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PRETENCE AND PREJUDICE

Pretence

In the early 19th century many of the academic subjects of our time had not taken shape. Then, to be a polymath, was a difficult ideal,¹ but still we tend to think that some succeeded. Now, after two centuries with its growth, differentiation and shifts of academic subjects things have changed dramatically. Subjects characterized by a prolonged professional training as well as sustained practical experience are almost sealed off to academics from other fields. This is especially so in the natural sciences, where someone trained in physics would not think of venturing into, for instance, pharmacy, where he has no training. The demands and standards of one discipline cannot be passed by and interdisciplinarity here invariably means to cooperate with experts than to dabble into the other field oneself.

In comparison, subjects from amongst the humanities are considered more accessible to outsiders. Here someone with a general academical training and expertise in one field can hope to understand the methods of the respective other field so as to be able to contribute to some extent to it. However, philologies remain an exception, since training in a philological discipline requires considerable and prolonged effort. In this respect, traditional philologies can be compared to the natural sciences: a dilettante is often spotted simply by the type of errors, usually basic

¹ "Es ist wahr, viele Untersuchungen nehmen in unserm Zeitalter eine solche Wendung, daß Universalität dazu gefordert wird; diese besitzt aber niemand vollkommen: warum zieht man also nicht zuvor die Kundigen zu Rath?" August Wilhelm Schlegel, in a letter to Wilhelm Humboldt (19.3.1823).

errors, he commits. More recently, with the North-American ostracizing of philology, a whole syndicate of philological dilettantes² has taken over to explain why even the term philology is or should no more be in use,³ or why philology and its method of textual criticism is racist,⁴ or even has laid the intellectual foundation of the holocaust. For studying ancient or foreign cultures training in the respective philology was consequently deemed dispensible.⁵

Concurrent to this “opening” of disciplinary boundaries there is an insecurity about the methods to be employed. An unbounded relativism has become fashionable, one that understands all truth claims as relative to a specific social group.⁶ While this is obviously applicable to many such claims with which Sanskritists deal (monotheism against polytheism etc.), it becomes plainly absurd in others. The notion that the Purāṇic cosmological model can be an alternative truth to the scientific one can only be entertained in an environment where creationism is held by many as a viable alternative to current scientific research on the history of the universe.⁷

As in many other subjects, in Indian studies such conflicts can be solved without too much disruption: Vedic air-craft, Yogic miracles etc. were studied without examining its truth claims, but as a literary, social or other phenomenon. The problematic type of relativism comes in when we give up the scientific truth claim entirely rather than suspend it temporarily, or in certain circumstances. We can accept and work on the assumption that the group we are studying believes that the Bible was written by and is thus literally the work of God, but as far as practical and scientific

² Heidrun Brückner and Karin Steiner have recently expressed their commitment not to leave the interpretation of the history of Indology to scholars outside the field: “[...] die Rückgewinnung der Deutungshoheit über diese sind unverzichtbar [...]” In their introduction to: *200 Jahre Indienforschung - Geschichte(n), Netzwerke, Diskurse*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz 2012, p. 6.

³ See Patrick Olivelle: “Material Culture and Philology: Semantics of Mining in Ancient India.” In *JAOS* 132.1 (2012), p. 23.

⁴ For examples, see Reinhold Grünendahl: “Post-philological Gestures – ‘Deconstructing’ Textual Criticism.” In: *WZKS* 52-53 (2009-2010), p. 17-27.

⁵ I am not talking here of the non-philological disciplines in the study of what is now called an “area”, since they play no role in what follows.

⁶ For the critique of this position, see Sokal as quoted below.

⁷ This point is made by the New York based physicist Sokal, see below.

questions are concerned we assume human authors at work and therefore consider textual criticism a valid method. Theologians of earlier centuries have not, and fundamentalists of the present may not, agree and this is why different philologies, or indeed “Religionswissenschaft” (contrary to some forms of “religious studies”), have freed themselves from the embrace of belief systems, and become a secular discipline.

In (Indian) philology, as in law, in many cases truth cannot possibly be relative: the identity of a murderer may be unknown, doubtful, but it is not relative to the observer. We can only distinguish between facts we can establish beyond any reasonable doubt (as the date of Varāhamihira), questions that have to remain open in absence of sufficient evidence (the exact date of the Buddha), and religious beliefs (the law of karma), which we do not want to treat reductionistically by subjecting them to an inappropriate method of interpretation. It is, for instance, problematic to reduce religious visions of saints, take for instance Hildegard von Bingen, to physical or mental disorders or natural phenomena. And it is likewise absurd to declare the Native Americans’ own mythological account of the origin of man a scientific truth against anthropological evidence simply for supporting their political claims (that are in any case valid without them).⁸

On the basis of such reasonings it has mostly been possible in Indian philology to recognize pretence to learning, dilettantism or religious fanaticism. Max Lindenau’s work on Bhāsa was acknowledged as a contribution to Indological research, but when he gave a lecture in Marburg about the occultist connections between the New Testament and Buddhism, he was dismissed from university.⁹ In other words, with sober philology as a common ground, it is often not difficult to tell genuine research from pseudo-science. An Indologist with a decent training is prepared to recognize for instance whether a new decipherment of the Indus script is academically sound or whether someone without adequate training has tried for whatever reason to venture into Indology.

⁸ This interesting example is given by Sokal.

⁹ See Jürgen Hanneder: *Indologie im Umbruch. Zur Geschichte des Faches in Marburg 1845-1945. Antrittsvorlesung*. München: Kirchheim Verlag 2010 (Indologica Marpurgen-sia 1), p. 30-32.

An interesting scientific scandal in another field has more recently shown that relativism has opened wide the door to a new academic dilettantism. One possible outcome of the loss of clear criteria of what one's own discipline is and entails is exemplified in the famous "Social Text affair".¹⁰ Here a physicist assembled material from fashionable studies on the sociology of science in such a convincing manner that the editors of the journal *Social Text* accepted his piece of writing, failing to grasp that it was a parody, into which he had purposely planted absurd errors. In a complementary study Sokal and a colleague have analyzed mathematical examples and arguments in the writings of a series of influential French authors, as Lacan, Baudrillard and others and exposed their pretence to interdisciplinary learning to impress their unsuspecting readers.¹¹

But the "hoax" also showed that the failure was not individual, but collective, since it became clear that one academic discipline (sociology) had started its own multidisciplinary project (sociology of science) without sufficient grasp of the disciplinary side, the internal "discourse" of the subject of their study. It seems exact sciences like mathematics prove a difficult object for such relativistic treatment.

The pattern is interesting for other fields. Dilettante intrusions start on the assumption that an outsider can better determine the position of one subject's methodology with respect to that of others (which may be true in some cases), but are often combined with an inadequate understanding of those methods, which renders the whole exercise futile from the perspective of the subject involved. From the perspective of such an analysis from a supposedly superior level, a thorough understanding of the methods of the subject – which are after all thought to be no more than a discourse limited to a specific peer group – is of course of only moderate interest. The adherents of the subject beg to differ. In the field of mathematics the proof that an author has no clue what he is talking about is, as we learn from Sokal,¹² not too difficult. Sanskrit

¹⁰ See Alan Sokal: *Beyond the Hoax. Science, Philosophy and Culture*. Oxford University Press 2008.

¹¹ Alan Sokal and Jean Bricmont: *Fashionable Nonsense. Postmodern Intellectuals' Abuse of Science*. New York: Picador 1998.

¹² See below.

Philology is in this respect like an exact science.

Take the following passage from a review by Vishva Adluri of a work by Angelika Malinar on the *Bhagavadgītā*, where the correct interpretation of the compound *rājavidyā* is discussed:¹³

In the introduction, Malinar claims that the “specific knowledge” Kṛṣṇa reveals “is called *rājavidyā*, the “knowledge of kings” or royal knowledge” (12; cf. also 145)—a grammatically questionable translation. Compounds of the form *rāja-* (e.g., *rāja-danta*) are best translated as “best of” or “highest.” Pāṇini *sūtra* 2.2.3 (*rajadantādiṣu param*) applies here. The usual order is inverted in *rāja-* compounds and the *upasarjana* moves to the end. Accordingly, *rājadanta* is not “the tooth of kings” but “eyetooth.” *Rājavidyā* should be translated as “the best of knowledges” rather than as “the knowledge of kings,” as Malinar does.

A general reader, or one only superficially acquainted with Sanskrit philology, will get the impression that the author has committed a grammatical error that can be solved by referring to the grammar of Pāṇini in the way the reviewer does. But an expert can spot immediately that Pāṇini is quoted here only to bedazzle the unsuspecting reader. Firstly *Sūtra* 2.2.31 (not 3) of the *Aṣṭādhyāyī* does not stipulate that compounds starting in *rāja-* have an inversion of their components, but merely that the items in the list (*gaṇa*) that starts with *rājadanta* – a list with 59 items, in which no other starts in *rāja* – display such an irregularity. If we see this list as an example list (*ākṛtīgaṇa*) then other similar examples can be exceptionally formed, but no more. Everything else would be absurd, for – as a glance at a dictionary and Sanskritic common sense suggests – most compounds starting in *rāja-* presuppose no such inversion, as *rājakumāra* etc. etc.

As every student learns in the first year of Sanskrit, the interpretation of some compounds require careful weighing of arguments. Therefore the self-confidence in this interpretation by the reviewer can be taken as an indication that he has not mastered even basic Sanskrit. What is worse, while charging others with not taking notice of the indigenous

¹³ *The Bhagavadgita: Doctrines and Contexts*. By Angelika Malinar. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007. Reviewed by Vishva Adluri in: *History of Religions* 50.1 (2010), p. 104.

interpretations of Indian texts,¹⁴ he remains utterly ignorant of the fact that the many commentaries on the passage are here in disagreement. And to his lack of expertise in Sanskrit he adds one in Indological secondary literature. Had he not arrogantly rejected – the second part of this article explains why this is the case – a review of the same work a decade earlier,¹⁵ he would have found the interpretations of the compound by classical Indian commentators neatly analyzed and categorized. He would have noticed, what every beginning student of Sanskrit might expect, namely, that there is no single interpretation of *rājavidyā*, on the contrary one finds commentators on the passage explaining a variety of grammatically viable resolutions of the compound, as *rājā vidyānām*, *rājñām vidyā* and even *rājā cāsau vidyā ca*.

Of course, such indications of philological failure should not be blown out of proportion.¹⁶ But in the case at hand, this is only the beginning. Take, for instance, the author's apodictic introduction to a new interpretation of the *Mahābhārata*: "The *Mahābhārata* addresses the individual reader. This has important methodological consequences for the way we read the text: it cannot become the object of a generalizing analysis that attempts to find things that are 'objectively' true in it. The methods of historiography and the historico-critical human sciences (Geisteswissenschaften), themselves modeled on those of the positive sciences, cannot apply here."¹⁷ Or: "The Cartesian approach to the *Mahābhārata* contrasts sharply with the Indian approach. The Indian approach does not recognize the Cartesian distinction between *res cogitans* and *res extensa*."¹⁸ Especially in view of his inability to interpret Sanskrit texts, his plea for an Indian approach cannot be taken too seriously. The Indian approach to the *Mahābhārata* is contained in works, for which a decent knowledge of Sanskrit is required. As long as his so-

¹⁴ See below.

¹⁵ Walter Slaje's review of the same work in: *Studien zur Indologie und Iranistik* 22 (1999), p. 131-166.

¹⁶ Especially since Sanskritists have a reputation of doing that, as we learn from the conflict of Max Müller with Böhtlingk, Roth and Whitney, where a desperate publisher wrote: "[...] da die Herren Sanskritisten zornige Leute sind, die gerne aus einer Mücke einen Elefanten machen [...]" See the article of Agnes Stache-Weiske in *200 Jahre Indienforschung – Geschichte(n), Netzwerke, Diskurse*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz 2012, p. 85.

¹⁷ Vishva Adluri: *Sacrificial Ontology and Human Destiny in the Mahābhārata*. Unpublished version of January 2009 sent to me by the author, p. 33.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 37.

called “Indian approach” contains speculations like the following, we need not deal with it in depth: “The *Mahābhārata* itself explicitly indicates that the later narrative is a meta-text: it refers to Utanka’s teacher, Veda, as the *upādhyāya* (teacher), a possible play on *upa-adhyāya*. *Upa* means “above”, or “meta”, *adhyāya* means chapter.”¹⁹ No further explanation for such an interpretation which exposes its maker as a philological dilettante is required here.

While the Sanskritist may work according to the dictum *mūle hate sarvaṃ hatam*,²⁰ and dismiss the rest, we may enquire whether these again are singular instances, and whether there is something substantial beyond the basics of Sanskrit Studies. So let us see his new methodological principles for studying the *Mahābhārata*: “1. The philosophical approach to the text constitutes the most universal hermeneutic horizon possible for reading it; and 2. The reason for taking the text to be a unified whole, ultimately, is not based on philological arguments, but on the unity of this horizon. Because the *Mahābhārata*’s unity is a philosophical, an a priori unity, it can only be challenged at the level of a philosophical refutation of this unity.”²¹

In his conclusion he goes even further in saying:

1. The *Mahābhārata* expresses neither a “naive” nor a “primitive” belief in the gods. It is self-consciously aware of their disappearance and this presents a philosophical response to the problem. [...] 5. The project of self-knowledge forces us to distinguish between two rationalities: calculative, transactional rationality and universal, transformative rationality. 6. The former is based upon a fundamental secularism inherent to much of contemporary *Mahābhārata* scholarship. 7. This view proves to be untenable, since the *Mahābhārata* is a work of the Spirit. [...] 11. The proper approach to the text thus proves to be an attitude of philosophical piety. One needs to be initiated into the text; it will not disclose its secrets to the researcher who approaches it without the proper respect.²²

At this point the conclusion is inevitable that here someone with a rather moderate knowledge of the subject has found his own ways to

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 282.

²⁰ This, by the way, is the second sentence in the examples in Stenzler’s famous beginner’s grammar for Sanskrit.

²¹ Ibid., p. 41.

²² Ibid., p. 42f.

pretend an expertise that reaches far beyond his peers, even beyond “Geisteswissenschaft” itself.

Prejudice

To this we may add another oddity of the case. Adluri has one recurring theme in his more recent writings. Apparently he has identified the very school that has got it all wrong as “German Indology”. This seems to have become a veritable obsession he imagines to share with many others. In a brief book review, where he states “With this book, Nicholson joins the growing chorus of scholars aware of the problems with German Indological scholarship and its hegemonic domination of Indian studies”,²³ he uses the adjective “German” eighteen times.

In contemporary American writings of post-colonial persuasion the adjective “German” has a similar tinge as in Hollywood blockbusters, and rightly used is guaranteed to elicit laughter, or horror. This is especially true for books about “orientalism”, a field that has attracted a large crowd of writers from interdisciplinary and even distant fields of study. What is meant by German in “German Indology” is, however, not as obvious as it seems. Of course, one could identify a variety of factors (place of birth, mother tongue, academic training) that make a scholar of Sanskrit a “German Indologist”, but usually one of these factors is considered sufficient for awarding the title, for if we demand all of them, the often quoted “German Indologists” could not be thus named. Many had no German parents, no German passport, were not working in Germany etc. For example, Böhtlingk studied in Germany, but was never German by nationality and lived elsewhere for most of his life. His teacher Lassen was Norwegian. Winternitz and Strauss were living within the Jewish academic community of Prague, but teaching at the “German University” there. Austrian Indologists are in these works as a rule regarded as “German Indologists” in the negative sense of the world. But if language is the main criterium, then Max Müller ceases to be a German Indologist. If training in Germany is crucial, then Charles

²³ Vishwa Adluri, Review of *Unifying Hinduism: Philosophy and Identity in Hindu Intellectual History* by Andrew J. Nicholson, Humanities and Social Sciences Online (H-Net), 22nd March 2012, <http://www.h-net.org/reviews/showrev.php?id=32207>.

Rockwell Lanman or even Angelo de Gubernatis could be counted. Thus, in fact, the category “German Indology” is one with open or arbitrary boundaries, and for this reason, to be made a member of it, another of the criteria that are generally associated with Germany or invoked in the genre of orientalist writings²⁴ has to be present. On the contrary, in the case of Indologists that are not German, racist or antisemitic ideas do not enter the equation. An absurd case is – as Grünendahl has recently shown²⁵ – Oldenberg, who is castigated for views that he most probably picked up from, at least shared with his British mentor Rhys Davids, who – lacking the “German” context – is not thus indicted.

Astonishingly, authors who are usually ready to deconstruct the attribution of so-called essences to Asian cultures by former generations of “German” Indologists, have apparently no problem with understanding an essence of “German culture” that allows them to say with confidence who is German and who is not. It is, of course, a safe game and therefore a field, in which the aspiring post-colonialist can exercise his urge to make a point: while the allegation of a complicity with nazism is sure to strike a chord, even when lacking in evidence,²⁶ any defense can rhetorically be turned into a proof of the allegation.

This being said about a wide-spread North-American perception of “German Indology”, one ought to note that there is a considerable ambivalence. American Indology, which has its roots in several European academic cultures, seems to quarrel with them from time to time, and within this context the question of “German Indology” within North-American academia is understood best.²⁷ But for one trying to score academically, to write about German Orientalism is a field like no other, for without great demands on one’s historical knowledge one can easily make politically correct claims with minimal chances of criticism.

²⁴ “For English readers today who associate Germany principally with horrendous crimes against humanity and National Socialism [...]” . Edward W. Said: *Humanism and Democratic Criticism*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan 2004, p. 94f.

²⁵ “History in the Making: On Sheldon Pollock’s “NS Indology” and Vishwa Adluri’s “Pride and Prejudice”. In: *International Journal of Hindu Studies* 16.2 (2012), p. 29.

²⁶ Grünendahl has provided ample evidence for this in his various articles.

²⁷ This is a perspective introduced by Robert Goldman in his introduction “Indologies: German and Other” to *Sanskrit and ‘Orientalism’: Indology and Comparative Linguistics in Germany, 1750-1958*. Edited by Douglas T. McGetchin, Peter K.J. Park and Damodar SarDesai, Manohar, 2004.

The case of Stuchlik and his book on Frauwallner is a good example. Although lacking in many respects²⁸ it was published by the Austrian Academy, since a rejection would have laid them bare to political criticism. It is thus not astonishing that Adluri too should have recently identified his enemies as “German”. In his “Pride and Prejudice: Orientalism and German Indology”,²⁹ he has tried – while feeding on Pollock – to defend the thesis of an intrinsic connection of German Indology with NS ideology. In short, Adluri subscribes to the view that there is a “complicity of Indology in National Socialism”,³⁰ and immunizes his position by claiming that to doubt this view is in itself proof that this complicity is not over.³¹

Before going into few details, one ought to note that the more academic part of Adluri’s problems with Indology can be viewed as a simple reenactment of the quarrel between the two camps of Homeric studies as applied to Indian texts.³² With queer arguments Adluri tries to be on the side of those who think that the texts as given or transmitted in the Indian tradition have to be made sense of, against those who are more interested in the prehistory of texts, their strata etc., with his own interests being mostly limited to the *Mahābhārata*. Surely, there are valid arguments for and against both positions, at least the present writer considers it meaningless to take sides, simply for the reason that a vulgata text, whatever its origin – if it can be known at all – of course has a life of its own, and deserves being studied in its own right, but that view does not rule out a study of its history by applying the method of textual criticism to it. For Adluri this conflict is an ideological one, with

²⁸ See only the most recent review by Rüdiger Schmitt: “Ist ‘arisch’ heute nur noch als Vokabel des Nationalsozialismus zu verstehen? Zu einem neuen Buch über den Indologen Erich Frauwallner.” In: *Philologia Fenno-Ugrica* 166-17 (2010-2011), p. 49-64. The reviewer goes as far as to doubt even Stuchlik’s archival work because of his “Voreingenommenheit und des Mangels an Objektivität, die Stuchlik nicht gerade zum Erforscher der Zeitgeschichte prädestinieren” (p. 62). His main argument he considers as “völlig gescheitert” (ibid.).

²⁹ *International Journal of Hindu Studies* 15.3 (2011), p. 253-292.

³⁰ Op. Cit., p. 258. Here, once, the adjective German is missing, but implied.

³¹ “Indeed, Grünendahl’s overhasty and unthinking reaction suggests that Pollock’s analysis might be profitably extended forward to German Indology even in its post-war period.” (op. cit., p. 259)

³² It should be remembered that by training he is a philosopher with interests in the presocratic authors, not an Indologist.

German (as expected) Indologists occupying one side of the spectrum,³³ but he tries to go further than his predecessors by calling the works of some Indologists simply “Nazi scholarship”.³⁴ It is difficult to understand why a student of German philosophy from the prestigious New York based *New School of Social Research*, which has been always proud of its famous German emigrants, can entertain such a one-dimensional view of German academia.

I will not go into the many details of willful misinterpretations of my own work, only one instance that is revealing: my critique of Malinar for excluding indigenous commentaries – to which Adluri in other circumstances would surely have agreed – he comments as: “Remarkably, Hanneder does not fault Malinar for her sweeping gesture of excluding all Indian commentators on the specious grounds that they are inconsistent and biased, but for not making an example of them as inconsistent and biased! From his perspective, German scholars need only take note of Indian commentators to show that they are wrong.” (Ibid., p. 264) The reader of the original³⁵ will notice that I am saying something quite different.³⁶

³³ Writing on the *Bhagavadgītā*, he states: “Thus, whereas German commentators freely tailored the text to their particular polemical or ideological ends, Indian commentators all acknowledge a roughly 700-verse text as authoritative.” A few lines later we read: “Von Stietencron’s gross generalization typifies the deficient historical consciousness that, according to Pollock, fatally impaired Indology’s capacity for self-reflection.” Ibid., p.263.

³⁴ “To my knowledge, no German reviewer has called attention to the glaring contradiction between uncritically repeating Nazi scholarship and yet excluding Indian scholarship on the grounds that it is not objective.” Ibid., p. 263. Also in public letters he is ready to allege such connections: “I cannot imagine that in the 21st century, this form of open support for Nazism and academic bullying and censorship can occur without any compunction at a university such as Marburg.” (Open letter to the faculty of foreign philologies dated 24.4.12).

³⁵ I quote from my review: “Obgleich angesichts des Umfangs völlig verständlich, ist ein möglicher methodischer Schwachpunkt der systematische Ausschluß der klassischen indischen Kommentartradition (p. 22; über die Sekundärliteratur wird jedoch eine Auswahl miteinbezogen, p. 62). Denn einer tendenziösen Interpretation durch einheimische Kommentatoren kann man wohl kaum durch deren Ausschluß begegnen; andernfalls setzt man sich der Gefahr aus, mit der einheimischen Rezeption auch den spezifisch indischen “Verständnishorizont” auszublenden, der eventuell historisch Richtiges bewahrt.” ZDMG 151.1 (2001), S. 240.

³⁶ A similar diagnosis is reached by Grünendahl, who says that “in most cases the discrepancy between Adluri’s charge and what I actually wrote is evident to anyone who cares to follow up his references to my articles.” Op. cit., p. 8.

What makes it furthermore difficult to take his arguments very seriously is his general ignorance of the history of Indology. He says: “The history of reception of Hauer’s thought suggests that many other Indologists were receptive to his ideas.”³⁷ This merely shows that he has not read or understood the relevant literature. The fact is that they were mostly not, and this has been shown already, in a work Adluri quotes, but chooses to ignore here.³⁸ But while Ruben wrote in 1934 that Hauer’s new “Indology” was religiously motivated,³⁹ and therefore not to be taken seriously, we read still in 1949 that “J.W. Hauer, a Sanskrit scholar who served for some years as a missionary in India, gives to the Gītā a central place in German faith.”⁴⁰ Apparently it was difficult for an outsider to discern that this statement was part of Hauer’s own brand of an “Aryan” religion, one for which he found no followers amongst German Indologists. Adluri prefers to be unaware of such disturbances of his simplistic theories, since nothing is to disturb the overall picture of a supposedly monolithic German Indology.

And finally: his general ignorance of Indological personalia has not kept Adluri from making absurd connections. Although he says that “Ad hominem attacks appear to be accepted practice in German Indology”,⁴¹ he states the very same page: “Interestingly, Hanneder is Slaje’s student, so that there would appear to be a consistent line one can trace from Frauwallner to Slaje to Hanneder.”⁴² It was apparently too tempting to bring two contemporary scholars into connection with the Austrian Sanskritist, who he thinks has just been exposed as a NS-Indologist. This, above all, shows Adluri’s ignorance about the actual students of Frauwallner: Slaje is not one of them, actually he never even met him, and just by being Austrian does not automatically become

³⁷ Op. cit., p. 264.

³⁸ See Jürgen Hanneder: *Indologie im Umbruch. Zur Geschichte des Faches in Marburg 1845–1945. Antrittsvorlesung*. München: Kirchheim Verlag 2010 (*Indologica Marburgensia* 1), p. 55-57.

³⁹ “Hauer treibt seine Indologie ja nicht aus philologischem oder historischem Interesse, sondern aus religiösem”. Review in *ZDMG* 87 (1934), p. 89.

⁴⁰ The statement was made by the former Oxford professor of Indian Religion and Ethics S. Radhakrishnan in his *The Bhagavadgita*, London: George Allen and Unwin 1949, p. 11.

⁴¹ Op. cit., p. 260.

⁴² Op. cit., p. 282.

one.⁴³ If such accusations were not directed against the “bad guys”, the country that stands for “crimes against humanity” (Said), one would not hesitate to call it an extreme case of prejudice, or a form of academical racism.

Further analysis of contents is, I think, unnecessary, but one wonders about the context of this strange case. Is it merely an awkward form of pretence for Indological learning combined with a prejudice against the label “German”, variously applied to what one dislikes. Or is it like a reverse version of Sokal’s Hoax an attempt to prove that, like the editors of the journal *Social Text* who accepted a mock article, German Indology has lost its critical acumen? The latter conclusion is not as unlikely as it seems. Adluri has recently announced a monographical work against German Indology to appear soon,⁴⁴ while at the same time he earned a Ph.D. in Indology from Marburg University. Since the candidate had insulted “German Indology” as a whole, all German (German speaking?) Indological scholars were excluded, in order to avoid possible bias. First Indological reactions against Adluri’s strange ideas have been unambiguous.⁴⁵ The latest just appeared in *Zeitschrift für Südasiestudien* 28 (2012), where Hans Harder, Angelika Malinar and Thomas Oberlies, in an editorial note on fighting “discrimination, racism and sexism”, reject his work on the following grounds:

It is very necessary to critically examine the ideological orientations of scholarship, but not to use a thin body of dispersed evidence to shower polemics on a whole discipline in German academia along with its methodology. This so happened in certain essays that have latterly appeared in academic journals (see Volume 19. no.2, Spring 2011, of the *Journal of Vaishnava Studies* and Volume 15 no.1

⁴³ Of course, Adluri would not know my main academical teachers, who are Friedrich Wilhelm (Munich), Friedrich Sprockhoff (Bochum), Claus Vogel (Bonn), Tilak Raj Chopra (Bonn), Michael Hahn (Marburg), Alexis Sanderson (Oxford). Only as a post-doc I worked in the *Mokṣopāya* project supervised by Walter Slaje in Halle and have worked with him in various projects since. The second generation of my “teachers” (none of whom I ever met) would thus not include Frauwallner, but for instance Ruben, von Glasenapp, Nobel etc. – whatever that means.

⁴⁴ *The Nay Science*. Announced as to appear in Oxford University Press 2012, in which he promises “an analysis of the deep Lutheran resentment this recurring Gestalt of German epic scholarship reveals” (*Journal of Vaishnava Studies* 19.2 (2010), p.21.). For this “Gestalt”, that is, German scholarship on the Indian epic, he quotes Goldstücker, who – being Jewish – would probably not have been too happy with this absurdly uninformed allegation.

⁴⁵ See Grünendahl as quoted above.

of the *International Journal of Hindu Studies*). And there is more to come, since two of the offending authors have announced their intention to publish a monograph to be titled: *The Nay Science: A History of German Indology*.

These defamatory excesses are pegged to a critique of a certain methodology for analyzing texts – what has come to be known as textual criticism. But at bottom, German Indology, understood as some timeless, essentialized entity, is the sole target of these denigrations. This is made abundantly clear by the fact that they exempt, say, American and British Indologists from their torrents of abuse, although the methodology of these authors is not different. Scholarly controversy is one thing – polemics distorting the proclaimed opponent’s views something rather different. We may well ask: how could essays of this calibre ever be published in the above journals?

Those that fall prey to this mixture of pretence and prejudice – more likely in neighboring fields than in Sanskrit philology itself – may later have to bear the same question that was put to the editors of *Social Text* in a review:

“How does it feel being duped by the half-educated?”⁴⁶

Supplement by Michael Hahn

In addition to the remarks by Jürgen Hanneder I would like to single out the following two points in relation to the paper of Dr. Adluri. It seems that he, in the same vague and inaccurate manner rightly criticized by Juergen Hanneder, wishes to place me in the *paramparā* of “Nazi Indology” whatever this *śāśāṅga* or *vandhyāputra* may be. Not only in view of my published writings, but also in view of my family background this is the most absurd and baseless allegation I can think of. The recommendation of the legal department of the Philipps University Marburg to the Dean of the Faculty of Foreign Languages (Fachbereich Fremdsprachliche Philologien) to release me from the task as supervisor and reviewer of Dr. Adluri’s thesis can, I believe, be defended under these very specific circumstances. However, whether it

⁴⁶ Quoted in Sokal: *Beyond the Hoax*, p. 149.

was wise, to exclude, on the same grounds, as reviewers not only those contemporary German indologists mentioned in Dr. Adluri's diatribe against "German Indology," but all indologists currently teaching at German universities may be doubted.

While this surely is a very convenient means – especially for someone who wishes to receive academic distinctions in a tradition he so fervently attacks – to sort out unwanted reviewers, the docility of the other parties involved remains puzzling.