



PROJECT MUSE®

Self-Othering in German Orientalism: The Case of Friedrich Schlegel

Nicholas A. Germana

The Comparatist, Volume 34, May 2010, pp. 80-94 (Article)

Published by The University of North Carolina Press
DOI: 10.1353/com.0.0075



➔ For additional information about this article
<http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/com/summary/v034/34.germana.html>

Self-Othering in German Orientalism

The Case of Friedrich Schlegel

In the 1960s and '70s, a number of scholars began to pay careful attention to German cultural constructions of the "Orient" in the literary and philosophical works from the Baroque period to Romanticism.¹ However, with the publication of *Orientalism* (1978), Edward Said's analytical framework became, for good or ill, the dominant scholarly paradigm. In the wake of the appearance of Said's volume, a decade or more passed before the scholarship on popular or academic Orientalism in Germany attempted to move beyond what Said had initially said on the subject. (As we shall see, Said himself had little else to say on the topic in the years following the first appearance of *Orientalism*.) The purpose of this essay is to consider the exceptionalism of German Orientalism, one that employs imagery of the Orient for very different purposes than the French and British variants. The central question under consideration regards the *utility* of this imagery in the tradition of German Orientalism. The construction of the idea of the Orient in German thought and literature in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, I argue, did not allow German thinkers to identify with the dominant powers of western Europe, but rather with the Oriental Other. In other words, they were engaged in a process of self-Othering.

I do not wish to suggest that the German identification with the Asian Other had any real substance beyond the "imaginative geography" (to use a Saidian phrase), or that it was necessarily less nefarious than the images of the Orient constructed by their French and British counterparts. One hesitates to describe German Orientalism as being "special" in light of the imposing tradition of arguments over the *Sonderweg* thesis (though, obviously, the choice of this adjective is not unintentional). While I contend that German Orientalism was, in a significant way, "special," it would be going too far to say that it was entirely unique. New light might be shed on a different variant of Orientalism by comparing the German phenomenon with Irish Orientalism, as described by Joseph Lennon: "[t]o study Irish writings on the Orient . . . is also to study Irish cultural narratives of antiquity, Celticism, and nation" (xvii, xviii). In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, at least, the same could be said of German intellectuals and their writings on India—Celticism being easily replaced with "Germanness"—and for similar, though obviously far from identical, reasons.

Before proceeding any further, it is perhaps best to provide an explanation of what is intended here by the term “self-Othering.” As we shall see, numerous German thinkers of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries sought to establish a German national identity that they envisioned as “oriental,” in contrast to classical or “occidental.” The image of the Orient with which they identified was, of course, one of their own making. To argue that these German thinkers identified with the oriental victims of western imperialism is not to argue that they were, in reality, such victims. Nor is it to argue that this identification came as a result of any genuine engagement with or understanding of the “Other” with whom they sought to identify. Self-Othering, as it is described below, was a curious rhetorical strategy which involved *two* distinct forms or acts of Othering—imaginative constructions of the oriental Other with whom one could identify and the western imperial Other, against whom one was seeking to construct an identity.² Both the Indian and western European Others could be made to serve as the ideal mirrors for thinkers who wished to see themselves, and their country, at twice their natural size.

As a rhetorical strategy, self-Othering has some noteworthy historical precedents in Michel de Montaigne’s essay “On Cannibals” and Bartolomé de Las Casas’s *Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies*, both composed in the sixteenth century. Montaigne was writing in reaction to the devastation of the Wars of Religion in France, while Las Casas was issuing his condemnation of the inhumanity of Spanish imperialism. Both authors, however, were taking advantage of the blank canvas that had been provided by the New World in order to level their critiques of contemporary European society. Montaigne declares that Brazilians have no words for lies, treason, dissimulation, avarice, envy, slander, or forgiveness (235–36). They inhabit a paradise of sexual freedom, a world apart from the bastardized “corrupt taste” of a society that has fallen so far away from the ideal of a natural life (234). Las Casas’s natives are similarly idyllic. They are “without malice or guile” and are “[n]ever quarrelsome or belligerent or boisterous.” They are “gentle lambs” whose modest diet is reminiscent of the “Desert Fathers” (9–11). They are ideal Christians, while the Spanish themselves assume the role of barbarians.

These are ideal representations, not anthropological studies. The inhabitants of the New World do not exist by or for themselves, but as projections of European desires, forebodings, or self-loathing. The example of Las Casas is especially significant in the context of German Romantic thought because of his condemnation of German cruelties in the New World, a heated subject that arose with the publication of his *Short Account* in German translation in 1790 (Zantop 22–30). The Romantics’ great predecessor, Johann Gottfried Herder, deployed Las Casas for his own anti-imperialist (and pro-German) purposes in the *Humanitätsbriefe* of 1797 (*Sämtliche Werke* VIII 516). As we will see, the mythical image of India was similarly

employed by Friedrich Schlegel and others in order to provide the starkest possible contrast between oriental Germany and the corrupting, barbarous West.

The difficulty of dealing with German Orientalism begins, naturally enough, with Said himself. In the Introduction to *Orientalism*, he wrote that despite the fact that by about 1830

German scholarship had fully attained its European pre-eminence . . . at no time in German scholarship during the first two-thirds of the nineteenth century could a close partnership have developed between Orientalists and a protracted sustained *national* interest in the Orient. There was nothing in Germany to correspond to the Anglo-French presence in India, the Levant, North Africa. (19)

“What German Oriental scholarship did,” he continued, “was to refine and elaborate techniques whose application was to texts, myths, ideas, and languages almost literally gathered from the Orient by imperial Britain and France” (19). If there could be no “sustained *national* interest” in the Orient; if “there was nothing in Germany to correspond to the Anglo-French presence in India, the Levant, North Africa,” how then did German Orientalism fit into Said’s larger thesis? Said continued, “what German Orientalism had in common with Anglo-French and latter American Orientalism was a kind of intellectual *authority* over the Orient within Western culture. This authority must in large part be the subject of any description of Orientalism, and it is so in this study” (19).

However, curiously, it was not. Limited commentary on Herder, Friedrich Schlegel, and Franz Bopp rarely rises to the level of the kind of analysis he gives to French and English sources. The German thinker of this era that Said pays the most attention to is Goethe, whose role in what Schwab calls the “Oriental Renaissance” was, to be generous, minimal.³ This lack of engagement with German Orientalism did not go unnoticed.⁴ In 1986, Said responded to some of his critics at a conference at the University of Sussex:

I have grasped some of the problems and answers proposed by some of my critics, and because they strike me as useful in focusing an argument, these are the ones I shall be taking into account in the comments that follow. Others—like my exclusion of German Orientalism, which no one has given any reason for me to have *included*—have frankly struck me as superficial or trivial, and there seems no point in even responding to them. (“Orientalism Reconsidered” 346)

In his recent broad survey of and commentary on the literature of Orientalism, Daniel Martin Varisco, whose overall appraisal of Said’s work is generally laudatory, is sharply critical of his handling of German Orientalism. “[T]o suggest,” he writes, “that German Orientalism was, in effect, a byproduct of French scholarship is a careless error” (90). He concludes that “[a] frustrated critic might wonder if Said

omitted German Orientalism precisely to highlight the complicity of the academic discourse with imperialism on the ground à la France and Britain" (90). Indeed he or she might.

In light of this lacuna in Said's analysis, a number of scholars have attempted to take the next step by placing German Orientalism within the larger theoretical framework established by Said. Sheldon Pollock and Kamakshi Murti, whose arguments will not be recapitulated in detail here, have set forward variations on this Orientalist theme. Although Edwin Bryant did not seek to articulate his argument within Said's Orientalist framework, he did neatly sum up this line of argument when he wrote that comparative philology, pioneered in Germany, "offered certain German scholars an opportunity to compensate for their poor showing on the colonial scene" (29).

There are two scholars in particular whose arguments are noteworthy for taking the examination of German Orientalism in a slightly different and intriguing direction by drawing attention to the *identification* of many German thinkers with the victims of French and British imperialism. The first is the late Susanne Zantop, whose book *Colonial Fantasies* explores the fascinating history of German literary representations of the New World and its inhabitants. While not explicitly addressed to German Orientalism, Zantop's book applies and extends Said's central contention about the relationship between knowledge of and power over the Other, and does so quite successfully. One of Zantop's keenest insights pertains to the remarkable way in which numerous eighteenth century German thinkers, most notably Johann Gottfried Herder, sought to place "German negroes" alongside "the roasted Montezuma," "Hindus," and "quiet Ethiopians" in contrast to the conquering powers, who are "[b]urdened with guilt, blood, and sins/and gold and diamonds" (Zantop 95). (In his quest for spiritual kinship for the German *Volk*, Herder found an ideal match in the *Morgenländer* of ancient India.) Zantop concluded that "as German states are overrun by French revolutionary armies, (some) Germans discover their kinship with other 'enslaved' or 'colonized' peoples." She then turns toward a more straight-forwardly Saidian argument: "They see themselves as the abject other—a situation they seek to revert by imagining others whom they can in turn colonize. Both Germans' self-perception, and their perception of the 'nature' of others are thus a function of positionality within a global order understood as 'colonial'" (82). While this last point is undoubtedly correct, the question remains open as to where these Germans thinkers saw their own position in the colonial global order.

Todd Kontje also notes that "the very lack of a unified nation-state and the absence of empire contributed to the development of a peculiarly German Orientalism. German writers oscillated between identifying their country with the rest of Europe against the Orient and allying themselves with selected parts of the East

against the West" (2–3). This ambivalence about Germany's status as a "Western" country is not, however, a theme that Kontje follows up in any detail, but it is one worth pursuing. Liah Greenfield sees this ambivalence as being foundational for the development of German nationalism in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and while her analysis of German nationalism is not without its problems (not the least of which is the title to her chapter on the subject—"The Final Solution of Infinite Longing"), she touches on something of significance. She argues that "the moment Germans turned to national identity and acquired national pride, this pride was wounded, and not by Napoleonic conquest alone, but rather by the miserable and laughable state of their society, rendered conspicuous by the proximity of the West. Their hatred toward the West was fed by the very fact that the West existed" (372–73).

Neither Kontje nor Greenfield expand on this ambivalence about Germany's liminal position in the colonial global order, but understanding this ambivalence is critical to an examination of the origins of German Orientalism, particularly with regard to the Indic Orient, among the Romantics of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.⁵ It is not insignificant that August Wilhelm Schlegel proudly proclaimed that "[i]f the regeneration of the human species started in the East, Germany must be considered the Orient of Europe" (37). Certainly there is one way to read such a statement, as offered by Zantop, Kontje, and Murti—that German identification with India was in its own way a power-play. As Kontje writes, "From this perspective, the Germans had no need to conquer and colonize eastern lands, for they were already part of a greater Indo-European whole" (8). Conquest took place by other means. However, a vital question remains: what is the *utility*, the usefulness of such an image? In the face of political, military, and economic humiliation at the hands of the French, how could such identification with the victorious imperial western powers provide any foundation for a sense of German identity? On the contrary, it was by distancing themselves from the West, by proclaiming, in the words of Adam Müller (1806) that German *Kultur* was "Asiatic"—as opposed to the rest of Europe which was "Greek"—that the Romantics sought to establish Germany's uniqueness and preeminence (Figueira 2002: 31–34; Müller 55; Kontje 89–91).

One of the central contentions of Said's argument is the claim that "the Orient has helped define Europe (or the West) as its contrasting image, idea, personality, experience" (*Orientalism* 1–2). In the case of numerous German Indophiles of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries this speculation simply does not hold true. The remarkable degree of *identification* of German thinkers with India has already been suggested and verified in considerable detail with regard to Herder, Adam Müller, and Joseph Görres among others. In the following discussion I will focus on the case of Friedrich Schlegel. With the publication of his *Über die Sprache und Weisheit der Indier* [*On the Language and Wisdom of the Indians*] in

1808, Schlegel emerged as the first serious student of Sanskrit and Indian thought in Germany. Schlegel is a particularly important figure since his arguments in that essay opened the door to the establishment of Sanskrit studies and academic Indology in Germany. It is also worth adding, though it will not come in for consideration here, that Schlegel, far more than Herder before him, first introduced what we might call “racial” speculation into his writings on India—a precedent with a painful legacy.⁶

India first entered into Friedrich Schlegel’s thinking in the late 1790s, most likely as a result of the extraordinary popularity of Georg Forster’s translation of Kālidāsa’s drama Śakuntalā (1791), and the Indian themes developed in the work of his close friend Novalis. Along with Novalis, Schlegel’s primary interest in this period was the articulation of a strikingly bold conception of modern art and poetry, and it was in this context that India first struck him as a source of inspiration. Schlegel’s earliest interest in India was part of an aesthetic project—the “new bible” or new mythology—with only obliquely political implications. However, from the outset Schlegel was concerned with establishing an affinity, even a deeper connection between Oriental and German cultural traditions. In his *Gespräch über Poesie* [Dialogue on Poetry] (1799), he contended that after the fall of the Roman Empire, European literature had been resuscitated by the “heroic poetry” of the Middle Ages, a tradition that had its roots in the German people (*KFS* II 296). The “wild energy” of Gothic poetry was influenced, he claimed, by “charming fairytales of the Orient,” an influence introduced by contact with Arab culture. The admixture of these traditions (a theme that his brother would develop in his Berlin lectures four years later) flourished “on the southern coast of the Mediterranean [where] a merry trade of lovely songs and unusual stories, which also spread, now in this form, now in that, along with the Latin saints’ legends, worldly romances, praising love and arms” (296–97).⁷

Schlegel’s first reference to a cultural connection between Germany and the Orient is quite vague, and concerns Arabic poetic traditions rather than those from India. Like many of his contemporaries in the late eighteenth century, however, Schlegel’s conception of the Orient was in the process of shifting further eastward. Even in the same work, in the section called “Rede über die Mythologie” [Talk on Mythology], Schlegel made his first and perhaps still most famous direct reference to India and the central role it must play in the project of the new mythology. Modern western culture, including Christianity, needed an infusion of inspiration from mythological traditions from other cultures. “To accelerate the genesis of the new mythology,” he proclaimed,

the other mythologies must also be reawakened according to the measure of their profundity, their beauty, and their form. If only the treasures of the Orient were as accessible to us as those of antiquity. What new source of poetry could

then flow from India, if a few German artists with their universality and profundity of mind, with the genius for translation that is their own, had the opportunity that a nation growing ever more dull and brutal barely knows how to use. In the Orient, we must look for the highest Romanticism (*Im Orient müssen wir das höchste Romantische suchen*), and only when we can draw from the source, will the semblance of Southern passion that we find so charming in Spanish poetry perhaps appear to us Occidental (*abendländisch*) and sparse. (*KFSA II* 319–20; Willson, *German* 100–01)⁸

Just as important as his claims about the role of India in the new mythology in this passage is Schlegel's insistence on the unique suitability of Germans, with their "universality and profundity of mind," to serve as translators of the richness of Indian art and poetry. In this suitability, the Germans stood in stark contrast to "a nation growing ever more dull and brutal." This was doubtless the same nation that Schlegel accused elsewhere of imperiously spreading its "sickly mental malady of so-called good taste . . . over all the countries of Europe," namely France (*KFSA II* 302; Willson, *German* 94). From here it is a short step to August Wilhelm Schlegel's declaration that "Germany must be considered the Orient of Europe."

Worth noting too is Friedrich's contention that under the influence of oriental, and especially Indian, poetry, the new mythology would make even the most passionate (viz. Southern, Spanish) European poetry seem merely "Occidental and sparse." The identification is with the Oriental in opposition to the West—an identity Schlegel claims for his countrymen.

Despite references such as these, Schlegel's growing fascination with the Indic Orient continued to be more aesthetic than political until three major interrelated developments changed the course of his thinking radically—his move to Paris to study oriental languages, the political and military humiliation of the German states at the hands of Napoleon, and his move toward a conservative Catholicism. In 1802, Schlegel relocated to Paris to take up the study of Persian (his interest in the Orient was still quite vague). The following year, Schlegel made the acquaintance of the British naval officer Alexander Hamilton (detained in France as an enemy combatant). While in India, Hamilton had become expert in Sanskrit and served as a member of the pioneering Asiatic Society of Calcutta, co-founded by the jurist and linguistic scholar Sir William Jones. Schlegel quickly set himself a new goal, and he wrote to August Wilhelm in May of that year that he hoped that soon he would, with some assistance, be able to read Śakuntalā in the original Sanskrit (Willson, *Mythical Image* 210). His interest at this point would still seem to be with the romantic image of India contained in the *Gespräch über Poesie*.

It is difficult to say what specific events, if any, effected a turn in Schlegel's thinking in this Paris period. Following the defeat of Austria in 1800 and the Treaty

of Lunéville in 1801, the French military campaign in central Europe was relatively quiet until the formation of the Third Coalition in 1805. Nonetheless, as René Gérard points out, these were critical years in which Schlegel found in a combination of the Middle Ages, Catholicism, and the Orient an answer to some “uneasiness” that plagued him (88). By September of 1803 we see a new development in Schlegel’s interests. In a letter to his friend Ludwig Tieck, Schlegel reiterated his fascination with all things Indian. “Here is truly the source of all language,” he raved, “all ideas, and the history of the human spirit; *everything*, everything originated in India without exception” (Lohner 135–36). His mind, however, had begun to move in a new direction. He expressed increased interest in Tieck’s engagement with northern and ancient German studies. In particular, he inquired about Tieck’s plans to proceed with a detailed study of the *Nibelungen* literature.⁹ At the same time, August Wilhelm was in Berlin delivering an immensely influential series of lectures on the Middle Ages. In these lectures, the elder Schlegel articulated a more detailed argument about the cultural co-mingling of German and Arabic traditions, with a historically momentous effect—the emergence of a new *Einheitsprinzip* for modern European culture based on the combination of oriental religion and people of Norse stock (Höltenschmidt 181).¹⁰

In 1805, Friedrich Schlegel was on hiatus from his linguistic studies and was offering lectures on *Universalgeschichte* in Cologne. These lectures bear the unmistakable imprint of Schlegel’s new religious attitude, as he put forward speculations about such themes as the similarities between the Indian *Trimurti*¹¹ and the Christian concept of the Trinity. More to the point, however, are Schlegel’s increasingly bolder claims for the importance of medieval German culture and the connection between the German people and ancient India. A new agenda had clearly emerged. Schlegel’s more cosmopolitan, intellectually radical, aesthetic Romanticism had, by 1805, been replaced by an effort to ground German history and culture in a tradition of unimpeachable nobility and antiquity—Vedic India. The image, the “mythical image,” as A. Leslie Willson calls it, has changed (from wild, fantastic purveyors of “oriental fairytales” to the founders of civilization), but the function of the image had not. German culture was oriental, not classical or “occidental.”

In the Cologne lectures, Schlegel advanced a theory about the Indic origins of European civilization and culture that posited two main sources of transmission: cultural and physical. Rebutting the assertion of some that Egypt was the oldest, most cultivated human society (an assertion dating back to the seventeenth century and the works of the German Jesuit scholar Athanasius Kircher, especially his central work on Egyptology, *Oedipus Aegyptiacus*, 1652–54), Schlegel insisted that Egyptian “culture, religion, piety, cosmology, mythology, and political constitution” were in fact derived from India (*KFS* XIV 19). Herder had vaguely posited an oriental influence on northern European peoples, an influence that had helped shape

their character (*Sämtliche Werke* V 514). As we have seen, both Schlegel brothers had also made similar assertions—Friedrich in his *Gespräch über Poesie* of 1799, and August Wilhelm in his Berlin lectures in 1803. In the Cologne lectures, however, and again in *Über die Sprache*, Friedrich Schlegel laid out for the first time a specific theory about how such a transmission of Indic culture could have occurred. As a result of the influence of both Schlegels in this period, attempts to trace the history of this transmission became the order of the day, occupying, to varying degrees, Joseph Görres, Friedrich Creuzer, and the Grimm brothers (Williamson 78–84, 123–35; Germana, 2009: 147–66).

According to Schlegel, the spread of Indic culture—encompassing language, religion, and political institutions—occurred in two ways, both involving the migration of people from India west into the European continent. In one scenario, a relatively small numbers of migrants would form a colony, while in the other an entire people or large segment of the population would relocate (*KFSA XIV* 20). In the former case, cultural transmission would be less complete as the colony adapted itself to new conditions and cultural influences. The second form of migration resulted in a more thorough transmission of Indic culture accompanied by a significant racial presence, perhaps even dominance, in the new area (*KFSA XIV* 20). The Egyptians, he maintained, had also been influenced by some form of colonization from the Indic people rather than a full-scale migration. Because the cultural force of a small group of colonists was minimal, their influence on the shape of Egyptian culture would be more difficult to detect, though Schlegel believed that it would eventually be revealed through the study of Egyptian language (*KFSA XIV* 20–21; *KFSA VIII* 273).¹² (On this count, he was, of course, incorrect.)

In contrast to the Egyptians, the Germans presented the clearest case in Schlegel's mind of the transformative effects of wholesale migration. He speculated that a massive group of migrants, trekking from India through Persia, the Caucasus, and the region near the Caspian Sea had finally found a home in Scandinavia and north-central Europe (*KFSA XIV* 22–23). In addition to the demonstrable connections between Sanskrit and German, Schlegel argued that evidence of this migration could be found in Scandinavian sagas. He maintained that the events described in these sagas were genuinely historical depictions, and that only a people “who know nothing of history but politics” (*KFSA VIII* 291–93) (read: the French) could doubt their authenticity.¹³

In *Über die Sprache und Weisheit der Indier*, Schlegel reiterated and expanded upon these claims. Linguistic scholarship such as that of Sir William Jones demonstrated a clear historical relationship between Sanskrit and a number of European languages—including French and English—not just German. In his effort, then, to mark Germans off as different from other European peoples, as more genuinely

oriental in their culture and heritage, Schlegel had to explain that some qualitative difference existed between the migrations that brought Indic language and culture to northern Europe and to the south and west of the continent. And this he duly did. The migration that had so fundamentally shaped northern European culture had been the result of a great spiritual quest, the achievement of a civilized, heroic, and deeply spiritual people. By contrast, the migrations that moved into other parts of Europe had come via a different route at a later period and for different reasons. Traveling through Mesopotamia, Phoenicia, and Asia Minor, these migrants had likely been a group of degenerate barbarians, interested primarily in earthly wealth and conquest (*KFSA VIII* 283–85, 291–93).

Just as important in Schlegel's mind as the evidence of migration provided by an examination of languages, religions, and the "testimony" of heroic legends, was the perceived similarity between Indian and German political institutions. In the Cologne lectures, he had put forward a bold argument for the historical importance of medieval political structures, developed among the German peoples, that formed the foundation of feudalism. The nobility of this system, Schlegel argued, was clear evidence that the German tribes had not been barbarous savages, but were, on the contrary, the founders of modern European civilization (*KFSA XIV* 112–16).

Again we see that for Schlegel "*everything*, everything originated in India without exception" (Lohner 135–36). As Chen Tzoref-Ashkenazi rightly points out, it is no coincidence that it was at this same time, as Schlegel was "first present[ing] a comprehensive medievalist view of European history, that he also for the first time presented his hypothesis of the Indian origin of the Germans" (119). In *Über die Sprache und Weisheit der Indier*, Schlegel insisted that the roots of German feudalism could be found in the Indian caste system. This latter system, he insisted, was far superior to any form of social organization that existed elsewhere in the ancient world. (It did not go unnoticed by his critics that the Indian caste system was dominated by an elite priestly class.) Alexander the Great, arriving as a conqueror in India had been unable to grasp its significance. The caste system provided India with a unifying force that far surpassed any of the systems that prevailed in the Hellenic or Roman worlds (*KFSA VIII* 289). India's political institutions—and hence Germany's—were both older and more successful than the models to be found in the ancient world, and, by extension, among the heirs of that classical legacy.

Friedrich Schlegel's interest in India and his employment of the "mythical image" underwent profound transformation in the decade from 1798–1808, a transformation that has been remarkably underappreciated. Tzoref-Ashkenazi's essay on the nationalist aspects of *Über die Sprache und Weisheit der Indier* does a nice job drawing important connections between Schlegel's orientalist *opus magnum* and the Cologne lectures of 1805, but goes back no further. Suzanne Marchand's

recently published history of German Orientalism is even less interested in tracing the trajectory of Schlegel's Indomania, and focuses primarily on the evolution of his religious thought with little attention given to the correlation between this and his increasing nationalism.¹⁴ The shift from his early, vague, romantic Orientalism to his more earnest investigation into ancient Indian language and thought has been left unexplored.

In addition to the fact that his interest in India was, from the outset, tied directly to his idea of "Germany," the progression of Schlegel's thought in this decade is of significance for another critical reason—it marks the shift from mythology as a poetic project to genealogy (Rabault-Feuerhahn 66–79). These two facts are inseparable. It was Schlegel's efforts to define Germany as the oriental Other of Europe that led him to seek the roots of German culture in a great *Völkerwanderung*. What began as a vague notion about some kind of spiritual/cultural influence of the Orient on Germany became a more pressing concern for Schlegel from 1802 to 1808.¹⁵ In this respect he was not alone. Both his brother and good friend Ludwig Tieck were moving in the same direction, as would Achim von Arnim and Klemens Brentano (*Das Knaben Wunderhorn*, 1805), Joseph Görres (*Die deutschen Volksbücher*, 1807), and the Grimm brothers in the years that followed.¹⁶ In the face of national political and military humiliation, these and other thinkers struggled to anchor "Germanness" in a tradition that was older and nobler than the neo-classical culture they associated with France.

Why India? There are, of course, several reasons. Some scholars, such as Peter Park, Suzanne Marchand, and even Chen Tzoref-Ashkenazi are right to look to Schlegel's turn toward Catholicism. Tuska Benes has endeavored deconstruct the potent mixture of nationalism and Catholicism for Schlegel, who sought to "sacraliz[e] the nation" by demonstrating its historical connection to India (74).¹⁷ Another important factor that has been largely overlooked is the plasticity of the "mythical image." Detailed information about India was quite new and constantly being supplemented, and the image of India was more malleable than that of Greece or Rome. India also offered a more useful model for identification for another reason: by identifying with India, Friedrich Schlegel and like-minded Indophiles were able to define Germany not as part of the West, but in opposition to it. Under their pens, India did not provide Germans, in Said's words, a "contrasting image, idea, personality, experience." It was very much the opposite—the "mythical images" of India and Germany afforded these thinkers the opportunity to project the *West* as their "contrasting image, idea, personality, experience."

≈ Keene State College

NOTES

- 1 For example, René Gérard, *L'Orient et la Pensée Romantique Allemande* (1963); A. Leslie Willson, *A Mythical Image: The Ideal of India in German Romanticism* (1964); Gerald Ernest Paul Gillespie, *Daniel Casper von Lohenstein's Historical Tragedies* (1965); and Elida Maria Szarota, *Lohensteins Arminius als Zeitroman: Sichtweisen des Spätbarock* (1970). Also worthy of note in the pre-Said literature is Ernst Behler's essay "Das Indienbild der deutschen Romantik" (1968). Prior to Gérard's work, at least two dissertations had focused on German literary Orientalism: Paul T. Hoffman, "Der Indische und der deutsche Geist von Herder bis zur Romantik" (1915); and Paul Hultsch, "Der Orient in der deutschen Barockliteratur" (1936).
- 2 Virginia Woolf, in an entirely different context, has brilliantly described the self-deluding effect of this activity: "Women have served all these centuries as looking glasses possessing the magic and delicious power of reflecting the figure of man at twice its natural size" (35).
- 3 Goethe receives considerable attention from Schwab, which may be why he plays a disproportionate role for Said, who was deeply impressed by Schwab's work. See Said's foreword to Schwab vii–xx. Also on Goethe's Orientalism, see Katharina Mommsen, *Goethe und die Arabische Welt* (1988).
- 4 Among other critics, see Dorothy M. Figueira (1994: 3, 56–57); and Suzanne L. Marchand (1996: xxii). Figueira, in particular, astutely criticizes Said's misunderstanding of Schlegel's engagement with Indian philosophy and literature (1994: 55–62).
- 5 As Figueira (2000: 249) has pointed out, Zantop also struggles with the problem of ambivalence between German colonial "fantasies" and colonial and postcolonial realities.
- 6 Recent work done by Christine Lehleiter raises some insightful questions about Friedrich and August Wilhelm Schlegel's thinking about national identity and how it reflected contemporary discourses in natural science. "From Climate to Blood: The Function of Sanskrit Studies for the Redefinition of Race and Nation in Nineteenth-Century Germany," delivered at the Thirty-Second annual conference of the German Studies Association, 4 October, 2008.
- 7 Translation taken from Willson, *German* 89–90.
- 8 Most of this passage is quoted from Willson's translation, with some minor revisions. Most notably, Willson's "In the Orient, we must look for the most sublime form of the Romantic," has here been rendered more literally as "for the highest Romanticism."
- 9 On the role of the *Nibelungenlied* in the evolution of *Germanistik* in this period, see Benes 116–18.
- 10 This passage, which remains unpublished, is from the lectures on the "Encyclopedia of the Sciences."
- 11 Term used to denote the three main deities of the classical Hindu pantheon—Brahma, Visnu, and Siva.
- 12 Friedrich Schlegel's study of the Sanskrit language and the conclusions which he drew from these studies are not detailed here. Important studies of this subject have been done by Figueira (2002) and Benes (2008).

- 13 For Joseph Görres's similar claims on the subject of the historical authenticity of the events portrayed in sagas and other *Volk* literature, see Görres 70.
- 14 At the time of the composition of this essay, Marchand's book has not yet gone to print. She considers Friedrich Schlegel's orientalist career, mostly with an eye toward the changes in his religious outlook, in Chapter Two of her manuscript. I am especially grateful to professor Marchand for allowing me to read parts of the manuscript before they have been finalized for publication.
- 15 Gérard, in his early study, also draws the connection between Schlegel's "Orientalmanie" and his conviction that western culture was in a state of decline or "decrepitude" (91).
- 16 The Grimms, while sympathetic, were less directly involved in this endeavor. See Williamson 82.
- 17 On the romantic tradition of "sacralizing" the nation through mythological traditions—Judeo-Christian as well as Indian—see Figueira (2002: 47–49).

WORKS CITED

- Behler, Ernst. "Das Indienbild der deutschen Romantik." *Germanisch-Romanische Monatsschrift* 48 (1968): 21–27.
- Benes, Tuska. *In Babel's Shadow: Language, Philology, and the Nation in Nineteenth Century Germany*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2008.
- Bryant, Edwin. *The Quest for the Origins of Vedic Culture*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.
- Figueira, Dorothy M. *Aryans, Jews, Brahmins: Theorizing Authority through Myths of Identity*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002.
- . *The Exotic: A Decadent Quest*. Albany: State University of New York, 1994.
- . "The Profits of Postcolonialism." *Comparative Literature* 52.3 (Summer 2000): 246–54.
- Gérard, René. *L'Orient et la pensée romantique allemande*. Paris: Marcel Didier, 1963.
- Germana, Nicholas A. "Herder's 'Morgenland': India in Mythology and Anthropology." *The Anthropology of the Enlightenment*. Eds. Larry Woolf and Paul Cipolloni. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007. 119–37.
- . *The Orient of Europe: The Mythical Image of India and Competing Images of German National Identity*. Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2009.
- Gillespie, Gerald Ernest Paul. *Daniel Casper von Lohenstein's Historical Tragedies*. Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1965.
- Görres, Joseph. *Gesammelte Schriften*. Vol. 3. Ed. Günther Müller. Cologne: Im Gilde Verlag, 1926.
- Greenfield, Liah. *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992.
- Herder, Johann Gottfried. *Sämtliche Werke*. Vol. 5. Ed. Bernhard Suphan. Berlin: Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, 1883.
- . *Sämtliche Werke*. Vol. 18. Ed. Bernhard Suphan. Berlin: Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, 1883.

- Hoffman, Paul T. "Der indische und der deutsche Geist von Herder bis zur Romantik." Diss. Tübingen, 1915.
- Höltenschmidt, Edith. *Die Mittelalter-Rezeption der Brüder Schlegel*. München: Verlag Ferdinand Schöningh, 2000.
- Hultsch, Paul. "Der Orient in der deutschen Barockliteratur." Diss. Friedrich-Wilhelms Universität, 1936.
- Kontje, Todd. *German Orientalisms*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2004.
- Las Casas, Bartolomé de. *A Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies*. New York: Penguin Books, 1992.
- Lehleiter, Christine. "From Climate to Blood: The Function of Sanskrit Studies for the Redefinition of Race and Nation in Nineteenth-Century Germany." Delivered at the Thirty-Second annual conference of the German Studies Association, 4 October, 2008.
- Lennon, Joseph. *Irish Orientalism: A Literary and Intellectual History*. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2004.
- Lohner, Edgar, ed. *Ludwig Tieck an die Brüder Schlegel; Briefe*. München: Winkler Verlag, 1972.
- Marchand, Suzanne L. *German Orientalism in the Age of Empire: Religion, Race, and Scholarship*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.
- Mommsen, Katharina. *Goethe und die Arabische Welt*. Frankfurt: Insel Verlag, 1988.
- Montaigne, Michel de. *Essais*. Paris: Garnier Frères, 1962.
- Müller, Adam. "Vorlesungen über die deutsche Wissenschaft und Literatur." *Kritische, ästhetische und philosophische Schriften*. Vol. I. Eds. Walter Schroeder and Werner Siebert. Neuwied und Berlin: Hermann Luchterhand Verlag, 1967.
- Murti, Kamakshi. *India: The Seductive and Seduced "Other" of German Orientalism*. Westport: Greenwood Press, 2001.
- Park, Peter K.J. "A Catholic Apologist in a Pantheistic World: New Approaches to Friedrich Schlegel." *Sanskrit and 'Orientalism': Indology and Comparative Linguistics in Germany, 1750–1958*. Eds. Douglas T. McGetchin, Peter K.J. Park, and Damodar SarDesai. New Delhi: Manohar, 2004. 83–105.
- Pollock, Sheldon. "Deep Orientalism? Notes on Sanskrit and Power beyond the Raj." *Orientalism and the Postcolonial Predicament—Perspectives on South Asia*. Eds. Carol A. Breckenridge and Peter van der Veer. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993. 76–133.
- Rabault-Ferrehahn, Pascale. *L'archive des origines: Sanskrit, philologie, anthropologie dans l'Allemagne du XIXe siècle*. Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 2008.
- Said, Edward. *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage Books, 1978.
- . "Orientalism Reconsidered." *Orientalism: A Reader*. Ed. Alexander Lyon Macfie. New York: New York University Press, 2000. 345–61.
- Schlegel, August Wilhelm. "Geschichte der romantischen Literatur." *Kritische Schriften und Briefe*. Vol. IV. Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1965.
- Schlegel, Friedrich. *Kritische Friedrich-Schlegel-Ausgabe*. Vol. II. Ed. Hans Eichner. München: Verlag Ferdinand Schöningh, 1967.
- . *KFSa*. Vol. VIII. Eds. Ernst Behler and Ursula Struc-Oppenberg. München: Verlag Ferdinand Schöningh, 1975.

- . *KFSA*. Vol. XIV. Ed. Jean-Jacques Anstett. München: Verlag Ferdinand Schöningh, 1960.
- Schwab, Raymond. *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. (French 1950.)
- Szarota, Elida Maria. *Lohensteins Arminius als Zeitroman: Sichtweisen des Spätbarock*. Bern: Francke, 1970.
- Tzoref-Ashkenazi, Chen. "The Nationalist Aspect of Friedrich Schlegel's *On the Language and Wisdom of the Indians*." *Sanskrit and 'Orientalism': Indology and Comparative Linguistics in Germany, 1750–1958*. Eds. Douglas T. McGetchin, Peter K.J. Park, and Damodar SarDesai. New Delhi: Manohar, 2004. 107–30.
- Varisco, Daniel Martin. *Reading Orientalism: Said and Unsaid*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2007.
- Williamson, George S. *The Longing for Myth in Germany: Religion and Aesthetic Culture from Romanticism to Nietzsche*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004.
- Willson, A. Leslie, ed. *German Romantic Criticism*. New York: Continuum, 1982.
- . *A Mythical Image: The Idea of India in German Romanticism*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1964.
- Woolf, Virginia. *A Room of One's Own*. New York: Harcourt, Inc., 1957.
- Zantop, Suzanne. *Colonial Fantasies: Conquest, Family, and Nation in Precolonial Germany, 1770–1870*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1997.