4. Deism, the Enlightenment, and the Early History of Indology

1. The reports of the missionaries, while never published in their entirety, were the most important sources of the European notions about Indian thought during the seventeenth century and remained as one of the most important in the eighteenth. To be sure, the interest which greeted these reports was by no means limited to an interest in the advance of Christianity or in the problems associated with its diffusion. For the knowledge and observations which the missionaries themselves saw as the means and prerequisites for proclaiming the Christian gospel could also attain an independent status and be applied to other ends as well. As indicated above, they could be used to oppose the very intentions that they were originally designed to serve. The reference to a "natural light" and the discovery of a natural conception of God and a natural theology and *philosophia perennis* were, particularly for the Jesuits, the prerequisite and the stimulus for doing missionary work in India. The same principle which served in the realization of these efforts, namely that of isolating the pure and, moreover, rationally understandable origins and bases from the overlying ritual trappings and superstitious distortions, could also be applied to Christianity itself. And it was in this way that the reports about India and the other non-European traditions, in particular China, which the Jesuits passed on fit those religious and philosophical tendencies of Rationalism and the Enlightenment that are subsumed under the term *Deism.*[1]

In 1624, Herbert of Cherbury, a contemporary of Roberto Nobili, published *De veritate* ("On Truth"), his main work. It goes into as little detail about India as its supplement, *De religione gentilium* ("On the Religion of the Heathens," written between 1642 and 1645, published in 1663). Yet it offered a framework in which many of the reports about the religion and philosophy of India were to find a place. In these works,

Herbert set forth the idea of a "religion of pure reason and suprahistorical catholicity." "The five constituent articles of faith of this new and oldest religion are the following: the belief in one God; the duty to honor him; his moral worship in the form of pious attitudes and virtuous conduct (virtus cum pietate coniuncta), the pain of sin, and the belief in an afterlife in which good and evil are rewarded." It was this—and only this—which was ultimately of importance in Christianity and the other religions. Christianity was one of a number of religions which had been nurtured at the fountainhead of the universal, pan-human revelation of reason. "There are no fully neglected religions: nulla umquam fuit tam barbara sive religio sive philosophia, cui sua non stetit veritas. In every historical religion, a precise distinction must be made between their rational origins and their non-rational development."[2]

2. Herbert used the expressions *notitia communis* and *consensus gentium* to characterize and justify his basic religious truths, expressions which refer to Stoic philosophy and the universalism it posited, and especially to the doctrine of κοιναι εννοιαι developed by Chrysippus. Stoic philosophy is known to have experienced a decisive revival in the sixteenth century, e.g., through J. Lipsius. In this context, we may recall the idea of a "natural theology," which found expression as early as the fifteenth century through Raymond of Sabunde as well as Thomas More's concept of a rational religion (*Utopia*, 1516) and the work of Augustinus Steuchus on the *philosophia perennis.*[3] In general, an interest in the diversity of humanity answering to the Age of Discovery worked its way into the literature of the sixteenth century, e.g., in J. Böhm's *Omnium gentium mores* (1520) and S. Franck's *Cosmographia, Weltbuch* (1534), which followed through on Böhm's ideas. An impressive example of this trend was provided by Montaigne (1553–1592), who, in his openness towards the variety of human viewpoints and foreign, unfamiliar patterns of behavior, tended towards scepticism and relativism while nevertheless clinging to the idea of the universality of basic moral principles. G. Postel (1501–1581) was an advocate of a Christian cosmopolitanism oriented around the Orient in the larger sense, as best expressed in his *Des merveilles du monde*, first published in 1552.[4] The *Colloquium heptaplomeres* of J. Bodin (1530–1596) represents a new and revolutionary approach to the comparison of religions and interreligious dialogue. The first published edition of this work appeared in 1841, but its existence was widely known since the end of the seventeenth century. The pamphlet *De tribus impostoribus* ("On the Three Imposters," i.e. Moses, Jesus and Mohammed), which was allegedly published in 1598 and contains "comparative" references to the Veda and the Brahmins, is probably (at least in its extant form) a falsification produced in the eighteenth century.

A number of works, including those by J. Toland, A. Collins, and M. Tindal (*Christianity as Old as the Creation; or the Gospel a Republication of the Religion of Nature*, 1730), continued the "deistic" discussion, brought it to a head, and created an intellectual atmosphere which came to be of considerable importance for the late eighteenth-century understanding of India. The deistic motif may also be clearly seen among many of the eighteenth-century English pioneers of Indian studies, namely in A. Dow and J.Z. Holwell, and to a lesser extent with Ch. Wilkins. As Dow explained in an apparent adaptation of the opening statement from Descartes' *Discours de la méthode*: ". . . common sense, upon the affairs of religion, is pretty equally divided among all nations."[5] He formulated the principle for understanding foreign religions, both Indian and otherwise, as follows: "Whatever the external ceremonies of religion may be, the self-same infinite being is the object of universal adoration."[6] Holwell, who, like Dow, emphasized the extraordinary age of the Indian tradition, contrasted the contemporary, degenerated customs of the Hindus ("their modern ceremonials, and complicated modes of worship") to their originally monotheistic tenets, which he described as "short, pure, simple and uniform." In his *Dissertation on the Metempsychosis*, which he appended to his account of *Interesting Historical Events relative to the Provinces of Bengal and the Empire of Indostan* (first published in 1765–1767) in 1771, he declared that all of the world's religions were founded upon the same pristine truth, revealed to mankind by a gracious God. "This was orthodox deism, but his list of 'primitive truths' was far from orthodox, including belief in fallen angels and metempsychosis."[7] Neither Dow nor Holwell knew Sanskrit, yet the contributions which they made to the knowledge of the Indian religious and philosophical literature were quite remarkable for their time. Dow, for example, made a survey of the various categories of the Vaiśeṣika and the Nyāya in which he introduced the Nyāya of Gautama under the name "neadirsen" (i.e., *Nyāyadarśana*).[8]

3. Although they cannot actually be described as deists, such figures as N.B. Halhed and W. Jones (who founded the Asiatic Society of Bengal in 1784) nevertheless came close to deistic thinking, and their works reveal its influence. The universalistic and deistic foreword by the Pandits who compiled the Sanskrit material for the *Code of Gentoo Laws* (1776) which Halhed then translated from an intermediate Persian version seems to reflect the views which Halhed himself held at that time—if it was not actually inspired by him. Later in his life, Halhed turned to millenarianism.[9] J. Shore (Baron Teignmouth) described the religious-philosophical thought of the Hindus quite simply as "pure deism."[10] Similarly, one of the Baptist missionaries from Serampore, W. Carey, complained about the influence and prevalence of deism in India, remarking that "India swarms with Deists . . . "[11]

Voltaire numbered among the readers of Dow and Holwell. Along with the still influential reports of the missionaries, the works of these two played a significant role in shifting India more clearly into the awareness of the Age of Enlightenment.[12] For the Rationalists and the early followers of the Enlightenment, China was the initial focal point of interest in the non-European world. Leibniz concerned himself minutely with the reports on China, which not infrequently tended to idealize the country.[13] In Halle, Christian Wolff held a famous lecture on the "practical philosophy" of the Chinese (*De Sinarum philosophia practica*, 1721) that was at least partially responsible for his losing his professorship for a number of years. Chinese religion and philosophy, and especially Confucianism, was considered an example of a basically ethical, human, and secular orientation which was relatively uncluttered with abstruse, abstract, and other-worldly considerations. The "practical philosophy" of the Chinese was recommended to Europeans as a corrective and complement to their own tradition. Leibniz even toyed with the idea of sending Chinese missionaries to Europe in order to instruct Westerners about questions of "natural theology" (and, more generally, common sense).[14] Similarly, China at first appeared much more attractive and important than India in Voltaire's eyes, and he played an active role in helping to idealize the "practical philosophy" and civic institutions of the Chinese. However, after studying the manuscript of the *Ezourvedam* which the Chevalier de Maudave had given him in 1760, he became convinced that the world's oldest culture and most pristine religious thought was to be found in India and not in China,[15] and as a result he became embroiled in a controversy which had far-reaching consequences in his time. This was the discussion about the chronology of the Bible as well as the priority and primacy of the Biblical revelation. In his polemics against Christianity, it was vitally important for Voltaire to have chronological arguments at hand which he could use to counter the arguments of the orthodox believers, who clung to the Biblical chronology and, moreover, felt that if there was anything at all acceptable or of value in Indian religious thought (or that of other Asian peoples), then this must surely be some kind of forgotten or overgrown by-product of the Mosaic-Christian revelation. In any case, however, the fundamental priority of the Bible was to be presupposed. Among others, A. Dacier, J. Bouchet, and Th. La Grue argued along these lines for the priority of the Biblical revelation. Even the great Newton became involved in the controversy and tried to defend the Biblical chronology.[16]

4. In this debate, Voltaire took a clear, even radical stand: India is the homeland of religion in its oldest and purest form; it is also the cradle of worldly civilization. In a section added to his *Essai sur les moeurs* in 1761 and under the immediate impression of his study of the *Ezourvedam*, he describes India as the country on which all other countries had to rely, but

which did not rely on anybody else, and which consequently had the most ancient civilization, as well as the most ancient form of religion ("la plus ancienne forme de religion"). He claims: "The first Brahmins, who were kings and pontiffs all at once, could establish religion only on the basis of universal reason" ("Les premiers brachmanes, étants donc à la fois rois et pontifes, ne pouvaient guère établir la religion que sur la reason universelle").[17]

Until 1767, the *Ezourvedam* was Voltaire's main source on India; after that, the works of Holwell, Dow and others supplemented his understanding, but without really changing it. What did Voltaire find in the *Ezourvedam*, this fictitious conversation between "Biach" (i.e., Vyāsa) and "Chumantou" (i.e., Sumantu)? It was, above all, the contrast between Chumantou's pure "Vedic" monotheism or deism, i.e., a kind of primeval religion of reason, and the degenerate and idolatrous religion represented by Biach, the Vyāsa of the Purāṇic tradition. He could easily translate the criticism which Chumantou directed against the superstitious beliefs and practices of popular Hinduism into his own polemics against contempoary Christianity.[18]

Religion in general is derived, and has degenerated from, the pure natural revelation of which the Indians were the first possessors. In a letter to Frederick the Great of Prussia, Voltaire assures the monarch "that our holy Christian religion is solely based upon the ancient religion of Brahma" ("que notre sainte religion chrétienne est uniquement fondeé sur l'ancienne religion de Brama").[19]

D.S. Hawley states correctly that what Voltaire read about India was of great importance for the articulation of his ideas about the origin and development of religion, and that, after 1760, India occupied a special place in his thought. In 1767, he even mentioned his intention to travel to India.[20] Yet, it is also true that he was not interested in India, or Indian religion, *per se*. In the words of Hawley, he "made use of India, rather than studying it."[21]

5. Even during the French revolution (which Voltaire did not live to see), India was played in this manner against the claims of primacy and exclusivity of the Christian revelation, for example by L. Langlès.[22] In different garb and in numerous more or less speculative variations, the thesis of the Indian origin of Christianity survived into the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It became a favorite topic of mystics and occultists, such as the followers of the Marquis Claude de Saint-Martin. We find it associated with such groups as the Rosicrucians and, later on, the Theosophists. It was frequently referred to by A. Schopenhauer and propagated and popularized in the highly speculative works of L. Jacolliot, A. Lillie and F. Nork.[23] More cautiously, R. Seydel argued for Indian influences; and around 1900, this issue was a topic of intense scholarly debate.[24]

Questions of priority and dependence were also raised in the domains of secular learning and science. The debate on these questions began early in

the eighteenth century. In 1716, Polycarp Lyserus (i.e., Michael Kusche) presented a thesis to the University of Wittenberg, in which he argued for the Indians, and against the Hebrews, as originators of culture and "erudition" (*De origine eruditionis non ad Iudaeos, sed ad Indos referenda*). In 1719, N. Fréret argued for the Indian origin of the game of chess; his article inaugurated a series of similar specific studies.[25] J.S. Bailly considered Indian astronomy extremely old; Laplace initially accepted Bailly's conclusions, but criticized them later on.[26]

Voltaire himself was obviously convinced of the priority of the Indian achievements in the area of secular learning and worldly culture. In a letter to the Marquise du Deffand, written in 1773, he described the Indians as the people "to whom we owe our numbers, our backgammon, our chess, our first principles of geometry, and the fables which have become our own."[27]

In general, the thesis of the great antiquity and autonomy of Indian culture contradicted the theory of an enduring Greek influence transmitted especially by Alexander and the Bactrian Greeks.[28]

6. Seen as a whole, the Age of Enlightenment approached India in a manner that tended towards ambivalence and was often superficial or speculative in nature. A marked interest in India was by no means the rule. India had little to do with the idealization of the "primal state" and the "noble savage" that can be found, for example, in Rousseau's thought. Diderot, whose *Supplément au voyage de Bougainville* is an important and impressive tribute to the exoticism of the Enlightenment, also published articles pertaining to India in the *Encyclopédie* which were quite deprecating and, considering the knowledge available at the time, very inadequate.[29] In the article "Brachmanes," Diderot discusses what he calls "extravagances tout-à-fait incroyables," stating that the persons who had referred to the Brahmins as "sages" must have been even crazier than the Brahmins themselves. The article entitled "Bramines" is essentially a summary and in part literal paraphrase of the article "Brachmanes" contained in Bayle's *Dictionnaire historique et critique*; it also reproduces a mixup of Buddhism and Brahminism occurring in the original: citing the Jesuit Ch. Le Gobien, Bayle described a Brahminic sect thought to be living in China as worshippers of the "God Fo."[30]

Based upon Bayle's and Le Gobien's portrayal of the Chinese "Brahmins" and Buddhists, a vision was conjured up of "quietism" and love of "nothingness" among the Indians, and of their desire to stupefy and mortify themselves:

> They assert that the world is nothing but an illusion, a dream, a magic spell, and that the bodies, in order to be truly existent, have to cease existing in themselves, and to merge into nothingness, which due to its simplicity amounts to the perfection of all beings. They claim that saintliness consists in willing nothing, thinking nothing, feel-

ing nothing . . . This state is so much like a dream that it seems that a few grains of opium would sanctify a brahmin more surely than all his efforts.

(Ils assurent que le monde n'est qu'une illusion, un songe, un prestige, et que les corps pour exister véritablement doivent cesser d'être en eux-mêmes, et se confondre avec le néant, qui par sa simplicité fait la perfection de tous les êtres. Ils font consister la sainteté à ne rien vouloir, à ne rien penser, à ne rien sentir . . . Cet état resemble si fort au sommeil, qu'il paraît que quelques grains d'opium sanctifieraient un bramine bien plus sûrement que tous ses efforts.)

Despite the inaccuracy and lack of originality inherent in Diderot's paraphrase of Bayle (which merely added the reference to "opium"), it nevertheless illustrates an important motif through the emphasis it lays upon the "quietism" of the Brahmins. It is a motif which we find also in the *Essais de théodicée*, which Leibniz published in 1710.[31] It will reappear later among Hegel and other critics of Indian thought. Hegel also made use of the opium metaphor (which Marx was to make famous) in his depiction of the Indian world, speaking of persons who "could only attain a dream-world and the happiness of insanity through opium."[32] On the other hand, Schopenhauer invoked the notion of "quietism" to express his appreciation of Indian thought; Bayle himself referred to the Western "quietists" Molinos and Mme. Guyon in this context.[33]

7. Very often, references to India were made to serve polemic ends; they seldom led to an immersion in matters of substance. Of course, India was often viewed as the seat of an extraordinarily old and pristine culture and tradition, yet it also served as an example of degeneration and decay, as an example of a tradition that had been unable to safeguard its original purity against superstition and priestly fraud: "What a difference between that (ancient) philosophy and the one which one professes today in India!" A Christian, as the *Encyclopédie* added,[34] could not fail to see the "effects of divine wrath" in such decay and deprivation, a remark which clearly refers to a quote from Th. Burnet's *Archaeologiae philosophicae* (1692) that was cited by Bayle. Burnet, following the lead of the missionary literature, hoped that the Occident would be spared such heavenly rage. He expressed his sympathy for the fact that the Orient, the seat of such pristine wisdom and culture, should have fallen into such disgusting barbarism.[35] Burnet also associated the motif of pantheism with India in a remarkable statement about the Indian idea of the "world spider"; Bayle makes this association in the context of his presentation of Spinoza.[36]

India thus illustrates the theme of the eclipse and suppression of the "natural light" through superstition and ritualism, a theme that enjoyed great popularity among thinkers of the Enlightenment. It was in connection with this that Kant made the following statements about the Indians: "Their

religion had a great purity. A couple of centuries before the birth of Christ, however, it became adulterated with many superstitious things . . . Still, one can find traces of a pure concept of divinity which cannot easily be found elsewhere." He also declared that Indian religious thought was free of dogmatism and intolerance: "It is a principle of the Indians (i.e., the Hindus), that every nation has its own religion. For this reason, they do not force anyone to accept theirs."[37]

8. Here, the idea of religious decay is linked with the motif of tolerance, another characteristic of the Enlightenment. We encounter this same linkage in a remarkable and somewhat idiosyncratic exposition by Moses Mendelssohn, embedded in the context of a theory of religious signs and symbols which makes explicit reference to Indian mythology and is equally committed to the Enlightenment and to Jewish apologetics. In Mendelssohn's eyes, religious decay essentially involves a fall from the use of symbols into polytheism and idolatry, a loss of the distinction between the signs and what they are intended to designate, a misunderstanding of the original sense and function of "metaphors and allegories," and thus, a misunderstanding of the original meaning of one's own tradition.[38] "The pictures had lost their value as signs. The spirit of truth, which should have been preserved therein, had evaporated, and the dull vehicle that remained had been reduced to pernicious poison." This danger of misunderstanding, however, does not just exist *within* a tradition, it also exists to the extent that outsiders are often unable to understand the "scriptural character," i.e., the ultimately symbolic meaning of alien religious customs. "When evaluating the religious concepts of what is otherwise an unknown nation, one has to be . . . careful not to view everything through one's own domestic eyes so as not to call idolatry what is perhaps really only script (i.e., symbolism). . . . Our travelers probably make similar mistakes quite often when telling us about the religions of faraway peoples. They must become very precisely acquainted with the thoughts and opinions of a nation before they can reliably say whether the pictures which they possess still contain the 'spirit of script' or whether they have already degenerated into idolatry." He drew explicit parallels between those misunderstandings which the Jews had been subjected to "by the conquerors of Jerusalem" and the erroneous interpretations of Indian mythology and religion which the Europeans had made with respect to, for example, the "world snake." Here, Mendelssohn referred to the work of J.Z. Holwell, who was supposedly able "to see with the eyes of a native Brahmin" ("mit den Augen eines eingeborenen Braminen zu sehen"); and he defended the Indians against philosophers like Locke, Shaftesbury and Hume, who had ridiculed their mythological ideas of a cosmic elephant, tortoise, etc.[39]

9. A basic willingness to see religious, philosophical and cultural traditions, including the European tradition itself, no longer solely "through one's own domestic eyes" was often postulated in the eighteenth century. As a matter of fact, there was a whole literary genre of works following the scheme of Montesquieu's *Lettres persanes* ("Persian letters," 1721) and pretending to present foreign, exotic views of Europe.[40] However, this program of seeing oneself and others with "foreign eyes" remained usually quite abstract and stereotypical in practice, specifically with regard to India, or it was simply a stylistic device. Even the influential works of A. Dow and J.Z. Holwell, whom Mendelssohn singled out as an open-minded, non-Eurocentric observer, did not establish a tradition of exploring Indian thought in its original sources and contexts of understanding. This was first achieved towards the end of the Age of Enlightenment, through the scholarly works and programmatic activities of the British "Orientalists" in Bengal: above all W. Jones (1746–1794), Ch. Wilkins (1749–1836), and H. Th. Colebrooke (1765–1837). These scholars turned to the original Sanskrit texts, and the use of Persian and other intermediary languages became obsolete.[41] No longer isolated achievements, their effort led to the establishment and institutionalization of a research tradition—the tradition of modern Indology. W. Jones' founding of the Asiatic Society of Bengal in 1784 is exemplary in this respect and points in the direction which later developments were to take. The economic and political presence of the British in India, of course, loomed in the background of these events. As Warren Hastings, the governor-general of Bengal, explicitly formulated it, the study of the Indian tradition and conceptual world simultaneously aided in steering and controlling the Indians within the framework of their own ways of thought.[42] Nevertheless, this does not change the fact that scholarly work now embarked on a sustained development of its own, one, moreover, that was fundamentally oriented around detailed work with the original material. "The birth of the Asiatic Society is a milestone in the history of Oriental Studies. By establishing it Jones helped to usher in the age of scientific specialization, by forming a society which would study the Asians at close quarters . . . ."[43] An imposing number of original translations appeared in the years directly following the founding of the Asiatic Society, which soon became known throughout Europe. They included Wilkins' *Bhagavadgītā* (1785, with a foreword by W. Hastings) and *Hitopadeśa* (1787) and Jones' *Śakuntalā* (1789) and *Manusmṛti* (*Ordinances of Menu*, 1796). These were followed by Colebrooke's pioneering works, especially in the fields of astronomy, mathematics, and philosophy.[44]

10. In some ways, Jones, Wilkins, and, to a lesser degree, Colebrooke were pursuing questions and lines of thought typical of deism and the Age of Enlightenment. They too were advocates of the view that the mythological, religious, and philosophical tradition of India was especially ancient and pristine. Beyond this, however, they also exhibited a certain openness and tolerance with respect to contemporary Hindu customs. Admittedly, Jones' views were dominated by the idea that India itself was not the original home of the religious and philosophical tradition of the West, but rather represented an old offshoot of an original source common to both East and West: ". . . Pythagoras and Plato derived their sublime theories from the same fountain with the sages of India."[45] This hypothesis of common origins was also applied to other fields, e.g., to Greek and Indian astronomy as well as to numerous alphabets in the East and West.[46] Yet it is in the domain of linguistics that its influence has been felt most deeply and has become most well-known. After Jones had praised the uniqe qualities of Sanskrit vis-à-vis Greek and Latin while emphasizing the basic similarities between all of them, he declared that "no philologer could examine them all three, without believing them to have sprung from some common source, which perhaps no longer exists."[47] Since F. Sassetti's observations in the second half of the sixteenth century, it had been repeatedly conjectured or claimed that Sanskrit and the languages of classical antiquity were in some way related;[48] it was through Jones' work, however, that this theme became more refined and, most importantly, made a wider and deeper impression upon tlhe scientific thought of Europe. Jones was fully aware of the fact that his efforts, together with those of his countrymen working in Bengal, in particular Wilkins, had raised Indian studies to an entirely new level. He considered the publication of Wilkins' *Bhagavadgītā* a major turning-point. Speaking of the Europeans, Jones stated: " . . . if they wish to form a correct idea of Indian religion and literature, let them begin with forgetting all that has been written on the subject, by ancients or moderns, before the publication of the Gita."[49]

11. Among Jones' lesser-known achievements was the first direct translation of an Upaniṣadic text into a Western language—his English translation and paraphrase of the *Īśā-Upaniṣad* (first published in 1799, i.e. five years after Jones' death, in an edition of his collected works).[50] In Jones' mind, the Vedānta school (which follows the teachings of the Upaniṣads) was the most important school of Hindu philosophical thought, and Śaṅkara its most important commentator. He expected that a full treatment of the *Vedāntasūtras* would yield an important contribution to the general history of philosophy. He translated a short didactic poem attributed to Śaṅkara, the *Mohamudgara*, for the first volume of the *Asiatic Researches*. Still, he never attained a real knowledge of the Vedānta literature.

Jones, like several other British "Orientalists," was familiar with the *Sirr-i Akbar*, Dārā Shukōh's Persian translation of fifty Upaniṣads. His opinion of the quality of this work, however, was very reserved: ". . . though sub-

lime and majestic features of the original were discernible, in parts, through folds of the Persian drapery, yet the Sanskrit names were so barbarously written, and the additions of the translator have made the work so deformed, that I resolved to postpone a regular perusal of it till I could compare it with the Sanskrit original."[51] N.B. Halhed, the translator of the *Code of Gentoo Laws* (1776) and one of the main exponents of the "Persian" interlude of early Indology, even completed an English translation of the *Sirr-i Akbar* (1787), although it was never published. Its introduction, which was recently edited by R. Rocher, provides us with testimony of an exemplary sort. It discusses the great age of the Upaniṣads and points out the differences between them and modern Hinduism. It also considers the possibility that Pythagoras, Mani, and Thales were dependent upon Indian sources.[52] In actuality, the great advances in making the original Indian texts available soon made the publication of such secondary translations seem obsolete. And thus, it was all the more remarkable when a Latin secondary translation of the Upaniṣads appeared in 1801/1802, viz., Anquetil Duperron's aforementioned two-volume work *Oupnek'hat*. Considering the idiosyncratic nature and style of this work, it is hardly surprising that it was not very favorably received by the British Orientalists. A. Hamilton, for example, wrote:

> . . . nothing less than the beatitude promised by Dara Shecuh, at the conclusion of his preface, to those who shall read and understand it, could induce any one to persevere in such an attempt, through the medium of M. Anquetil's version . . . We are of the opinion, that a translation of an Upanisad, from the Sanscrit into English, would prove a performance of some interest; but that the value of the work before us is considerably diminished, by coming through the medium of a Persic translation.[53]

12. In some ways, A.H. Anquetil Duperron (1731–1805) was the antipode of the British "Orientalists" surrounding Jones. His proper place is more in the prehistory of Indology, yet at the same time, his influence was felt until well into the nineteenth century. His *Oupnek'hat* is an anachronism; yet it did more to awaken the modern interest in Indian philosophy and made a greater contribution to the philosophical debate about India than Jones' works. The fact that Anquetil's name remains known is chiefly due to Schopenhauer and the enthusiastic reaction with which he greeted the *Oupnek'hat*.[54] For all this, Anquetil's importance is by no means merely limited to his role as a translator or the fact that others have received important stimuli from the texts which he translated. His "comparative" method, his philosophical and hermeneutic reflection, and his peculiar position between the Enlightenment, Romanticism, and scientific Indology all earn him a more direct and primary interest than that he is normally accorded. There is no doubt that he is one of the more impressive and decisive figures in the history of European approaches to Indian and Oriental thought, and

in the preparation of a philosophical "dialogue" between India and the West.

Anquetil Duperron had published another basic and pioneering work in the field of European Oriental studies some thirty years before the appearance of the *Oupnek'hat*. This was his French translation of the Old Persian Zend Avesta (*Zend-Avesta, ouvrage de Zoroastre*, 3vols., Paris 1771), a work that unleashed an extended controversy as to its authenticity. In Germany, its fame was primarily due to J.F. Kleuker, who translated the work and, at the same time, defended it against the doubts and criticism it encountered, in particular from the British.[55]—Anquetil's working procedure was such that the Enlightenment motif of origins led to a methodical search, conducted with a great sense of purpose, for the original, primal sources of the religions of the Orient as well as systematic preparations for their study. He visited India between 1754 and 1761 in the hope of finding such sources. He gained a knowledge of Persian, but his attempts to learn Sanskrit as well did not meet with success. In the "Discours préliminaire" to his *Zend-Avesta*,[56] he wrote: "Convinced that the modern customs of Asia owe their origin to the peoples and religions that subjugated it, I proposed to myself to study in its sources the ancient theology of those nations which are at home in the immense countries located East of the Euphrates, and to consult the original books on their history." ("Persuadé que les usages modernes de l'Asie doivent leur origine aux peuples et aux religions qui l'ont subjuguée, je me suis proposé d'étudier dans les sources l'ancienne théologie des nations habituées dans les contrées immenses qui sont a l'Est de l'Euphrate, et de consulter sur leur histoire les livres originaux.").

13. Anquetil's translation of the *Sirr-i Akbar* did not directly result from his voyage to India; not even the manuscripts of the text upon which his work was based were obtained there. These he first received at a much later date, from his friend Le Gentil, the French Envoy at Oudh. He gave an initial description of the text, along with a promise to translate it, in 1778.[57] The first sample of the translation—four Upaniṣads in French—appeared in 1787;[58] the remainder of the complete French translation, which he claimed to have finished, has, however, never been published. Instead, he followed up these initial efforts with a Latin translation (finished in 1795, published in 1801/1802). Anquetil's attempts to locate and study the oldest sources of Indian religion in Sanskrit were indeed unsuccessful;[59] yet the decisiveness of his approach was important and indicated the direction which later Indological research was to take. His basic position as well as his methodological principles set him distinctly apart from the procedures normally applied by Indian travelers of his time:

> The majority of travelers content themselves with asking the Brahmins about the essence of their teachings, or what they believe concerning this or that subject-

matter. Some go so far as to get for themselves extracts of their theological books. The answers and the extracts may be accurate; but they may also correspond to the circumstances, the spirit, the views of the person who asks the questions. The only way to know the truth is to learn the languages well, to translate oneself the fundamental works, and to confer subsequently with the scholars of the country on the subject-matters treated therein, the books in hand.

(La plupart des voyageurs se contentent de demander aux Brahmes . . . le fond de leurs dogmes, ce qu'ils croient sur tel ou tel objet; quelques-un vont jusqu'à se procurer des extraits de leur livres théologiques. Les réponses, les extraits peuvent être exacts; ils peuvent être analogues aux circonstances, à l'esprit, aux vues de celui qui interroge. Le seul moyen de connaître la vérité est de bien apprendre les langues, de traduire soi-même les ouvrages fondamentaux et de conférer ensuite avec les savants du pays sur les matières qui y soint traitées, les livres en main.)[60]

And he demanded: "Let us study the Indians as we study the Greeks and Romans" ("Étudions les Indiens, comme nous faisons les Grecs et les Latins")—critically, but respectfully, and without ridiculing them.[61]

Anquetil remained a faithful Christian; yet he developed an openness for extra-European and non-Christian achievements of thought, and a readiness for comprehensive comparisons which not only transcended the limits of "orthodoxy," but also surpassed the abstract openness of deism and the Enlightenment. Even if he himself was unable to fulfil his own programmatic ideas, his postulate to study the Indians "like the Greeks and Romans" and to inquire systematically into the sources and backgrounds of their thought is suggestive of the line of development which A.W. Schlegel and other pioneers of Indian philology would promote and exemplify.

14. In spite of Anquetil's pioneering methodological suggestions, his *Oupnek'hat* does not belong among the founding achievements of Indian philology, or of scientific Indology. In general, its importance lies not so much within the history of Indology as within the history of philosophy. It is there that it has its specific significance, and that its historical impact has been primarily felt.[62] Anquetil himself left no room for doubts as to the primarily philosophical aims of his work. His appeal to a philosophical audience was explicit. He called upon the philosophers of many countries, and in particular the representatives of German Idealism—the "followers and opponents of the profound Kant"—to study the teachings of the *Oupnek'hat* from a philosophical angle, not just seeing them as testimony about ancient India, but also to consider them as a serious philosophical challenge: "Interim ad scrutanda, rimanda ea qua valent mentis acie τοῦ Oupnek'hat secreta Germanos philosophos, asseclas vel adversarios profundi Kant, videlicet Goethe, Schiller, Humboldt, Jacobi, Maimon, Fichte, Bouterweck, Reinhold, Bardili, Koeppen . . . invitare liceat."[63] He included many comparisons with Western philosophical teachings, e.g., with Plotinus and the Gnostics, especially in the comprehensive and scholarly "Emendationes et annotationes."[64]

The introduction to the first volume offers a very detailed attempt to establish the concordance or correspondence of Indian and Judaeo-Christian ideas ("Dissertatio in qua e Judaeorum, Ecclesiae Doctorum, et tam catholicorum quam acatholicorum theologicorum scriptis summa orientalis systematis inquiritur").[65] He cites at length from the hymns of the "syncretic" Bishop Synesius of Cyrene[66] in order to illustrate the fundamental agreement between Christian and Indian thought with respect to such themes as the creation of the world, etc. He generally portrays Indians and Christians side-by-side, and does not insist upon relationships of dependence or qualitative gradations. The two, so to speak, enjoy equal rights as members of the same family. Anquetil also finds "true Spinozism" existing in Indian thought.[67] He was particularly interested in establishing connections with the latest philosophical developments of his own time —above all with Kantian Transcendental Philosophy, which he knew primarily through Ch. Villers' presentation:[68] Anyone who carefully examines the lines of Immanuel Kant's thought, its principles as well as its results, will recognize that it does not deviate very far from the teachings of the Brahmins, which lead man back to himself and comprise and focus him within himself (". . . eum a Brahmanum doctrina, quae hominem ad seipsum revocat, intra se coercet, non multum discedere forsan reperite."[69]

15. Here, Anquetil anticipated developments that would be especially promoted by the most enthusiastic reader of the *Oupnek'hat*, A. Schopenhauer, Schopenhauer's admirer P. Deussen, and the representatives of a "comparative philosophy" which has established itself especially in India. Prior to this, the historian of philosophy Th. A. Rixner declared that "the truth which—through the insightful research of the most recent German students of God and the World— . . . has so happily been brought back to the bright light of the philosophical day" completely corresponds to the "all-is-one-doctrine" of the *Oupnek'hat*. Rixner himself produced a German translation of a section of the *Oupnek'hat* in 1808 and described Anquetil as "the only metaphysician which the French nation can boast of since perhaps the time of Malebranche."[70] Rixner was under the influence of Schelling, who was also among the readers of the *Oupnek'hat*.[71]

Anquetil viewed the demonstration and study of such correspondences as a contribution to the moral regeneration of his time, to the "cause of humanity" ("humanitatis causam agere est"), and as an "incentive to general concord and love" ("generalis concordiae, dilectionis incitamentum.")[72] And thus, through this recourse to ancient Indian wisdom, as well as by un-

covering the common sources of religion and humanity, he also felt that he had found a way out of what he referred to as the "malaise européen."[73]

As noted above, the foundations for the modern study of India were not laid by Anquetil Duperron, but by the British Orientalists Jones, Wilkins, and Colebrooke. Back in England, however, a palpable reaction against what was seen as a too benevolent study of Hinduism occurred in the first decades of the nineteenth century.[74] This did not come from the Christian missionaries alone, but also from such historians and politicians as James Mill and Th. Macaulay. Macaulay spoke of the "monstrous superstitions" and of the "false history" and "false religion" of the Hindu texts and asserted that all of the works that had ever been written in Sanskrit (and Arabic as well) were "less valuable than what may be found in the most paltry abridgements used at preparatory schools in England." For the educational system in India, he set a goal of enlisting a class of English-educated Indians "who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern."[75] He saw no reason to study Indian things as such or for their own sake.

Both Indology as an academic discipline, as well as a more far-reaching enthusiasm for India, first developed on the Continent, in particular in Germany. This took place in close association with a movement which seems to be diametrically opposed to the Enlightenment—Romanticism.

5. India and the Romantic Critique of the Present

1. Several recent studies have emphasized the fact that the commonly-held idea of an irreconcilable antagonism between the Enlightenment and the Romantic movement is in need of some modification; there are shadings and transitions between the two.[1] The same holds true with respect to the opinions of the time about the Orient in general and India in particular. As we have already seen, the Age of Enlightenment was characterized by a very distinct association between a general interest in non-European traditions and the motif of criticizing contemporary Christianity and Europe. One shape which the criticism of Christianity took was the attempt to trace it back to older, more original traditions, or the view that a more pristine religious consciousness could be found in Asia, and specifically in India.

Both this motivation towards self-criticism and the theme of origins were assimilated into the Romantic awareness of India and the Orient. To be sure, they here entered a new context of self-awareness, specifically, a more concrete and organic awareness of culture and history that was not determined by abstract categories of progress and degeneration. J.G. Herder (1744–1803) was particularly responsible for shaping this new relationship to history. Herder did not just pioneer the Romantic movement in general, but also broke ground precisely in terms of its awareness of India.[2] In his eyes, nations and their traditions were living wholes existing in organic cohesion and yet, simultaneously, individuals whose uniqueness should be recognized. He saw history as the natural history of "living human force," as a process in which *one* mankind presented itself in multiple forms and expressions while, at the same time, the very idea of humanity acted as a regulatory force.[3] "Because *one* form of humanity and *one* region of the earth were unable to contain it, it spread out in a thousand forms, it journeyed—an eternal Proteus—through all of the areas of the earth and down through all the centuries . . . ."[4] Metaphors of organic growth and develop-

ment are typical of Herder's thought. For example, the development of mankind "from the Orient to Rome" is likened to the trunk of a tree, out of which branches and shoots grow: "how shot the one, old, simple trunk of humanity into boughs and twigs."[5] The Orient was the infant state, and thus innocent, pure, and with unexhausted potential. Hellenism was adolescence, Rome adulthood. The Orient represents Europe's own childhood. "All the peoples of Europe, where are they from? From Asia."[6] In other words, we find here a new willingness to acknowledge the cultures of the Orient as autonomous structures in their own right. And yet they are also simultaneously viewed as the cultures of our own origins, the sources of our own historical being.

2. Herder had a lasting fascination with Biblical antiquity, with the "Spirit of Ebraic Poesy": "Then come here, poets and artists! Here is the greatest ideal and paragon for your art . . . "[7] Yet he soon became aware of India as well, through contact with such travelers' accounts as that of Sonnerat, through the works of Roger, Dow, and Holwell, and also through the original translations which became increasingly available after 1785, especially Wilkins' *Bhagavadgītā* and *Hitopadeśa* and Jones' *Śakuntalā*.

The most important of the original works and translations which, during Herder's lifetime, first appeared in English, French, or even Latin, were rapidly translated into German or treated in German by such writers as G. Forster, F. Majer, and J.F. Kleuker, who was especially productive in this area.[8] Herder himself was personally involved in some of the works by these authors. He wrote the foreword to Majer's *Kulturgeschichte der Völker* (published in 1798) as well as the foreword to the second edition of Forster's secondary (German) translation of the *Śakuntalā*, which appeared in 1803, the year of Herder's death. In general, Herder was a careful observer of and active participant in the nascent discipline of modern Indology. His sympathy for the people of India became ever more apparent in his friendly and glorifying view of the "childlike Indians."[9] "The Hindus are the gentlest branch of humanity. They do not with pleasure offend anything that lives; they honor that which gives life and nourish themselves with the most innocent of foods, milk, rice, the fruits of the trees, the healthy herbs which their motherland dispenses . . . Moderation and calm, a soft feeling and a silent depth of the soul characterize their work and their pleasure, their morals and mythology, their arts and even their endurance under the most extreme yoke of humanity."[10]

3. With friendly empathy, Herder described the thoughts which he considered to be the core and basis of Hindu thought: the idea of *one* Being in and behind all that there is, and the idea of the unity of all things in the absolute, in God.

Vishnu is in you, in me, in all beings;

It is foolish to ever feel offense.

See all souls in your own,

and banish the delusion of being different.[11]

The theme of "pantheism" which may be seen here in Herder's paraphrase of the *Mohamudgara*, a Vedāntic didactic poem, has long been one of the central themes in the discussion about India.[12]

Yet in spite of all the sympathy which greeted India, it was not glorified as a lost home or a place of refuge and retreat from the aberrations of modern Europe. Herder did not accept the degeneration theory of the Enlightenment without question, but he found much of what had been originally pure in India to have become sullied. He viewed some of the exemplary institutions and convictions of the Hindus in a manner that was both differentiating and ambivalent. For example, he considered the Brahmanic influence upon the people of India as having been essentially salutary. He found their concept of God "great and beautiful," their morals "pure and noble." But he also saw another result: "Manifold fraud and superstition, which had already become unavoidable because astronomy and chronology and the art of healing and religion, transmitted as they were through an oral tradition, had turned into the secret science of one clan." As a result, the populace had been ripe for subjugation. The "distribution of the ways of life among hereditary clans"—i.e., the caste system—had excluded "all free improvement and perfection of the arts almost completely."[13] Herder also considered the Indian doctrine of metempsychosis as having produced disastrous results: "Since it awakens a false sense of compassion for all living things, it simultaneously lessens the true sympathy with the wretched members of our own race, for these unfortunates are held to be wrongdoers suffering under the burden of prior crimes or being tried by the hand of fate, while their virtuousness will be rewarded in a future state." The doctrine of metempsychosis is a "delusion transgressing humanity" ("Wahn, der über die Menschheit hinausreicht").[14] It is incompatible with the idea of mankind, which Herder saw as the greatest regulative idea in the history of the world. The pre-eminence of Christianity over India and the Orient was due to the fact that it is the religion of "purest humanity."[15] And while the Indian "infancy" of mankind may have been glorified and idealized in Herder's writings, he did not believe that it was desirable or possible to return to it. While mankind may have been born in Asia, it reached adulthoood only in the mediterranean world, in classical Greece.[16]

4. Herder was and remained a Christian and a European. Considering this, he exhibited a very remarkable willingness to accept Indian thought and Indian ways of life in their own right, to accede to what he understood

as being the Hindu viewpoint, and to look critically at himself as a Christian and European through, so to speak, Indian eyes. What is more, he was especially willing to reflect on European and Christian assumptions and biases vis-à-vis India. He saw little sense in the missionary activity in India. Shortly before his death, his *Gespräche über die Bekehrung der Indier durch unsere europäischen Christen* ("Conversations on the Conversion of the Indians by our European Christians")[17] appeared in 1802. In this work, he presented an Indian complaining about the ignorance of the missionaries, their arrogance in wishing to show the Indians (whose own characteristic ways they did not recognize at all) the "path to salvation" using "alien formulas." The picture Herder painted of India was essentially positive and occasionally glorifying, and anticipated in some ways the Romantic understanding of India. His programmatic pluralism and his openness to the diversity of human nature and human cultures did not, however, permit him to accord the Indians any kind of privileged position or meet them with an exclusive interest.

In the 116th *Brief zur Beförderung der Humanität* ("Letter for the Advancement of Humanity"), which appeared in Riga in 1797 as part of the tenth collection of such letters, Herder formulated a number of principles for a "natural history of mankind." These were also significant for his relationship with India. He stressed that the author of such a "natural history" was not permitted to have a "favorite tribe" or "chosen people" ("*Lieblingsstamm*," "*Favoritenvolk*"), or to presuppose a hierarchy of nations. Herder also demanded that each nation be considered in its own natural environment, in the context of its entire culture, and without any "arbitrary divisions" being made. By no means, moreover, could European culture serve as the general standard for comparison: "The genius of human natural history lies in and with each nation, as if it were the only one on earth."[18]

5. It is generally known that India became the focal point of an enthusiastic interest, occasionally bordering on fanaticism, within the German Romantic movement. Here, the motif of origins and unspoiled pristineness shared by the Enlightenment became effective in a different, more exalted way. The very idea of India assumed mythical proportions; the turn towards India became the quest for the true depths of our own being, a search for the original, infant state of the human race, for the lost paradise of all religions and philosophies. "The 'eternal Orient' was waiting to be rediscovered within ourselves; India was the 'cradle of humanity' and our eternal home;"[19] it was the "home and youth of the soul."[20] It represented the "spirit of infancy" which Schelling evoked in his early programmatic work *Über Mythen, historische Sagen und Philosopheme der ältesten Welt* ("On Myths, Historical Legends and Philosophemes of the Most Ancient World," 1793). For something was missing from the European present—the sense of unity and wholeness—and this was mourned as the affliction of the time. There was hope that a return to the Indian sources would bring about a change for the better.

What exactly was the *present* to which the Romantics referred? It was the culmination and termination of the Age of Enlightenment, of its faith in reason and progress, and the secular world of the consequences of the Reformation and the French Revolution. It involved, moreover, a fall into a quantifying, mechanical, merely rational way of viewing the universe. It was a time in which the sense of wonder and the awareness of the unity and wholeness of life had become lost. It was a present which called for transformation and regeneration; in the Romantic understanding, this meant a spiritual return to a superior past, to its own forgotten origins.

In the present context, our interest cannot lie with the diverse views of India which the leading authors of the Romantic movement conceived, the knowledge they obtained about India, or how each of them varied on or even criticized the motif of yearning for the origins. Many authors developed detailed opinions about Indian thought more or less independently of one another and contributed to the Romantic understanding of India, including Schelling, Novalis, Görres, Creuzer, Goethe, M. Claudius, and, more than any of the others, the Schlegel brothers.[21] F. Majer (1771–1818) served as a kind of catalyst through the translations he made as well as his own writings and his many personal acquaintanceships. He also helped in shaping Schopenhauer's interest in India.[22] Like Creuzer, Görres, and many other mythologists, Majer was captivated by the idea of an "original monotheism" thought to be present in the most ancient Indian documents, and in this context he also referred to Anquetil's *Oupnek'hat*. It was his conviction that the religious and philosophical situation in Europe could only be clarified and rectified through a return to the Indian origins, and that the sources of the Western tradition found their integrating context and background in Indian thought: "It will no longer remain to be doubted that the priests of Egypt and the sages of Greece have drawn directly from the original well of India; that only Brahmanism can provide those fragments of their teaching which have come down to us with the clarity which they do not possess."[23]

6. And do you know the land where infant mankind lived its happy childhood years, where stood the pillars of fire in which the gods descended to their darlings and mingled in their spirited play? . . . Towards the Orient, to the banks of the Ganges and the Indus, it is there that our hearts feel being drawn by some hidden urge,—it is there that all the dark presentiments point which lie in the depths of our hearts, and it is there that we go when we follow the silent river which flows through time in legends and sacred songs to its source. In the Orient, the heavens poured forth into the Earth . . . In the primitive cultures of this earth, the original force

must still appear undivided; in them, everything must be contained in the same homogeneity which would later become separated into the various camps . . . [24]

With these words, and in a number of other equally impassioned variations on the same theme, J. Görres (1776–1848) depicted the Romantic myths of infancy and unity. The often overlooked Jacobine and Romantic, N. Müller (1770–1851), used similarly ecstatic phrases in his search for the "unity of primeval faith and knowledge" and the "innocent world of mankind" in India. Müller's desire was to evoke the "Spirit of Brahmanism" from the "buried ruins of temples . . . in order to introduce a new, radiant life into the present with its awakening."[25] Like Görres, Müller also referred to the *Oupnek'hat* of Anquetil Duperron.

In his *Die Christenheit oder Europa* ("Christendom or Europe," 1799), Novalis (1772–1801), the greatest of the early Romantics, primarily spoke of an idealized medieval world, of a time in which God, man, and the world were united in harmony and mankind was filled with a "childlike trust." This was the standard against which he measured his criticism of the present. Because of Herder's influence, however, the Orient and especially an idealized India also became associated with the idea of an original state of harmony and a childlike, unbroken wholeness. Poesy-garbed India, where the people were still "dozing" and dreaming, appeared to be the antithesis of the cold, prosaic Europe of the Age of Enlightenment; it stood "in contrast to the cold, dead Spitsbergen of that sitting-room reason" (". . . dem kalten, toten Spitzbergen jenes Stubenverstandes").[26] The poesy sought in India was at once religion. "Religion is the great Orient in us, which is seldom obscured."[27] Still, for Novalis India never attained the central importance that would have led him to strive after a more detailed knowledge.[28] His friend Friedrich Schlegel (1772–1829), however, did have such a relationship with India, at least for *one* very momentous decade of his life.

7. F. Schlegel's thought was initially at home in what could be called the outskirts of the Enlightenment. Yet his criticism of the European present became ever sharper and more decisive, while the Orient, and especially India, increasingly became a synonym for pristine religiousness and the lost wholeness of human existence. In his eyes, the West had lost its sense of unity and harmony as well as its capacity for religion. "Man cannot sink any deeper; it is impossible. Man has indeed come very far in the art of arbitrary division or, what amounts to the same thing, in mechanism, and thus man himself has almost become a machine . . ."[29] In the same article in his journal, Schlegel then complained about an "abstract unfamiliarity with one's own destiny," ("abstrakte Unbekanntschaft mit der eigenen Bestimmung"), a "non-feeling for everything great that has already existed on

earth" ("Nichtgefühl für alles Grosse, was schon wirklich auf Erden war"). As a way out of this impoverishment, he recommended turning back to the Oriental, and especially the Indian sources, "from where every religion and mythology up till now has come," where the "possibility of enthusiasm" could never be completely obliterated.[30] As early as 1800, he wrote that "we must look for the pinnacle of Romanticism" ("das höchste Romantische") in the East, primarily in India.[31] On September 15, 1803, he wrote to L. Tieck: "Here is the actual source of all languages, all the thoughts and poems of the human spirit; everything, everything without exception comes from India."[32] In his *Vorlesungen über Universalgeschichte* ("Lectures on Universal History," 1805/1806), he stated: ". . . the Persian and German languages and cultures, as well as the Greek and old Roman, may all be traced back to the Indian."[33]

Around the time he was writing these words, and in particular when he wrote the letter to Tieck, Schlegel was intensely busy studying Sanskrit and ancient Indian literature. Arriving in Paris in 1802, he first commenced learning Persian under A.L. de Chézy. Chance then provided him with the desired access to Sanskrit, for an expert in the language, A. Hamilton, had just returned from India.[34] He was detained in Paris in 1803 and thus became available as a teacher for Schlegel, whose mythicizing enthusiasm was now leading to more exact and disciplined linguistic and philological work. Schlegel began to translate original works;[35] he worked on a chrestomathy of Sanskrit and published his book *Über die Sprache und Weisheit der Indier* ("On the Language and Wisdom of the Indians")[36] in 1808, the same year he converted to Catholicism. This book is one of the key works of European Indology, "the first work in the German language in which the Indian language, literature, and history are presented upon the basis of a study of original sources."[37] At the same time, this book also documents the end of his enthusiasm for India and of the period of his really original and intensive study of India. After it appeared, the author occasionally contemplated a new edition, although it was never completed. He no longer worked with original Indian sources, but was content with secondary literature. In his later works, we find only more or less casual remarks on India, which do not indicate much fascination or reflection. Thus, for example, his *Vorlesungen zur Philosophie der Geschichte* ("Lectures on the Philosophy of History," 1828) offers only relatively dry comments about the status of the Brahmins, metempsychosis, etc. as well as a sketchy survey (indebted to Colebrooke) of the Indian philosophical systems.[38] Meanwhile, Schlegel had relocated the "cradle of mankind" to biblical Mesopotamia.[39]

8. *Über die Sprache und Weisheit der Indier* is not just a testimony to Schlegel's scholarship, it is primarily a philosophical statement. Schlegel saw no reason to doubt that there was a fundamental and profound affinity

between Indian studies and philosophy: "For investigating the Orient in general, and India in particular, a knowledge of philosophy is very essential and can therefore hardly be dispensed with."[40]

The work has three parts: I. On Language (treating language families, etc.); II. On Philosophy (the types of systems in Indian thought—the doctrine of emanation, naturalism, dualism, pantheism); III. Historical Ideas (in which the concept of a world literature based upon comparative studies is developed). In this work, Schlegel was still glorifying the religion and philosophy of the "most cultivated and wisest people of antiquity."[41] Yet he no longer viewed the oldest religious and philosophical texts of the Indians as providing evidence of an undistorted pristineness, but instead considered them already to contain distortions and misinterpretations of the true pristine teachings. The original revelation could not be found in an unsullied state even in the thought and tradition of the Indians—an idea that was advanced at the beginning of the work as its very premise.[42] And while the Indian material held the continuing fascination of being old and original, it now appeared, as it were, to illustrate the origins of error, and to provide an opportunity to observe how the processes of obscuration and decay had affected the initially god-given clarity in even its oldest and most original phases. He still adhered to the priority of the Indian sources and to the idea that, in certain particular contexts, viz., in the domains of linguistics, mythology, and philosophy, the developments in the West had depended upon these sources.[43] Nevertheless, India was no longer depicted as the country of origin or the home country. Certainly, it still exhibited numerous traces of pristine truth and clarity; yet only Christianity could teach the "context of the whole" ("Zusammenhang des Ganzen"), and the "sure separation of admixed error" ("sichere Absonderung des beigemischten Irrtums").[44]

9. India no longer appeared as the lost paradise of human totality, purity, and proximity to God, but merely offered "curious and unexpected sidelights about the ways of human thinking in the most ancient times," sidelights about "the rise of error" and "the first monstrosities" which followed the loss of the "simplicity of divine knowledge."[45] In the second part of his work ("On Philosophy"), Schlegel attempted to make the Indian "system of metempsychosis and emanation" understandable in the light of his own concept of "original revelation" ("ursprüngliche Offenbarung," "Uroffenbarung"). In this doctrine, which, in his opinion, found its most exemplary and telling expression in the law book of Manu, he saw "high wisdom compounded with an abundance of error." From this, he concluded: ". . . considered as natural development of reason, the Indian system of emanation is not at all explainable; seen as a revelation that was misunderstood, everything in it is entirely comprehensible."[46]

And it is precisely this most ancient error, which arose from the misuse of the divine gift, from the obscuration and misinterpretation of divine wisdom which we find in the Indian documents, and we shall find even more clear and instructive examples of it the more we become acquainted with the most cultivated and wisest people of antiquity. It is the first system to have occupied the place of truth; wild fabrications and crude errors, yet everywhere still the traces of divine truth and the expression of that shock and sorrow which must have resulted from the first fall from God.[47]

Schlegel emphasized that the doctrine of emanation is not to be confused with pantheism. He considered pantheism (which he discussed in the fifth chapter of the second book and found present especially in the Vedānta and, in other ways, in Buddhism) to be the most recent and degenerate of all the teachings of India:

The most important epochs of Indian and Oriental philosophy and religion in general are the following: first, the system of emanation, which eventually degenerated into astrological superstition and fanatical materialism; the doctrine of the two principles, whose dualistic system eventually changed into pantheism. The human spirit has not sunk deeper in Oriental philosophy than into pantheism, which is just as pernicious for morals as materialism and, moreover, destroys the imagination as well.[48]

10. For Schlegel, the core and basis of pantheism was an abstract, negative concept of the infinite devoid of content, a false concept which leads to indifference, leaves no room for living individuality and moral discernment, and which thus has a "destructive influence upon life." It is the polar opposite of the true concept of the divine omnipotence: ". . . here, we merely notice that the deep living feeling of infinity and the abundance of omnipotence must have already become very weakened and attenuated before it would dissolve itself in this shadow and false concept of the one and all, so difficult as it is to distinguish from nothing."[49] Buddhism, as understood by Schlegel, had as its "actual, most essential, and esoteric doctrine" the teaching "that everything is nothing." He thus viewed it as being naturally close to the Vedānta, indeed, as its very consequence.

When everything else has first been obliterated and has disappeared before the merely abstract and negative concept of infinity, then it ultimately escapes itself and dissipates into nothingness, since it was empty and void of meaning in the first place . . . Once this great disclosure has been made, and this all-encompassing, all-destroying, and yet so easy science and reason-wisdom that all is one has been discovered, then no further search or research is necessary; all that which others know or believe in other ways is simply error, deception, and weak-mindedness, just as all change and all life is mere illusion.[50]

Schlegel considered pantheism "the system of pure reason" and, at the same time, the most profound and most extreme aberration and failure in the

history of human thought. Through it, thinking man comes to rely upon himself alone, closing himself to faith and revelation. "It appeals to man's self-conceit just as much as to his indolence." Here, Schlegel felt he had found the point of transition from Oriental to European philosophy, with its aberrations and its hybris.[51]

The critique of pantheism brings us to the philosophical (and religious) heart of the work. Moreover, it provides testimony of Schlegel's own position in the philosophical debate of the time, while simultaneously introducing an important theme in Schlegel's attempts to come to grips with his own earlier thought. For not only had he himself flirted with a Romantically-glorified conception of pantheism during his younger years; this concept was certainly one of the original motivations behind his interest in India. It is symptomatic of Schlegel's development that the motif of pantheism was now cast in a new light and became the keynote of his criticism of India, and it reflects a deeper, not merely chronological, connection between this book and his conversion to Catholicism. It was this shift which was to lead some of his contemporaries, e.g., Schelling, to criticize the basic philosophical position of the work.

11. Schelling provided a defense of pantheism in his *Philosophische Untersuchungen über das Wesen der menschlichen Freiheit* ("Philosophical Investigations on the Essence of Human Freedom", 1809). Following Baader's lead, he accused Schlegel of advocating a subordinate "governess philosophy."[52] Schelling's own philosophy has been characterized by Feuerbach as "an exotic growth" which, so to speak, transplanted "the old Oriental identity onto Germanic soil."[53] During the earlier phases of his philosophical development, Schelling did indeed exhibit an intense yearning for the origins and for unity, which his opponents as well as his followers associated with India.[54] Already the speculations on the mythical and traditional sources of human thought and existence, which he presented in his early work *Über Mythen, historische Sagen und Philosopheme der ältesten Welt* (1793), were obviously applicable to non-European, especially Oriental traditions. As a matter of fact, several "Schellingians" among the historians of philosophy, for instance Th. A. Rixner, C.J.H. Windischmann, and E. Röth, showed an often speculative openness towards India and the Orient.[55] Yet in his earlier years, Schelling's own explicit interest in India was less developed, and his position vis-à-vis the Indian "origins" more reserved than was the case with some of his contemporaries. His later, more explicit and detailed statements on India, specifically those in his *Philosophie der Mythologie* ("Philosophy of Mythology"), are often critical and anti-Romantic.

Hegel's essentially negative attitude towards F. Schlegel and Schlegel's picture of India is well-known. To be sure, it is precisely Schlegel's remarks

about pantheism, criticizing as they do an abstract infinite which coincides with nothingness and leads to indifference, that tell us to exert more caution and differentiate more carefully than Hegel himself or some more recent critics of Schlegel. The motif of the abstract "One," that empty substantiality which is not "mediated" and reconciled with the particularities of the world, played a key role in Hegel's own critique of India—even if an entirely different philosophy of history was involved.[56] Schegel's repeated warnings against abstractly comparing Indian and European phenomena, without taking their particular concrete contexts and contents into consideration, are also occasionally reminiscent of Hegel.[57] The decisive difference between the two lies in the fact that Hegel simply could not accept the ideas of an original revelation, a "primitive people," or a perfect and unified state of mankind standing at the dawn of history;[58] he considered these views as representing a totally inverted and perverted sense of the true direction of history.

12. In the closing chapter, "On Oriental and Indian Studies in general, and on their Value and Purpose," Schlegel took what may be called historical and philosophical stock, delineating what he saw as a possible practical application of his book on India. He attempted to place Indian and Oriental thought in general into one basic historical and systematic context together with European thought and thus to sketch out the possible repercussions which the study of India and a synoptic view of culture could have upon the thinking of his European present. As noted above,[59] Schlegel had previously characterized pantheism, which he saw as both the "system of pure reason" and the low point of Indian thought, as the "transition from Oriental to European philosophy." Although he insisted that the complete truth was to be found only in the Christian revelation and not in any of the documents of ancient India, within the domain of philosophy, he nevertheless adhered to his view that the wisdom developed in India was superior to that of European philosophy, and remained a source of spiritual force and orientation untouched by the hybris of critical and autonomous reason. In his eyes, European philosophy depended on the impulses, admittedly often indirect and obscured, which it periodically received from Eastern thought, on an "alien ferment" which was passed on to it from time to time. "Without the continually renewed stimulus of this enlivening principle, the European spirit would probably never have raised itself so high, or it would have fallen back earlier." Moreover, that most sublime philosophy of Europe, the idealism of reason, "as advanced by the Greek thinkers, would, when held against the wealth of power and light in the Oriental idealism of religion, probably appear only as some weak Promethean spark would appear before the full heavenly glow of the sun, as something merely stolen and continually threatening to expire; yet the less there was of substance, the

more elaborate became the form."[60] Of course, Schlegel considered the "merely empirical way of thinking" which dominated his time to be even more deficient, for it was characterized by its "limitation of experience to the domain of the merely useful." This led to the destruction of the "higher spirit"—a situation which, however, provided a reason to "search for a way back to the older and better philosophy" precisely because of its utter desolation.[61]

13. *Über die Sprache und Weisheit der Indier* has often been described as a pioneering work of Indology that indicated the path of the future. Yet is was also a restorative philosophical work firmly committed to the past. Because of this, it is not surprising that Schlegel's work was enlisted by partisans of the political restoration and ultramontanism and generally associated with a specifically Catholic interest in India, in particular in France.[62] In this context, we may mention the name of Baron F. von Eckstein (1790–1861), who served as historiographer of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs and was an avid amateur Indologist.[63] Using a critical, even polemical tone, Hegel laid stress upon the associations between Schlegel and the French advocates of a "primitive Catholicism," naming Lamennais, Abel Rémusat, and Saint Martin as well as von Eckstein.[64] The doctrine of a decline in the divine light that had originally been given to the Indians and other Oriental peoples, by the way, concurs in a natural way with basic assumptions of many missionaries and Christian authors in the preceding centuries.

We do not need to concern ourselves with the question as to how far Schlegel's conversion to Catholicism represented a break in his development or may have been a logical fulfillment of earlier motives,[65] or whether his book is a document of "disillusionment" or a recantation of his earlier enthusiasm.[66] Apart from this, it does remain to be noted that Schlegel's book on India ultimately achieved a certain kind of academic neutrality above and beyond the fundamental philosophical and religious conflicts of its time,[67] and that it opened up new methodological perspectives as well as the prospect for a new context of research. Schlegel evokes the ideal of the Renaissance scholar who combined solid linguistic knowledge with philosophical training in his studies of classical antiquity; he hopes that it will inspire a methodical and yet not exclusively philological treatment of the Indian material.[68] His book closes with a summons that remains impressive even today, a plea for synoptic, contextual understanding, and for a cross-fertilization of the results obtained from the study of different literatures and cultures: " . . . just as in the history of nations, the Asians and the Europeans form just one large family and Asia and Europe constitute an inseparable whole, so should we exert ourselves even more to view the literature of all educated peoples as a continuous development and one

single, intimately connected structure and framework, as *one* large whole. Then, many of those one-sided and limited views would disappear of their own accord, much would become understandable in this context, and everything would appear new in this light" (" . . . so wie nun in der Völkergeschichte die Asiaten und Europäer nur eine grosse Familie, Asien und Europa ein untrennbares Ganzes bilden, so sollte man sich immer mehr bemühen, auch die Literatur aller gebildeten Völker als eine fortgehende Entwicklung und ein einziges innig verbundenes Gebäude und Gebilde, als *ein* grosses Ganzes zu betrachten, wo denn manche einseitige und beschränkte Ansicht von selbst verschwinden, vieles im Zusammenhange erst verständlich, alles aber in diesem Lichte neu erscheinen würde.").[69]

14. While Friedrich Schlegel's brother August Wilhelm (1767–1845) was equally important for the West's awareness and knowledge of India, he was more straightforward and less ambivalent in his attitudes. He also began by criticizing his own European present, i.e., Western culture around the Age of the Enlightenment. His lectures *Über Literatur, Kunst und Geist des Zeitalters* ("On the Literature, Art and Spirit of the [Current] Era") are most exemplary in this regard.[70] In them, he deplored the utilitarian thinking, the pragmatism, and the spirit of modern Europe, directed as it was entirely around economics and the "promotion of the civic good." Faced with this situation, it was his hope that an impetus towards re-orientation might be gained through the Indian sources.[71] India and the Orient, the realm of the lost unity and totality, as the starting point of a possible regeneration, as the field in which the search for the original revelation was to be conducted—these were ideas and motifs which affected August Wilhelm as well, although they touched him more gently, more steadily, less exaltedly, and more continuously than they did his brother Friedrich.[72]

August Wilhelm Schlegel eventually became a professional Indologist. He was the first occupant of a German chair for Indology (Bonn, 1818).[73] He edited Indian texts according to the principles of classical philology and tried to make them available in translations that were understandable. He was succeeded by Chr. Lassen, who presented a comprehensive, scholarly assessment of the classical and modern knowledge of India in his *Indische Altertumskunde*. The speculations about India and the "Indomania" had finally been transformed into institutionalized Indology.

Some of the leading figures of the time, most conspicuously W. von Humboldt, played an active, personally committed role in this transformation. Humboldt himself studied Sanskrit and published important articles on the *Bhagavadgītā*, to which Hegel responded in his even more important review articles.[74]

F. Max Müller was the son of the poet who wrote the poems for Schubert's *Winterreise* and *Schöne Müllerin*, and one of the classic figures

of nineteenth-century Indology. When he was older, long after his naturalization in England, Müller still spoke of the stimulus which the Romantic movement had provided for his Indological career. Referring to the opening up of Sanskrit and the culture of India, he said: "It has added a new period to our historical consciousness, and revived the recollections of our childhood, which seemed to have vanished forever . . . We all come from the East—all that we value most has come to us from the East, and in going to the East . . . everybody ought to feel that he is going to his 'old home,' full of memories, if only he can read them."[75]

15. Müller saw an analogy between the Europeans who rediscovered the documents of the Indian past and the hypothetical situation of Americans who had been unaware of the origins of their language and literature in England, and who then suddenly rediscovered these English origins and were led to completely new dimensions of historical self-understanding.[76] The formula of the Indian childhood of our own being and consciousness appears repeatedly throughout Müller's work; the author asserts that for the "true anthropologist" who is concerned with gaining an adequate historical self-awareness of mankind, nothing is as important as that oldest record of Indian thought, the *Ṛgveda*.[77] Nevertheless, Müller, like his friend and patron Chr. C.J. Freiherr von Bunsen, remained committed to a Christian standpoint, although he did become more receptive towards the Vedānta—to the idea of a "Christian Vedānta"—in his later years.[78]

The motif of origins so emphasized by Max Müller may also be found among some of the other leading Indologists of the nineteenth century, although usually in less exuberant form. Even Müller's Parisian teacher E. Burnouf, a highly dedicated philologist, exhitibed its influence, for he considered his Indological work as simultaneously being a pursuit of the history of the origins of the human spirit.[79] More generally, the continuing fascination with the "origins" is indicated, at least implicitly, by the central role of *Ṛgveda* studies in nineteenth-century Indology. To be sure, Indological research developed its own tradition of correcting and neutralizing the cultural and ideological presumptions and prejudices to which it owed its impetus, if not its very existence; the criticism of its own motivations and points of departure became a kind of motivation in itself as the scholarly exploration of the textual sources advanced.

Romantic ideas and aspirations concerning India survived in various transformations, primarily in non-academic movements. The nostalgic fascination with the Indian "origins," the association of India with a critique of quantifying and calculating thought, and the reaction against pragmatism, rationalism and materialism were more than an ephemeral phenomenon. Here it is sufficient to recall New England Transcendentalism, especially R.W. Emerson and H.D. Thoreau,[80] as well as

Theosophy, Anthroposophy and various cults and movements in the twentieth century. In addition, we may refer to the type of "traditionalism" and "cultural criticism" which we find exemplified in the writings of R. Guénon (1886–1951) and his associates.[81]

16. In the life and work of the Schlegel brothers and some of their contemporaries, the Romantic fascination with India merges into academic Indology; the yearning for alternatives and self-transformation leads to the systematic exploration of the sources, and the methodical accumulation of "objective" knowledge about India. The dialectic irony in this development is obvious.

As we have seen, the Romantic interest in India was inseparable from a radical critique of the European present. The preoccupation with the merely useful, the calculable, rational, precisely determinable, the loss of faith, enthusiasm, and the sense of unity and wholeness, were seen as symptomatic deficiencies of this present. As a remedy for such spiritual impoverishment, Friedrich Schlegel proposed a return to the sources of Indian wisdom. Yet in order to bring about such a return, he felt that linguistic studies alone would not suffice; they had to be supplemented by "research," by the historical and philological methods of his time. The types and methods of Indological research which Friedrich and August Wilhelm Schlegel eventually applied proved to be aspects and symptoms of precisely that present, which the *yearning* for India had initially sought to overcome. There is no way which leads out of the present: what had appeared as a promise of retreat and return, as a possible escape from the present, itself became the object and goal of a program of historical and critical research that was committed to the spirit of that present and oriented around classical philology and the ideal of "objectivity." Instead of the desired ascent from the cold and prosaic world of "numbers and figures" (Novalis) to the world of "fairy tales and poems," a process of "objective" research, of scientific and very prosaic exploration of such "fairy tales and poems" was inaugurated.

In the following chapters, we will not trace the course of Indological research any further, nor describe the motivations and presumptions of leading Indologists. Instead, our primary concern will be with the ways in which the newly discovered materials affected the European understanding of philosophy and the history of philosophy. For Indology was in its formative stage at the same time in which the history and historiography of philosophy were, so to speak, changing and acquiring new forms, in particular in the work of Hegel. He and his antipode Schopenhauer provided two exemplary and influential models for approaching Indian thought, and for including it in the horizon of Western philosophical and historical self-understanding.