf 1942: 85.

19. The first, in all its confusion, reads as follows: "Aryan? (also known as Indo-Germans or Japhites) includes the three branches of the Caucasian (white) race; these may be divided into the western (European), i.e., the Germans, Romans, Greeks, Slavs, Latvians, Celts, Albanians, and the eastern (Asiatic) Aryans, i.e., the Indians (Hindus) and Iranians (Persians, Afghans, Armenians, Georgians, Kurds). 'Non-aryans' are therefore 1) members of the two other races, namely, the Mongolian (yellow) and the Negro (black) races; 2) members of the two other branches of the Caucasian race, namely, the Semites (Jews, Arabs) and Hamites (Berbers). The Finns and Hungarians belong to the Mongolian race, but it is hardly the intention of this law to treat them as non-aryans" (cf. also Siefert 1987: 461–62). The confusion in the popular mind, however, continued; see for example the article "Nichtarisch oder Jüdisch?" in the anti-Semitic journal *Hammer* (No. 799/800 (1935), pp. 376–77), prompted by the "Wehrgesetz" of 1935, which prohibited non-Aryans from joining the army (the author was worried about the potential exclusion of such "loyal" and "martial" non-Aryans as Finns, Hungarians, and "Moors"). I have looked in vain for any detailed social-historical analysis of the term "Arier" in the NS period. (I would add that it appears incorrect to claim that "Arier," etc. had ceased to be meaningful on the juridical plane after 1935 [Siefert 1987: 462], though the question requires specialist adjudication. Certainly the process of expropriating Jewish businesses, which begins in earnest after Crystal Night [November 9, 1938], was referred to as "Arisierung," and laws so formulated seem to have been passed as late as September 1941 [Walk 1981: 348]. Anyway, the terminology remained a potent racist shibboleth and constantly appears in official and private documents until the end of the regime.)

20. For an example of this recentering of the notional, see Tal 1980, 1981, and Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy 1990.

21. This paper was later presented again as a speech before the German Academy at the University of Munich on December 6, 1939, and reprinted in Wüst 1942: 33ff. (the latter collection was favorably reviewed by Frauwallner [1943: "Let us hope . . . that (the book) has the desired effect in scholarly circles and wins as many adherents as possible"]). Some scholars of the period do seem to raise the

issue of the historical validity of the term "arisch" as used in contemporary discourse (for instance Lommel 1934; Krahe 1935), but avoid, or cannot conceive of, any critique.

22. For the contemporary resonance of the term cf. Klemperer 1987: 151–57.

23. According to additional documents from the BDC, the speech was printed and distributed to the SS. Wüst was later to be named director of the SS's research institute "Das 'Ahnenerbe'" (Kater 1974).

24. Especially notable is his drive for institutional dominance in the Indological and Indo-European studies establishment. Wüst for instance got himself appointed—or appointed himself—to the editorship of a number of important journals in these fields including *Wörter und Sachen* (1938), *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes* (1939), *Archiv für Religionswissenschaft* (1939). This is of a piece with his attempt to institutionalize and direct popular media coverage of scholarship in general through his short-lived "Deutscher Wissenschaftlicher Dienst" (1940: cf. MA-116/18 HA Wiss. S. 75 in the archives of the Institut für Zeitgeschichte, Munich). His more practical contributions to the NS regime include consultation in the creation of "scientific research institutes" exploiting Hungarian Jewish prisoners in concentration camps; see the memo from Himmler of May 26, 1944 reprinted in Poliakov and Wulf 1983: 319.

25. However we may wish to define "the ideology of the Third Reich"—whether as *völkisch* doctrine or as the strategy of the state for world domination—in neither case would it be correct to say that Alsdorf made no "concessions" to it (Bruhn et al. 1990: ix).

26. "A product of the most serious scholarly research, which is meant to serve contemporary life as well," Richard Schmidt 1939: 546.

27. (1936): *Germanen und Indogermanen: Volkstum, Sprache, Heimat, Kultur. Festschrift für Herman Hirt*, two volumes (with contributions by, among others, von Eickstedt, H. F. K. Günther, Hauer, Reche, and Dumézil but also by Benveniste and Meillet).

28. Contrast Wilhelm Schmidt's claim (in Scherer 1968: 314) that "East-thesis" submissions (placing the *Urheimat* in Asia or Russia, as opposed to Northern Europe) were rejected (p. 313).

29. Koppers et al. 1936. Cf. the review by Otto Reche ("Professor für Rassen- und Völkerkunde, Leipzig"): "This entire edifice of notions is tied up with church dogma [Koppers, a priest, was affiliated with Societas verbi divini in Mödling] and thus assuredly in no way scholarship . . ." (Reche 1940: 17).

30. "The homeland, the race and the culture of a supposed Proto-Indo-German population have been discussed, but this is a population that may never have existed"; "the only thing these people [i.e., speakers of IE] have in common is the fact that their languages belong to the same family . . ." since "Indo-Germanic" is a purely linguistic notion" (1936: 81, 83; cf. Renfrew 1987: 108–9). Speaking of improbable coincidences and the politics of the *Urheimatfrage*, I would call attention to the hypothesis recently presented, on the eve of continental unification in the European community, that lays "less emphasis on specific ethnic groups and their supposed migrations," and instead imagines peaceful Indo-European farmers spreading in a gradual, egalitarian, and what seems to be an eth-

nically almost homogeneous "wave of advance" throughout Europe (Renfrew 1987: 288).

31. Schlegel's image did live on, however; the Münster Sanskritist Richard Schmidt could still speak, in a learned journal in 1939, of the ancient Indians as "our ancestors" ("unsere Urahnen," *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes* 46: 157; cf. Schmidt 1939: 548, where he refers to Meister Eckhart and Śaṅkara as "race-comrades" [*Rassengenossen*]). The myth of origins still carries on a twilight career among adherents of the new "conservatism," especially on the French right. See especially Jean Haudry, 1981, along with the review that puts this work into perspective, Bernard Sargent 1982. (The intellectual wing of the French right involved here—G.R.E.C.E. *Nouvelle École*, Alain de Benoist—is situated by d'Appollonia 1983).

32. In the most recent reconsideration of the German "intellectual quest" for India, D. Rothermund asserts that "In the Nazi period [German Indology] could survive by virtue of the esoteric character it had acquired. . . . This type of 'inner emigration' was, in fact, the only saving grace for Indologists, because the tradition of the German quest for India was perverted at that time by being pressed into the service of Hitler's ill-conceived racial theory. . . ." (1986: 17). I see little evidence of this "esoteric" dimension in the NS period, or of "inner emigration," nor is it in the least self-evident that the racial theory of the NS state constituted a "perversion" of the romantic/idealist quest (rather than, say, its telos).

33. Losemann 1977: 108; see also Kater 1974: 193ff.

34. See *Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 96 (1942): \*12ff. The process of *Gleichschaltung* in the German Oriental Society awaits study. It was only in 1938 that the organization actually passed a by-law whereby Orientals, Jews, and anyone else ineligible for "imperial citizenship" were denied membership (*ZDMG* 94 [1940]: \*7–8). As far as I know, no history of the DMG exists, and this is a real desideratum for the study of institutional orientalism, especially in the NS and postwar years. Worth noting is the reappearance in the society's postwar membership list of people like Wüst (*ZDMG* 100 [1950] \*23), despite apparent "de-Nazification" (cf. *ZDMG* 99 [1950]: 295).

35. At least in view of the generalizations of Kater 1983: 110.

36. This list could probably be expanded with further archival search, to include, for instance, the already mentioned Hermann Güntert, professor of Sanskrit and comparative philology, who according to Maas (1988: 279n.) was installed as a dean in Heidelberg (1933–37) by the "political leadership" (this certainly harmonizes with the essay of his excerpted above, as does Wüst's approval of his editorship of *Wörter u. Sachen* from 1938 on. (Incidentally, locating the Indo-German "Urheimat" in the east was not necessarily a sign of anti-Nazism, as Wolfgang Meid implies [1974: 520].) Also excluded are Indo-Europeanists strictly speaking, who merit a list of their own, starting with W. Porzig (dismissed from the University of Bern for Nazi activities already in the 1920s, he exchanged positions with Debrunner in Jena; he was banned from teaching after the war but rehabilitated in 1951 [Maas 1988: 270n.]).

37. The event that led to this awaits clarification, but for now consult with due caution Alsdorf 1960: 577 (and cf. Morgenroth 1978: 54–55). Lüders continued,

however, to sit on the board of the DMG. It may be noted that the aged Geiger, according to personal papers consulted by Bechert, objected privately to the behavior of Wüst.

38. On the former, see Kater 1974; for the latter, see the documents reproduced in Poliakov and Wulf 1983: 133ff.

39. Von Schroeder, familiar to Indologists as the punctilious editor of the *Kāthakasaṃhitā* and *Maitrāyaṇī Saṃhitā*, is also the author of the *The Culmination of the Aryan Mystery in Bayreuth* (Von Schroeder 1911) and of *Houston Stewart Chamberlain, A Life Sketch* (Von Schroeder 1918). His book on aryan religion (Von Schroeder 1914–16), above all the chapter entitled "Die Arier," is a summa of the racialist topoi that were to become staples of NS discourse.

40. In the sense of "ideology" powerfully argued by Thompson 1984.

41. There are exceptions; Guha 1986 is a fine example of sensitivity toward continuities or homologies in colonial and precolonial idioms of domination.

42. A form of Orientalist critique of colonialism in Indian scholarship has produced similar, and in some ways more important repercussions, given their immediacy to political actuality. See for instance Chandra 1984, on the claim that colonialism generated communalism; this is an axiom for Mani (1987: 154, the "emergence [of communalism] is inextricably linked with colonialism"), cf. Dirks (1989: 47–48), and for the most sophisticated and sustained historical argument, Pandey 1990. To a degree Bayly 1985 provides a historical counterargument. His article begins with ca. 1700, the era of Mughal decline; pre-Mughal communalism or religiously coded political mobilization—as evidenced, say, in the Coḷa extirpation of the Jains or in what appears to have been massive destruction of Buddhist sites by Pāñcarātra Vaiṣṇavas in the Kathmandu valley in the eighth century—seems not to have been much studied. I am presently exploring to what degree the *Rāmāyaṇa* can be said to have been constituted as a proto-"communal" text in twelfth-century North India (operationalized via the demonization of the Central Asian invaders).

43. I take it what is meant are not "Brahmana texts" in the strict sense but Brahmanical texts, the *dharmasūtras* and so on ("varnāshramadharmā" is hardly discussed in the former).

44. These are all in fact components in a very ancient taxonomy of *vyavahāra* (the *vyavahārapadas* or eighteen titles of law), though not all *smṛti* writers include *sahamaraṇa*.

45. Had Lakṣmīdhara dwelt long on the topic, it is likely that we would have encountered also the interpretative principles used by the pro-*sati* faction in Calcutta in the 1820s; for all of them—the hierarchy of texts, the priority of "scripture" to "usage," even the specific axioms that "order of meaning has preference over order of reading"; "non-prohibition constitutes sanction" (pp. 142, 145)—are "traditional," in fact Mīmāṃsā in origin. Whether this makes them less "disingenuous" or "facile" (p. 143), I do not know, but it certainly makes them less colonial.

46. *sahamaraṇānumaraṇayor adhikārah*, p. 635.

47. Washbrook 1988: 83. This article, especially pp. 81–83, effectively summarizes the postcolonial analysis.

48. On the "absolute truth" of the *Rāmāyaṇa* see for example the sixteenth-

century commentator Maheśvaratīrtha ad 2.41.10 vulg. The poem's vision of stratification is reproduced in normative texts continuously at least from the time of the *Āpastambadharmasūtra* 1.1.5-7, "There are four *varṇas*, the brāhmaṇa, kṣatriya, vaiśya, and śūdra; of these, each succeeding is better [*śreyān*] by reason of birth; all but the śūdra . . . are to be initiated and are to study the Veda . . . ; a śūdra is to serve the other *varṇas*."

49. The distinction is usefully drawn and discussed by LaCapra 1983: 30ff., 339ff.

50. Though there seems to be a definite consensus against my view: The new multivolume history of India currently under publication from Cambridge University Press, for example, chooses to ignore the problem entirely and begin—Stein's brief monograph on Vijayanagar aside—with the Mughals.

51. Thus also, from a comparative perspective, Mann 1986: 348ff.

52. For an elaboration of this argument, see Pollock 1989.

53. The dedicatory and *prāsasti* verses are collected in Vol. I, 47ff. See especially the one that introduces the *Vyavahārikāṇḍa*, 51.

54. The precise nature of the *turuṣkadāṇḍa* remains problematic; most likely it was either a tax levied to defend against Afghan invasions (Smith 1924: 400) or a tax levied on the Afghan settlers in the Gāhadavāla dominions (cf. Sten Konow, *Epigraphia Indica* 9: 321).

55. *Epigraphia Indica* 9: 324.

56. I find myself in broad if tentative agreement with the view of the editor of the *nibandha*, K. V. Rangaswami Aiyangar (*Dānakāṇḍa*, Introduction: 16). I don't know enough about the prehistory of the *nibandha* genre to be fully convinced of the adequacy of this explanation, however. Lakṣmīdhara himself cites six earlier compendia, but these are no longer extant.

57. The *Mīmāṃsā nyāya* runs *apṛāpte śāstram arthavat* ("Holy word pertains to, communicates, what is not otherwise available, knowable"), and would comprise such things as sacrificing in order to attain heaven.

58. See the elaboration in Pollock 1990.

59. *Āpastamba*, for example, is very clear about denying Vedic status to injunctions derived from memory or custom that reveal some motive—*karāṇa*, *hetu* (e.g., 1.4.9)—but at the same time encodes as *rule*-bound action that "A servant who refuses to do the tilling is to be beaten" (2.11.2).

60. Vol. I, Chapter 1, p. 5, citing *Viśvāmitra* (= *Āpastamba* 1.20.7).

61. I now find that W. Halbfass's magnum opus inaugurates just such an analysis (Halbfass 1988: 172ff.). Additional materials are collected in Thapar 1978: 152–92. For the important Buddhist (and Jain) transvaluation of the term *ārya*, see the preliminary remarks in Deshpande 1979: 40ff.; p. 10 and n. 29.

62. Compare Parasher 1983. That such bipolar visions of *ārya* and *mleccha* were actualized in conceptualizing real contacts with others is suggested by the almost contemporaneous Delhi-Siwalik pillar inscription of Visaladeva of the Chāhāmāna dynasty of Śākambharī (A.D. 1164), which, referring (probably) to the defeat of Khusrū Shah, describes the king Visaladeva "the god who made Āryāvarta once again true to its name by extirpating the *mlecchas*" (19, 218; cf. *Journal of Indian History* 15 [1936]: 171).

63. Vol. I, p. 49. *Viṣṇu Smṛti* 84.1–2. The same energy vibrates in late medieval representations of the monstrous races, where, for example "Yavanas," that is, Muslims, are viewed as the "rākṣasas of the Kali age" (see the Decanese commentators Kataka and Tilaka on *Rām.* 3.3.24 crit. ed.). The plastic arts, especially epic miniatures, provide a visual map of the demonization of various tribal cultures, it may be argued, though detailed analysis in this area remains to be done.

64. *ṚV* 10.90 is the locus classicus in the Veda; it is explicated in *Manusmṛti* 1.87ff. *Bhagavadgītā* 18.41–42 (cited Vol. I, p. 9) provides the biology, which is also of course latent in the *ṚV* passage.

65. This paradigm is elaborated elsewhere by Lakṣmīdhara in his review of *pratiloma* (hypogamous) marriages: the impurity of such a marriage is perpetuated in the offspring; the offspring of a Brahman woman and śūdra man, for instance, exist in a permanent state of impurity, i.e., they are untouchable (*Sūddhikāṇḍa*, p. 28 and introduction p. 14). The genealogy of untouchability needs far more detailed reconsideration; see for now Jha 1986–87.

66. For instance, Dumont 1961, or Delacampagne 1983: 150–58. The best essay to date is Washbrook 1982. (I do not see, however, how one can argue that it is irrelevant whether "race" is defined culturally or biologically—the defining characteristic of "racialism" is its "legitimizing social inequality by reference to qualities inherent in different ascriptive communities" [p. 145]—and still go on to claim that traditional Indian society "was not structured around principles . . . of racial domination" [p. 51]. The diachronic base of the essay is also too narrow for so weighty a topic.) There is no necessary causal dependency of racism on nationalism; Balibar points out that the classical racial myths "refer initially not to the nation but to the class, in an aristocratic perspective" (1990: 286).

67. Vol. 2, ch. 16, pp. 265ff.

68. There exist an array of texts treating of *sūdradharmā* (e.g., *Sūdrācārāśiromani* of Śeṣa Krishna, *Sūdrakṛtyatattva* of Raghunandana Bhaṭṭācāryya, *Sūdrakamalākara*, etc.), which to my knowledge have received no systematic (or other) analysis. The *Arthasāstra* excludes caṇḍālas even from *sūdradharmā* (3.7.37).

69. *Mati*, that is, "knowledge pertaining to duties and prohibitions with otherworldly ends," according to Lakṣmīdhara.

70. Pp. 380ff.; *Manusmṛti* 4.80–81, Yama and Vasīṣṭa (not traced).

71. The *apāsūdrādhikāraṇa*, *Pūrvamīmāṃsāsūtra* 6.1.25ff., similar but with interesting variations is *Brahmasūtra* 1.3.34ff.

72. *Mīmāṃsānyāyaprakāśa* p. 193.10ff. See also Lariviere 1988, who with some justice wants to extend the meaning of the term to include "responsibility."

73. And they must be built according to ritual injunction, being ritual fires (*Tuṣṭikā*, pp. 208–9).

74. In technical terminology, the injunction is conditional, not constitutive (*nimitātārtha* rather than *prāpika*), 6.1.27.

75. *Pūrvapakṣa* in Śabara ad 6.1.32.

76. "The śūdra shall not recite the Veda" (6.1.29–36). The *Brahmasūtra* seamlessly extends the *Mīmāṃsā* argument from the prohibition for the śūdra to sacrifice to the prohibition to acquire "sacred knowledge" (*vidyā*) in general. Here the

"right" of the śūdra to have access to "sacred knowledge" is denied on the grounds that this presupposes the right to recite the Veda (*adhyayana*), which in turn presupposes the right to initiation (*upanayana*), something reserved by Vedic injunction to the first three *varṇas*.

77. According to Vācaspati (*Bhāmātī* ad *Brahmasūtra* 1.3.34) and Kumāṛila (*Tantravārttika* ad 1.3.9, pp. 143.9–10) respectively.

78. Consider the following discussion by the tenth-century Kashmiri logician Bhāsarvajña on the origins of the Jaina scriptures:

"Objection: the scriptures of the Jains and the rest [i.e., the Buddhists] have no instrumental purpose and are accepted by many people, too [two arguments use to support the transcendence-claim of the Veda], and so should be valid as scripture. Answer: Not so, because they were accepted for other reasons. Some śūdras once heard about the great good fortune of learning and teaching the Vedas, and they became desirous of learning the Vedas. But of course they had no authorization to learn the Vedas, and consequently had no chance of doing so. Then certain ambitious people like the Jina convinced these śūdras that there was great benefit to be had in learning the "scriptures" that they themselves had composed, and the śūdras accordingly did so. They encouraged other śūdras to the same end, and these others, including some brahmins and the other [higher social orders] who, being both stupid and crushed by poverty, were deluded into thinking they could thereby end their troubles. That is how such "scriptures" achieved prominence—not, like the Vedas, by being committed to memory even by people [who have no material interests whatever and so] live in the forest, and who are not excluded from participating in any scriptural tradition; by being taught by brahmins and brahmins alone, and learned only by the three higher social orders. Consequently the question of the authority of the "scriptures" of the Jains and the others simply does not arise (*Nyāyasārabhūṣaṇa*, p. 393).

79. See for instance the "*vidhi*" cited by Vedāntadeśika ad *Bhagavadgītā* 18.44 (hemānte śūdrām eva ca [dikṣayet], "... and one should initiate a śūdra in the winter").

80. A further useful comparison is with the slave codes of the U. S. South, which also included antiliteracy laws and substantial inequalities of criminal sanctions. These codes also provide us with a sobering reminder of how difficult it is to distinguish "actuality" from "sentiment" in legal materials only five generations removed from us. See Tushnet 1981: esp. 18ff.

81. In the course of the recent *Historikerstreit* in West Germany, Joachim Fest argued that the category "high culture" itself (as a condition of the singularity of the Holocaust) is inadmissible because, "taken strictly, it perpetuates the old Nazi distinction that there are higher and lower peoples" (1987: 104–5). What Fest calls "die alte Nazi-Unterscheidung" is in fact the belief that knowledge and truth are valuable for human existence, the very belief behind Fest's own intervention. For if the relationship of NS state terror and German high culture is not a real problem for us to study—if knowledge and truth are not somehow meaningful values for

life—then there is no point to any reevaluation of the Nazi state, let alone to Fest's particular argument.

82. Among only the most recent: the revelations about Paul de Man should require no reference; for Eliade, see Berger 1989; for Dumézil, Ginzburg 1985 is the first installment in a history that others are now writing. As for the standard fall-back position that seeks to draw a boundary marker between life and work, Marcuse's letter to Heidegger merits citing: "But we cannot make the separation between Heidegger the philosopher and Heidegger the man, for it contradicts your own philosophy" (Wolin 1991: 29; letter dated 1947). This may easily be extrapolated to other humanistic enterprises.

83. This is perfectly well known to us all at the theoretical level. So too is the danger of self-cancellation of rhetorical or ideology critique, or of reducing history to sheer textuality. But what, then, do we do in the practice of our own work? How many of us can follow through on the implications of all this in the execution of our own scholarship? How many confront the interests that inform our own analysis of interests, or disinter the master trope buried within our own historiography? It is one thing to acclaim White's work (for "dislodg[ing] the primacy both of the real and of the ideal") at the level of theory (Said 1989: 221), but quite another to live out its consequences in the practical task of writing a history of, say, orientalism (or "deep orientalism"). Discontinuity between the two is rather the rule.

84. See Silbey and Sarat 1987, and Trubek and Esser forthcoming (especially pp. 71ff.)

85. British colonialism gave a hearing to voices of the despised in a way pre-British colonialism did not, thus enabling the sort of recuperation that Guha performs for the Doms on the basis of Brigg's ethnography (Guha 1985).

86. The quotes are found in *India Today*, November 15, 1987: 75 and Joshi 1986: 151 respectively.

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