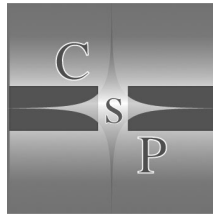


Mapping Channels between Ganges and Rhein

Mapping Channels between Ganges and Rhein: German-Indian Cross-Cultural Relations

Edited by

Jörg Esleben, Christina Kraenzle
and Sukanya Kulkarni



Cambridge Scholars Publishing

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INTRODUCTION

JÖRG ESLEBEN, CHRISTINA KRAENZLE,
SUKANYA KULKARNI

Since medieval times and extending into the twenty-first century, the German imagination has regarded India as the quintessence of the ‘exotic Other,’ a status which led to contradictory representations of the land and its inhabitants.¹ On the one hand, India was an embodiment of Oriental grandeur, and glorified descriptions of a land abounding in natural wealth were commonplace. On the other hand, India’s exoticism produced dichotomies between the East and West that metamorphosed into ethnic, cultural, and racial stereotypes, and by the turn of the twentieth century the discourse about India saw the interference of contemporary German trends in colonialism, imperialism, Orientalism, and Eurocentrism. As Anil Bhatti elucidates in his essay “Unser Wissen übereinander”, the image of India seemed to have split into two distinct halves in the German imagination—one glorified its past whereas the other underscored its contemporary degenerative state which implored for European dominance:

Whether evaluated positively or negatively, India was a past figure: dream of origins, cradle of civilization, childhood of mankind, etc. The present was a faint reflection, even a degenerated stage of the former glory. In addition to this denial of coevalness, this India was denied ‘modern’ characteristics like science, rationality, and philosophy by means of dichotomizations and demarcations.²

¹ For an in-depth study of German travels to India from the sixteenth century, see Gita Dharampal-Frick, *Indien im Spiegel deutscher Quellen der Frühen Neuzeit (1500-1750). Studien zu einer interkulturellen Konstellation* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1994).

² “Ob positiv oder negativ gewertet, war Indien eine vergangene Größe. Ursprungstraum, verlorenes Paradies, Wiege der Kultur, Kindheit der Menschheit, etc. Die Gegenwart war ein matter Abglanz, ja degenerierte Stufe der einstigen Glorie. Neben dieser Verweigerung der Gleichzeitigkeit wurden durch Dichotomisierungen und Abgrenzungen ‘moderne’ Eigenschaften wie Wissenschaft, Rationalität, Philosophie diesem Indien abgesprochen.” Anil Bhatti,

Before the turn of the last century, German fantasies about this earthly paradise transformed into more realistic methodical and methodological preoccupation with Indian anthropological, linguistic, and philosophical studies. This “Oriental Renaissance,” a term coined by Raymond Schwab for the intensive European vocation with the Orient from 1680 to 1880, introduced German scholars to ancient Indian philosophy, Hindu religion, and Sanskrit literature. The translation of Sanskrit texts such as *Upanishads*, *Vedas*, *Bhagavad-Gita* and *Shakuntala* into German led to the enormous popularity of German Indologists such as Bopp, Deussen, the Schlegel brothers, and Max Müller in Europe. This *intellectual* encounter with India particularly during the nineteenth century confirmed Germany’s proud position in Europe as these new fields of knowledge had an enormous influence in England and France.

The *actual* encounters with Romanticized India were in reality far from romantic. The political situation in Germany at the end of the nineteenth century only aided in the demystification of India, which constructed an image of India in opposition to Germany and Europe. As Ronald Inden points out: “India has played a part in the making of nineteenth- and twentieth-century Europe (and America) much greater than the ‘we’ of scholarship, journalism, officialdom would normally wish to allow...India was (and to some extent still is) the object of thoughts and acts with which this ‘we’ has constituted itself.”³

During the last two decades of the nineteenth century, as Germany was in the process of constituting a national German identity, India was dichotomized by the German intelligentsia. Not surprisingly, the emergence of a ‘self’ versus ‘other’ discourse worked simultaneously with the general colonialist desire at the time—where the exoticized, racialized, and feminized India played a central role in the agenda of domination and subordination. According to Jürgen Osterhammel, European colonialist desire manifested itself as a white man’s burden to “civilize” the degenerated Other which in turn allowed for a construction of an inferior Other.⁴ This shift in the perception of India from “the cradle of human

“Unser Wissen übereinander,” in *Verstand zur Verständigung: Wissenschaftspolitik und internationale wissenschaftliche Zusammenarbeit. Festschrift für Heinrich Pfeiffer*, ed. Thomas Berberich und Jan Ulrich Clauss (Berlin: Springer, 1987), 17. Also see Bhatti, Anil, Jürgen Lütt, and Nikolaus Klein, eds., *Utopie - Projektion - Gegenbild: Indien in Deutschland. Zeitschrift für Kulturaustausch* 37.3 (1987).

³ Ronald Inden, *Imagining India* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990), 3.

⁴ Jürgen Osterhammel, *Kolonialismus. Geschichte – Formen – Folgen*. 4th ed. (Munich: C H Beck Verlag, 2003). Osterhammel discusses intensively how the

civilization” to its ambivalent depiction can be understood within the collective political and popular psychological phenomena in German consciousness from the late nineteenth century onwards. Viewed from this perspective, India offers a kaleidoscope of heterogeneous and contradictory images for a German-Indian encounter that involves a “process of cultural negotiation in constant conflict and evolution.”⁵

This complexity is discernible in the multitude of functions that India has been assigned in German discourses in the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. Thus, in the first half of the twentieth century, constructions of ancient Indian culture could simultaneously function as utopian ideal of philosophers and Neoromantic authors and as source of National Socialist symbols and ideologies of the ‘Aryan’, while after World War II, exotic India could serve for escapist fantasies. In the 1960s and 70s, the student protest generation sought spiritual renewal from and in India, while at the same time a political, economic, and sociological discourse of the ‘Third World’ began to assert itself. Many of these perceptions of Indian culture have continued to be effective in German culture and have been added to in recent decades by discourses of globalization, by New Age adaptations of yoga and other Indian spiritual practices, by the ascendancy of India particularly in the information technology sector, and by a recent rise in German interest in Indian popular culture (e.g. Bollywood films and Bhangra music). Moreover, the last decades have seen increasing actual contact between the cultures in the forms of travel, tourism, migration, and cultural and economic exchange. They have also brought increasing awareness of Indian perceptions of German culture as well as of hybrid identities and unstable boundaries between these cultures, research into which is a much needed corrective that is gradually gaining in volume and attention.

The current collaborative volume was conceived in order to gain an understanding of the complexities of such an ever-changing German-Indian encounter as well as an overview of present approaches to academic inquiry into German-Indian relations. The study of cultural relations between the Indian subcontinent and the German-speaking world has evolved over the course of the last two centuries into a significant field of research at the intersection of numerous disciplines. In the eighteenth century, academic interest in cultural exchanges and relations between India and Europe had focused on the knowledge that the ancient

“colonizing mission[s]” of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were justified and rationalized in view of colonialist desires.

⁵ Bart Moore-Gilbert, *Writing India, 1757-1990* (London: Manchester UP, 1996), 23.

civilizations of the Mediterranean rim had of India and on relations between Indians and their European colonizers. However, the beginnings of Indo-European linguistics in the early nineteenth century ensured that German lands were now included in the search for historic connections, while also bringing German-language scholarly writing into prominence in this field and in Indology. This development and the related appropriations of Indian culture by German philosophers and literary authors became themselves the object of academic interest by the turn of the nineteenth to the twentieth century. Since then, each decade has brought forth a steady stream of research into Indo-German relations, including many influential monographs and scholarly anthologies in the areas of intellectual history and literary and cultural studies.⁶

Secondary literature about *Indienliteratur* that was *en vogue* before Edward Said's groundbreaking *Orientalism* (1979) focused on the "escapist" tendency of German intellectuals at the beginning of the twentieth century, whose search for eternal truth and wisdom was fulfilled within the boundaries of ancient Indian religion and philosophy. In *Das Indienbild deutscher Dichter um 1900*, Vridhagiri Ganeshan illustrates how India offered intellectuals such as Max Dauthendey, Fritz Mauthner, Karl Gjellerup, Hermann Keyserling and Stefan Zweig a chance to flee from a modern Europe.⁷ Wolfgang Reif extends this theory of

⁶ To name only a few representative examples in chronological order: Paul T. Hoffmann, *Der indische und der deutsche Geist von Herder bis zur Romantik. Eine Literarhistorische Darstellung*, Diss. University of Tübingen (Tübingen: Laupp, 1915); Ludwig Alsdorf, *Deutsch-indische Geistesbeziehungen* (Heidelberg, 1942); Walter Leifer, *Indien und die Deutschen. 500 Jahre Begegnung und Partnerschaft* (Tübingen: Erdmann, 1969); Dorothy Matilda Figueira, *Translating the Orient: The Reception of Sakuntala in nineteenth-century Europe* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991); Asoka DeZoysa, *Blutrünstige Braminen am heiligen Strome: Indienbilder in der deutschen Unterhaltungsliteratur zwischen Aufklärung und Restauration*, Diss. Freie Universität Berlin, 1996 (Frankfurt/Main: Peter Lang, 1997); Horst Turk, ed., *Kulturelle Identität: Deutsch-indische Kulturkontakte in Literatur, Religion und Politik* (Berlin: Schmidt, 1997); Michael Bergunder, ed., "Arier" und "Draviden": *Konstruktionen der Vergangenheit als Grundlage für Selbst- und Fremdwahrnehmungen Südasiens* (Halle: Verlag der Franckeschen Stiftungen, 2002); Angelika Fitz et al., eds., *Import Export. Cultural Transfer. India, Germany, Austria* (Berlin: Parthas, 2005).

⁷ Vridhagiri Ganeshan, *Das Indienbild deutscher Dichter um 1900: Dauthendey, Bonsels, Mauthner, Gjellerup, Hermann Keyserling und Stefan Zweig. Ein Kapitel deutsch-indischer Geistesbeziehungen im frühen 20. Jahrhundert* (Bonn: Bouvier, 1975). Also see Helmuth von Glasenapp, *Das Indienbild deutscher Denker*

‘psychological’ escapism with socio-cultural phenomena such as travel to India to reinforce a desire for a utopian life outside of Germany.⁸ Reif refers to the travelers of this *Fluchtbewegung* who wished to escape the alienation of modern society as “spiritual travelers,”⁹ whereas Rekha Kamath describes these travels as “Neoromantic.”¹⁰

Edward Said’s *Orientalism* paved the path for new approaches to examining German-Indian relations. Instead of looking at the exchanges between the two nations as purely social, cultural, or psychological, the research in the 1980s and 1990s focused on the political and economical power relations between a Germany poised for colonial expansion and the “most precious jewel in the British crown.”¹¹ Studies by Sheldon Pollock and Kamakshi Murti have revealed how Germany’s intellectual interest in

(Stuttgart: Koehler, 1960) and Amos Leslie Willson, *A Mythical Image: The Ideal of India in German Romanticism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1964).

⁸ Wolfgang Reif, *Zivilisationsflucht und literarische Wunschräume. Der exotische Roman im ersten Viertel des 20. Jahrhunderts*. (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1975), 10; Also see Anselm Maler, *Der exotische Roman. Gesellschaftsflucht und Gesellschaftskritik zwischen Romantik und Realismus* (Stuttgart: Ernst Klett, 1975) and Otto F. Best, *Abenteuer – Wonntraum aus Flucht und Ferne. Geschichte und Deutung* (Frankfurt/M: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 1980).

⁹ Reif, *Zivilisationsflucht* 101.

¹⁰ Rekha Kamath, “Indien mit der Seele suchend. Deutsche Indienreisende der Frühen Moderne.” In *Das Fremde. Reiseerfahrungen, Schreibformen und kulturelles Wissen*, edited by Alexander Honold, Klaus Scherpe, 267-284. (Bern: Peter Lang, 1999).

¹¹ Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage, Books 1978). Studies that have been influenced by Said are Andrea Fuchs-Sumiyoshi, *Orientalismus in der deutschen Literatur. Untersuchungen zu Werken des 19. und 20. Jahrhunderts, von Goethes West-östlichem Divan bis Thomas Manns Joseph-Tetralogie*. (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 1984); Joachim Warmbold, “Ein Stückchen neudeutsche Erd’...” *Deutsche Kolonial-Literatur. Aspekte ihrer Geschichte, Eigenart und Wirkung, dargestellt am Beispiel Afrikas* (Frankfurt/M: HAAG + HERCHEN, 1992); Sibylle Benninghoff-Lühl, *Deutsche Kolonialromane 1884-1914 in ihrem Entstehungs- und Wirkungszusammenhang* (Bremen: Im Selbstverlag, Überseemuseum Bremen, 1983); Wolfgang Bader and Janos Riesz, eds., *Literatur und Kolonialismus I*, Bayreuth Contributions to Literary Studies 4 (Frankfurt: Lang, 1983).

On the other hand, Wilhelm Halbfass underscores a post-*Orientalist* methodology to approach Indian thought. In *Indien und Europa*, Halbfass lays down certain prerequisites that would make a true dialogue between India and the West possible, while not denying the domination of Western scholarship. See Wilhelm Halbfass, *Indien und Europa: Perspektiven ihrer geistigen Begegnung* (Basel: Schwabe, 1981).

India was not and could not be devoid of political interest, since Germany's desire for colonial possessions articulated itself as "intellectual authority."¹² Murti, too, rejects the traditional assumption that Germany was solely interested in ancient India and by analyzing nineteenth-century German literature, includes Germany along with Britain and France in a colonialist relationship with India.¹³ And as Alexander Honold hypothesizes, a distinct cultural "*wilhelminischen Orientalismus*" originates from this interpretation.¹⁴

The approaches that have influenced the studies in this field have been diverse, from *Geistesgeschichte* via imagology and intercultural German studies to postcolonial and transnational studies. This body of research demonstrates two important points: that German-Indian cross-cultural relations have been and continue to be a significant phenomenon and field of study, and that historical and scholarly contexts constantly reshape the makeup and parameters of this field and redefine the appropriate discourses and perspectives to apply to it.

The present volume demonstrates some of the new directions that current research has taken in the field of German-Indian cross-cultural relations. The first three essays in the book address Germany's role in the institutionalization of European Indology during the nineteenth century. The contributors map out Germany's advancement in this emerging field, investigating prominent individuals, ideologies, and controversies that shaped the discipline. Nicholas A. Germana begins by asking what prompted the Prussian state to support Indology and Sanskrit studies in the early decades of the nineteenth century. While Prussia's general interest in academic Orientalism may be explained as a response to its status in England and France, what is less clear, Germana contends, is the reason for Prussia's promotion of Indology and Sanskrit studies in particular. Germana identifies two competing impulses in the field, represented by A. W. Schlegel and Franz Bopp, and shows how "a combination of popular

¹² "[P]ared 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." Sheldon Pollock, "Deep Orientalism? Notes on Sanskrit and Power Beyond the Raj," in *Orientalism and the Postcolonial Predicament – Perspectives on South Asia*, ed. Carol Breckenridge & Peter van der Veer (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993), 77.

¹³ Kamakshi P. Murti, *India. The Seductive and Seduced "Other" of German Orientalism* (Connecticut and London: Greenwood Press, 2001).

¹⁴ Alexander Honold and Klaus Scherpe, eds., *Das Fremde. Reiseerfahrungen, Schreibformen und kulturelles Wissen* (Bern: Peter Lang, 1999), 8.

interest in spiritual and philosophical affinities between ancient Indians and modern Germans, and the importance ascribed to Sanskrit as a foundational language by linguistic scholars led to the emergence of Sanskrit and Indology in Prussian, and later, German universities.”

Douglas T. McGetchin shifts the focus to the latter half of the nineteenth century and the vociferous, transnational debates between two eminent Indologists, the German-born-and-educated Oxford Sanskritist, Friedrich Max Müller and the American Yale linguist, William Dwight Whitney. McGetchin assesses the role that Whitney’s attacks on Müller’s methodology, motives and scientific theories may have played in the decline of Müller’s reputation within the field of linguistics. Whitney’s critique would prove highly influential in the development of the Neogrammatical school in the mid 1870s, while Müller’s linguistic theories were increasingly considered obsolete. A major point of contention was Whitney’s scorn for Indian scholarship, a view that won many followers amongst Whitney’s peers. Müller’s faith in and reliance on Indian commentators would become an isolated approach in his field. The Whitney-Müller controversy thus not only provides insight into the personal and scientific differences between these two prominent scholars; it also sheds light on the marginalization of Indian scholarship within American and European Sanskrit studies.

Kamakshi P. Murti continues the spotlight on Friedrich Max Müller in her investigation of the multiple and seemingly conflicting facets of his identity. Born and educated in Germany, Müller’s expertise as an Indologist earned him the admiration of Indian intellectuals and a lengthy career in England. Murti examines how Müller reconciled these various personalities—German, English, Indian, Orientalist, and what Murti terms “Indian Vedantist.” It was not simply political or social expediency, argues Murti, which allowed Müller to slip between these many roles. Müller’s dedication to Sanskrit studies and Veda research can in fact be seen as an integral part of the colonial enterprise. Murti’s readings of Müller’s writings and correspondence trace his belief in the inevitability of British colonial rule and his “conviction that it is the white man’s burden to enlighten and civilize the Indian.” Müller’s apparent disinterested indological research must therefore be seen as part of an effort to consolidate colonial domination.

The second section of the book examines the cross-cultural exchange between Indian and German philosophical traditions. Bradley L. Herling surveys readings of the ethical teachings in the *Bhagavadgītā* by two of its earliest German interpreters: Friedrich Schlegel and Wilhelm von Humboldt. Herling shows how Schlegel’s evaluations of the *Bhagavadgītā*’s

ethics fit into a tradition of the text's reception that positioned it as irrational and amoral, feeding a discourse that derided Indian culture and contributed to the denigration of Indian thought within Western philosophy. Such assessments have had enormous staying power, evidenced by Slavoj Žižek's recent commentary on the *Bhagavadgītā* in *The Puppet and the Dwarf: The Perverse Core of Christianity* (2003). Here, Žižek critiques the current absorption of Eastern philosophy by the carriers of a new global, corporate economic order, a philosophy which, in Žižek's view, facilitates an ethics of distance and indifference. Herling investigates a distinct alternative to this genealogy of interpretation in his analysis of Wilhelm von Humboldt's more charitable reading of the *Bhagavadgītā*'s ethics. Humboldt's reflection on the relationship between Hindu ethics and the Kantian system suggests that "the supposed 'indifference' of the *karmayoga* doctrine is actually the premise of ethical action" and thus disputes the nihilistic interpretations of the text.

Douglas L. Berger traces another trajectory of cross-cultural exchange in Indian and German philosophy, namely Schopenhauer's appropriation of early Indian thought into his ethics. Schopenhauer's interpretation of the Upanisadic formulation "*tat tvam asi*" influenced both German thinkers like Phillip Mainlander and Nietzsche as well as Neo-Vedantic philosophers like Vivekananda and Radhakrishnan. Schopenhauer's conviction that the grounds for human compassion lie in the essential metaphysical unity of beings proved a powerful hermeneutic for both adherents of Schopenhauer as well as advocates of a twentieth-century "practical Vedanta." Schopenhauer's version of metaphysically-grounded ethics was critiqued by, among others, German Indologist Paul Hacker. Berger assesses Hacker's arguments with a view to determining to what extent Schopenhauer's understanding of the *tat tvam asi* ethic was a hermeneutic innovation and what relevance his theories gave to ethics in classical Vedantic thought.

The third section of the book is devoted to Indian-German intercultural connections manifested in literature, literary translation, and travel writing. In her comparative reading of Anita Desai's *Baumgartner's Bombay* and Jeannette Lander's *Jahrhundert der Herren*, Petra Fachinger shows how these two novels investigate the aftermath of British rule, but also, to varying degrees, use post-independence India and post-Civil War Sri Lanka as stages upon which to consider the legacy of the Holocaust. However, as Fachinger contends, the juxtaposition of the Holocaust with the mass murders of the Partition riots and the Sri Lankan Civil War fails to take into account the historical specificity of all three events. By universalizing these very different experiences of oppression and brutality

neither novel adequately addresses the consequences of colonial rule and ethnic violence. In Fachinger's estimation, the European perspectives of the two novelists account for their ambivalent representations of the Indian subcontinent and obscure the voices of Indian and Sri Lankan societies. Ultimately, "both novels fail to free themselves from the over-determined conception of the Indian subcontinent as garish and violent spectacle, and India and Sri Lanka remain constructs of the European gaze."

European representations of India are also the subject of Ursula Kocher's contribution on Alfred Döblin's epic work, *Manas*. Despite favourable reviews by literary notables such as Oskar Loerke, Robert Musil, and Hermann Kasack, Döblin's *Manas* was largely considered a failure. Kocher brings new attention to this relatively neglected text and places it in the context of the available research on India in twentieth-century Berlin. She investigates the countless sources the author consulted in the writing of the novel—philosophical and scientific texts on Indian thought and religion as well as travelogues, geographical and literary texts, and German translations of classical Indian writings—thus refuting claims that Döblin's interest in India was the result of pure exoticism, based on impression rather than fact. Kocher shows how *Manas* instead reflects the state of contemporary studies on India at the time of its publication, thereby appealing for a reassessment of this carefully-researched work.

As a translator and publisher of the Hindi-language literary magazine, *Saar Sansaar*, Amrit Mehta has dealt first-hand with the practical difficulties of cross-cultural translation. In his paper, Mehta relates the controversy sparked by the publication in *Saar Sansaar* of Hindi translations of contemporary Austrian literature. Deemed obscene by some readers, these translations were considered an affront to the mores of Indian culture. The publication of texts by authors such as Margit Schreiner, Margit Hahn, Monika Wogrolly, Zdenka Becker, and Gustav Ernst prompted a debate amongst the readership about such contested issues as censorship, cultural values, and the moral obligations of writers and translators. Mehta's analysis of the discussion illustrates the difficulties that translators and publishers may face when dealing with potentially sensitive topics such as sexuality. At a time when literature seems under threat by the prevalence of other media, Mehta's experience reaffirms literature's power to affect the reading public deeply.

Perry Myers considers border crossings of both an intellectual and physical nature in his treatment of Joseph Dahlmann's turn-of-the-century travelogue, *Indische Fahrten*. A Jesuit father, noteworthy Indologist, and author of numerous books and essays on Indian religious traditions and philosophy, Dahlmann published the account of his three-year excursion

(1902-1905) through India, China and Japan in 1908. Myer's reading emphasizes how Dahlmann reconciles the knowledge attained through his indological studies with the experience gained through his actual travels in India. More specifically, Myers depicts how Dahlmann applied Enlightenment ideals of truth, scientific knowledge, and progress to Indian culture. Myers shows how Dahlmann's assessment of India's cultural conventions and his use of social science authorizes an Oriental discourse, thus disregarding Enlightenment dictates; he argues instead that Dahlmann's application of "scientific" knowledge of the Orient is filtered by a colonialist consciousness.

The final section of the book considers representations of India and Indianness in popular cinema and on the internet and reminds us of the power of media to construct virtual spaces of identity. Christine Lehleiter investigates cinematic adaptations of Thea von Harbou's novel *Das Indische Grabmal* and the reasons for their popular success. Lehleiter argues that in the two post-war periods, Joe May's 1921 and Fritz Lang's 1958 versions offered the German people a vision of India that could function as a metaphor for their own wartime experiences. Lehleiter contends that the films' depictions of despotic rulers and submissive populations, combined with their citation of postwar films such as Abel Gance's *J'accuse*, served to connect the Indian subcontinent with the German nation. The remarkable uncanniness of these films can therefore be best understood in the historical context of the immediate postwar periods, where the tyrannical Indian Maharaja functions as the repressed familiar of a haunted German past. India thus serves in these films not only as exotic Other; it also offers an uncanny likeness that allowed contemporary German audiences to simultaneously work through and distance themselves from disturbing aspects of their recent wartime history.

While cinema has long played a pivotal role in the fashioning of individual and collective identities, the internet has only more recently been exploited as a tool with which to create a sense of belonging or to define a set of shared experiences and values. In her paper, Urmila Goel examines how the internet is used by second-generation Indian-Germans to negotiate ethnic and diasporic identity. In her investigation of the internet portal, *theinder.net*, Goel analyses site content and interviews to uncover the often contradictory images of India and Indianness constructed by this online community. Goel demonstrates how internet technology allows individuals to develop ties to an India that is both real and virtual: a physical, material space overlaid with the multiple and conflicting stereotypes, dreams and desires of the internet portal's users.

Together, these eleven chapters help elucidate the constantly changing, complex relationships between Indian and German cultures. Moreover, the book presents representative examples of early twenty-first century research into these multifaceted relationships. The volume is thus also a contribution towards shaping the paradigms for such research at the present juncture. Importantly in this context, the contributions to the book show that this is not a question of discarding all previous methods and perspectives and of declaring a radically new and different framework. Rather, the contributions demonstrate the fruitfulness of blending previous with new scholarly approaches and objects of study, and of ensuring a lively dialogue among disciplines. We offer this volume as a testimony and an example of the dynamic possibilities that such border-crossing scholarship can create.

PART I

SURVEYING INDOLOGY

‘GERMAN DILIGENCE AND GERMAN PROFUNDITY’: THE INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF SANSKRIT STUDIES IN PRUSSIAN UNIVERSITIES, 1818-1830¹

NICHOLAS A. GERMANA

By the middle of the nineteenth century, German scholars had developed a reputation as the most advanced and thorough orientalists in Europe. Their advancement in this young field was noteworthy to both their English and French counterparts, who had witnessed the birth of academic orientalism in their own countries a generation earlier. The first German scholars of oriental languages had had to travel to Paris and London to consult the experts and the texts necessary to learn Arabic, Persian, and Sanskrit, but by the 1860s, the Germans had become, by common agreement, “the Indians of Europe.”²

The period treated in this chapter covers the little more than a decade in which the first three Sanskrit scholars were hired and promoted at Prussian universities—A.W. Schlegel at Bonn (1818), Franz Bopp at Berlin (1821/1825), and Peter von Bohlen at Königsberg (1825/1830). The focus of this essay is the question of why the Prussian state chose to fund Sanskrit studies and Indology at a time when state budgets were tightly constrained.³ As shall be seen, there are really two questions being asked here. First, what prompted the Prussian state to invest in academic

¹ Note on archival sources: GStAPK = Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin; HU = Humboldt University Archive, Berlin.

² Foucher de Careil, *Hegel et Schopenhauer* (1862), cited in Roger-Pol Droit, *The Cult of Nothingness: The Philosophers and the Buddha*, trans. David Streight and Pamela Vohnson (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 102.

³ The cost of fighting against Napoleon was exacerbated by losing, as the French Emperor imposed massive reparation payments on his vanquished foes as a means of meeting his own sky-rocketing expenses. Matthew Levinger, *Enlightened Nationalism: The Transformation of Prussian Political Culture, 1806-1848* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 42-46.

orientalism generally? Second, how and why did Sanskrit and Indology emerge as the most prominent of the fields of study in this new discipline? The answer to the first question appears to be relatively straightforward: the rise of orientalism was a response to its fashionableness in academic and literary culture in England and France. This fact cannot, however, also explain the rise of Sanskrit studies and Indology. The explanation of this phenomenon is more complex, and I argue that there were two main causes for the rise of these studies in Prussian universities in this period. These causes correspond to two sometimes complementary, sometimes competing images of defining “German” virtues—“diligence” and “profundity.”⁴ The German Romantic thinkers who first turned their attention toward India believed that they discovered there an affinity between ancient Indians and modern Germans. This enthusiasm for the “mythical image” of India was later joined and forced to compete with the forceful insistence of linguistic scholars that the study of Sanskrit was central to the study of the Indo-European language family as a whole.⁵

In his book *Aryans and British India*, Thomas R. Trautmann argues that the debate in Britain about India and how it should be ruled was really a debate about British identity in the period after the French Revolution.⁶ Trautmann shows how British imperial institutions served as a place where these debates could be played out. Institutions such as the College of Fort William specialized in the linguistic and cultural training that British imperial officials needed in order to conduct the business of the empire. In this sense, they were clearly “orientalist” institutions in the Saidian sense. In Germany, no such institutions existed for two reasons. First, the civil service in Germany, even in a more advanced state like Prussia, had not yet become the outlet for the middle class and its professional ambitions that it had in England.⁷ Second, none of the German states had imperial ties to India (as will be seen, German scholars made much of this fact).

There was, however, a comparable institution in Prussia after 1810—the university. From its inception, the Prussian university system was intended to make a statement about Prussian national identity. Max Lenz, the early

⁴ *Fleiss and Tiefsinn*.

⁵ The phrase “mythical image” is taken from A. Leslie Wilson, *A Mythical Image: The Ideal of India in German Romanticism* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1964).

⁶ Thomas R. Trautmann, *Aryans and British India* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997).

⁷ Charles E. McClelland, *State, Society, and University in Germany, 1700-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 7.

twentieth-century historian of what is now Humboldt University, quotes King Friedrich Wilhelm III as having said, “the state must replace through intellectual powers what it has lost in the way of physical powers.”⁸ The personal interest of the king is reflected in the remarkable degree of his direct involvement in university matters, particularly the hiring of faculty, in the early stages of the university’s creation.

One of the most fashionable trends in England and France was toward orientalism, a project aided in those countries by the possession of ancient Indian manuscripts unearthed as a result of English and French imperialism in South Asia. In England, instruction in oriental languages was largely confined to imperial institutions like the College of Fort William. Numerous scholars such as Sir William Jones, Charles Wilkins, and Alexander Hamilton made considerable names for themselves throughout Europe with their translations of recently rediscovered materials from Persia and India. These scholars were members of the Royal Asiatic Society of Calcutta, and published their work in the most prominent orientalist journal of the day, the *Asiatic Researches*. The *Asiatic Researches* was indispensable for any European scholar attempting to verse himself in the state-of-the-art on the topic of the Indic Orient.⁹ Though French imperial interests in India had been disappointed by the British after the Seven Years’ War (1756-1763), French scholars like Abraham Anquetil-Duperron made important contributions to the field, such as Duperron’s Latin translation of the *Upanishads*.¹⁰ Friedrich and August Wilhelm Schlegel and Franz Bopp undertook their studies of Sanskrit in Paris with Sylvestre de Sacy, and in 1812, the Collège de France established the first chair of Sanskrit in Europe.

Of the three Sanskrit scholars whose work is considered in this chapter, Peter von Bohlen’s is perhaps the most illuminating. Schlegel and Bopp achieved greater notoriety in their own day, and are better known today, even though knowledge of Bopp’s work is mostly confined to linguists. August Wilhelm Schlegel’s life and works have been treated extensively, both in German and in English. Bohlen, by contrast, is little known and all but ignored. His appointment and promotion, however, are very instructive in our effort to understand the issues presented here.

⁸ Max Lenz, *Geschichte der königlichen Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität zu Berlin, Vol. I* (Halle: Buchhandlung des Waisenhauses, 1910-1918), 78.

⁹ Cf. Raymond Schwab, *The Oriental Renaissance: Europe’s Rediscovery of India and the East, 1680-1880*, trans. Gene Patterson-Black and Victor Reinking (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), 52-57.

¹⁰ It was this translation, under the name *Oupnek’hat*, which provided critical inspiration to the young Arthur Schopenhauer.

In order for Prussian universities to begin to compete with comparable institutions in England and France, it was first necessary to acquire manuscripts that could be consulted by students in Germany. This desire is clear in the case of Peter von Bohlen, whom the *Kultusministerium* intended to shape into a “first-rate scholar,” with the most “thorough” grounding in oriental languages.¹¹ The *Ministerium* had decided to train Bohlen as Prussia’s first home-grown orientalist scholar, and officials made detailed plans for the course of his training. After studying Persian in Halle, Bohlen traveled to Bonn to work on Arabic. It was expected that upon completion of his studies in Bonn, Bohlen would move on to Paris where he would follow in the footsteps of Schlegel and Bopp and train with Sacy, taking advantage of the “treasures” of the *Bibliothèque nationale*. In particular, the *Ministerium* hoped that Bohlen would be able to copy the library’s manuscript of the *Zend-Avesta*, and/or to complete a translation of it for the benefit of the “learned public.”¹²

Bohlen’s training did not, however, go according to plan. The *Kultusministerium* kept close tabs on his progress, showing concern for a return on the investment of “state,” or “public” funds.¹³ Reports from Bonn to Berlin in the spring of 1823 and again in the spring of 1824 lamented that Bohlen still had many “holes” in his knowledge, particularly when it came to analyzing original language handwriting. Doubts were expressed about Bohlen’s possible effectiveness with the original sources he would encounter in Paris.¹⁴ When it became clear to Bohlen that the trip to Paris was off, he requested that he be allowed to stay in Bonn to study Sanskrit with A.W. Schlegel, a “beautiful and difficult” language that he had been unable to explore to that point.¹⁵ Despite a personal appeal by Schlegel himself, the *Ministerium* replied that Bohlen should either travel to Königsberg and take an appointment as a *Privatdozent*, or, if he insisted on studying Sanskrit, he would have to do so with Bopp in Berlin.¹⁶ (This insistence that his training should be with Bopp rather than with Schlegel may have been an indication of the relative appreciation of the two scholars, and we shall have opportunity to return to it later.) Perhaps reluctant to bring his state-subsidized student days to an end, Bohlen

¹¹ Letters from 6 July and 14 November 1822. GStAPK I Rep. 76 Vf., Lit. B – Personalia of Peter von Bohlen.

¹² “Gelehrtes Publikum”. Letter of 14 November 1822.

¹³ “Staatsfonds” or “öffentlichen funds”. Ibid.

¹⁴ Letters of 4 April 1823, and 10 March 1824. Personalia.

¹⁵ Letter from Bohlen to the *Kultusministerium*, 4 June 1824. Personalia.

¹⁶ Letters from A.W. Schlegel to the *Kultusministerium*, 15 July 1824, and from the *Ministerium* to Bonn, 2 July 1824 - Personalia.

traveled to Berlin to study with Bopp, but by the spring of 1825 he was ready to move on to Königsberg.

Numerous times over the next several years, the *Kultusministerium* explicitly expressed disappointment in Bohlen's development as an orientalist. His failures turn out to be good for the historian, and they don't appear to have hurt him much either, since he was promoted to *ausserordentlichen* (associate professor) in 1825, and *ordentlichen* (full professor) in 1830. In 1829, no less an official than Freiherr Karl von Altenstein, the head of the Ministry, expressed his disappointment with Bohlen's lack of "literary accomplishments," specifically "great scientific accomplishments."¹⁷ Altenstein complained that the state had provided generous support to Bohlen in his student years, and expressed some doubts about his prospects for promotion to *ordentlichen*, doubts that apparently never crystallized into opposition.¹⁸

Peter von Bohlen's disappointing career provides insight into two important motivations for state investment in academic orientalism. It is clear that officials at the Prussian *Kultusministerium* regarded the expenditure of "public funds" on Bohlen as an investment, with an expected return. First, in order to begin competing with the English and French, it was necessary to acquire manuscripts. Bohlen's work in Paris was intended, in part, to make progress toward this end. Time and again, one finds scholars writing to the Ministry, usually for promotion or travel funds, justifying their work and requests by referring to some new sources they had acquired for use at their universities.¹⁹ In the first volume of his new academic journal, *Indische Bibliothek* (1823), A.W. Schlegel made a point of drawing attention to the scope of his own personal library of Sanskrit works, larger than that held by any "public library" in Germany, purchased at great personal cost from England.²⁰ This was a means of the state acquiring manuscripts relatively inexpensively. The cost of original manuscripts and collections was often prohibitive, even for the state, as can be seen in the case of the Chambers manuscripts, which the Prussian

¹⁷ Letter from Altenstein to Reusch in Königsberg, 6 May 1829 – Personalia.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Cf. for example, letter from Bohlen in London to the Ministry, 11 July 1831, Personalia; A.W. Schlegel's letter to the Ministry on Bohlen's behalf, 15 July 1825 - Personalia of Peter von Bohlen.

²⁰ A.W. Schlegel, *Indische Bibliothek, Eine Zeitschrift, Vol. I* (Bonn: Eduard Weber Verlag, 1823), 3-4.

state passed up in 1829, only to purchase thirteen years later at a fraction of the cost.²¹

Second, and just as important, the Ministry was concerned with publication. This is clear from their desire for Bohlen to produce something for the “learned public” as a result of his study in Paris, as well as Altenstein’s subsequent disappointment in Bohlen’s lack of “literary accomplishments.” This emphasis on publication for a “learned public” was the result of the movement toward professionalization of scholarship in Germany in the second and third decades of the nineteenth century. As the state became the primary patron of scholarship during the Reform Era, universities found themselves on surer financial footing, but at the expense of autonomies they had traditionally held.²² Along with greater state funding came a greater state interest in the functions of the universities, as well as greater concern for a return on their investments.

The *Ministerium* expressed a clear concern for the production of scholarly material for public consumption. The late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries witnessed an unprecedented growth in the size and sophistication of a reading public in Germany. By the 1770s, more than seven hundred periodicals circulated in the German states, in contrast to fewer than sixty at the beginning of the century.²³ Schiller’s journal *Die Horen*, and Friedrich Nicolai’s *Bibliothek der schönen Wissenschaften und freien Künste* and *Allgemeine deutsche Bibliothek* contained articles by the most prominent German *literati* of the day and enjoyed wide circulation throughout the German states.²⁴ As James Sheehan argues, perhaps the best sign of a vibrant reading culture in Germany in the late eighteenth century was the emergence of literature *about* literature—literary criticism.²⁵ The progenitor of German *Volkish* nationalism, as well as the

²¹ This rich collection of Sanskrit manuscripts had belonged to Sir Robert Chambers, a judge for the East India company, and were put up for sale following his death in 1803. Douglas T. McGetchin, “Into the Centre of Sanskrit Study: Ancient Indian Studies and German Culture in Berlin and Leipzig during the Nineteenth Century”, *Sanskrit and ‘Orientalism’: Indology and Comparative Linguistics in Germany, 1750-1958*, eds. Douglas T. McGetchin, et al. (New Delhi: Manohar, 2004), 202; Douglas T. McGetchin, *The Sanskrit Reich: Translating Ancient India for Modern Germans, 1790-1914* (Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, San Diego, 2002), 161-162.

²² McClelland, 141-145.

²³ James J. Sheehan, *German History, 1770-1866* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 155.

²⁴ W.H. Bruford, *Germany in the XVIII Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1959), 281.

²⁵ Sheehan, 155.

mythical image of India, Johann Gottfried Herder, entered upon the literary scene in the 1760s with his series of reviews, “Fragments on Recent German Literature”.²⁶

One prime example of the kind of “return” the Prussian state may have been hoping for is a three-part review of Bopp’s *Nalus* translation, which appeared in the *Leipziger Literatur Zeitung* from 26-29 July 1820. The review lauded Bopp, and his then patron, the Bavarian state, for bringing a “broadening and solid foundation” of Indology to Germany. The translation was praised for two reasons especially. First, because it marked the first time a German scholar had made a contribution to the “field of Asiatic literature in the original language;” and second, because now the principles of classical philology could be applied to “Indian languages.”²⁷ (As will be seen, this task was viewed as one for which Germans were particularly well suited.) That the state was indeed influenced by such publicity is evidenced by the fact that this review was placed in Bopp’s personnel file with the *Kultusministerium*.

Some light has now been shed upon the state’s motivation for funding the study of oriental languages at Prussian universities. What is not yet clear is why Sanskrit and Indology came to be the most dominant of the fields of study, and how Germans came to be regarded as the “Indians of Europe.” Contrary to the belief of some scholars, A.W. Schlegel was not hired as a Sanskrit scholar, or even an orientalist. Altenstein had been looking for someone to teach “the history of the German language” at Berlin, but settled on Schlegel, no doubt in part because he received a powerful endorsement from Alexander von Humboldt.²⁸ It was intended that Schlegel should give lectures in art history, archaeology, and Roman history. In a letter to the Ministry, requesting that his appointment be shifted from Berlin to Bonn, Schlegel added that he would also be

²⁶ Johann Gottfried Herder, *Selected Early Works, 1764-1767: Addresses, Essays, and Drafts; Fragments on Recent German Literature*, eds. Ernst A. Menze and Karl Menges, trans. Ernst A. Menze and Michael Palma (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1992).

²⁷ No. 157, 26 July 1820, p. 1250. GStAPK I Rep. 76 Va., Sekt. 2, Tit. IV, Nr. 5, Vol. 7, Docs. 18-19.

²⁸ Letter from Altenstein to the king, 8 March 1818, GStAPK I Rep. 76 Va, Sekt. 2, Tit. IV, Nr. 5, Vol. V, Docs. 27-28, and letter from Alexander von Humboldt to the *Kultusministerium*, 20 January 1818, GStAPK I Rep. 76 Va, Sekt. 2, Tit. IV, Nr. 5, Vol. V, Doc. 20.

prepared to give lectures on “the oldest cultural history of Asia,” doubtless referring to India.²⁹

Even Bopp, who had achieved notoriety for his work on Sanskrit, was hired not as a Sanskrit scholar, but as a scholar of oriental languages generally, and the document from the philosophical faculty supporting his appointment emphasized his abilities as a Hebrew scholar. The document, which appears to have been written in whole or in large part by Hegel, even goes so far as to ensure the *Ministerium* that Bopp’s “oriental studies” had not, and would not, detract from his Hebrew scholarship in any way.³⁰ At first, this claim seems remarkable, since Bopp himself never seems to have claimed such expertise, either in his initial correspondence with the Ministry, or in his request for promotion in 1824.³¹ The document written by the Ministry supporting Bopp’s promotion to *ordentlichen* made it clear that, while his Sanskrit scholarship was an “ornament” to the university, his greatest value was as an expert and lecturer in comparative linguistics. No mention was made of the “Jewish language.”³² This fact, however, is less surprising when one considers the need to instruct theology students in Hebrew, a much more practical concern of the Ministry. Even A.W. Schlegel, in his letter to Altenstein requesting that his appointment be moved to Bonn, cited above, played up his recent intense study of Hebrew.

The review of Bopp’s translation in the *Leipziger Literatur Zeitung* gave expression to the conviction that the Germans were defined by two essential qualities, intellectual (and moral) diligence, and spiritual and philosophical profundity. The review claimed that, with the aid of grammar guides and other *Hilfsmittel*, “German diligence and German profundity” would penetrate the depth of the “spiritual treasures of ancient India.”³³ These qualities often stood alongside one another, as in this review, but circumstances in Germany in the second and third decades of

²⁹ “[D]ie älteste Culturgeschichte Asiens”. 27 August 1818. GStAPK I Rep. 76 Va, Sekt. 2, Tit. IV, Nr. 5, Vol. V, Docs. 152-153.

³⁰ GStAPK I Rep. 76 Va, Sekt. 2, Tit. IV, Nr. 5, Vol. VIII, Docs. 4-5. HU Phil. Fak. No. 1454, Doc. 125, which bears only Hegel’s signature, is clearly a draft of the letter from the philosophical faculty to the *Kultusministerium*.

³¹ GStAPK I Rep. 76 Va, Sekt. 2, Tit. IV, Nr. 5, Vol. VIII, Docs. 7-11, 18-19, 27; GStAPK I Rep. 76, Va, Sekt. 2, Tit. IV, Nr. 5, Vol. X, Docs. 123-127.

³² The “Jüdische Sprache”. GStAPK I Rep. 76, Va, Sekt. 2, Tit. IV, Nr. 5, Vol. X, Docs. 148-150.

³³ “[D]eutscher Fleiss und deutscher Tiefsinn”. No. 157, 26 July 1820, p. 1250. GStAPK I Rep. 76 Va, Sekt. 2, Tit. IV, Nr. 5, Vol. VII, Docs. 18-19.

the nineteenth century brought them into contention.³⁴ The move toward professionalization in Germany was a response to several important factors, none more important than a reaction against political, philosophical, and cultural romanticism. Friedrich Schlegel's conversion to Catholicism and the furor raised over the so-called *Creuzerstreit* led to a backlash against romantic Indomania by linguistic scholars and state officials.³⁵

It was William Jones who had first argued for a connection between Sanskrit and more modern members of what came to be known as the Indo-European language family. Friedrich Schlegel developed the relationship between Sanskrit and modern European languages, especially German, in his 1808 essay, *Über die Sprache und Weisheit der Indier*.³⁶ The first systematic examination of the relationship of Sanskrit to its more modern relatives appeared in 1816 with Franz Bopp's path breaking *Conjugationssystem der Sanskritsprache*. With this work, Bopp inaugurated a new academic discipline—comparative philology. Bopp sought to avoid association with Friedrich Schlegel's work on India, and labored, instead, to establish comparative philology alongside classical philology as a *Wissenschaft*.³⁷ As a science, comparative philology made no claims about national identity or spiritual affinity between one people and another. Just as importantly, although comparative philology was not explicitly inclined toward one confession or another, it was undoubtedly closer to the Protestant tradition of biblical criticism and even classical philology than it was to Catholicism.³⁸

The pressure of state interest and academic professionalization were critical influences on the development of Sanskrit studies and Indology in Prussian universities, but the romantic “mythical image” continued to be an important force, especially outside the university. There remained in German literary culture, that is, among the “learned public,” a belief that

³⁴ Herder had made a fairly representative statement about the correlation of diligence and profundity (the former leading toward the latter) in his 1764 essay, “On Diligence in several Learned Languages”. *Selected Early Works*, 29-34.

³⁵ On the *Creuzerstreit*, cf. George S. Williamson, *The Longing for Myth in Germany: Religion and Aesthetic Culture from Romanticism to Nietzsche* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 121-150.

³⁶ Cf. Willson, 199-220.

³⁷ Roy Harris, ed., *Foundations of Indo-European Comparative Philology, 1800-1850* (London: Routledge, 1999).

³⁸ Anti-Catholicism was a central component of the critical attacks on the works of Friedrich Schlegel and the Heidelberg Romantics, especially Joseph Görres and Friedrich Creuzer.